

Review

HORROR OF FANG ROCK – AUDIO CD

Review by Allan Lear

Horror of Fang Rock is from an original television script by Robert Holmes, subsequently adapted into a novel by Terrance Dicks. This is about the best pedigree that it is possible for a *Doctor Who* story to have, and on top of that the original TV version stars Tom Baker as the Doctor. It's therefore quite tempting to suggest that there's absolutely no point in producing any further version of the story, because it's already been perfected.

This risk has clearly been understood in the process of bringing BBC Audio's new CD version to life, because rather than mess around with minor actors they've gone straight to the source. *Fang Rock* is read by Louise Jamieson, whose character Leela was Tom Baker's companion in the original television broadcast. Jamieson is not only a firmly established actor but also a director and a playwright, and her expanded dramatic range makes her ideal for tackling an ambitious project such as this.

The story, as you are no doubt aware, concerns an isolated lighthouse in the early part of the twentieth century. The inhabitants are visited by the passengers of two crashed vessels on the same night: a pleasure yacht belonging to an objectional businessman and his entourage, and a spaceship containing a malevolent alien entity. A twist on the traditional Gothic haunted house story ensues, with the dramatis personae being picked off one by one by the mysterious extraterrestrial threat.

As one might expect from the era and the lonely maritime setting, the cast of characters is heavily male, and thus might well have proven difficult for an actress to voice. Jamieson, however, succeeds admirably in giving each character his or her own distinct

vocal identity. With the sole exception of the Doctor himself – Tom Baker's own stentorian tones will always be missed in any production he doesn't appear in – there is no character who isn't brought into vibrant life by her portrayal. It helps that the cast is rich and full of interesting characters, provided one discounts the presence of the self-important business mogul's secretary: a prim young lady named Adelaide who got right on my nerves. Luckily her ineffectual twittering is counterbalanced by Leela's habitual blunt pragmatism, because otherwise the female side of the cast would be wholly absent a likeable character.

The reading is backed with appropriate sound effects – lighthouse's warning foghorn, the noise of flares being fired, the crackle of unearthed electricity – and the occasional smattering of atmospheric music. Agreeably, this all errs very much on the side of caution, and the words of the script are given the primacy they deserve. Sympathetically edited, the result is soundscape which supplements the scenes your mind's eye conjures rather than drowning them out.

Horror of Fang Rock is a strong entry in the *Doctor Who* canon and one that deserves to receive outings in these different formats so that it can be enjoyed as widely as possible. This recording preserves all the strength of the original story while also playing to the possibilities of the audio-only medium, and I have no hesitation in commending it to any *Doctor Who* fan for use in the car, the bath or the privacy of their own imagination. A quality production and a high bar for the BBC Audio range to aim for in future. ▲



Fiction

WHEN MOZART WAS FIVE

by Allan Lear

According to the manual, it was an 04.500ytc Spatiotemporal Combat Interocitor. According to the thudding wits of Celestial Intervention, it was a Gunboat Diplomat. In plain simple language it was a battle TARDIS, and it had just exploded.

The blast from the detonated plasma shell impacted the planet below like moonstrike. On the world's far side the shockwaves raised mountains that spat magma and pyroclasm. The rumbling nuclear winter met, coming the other way, a cascade of hydrogen fusion spreading from the epicentre of the explosion that set the oxygen-rich air ablaze. Seen from afar, the planet resembled a half moon: the brightly-burning sky met halfway the dense smog of tectonic trauma and battled for supremacy.

All of which was bad enough, but to a time-sensitive it was only the entrée. The pocket dimension at the heart of the battle TARDIS imploded, taking with it the eleven-dimensional hypercube that made up the TARDIS interior and leaving in its stead a temporal singularity that raged briefly and burst, punching a crack in spacetime like a skull impacting a windshield. The fabric of causality, already riven with more faults and fractures than an icy lake in dynamite-fishing season, creaked almost audibly, shuddered and, for the moment, held. Lashed by the explosive monsoon that buffeted his own TARDIS, straining not to be flung bodily from his tactical webbing, the Doctor nevertheless exhaled momentary relief. The ululation of the dying machine was met by a single, doleful toll from the Cloister Bell; a warning, but principally a memoriam.

The Diplomat formation, unperturbed, strafed. Five battle(time)ships and the Doctor's ancient Type 40 continued their

descent towards the planet's surface. Ultraviolet gunfire perforated the air like tattoo needles round a dockyard, and the ships shifted frantically through evasive phase space – now a picosecond in the future and twenty light years from impact, now thirty billion years and three feet away – cycling random possible locations from a quasi-infinity of theoretical next steps. Between their targets' myriad shuffling placements and the plasma firestorm, most planetary defenders would have been defeated already; but Daleks are nothing if not tenacious.

"But won't she remember? You said she can't remember."

"She won't if you don't tell her, Wilf. Tell her it's your mother's, an heirloom. She won't care as long as it's sparkly."

"You talk about her like she's a cat."

"Oh, she is, Wilf! The coolest of cats."

The thin man flashed a smile fit for Hollywood. His smile, thought Wilf, was like a meteor: bright, and glorious, and hopefully not about to fall on your head.

"How big is it?" he asked, doubtfully.

"We-ell," said the thin man, stretching the syllable out into a drawl. "That depends on how you look at it. A carat and a half? Three thousand miles wide?"

Seeing the old man's befuddlement, he expanded, expansively.

"It's a star, Wilf. A carbon star. Sometimes, when a big enough star burns up all its hydrogen, it starts burning helium. The fusion process unites the particles into heavier elements – like, oh, I don't know, carbon. The gravity at the heart of the star compacts the carbon into a molecular lattice and: pow!" The grin again. "Diamond star."

"Just as well there's all that gravity," said Wilf, staring up at the night sky. "What use is a pencil lead three thousand miles wide?"

The thin man regained his balance *almost* instantly. "Exactly! Neither use nor," – and here he placed the diamond ring in Wilf's hand – "ornament." He closed Wilf's fist around the ring. "An engagement present. And a thank-you present. And a farewell gift." There was no sign of the smile now on his solemn face.

"Well, the boy certainly couldn't afford one like this. I'm sure they'll be very grateful to... to my mother, who left it me."

"That's the ticket." The thin man stepped back, appraised Wilf briefly, and gave him a respectful nod. He opened the blue box door and stepped over the threshold.

"Doctor!" called Wilf. He stood framed in the light from the box's doorway. The thin man turned.

Wilf was holding the ring the way he once held a gun. His clutch was firm, but ginger, as though grasping a danger there was no precluding. "There's no chance it'll...get big again, is there?"

"Really, Wilf," the thin man chided. "That's a conversation you need to have with your *own* doctor."

He closed the door and was gone.

A shabby blue cuboid screamed through last Wednesday, hooked a right around the gravity well of Cygnus X-1 and shot forward into the future. The problem with his distinctive police box, thought the Doctor, was that the Daleks always knew whom to chase.

The bombing run had been completed without further casualties, the Dalek's antiartron particle cannons falling silent as the artron-infused crystalline lattice that

powered their fuel cells was beautifully fragmented by a well-placed spatial inflator. A crack shot from one of the Diplomats had suddenly persuaded all the neutrons in its atomic nuclei that they were bored and needed to explore the universe at something closely approximating – but, of course, still below – light speed.

The resulting discharge had, he was assured, been similar to a few million Hiroshimas going off at once. It was a locus of Earth history that, even in his present self, he had never found the chutzpah to visit. Judging by the result here, it must have been spectacular.

The battle TARDISes had immediately broken formation and fled in all conceivable directions and calendars. Unerringly the Daleks had pursued the Doctor's craft and, though the TARDIS was a device of infinitely greater complexity and nuance than the clunking pepperNazis' crude time tunnel technology, their haring disregard for the fabric of reality gave them an advantage in the chase.

It was times like this that he regretted his preference for earthing the internal hypercube to the plasma shell. Most Diplomat pilots leave the pocket dimension untethered, so they remain a still epicentre even as the plasma shells are battered by exploding suns. They feel nothing until the moment they suddenly wink out of existence in a multidimensional implosion; but then, feeling nothing has long been an ambition of the Time Lords. The Doctor had always preferred to fly by touch, but at times like this – as a glancing impact of coherent laser fire spun the TARDIS end-over-end and left the Doctor hanging from the console by merit of webbing alone – that he had second thoughts about the wisdom of this. A corner of his mind also worried about osteoporosis.

Without antiartron cannons the pursuing ships would be hard-pressed to destroy his craft, but they could certainly precipitate a forced landing. Then it would be a question of capture, interrogation and execution, none of which rated in his most eagerly-

anticipated recurrences any more than being born again or having a whole fugu repeat on him.

Straining against the straps, regretting also the beard which tended to get caught in the harness and pull out facial hairs, the Doctor laid in a preset course.

"So I said to her, you can have my job, love, but you'll never have my hips!"

Donna's raucous laugh could be heard above the sound of the DJ's best efforts. The night was young yet for dancing but not so young that a few bottles of wine hadn't gone the way of all flesh.

"You never did!"

Carlotta and Meredith joined in the cackling. This was why they were friends: Donna might be an obnoxious cow at times, but she told it like it was and was honest to, and beyond, a fault.

"Too right I did! Stuck-up twiglet just out of nappies trying to boss me around, I chucked it in on the spot. No more Supertemp for them." Donna glugged back the dregs of her glass and reached out to the stack of bottles, sorting through for one that still contained a slug of genius juice.

"Show me again!" squealed Carlotta as the light caught Donna's fingers with a bright glint of shiny.

Donna extended her hand like the Pope expecting a kiss, and her friends cooed once again over her newly-besparkled finger.

"How the *hell* did Gavin afford it?" Meredith asked for the sixth or seventh time.

"He didn't," answered Donna, "It's a family heirloom. My great-nan's. Could be worth a fortune." Staring at the ring, she was caught once more by a sudden sensation that it reminded her of something she could neither

quite recall nor ever entirely forget. Her sudden subdual manifested in her next quiet sentence: "Flawed, though, they reckon."

"Aren't we all?" asked Carlotta, the thoughtful one.

"Scuse ME! Presented company exCLUDED!" shrieked a wine-resurgent Donna, and they fell in the mutually congratulatory laughter that marks true friends apart from jealous skinny twiglet babies.

The most dangerous part of any flight is the landing. This is particularly true when you are setting a micron-precise course amidst a blaze of Dalek laser fire, but it is a good general rule as well.

The pernickety exactitude of the Doctor's required destination narrowed down the phase space of his rematerialisations. In practical terms, the space he had to dodge the Daleks in was narrowing. The blast came closer, struck more often, clipped more and more energy from the plasma shell. The TARDIS and the Doctor strove as one to stabilise the internal and external dimensions; precision, both knew, would be all in this last manoeuvre.

What the Doctor was about to attempt in his wheezing, knackered old Type 40 would have been inadvisable bordering on impossible in the most cunningly outfitted of the combat interocitors. A crew of battle technicians would have taken a week to work out the logistics alone, then reported back that it couldn't be done. To attempt it in a body that was wearing thin, in a TARDIS that had been due for retirement around the time that the Sombrero Galaxy was being born, probably made him a bit mental.

Still, that couldn't be helped now. As the TARDIS shuddered from blow after blow, the impacts fighting the inertial dampeners for the right to knock the ship hurtling from the vortex, the Doctor floundered his way out of the tactical webbing and hauled

himself around the console towards the door. At his age it was hard to tell whether the unsteadiness underfoot was due to the battering the TARDIS was taking or the battering his body had already taken. Foot by shaky foot he made his way to the door and opened it, staring out at the pulsing vortex riven by laser fire, fighting the urge to duck as it blazed overhead and around. Then he turned about and made his painstaking way back to the central octahedron.

This, however, was where having the internal dimensions tethered to the plasma shell came into its own. It may make for a bumpy ride, but one of the reasons the Diplomat crews would never have pulled this manoeuvre off is because they would never think to do it by hand.

As his craft started locating itself in real space the Dalek ships pursuing dropped out of the vortex, their computers calculating his emergence point, their pilots slipping into space ahead by a handful of rels, ready to annihilate him with laser fire on his appearance.

His hand palsied with impact tremors as he poked at the gyroscope, first leaning and then bracing as the TARDIS canted over forty-five degrees. Crouched lower than his knees really appreciated these days, he got a firm footing on the angular edge of the console, gripped the housing with one hand and, with the other, pulled the materialisation lever.

Then he leapt.

The combat console room was quite small and pokey, nothing like the acres of space reserved for peacetime slopping about in, and despite his senescent condition he caught the door with ease. As the gyroscope gradually canted the TARDIS back in true, his full weight rested for a moment on the TARDIS door and, slowly at first, the ship started to spin. The second his feet touched wall he jumped again, levering again his whole mass against the door, and the craft's axial rotation sped. The thunder of the engines rang with the pulse in his ears as he

heaved, the querulous high note whinging like a killjoy gran moaning of dizziness on a pierhead carousel. As the TARDIS weebled back upright he lay flat on the whirling floor.

The TARDIS slammed to a halt in the heart of a star.

Owing to the conservation of angular momentum, a spinning object doesn't just stop. That kinetic force has to go somewhere. The TARDIS may only have been five feet across but its mass, tethered to our spacetime dimensions by the earthed hypercube, was anywhere between "vast" and "infinite", and all that mass transferred its momentum to a diamond star three thousand miles wide.

The star became a blur. A rough cuboid of crystalline mass the exact size and shape of an old Earth police box, fizzing with displaced artron energy, was ejected in a random vortical parabola by the TARDIS's automatic displacement circuits; the rest of the diamond span like a top, a blur of rough facets and internal refractions like the most valuable glitterball in the history of the universe.

The Daleks, swift as ever on the trigger, did not stop to consider the wisdom of blasting a rapidly-rotating prism with coherent light beams. They fired, and in doing so, they doomed themselves.

The laser rays concentrated on the star were surprised to find themselves ejected like a speed dealer at a posh nightclub. Rattled and returned by the internal facets of the massive diamond, they fell like ninepins to the laws of optics. Some dispersed harmlessly into regular light waves and fled out into space. Some blossomed prismatically into blooms of glorious colour and microwave energy, radiating harmlessly into warmth and oblivion.

Some caught a reflective surface and bounced right back.

Sunbursts danced across the surface of the spinning jewel as Dalek ships burst into space-silent eruptions of damaged matter. The speed of light being what it is, none of the occupants even realised what was happening before their atoms were smeared across the space lanes. At the soul of a pyrotechnic cloud of obliterated mutants and their ham-fisted technology, orbiting an ancient machine and a grizzled veteran, a heliosphere of flashing auroras danced for a moment in the sky, the inferno glancing off its cold, hard surface.

Unplumbed millions of light years away, on a primitive but promising planet that its inhabitants know as "Earth", a wedding reception was in full swing. Amongst the dancing, the drinking, and the arguing, it is hard to tell whether any of the partygoers noticed a supernova blossoming low on the horizon. Perhaps the groom, drunk to the point of sentimentality, noticed it and saw in it a good omen for his connuptial life, or a beautiful reminder of the shining star that was his spouse; perhaps he decided that he would point it out to his bride the next night, and it could be *their* star.

If he did, the next morning would wipe it from his mind, and besides, the star would no longer be visible.

Certainly the bride didn't spot it. Her bright red hair held back by a sympathetic Carlotta, that happy lady was being violently sick in the toilets.

As the rotation gradually slowed, the Doctor staggered to his feet. Adjusting his bandolier until it no longer threatened to choke him, he limped to the central console, which was gently steaming and throwing off the occasional spark. There was one more job to do before he and the TARDIS could recuperate. The trap he had so carefully laid must be obliterated, so that the Daleks could never stumble across it and guess his motives.

They might not care much for sparkly things, but a diamond star with a fault the exact size and shape of an old Earth police box might ignite even their torpid curiosities.

With a sympathetic pat on the console, he coaxed one last effort from his exhausted craft. "Nap time soon, old girl. Have you back on your feet," he mumbled, the gravel in his voice exacerbated by the drifting smoke from fused circuitry. Even in an interocitor, you can't perform a handbrake turn without expecting something to overheat.

He had time, now, at least, to be gentle.

Responding to his touch, the TARDIS lurched once more into life. Anyone watching would have been hard-pressed to explain how a box five feet across slowly encompassed a diamond three thousand miles wide; to the untrained, which is to say, human eye, it looked like a transition overlay, the image of the TARDIS getting stronger as the image of the star dwindled, faded and vanished. In reality, it was a simple matter of rotating the star through a couple of nonspatial dimensions, materialising the hypercube around it, establishing an *n*-dimensional compression field – venting the resultant gaseous output into the Horseshoe Nebula as you went – then rerotating it back into normal spacetime reduced in size and weight. The star's mass was conserved but, since mass is only as good as the gravity acting on it, all you needed to do was cheat up a little graviton-dispersal field and the star weighed less than an ounce.

The Doctor slumped, job finally over, into an incongruous overstuffed horsehair chair and smiled grim satisfaction to himself as the lights in the console winked gradually out, automated repairs kicking as the TARDIS's unhuman intellect took to its boudoir for R&R. In the emergency backup lighting the star glowed like a ruby on his palm.

Perhaps, he thought, when all this was over he would fashion it into an eardud for the Corsair.

The Doctor, like all his people, never really slept. But now, for a while, he was absent.

A billion years in the future, unusual readings drew a Dalek scout drone to a muddy, uninhabited planet with an oxygen-rich atmosphere. Daleks did not believe in luck, just as they did not believe in beauty, love, justice, mercy, truth or leprechauns; but they did believe that if you searched hard enough for long enough you were bound to turn up something. In a universe of sufficient temporal duration, the probability of all possible events approaches one.

Nevertheless, this particular event seemed, even to the limited Dalek imagination, almost too good to be true. The backwater world was blessed with one outstanding feature. Deep, deep in a crater thousands of millennia old lay a meteor of pure diamond. Its crystalline lattice structure fizzled and cracked with untapped artron energy, perfect for fuelling antiartron cannon. Buried in the mantle of a young planet, unbeknownst to the reporting Dalek scout and hence to the Dalek tacticians that received its signals, the meteor was the exact size and shape of an old Earth police box.

In the bedroom a redhead slumbers contentedly, her arms wrapped around the man who, only a month ago, made her the happiest woman in the world. He shifts slightly in his sleep. The sensitive instinctual mechanisms in his reptile hindbrain, evolved over almost geological time to do nothing more than assess imminent threats to life and limb, detect the warmth radiating from the woman's body as it presses against him in the dark. It sends a simple message to the sophisticated mechanisms of the neocortex – not a word, because the hindbrain has no language, but a sensation. "Safe," it signals, and the neocortex takes the hint to sleep deeper, to rest sounder. The man's body relaxes even more deeply, and the redhead's with it, and they sleep the contented sleep of the little person whose decisions, however wrongheaded, will never knock the world off its axis.

On the woman's bedside table a stone catches the last vestige of light, seeming to glow dully as the diffuse beam spreads throughout its interior. The stone, like all of us, is valuable, is bigger on the inside, and carries at its heart a perfect flaw. ▲



Review

DIRECTED BY DOUGLAS CAMFIELD

by Michael Seely

Review by Allan Lear

If there is a literary format that approaches the all-consuming scope of “fiction” in its nonspecific unhelpfulness, then it must surely be “biography”. That catch-all term covers approaches so diverse that it really tells you nothing at all about the contents of the book it purports to describe. Matt Lucas’s recent memoir, *Little Me*, is presented as an A-Z of topics, like an encyclopaedia rather than an autobiography; Neil Patrick Harris’s *Choose Your Own Autobiography* is written like a Fighting Fantasy novel, with Harris’s own life taking different possible routes depending on the entries you choose to read.

Even below the level of such bold experiments with the autobiographical genre, each biography is a different proposition, with scholarly texts claiming to be authoritative, or even definitive, rubbing shoulders on the shelves with lightweight and unanalytical books of gratuitous celebrity tittle-tattle. Where the focus on each life lies is entirely dependent on the choices made by the writer.

For *Directed by Douglas Camfield*, Michael Seely has decided to walk us through each TV show that came under Camfield’s purview during his time behind the lens in chronological order. A typical entry might explain the circumstances in which Camfield came to be attached to the project, give rough dates for the shooting schedule, include a few quotes from surviving members of the cast or crew about how Camfield was terribly organised but a pleasure to work for, and finish with a snapshot of the director having a quiet drink and playing Spanish guitar.

Not everybody wants the same things from their biographies and I know for a fact that

there are plenty of *Doctor Who* fans, as well as fans of other cult and genre shows to which Camfield made a contribution, who will be fascinated and intrigued to have a compendium such as this which details the extent of his directorial career. Completists in particular will enjoy ticking off such productions as survive in their all-reaching quest to perfect their knowledge of the genre, and why not?

Some of us, however, wish biographies to explain the work to us by explaining the person behind the work, and in terms of personal insight *Directed by Douglas Camfield* is not rich pickings. Though there are brushstrokes that attempt to cover his personal habits, his superficial likes and dislikes, there is no concerted effort here to introduce to us any more of Mr Camfield than the briefer of his work acquaintances are likely to have encountered.

Were it merely that this was a biography that was not in the style that I, as a reader, prefer, I would not hesitate to recommend it to such fans as may be intrigued by the proposition of a complete list of the Camfield oeuvre. However, there is a more objective problem with the book than this, which is that it’s badly written. It’s not just that it is full of glaring typographical errors, though it is (from this book I learned that Doug Camfield’s adoptive father was a widow with a tiny daughter). It’s also that the English language is routinely mishandled in the sort of baffling ways that come from a writer who isn’t prepared to do the work required to make himself understood. Particles dangle like cliffhangers and subjects disagree with objects about the least little thing. The job of an author is not merely to vomit information onto a page and slam the book shut before any facts can dribble away; it is to present that information in an interesting and engaging way. The only thing I was engaged in was a titanic struggle with Seely’s syntax.

Overall, a disappointing contribution from the usually-reliable Miwk publishing. Here’s hoping their next outing will be a return to form. ▲

Feature

MY DOCTOR WHO COMIC

by Patrick Wray

It was in the dark days of 1990, the year after the show’s original run had ended, that I, as a *Who*-obsessed thirteen-year-old, decided to create my own *Doctor Who* comic strip. The fact that the show had recently been axed and this was the first year that it had not been on TV since the ‘85 hiatus was surely no coincidence. If I was unable to watch new episodes of *Doctor Who* I’d have to make my own!

As a youth in those pre-internet days it was impossible to know that others out there were also producing what is now termed ‘fan art’; no less companies like Audio Visuals and later Big Finish, who were to take this to a whole new level in the nineties and beyond.

The audience for my comic was mainly my mother and sister, who – it has to be said – were pretty indifferent to the comic and to *Doctor Who* in general (though mum was polite and encouraging). Attempts to show it to some school friends proved disastrous and the strip was met with ridicule. By 1990 the show was not a hip proposition amongst Britain’s youth (not at my school anyway) and one could argue that for various reasons the show was at its lowest ebb of popularity (though this was unjustified based on the quality of Sylvester McCoy’s excellent last season).

My *Doctor Who* comic strip featured my own incarnation of the Doctor. The idea was that this was who the seventh Doctor might have regenerated into. My Doctor wore a red bow tie, stripy trousers reminiscent of those you might see on some Cambridge punters in the twenties. He wears a purple velvet dinner jacket with question marks on the lapel. His character is good-natured and stoical, and he has a friendly, grandfatherly manner about him. He is old-looking with grey hair and a

moustache. His assistant is Adrian, a tank-top-wearing fop from the fictional town of Pennyworth.

The comic strip *Doctor* met various derivative monsters including Kildroids, Insecticides as well as Daleks, the Master, Cybermen and the Rani in a story that was very similar to *Time and the Rani*. Story titles included *The Factory of Fear*, *Revolt on Castle Zynak* and *Faceless People*. He had eleven adventures in total spread across nine one-off issues, plus two more included in the 1991 annual. Most of them were created in 1990 with two more and a few unfinished stories being produced in 1991 but by now, with the show still off our screens, my interest was waning and the comic fizzled out after the completion of a spin-off magazine. An attempt to revive it in 1993 with a second incarnation of the comic strip *Doctor* was spurred by some repeats on BBC2 but was not completed.

With *Doctor Who* largely AWOL from our screens for most of the nineties and into the mid-noughties my enthusiasm for all things *Doctor Who* went with it to some degree. It was not its revival in 2005 that reignited my interest in *Doctor Who*. It was in fact the viewing of some vintage classic era DVDs including *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* (a masterpiece of dystopian sci-fi by any measure) that got me thinking about my childhood fascination with the show and about my own *Doctor Who* comic.

I dug out the original strips and decided to make an all new story for old times’ sake. This resulted in the spoofy *The Dalek Invasion of Keighley* in 2012. Keighley is my home town and the story was a kind of meta-*Doctor Who* story featuring me and my family members as characters visited by the Doctor and his assistant Adrian just in time for a Dalek invasion. I made the comic at a time when I was getting back into making comics, partly as a fun exercise that would serve to re-familiarise myself with the process of creating sequential narratives...

It was a lot of fun to make but ended up taking much longer than I originally planned. It was

also created partly as a nostalgic Christmas gift to my sister who was once again pretty unimpressed by the whole thing. I still have all the original drawings from my original run of home-made *Who* and I cherish them (though they reek of my parents' cigarette smoke). *Doctor Who* clearly has the power to spark the imagination in all kind of ways. For writers and artists it provides an open circuit platform from which to operate. A place where any idea, no matter how idiosyncratic, can be explored within the framework of *Doctor Who*.

Every fan has their own personal history with *Doctor Who*, their favourite Doctor, favourite companion. My formative memories of watching *Doctor Who* (beginning with early eighties Tom Baker) are mixed with the ideas it sparked in my imagination and ultimately my own version of the Doctor. Though he is known only to me, he is in a strange way as much a part of my relationship with *Doctor Who* as the character depicted on television and truly 'My Doctor'. ▲



Review

THE UNOFFICIAL DOCTOR WHO SONGBOOK

Review by Allan Lear

Long Scarf Publications has two speeds: crawl and blitzkrieg. In the last issue of *Cosmic Masque* we reviewed their Choose-Your-Own-Adventure style offering, *The Fescan Threat*, a behemoth tome that contained two thousands entries and had taken over two years to complete. In the time between that issue and this, LSP have already completed, published and sold out of a book of fan-sourced *Who*-themed limericks, and are now doing the same thing with their unofficial songbook.

Jenny Shirt and Christopher Samuel Stone are the leading lights of this production, and they have followed the same idea that made a rapid success of their limericks book: advertising on social media for contributors to provide material that is then collated into a volume and sold cheaply with profits going to MIND, the mental health charity to which Long Scarf donates all its proceeds.

Slightly more complex than limericks, the order of the day this time was lyrics to existing songs. In this day of slapdash nomenclature, this sort of thing is commonly referred to as a collection of parodies, although of course it isn't. What it actually is, as older denizens of the Internet and its abstruse fannish byways may remember, is a collection of filks. As Humphrey Lyttleton used to observe weekly, these songs have had their lyrics removed and a fresh set surgically transplanted to match the existing tune.

As someone who regularly wanders down the street singing my own lyrics to Eleanor Rigby*, this sort of endeavour is right up my alley, and anyone with a musical ear and a healthy capacity for silliness will no doubt find the whole thing great fun. It's like an

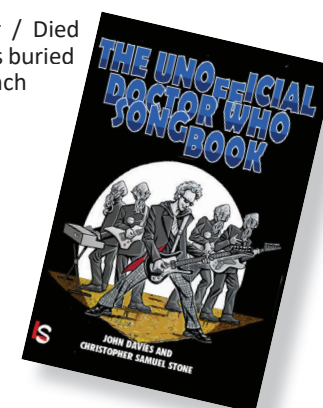
extended party game or one of those Twitter round robins where everyone has to think of punning names for films based on fruit, or some such daft undertaking. It also inspires the reader to try and come up with their own variations on popular songs to be given a Whovian twist, and no doubt if this volume is a success then an expanded edition or a companion will be issued further along the line.

Not all of the contributors are wholly successful, it has to be said, with some of them neglecting to ensure that their new lyrics actually fit into the tune they're supposed to accompany (one example being the version of *I Will Survive* which tries to crowbar two whole additional syllables in – if you're filking a song, sing along while you write to avoid falling into such a trap, otherwise Marcus Brigstocke will be unimpressed with you on Radio Watford). On the other hand, the book is beautifully illustrated, particularly by Raine Szramski's superb black-and-white character studies, and some of the more impressive comic conceits are rewarded with a page full of mock sleeve notes explaining how they came to be written and why they never made it to the final recording.

A lighthearted and fun way to donate to charity while also filling your bookshelves with *Doctor Who*, *The Unofficial Doctor Who Songbook* is another worthwhile production from the charitable souls at Long Scarf Productions. And the lyrics to Gwen Stefani's *Don't Speak* – here rechristened *Don't Blink* – are a marked improvement on the originals.

*Hannibal Lecter / Died in his cell and was buried along with his lunch

▲



Interview

ANDREW SKILLETER

by Ian Wheeler

Many skilled and talented artists have provided cover artwork for Doctor Who books and videos over the years, but Andrew Skilleter remains one of the most admired and respected. Ian Wheeler caught up with him...

What made you want to be an artist? I believe the Eagle comic was a particular early inspiration of yours?

Given that I grew up at a time when the most visual and colourful media were comics, I guess it's there that I found the inspiration. My brother and I had the comics my parents approved of, so my brother had the *Eagle* with Dan Dare and, being younger, I had its stable mates. Later I discovered Ron Embleton's work in *Express Weekly* and was immediately drawn to its painterly quality. Then I rediscovered the modernised 1960s *Eagle* and was enthralled by the late Keith Watson's dramatic graphic style for Dan Dare. It remains a great love of mine. Both these artists were later to become friends of mine.

Can you remember the first time you watched Doctor Who?

My parents finally got a TV coincidentally in time for the very first *Doctor Who* episode. I have to dig deep to capture the impact but it was compelling and the Daleks invading Earth stick in my mind. The monochrome images helped the menacing atmosphere. I don't think the Daleks ever had the same impact for me later. Age and first impressions and all that.

Were you given much editorial guidance with your Doctor Who covers? Would the editor say 'I want a Cyberman on this one' etc. or was it very much your own decision?

Mike Brett the Art Director briefed the artists. I saw the editors perhaps just a few

times. There were obviously discussions as I had access to the BBC Photo Library in London and I was often given the info sheet on the story from the BBC Production Office. Of course I was told Doctor or no Doctor, and apart from a run of Tom Bakers, usually the latter sadly.

Your cover for The Five Doctors novelisation is iconic and one of my favourites of the ones you did. That one was unusual as it came out prior to transmission – did you have much in the way of photographic references for that one or did you have to work mainly from the script?

The Target cover was based on editorial info about key elements that would feature in the story. I was told not to be too explicit with the Doctors' portraits; hence the silhouette feel. I came up with this icon like design which was really distinctive.

The Radio Times *Five Doctors* cover was a big thing and [Doctor Who producer] John Nathan-Turner gave me access to watch the video in a room adjoining his office to make drawings of the Dark Tower. I gathered what photo references I could including a rather blurred Hurndall portrait.

Is painting a video cover fundamentally different from a book in terms of the composition or the way that you work?

It certainly was at the time. Of course, it's an era that's long gone. In my opinion DVD covers across the board, be it TV or film, are generally boring and predictable. There's no artistry in them. It's just packaging. My acrylic technique was at its peak and I intended to prove to myself what I could do with a larger original, no restrictions on subject matter, much better references and more time as a rule. I was lucky to get a run of twenty-four covers. The Targets of course will remain the most iconic but technically and compositionally my VHS covers were a big leap forward.

Is there a particular Who painting that you're really proud of – one that makes you think 'I nailed it'? The Deadly Assassin video cover was a really good one for my money!

That's difficult as in retrospect that feeling applies to many of the artworks: a number of the Target covers, VHS covers and my *Who Dares* work on the calendars. Of course, *Deadly Assassin*, but *Castrovalva*, *Planet of the Spiders*, *Claws of Axos* and many more.

What are your memories of working on the American Doctor Who traveling exhibition in the mid-80s? [Andrew provided exterior artwork for the trailer which housed the exhibition.]

What traveling exhibition? 'Thinks'...oh, THAT one. An intense challenge outside the parameters of a cover commission. More like project management which I enjoy. I had to come up with something that could be translated to large spray painting. And I was disappointed with the translation to the full size but the guys doing it had an impossible job in too short a time. I didn't choose them and I think it would've been great if, as part of the BBC's project management, I had a say in who was chosen and then more communication with them.

You and your colleagues seem to be getting a little bit more recognition these days, especially with the recent exhibition of Target book covers in London. How does it feel to be part of such a success story?

I think the recognition was always there but I take your point that it became more public. I think Chris Achilleos benefitted from this enormously. Everyone else were secondary. But of course it's a great privilege to be in this position with the much-loved Target covers. It's touching when I receive messages telling me how much the covers meant to fans. I get that, as I felt the same way, feel the same way, about, for example, Keith Watson's Dan Dare front covers for the *Eagle* as I saw them each week.

Were you involved with the exhibition on a practical level – how the art was displayed, for instance?

Once Edward Russell, Brand Manager of BBC, got in touch (it was his baby and he loves Target covers) I did all I could to contact collectors and discover the whereabouts

of Target originals and not just mine. I was instrumental in helping to track collectors down. Edward and I worked out a shortlist of mine to go in on the basis that I had done more classic Target covers than anyone else – I think we had it down to thirteen of my forty or so Target covers. But once he relinquished control there was no communication and I discovered at the exhibition launch that I was left with just a handful and many of my first choices never appeared.

Can you tell us one fact about Andrew Skilleter and his work that people might not know?

Errm...there is work I forget about and work I want to forget about! I guess it would be my long connection illustratively with the collector's limited edition WE Johns and *Biggles* books [WE Johns was the creator of Biggles and many, many other mysteries, air adventures and crime stories]. Over a period of ten years or so I worked with my friend Norman Wright on the covers and some incidental illustrations and added original drawings to many of the special hardback editions. A number of WE Johns Portfolio Collections followed.

What can we expect from you in the near future?

My focus, apart from private commissions, is the relaunch (with Matthew Doe) of *Who Dares* Publishing www.who-dares.co.uk which I originally formed in the 1980s. As I write we are about to launch our third limited edition portfolio and have ambitious plans for print and audio including some books across genres and original content.

What's your favourite cheese?

A good English cheddar! Which, of course, I always buy only from a Dalekatesen... ▲

www.who-dares.co.uk

<http://andrewskilleter.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/artofandrewskilleter>



Andrew Skilleter's iconic Cyberman image
from the cover of
David Banks's 'Doctor Who - Cybermen'

Review

THE MIND OF EVIL BBC AUDIO CD Review by Allan Lear

At this year's DWAS convention, The Capitol, I had the privilege of interviewing Pik-Sen Lim as part of a panel of guests from Jon Pertwee's time as the Doctor. Pik-Sen, of course, played Captain Chin Lee in the televised original version. As part of the interview I suggested that *The Mind of Evil* is a story that still holds up well today, and I was rewarded with an audible murmur of agreement from the audience.

Of course, there are a multiplicity of reasons why this story is so fondly regarded by fans of the show. It's an early Jon Pertwee, so one of the first stories that's available in its entirety, most of it even in colour. It features plenty to do for The Master in the body of Roger Delgado, still many aficionados' choice for Best Master That Ever Did. It features Katy Manning, massive fan favourite due to her hugely enthusiastic embrace of the convention circuit and her doting interactions with fans as well as her ability onscreen. And it features the UNIT family, properly constituted with Benton, Yates and the Brig all well-rounded and with their own starring moments of screen time.

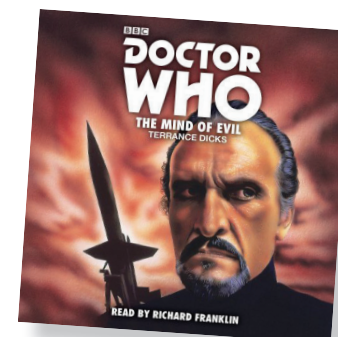
Possibly on this last basis, Richard Franklin has been tapped as the narrator for this audio version of the story. Franklin's star has had a rapid ascendancy in recent months, and one assumes that at the time of recording he hadn't realised that his appearance in *Rogue One* would garner such attention and lead to his fronting an international advertising campaign for a noted, and disgusting, chain of fast food outlets.

Certainly there's no hint in his reading that he might be about to be launched into much more lucrative and high-profile work, and his calm, warm manner makes *The Mind of Evil* into a delightful bedtime story, one where

– for all Benton's ineptitude as a private eye and Lethbridge-Stewart's shouted denunciations of incompetence – the listener is never in any doubt that the Doctor and friends will find a way to foil the scheming Master. For this reason the audio version might be suitable for younger audiences than the TV production itself, though be warned that there are no story changes and poor old Barnham still has nothing down for him.

The Mind of Evil is a strongly-plotted tale, full of good characterisation that enables a single reader to handle its large cast without difficulty. Particularly strong is Franklin's Brigadier, who is the late Nicholas Courtney to the life, with clipped military vocalisation intact. It's nice to hear the dear old Brig being portrayed by someone who knew Courtney so well and worked so closely with him, of course, which is another reason why Franklin was a good choice for this particular adventure.

It seems evident that *The Mind of Evil* has enough meat on its bones to captivate an audience in any medium, and this well-plotted boys' own adventure has translated well into the audio format here. Add in BBC Audio's usual sympathetic soundtracking which adds to the narrative without overwhelming – UNIT's storming of Stangmoor Prison is elucidated with some lovely firefight noises that really help up the tension quotient – and you have another audio CD ideal for introducing classic *Doctor Who* stories on long car journeys or to relive some favoured memories while doing your early-morning jog. ▲



Interview

JASON QUINN

by Ian Wheeler

Jason Quinn is the editor of Doctor Who Adventures, Panini's monthly publication for younger Doctor Who fans. CM caught up with him before the sad decision to suspend publication of the title...

Would you be able to give us a little potted summary of your career in comics and how you came to be back in the UK (after some time in India) editing Doctor Who Adventures?

I grew up on comics, in fact I learned to read with them. I remember learning to read with *Oor Wullie* and *The Broons*, and consequently I peppered my speech with Scots slang even though I had never set foot across Hadrian's Wall. Then of course came the Marvel reprints in comics like *Fantastic, Pow* and *Wham*, which I loved. The bug remained with me all my life until 1993 when my brother Tim [Tim Quinn – former *DWM* cartoonist] was working at Marvel UK and he got me in for an interview in the nursery department. My first weeks were sent packaging up and returning old artwork before I was handed the task of editing *Care Bears* and *Barbie*. It seemed churlish to say I wanted to do *Spider-Man*, especially since Tim was the one editing it at the time, so I stayed with *Barbie* and the *Care Bears* before adding the likes of *Fun Song Factory*, *Thomas the Tank Engine* and *Casper the Friendly Ghost* to my portfolio.

I think I had been with Marvel for about a year or maybe two before we were bought up by Panini and before long we had relocated from Temple to Tunbridge Wells and I was Project Leader on the first of our Collectors' Editions, *Astonishing Spider-Man* and *Essential X-Men*, along with some other less long-lived titles including *Football Crazy*, *Quiz Mania*, and some pretty long-lived ones like *Spectacular Spider-Man Adventures* and *Action Man*.

One of our comics at the time was *Dream Street*, based on a CITV show, and this led to me being asked by the producer to join them at Pinewood. Who could say no to working there and rubbing shoulders with the likes of Pierce Brosnan and Russel Crowe (who incidentally almost ran me over on my bike, the @£∞•)? But Pinewood wasn't really my thing and after a couple of years I relocated to Spain and went freelance. I carried on a lot of work for Panini, scripting *Spectacular Spider-Man Adventures* for a while and *Action Man* along with other stuff such as *Commando*, and writing Hachette's *Ben 10* partworks.

Then one day I was approached by Campfire Graphic Novels, an Indian comic book publisher who asked me to script a book for them. I did. They didn't publish it but then Steve Jobs died and they asked me to do a book on him. So I did, I went out to Delhi and loved it. The book did well and won Best Graphic Novel and Best Writer at Comic Con India that year and then I wound up working for them, heading up the art team, who all work in-house. It was great. We came up with some pretty good books too, including Alan Cowsill's *World War One* and my own one on Gandhi.

I had been there close to two years when Alan O'Keefe from Panini Skyped me and asked if I would be interested in coming back to Panini. As it happened, I had barely survived a hellish summer, multiple attacks of food poisoning and was beginning to look a bit like Gandhi myself, owing to the fact that every meal was a bit like playing Russian Roulette. So I said yes, came back to the UK and found myself working on *Doctor Who Adventures* which we had just got from Immediate.

What other comics had you read as a child?

Apart from the Marvel stuff, I was a massive fan of *Action*. I loved characters such as tough as boots Dredger and Breed. To this day it's my favourite ever comic. I also loved *Roy of the Rovers* and got it every week along with *Action*.

Some obligatory clichéd questions: What is your favourite: Doctor, monster, televised Doctor Who story?

My favourite Doctor has to be the current one, because I've really enjoyed writing him. I normally say I love all of them as they're the same person, but if I'm honest, probably like everyone I go back to the ones I remember most from growing up. So I would say Jon Pertwee, because I loved the Master and the Silurians, Sea Devils and the Daemons. Those stories remain my faves to this day. Although I often like watching some of Hartnell's stories because he's such an amoral grump that he really makes me laugh, although being stuck in the TARDIS with him would have been a nightmare. As for my favourite monsters, the Master, the Sea Devils and of course the Daleks. In fact Dalek, the Christopher Eccleston story, is one of my favourite Dalek stories ever. It reintroduced them in such a great way and the fear that one Dalek created was masterful. I don't think that tension has ever been really replicated since. It was just perfect.

What is the average age of a DWA reader? Is there any evidence that adult Doctor Who fans buy the title?

The average age is around 8-9 although we do get a lot of older readers. I do get competition entries in from people in their twenties and forties which is great, because I always believed *Doctor Who* was a real family programme, which can appeal to all ages and should appeal to all ages. That's what we try and do with the editorial in *DWA*.

Do you think of DWA as a 'comic' or a 'magazine'?

Good question. I guess Titan's line of Doctor books are comics and ours has to be a magazine because it is a compendium of other stuff too. Of course, I'd love to expand the strip but we already have some excellent *Doctor Who* comics so I don't think that's likely to happen.

There are more Doctor Who publications on the news-stands than there used to be. Is it a crowded market do you think or about right?

I do think it's crowded. Of course it is. Ideally for me, there would be one magazine and it would be *DWA*. That's not being disrespectful to all the others, which I enjoy anyway, but I'm greedy and would like a monopoly on it. I'm sure the editors of the other books, mags and comics would all feel the same way. After all, you can never have too many readers.

Did the absence of Doctor Who on TV in 2016 cause you any problems in maintaining the reader's enthusiasm in the programme?

I think it does for a title like *DWA* more than it does for something like *DWM*. The vast majority of *DWM*'s readership are adults whereas *DWA* is aimed at a young audience and a young audience has a short memory and can be fickle too. I mean something like *Doctor Who* is evergreen. It will always have appeal but if it's not on TV then we won't be replenishing our young audience.

Now that the new Doctor Who has passed its first decade, what do you think the future holds for the show?

The beauty of *Doctor Who* is that it can be constantly reinvented and renewed. It's possibly the only show on TV that can really do that again and again. It is incredibly experimental, not only in actors and new Doctors but also in mood and story-telling. One season can be completely different from another. It is a show that can run and run forever because the basic idea is timelessly great. A guy in a box who can go anywhere in the universe, past present or future. It's got everything.

As someone with such a strong background in comics, I wondered what your view is of the glut of superhero moves that we're getting at the moment. Are there too many? And does the idea of 'shared universes' work with films?

I have to admit, a movie about the Avengers was something I had longed for all my life. But I think the Marvel characters are so amazing and well-crafted that they need a series more than a movie to get the best out of them. Especially when you have a cast of thousands. Then you just get spectacle but no real character development. Of course, that's just my own personal feelings on it, and when I've gone to see a movie I don't have expectations of, I've loved it. I loved Ant-Man. I loved Guardians and I loved Deadpool.

Finally, your brother Tim has written an autobiography – can we expect your own memoirs at any point?

Hahah! I think I would probably cause an international incident if I did that. Maybe one day I will do a kiss 'n' tell but I think if I did I would probably have to go into exile again. ▲

The *Doctor Who Adventures* website is at <http://www.dwamag.com/>



Review

THE LOST SERIES 1-3: ANGEL, PLANET AND MAGIC Reviewed by Allan Lear

BBC Audio adventures are heavily active at the moment, bringing out for fans' delectation a mixture of old favourites read in audio format by classic series actors (such as Matthew Waterhouse, Nicola Bryant and Terry Molloy) and brand-new adventures such as this, read by alumni of the regenerated series. The *Lost* series is not yet completed but the first three parts – *The Lost Angel*, *The Lost Planet* and *The Lost Magic* – were available for review at the time of publication.

Set in modern-day New York, *The Lost Angel* is appropriately read by American actor

Kerry Shale, who played Dr Renfrew in the Matt Smith-era episode *The Day of the Moon*. Shale is also involved with the voicing of *Thomas the Tank Engine*, and so is well-versed in the audio format.

This is an original story from the Twelfth Doctor's era and pits Capaldi's Doctor, as well as intrepid human amateurs Alex and Brandon Yow, against what many consider the most iconic threat of the new series: the Weeping Angels. The Angels are a creation of Stephen Moffat's and formidable opponents, being essentially invulnerable, with a range of high-supernatural powers and a manner of manifesting that lends itself to creepy, scary scenes of gradually encroaching threat. To these inherent attributes, writers George Mann and Cavan Scott have added the one thing that the Angels have so far lacked that arguably keeps them from the top rank of adversaries like the Daleks and the Cybermen: a motivation.



The Lost Angel tells the story of an up-and-coming photojournalist who stumbles over a series of mysterious disappearances connected to a property deal taking place in the

New York suburb of Rickman. Needless to say, these disappearances are far more than a series of romantic elopements or joining of circuses; there is sinister intent behind them. When a crazy Scotsman shows up at the homeless shelter waving a glowstick around, the stage is set for Doctor Twelve to intervene on behalf of humanity.

There are two essential things that any *Doctor Who* stories need to be a success: they need pace, and they need wit. Running at an hour in length, this adventure exceeds the duration of a TV episode and must therefore guard against flab or slack in the running time. Mann and Scott structure the story well to avoid this pitfall, using the encroaching fear the Angels generate to slow the pace without allowing the momentum to drain away. Their script also contains plenty of humour, with throwaway absurdities and the Doctor's lateral approach to familiar human situations used well to lighten the mixture while never undermining the threat at the heart of the story. Scott, in particular, is a well-established contributor to the Big Finish line of *Dr Who* audio adventures, and that experience clearly serves the team well here.

Employing an American actor for a story set in New York was an excellent choice, as Shale is able to embody multiple American characters while retaining a clear vocal identity for each of them, something which a British actor might struggle to do without resorting to stock American accents – one New Yorker, one Bostonian, one Texan, say. This adds immeasurably to the realism, and hence the immersion, of the tale. We know from

bitter experience of plenty of American films and TV series that many US actors struggle to tell the difference between a Scottish and an Irish dialect; Shale, however, evidently has a good ear, and his version of the Twelfth Doctor is consistent and convincing. While he does nothing so ruinously ambitious as to attempt an out-and-out impersonation of Capaldi, Mr Shale has observed his delivery well and you can really hear some of these lines coming from Number Twelve's mouth. That the dialogue matches the character so well is, of course, another compliment to the writing team also.

People who are not completely sold on the "wibbly-wobbly, timey-wimey" aspects of Moffat's version of *Doctor Who* may be somewhat perplexed by the story's twists and turns, involving as they do the Angels' habit of zapping their victims back in time when feeding on their choral energy. However, the script keeps matters light and never descends into dull-as-ditchwater pseudoscientific gobbledegook, and the patience of even a young audience is unlikely to be taxed too severely here.

In short, *The Lost Angel* is a fast and fun tale, produced by a fine conjunction of actor and writers. It's a pleasure to see such obvious skill has been exercised in putting it together, and I look forward to more collaborations from the Mann-Scott team-up. They reunite for part four of the series, *The Lost Flame*, which will be available from 5 July and which apparently will concern itself with the Sisterhood of Kahn, so one to watch out for there.

The Lost Planet follows on from its near-namesake and continues the adventures of the Twelfth Doctor and his temporary companions, Alex and Brandon Yow of New York City. The problem of having two American characters as leads is, of course, that you need to find more actors who can convincingly maintain the accent when you do the other instalments in their series.



If for that reason alone, Nicola Bryant is the obvious choice to tackle the second story of the Yows' adventures with the Doctor. Famous to *Who* lovers as Peripugilliam Brown,

the dynamic and confident assistant to the Fifth and Sixth Doctors, Bryant is already noted for the pitch-perfect American accent she delivered in her time onscreen with the series. She's also a firm fan favourite, being active on the convention circuit and continuing to bring Peri to life via Big Finish audio plays, and therefore an excellent choice to act as a bridge between fans of Classic and New *Who*.

Ms Bryant reads us a story of an unconventional invasion. Returned from their adventures with Weeping Angels in New York, the Doctor and Yows enter the TARDIS only to find blue flowers sprouting from it, some in the most inconvenient places. As the flourishing weeds grow like toadflax through all the ship's vital circuitry, the Doctor twigs that they must originate from only one place – a planet he parked in the TARDIS some centuries ago and subsequently allowed to slip his mind. The adventurers make their way to this indoor world, only to discover that just because a celestial body happens to have a roof over its head doesn't make it a safe place to be.

The Lost Planet is written by George Mann, a prolific author of novels including several BBC *Doctor Who* tie-in books featuring a range of different Doctors. This experience of characterising the Doctor has again stood Mann in good stead, and his grasp of the Twelfth Doctor's voice is superb. Other characters are strong and consistent – vital attributes, of course, in the setting of a narrated audio adventure – but it's the Doctor with whom we are familiar, and the words Mann puts in his mouth could easily

have been said by Capaldi himself. It's an excellent piece of mimicry and, combined with Bryant's good ear for character, it ensures the listener feels that the tale takes place well within the *Doctor Who* world.

Listened to in the wake of *The Lost Angel*, *Planet* forms an interesting counterpoint. It's not as punchy and all-action as its immediate predecessor, taking a slower pace and building threat through the mythology of the forgotten world; the inhabitants, an ent-like race of sentient tree-descended humanoids, have formed a cargo cult around the Doctor's last appearance on their planet, which is a lovely idea and produces the sort of striking imagery that really makes it possible to see the world that is being conjured up with words. Some may find the relative slowness of the pace a tad underwhelming, but Bryant injects plenty of urgency and vigour in the appropriate places to keep the heartrate up.

Not all of the world-building is absolutely perfect – there's some importance attached to the diet of the xyloid ent-people and its effects on the mammalian population, which struck me as peculiar since I can't think of a single reason why a tree and a mammal would be able to eat or digest the same foods or, indeed, why a tree would ingest anything other than water and sunlight in the first place, since such a ligneous creature would surely photosynthesise – but it's rich and colourful enough to keep you interested and the old trope of a religion being built around the protagonist's escapades makes far more sense when it's the Doctor moving entire worlds about willy-nilly rather than some small feat of quotidian heroism like standing up to a rogue sheriff.

The second act in an ongoing series, *The Lost Planet* does plenty to ensure that the listener will remain sufficiently intrigued by the progressing story arc to tune in again next time. It also gives long-term *Doctor Who* fans a rare opportunity to hear a well-established actor from the series doing something outside the ambit of her regular character, which can only add to our appreciation.

Magic is the lost substance in the third and, so far, last instalment of the series. Cavan Scott writes this one, before he and Mann team back up to write the fourth part. Ringing the changes once again, *The Lost Magic* is neither a modern-day city under siege tale nor an out-and-out science fiction escapade; it's that old favourite of the discerning *Who* fan, the historical.

The Lost Magic is set in Elizabethan England at the time of the Spanish Armada. Watching out for signs of Spanish treachery is Dr John Dee, Queen Elizabeth's court astrologer and spy in the courts of European royalty. The historical is a lovely opportunity to crowbar in nice bits of genuine trivia from the weird world of facts, and little titbits are tucked away throughout the story – like the genuine fact that Dr Dee signed all his coded messages '007', which is where Fleming got James Bond's codenumber from.

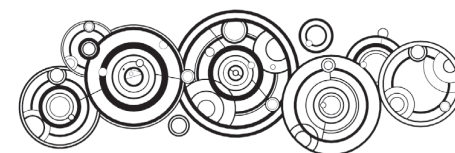
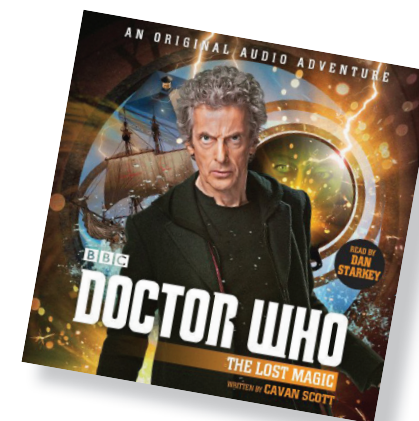
Real history is also pressed into service more directly as a key plot point. Late in life, Dee was rejuvenated in his faith in magic by the discovery of a mirror which, seemingly, enabled him to talk to an angel. This historical happenstance is a key element of the ongoing saga here, the clue that will drive us on to part four of the story, and for that reason Scott has chosen to omit the fact that this "magic mirror" was the work of a chancer who used to demand sex with Dee's wife in exchange for its use – through the voice of the "angel", naturally. Neither a pleasant nor a child-friendly story, in reality.

More to the point, the choice of televisual *Who* alumnus this time around is one Mr Dan Starkey, probably most famous as Strax, the comic Sontaran foil of the Pater Noster Gang, and also as one of the elves backing up Nick Frost's Big Daddy Chrimbo in *Last Christmas*. Starkey has an impressive vocal range and it is used to full effect here – late on in the episode, for plot reasons I won't whisper, he is called upon to perform, in quick succession, the voices of several characters previously seen in TV *Doctor Who*,

and he acquits himself admirably at what – when you hear it – you will agree must have sounded like a pretty gargantuan task when he first read the script.

With more incident and intrigue than the softer *The Lost Planet*, *Magic* will seem like a return to form for those who felt that the pace had dipped below acceptable speed for that second instalment – though it bears repeating that, at roughly an hour per episode, none of the stories really outstays its welcome or shows signs of flagging.

With three varied stories in the bank, each of them successful in its own right and varied enough from its kin to stand apart as an episode while also servicing the arc plot, the *Lost* series has been a pretty solid success for these initial forays into audio Capaldi. With Clare Higgins, of *Hellraiser* fame, set to read the next entry – suggesting that Sister Ohila, her onscreen *Doctor Who* character from the Sisterhood of Kahn – it seems that the series will be worth pursuing at least one more step. ▲





Matt Connolly

Feature **DIORAMIC DRAMAS** by Jez Strickley

If you grew up with the original cinematic releases of George Lucas' *Star Wars* trilogy between 1977 and 1983, you may well have spent your pocket money on the accompanying action figures, chunky spaceships and fantastic play sets which became a stock feature of British toy shops in the early 1980s. These wonderful diversions allowed you to re-enact your favourite moments from the saga or engineer alternative storylines, which might see Han Solo escape the carbonite-freezing chamber or Luke Skywalker defeat Darth Vader with both hands intact.

As much as I loved recreating dramatic lightsabre duels and X-Wing versus Tie Fighter dogfights, I really wanted to do the same in the context of *Doctor Who*, with console room and TARDIS, Doctor and companion, and a good selection of bug-eyed monsters to battle against. I'd enjoyed *The Five Doctors* with its medley of malcontents only a few short months after I watched *Return of the Jedi* at the cinema and been given an Imperial Scout Walker toy, so what about a Death Zone play set, complete with Rassilon's Tomb and Raston Warrior Robot?

If you think about it, most series in the 1980s had at least one adventure which could have leant itself to a play set theme, like the aforementioned Season Twenty anniversary special. Season Eighteen's *Full Circle* could have been another contender, not to mention Season Nineteen's *Earthshock*, Season Twenty-One's *Warriors of the Deep*, Season Twenty-Two's *Revelation of the Daleks* and Season Twenty-Three's Parts Nine to Twelve with hydroponics set and Vervoids running amok.

But it was not to be, at least not until the Cheshire-based company Dapol Models arrived on the scene in 1987 and took advantage of the newly-started McCoy era

to release a range of *Doctor Who* action figures. I still remember seeing the advert and poring over the details with a feeling of incredulity. Was it really true? Could I finally get a collection of figures depicting characters from my all-time favourite series? Of course, my doubts were not serious, but I was still a little disbelieving. When I made my first order I seem to remember purchasing one of the figures first and only aiming for the more expensive TARDIS (which could be dismantled and its walls used to complete the console room set) and console with battery-operated time rotor when I had saved up enough money. Along with the above, the Dapol range included the Seventh Doctor (complete with question-mark handle umbrella), Melanie Bush and a friction motor-powered K9. The then-latest monster, the Tetrap, was also a feature. Soon enough there was a variety of Daleks on offer (my favourite was the gold-and-white imperial Dalek from *Remembrance of the Daleks*), Davros (with a limited edition sporting an intact right hand, I presume produced in error), a Cyberman and an Ice Warrior. Ace and the Fourth Doctor also joined the range later on.

Between 1987 and 1991 I steadily built a collection of figures, plus TARDIS and console room. But somehow, despite Dapol's wonderful efforts, these collectibles arrived just a little too late for me to conjure up new fictions courtesy of a Dalek versus Ice Warrior stand-off, or a moralising exchange between McCoy's Doctor and the dastardly Davros. Instead these figures joined my *Doctor Who* merchandise collection, and were carefully put on display amongst boxes of DWM issues and VHS tapes, cases of books and assorted pewter figures. Had I been a touch less obsessive in my collecting, or just a bit more imaginative, I might have tried using these models to create storyboard tableaux of new adventures, fan-fiction dioramas which I could have recorded with a well-taken series of photographs.

Alas, I did not, and it wasn't until I discovered Malcolm Orr's wonderful *Time Tales* series – some twenty-odd years after unpacking

my first Dapol action figures – that I realised what was possible.

Possible, that is, when you have liberal helpings of artistry, ability and creativity. Which Malcolm Orr has in spades.

Available to read at *Doctor Who* Online, Malcolm Orr's stories are well worth taking the time to enjoy. His tableaux of *Doctor Who* action figures, better known as dioramas, depict well-crafted adventures where plotting takes precedence over props. I learnt this first hand when I had the pleasure of interviewing Malcolm for the Canadian *Doctor Who* fan magazine *Whotopia* back in 2009. In short, if an action figure representing a particular character isn't to hand, Malcolm customises it. Period. And it's far from a quick-fix pursuit, with a typical story taking around a month to complete. Malcolm's *Time Tales* deliver a varied and well thought out collection of stories, including outings for the Tenth Doctor and the Fourth Doctor, and at least one brand new companion who may look familiar. It's inventive and original storytelling and, in my view, makes for a wonderful added layer to the growing body of fan fiction populating forums and fanzines.

Three decades ago, my own meagre model-making plans – sadly unused – were entirely confined to a cast composed of a solitary Tetrap menacing the Seventh Doctor in the TARDIS console room. It was fun to imagine what I could manufacture out of this grouping, outside of a sequel of sorts to *Time and the Rani*, and for all too brief a time I pondered building full-scale dioramas and photographing my efforts for posterity. In the end my cast gradually expanded, too, lending me a mix of characters which would have been more than up to the challenge of pulling off a multi-Doctor story, with a brace of companions and an assortment of monsters for good measure. But, for no reason that comes to mind, I never got around to doing it. So it is with a pang of regret that I must confess my pondering remained just that. And when I look at the fantastic stories of Malcolm Orr I see what can indeed happen when a motivated and skilled artist, with a creative writing talent, sets about producing such delightful works of fiction. So perhaps it's long past time I took out my Dapol action figures and got to work on a diorama of my own. Watch this space! ▲



Malcolm Orr's Time Tales can be viewed online at <http://www.drwho-online.co.uk/TimeTales/>

Interview PAUL BERRY Interview by Grant Bull

Paul Berry is the author of Doctor Who Memorabilia, a review of which is featured in this very issue. CM caught up with him to ask the burning questions...

Firstly, who was your Doctor and your first series?

My first Doctor was Tom Baker. I have vague memories of *Androids of Tara* and *Power of Kroll* but started watching regularly from *Destiny of the Daleks*. I remember *The Horns of Nimon* being scary when I was five. I couldn't believe it when years later people started saying it was rubbish. Just goes to show that quote about the memory cheating does have some truth to it. I didn't become what I'd call a fan though 'till about *The Trial of a Timelord* when I became obsessed with the programme. Up 'till then it had to compete with things like *Star Wars* and *Masters of the Universe* for my attention. Ironically just as my enthusiasm was taking off everybody else seemed to be getting disillusioned with it.

How did you decide on what elements of such a huge array of Who collectables to focus on?

It was a case of narrowing it down to the core items and the rarer and more interesting ones. It isn't intended to be a complete guide like the *Transcendental Toybox*. The idea was to tell the story of the collectables and be more of a visual treat rather than just a list or price guide. The book mainly focuses on the 60s, 70s and 80s with some merchandise from the 90s and 2000s. The new post-2005 series isn't included at all for a couple of reasons. Firstly, there has been a ridiculous amount of product and while there has been some good stuff a lot of it is still very common and I don't think would carry a huge amount of nostalgia for the target audience of the book. The second reason – and this may prove a bit controversial with some of your readers – is that I no longer watch the

new series, I boycotted it halfway through Matt Smith's tenure, although I have checked in occasionally to see if things have improved and usually tune straight out again when I find they haven't. I sold off nearly all my new series *Who* collectables some years ago so sourcing a lot of them would have proved tricky. Rather than just giving the new series lip service I decided to keep the focus on *Who* from 1963-2004. That leaves us with an option for a second volume on the new series if this one's popular, although whether I'm the person to write it who knows.

What is your favourite piece of memorabilia?

I suppose for sheer nostalgia the Target books are probably number one for me. I could look at that cover art all day. A close second would be the Character Options range of action figures. I wanted *Doctor Who* figures as a kid and although Dapol was around I was a bit disappointed with them. The Character Options classics are the *Who* figures I dreamed of when I was younger. Sadly it looks like they've stopped doing the older stuff now but they had a good run.

Do you think Doctor Who products have improved with the new series?

In some ways, yes. There's a slickness to them. The figures and models have a lot more attention to detail than in the old days, but I think a lot of the new merchandise lacks individuality. There seems to be a lot of rubbish out there with no charm at all, but maybe that's just an age thing. When the new series came back I had the foolish idea I was going to collect everything, like many of us did in the old days. Thank god I gave up, because I would be drowning in it now.

I'm a sucker for the video cover art, which period of these releases do you prefer?

I must admit my favourites are the early ones with photo montages like *Pyramids of Mars*, *Day of the Daleks* etc. I think opinion at the time was that they weren't very good which is why they brought the artwork ones in. I

think though they have aged well and in a way it's a pity they didn't continue them.

Action figures, open or unopen?

Both. I've got most of the Character classics both loose and sealed. I normally err towards keeping action figures packaged, but couldn't resist the idea of having the *Who* figures on display. I don't mind paying full price for packaged figures but usually hold off for a sale on ones to open.

Were there collectables you wish you had included? If so which ones?

I got most items in I intended, obviously with more pages to play with I would have been able to include a lot more. It would have been nice to get a few more 1960s products in but understandably they are hard to find. All the images are original taken or sourced by myself so it wasn't an option to just pull them off the internet.

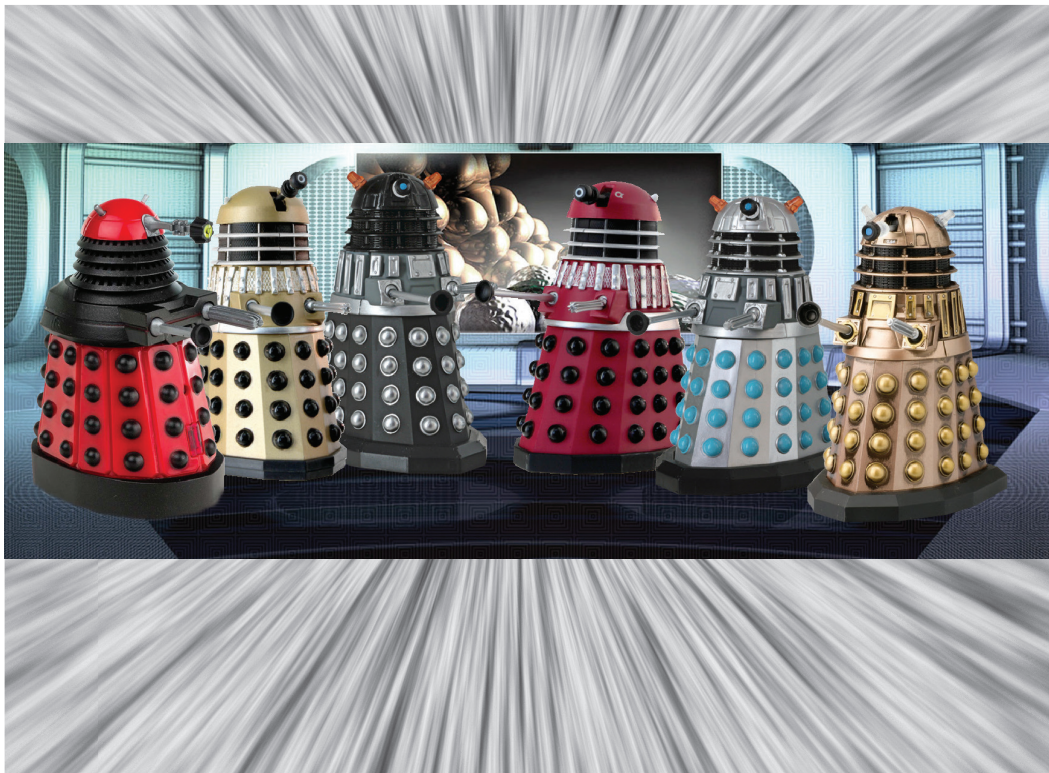
Why do you think Doctor Who has stayed so popular over the years?

I think probably its adaptability and having such good ideas and creativity. It's a fantastic format, and there's no reason it can't run and run and be revived time and time again. The new series though has played it too safe for too long now and I think it needs a drastic re-imagining for it to have a long term future. Whether Chris Chibnall will have the guts to do that remains to be seen.

Finally, and some would say most importantly: what is your favourite cheese!?

Sorry, not really a cheese lover, although I don't mind cheese-flavoured crisps. ▲

Thank you very much to Paul for chatting to us and do check out his book via <https://www.amberley-books.com/doctor-who-memorabilia.html>



Fiction A MIDSUMMER'S TALE by Ian Peake

It is the Year of Our Lord 1592. Four years have passed since the Spanish Armada sank off our shores, yet as a nation England is still not at peace. Daily there are rumours of another Armada being built. Most are false, but occasionally there is a rumour too true to be ignored.

Word had reached London that the Vatican, together with some Italian States, was building a large fleet of ships in Venice, ready to invade. Naturally Walsingham wanted to know if there was any truth in these rumours, so he sent me – William Shakespeare – to investigate.

The rumour was a curious mixture of both fact and fiction. True, the Venetians, under the instructions of Pope Clement and his Italian allies, were building a fleet of ships. But they were more interested in the New World, rather than England's green and pleasant land. Relieved, I spent that Midsummer's Day of 1592 walking the streets of Venice. The sun was high and its heat fierce and I soon found myself in need of some wine to quench my thirst.

Fortune lead me to The Two Noble Kinsmen: a tavern off St Mark's Square. As I entered I was surprised to see the place so empty, given the hour. Apart from a few fishermen who were actively arguing over something, the only other inhabitants were two men who by the looks and dress of one of them were English. Eager for company and conversation, I approached.

My instincts proved to be right. The younger of the two, a traveller whom I later learnt was called Steven, was saying, "Doctor, you've done the right thing, don't worry. Look let's enjoy our drink and explore Venice. True, we

might be a little early, but that's no reason why we can't enjoy ourselves."

The Physician, an elderly gentleman with thinning white hair and wearing some sort of cloak despite the heat outside, kept staring at the wall and saying, "But how can we be sure? How can we my boy, when I don't know if I have done the right thing or not?" Not liking to see a fellow Englishman in distress, I approached and asked if I could help in any way.

"The Doctor keeps going on about what he recently did in Athens," Steven explained as he took me into his confidence. "I keep telling him that anyone with a heart would have done exactly the same thing."

"And I keep telling this young man," the Physician retorted, "that though we are lucky to travel as much as we do, we must consider the wider consequences. We dare not, must not meddle with things and situations we do not fully understand. Especially in Athens, where things are at such a delicate stage where the Greeks and Rome are concerned."

My ears pricked up at this point. I knew the Venetians still objected to the Ottoman occupation of Athens, but Rome as well? This was news to me and news that Walsingham would gladly pay more to hear. "Why not let me decide?" I ventured. "I am after all neutral and a fellow traveller."

"Why not, Doctor?" Steven suggested. The Physician hesitated for a moment as he thought. "I can see no possible harm that will come of it, and besides, it would settle the matter one way or another. If you are happy to judge, Mr ..."

"No names" I replied. "That way there can be no question of my loyalties. The less you know about me, the easier it will be for me to decide." The Physician hesitated for a second before agreeing. "Fair enough, young man. If that is your price for settling this affair, so be it."

I was glad, for my desire for anonymity had nothing to do with loyalty or the travellers urging me for the sake of a mutual friend to back their cause, but more for self-preservation. If the information was as precious as I thought, there would be a riotous commotion when it was discovered that the English knew all about the planned alliance between Athens and Rome. If the Greeks, or worse, the Pope, ever discovered that I, William Shakespeare, had given away their secret, my life expectancy would be less than Richard III's on the Bosworth field. Far better if these fools take the full brunt of any punishment that was dealt out by the authorities.

I realised to my horror, that in my meditations I had missed something of what Steven had been saying. I fancied I heard him saying something about 1700 years, but knew I was mistaken. "Pardon" I murmured.

The Physician rapidly took up the tale and clarified the situation for me. "My friend was saying that we arrived in Athens over 1700 hours ago."

"A fair time," I replied, "and time enough to put this problem to one side." My reassurance calmed the aging Physician as I saw him visibly relax and, after re-filling Steven's goblet, let him continue the talking.

"True, when we arrived those hours ago we were weary and needed some rest. But within a few hours we found ourselves up to our necks in a very difficult situation and a few more hours after that, we had to make another rather hasty exit."

"Just how difficult and hasty?" I asked. Time had shown me that life in Elizabethan England was anything but easy, but most difficulties could be resolved over a flagon or two of wine. Unless of course politics was involved, in which case you almost certainly need a fast horse in every town and a fast boat in every port at your disposal.

"Difficult enough," Steven replied. "Creatures from another –"

"Continent," the Physician interjected. "You have heard the stories of things unseen in far distant lands, Mr..."

"Quite so," I added, "but pray, Steven, continue."

"Yes, creatures from another continent I can live with, especially when they are troublesome. But the one thing I don't like having and getting into trouble with is Monks and those in authority."

Very wise, I thought to myself. Even though it was now over fifty years since the Monasteries had been dissolved, many people like Steven here were still afraid of falling foul of members of the clergy. I felt I needed to know more, so re-filling Steven's glass I asked if the person in question was a member of the clergy or the nobility.

"Nobility," he replied.

I pushed a little more: "Who exactly?"

"Duke Theseus of Athens, no less."

"Difficult."

"And delicate. But I keep telling the Doctor we did the right thing."

This Physician, this Doctor, was indeed a strange man, who by the looks of things needed to spend less time arguing with his companion and more time healing himself. As I write, I can still remember feeling the heat of the Venetian sun through the walls of the hostelry where we sat, yet despite the warmth he still wore his thick cloak. More alarming was that even though myself and Steven were sweating profusely and drinking as much wine as our goblets could hold, not one bead of perspiration appeared on this Doctor's brow and not one goblet of wine seemed to pass his lips. So far, apart from the odd word, he had said nothing and by the look of things was unlikely to say much for a while. So I looked to Steven for more information. "What exactly did you do to annoy him so?"

"Well, this Duke Theseus..."

"Of Athens."

"Yes, of Athens. Well, this Duke insisted that a local girl, Hermia, marry someone she did not love."

"What's wrong with that?" I queried. It is a well-known fact that virtually all the women in Elizabethan England are husbands to the men they do not love and mistresses to the ones they do.

"Because it's wrong," said a slightly annoyed Steven. "You should marry not for what you or your family will get out of it, but for love and the desire to be together."

I decided to try a different mode of enquiry. "What did her father say?"

"He agreed. As far as he was concerned love didn't come into it. His daughter should marry Demetrius whether she liked it or not."

"Demetrius" I enquired.

"Yes, Demetrius. Both the father and the Duke felt it was in everyone's best interests if Hermia married this Demetrius who she clearly did not love."

"A match more of politics, than love."

"And that," said the Physician, "is the problem. Should I have let this marriage take place?"

"Between this Hermia of Athens and Demetrius of Rome?" I stated, as I wanted to be in no doubt about this marriage alliance between Athens and Rome. The Physician, though irritable, confirmed this with a brief "Quite so. Must you repeat everything we say?" and on that note, fell silent.

Steven continued. "Well, this Hermia was in love with a local boy called Lysander. In fact, she was so in love with him that when her father gave her an ultimatum – to marry

Demetrius or become a nun – she was more than happy to take holy orders."

"It was at that point that I allowed my companion's heart to over-rule my head."

"Quite so, Doctor." Pausing for breath and draining his goblet, Steven told me that originally during their travels there had been three of them: himself, the Physician and a young maiden called Vicki. However, during their stay in Troy, this Vicki had met and fallen in love with a member of the local nobility. If there was any suggestion that it was a political marriage, rather than a marriage of love, there was, Steven pointed out, no way that the Physician would have approved of the marriage. He wouldn't wish a loveless marriage upon his own granddaughter, so why should Hermia suffer the same fate? So, the two of them hatched a cunning plan.

"A plot?" asked I.

"A lover's plot," confirmed Steven, "worthy of Marlowe himself." I winced inwardly as I heard the name of my greatest rival, but said nothing least I should give myself away. "The plan", Steven said, "was simple. Pretending to be travelling players, both the Doctor and I approached Hermia and Lysander and suggested –"

"Persuaded might be a better word, my boy."

"Okay, Doctor, persuaded them to run away together. There was a wood close by where they could meet and elope. With a bit of money in their pocket they could live happily together for a few years. Then Hermia could come back to Athens, be reunited with their father and they could all live happily ever after."

"Did they agree?" asked I.

"Like a shot," came the answer. "Indeed, out of all the people I've seen in all the places I've visited, I've never seen such a couple so in love. Their love was like..."

"The flames of Venus."

"When the sun sets after a storm beaten day, quite so." I must admit that I did not know what Steven was talking about; however, I let the phrase go, refilled our goblets and let him continue.

"Both said yes, even before we had finished telling them our proposal. So, we arranged that all of us would meet up in the forest, where we would help them on their way."

"What about this Demetrius?"

"Naturally he would not be happy, so we decided it best not to tell him."

"Let sleeping tempests lie."

"Quite so. Besides, it was clear when you looked into Demetrius' eyes that he did not really love Hermia. He was marrying her not because he loved her, but because his family and this Duke Theseus wanted him to. It was obvious he loved another."

"Another?"

"Another."

"The plot thickens," said I.

Steven continued: "The problem was, he did not know it. It was one of those buried loves, those hidden desires that when you admit it for the very first time not only feels right, but you realise you felt this way all along and had been too afraid to admit it."

"Fear, like love, makes fools of us all" said I. The Physician agreed, saying that he had seen the same thing over and over again in all his travels. His desire to remove this ridiculous fear of Demetrius and let him love another who loved him as much as he loved her was another reason why he had let himself become involved in this ridiculous scheme. I nodded in agreement, but was still unsure about two things: the identity of the other girl involved, and why the Duke should

object to the marriage. Thankfully, Steven saw my confusion and took up the tale.

"Helena was the name of the other girl. You could tell by the way she looked at Demetrius, the way she flicked her hair and lowered her voice every time she said or heard his name, that this was a girl deeply in love. And, by the way Demetrius was fighting his inner demons, that he was in love with her. One hour spending as much time as possible with her, the next pushing her away with cruel insults. It was there for all to see, but power and politics got in the way.

I could tell by the tones of Steven's voice that he did not like politicians and those in authority. I secretly agreed with what he was saying – as I would rather be in Stratford writing than here in Venice being a spy. Life though had taught me to keep these thoughts to myself. Indeed, those brave or stupid enough to express such views out loud had often dined at a local tavern in the evening, spent the night in the tower and been breakfast for the birds in the morning. Maybe, I wondered, their dislike of politicians and those with power over them the real reason why my drinking companions travelled as much as they did. In the silence that followed I felt obliged to say something safe, as you never know who may be listening. So, I asked why Demetrius couldn't marry this Helena.

"Because her family was not as powerful or as influential as Hermia's" came the honest, brutal reply. "Yes, Helena's family had money and property, but Hermia's brother was a senator. Not a good one I hear, but a Senator none the less. I had heard it said that in time Helena's brother would become a Senator and a good one at that, but like all politicians, Duke Theseus could not wait. Putting short-term gain over long-term stability."

"I take that if Duke Theseus was ever to find out about your plan to help Hermia marry Lysander and Demetrius marry Helena he would not be happy."

"Quite so."

"It could ruin a carefully worked out political alliance."

"Doubtlessly so."

"It would be good then if he did not find out."

"That's the problem: he did find out."

"A most unfortunate turn of events," added the Physician.

"But how?" I asked. For the life of me I could not think how their well-thought-out plan with honourable, though misguided, intentions might have gone amiss.

"Hermia told Helena."

"Oh."

"Yes oh. You would have thought that Hermia would have kept her elopement secret. But no, she had to tell Helena." Steven, I could tell, was getting angry and in a way I could not blame him. Many a spy had been caught due to his wife's gossiping amongst her friends. Pausing to take a long drink from his goblet, both to quench his thirst and re-fuel his anger, Steven continued: "And what does Helena do? To prove how much she loves Demetrius, she goes and tells him. And Demetrius in turn goes and tells the Duke all about it, to prove that he is worthy of Hermia's hand in marriage."

"A most regrettable fact," stated the Physician.

"Quite so," I agreed. Fate had taught me that the best way to calm down a man consumed by both wine and anger is to agree with him. This seemed to do the trick, as even though the situation was about to get worse in Athens, Steven's manner improved as he continued:

"As you can imagine, the Duke was not entirely happy when he heard that it was the two of us who had suggested the elopement and put all his carefully-laid plans in jeopardy.

As quick as Hamlet's ghost he had ordered his soldiers to kill us."

"Difficult," said I. I was tempted to ask if the two of them had thought of running away and leave the four lovers to their fate, but decided against it. Sword fight follows anger as quickly as Anthony had followed Cleopatra. Thankfully, this satisfied Steven, and he told me what happened next.

"Naturally we couldn't leave the four lovers and let them await the punishment of the authorities. Having got them into this situation, it would be totally wrong to abandon them to their fate. Thankfully the TARDIS..."

"TARDIS?" quizzed I.

"Our means of transport," said the Physician, "It's a carriage we use to get from place to place. TARDIS is the name the two of us have given to it."

I understood at once. During my recent boat trip to Venice I had sailed on the ship "Merry Wives of Windsor." The voyage was anything but merry. I noted with relief that Steven was now a lot calmer and took the opportunity to order another bottle of wine. Due to the heat, we had already consumed two flagons, whilst the Physician was still on his first goblet. Having re-filled our glasses, I let Steven continue.

"Thankfully our carriage, the TARDIS, was in the same wood as the four lovers were heading, so it should have been easy to get everything sorted out. But then the Duke interfered again. Not content with sending his soldiers out in the streets to kill us, he sent them into the woods after us. A fact made even worse by the way he sent them in disguise."

As Steven re-freshened both his glass and mine I found myself increasing interested in their story and less so in the political alliance. "How so?" enquired I.

"By dressing them up as travelling players. Oh, he was clever that Duke. Because of the forthcoming marriage he had decided to put on a play for both the guests and locals. What's a few more players? So, he got some of his best soldiers to put on actor's clothes and walk around the market place. There he puts on a bit of a performance as he pretends to hire them and then sends them, daggers and all, into the woods to rehearse their Winter's Tale and eliminate us at the same time."

"A most unfortunate development," said I.

"If I had known that this unexpected course of events would have taken place, I would have never," said the Physician, "never allowed myself to be persuaded to get involved."

"But it worked out alright." Steven countered. "True, the original plan was that Hermia and Lysander would originally meet in the woods and quietly elope. And now we had to do this, whilst at the same time dealing with the soldiers and their acting clothes and real-life daggers. As well as the presence of Demetrius and Helena...but the Doctor came up with the most ingenious solution."

"How so?" asked I.

"You will have heard, young man, that there are certain flowers, certain herbs that when added to a drink make a person fall asleep." I nodded as the Physician continued. "Over the course of my travels I have encountered such a flower and had kept a sample in my carriage, where in safety I was able to make a drink that contained the juice of that flower."

"A sort of magic juice?" said I.

"Quite so. Once drunk it sends the person into a deep sleep and makes them see the world with new eyes on awakening. Indeed, it has been said that once you have drunk the juice of this flower, it has been known for people to fall in love with the first thing they see."

"A drink worthy of Venus herself."

"Quite so."

"The problem," said Steven draining his goblet and refilling both mine and his, "was the Duke's soldiers. By all accounts they were not happy at the thought of going into the woods at night, partly because they were missing the pre-wedding celebrations and having heard stories about beings that lived there."

"Pure superstition," muttered the Physician, who at last finished his goblet and indicated that the soldiers like Steven and myself had drunk copious amounts of wine before venturing into the woods. I could not disagree. The two of us were now on our fourth bottle, but any thoughts of leaving and tasting the Venetian air were far from my mind as I was eager to know what happen next. Steven enlighten me.

"Luckily for us, one of the soldiers had indulged a bit too much and upon entering the wood fell fast asleep. I was able to liberate his clothes and, pretending to be one of the inhabitants of the wood, approached both Demetrius and Helena separately, offering hospitality, for it was a warm night and saying there was a drink waiting for them in a nearby clearing. The idea being they would drink, fall asleep and then in love."

"All's well that ends well," I said. An apt saying that I hoped I would remember for another time. The slightly shaking heads told me that this was not the case.

"Whilst Demetrius was approaching the glade, he heard the soldiers approaching. Knowing how drunk the soldiers were, he hid in case it was a case of daggers first, questions later. Whilst he hid Lysander approached the glade from the other direction. I don't know why, maybe it was nerves, maybe the heat, but upon seeing the two goblets he assumed that either I or Hermia had laid them out for the two of them. Drank one and promptly fell asleep."

"Not good."

"And complicated further when Helena entered the glade. Upon seeing Lysander laying on the ground and unsure if he was asleep or dead, she tried to wake him up. Lysander wakes up, notices for the first time how wonderful Helena is, falls madly in love with her and asks if he can marry her. She runs away with him giving chase.

"They disappear and then a few minutes later Demetrius reappears having hidden well enough for the soldiers to have passed him by. He sees the other goblet, picks it up, has a drink and falls promptly asleep. Shortly afterward Helena, having lost Lysander in the woods, stumbles back into the glade and falls over a sleeping Demetrius. He wakes up, realises how beautiful she is, falls in love and asks her to marry him. Yet again she runs away with this time Demetrius giving chase.

"So," said I, just to be clear, "both Lysander and Demetrius, instead of falling in love with their hearts' desires, were now both in love with Helena and pursuing her at the same time."

"Quite so." said the Physician.

"A plot of comedy, worthy of a play," I laughed seeing the joke and hoping that I hadn't given myself away.

"Possibly," grunted the Physician. I could see that he did not agree, neither did Steven. So, I refilled both our goblets and let him continue.

"A Puck of a mess, was how one of my former colleagues in the fleet would have called it. Not only did we have to make these star-crossed lovers un-love and then fall in love again with the right person, but we also had to deal with the Duke's soldiers, who had caused this confusion at the same time. We were due a bit of luck and thank heavens we got it."

"How so?" enquired I.

"The soldier who had fallen asleep due to having too much wine woke up. Due to

the fact that I was wearing his original set of clothes, and not wanting to walk around naked, he put on the first set of clothes he could find. It was just his misfortune and our good fortune that the clothes were those of a donkey costume which the soldiers had brought along as part of their disguise. And then someone crept up behind him and pushed the head of the donkey on top of him."

I wondered who it was and as I looked at the Physician his face broke into a slight grin. I was tempted to find out, but instead he raised his forefinger to his mouth and, chuckling privately to himself, muttered, "Remarkable, quite remarkable."

"Ingenious," was how Steven described it. "Unable to see properly due to his attempts to remove the head, he stumbled around the wood and somehow ended up meeting his fellow soldiers. You can imagine how they reacted. They were nervous enough about coming into the woods in the first place. Upon seeing a donkey coming towards them they turned and ran. And then – I don't know – a fairy or something ensured that this poor soldier tripped and in a moment removed the donkey's head that had inconvenienced him so. Relieved, he ran after his colleagues to explain all and in less time than it takes for a merchant of Venice to complete a transaction the soldiers had all disappeared."

"A fairy," I asked, looking at the Physician, "or someone else?"

"Who knows, dear boy, who knows?" he said, chuckling at some private joke, before quickly changing the subject by remarking that we were now on our fifth bottle of wine and it was time they were on their way. I refilled Steven's glass and encouraged him to continue as I was keen to find out what had happened to Lysander and Hermia.

"By this time things had got a little bit out of hand. All four of them had met up and both Lysander and Demetrius were arguing fervently over who loved Helena the most. We knew we had to act quickly, as measure

for measure they were both worked up and likely to start duelling any second. Thankfully, none of them knew that the soldiers had all left and during our recent visit to Troy I acquired a shield, sword and complete set of armour. Putting this on, I made enough noise for six men. Before you could say "Timon of Athens" they had all disappeared in four different directions."

"It was quite amusing," added the Physician. "In many ways, you could say it was a real comedy of errors."

"And whilst I made the noise, the Doctor here appeared to each one of them in turn and offer them a hiding place and another drink of our magic juice. Before long, all four of them were fast asleep and in the glade for safekeeping."

The evening sun was already starting to cast shadows in the inn, yet the way Steven had finished his last sentence made me think there was one more twist to the tale. Why put all four together, instead of keeping the two couples apart to prevent the same mistake happening again? I was about to ask, when it seemed that my young friend had read my thoughts and answered the question for me.

"By now the dawn had started to break. Duke Theseus, upon hearing how his soldiers had failed the night before, arranged an early morning hunt into the forest. Though the only wild animals he was hunting were us. Before we had time to separate the two couples we could hear the Duke and his horses approaching. Having made sure that Hermia was lying next to Lysander and Demetrius next to Helena we made a hasty retreat and just in time. The noise had also woken up the young lovebirds and we didn't want them falling in love with us, rather than their hearts' true desires."

"And then?" asked I. Raising my hand to order another bottle of wine, for this was a story I had to know the ending to, and a good wine is always essential to a good tale.

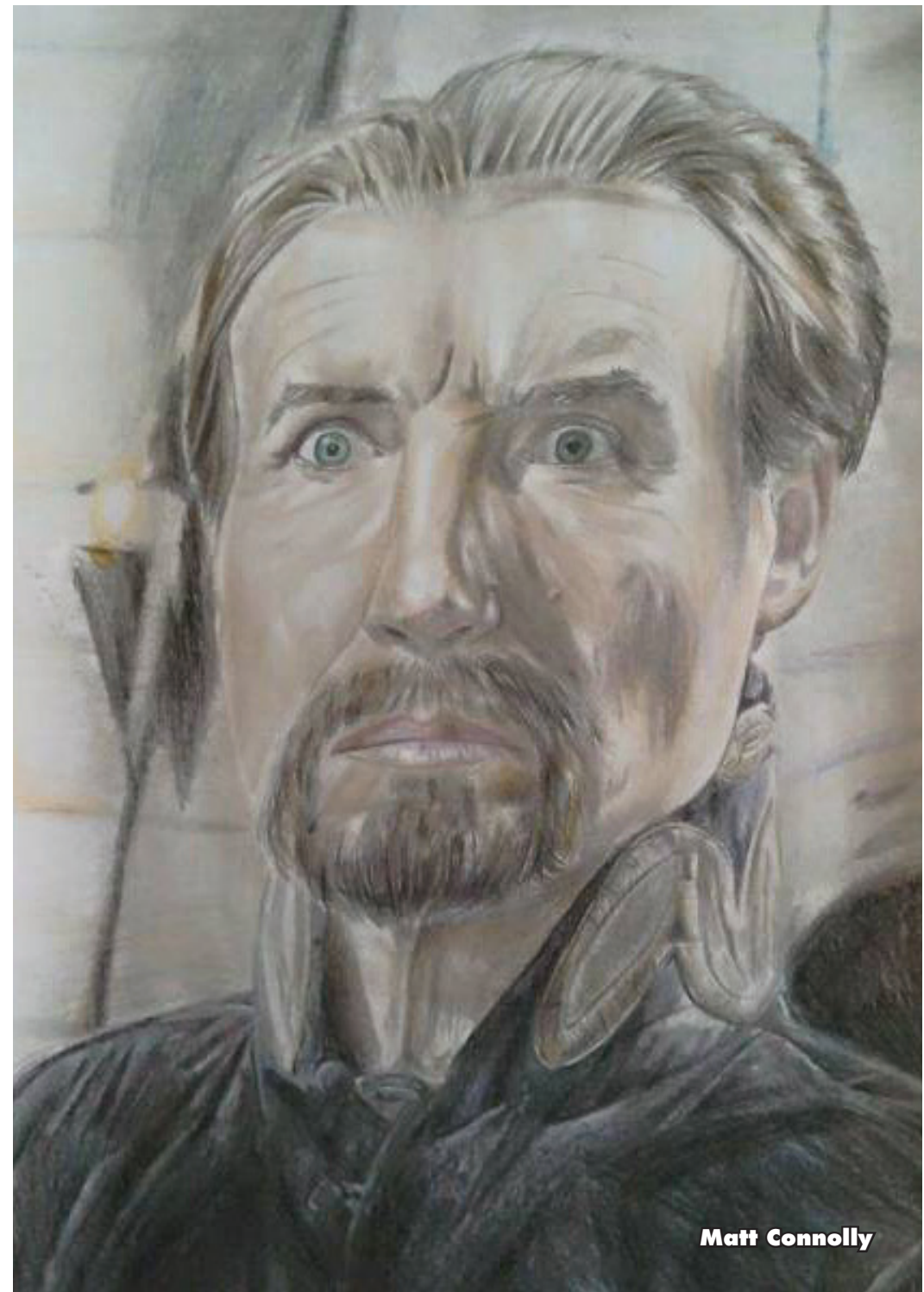
However, before the innkeeper could see me, the Physician told me in no uncertain terms to put down my hand as the day was nearly over and it was time they were on their way. I was disappointed and like all good doctors, the Physician noticed the signs. "If you must know young man, when the couples awoke Demetrius discovered what we knew all along, that he loved Helena. He fact he was now so taken with her he asked the Duke if he could marry her instead of Hermia; a request he granted."

"And that is why," said Steven, "I say we did the right thing. Because the Duke allowed Demetrius to marry Helena, Hermia was able to marry Lysander and love conquered all. Believe me, I've seen the blood that can be shed when alliances are made on bitterness and jealousy."

"And I, young man, have seen the consequences of the careful political alliances going astray. Meddling in affairs we don't fully understand could have grave consequences. Not just for the present time, but for the future. Who knows what harm our actions might have caused that day."

I felt that unless I acted quickly, the situation could turn nasty, and the Venetians did not take kindly to foreigners fighting. Besides, in my heart I felt I had to agree with Steven. True, the alliance might not have been the one both sides had wanted, but a marriage had taken place between two important families in Rome and Athens. The political union could still take place and that was enough, I reassured both of them, enough to keep Pope Clement happy.

The Physician accepted my judgement and the two of us helped a slightly intoxicated Steven stand up and carry him to a blue box that was parked a few streets away. As the box, like fairies, disappeared into the night I kept asking myself: "was it true, all that I had heard and seen? Or had it all been a Midsummer's Night Dream?" ▲



Matt Connolly

Review

WARLORD GAMES DOCTOR WHO RANGE

Review by Grant Bull

I remember inheriting a box of lead miniatures as a kid, some painted, others not. Either way I spent hours looking at this assortment of metal beings. They weren't an army, they were a random selection of creatures from different times and different spaces; there were goblins, orcs and elves and then there was aliens with extra arms and off-worldly army men clad in heavy armour. I knew that this box was going to lead me into another world...

The Games Workshop store in Croydon and then my local in Sutton became weekend homes. From here I purchased primers, paints and brushes and set to work painting the unpainted figures in my box. A hobby developed into an obsession and I ploughed money and time into a Tyrannid army. Every spare moment was spent with a paintbrush or a dice in my hand and it was brilliant.

When Warlord Games acquired the licence to make *Doctor Who* miniatures I was intrigued from the off. A company with a sound reputation for military figures of a high standard; we were in safe hands. Indeed these models are of the same standard: each are well-designed and cast with fine detail.

Of the sets released so far we have a Tenth and Twelfth Doctor and Companions set, consisting of Ten, Rose, Donna and Wilf and Twelve, Clara, Strax, Jenny and Madame Vastra respectively. Then there are the enemies of the Doctor, of which there are Judoon, Zygons and the Silence. These feel like a good choice, representing each of the Tenth and Twelfth Doctors' eras as well as the Classic Series with the Zygons. I must say I was pleased to see the addition of Wilf in the Tenth Doctor set – Bernard Cribbens deserves to be immortalised in lead! I also hope this is a sign of things to come in terms

of a variety of characters and not just running with the main crowd.

I know what you're thinking, that's all nice for those that like to paint and display pieces but where's the gaming element? Well it's all neatly contained in *Exterminate!* Within its box you will find two armies: Daleks and Cybermen and some Cybermats. There is a selection of cards, tokens and die and a gaming board to get your battles going on.

The game must be praised for its entry level. It's straightforward enough to introduce on a games night to anyone, even non-gamers. The backstory is a battle across the galaxy for the elements to replicate a legendary ultimate weapon which the current Dalek Emperor has his eye-stalk on. Acquiring it isn't going to be easy though. The gamebook provides a number of scenarios which set up the battles in different and engaging ways.

Back to the miniatures mentioned earlier. They are used in the advanced version of the game under the title *Adventures*. This expands upon the basic game and adds longevity to the product and your gaming sessions. Overall, both modes are great fun and highly entertaining. Credit must be given to the Games Designers, Wayne P. Bolland and Ricard Fortun, and the rest of the team behind its development. Fine job, people.

The potential is there to build and build on this game both for Warlord Games and for the gamers out there. I'm thinking of the different scenarios we can dream up and the scenery and stages we can build for our battles. Exciting potential. The *Who* gaming range is indeed in safe hands; long may it continue.

Finally a mention must be made for the excellent customer service Warlord provide too. I was regularly updated on the progress of my order even though it was complementary. It was delivered in excellent time and packed extremely well. Brilliant service. Go buy...

<http://store.warlordgames.com> ▲

Review

WHODUNNIT?

Jon Pertwee's classic panel show remembered.

by Ian Wheeler

I was recently watching Jon Pertwee's *Mythmakers* interview on the recent compilation of interviews from his era, and presenter Nick Briggs asked Jon about his participation in the 1970s ITV show *Whodunnit?* I'm just a little bit too young to remember watching *Whodunnit?* (although I did watch the similarly-themed *Cluedo* series a few years later) so it felt like a good idea to catch up with it now. A friend had shown me a few episodes on a rosey VHS copy a few years back but thankfully five seasons are now available on DVD, with the sixth due for release in October. I think you'd call *Whodunnit?* a panel show or quiz show rather than a game show and it is a very intelligent and watchable programme.

The pilot of *Whodunnit?* (1972) was presented by Shaw Taylor, well-known for fronting the crime bulletin *Police 5*. The panelists in the pilot episode included *Doctor Who* guest star Frank Windsor (of *Z Cars* fame) and celebrated British actor Edward Woodward. Woodward went on to present the first full series, with Pertwee (himself a panellist on series one) taking over to present seasons two to six, the show ending in 1978. The programme would occupy the same slot as the popular *Opportunity Knocks* when that show was off the air.

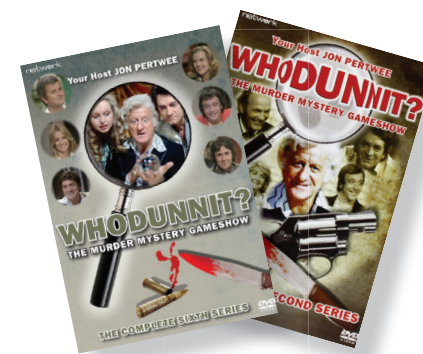
The dramatised segments of the programme, where the audience is shown the lead-up to and aftermath of the murder, are surprisingly well-done. They are made as proper dramas and are well-acted and -directed. Unsurprisingly, they feature numerous *Doctor Who* alumni including the likes of Simon Williams, William Russell, Mary Tamm, George Baker, John Challis, Richard Hurndell, Katy Manning and the late lamented Brig himself, Nicholas Courtney.

Pertwee is an excellent host and seems possibly a little more comfortable in the presenter's chair than Woodward. He revels in it all and builds up a good rapport with many of the show's panellists, especially regular Patrick Mower. He also dresses in a very cool, Doctor-esque way – it's all open-necked shirts and medallions!

What really struck me was how entertaining this series is and how well it stands up today. Yes, it is dated at times with perhaps an element of unconscious sexism by today's standards, but it is also rather charming. Pertwee is impeccably polite to the lady panellists and the whole thing is good-humoured and still makes for good viewing. It does seem odd to see panellists such as Leslie Crowther merrily smoking away on camera but you have to put it in the context of the time. Richard O'Sullivan is particularly good fun to watch and really does have a wicked sense of humour!

It's quite unusual for a Doctor to present a quiz show (although David Tennant and Tom Baker have done 'guest turns' on popular BBC shows in recent years) so *Whodunnit?* is something of a historical curiosity. Pertwee is in his element and even does his 'I am the Doctor!' pose to camera at the end of each episode.

Whodunnit? Is now available on DVD from you-know-where and other retailers! I strongly suggest you check it out. I think *Whodunnit?* could be very successfully revived today – perhaps Sean Pertwee could take a break from Gotham to inherit his father's chair? ▲



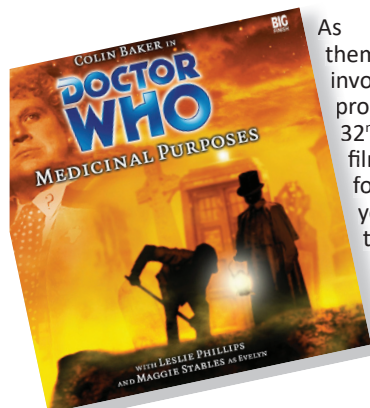
Interview ROBERT ROSS MEDICINALLY SPEAKING

Interview by Ian Wheeler

Robert Ross has written three historically-flavoured Doctor Who stories for Big Finish – Medicinal Purposes, Pier Pressure and Assassin in the Limelight. He is an authority on British comedy and his many books include the successful Carry on Companion. Ian Wheeler caught up with him...

Let's talk a little bit about the Carry On films, as I know a lot of Doctor Who fans love those as well. Why do you think they continue to be so popular? And do you think they could be successfully revived for the modern age?

I've loved the *Carry Ons* since before I could talk, so I'm delighted to have seen them go from being treated as cheap embarrassments to national treasure. Heavens, the best of them are even respectable now! I honestly believe their longevity and continued popularity boils down to two things: firstly, they have never been off television. Even when Sid James and the gang were still making them for the cinema, they were a regular small screen treat. The *Carry Ons* are practically part of the DNA of the nation. And secondly they are still very, very funny films. The ultimate comfort blanket.



As for reviving them. I'm currently involved in the production of the 32nd *Carry On* film – the first for twenty-five years – so, yes, they absolutely will be back in cinemas, with a brilliant script that

has one foot in the past and one foot very much in the present, and a hand-picked cast of the best of British comedy talent. Just like the good old days!

A number of Carry On stars guest-starred in Doctor Who. Which was your favourite appearance by a Carry On star opposite the Doctor?

Undoubtedly Peter Butterworth, opposite William Hartnell in two serials (*The Time Meddler* and *The Daleks' Master Plan*). Peter is one of my favourite actors period, so his performance as the Meddling Monk is one of the great joys of *Doctor Who*. Actually, this is why my Big Finish character of Doctor Knox is a time-meddler. I had originally pitched it as the return of the Monk, and I wanted Tyler Butterworth to reprise his father's role!

Your readers may also be interested to know that Tyler and I are currently writing Peter's biography. I'll keep you posted on that!

Please do! Moving on to Doctor Who, when did you first become aware of the show when you were growing up and which were your favourite Doctor and story?

My earliest telly memory is of the Doctor taking on the Cybermen. I would have been four, going on five, when *Revenge of the Cybermen* was first broadcast, so that would be about right. We watched *Doctor Who* as a family, so it would have been on as a matter of course. Now, I adore all the Doctors, but forty years on I still think Tom Baker is the Doctor, and the show has never been better than when Tom, Lis Sladen, and producer Philip Hinchcliffe reigned. My favourite is probably *Pyramids of Mars*. I do like my *Doctor Who* wearing its Hammer horror influence on its sleeve.

You're obviously a big fan of lots of things but how did that lead to you becoming a professional writer?

Basically, I wrote about what I loved and what I knew about. It was a long, long road to getting published, but my first book,

The Carry On Companion, was accepted by publisher BT Batsford just after I left University.

Your Big Finish stories have all been Sixth Doctor stories and have all been concerned with historical events or characters - was this a conscious choice on your part or just the way it turned out?

I desperately wanted to write for Colin Baker's Doctor, because I had loved his Doctor on television and was really enjoying the direction his Big Finish adventures were taking the character. I'm delighted that Colin liked my first script, and subsequently asked me to write for him again. I was more than happy to oblige. I studied and love history, and always loved the pseudo-historicals of the 1980s, so, yes, there was a conscious arch if you like, although I'd love to write a 'full-fat' futuristic yarn in the future!

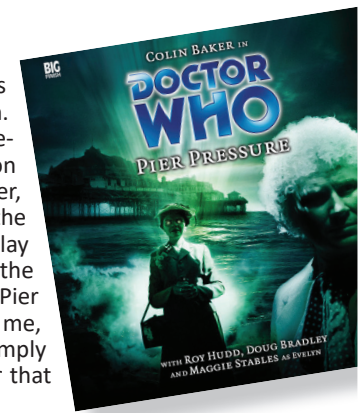
Is there another Doctor you'd like to work with or another event you'd like to write about?

I would love to write for all of them, but in particular Paul McGann. He's seriously up there with my favourite Doctors, based on the briefest of television time in 1996 and 2013 but also his glorious Big Finish work. Just brilliant. I have loads of potential McGann plots, so we'll have to wait and see...

There have been some big names in your stories such as Leslie Phillips and Roy Hudd - were they fun to work with in the studio?

Absolutely! I had known Leslie for years before 'Medicinal Purposes' and when Gary Russell was casting that play I was working with Leslie, recording some audio commentaries for some of his films, at Pinewood Studios. Gary was actually thinking of casting Leslie as another character, in somebody else's play. Then he had the brainwave of casting him as Doctor Knox. It was perfect; not least because it tapped in beautifully with Leslie's prolific association with the Doctor comedies.

Roy Hudd was my suggestion. He has a life-long passion for Max Miller, and relished the chance to play him opposite the Doctor in 'Pier Pressure'. For me, there was simply no one else for that part.



The legendary figures Burke and Hare feature in Medicinal Purposes - there have been a lot of films about them, was there a particular one that you were inspired by?

I didn't watch any of them as research for the play. Instead, I went to the history books, and Edinburgh itself, to wallow in the time and place and horror of it all. However, I had seen most – if not all – of the films. Don't forget 'Medicinal Purposes' pre-dated John Landis's fun romp by a year or so, so it was hazy memories of Peter Cushing in *The Flesh and the Fiends*, and bits of *Doctor Jekyll and Sister Hyde*, and the delicious Francoise Pascal one that informed the script. I have to say David Tennant's extraordinary performance as Daft Jamie made me well up during the recording. They tell me David has done rather well for himself since!

You love classic horror movies. Can you give Cosmic Masque readers a recommendation of a really obscure film they should hunt out that they might enjoy?

Gosh! Well, I'm guessing if you are a horror fan you may already know the really obscure ones, but here's a couple I love that don't get talked about as much as they should. *Damned by Dawn*, an Australian film from the noughties, is a revelation. Much more than your average Banshee in the Bush tale! For your classic British post-war batch – which I love – I have a very soft spot for *Scream and Scream Again*, which rather annoyingly cast Vincent Price, Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing, but kept them firmly apart

on screen. It's an incredible film though. Gruesome and gritty; and Price plays it for keeps, which was something of a rarity for him at the time. Of the treasured Universal days, I always try to convince sceptics that they shouldn't be sniffy about *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*: it's that rare comedy horror, both genuinely funny and genuinely scary.

And there's *Spider Baby*, of course, which gave Lon Chaney Jr his last great role, and allowed him to embrace his Universal glory days with an affectionate smirk. And he sings the theme tune!

Ooh, and *Dance of the Dead* is a teen zombie flick which is far, far better than it has a right to be!

What's your favourite cheese?

Ha! Well, as a very happy vegan I'm delighted to say that the choice is getting better and better. Sainsbury's do an incredible range: the best is a Wensleydale-style one with cranberries. It's bloody delicious!

Thank you, Robert! ▲

Please check out Robert's home page at <http://www.robertross.co.uk/>

He's also on Twitter. At the moment, he's working on a new book about forgotten heroes of comedy – details of how you can support the project are can be found at:

<https://unbound.com/books/forgotten-heroes-of-comedy>

IT'S A BIT RANDOM!

with Jeff Cummins

This time around legendary Target book artist Jeff Cummins answers our randomness...



Pencils or Pens?

Both.

Favourite Cartoon?

Ren and Stimpy.

Best Sandwich Filler?

Cheese and onion... also my favourite Rutles song.

Thunderbirds or Captain Scarlet?

Dum-dum-dum, dum-dum-dum-dum!

Most Influential Artist?

Norman Rockwell

How do you like your eggs?

Cooked and free range.

The Kinks or The Who?

Kinks.

Early riser or night owl?

Both...I'm bloody knackered!

Star Wars or Star Trek?

Starbucks...(Surprise, surprise)!

Favourite black and white movie?

Scrooge (Alister Simm version). All versions since have failed horribly. I'd love to see Jonathan Pryce give it a go though.

Review DOCTOR WHO MERCHANDISE BOOK by Paul Berry

Review by Grant Bull

Now it has to be said that when I saw the announcement for this book I wondered what it would offer given that David J Howe's *Transcendental Toybox* is the ultimate tome when it comes to the cataloguing of *Doctor Who* merchandise. For me this book had to offer something different and indeed it does. Whereas Howe's book is a chronological journey through the release of *Who*-related goodies, Paul Berry has sensibly decided to break things down in sections such as 'The Books', 'Toys, Models and Games' and so on. For each of these subjects we are presented with an overview of what has been released and when, and full colour photos to boot.

Some of the memorabilia will be common knowledge to fans – the Target Books and annuals in the book section, for example – but there are some rarer items to feast your eyes upon. Using the book section as an example, the Japanese novelisations present some wonderfully bizarre covers which would leave even the biggest *Who* fan wondering which serial they relate to!

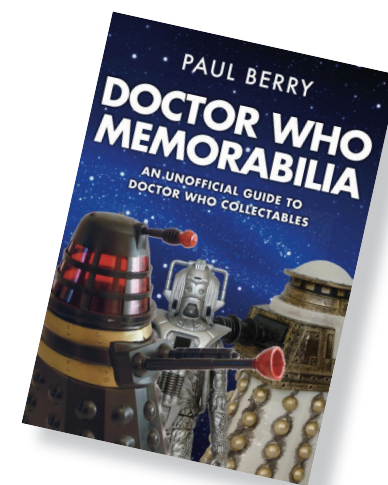
The '60s toys are a delight to look at. I adore the vibrant art used on the boxes, no doubt drawing many a young fan's attention back in the day on the shelves of Woolworths. Many of these fetch a high price in today's market, so looking is probably as far as this fan will get. The modern era is also represented with a selection of photos and commentary dedicated to the Character Options/Underground Toys action figures.

One of my favourite sections is the 'Visual Arts' one that covers the video and DVD releases. Though I know a lot of folks don't know what to do with their video collections now and sadly a lot are heading the way of

the rubbish tip, I personally am a real fan of the art on these and think they should be treasured. A display of some of the early covers through to the end of that range is wonderful to see. Also in this section is the video and reel to reel cover art for the Peter Cushing Dalek movies; these are visually striking compositions.

Overall this book is a worthy addition to any *Who* collector's library. It's clear, informative and a treat on the eyes. The author clearly knows his stuff and puts it to great use with this volume.

Whilst here I must mention two other titles from Amberley Books, both by Matt McNabb. On my last birthday I was kindly bought his book on *Ghostbusters* collectibles and the good folks there just sent me his latest book, just released, on *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* merchandise. Both are brilliant titles which showcase the best of collectibles for both series, with informative text and excellent photos of items ranging from common to rare and even un-produced. Amberley are clearly sourcing strong authorities on collecting and giving them a platform from which to shine. Check out their website at www.amberley-books.com for these three titles and many more. ▲



Feature

A TRIBUTE TO THE DOCTOR WHO EXPERIENCE

By William J.P. Turner

Walking through a familiar junkyard having just been on an epic adventure in Time and Space featuring the Doctor, several incarnations of the console room and none other than Romana herself in her underrated NewWho appearance, my trip to the *Doctor Who* Experience in Cardiff last June was quite simply magical before it had even truly begun. I can remember, as a boy, visiting the *Doctor Who* exhibition at Land's End when it opened back in 2007. Exactly a decade ago (where does the time go, hey?) the show was a massive television hit that was keen to honour the proud tradition of the original run without overt reference to its rich history, something that has become more commonplace in recent years. After sixteen years off air, this was certainly a wise decision to present the show as a serious relaunch as well as the latest of a decades-long legacy. Though the Doctor was very much the same man who had witnessed the fall of Troy, with references to Davros, Mondasian Cybermen and UNIT in the 2005 season alone, flashbacks of classic Doctors would only ever feature once during the Christopher Eccleston and David Tennant years (2005-2010) in 2008's Christmas extravaganza *The Next Doctor*. For this reason, my visit to Land's End featured just one classic reference: the Doctor's faces, all ten of them, progressing through the corridor as I entered the main attraction. For a twelve-year-old boy, the experience of seeing my Doctors, Nine and Ten, recognised as true successors to the original eight I had by this time become familiar with thanks to DVD, was simply awe-inspiring. Looking back, I think that my brain would have exploded had I been given a ticket to the *Doctor Who* Experience at that time.

So, for me, this is what the *Doctor Who* Experience, which is due to close this year, represents: the transition towards the show becoming more comfortable with putting its rich history centre stage in a mainstream slot, something that reached its peak during the Matt Smith years. While Matt Smith's first series appeared (at least to me) to witness more obvious references to the 20th century run of the series than previous seasons, it was ventures like the *Doctor Who* Experience which I feel contributed to the show's rich continuity becoming increasingly apparent in successive seasons.

Hot on the heels of *Doctor Who Live: The Monsters Are Coming!* and Jo Grant's (sorry, I mean Jones'!) appearance in the *Sarah Jane Adventures*, the *Doctor Who* Experience (at its original location in London) was a unique fusion of interactive adventure, sets and exhibitions that celebrated *Doctor Who* as the whole we always knew it was. Originally featuring an Eleventh Doctor adventure, several years after its move to *Doctor Who*'s new (yet well established) home at Cardiff Bay it came to feature the aforementioned interactive adventure with the Twelfth Doctor. If only it had seen a further adventure with a third Doctor. One can but imagine.

The adventures, as with the Experience as a whole, were a unique blend of mainstream and cult elements, with the original adventure being (at least in one theory) the key to one ongoing narrative of the Matt Smith era. Controversially, the first story in which the Eleventh Doctor faced down the Daleks saw their drastic redesign. Within four years, these new Daleks would be completely replaced by...their predecessors. Although no reference was given on-screen to why or how the bronze Daleks reasserted their dominance, within the *Doctor Who* Experience, a Civil War was depicted in which the bronze Daleks finally and fully replaced the new Paradigm. This, combined with the aforementioned appearance of Romana in the Twelfth Doctor Experience, demonstrates what a fine addition to the canon these colourful stories have been.

The exhibitions themselves consisted of costumes and items salvaged from various exhibitions to showcase the series in its entirety (with an understandable imbalance toward more modern content which could easily be sourced from the nearby BBC studios, rather than the older treasures that have become damaged or lost in time) including, most excitingly, costumes of all of the Doctors, which were (for the most part) originals. Excitingly, the War Doctor's costume would also be added to this stunning array, cementing his place in *Who* history. Of all the items on display, there was one item in particular that caught my eye: the Face of Boe I had seen nearly ten years before back at Land's End. Time had certainly not been kind to the poor old thing, yet it maintained its regal presence, a testament to all involved in its realisation. Notably, having such a vast repository of *Who* history so close to where the show is filmed during the show's golden anniversary meant that, for the first time in its history, the programme was able to revisit classic TARDIS sets for an anniversary special, here in the form of the Tenth Doctor's TARDIS (albeit in smaller form) with the original TARDIS set from the programme's twentieth anniversary special (which remained in use until the show ended its original run in 1989) almost being used for the War Doctor. It was this set in particular that hooked me when I heard the initial announcements about the Experience, since it enabled younger fans like myself to have a physical connection with a past we missed the first time around. The walking tours (though I never experienced one personally) were also a perfect way for

fans both casual and devoted to establish a physical connection with the show they love.

Being based on a programme that is constantly changing, it was fitting that the *Doctor Who* Experience itself also changed throughout its existence. New props and elaborate sets were continually added, enabling fans to revisit their favourite moments from the latest televised adventures in no time, from the barn on Gallifrey, to Trap Street and Davros' dwellings on Skaro.

As *Doctor Who* has always taught us, everything has its time, however hard it is to say goodbye. Unfortunately, the *Doctor Who* Experience is no exception. Coinciding with the departure of showrunner Steven Moffatt, it is fitting that these two pillars of a period in which *Doctor Who* began to embrace its past in the most public of manners find themselves parting from a show that is leaving the shadow of its fiftieth anniversary, finally ready to put the Wilderness Years behind it and head out without looking back for the decades of adventure to come. The programme, quite simply, doesn't need to prove itself as fresh and new anymore: it is fresh and new, whilst at the same time being a well-established institution that has been back on our screens now for twelve years. It is this that makes it easier to embrace the past. To all who have been involved in any capacity at the venue, I impart a big and well-earned thank you on behalf of all who have found it a truly magical experience. ▲



Review and Interview

DOWNTIME - THE LOST YEARS OF DOCTOR WHO

Reviewed by Ian Wheeler

Doctor Who's 'Wilderness Years' – when the TV show was off the air between 1989 and 2005 – may be remembered for the lack of new episodes of the show on television, but it was also a period of great creative activity in other media. The New Adventures novels, Marvel UK's comic strip, the BBC video releases – all these things helped to keep *Doctor Who* in the public eye. Another exciting source of new stories came in the form of the 'spin-off' videos. These low-budget but very well-produced dramas gave us Colin Baker's *Stranger*, a new encounter between the Brigadier and the Yeti, a trilogy of Auton-inspired stories and a lot more besides.

This book takes a look back at the making of these videos and does so in a very detailed way, talking to many of the people who were involved. It's a rollercoaster ride of nostalgia, packed with factual information, and is a stunning piece of research. I was familiar with many of the anecdotes already, having read them in various articles over the years, but it was nice to be reminded of them and there is also a whole lot of other stuff that you won't know already. We learn, for example, that prior to producing the other video dramas with which we are all so familiar, Keith Barnfather considered making a drama starring a much-loved former Doctor and companion which could have been filmed at Longleat House – but that's all I'm saying because I have no intention of giving away any of this book's juicy nuggets of information!

At 400-odd pages, this is a big book. It tells the whole story of independent *Doctor Who* drama production, starting with the UNIT-inspired story *War-time* in 1987 starring John

Levene as Benton. Made with primitive equipment and a £5,000 budget, it is still fondly remembered today and set the standard for the many other videos that were to follow.

As you read the book, you build up a great respect for the film makers who created these projects. They were hard-working and talented but also audacious, be it asking to film on HMS Belfast (as in the case of *Shakedown*) or employing respected former BBC personnel at a fraction of what they would usually be paid!

The book tries to put the history of these videos into context and looks at the way in which things are different today. There seems to be a feeling that the BBC would not tolerate such dramas today but also, ironically, that new technologies and crowd-funding means that the resources exist to do them really well now.

This book is well worth a look!

Cosmic Masque caught up with Dylan Rees, the author of *Downtime*...

How do you get into *Doctor Who* originally and what was your favourite story? And your favourite Doctor?

The first episode I watched was *Battlefield* episode one. I was about seven years old. Once that final season finished it was the BBC 2 repeats and the video range. It was quite unusual discovering this vast series that existed beyond Seven and Ace.

McCoy and Aldred were and still remain my favourites. McCoy just felt so alien and in some ways their story feels unfinished. It's like they walked off into that sunset and adventured on forever, from the New Adventures through to the BBV audios and Big Finish.

My favourite story at the time was *The Curse of Fenric*, it scared the shit out of me. But now I think it's probably *Survival*. I love how perfectly it links into the modern day series.

What do you think makes *Doctor Who* such a special programme?

I think it is its positivity, a hero that essentially believes in the good of things in an imperfect universe. Plus its ability to genre hop within its narratives. It's indomitable.

What other TV shows and films do you like?

I love cult TV, so anything from *Our Friends in the North*, to *Quatermass*, to *Out of the Unknown*. My friends all binge watch Netflix shows and I'm trying to get through the complete *Avengers* box set.

Can you tell us a little bit about your background in *Doctor Who* fandom and what you've done prior to working on this book?

As I said I've been a fan since '89, when I was seven years old. I used to go to quite a lot of conventions and a local group called the Wolves of Fenric. I've contributed to the *You and Who* range and *CT* before. But I'm not what you call on the scene.

What fascinates you about the Wilderness Years of *Doctor Who*?

It's my era, and in a strange way it's my favourite era of the show. Obviously I would rather have the show on TV, but there was something very exciting about the show being almost entirely fan-owned in terms of new stories for the character. The Doctor went some places he's never been before and some he probably shouldn't do again. But the possibilities seemed almost infinite. From the 'almost' Doctors like the Professor and the Stranger to comic strips, books and audios, it was a time of amazing creativity and some of the finest ever *Doctor Who* was produced in that time, but also some that was less than stellar. But it was always produced with the best intentions.

What were the main challenges you encountered when writing your book? And what was most fun?

The biggest challenges were just finding people. Some of the lesser-known BBV authors were barely present on the internet and there was one I couldn't find at all. Also getting people to talk about things. Nick Briggs was quite hesitant at first as he doesn't look back on the period fondly. Although eventually he came through with some fascinating insights.

You managed to uncover quite a lot which I never knew, and which I won't give away to potential readers, but was there anything in particular you learnt that really surprised you?

There was a lot I found out that I never knew before. But there were three questions I set out to answer when I started:

1. What happened to Michael Wade?
2. Why did Nick Briggs quit Auton 3?
3. What happened to Bill Baggs?

I'm pleased to say I managed to find all the answers to all of them and many others I didn't know I would be asking.

When *Doctor Who* comes off the air again, which inevitably it will, do you think we will see the return of the types of independent productions featured in your book?

I don't think so, I think the brand is so protected now the BBC wouldn't have such a lax attitude to it. Back then nobody really cared what people did with the rights to some twenty-year-old monster. Now the BBC know *Doctor Who* can always be success, they will guard it closely. There were incidents in the 90s where people like Bill Baggs were phoning up the BBC asking to use Liz Shaw and they just said yes, no money was paid. Can you imagine that happening now?

What other projects have you got up your sleeve for the future?

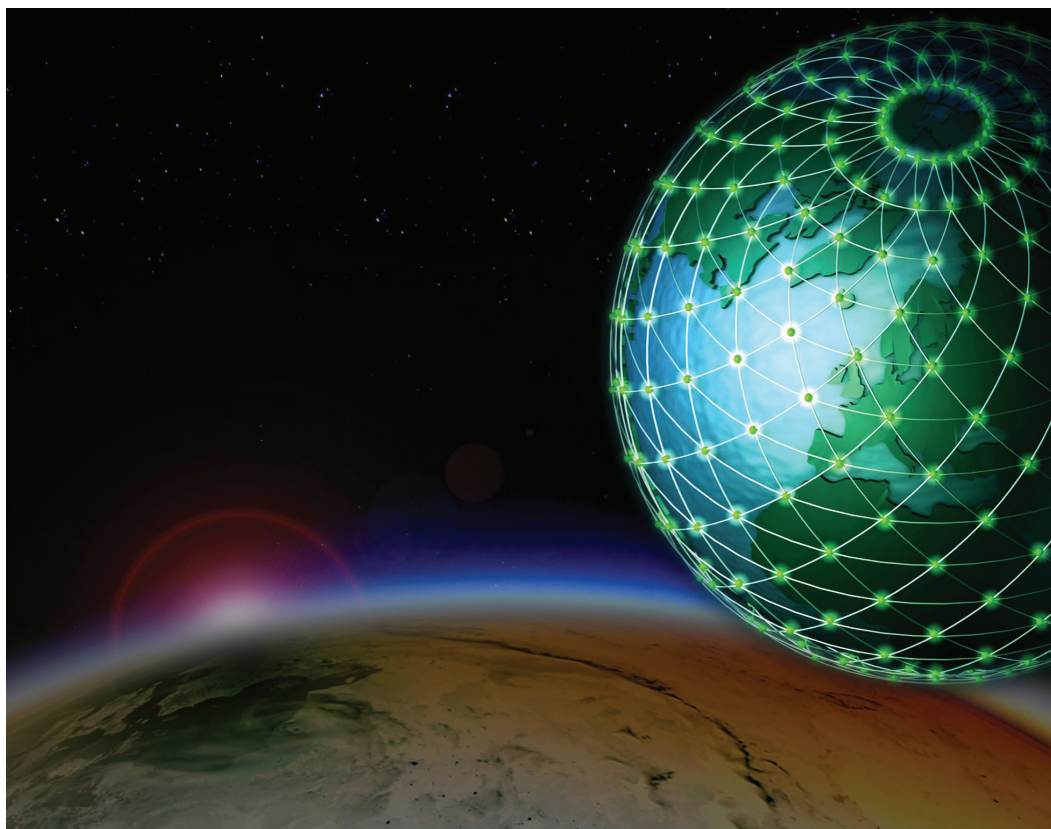
Well I work in film and video production so that's taking up most of my time. In fact,

I just worked on Reeltime Pictures' new release *Panopticon: Genesis*. I'm also hoping to help Keith finally finish *The Witch of Devil's End*. A feature I produced called *Charismata* should be out by the end of the year and I am currently working on a web series called *Piss Off, I Love You*. Book-wise I have a few plans, but I need to find the time. One is the history of a Gangsta rap record label and the other one is a biography of a notable British TV writer who, although not a *Doctor Who* writer, would be of interest to your readers. But it's all about finding the time.

What's your favourite cheese?

All cheese is amazing but a Gruyère is the one! ▲

Downtime is available from Obverse Books:
<http://obversebooks.co.uk/>



Interview RYAN DANES Interview by Ian Wheeler

Ryan Danes is the author of The Man Who Thought Outside the Box. Ian Wheeler caught up with him...

How long have you been a Doctor Who fan and what in particular do you like about the series?

Since I was a young baby. My mum said the music would stop me doing whatever it was I was doing, and I'd bounce up and down in my baby seat. I was born on the day Bill Hartnell died, 23rd April 1975. Maybe I should do some research on reincarnation?

In 1983 I met Jon Pertwee and Peter Davison at Longleat, and by then I was obsessed. I love the fact that the Doctor can have an adventure anywhere in time and space. Such a diverse format.

What fascinates you about Sydney Newman in particular?

How most people have no idea who he is until you mention Doctor Who and they say 'Oh yeah'. Even though he wasn't really a writer I feel he should be up there with people like HG Wells, Jules Verne, and Gene Roddenberry and I think it would have been a travesty not to celebrate his life on his 100th birthday.

How did your book come about?

I wanted to find out where the idea for Doctor Who came from, and like I say, I didn't like the fact he had been forgotten.

What do you think was Newman's biggest achievement apart from Doctor Who?

Sorting out the BBC and influencing millions of people through the way he reorganised drama. The organisation is still pretty regimented today, and Sydney knew creativity couldn't flourish in such an environment and that's why he changed it and gave ordinary people a voice.

As you say, Newman doesn't get as much recognition as Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry for example. Do you think he is often unfairly overlooked?

Definitely. People think he just set the wheels in motion and left but that's wrong. He may not have thought of regeneration but he certainly introduced the idea of different Doctor personas for example.

If you had to name six people, apart from Newman, who had made the most valuable contribution to Doctor Who overall (not just at its inception) who would you choose?

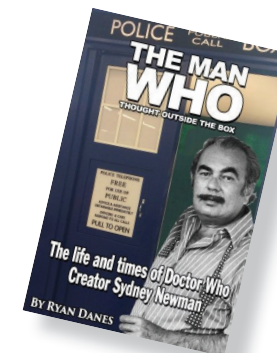
Verity Lambert, Antony Coburn, Waris Hussein, Tom Baker, Russell T Davies, Chris Eccleston.

How accurate do you think the depiction of Newman was in An Adventure in Space and Time?

The family didn't like his accent, he sounded like he was from the Bronx rather than Toronto. Other than that it showed the 'Piss and Vinegar' he also possessed.

What other projects have you got coming up in the future?

There another Doctor Who origins project we're looking at. New information about the origins and possibly 'new from old' fiction, but I can't say anymore at this point for legal reasons. If we get the go-ahead from the lawyers, or the BBC want to be part of it, it will be a real eye-opener. Good old fashion thinking persons' sci-fi which I think the last few series sometimes lack. ▲





Matt Connolly

Review

FOUR TO DOOMSDAY

AUDIO CD

Review by Allan Lear

Four to Doomsday is, even by the standards of *Doctor Who*, a bizarre story. There aren't many shows that could get away with a shaggy dog tale about a giant hypnotic frog that turns selected humans into androids once every few thousand years in the run-up to invading Earth and mining all its silicon in an attempt to go back to the Big Bang and meet God – particularly when the hypnotoad in question is under the impression that the God he meets will, in fact, be himself. It was the first story that Peter Davison recorded as the newly-incumbent Fifth Doctor, and one can't help wondering if he came out of it a bit uncertain what he'd got involved with.

Absurd though it is, however, it's a thoroughly engaging story with lots of memorable characters and plenty of twists, and it lends itself well to the audio format where ideas like a colony spaceship large enough to carry three billion people get a chance to really stun the audience with their scale, rather than suffering the inevitable limitations of the visual format.

For this audio recording, BBC Worldwide have invited back an actor from the original screen episodes to give them new life on CD. Matthew Waterhouse (the Blue Box Boy) needs no introduction to fans, and here he gets the chance not only to recreate his role of Adric but to take on the rest of the TARDIS crew as well. His familiarity with the performance styles of the original actors really helps him to breathe life into these characters, and his characterisation is a real highlight of this three-disc set. His Tegan snaps and snarls and whinges just like she did on telly, throwing all the toys out of her pram at the slightest inconvenience; his Doctor is a marvellous pastiche of Peter Davison's early acting style, all impatient breathiness, huffing and sighing his way through

explanatory passages; his Nyssa is quiet and self-contained, with occasional hints of a blasé superiority breaking through. It's a performance that treads a difficult tightrope between honest imitation and affectionate parody, and not only does it really tell the story, but it makes Waterhouse himself seem an affable host, like a favourite Jackanory reader, inviting us into his world for a tall tale.

There are *Doctor Who* fans who like their historicals, who enjoy period costume and learning about the actual history of Earth via the medium of their favourite Time Lord running around saving it, who prefer their science fiction when it's grounded and realistic and sensible. If that's your favoured style, then I'll go out on a limb and suggest that *Four to Doomsday* might not be the kind of *Who* that you are likely to enjoy. For those who prefer their *Doctor Who* a little more Douglas Adamsy, who like outré concepts and big ideas and jokes and absurdity, I'm certain that they will roundly enjoy this new presentation of Terence Dudley's story of megalomaniacal batrachians and their colony ship of android philosophers. ▲



Fiction

AFTERMATH

A short trip by Hayden Gribble

Unearthly sounds filled the decimated hanger. A wind raged through the vast metal walls, and the small fires that had erupted, scattering like tiny beacons of destruction, whirled their orange flames in unison as the strong breeze blew through them. The debris of the gantry that had once been held firmly suspended forty feet above the ground began to fall. Screams from stranded beings, terrified and trapped in their surroundings, cowered with arms held high, protecting their heads, as the heavy metal smashed on top of them. The screams died and were replaced by the clatter and contact of metal on metal. Explosions began to ripple and tear holes in the walls and floor. It had become a hall of devastation.

A blue box, about eight feet in height and situated right in middle of the hanger, was fading out of existence as the noise of the wind grew stronger. The little blue light on the top flashed and escaped the turmoil. Further screams of despair as a few of the survivors had clambered over the falling rubble towards the magic box but it was too late. They were confined to their death. Balls of fire burst the seams of the floorboards and the survivors began to scatter. Its sporadic nature suggested a series of bombs but that was impossible for a ship that had such tight security. None of this was in the minds of the terrified people who were still aboard. It was now a fight to get off the ship before it was too late. Escape pods were the only option left to them before the once-grand ship fell out of the sky and disintegrated in the Earth's atmosphere.

Amongst the mounds of rubble lay the main instigator in all the ruins. A man, corrupted by power, believing his own god complex, who promised those in his employ that the invasion would be successful, that they were doing the right thing, lay broken. Immobile yet still alive, he began to open his eyes.

Groaning in agony, a thought came into his head. How had it all gone so wrong?

The heat of the flames licked against the side of the man's face as he lay facing the ceiling in a room of destruction and death. All the prostrate man could feel around him was the violent waves of doom as he came to. Shaking his head, the man groaned like somebody who had been beaten against a brick wall for over an hour. He didn't know how long he had been unconscious and in a way he didn't care. He had failed. And now the fallen was stirring and knew that he was finished.

The sound of the ruined metal timber falling towards him made his skin go cold. With his eyes blinking open and shut, he struggled to free himself from his temporary prison. Starring into the burning abyss of his once oh so magnificent ship, he was pinned by the falling debris to the floor. Although aware of his perilous position, he struggled to remember what had precisely happened.

He remembered his plan. Oh, how he had worked on it. He had spent years plotting the attack and after using the millions of Stellarpounds he had at his disposal – not so much earned but stolen through his many business schemes and the money he had conned out of fellow competitors in the market – he was able to do what nobody from his home planet of Draxos had done in over four centuries: reclaim the Earth.

Draxos was one of the first Earth colonies to settle out of the solar system. It was uninhabited and after years of research it was chosen for colonisation to help move the population of the Earth – which was stretching to overcrowding in the big urban areas – to all corners of the galaxy. And so, with the numbers of population at breaking point, great ships, built to hold thousands of humans in suspended sleep, set off on their long journey, with a crew who took it in turns to pilot them and made sure the passengers got to their new world safely.

Many were jealous at those who had been selected for the voyage to Draxos. It was a beautiful planet, rich with emerald green skies and mauve fields. For the first human inhabitants they were not used to this strange colour scheme but they grew to love it. It was like no other planet in its system and as far as they knew it had never been inhabited before. However, it wasn't long until their new paradise succumbed to the same problems that the colonist had experienced on Earth.

Food and water were brought along for the trip, which had required that the colonists to be suspended in animation for the decade long journey, were planted and crops were soon growing in abundance. It was a new golden age. The scientists who had joined the colonists on the journey had taken samples of the soil and rainfall as soon as they awoke from their long sleep. The probes they had sent from Earth had been accurate, the soil was able to sustain the crops and the atmosphere was not poisonous. If anything, it was healthier than that on the mother planet. There was a high bombardment of positive ions in the air and the new settlers were in better frame of mind. The planet was tranquil, peaceful and the need for work was more of a hobby as greed was not a common folly.

Unfortunately, Draxos did also have its drawbacks. There was a nutrient in the soil that meant it was rancid after a week. They could combat this by managing the supplies appropriately, but as generations came and went and the surplus population grew. Famine came and took the lives of some the colonists. The designated leaders, whose predecessors had been designated on the first voyage and the roles were inherited, pleaded for aid from the mother planet but it never came. Draxos, for reasons they did not understand, had been cut off and left alone.

And so the planet lay dying, weak, helpless, until the ruler of the planet, an ambitious and some would say reckless king, decided that they should make the Earth pay for what they had done. Ordering repairs to be made

to the ship that had carried them to Draxos centuries earlier, and enlisting the help of those who had come to the planet over the years of his rule, the plans for war began. The money he had acquired and stolen, along with the technology that was culled from other races during his reign, made him strong and determined to bring the Earth to its knees.

Many of his subjects disagreed with his vision of war and violence. Some were convinced that the power had gone to his head and as punishment, the king outlawed many and accused them of treason. The once happy, picturesque, peaceful humans of Draxos were now ruled with an iron fist and forced into a war with their own people. The king gave himself a name that struck fear into his subjects and those who were loyal to him equated to an army who ensured that his life was kept safe from the rebels who tried to kill him before it was too late. That name was Stratos.

Stratos abandoned Draxos, leaving behind the weak, feeble and those who opposed him to die. Ordering his troops aboard the ship that brought them to what had been their Eden, Stratos and his army placed themselves in suspended animation and set the co-ordinates to auto-pilot back to Earth. The Army was a twenty thousand man strong force and with advanced weaponry that had been culled from the races who visited Draxos and lived to regret it, and were more than a match for the planet. Whatever the conditions and no matter how surprised the peoples of the Earth would be, a ship that was once built to bring peace and new beginnings was now an armoured battle-craft set on a course to destroy those who had stranded them.

The plans that had been made were meticulous to the last detail. A sensor was set to alarm the forces if they were under attack or an obstacle dangerous enough to endanger the mission meant that evasive action would be needed. For the first few years however they were mostly undisturbed, safe in momentary sleep, waiting for the

moment they had been waiting for. It soon became clear though, that even though communication had been lost decades earlier, Earth knew they were coming.

As soon as the ship, now called the *Venus II* after the planet that originally made her, scraped the fringes of the Solar System, a fleet of galactic fighters, small and slick in design like an ancient World War II Spitfire, hung in the sky like a spider web, waiting for the unwitting fly to fall into the trap. Fifty in number, the fleet were ready, and that meant the peoples of the Earth were too.

When Stratos awoke to the sound of gun fire on his vessel, he was taken aback by the surprise, but in no way unprepared. Back on Draxos, he heard rumours that the rebels had got word to those lucky aliens who had escaped the bleak prisoners of war camps that stained the planet like blood on a flower. The word must have got out about what he was planning. Earth knows what we are going to do, he thought to himself, but they will be no match for us.

Ships fell hard like hail stones as the *Venus II* showed the fleet just what it could do. The battle raged for two hours. Although slightly damaged, the shields that had been stolen from more advanced races kept most of the fire at bay. The firepower at Stratos' disposal was devastating. One by one the little fighters were destroyed, the pilots inside trapped in the burning craft and fated to a fiery end. Then the moment came when the ships were forced to flee, their mission failed. Licking their wounds, the armies of Earth were defeated. With minimal casualties and a regained sense of willpower and determination, Stratos had won.

Now they had penetrated the Solar System, the *Venus II* continued its journey of death. Following their excursion past Pluto, the armies of the System banded together, in a way that they hadn't done in centuries. All the political disagreements and differences in opinion that separated the planet were forgotten for the time being and they banded together as one.

The only planet that decided not to help the Earth was Mars. The planet was still too devastated by the widespread infection of a mysterious life form that started on Bowie Base One in the mid twenty-first century and was uninhabitable, even by the warrior race of Ice Warriors. Following the Peladon Convention, and a war between the Earth and its red neighbour, the reptile race was forbidden from engaging in conflict, which they started as a way of escaping the infection that was devastating their own planet. Living in fear and trapped on a diseased world, they watched as the ships from Earth and Mercury took off to hold the warship away, knowing the effort was in vain.

No matter how big in number the defensive parties were, or potentially successful the campaigns were, nothing could stop the gigantic offense from lumbering on through the System. Now only a matter of weeks away from his final destination, Stratos relished the fight he faced. He kept his best soldiers awake, depriving them of the sweet comfort of sleep and ordered that they stay at their posts, taking it in turns to look out and attack.

One by one the command posts that led to the world of mankind were purged and eradicated. Slaves were taken, many were slaughtered and it fed Stratos' lust for revenge. It was as though he absorbed the attacks and let them fester in his mind, further polluting his thoughts and filling his imagination with perverse images of destruction and power. The *Venus II* was like a cancer wiping through the stars and obliterating all in its path. It seemed as though nothing could stop it. Until one day, the day that Stratos let his guard down.

Repairs were required as the *Venus II* began to feel the brunt of the storm it had faced. Shield capacity was strong, but not as strong as it could have been. The loyal followers of the man who would be king, fearful of their own lives, worked endlessly to repair the ship. Some even succumbed to their weakness, kept awake and some starved to the point of death, began to slip away.

Stratos was just as relentless and unfeeling as stone though a plain glass window. He killed those who were too weak to fight or work, knowing that here were still many in suspended animation he could call on. Work conditions were appalling and his armies were making mistakes thanks to it.

Following a devastating fight on the rings of Jupiter, the *Venus II* was badly damaged. It was the first time since the ship had started its invasion that it had been defeated. Loathing the decision he had to make, Stratos ordered his subjects to retreat and they fled. It was just at this moment, unknown to him, that a blue box materialized on board. Out stepped a white-haired man, who held his lapels and strode into this world of hate like he owned the stage, accompanied by his three friends. A tall, strong-looking man with his black-coloured fringe brushed to one side, a kind-looking lady who looked roughly the same age as the man, with dark hair that stood high on her head, and a young girl, who stood protectively with who Stratos presumed was her grandfather and carried with her an unearthly feel and a yearning to find a place she could finally call home. It was as if, she, in fact none of them, had been home in a very, very long time. They brought with them a sense of experience beyond the stars and soon they went about destroying Stratos' world from the inside, like a virus in a computer mainframe.

Stratos, lying in the rubble, winced as he tried to move. He opened his dry, bloodstained lips and uttered the only thing that was in his mind.

'Doctor,' he spluttered as he agonized to move, dry spit barking from lungs.

'DOCTOR!'

Another explosion gave birth to a glow of fire that growled at Stratos like an animal. Every sinew of his being was broken, beaten. His body told him to stay where he was, accept his fate and embrace the inevitable. His mind spoke another language to him, one of survival, vengeance and hate. The pain

worsened now his eyes were open. The ambition, like the fire now raging throughout the *Venus II*, burned brightly. He had to get out. And nothing was going to stop him.

At first his small movements ached, and then the pain really set in. Hot, searing pain that shot through his veins and boiled within every sinew in his body. Stratos knew it was futile to try and guess how and where the breaks had occurred. It felt as though nearly every bone in his body was broken. By all rights, he should already be dead; he knew that, especially after falling twenty feet from a disintegrating gantry onto the stone-cold floor below. From every angle, the man who called himself the Doctor had beaten him. How on earth an intruder like him, a SENIOR intruder had alluded capture, aligned himself with rebels who were hiding in the store rooms and saved both himself and his allies and left the others to die was incredible. To have compassion and show no remorse in equal measure was a personality trait that puzzled Stratos and led him to believe that this man was not like any other he had encountered. To him, the Doctor's behaviour was like that of an old campaigner, whose eyes only reveal his true intentions and his full ruthlessness to his enemies and hides them from those who trust him.

Every inch began to feel like a mile, but Stratos was undeterred. Crawling away from the rubble and watching the panic unfold around him, the pain illuminated from his bloodshot eyes and pathed the way. Desperately, Stratos searched the room, which glowed a brilliant orange. His men, supposedly the best of the best, the ones he personally picked and oversaw the training of, ran around like headless chickens. The feeling of depression and imminent doom hung like a fog amongst the smoke. *Venus II* was breaking up around him, his beloved ship, the one that was meant to bring to Stratos his dream of revenge, was going down faster than the *Titanic* in Earth stories of old. The ship slipped even further out of space towards the planet it was supposed to conquer, pulling away at its metallic seams in the atmosphere. Many will have already

perished, sucked into the vacuum of space or fated to a fiery grave, but Stratos was not thinking about them at all. Although he was the Captain, he wasn't going to go down with the ship.

Still crawling, Stratos' eyes were firmly on the prize. His salvation and only means of escape lay mere metres away. Through the fire and smoke and his own blurred vision, he has spotted an escape pod on the opposite side of the hanger to where he had lain. In all the confusion, and although some had escaped, and were bound to be picked up by the Space Police, only one remained empty. Its red, vacant light lit the way. He was nearly there. The pain was put to the back of his mind for the time being; he could worry about it later. Safety was so close for him now.

VWOOOSSSHH!

An explosion, so ferocious in its manner, rocked the hanger. Stratos stopped his hellish trek and lay prostrate on the floor. Looking up, he started to feel his broken body being dragged back towards the rubble pit he had awaked in. Struggling to fit his fingers in a metal grille on the floor, Stratos blinked into the void behind him. The hanger was silent now. No more screams or desperate struggles to get off the doomed craft. Stratos was now alone in the hanger. The only company he had now was vast hole that had replaced the hull. He watched as his faithful soldiers, the ones who had shared his dreams and those who secretly loathed them, were floating lifelessly in the black, unforgiving silence of space.

A wind that sent a chill along his spine was still tempting the fallen leader to a silent death. Holding on with the last remaining effort of his being, Stratos, who knew that the only strength he had left in his body was now in his arms, edged his way along the grille the last few feet to the escape pod door. Grimacing and screaming until his lungs began to burn, Stratos reached out for the release button. His fingertips reaching out like a child seeking the attention of its mother. Just a little further. More fire and

sparks licking in his face and the icy touch of deep space dragging him to death. His screams inaudible compared to the vacuum that wanted to embrace him, Stratos' last ounce of strength hurled him onto the button. In a split second the escape pod door, which was about six feet in height, whipped open. Feeling along the wall inside the pod, Stratos found a hold and swung himself inside, snapping the door shut. He had made it. Now, the fun really started.

Sliding to the floor once more, Stratos panted as he rocked about in the little pod. The turbulence created an unstable yet safe environment for the Warlord to tend to his wounds. He knew, however, that to avoid escaping too early and being picked up by his enemies from Earth, he would have to release the pod at just the right moment. He felt that it was coming soon.

Around the pod, more and more chunks of the *Venus II* collapsed, splitting through the stress of the fractures that had been created by the internal damage of the explosions. The hole that had been torn in the hull was now replicating all over the ancient ship. The loss of life was insurmountable and disturbing. Not all of the rebels had been lucky enough to escape, something the Doctor had promised they would succeed in doing. The majority of them were among the first to be picked up by the salvage ship, warning that those who followed were Stratos' personal army, fleeing like flies from a carcass. The rebels watched from a safe distance as the *Venus II*, a ship that set sail on a mission of peace and prosperity that had become one of war and death, in a blaze of fury, perished for good.

Stratos flicked the jettison switch as soon as he felt the force of the first shockwave. The sound was like that of an atom bomb and it deafened the lone survivor. He had found no time to secure himself in one of the grey seats that sat to the side of the pod. The pod was roughly the size of a cupboard and would have only fitted two people but with the extra room available, Stratos' tormented frame was thrown to the far side of the pod, screaming as the gravity created by

the shockwaves crushed him. Before long, Stratos closed his eyes, giving in to the bliss of unconsciousness. His body was broken and had no feeling below his waist. Only willpower had brought him out of his destiny of fire. He had cheated death. It was up to the pod now to carry his nearly lifeless form to safety.

As his eyes closed, a mirage of thoughts flowed through his mind. There was no point answering the questions he had now, just let go. Give in to the embrace of sleep and worry about it later.

The pod tore away along with the rest of the debris that once formed the magnificent form of the *Venus II*. Since its rockets were no longer firing, it could be easily mistaken for a spare part, a piece of a puzzle that was torn away from its body and now littered the black, empty space above Earth. The final explosion had been impressive with the look of a huge firework. Earth was safe yet again, thanks to the strange old man and his friends.

The one with the blue box had come and gone and brought with him a world of destruction.

His name had betrayed his actions. He wasn't a Doctor; he was a bringer of death.

Debris began to shower the Earth, falling over the isolating desolation of Antarctica. Only a few colonies were brave enough to set up home on such an uninhabitable plain. It was here that the pod carrying Stratos, was slowly heading for. The rest of the debris would break up in the atmosphere. The capsule however, temporary home to one of the worst war criminals in history, was on its final journey.

With no more shockwaves to hold him against the wall, Stratos' unconscious body crumpled on the floor. It felt like a ragdoll and it was hard to believe that this bloody, sickening mess was once that of a strong, evil megalomaniac. His ego would not allow anybody to see him in this shape. He was alone, wounded almost beyond recognition, but he was not finished. No matter how badly injured he was, he would rebuild, grow stronger than he was before and live to serve his one purpose, his only calling in life.

To kill the Doctor. ▲



Review

THE DOCTORS: THE JON PERTWEE YEARS

Reviewed by Ian Wheeler

This DVD is the first in a series of compilations of interviews previously released as part of the 'Mythmakers' range. For those unfamiliar with the range, Mythmakers began in the 1980s and still continues today. At first released on VHS, and now on DVD, each title consists of an interview with someone heavily involved in *Doctor Who* – often a Doctor, companion or member of the production team. The series has been produced since it began by Keith Barnfather and most of them have been presented by Nicholas Briggs, now famous as the voice of the Daleks and other *Doctor Who* monsters.

This release is dedicated to the Jon Pertwee years and features interviews with Pertwee himself and most of his companions – Katy Manning (Jo Grant), Caroline John (Liz Shaw), Nicholas Courtney (the Brigadier), Richard Franklin (Captain Mike Yates) and John Leeson (Sgt Benton). The late Lis Sladen is sadly absent because she never did a Mythmakers. This DVD is most likely to appeal to those fans who did not collect the original titles as it will all be new to them, but I suspect other fans may be keen to have them all in one handy set.

The first DVD begins with a new introduction by Keith Barnfather and Nick Briggs, and it really is nice to see them reminisce with such fondness about their time making the Mythmakers. It's a warm and good-humoured introduction and gets the whole thing off to a good start.

The first and best of the interviews, not surprisingly, is that with Jon Pertwee himself. It really is rather wonderful to see him on the screen looking larger than life all these years after his death and this is a wonderful record of his career. As Keith points out in the introduction, there aren't many interviews

of such depth with *Doctor Who* stars so we are lucky to have the Mythmakers. Sat in his own home, Pertwee looks relaxed and comfortable and Nick Briggs really does get the best out of his interviewee as Jon looks back on his career as a whole, covering *Doctor Who* of course and many other things such as *Whodunnit?* (see more on that show elsewhere in this issue!) Watch out for Jon re-arranging an adjustable sculpture which he keeps in his living room – all rather bizarre but very good fun!

Katy Manning is a larger than life character as anyone who has met her will know. Here we see not only the loud, outgoing Katy but the poignant aspect of her personality as well as she looks back with affection on her time working with Jon and the rest of the UNIT team. The initial scenes, recorded on the set of *Doctor Who* spin-off video *Lust in Space*, don't really gel in my opinion, due to the setting's lack of connection with the Pertwee era and the fact that the set, as shot here, doesn't really look very interesting. But later segments of the DVD shot in more neutral surroundings, such as Katy sat in a chair in a dressing room, make for better viewing.

The Caroline John interview suffers a little because as she freely admits, she doesn't really remember the filming locations that Nick Briggs takes her to. But her lack of recollection becomes something of a running joke so there is never any awkwardness. The weather during filming on this one was clearly as unpredictable as it was during filming of *Doctor Who* stories such as *The Claws of Axos* and *The Curse of Fenric*, as it starts raining at one point, but Caroline still manages to give an interview that is both entertaining and informative. It is quite clear that despite being on *Doctor Who* for only one year and then being replaced by Katy Manning who came in as Jo Grant, Caroline was very proud of the work that she did on the show and clearly had absolutely no regrets.

The interview with Nicholas Courtney is a harder watch from my point of view because he's the only one on this set whom I knew a little, as Nick was Honorary President of

DWAS when I was Coordinator. So I did feel a little sad watching this and being reminded of what a nice man he was. But the sadness didn't last long; this is a very relaxed interview and it's clear that 'The Two Nicks' – Briggs and Courtney – are very comfortable with each other. Nick Courtney had a unique overview of the original series because he worked with so many Doctors, so it's lovely to get his perspective on working on the series over so many years. Interestingly, it sounds as though Nick and Mr Pertwee took quite a few weeks working together to build up a mutual trust but when they did they became the ultimate team.

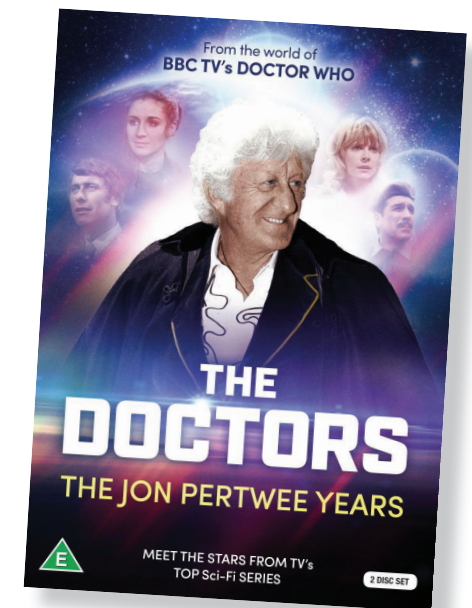
The Richard Franklin interview is one of my favourites because it has such lovely locations - Richard's own house (converted, with great taste, from an old chapel) and the surrounding countryside. Richard is an articulate and intelligent interviewee and talks with fondness about his involvement with *Doctor Who*, including later projects such as *The Five Doctors* and *Dimensions in Time*.

John Levene is often said by some to be a little on the eccentric side but on the

evidence on this Mythmakers interview, it's clear that he's a very sincere and likable guy. He talks very openly about his low self-esteem and how he wondered whether he'd be able to cope with being the star of the show when he was the main character in the Benton-focused spin-off story, *Wartime*. *Doctor Who* is clearly an important part of his career, but it's fascinating to learn about just how varied his life has been, everything from measuring Telly Savalas up for a suit to working as a bingo caller on a cruise ship. The only weak point of this interview is that the main location – John and Nick Briggs sat on a tree – isn't particularly inspiring.

Overall, these interviews really do reinforce the view that *Doctor Who* during the 1970s was a fun programme to work on and really did have a 'family' atmosphere. The interviews are fascinating reminders of great performers, some of whom are sadly no longer with us. Well worth checking out. ▲

The Doctors:
The Jon Pertwee Years
is published by Koch
Media, and is available
from Amazon



Feature

THE NEW ADVENTURER

By Nick Mellish

Nightshade, by Mark Gatiss

The following article contains spoilers for the books.

I have said before in this article that it is almost impossible to come into this range of novels now completely spoiler-free or unaware of certain things. Unless you live in a complete bubble, you will recognise certain writers or names of stories will ring faint bells.

Step forward *Nightshade* by Mark Gatiss. I had heard good things about this book from many quarters and I know who Mark Gatiss is from his work in *The League of Gentlemen* and latterly in *Nebulous* and *Sherlock*.

Oh, and *Doctor Who*, of course.

At the time of this book being printed that would not have been the case, as fame was still in the distant future for him. In many ways, I would have far preferred this to be the case for me heading into the novel, as knowing both who Gatiss is and that the book is meant to be good comes with its own set of preconceptions: will it live up to the weight of expectation, and will I be able to detect the fingerprints of an author whose work I am in part familiar with?

The answer to both questions is yes, though to varying degrees.

Reading it now, you notice nods that would never have stood out way back when, such as all of his *League of Gentlemen* cohorts getting name-checked along the way and mentions of both "Invaders from Mars" and "Phantasmagoria" making you wonder whether Gatiss purposefully took the names of his two Big Finish scripts from this, his

debut novel (if that is indeed the case, then it's sort of sweet in a strange way).

Gatiss's love of history and horror as well as archive television are there for all to see, too, with some nicely grotesque insects and collapsing corpses mixed with an actor who starred in what is to all intents and purposes *Quatermass*. None of this detracts from it being a damn good read though.

Of all the stories in this range so far, it's the one which best marries the old and a new direction. *Timewyrm: Revelation* showed us a more conceptual take on the Doctor as a character; *Cat's Cradle: Warhead* gave us a traditional McCoy tale with futuristic intent; and *Cat's Cradle: Time's Crucible* pushed us into the realm of the show's mythology, simultaneously reinventing and celebrating it.

This is the child of all three. The story has tradition written in its bark like notches etched into a tree, but the Doctor and Ace feel different with more gravity than they had on screen. The Doctor in particular is in a pig of a mood, shouting and snapping at Ace for no good reason, moping around the TARDIS like a sullen child, and considering giving it all up for a quiet life. It's alarming to see him in such a despondent and introspective state, and more worryingly the novel ends without this being resolved. Is this the new direction for the character now: slightly unlikeable and brooding?

I'm hoping not as it makes it hard to warm towards events at times, especially at the very end where he robs Ace of the farewell she craves, taking her away from a man she has the hots for, for reasons as yet unknown. It's a truly shocking and ugly moment that surely has repercussions to come.

There is also a startling moment where the Doctor all but gives up and decides he cannot possibly defeat this latest foe until Ace proves that she is able to face it down. It's a two-edged sword in many ways. On the one hand, it shows us the resourcefulness and intelligence of Ace as well as her

touching faith in the Doctor and their close relationship: she alone can give him hope, and she knows that he is the only one who can save them all. On the other, it's a dark moment where the Doctor sees her able to defeat the antagonistic Sentience and essentially thinks "Well, if a mere human can do this, so can I." (That is never explicitly said, but it's there to be inferred.)

The supporting characters are a strong bunch, though most of them never really develop: you've the racist, the old man, the student, the lovers, and so on. It gives the story some colour though and for such a large cast, Gatiss gives them all a fair share of air time without it ever feeling overcrowded.

One of the more notable aspects of the tale is the use of Susan throughout, especially hot on the heels of the hints in *Time's Crucible* that Time Lords and biological offspring are not necessary easy bedfellows. Gatiss uses Susan as a lynchpin for the Doctor's introspection and regret-laden personality. She symbolises opportunities missed, hard decisions made, and longing for a simpler time.

Susan has always been a bit of a sore point for the show in many ways, all but forgotten by the series itself. In many ways this makes sense: does any casual viewer of the show, or one watching an episode for the very first time in, say, 1988 really care about the fate of a companion from the early 1960s?

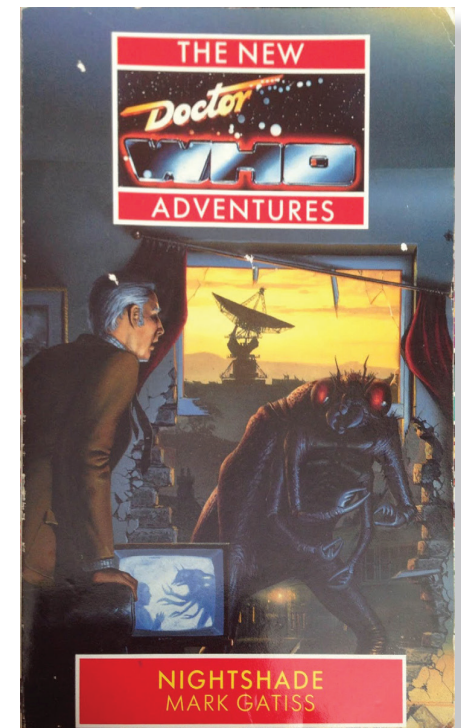
No. No, they do not.

It would have been pure fan service and nothing more to return to her once so much time had passed (even in the most naval-gazing times of the late 1980s), and seeing as these novels are for fans alone...well, I can see why the series is trying to address the issue now: because it *is* an issue. His own flesh and blood (maybe), abandoned albeit with good intentions and never seen again (besides *The Five Doctors* and nobody seems to react at all to their reunion when it occurs).

It's an odd one, make no mistake.

Back to *Nightshade* though. There are times when certain parts are slightly overwritten perhaps, the pacing is rather slow to start with and certainly in the middle, and the very start on Gallifrey sticks out like a sore thumb as it never works its way into the rest of the novel, but these feel relatively minor points. It's not a perfect book by any means, but it's an enjoyable one and I can see why it created ripples when it was first printed.

It ends with Ace desperate and upset, the Doctor at his most manipulative and remote, and a new TARDIS console room made of stone (which is nice). Perhaps these novels are finally finding their feet and not still putting out tentative feelers regarding where to go next. I certainly hope so and I find myself keen to see what happens next. ▲





Do you remember your first time?

John Davies



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

Tricky one! I remember watching *Full Circle* on a portable while on holiday with my parents; however, I have clear memories of the Nimon, Sarah's face falling off in *The Android Invasion* and Kroll looming over his swamp. The show's been a part of my life from Day One so I really can't say for sure. Sorry!

The first Target novel I bought was...

Ah, this one's easier. It was *The Planet of the Daleks*. I bought it from the local library when they were having a clear out.

The first fan letter I sent was...

Another easier one. Thanks to Mrs Crawley at school, we were given the task of writing to someone we admired. I wrote to Tom Baker – and he replied. That started a hobby that lasted for years!

The first convention I attended was...

The memories are flooding back here – thank you! This was an event The Sheffield Space Centre held at Sheffield Hallam University. I was still at University, so you can imagine it was a fair few years ago! I remember seeing Mary Tamm, John Nathan-Turner, Sophie Aldred, Nicola Bryant and Mark Ayres there. It was a fun day! I was as nervous as anything, but I really would not have missed it for the world.

The first Doctor Who video I bought was...

The Seeds of Death! Well, it had to be a Troughton, didn't it? Videos were extremely expensive when they first came out so this wasn't something I rushed out to buy. My parents and I used to go walking over the Moors at the weekend, and to encourage me, my dad sponsored me 10p a mile. I walked and saved, saved and walked...and, eventually, I had enough money to buy that first VHS. I still have it, tucked away somewhere. It weighs a brick! ▲



Review

T IS FOR TARDIS

Review by Grant Bull

I recently turned thirty-five and, as I'm sure a lot of thirty-five-year-olds did, I received a copy of BBC Books' *T is for TARDIS*...

This book is as it sounds: an ABC of *Doctor Who*, charmingly illustrated by Adam Howling. The illustrations have a 'pop art' quality to them and really make the book. The simplistic layout, and the design and choice of colour palette, add to the charm.

The choice to represent each letter isn't always the obvious one and there are some nice inclusions from the past such as Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart for 'U is for UNIT' and the Yeti for the letter 'Y' to name a couple. Of course, 'D is for Doctor' but Davros pops up here too, always one to try and steal his nemesis' limelight!

I know this title won't be for everyone but for me it works on different levels: firstly as a parent, and secondly as a collector of children's books. There is a real quirkiness to this book, it's good fun and fun should always be encouraged in my opinion. It's also an excellent gift to buy a young child, especially those who don't come from a *Who*-loving family. Brainwash them while you can, it's always served me well as a parenting style!

I guess my only gripe would be that the pages aren't made of card like other children's books on the market. Ultimately I want to be able to share this book with my youngest child and the decision to print on paper doesn't allow for a more 'hands on' storytime. That said, I'm hoping the line will expand into other titles such as counting and colours.

Altogether now: "A is for Adipose"... ▲



'T is for TARDIS' is available from all good book sellers

Opinion

THE OTHER FANDOM Ian Wheeler

A few months ago, I was walking along a street adjacent to the one where I live and I happened to glance into a window and saw what the resident was watching on TV. No, I wasn't being nosey, it's just that some TV screens are so large these days you can see them from the other side of the street whether you want to or not! And it just happened that this person was watching an episode of *The Trial of a Time Lord*!

In many ways, this cheered me up no end because it tickled me that a thirty year old episode of *Doctor Who* (which, if we're honest, is considered by many fans not to be the best story in the world ever) is still being watched and enjoyed in the modern age, on state of the art televisions which are far superior to anything that was around at the time the episode was made.

It also surprised me, because I've always assumed that there aren't that many *Doctor Who* fans in my home town as any attempts I've made to contact any such fans (such as going on the local radio to drum up interest in a possible local group) have always met with failure.

Then it struck me. There *are* *Doctor Who* fans in my town but they don't belong to the fandom I know. What they belong to is 'the Other Fandom'.

What is this 'Other Fandom'? Well, the main, established fandom is us. The people who go to conventions, post on internet message boards and edit and write for fanzines like this one. Many of us (but by no means all) are old enough to have watched the original series when it first went out.

But there is also this Other Fandom of which I speak – people who watch and enjoy *Doctor Who* and collect the DVDs and some of the merchandise but who would never think

of becoming a member of Gallifrey Base or writing an article for a fanzine. In fact, such people might actually consider such behaviour to be rather odd.

If you think about it, this Other Fandom is actually much larger than our own. It has to be. *Doctor Who* is watched by millions of viewers and the DVDs and books sell in their thousands. What we contribute to the wellbeing of *Doctor Who* is very important and our enthusiasm helps keeps the show in the public eye. But we are much smaller in number than those other, more general fans. Frankly, the programme could survive without us. Mass appeal shows like *Casualty*, *Eastenders* and *Coronation Street* all thrive without the kind of obsessive fans that sci-fi fare like *Doctor Who* has. It is the Other Fandom which is much more vital to the long-term survival of the show.

Doctor Who's fortunes started to slide when 80s producer John Nathan-Turner started getting very friendly with certain sections of the fan community and began making the show to please them by bringing back old enemies etc. Russell T Davies and Steven Moffat have not made the same mistake. Both have aimed the show at a much wider audience. They have not been afraid to annoy the fans (e.g. by not bringing back all the old Doctors for the fiftieth anniversary) and this has helped make the modern show a success.

In many ways, I guess I am part of the Other Fandom of *Star Trek*. I love the programme in all its incarnations and have grown up with it but I am not a contributor to any *Star Trek* message boards and I don't speak a word of Klingon.

So, next time you go to a screening of a new *Doctor Who* episode at your local cinema, look around you. Look at the more general fans who aren't part of our little world but who play a key role in keeping the show alive. *Doctor Who* is not ours alone. It belongs to a much wider group of people. And that can only be a very good thing. ▲

Fiction

THE WITCH'S DISPOSABLE by Richard Wright

Missy stood at the open TARDIS doors, her toes over the edge, staring out into the vortex.

"Is she alright? Should I talk to her? Doctor?" Bill waved a hand in front of the Doctor's eyes.

The Doctor was sitting in his ridiculous chair, too far from the TARDIS controls, just sitting – whilst Nardole coaxed and mumbled, circling round and round the console looking for a distress signal to begin Missy's 'test'.

"I thought you said she scares you?"

Bill did a face that was more expressive than a shrug.

"Heights scare me, but I don't live my life on the ground floor." And she moved to stand with Missy.

"Is this wise? You know I..." Nardole was at the Doctor's ear with almost magical speed.

The Doctor just held up his hand and Nardole fell silent.

It was just as River had said, you could see by the Doctor's face, that he was afraid, that he never really knew what he was doing. It was plain to see – if you loved him – how vulnerable and lost he was.

"Hello human person." Missy did not look away from the swirling chaos of time and space. Her eyes were filmed with tears; they seemed to bulge and glisten.

"It is awesome, like proper awesome," said Bill.

"Yes...the Doctor said if I saw it like you do...I would be...moved."

"What do you mean? We see it as it is."



"No – you bright primate – the TARDIS translates. I heard you tell the Doctor 'the TARDIS lip-syncs Centurions'."

"You were nowhere near when I said that."

Missy smiled and her tears suddenly were ice.

"This view, like the Doctor's view of 'good', is not an absolute, let me show you the more emotional view."

Bill found herself staring out into the vortex, but now it was a tunnel of clouds and lighting, then rotating fire, it seemed unreal except the heat drove her back.

She turned to look at Missy, but saw a demon. Inside the black clothes was a dark-veined, yellow-eyed face of hate...

And then it was gone.

And Bill was staring into Missy's tear-filled eyes which, by contrast, seemed mild, sad, and reassuring. Bill forced her hand to let go of the TARDIS door frame – she felt the deep imprint of the trans-dimensional wood bruised into her flesh.

"A bit much was it dear? Try a more deterministic view."

Bill was watching the vortex, but this time it was clockwork. The TARDIS was like a mote of dust in fob watch or a mouse stuck inside a grandfather clock. It was beautiful. It made you insignificant, but free inside the predictable.

After a while Bill turned back to Missy. Missy appeared to be all T1000 (it's from a movie), she was liquid silver – feminine silver. Somehow predictable, awesomely beautiful like, like Heather.

Bill had almost forgotten about Heather, her friend, her crush, the girl who wanted to leave. The girl who joined with the alien oil. The girl who had made Bill desire to explore the Universe.

"Snap out of it." The Doctor was shaking her. Slowly Bill focused on his old, paternal face.

"What did you do to her, Missy?"

"Showed her things as she would prefer to see them...surely that is a good, kind, thing?"

▲



Feature DOCTOR WHO TARDIS SET TOUR By Ian Wheeler

If there is one ambition I'd always had which I'd never been able to achieve, it was actually to see where *Doctor Who* is made – to step on to the TARDIS set and follow in the footsteps of the Doctor himself. I'd been in TV studios before as I'd been lucky enough to be in the audience of some well-known quiz shows and comedies but visiting the *Doctor Who* set had eluded me – until now!

Unlike my DWAS pals Allan and Erica who actually know Matt Lucas (!!!), I was unlikely to ever receive a VIP invitation to visit the set. As luck would have it, however, the BBC have on occasion allowed fans to do tours of the studio between the recording of seasons. And the gap between recording of Series 10 and the 2017 Christmas special was one such occasion. Determined to grab this opportunity, I snapped up some tickets, booked the train and hotel, and in May 2017 we headed off to Cardiff to visit the Doctor Who Experience and set tour.

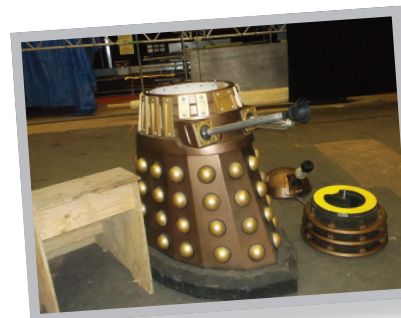
Our set tour was booked for the Sunday (the very last day of this round of tours) so this gave us the opportunity to check out some of the *Doctor Who* locations in Cardiff on the Saturday. We visited the shop where Rose worked, the Millennium Centre and Water Tower in Cardiff Bay (famous for their appearances in *Torchwood*) and Eddie's Diner (the American-style diner seen in both

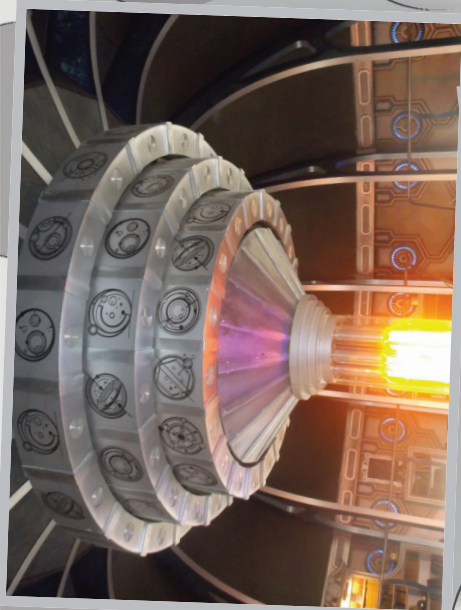
the Matt Smith and Peter Capaldi eras). We also took a look at the famous Ianto's Shrine, where fans can leave mementos and memories of that most beloved of *Torchwood* characters.

On the Sunday, we made our way to the Doctor Who Experience. It was fascinating to see the various versions of the console from different eras of the show as well as the Doctors' costumes and many, many props from the history of the programme, both the classic series and the new version. A stunning collection of *Doctor Who* items, as anyone who has visited will know.

Then, we were off to the BBC studios to see the TARDIS for real. To step on to that set, knowing that I was standing in the same place where Matt Smith and Peter Capaldi had stood (and David Tennant and John Hurt for the fiftieth anniversary special) was utterly magical. To be able to take a close-up look at the console and admire the various details of the set really is a special experience. We were then able to wander around the rest of the studio where the police box, a Dalek and a few props from Series 10 could also be seen.

It remains to be seen whether there will be more *Doctor Who* set tours in the future. I hope so. It's nice for fans who have been so loyal to the show over the years to have the chance to connect with it in such a real and meaningful way. *Doctor Who* is for everyone and giving people the opportunity to have this behind-the-scenes glimpse can only be a good thing. ▲





Interview

The Convention Organisers

STEVE HATCHER

by Ian Wheeler

Beginning a new series of interviews, we're going to be catching up with some of the talented individuals who organise Doctor Who conventions up and down the country. Steve Hatcher is a popular member of fandom who for many years has been running the Derby-based 'Whoovers' local group and their regular Whooverville conventions. Ian Wheeler caught up with him.

1. When did you first get into Doctor Who and what are your early memories of watching the programme?

The first episode I remember is Part One of *The Web Planet* – I clearly remember the Crater of Needles set. I also have a vague memory of an episode that I now think was Episode 1 of *The Massacre*. However, although I was always aware of Doctor Who, I saw very little of it during the 1960s. When I was young, Saturday evening was always spent at my Grandparents' house, and my Grandad would only ever watch ITV – whatever was on. So, I only got to see Doctor Who if I was ill and couldn't go there. When I was a bit older, the Christmas Omnibus of *The Sea Devils* got me properly hooked, and apart from when I was studying abroad in 1979-80, I stayed with it then through to the end.

2. And how did you get actively involved with fandom?

The 30th Anniversary in 1993 fired up my fan genes again and I began collecting video tapes, books etc, but had never been to a convention and had no contact with any fan groups.

In 2000 when I was nearly 42, I heard about a new Who fan group The Whoovers, that had been going about 6 months by then.

I acquired a contact number and had an encouraging conversation with Gary Finney, who was co-running the group as well as co-editing the fanzine *Shockeye's Kitchen*. I went along to my first meeting, still giggling at my wife's warnings that these would certainly be weird people and that I was not to give out my phone number or address. It all started from there – better late than never! My first convention was Panopticon 2000 in Manchester, where I spent most of my time alone, but which I still loved.

3. Your Derby-based local group, the Whoovers, has been going for the best part of two decades. What's the secret of its success?

There is a long tradition of organised Who fandom in Derby, going back to the mid-80s, long before I moved up here, with groups such as Whotopia making fan films (most memorably, *A Fan Called Nigel*) and publishing fanzines such as *Fan Grok* and later the aforementioned *Shockeye's Kitchen*. Although those groups faded in the 1990s, the core individuals stayed in touch and formed the basis of The Whoovers, which





was formed in 1999. Over the years, people have come and gone, people have moved away, died or just grown up and lost the enthusiasm, but others have come along and replaced them. Numbers have never fallen away to such a degree that it wasn't worth carrying on. We have always held monthly meetings in venues accessible to all ages (not in a pub) and have always tried to do things at those meetings, not just sit and talk (that does go on in the pub afterwards). We do quizzes, games, Desert Island Docs, monthly raffles, an annual auction and whatever else occurs to us. The idea is to make it fun. I took over running the group in 2001 and since then we have tried to get special guests about four times a year. Our first guests were Paul Ebbs and Steve Johnson, who were working with BBV at the time and we soon graduated to other writers (Rob Shearman, Nick Briggs and Terrance Dicks early on), companions (Anneke Wills, Sophie Aldred, Mary Tamm, Peter Purves, and so many more), production crew and guest actors. We finally got a Doctor, when Sylvester was in panto in Derby in 2009-10. We have raised funds at our auctions and by our raffles, which has allowed us to pay guests' fees and we have also occasionally worked with Tenth Planet and Fantom Films, who have brought guests to our events. Our record attendance at a monthly meeting has been over 90 people, on two occasions, when our guests were Katy Manning and Matthew Waterhouse.

4. How did Whooverville get started? And did you anticipate that it would continue to be so successful for so long?

Once we had made a few contacts with interesting guests, we often talked about

doing a convention. A group of us had crewed at Tenth Planet's Bad Wolf convention, when it came to (nearly) our home territory of Stoke-on-Trent in 2006 and I became a Tenth Planet regular after then, becoming friends with the splendid Derek Hambly. In 2008, Rob Cope of Colin Baker Online asked us to co-organise with him an event at the Gladstone Pottery Museum, also in Stoke, which featured Colin, Rob Shearman and Terry Molloy, and which went very well. In many respects these were the dress rehearsals for Whooverville.

We had gained a bit of experience but we now wanted to organise our own event, which we called Whooverville. Incidentally it took us about 30 seconds to choose that name, at least three of us suggesting it simultaneously. The problem was that we couldn't afford it. So we came up with a scheme.

One of our members, Ian Farrington who by then had moved to that London to work with Big Finish, had a relative who was working at The Midland Railway, a steam/heritage railway north of Derby and told us that they were looking to host an event, having lost the rights to do Thomas the Tank Engine at that time. We arranged a meeting and my dear friend the late Robbie Langton and I went up and made what I thought was a cheeky proposal. We would organise a one-day convention for them, to be held in the engine shed at their lovely site at Swanwick, they would sell the tickets and keep the profits, but they would pay for the event – guests' fees, expenses, the lot. Somewhat to my surprise, the idea was accepted and a budget and date agreed on, Sunday 6th September 2009. We put together a guest list by contacting people who had been guests at our Friday night meetings – Anneke Wills, Nick Briggs, Gary Russell, Ian Fairbairn, Glen McCoy, Cheryl Hall (who was working in the same school as me in Chesterfield); and Derek put us in touch with Colin Baker, who agreed to be our headliner.

I was determined to get the Doctor Who podcast community involved. I had become a regular listener to a number of shows, so contacted with some of my favourites and

invited them to take part in a podcasters' panel. This paid dividends, with lots of free publicity, but since then, we have also been a sort of unofficial podcasters' convention, with the podcasters' panel evolving into a second stage in which podcasters have access to our guests.

That first Whooverville was a moderate success, with some 70 attendees arriving at Butterley Station, to be brought to the convention in the engine shed at the Swanwick end of the line by steam train. However, we felt we had achieved something and the feedback was great. The following year, word of mouth was working in our favour and we topped 100 attendees. However, it was clear that a steam railway, in the middle of nowhere on a Sunday was far from the ideal location. What made our minds up was a number of problems that we had at that second convention. The Midland Railway is a beautiful site and the volunteers were lovely and had a real passion for what they were doing, but there were difficulties. It seemed as if everyone there belonged to one faction or another, each of which hated all the others. Volunteers at one end of the line hated those at the other. Steam people hated diesel people and they all looked down on the narrow gauge people. We arrived to set up the day before the convention to find a diesel locomotive in the engine shed, being spray painted.

"But", we enquired, half joking, "It'll be gone by tomorrow – you promised us the shed to ourselves."

"No, they're painting it in here, all weekend."

Those who attended Whooverville 2 will still remember the fumes, some came close to passing out. We needed an alternative venue.

By this time, the brilliant new QUAD arts centre, right in the middle of Derby had opened, so we talked to our contact there, Adam Marsh and agreed a similar deal with him to that we had had at the railway. As far as I know, this is a unique arrangement among

Doctor Who conventions. The Whoovers group is effectively paid by QUAD to provide a convention. QUAD sells the tickets and keeps the takings, we choose and book the guests and don't aim to make a profit. This way, we get our convention without having to risk our own money. Numbers have risen steadily over the years until last year, at Whooverville 9, we had around 250 people attending.

Did we think it would go on this long? Well, once we had a success, I couldn't see why it shouldn't continue. Rising guests fees are a problem as is the sheer number of conventions going on, all competing to attract the same guests. If it comes to an end someday, that will probably be why.

I want to pay tribute to some good friends of our event. First and foremost there is my extraordinarily talented co-organiser, Andrew-Mark Thompson, who has been my trusted right hand man throughout, and the wonderful Whoovers team, including John Smith, Alan Darlington, Steve Hardy, Gary Finney Zair, Angelina Olding and many, many others including the late and lamented Robbie Langton and Lee Lambert.

Derek Hambly has been a huge supporter since Whooverville 1, contacting potential guests for us and also bringing some great sponsored guests every year.

The Fantom Films boys Dexter and Paul, have also been fabulous and have continued to support us with top quality sponsored guests.



Robert Dick has been a great source of advice and has come up every year to help and to provide his superb interviewing skills.

Siobhan Gallichan has been an excellent Podcaster Wrangler; the Staggering Stories gang have made a big effort to come along every year and are great friends of our event; Michael Gilroy-Sinclair has each year made his own trailers for Whooverville, which he has added to his Tin Dog Podcast. There are so many other podcaster friends whom I could mention too. Thanks to all of them.

5. What's your favourite memory of an event that you've organised? And are there any funny or unusual happenings that have occurred at an event or behind the scenes?

They are mostly concerned with our Whoovers guest meetings, rather than Whooverville. Meeting Terrance Dicks on a number of occasions has been a privilege as was interviewing Barry Letts, at one of the last Doctor Who events that he attended. There are a number of special interviews that I have been lucky enough to do; Katy Manning, whose head somehow ended up in my lap; Graeme Harper – my memory is that all I said was “So, Graeme,” and two hours later, he was still speaking - and being fascinating; and so many more.

The Saturday afternoon meeting with Sylvester was extraordinary. When he was in Derby to launch the panto for the press, at the end of the summer of 2009, we provided a Dalek. I set a bit of an ambush and sent two of our most appealing and (frankly) cute child members to ask Sylvester to agree to do a meeting with us. How could he refuse? We swapped phone numbers and agreed that, although he would be very busy, if a free afternoon or evening came up he would give me a call. And so in early December on a Tuesday morning, I was at work (teacher) had just dismissed my period one class and was preparing for period two, when my phone rang (it should by rights have been turned off). It was Sylvester, he was free that Saturday afternoon, could we use him? Of course we could. I rang Robbie and he booked

a room (for once it had to be a pub). We started putting the word out and in four days managed to put together a very successful event, with over 50 attendees. Sylvester was clearly tired, but was on sparkling form.

6. What do you think are the key ingredients of a truly successful convention?

Above all good guests – ideally a mix of new and classic series, old favourites and new faces, actors and production staff. A good dealers' room; a comfortable venue; competent, friendly and approachable organisation, which while being professional is not trying to rip people off. Apart from Whooverville, I would always point to the first couple of Dimensions conventions, organised by my convention-organising hero Dave Price, which achieved all of the above. Cary Woodward's Regenerations had that too – although I only managed to get to one of those.

7. More and more celebrities seem to be charging for autographs and 'selfies' at some events these days - what is your view on that?

A big, big problem. You cannot blame the celebrities, they are in demand and with so many events around, they can pick and choose where they go and to a degree, what they charge. Touch wood, this has not affected us yet. We book guests on the basis that they will sign autographs as part of what we are paying them for. Whooverville attendees expect to get their autographs for free and (within reason) unlimited. I'm afraid that we might have to say “no thank you” if a potential guest made such demands. We tend to hear if that is likely to happen and then don't approach that person. I hope that our attendees know that we will get the best line up that we can for them each year. If that doesn't include a Doctor or a lot of companions, then there will be other interesting people to meet. So far things have worked well.

8. What sort of events do you yourself enjoy attending?

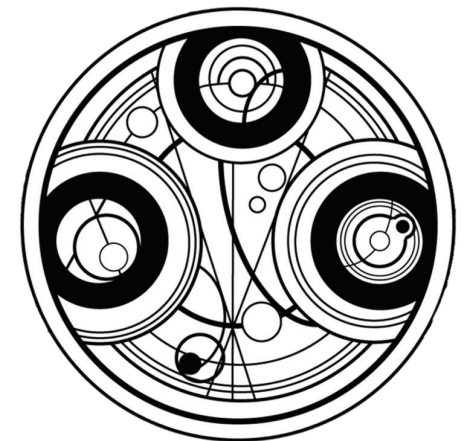
We have a young daughter, so I don't get to many events these days. In recent years, I have loved going back to the Tenth Planet Dimensions conventions, where I have again helped out, but sadly that isn't happening this year. There have been some fun events at the National Space Centre at Leicester too. I mostly restrict myself to Doctor Who events and far prefer traditional conventions to the Comic-con style autograph fair event. I am not a big autograph collector, so for me they are a bit of a waste of time. It does annoy me sometimes, when comments are made along the lines of, “How come it costs £45 for a day at Whooverville (tickets available from QUAD box-office), when I can go to Happytown Comic-con for £10 for the day?” Of course, the answer is that at Happytown, you then will pay £20 plus for each autograph you buy, or if that's not your thing, you'll probably have a little look at some stalls and then wander home again, whereas we provide a full day's entertainment. How much is it for a ticket for 45 minutes at a Premier League football match?

9. You've become quite a 'name' in fandom with both your convention-organising and your writing. How does it feel to be a little bit famous?

Oh, I don't think that's right at all. It's Whooverville that is well-known, not me. Although I suppose that because I am big, beardy and quite loud, people tend to know who I am. I haven't written professionally since Big Finish Short Trips, so that was a long time ago, but I do enjoy putting together the odd story – these days confined to contributions to charity anthologies such as *Time Shadows*. I am having great fun now editing the follow-up volume, cunningly entitled *Time Shadows 2*, which is something I haven't done before.

10. You're a regular scribe for Cosmic Masque's sister publication, Celestial Toyroom. What do you enjoy about writing for CT and other fanzines?

My first fanzine writing was for *Shockeye's Kitchen*, which was such fun, and I then contributed to the Canadian DWIN fanzine *Enlightenment* and to *TSV*, from New Zealand (although I have no connection with either country). I hadn't written for *CT* for years, but I have been very happy to return to that in recent times, when in my view, the magazine has undergone something of a resurgence. I suppose the joy of fanzines, in as much as they still exist, is that they allow fans to talk to fans – to delve into the minutiae in a way that a magazine such as *DWM* (wonderful as it is), which has to aim at least in part at the mainstream, cannot do. ▲



Review

THE MAN WHO THOUGHT OUTSIDE THE BOX

Review by Allan Lear

The Life and Times of *Doctor Who* Creator Sydney Newman

The celebrations of *Doctor Who*'s semicentennial, unbelievably already diminishing into the distant past, brought with them more than the typical wave of nostalgia for the early days of a popular television programme. After all, few shows outside the major soaps can hope to have such a prodigious life expectancy; and, if truth be told, a great deal of fans' enjoyment of *Who* already rests on the hazy memories of childhood scares and black-and-white heroics from long-deleted serials. Would I, for one, have been so excited for the show's return in 2005 had I not dimly recalled primary school nightmares of Nicholas Parsons being fingernailed to death in *Fenric*? Honestly, I doubt it.

But *Doctor Who*, to a greater extent than any other TV series with the possible exception of inferior American cousin *Star Trek*, is more than just a television show: it is an industry and a spawner of cottage industries. One of the salient features of its fandom is a genuine appreciation for the efforts and achievements of the many behind-the-scenes figures who have lent their talents to the show's production, and the fiftieth anniversary has given diligent researchers a window of opportunity in which interest is seen as high enough that there is an evident market for their findings (though, in truth, the market is always there, just rarely as clamorous).

Enter the frame one Mr Ryan Danes, whose contribution to the panoply of *Who* research is this slim volume of biography on one of the most significant figures in the series'

history: Sydney Newman, the ideas man and television executive who, along with producer Verity Lambert, can claim to be both parent and midwife to the programme.

Newman's life was a rich and varied one, and Danes accentuates the accessibility of the subject matter with a clear, conversational prose style that invites the casual enquirer and the interested generalist. More academic students of biography should not be put off, however, because Danes may write for the lay reader but he is serious enough about his subject to include bibliographical sources for the story he weaves.

Publishers Digital Entropy have done their best to obscure matters by refusing to engage the services of a decent proofreader, but Danes' prose is sufficiently clear and lacking convoluted that these efforts fail to make the text unreadable. That Digital Entropy and Danes appear to be conterminous entities makes the decision not to proof extensively both more and less explicable; clearly there is no money in the pot to employ a subeditor, but one would have thought that the point of vanity publishing was to show one's work in the best light.

To the scholarship of the book I cannot attest, being that Mr Danes clearly knows far more than I ever did about the life and times of the fascinating Canadian who gifted *Doctor Who* to the world; but as an introduction to Sydney Newman and the life he led before, during and after his period of great creativity in British television, it serves admirably. ▲

