

This Is Not The End

It most certainly isn't. As I write this, for instance, Channel 4 Teletext (sci-fi news, page 118), has quoted Lorraine Heggessey, Controller of BBC1, saying that she is behind embryonic plans for a new series of *Doctor Who*. As with all these things, it makes sense to phone up the council and ask them to deliver 25 tonnes of road de-icing substance to your house, so you can take the latest *Who* rumour with a great big pinch of salt. But new *Doctor Who* is still being discussed in the Great Halls of Power, that cannot be denied.

It's nearly the end of the magazine. Congratulations! You've made it through 25 pages of analysis, fiction and (some might say) humour, through the strongly-held and mischievously-held opinions of all kinds of people. You're looking forward to going to bed or the pub. I hope you will bear with us just a little longer. After five years in the job, on and off, I wanted to put a few things down about how *Tides of Time* gets made.

First of all, altruistic people send in articles. If I listed everybody who's contributed to *Tides* since Issue 21, I'd fill up the rest of this page. I should mention here my friend Alasdair Prett, who passed away just as *Tides* 26 had come back from the press - an edition of the magazine which featured an article on his wedding six months previously. But if I had to pick out one or two favourite articles, Alice Dryden's piece on *Get Smart!* in *Tides* 22 definitely deserves a mention, not only because it was so well written, but also because it set the standard for a whole host of further 'feature' articles on individual, off-the-beaten-track series, the rarest and most prized writing of all, because they involve the greatest amount of research. For fiction, Dave Bickley takes some beating: his Colin Baker story in *Tides* 26, which got published professionally soon afterwards (we're still waiting for the royalties, Dave) is my own favourite. The people in the photocopy shop liked it too, always a good sign. For a personal take on *Who*, Mark Boyes' encounter with Liz Sladen (*Tides* 25), has, I think, yet to be conquered.

I have, of course, written the odd article myself. I still look back with fondness to a bit of filler in the rather primitive *Tides* 21, two pictures, one of a wounded alien from *The Two Doctors*, the other a confrontation from *Attack of the Cybermen*. The first was the basis of a very short story about the Doctor's anti-Sontaran baked potato oven and in the second the Cyberman was telling Colin Baker "If your name's not down, you're not coming in." This led to all kinds of things like the page 3 "funny" and, oh dear, the back covers, which were an entire underground culture in their own right, and which will one day confound great archaeological minds. If you want a fuller history of this magazine, consult Matthew Kilburn's comprehensive article on the subject in *Tides* 25.

Then articles have to be prettied up, which involves much trawling of the internet for images, a fair amount of scanning, and occasionally image capturing off videos. I started off doing this at OUCS, before investing in the hardware. But no amount of kit has enabled me to get the page numbers right - I've never quite managed it. This time I tried separate text boxes for each number, which sometimes worked and sometimes didn't, depending on whether my copy of Word '97 was in the mood to follow the bottom margin settings or not when the time came to print out each article. I've also tried Word's own page number feature (useless) and printing out a page of page numbers, cutting them up and gluing them to the master copy prior to photocopying. Once I even used rub-down transfers. But even then you have to cope with the vagaries of photocopiers which don't copy/print right to the edge of a piece of paper... Of course, it wouldn't be so bad if I had bigger bottom margins, but the last zillion and a half years of editing and co-editing the magazine has been a battle against White Space in all its forms. *Tides* articles now generally consist of 1,000 - 1,200 words per page, after much experimentation and bloodshed. Oh, and it took me three years to work out how to get rid of spurious blank pages at the end of documents by reducing everything on them to 1 point. You see, a useful tip after all!

Photocopiers are the life and death of any student society. Some of them cost money, some of them (in colleges or, for the cunning, in other places) don't, but for a magazine with pictures you have to use decent kit. There aren't many good photocopiers about in this 'ere town, and some are good one week and bad the next. For my final edition as editor, I decided not to expose myself to The Toner Curse, or the agony of having high-quality original images mangled by Photographic Reproduction. At one stage the idea was that issue 28 would be laser printed by the good offices of Al Harrison, but, almost inevitably, Word '97 documents created on one machine don't look the same when loaded into Word '97 on another - it won't recognise the fonts, the margins will go all over the place, the images will fly off in all directions. So, apart from one or two text-only pages, like this one, *Tides* 28 ended up being printed out on my trusty Hewlett-Packard 710 - a rather archaic piece of kit, and an inkjet at that, but sturdy, and with a built-in photo-enhancing system. That various bits of *Tides* 28 are in colour was another last-minute decision, a sort of tribute from me - I haven't finished doing the covers yet so I hope the ink cartridge (thanks, Linda) holds out a little longer. Still, it's managed 7 so far plus 20 Sylvester McCoys (see opposite!) and an awful lot of Paul McGanns, which seem to have got everywhere.

Editing *Tides of Time* isn't martyrdom - though it does take a bit of work. The satisfaction you get, though, when you see that stack of completed magazines, is enormous (as I write this, I'm still waiting to feel it). And *Tides* has always made a small profit for the Society, generally enough to pay for each year's stall at Freshers' Fair, which will make you feel even better. I'm looking forward to seeing what the new editor makes of it - it's about time things like the contents page had a new look, and there's of course far too much Impact Font about.

Here's looking forward to *Tides of Time* issues 29+.

Mat "wondering one last time if the page number will come out" Peacock.