The Tides of Time
Issue 30  Easter Vacation 2005

Editor  Matthew Kilburn
matthew.kilburn@history.ox.ac.uk

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SHORELINES
By the Editor

The Road to Hell
I’ve been assuring people that this magazine was on its way for months now. My most-repeated claim has probably been that this magazine would have been in your hands in Michaelmas, had my hard drive not failed in August. This is probably true. I had several days blocked out in August and September in which I expected to complete the magazine. However, thanks to the mysteries of the guarantee process, I was unable to replace my computer until October, by which time I had unexpectedly returned to full-time work and was in the thick of the launch activities for the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Another hindrance was the endless rewriting of my paper for the forthcoming Doctor Who critical reader, developed from a paper I gave at the conference Time And Relative Dissertations In Space at Manchester on 1 July last year. There was a time when every cut I made seemed to lead to the addition of 1000 extra words. Thankfully it’s now down to a manageable size. There will be a paper co-written by former Society president Fiona Moore in the volume as well.

So, having intended to present this issue to new members in Michaelmas, I end up publishing another ‘Easter Vacation’ issue, on the verge of becoming out of date once the landscape is changed forever by the arrival of Christopher Eccleston’s Doctor on our screens at the end of March. I hope you see this before the new series airs!

This has been the second edition of Tides I’ve edited, but has taken much longer to put together than the first. I’d love to do another but I’m wary of again being led on by good intentions. I know what I’d like issue 31 to include: the final two parts of Wanderers, plus reactions to the new season, and anything relevant people want to send me – and I’d like it out for Michaelmas at the latest. This may be a tall order.

More from me later on – but now, over to Alex C…
Prologue

*New York City, 2003*

The old walkway echoed to the sound of one man’s solitary footsteps. Even for a city famous for its unsleeping nature, the Doctor thought, making his way across the Brooklyn Bridge with a rather preoccupied mien and a sheaf of printouts in his pocket, it was still possible to find bits of it catching a wink or two at three in the morning. He preferred to be alone.

The Brooklyn Bridge subway station was equally desolate as he entered it, the beep from the swipe-card turnstile sounding somewhat melancholy. Flicking out his pocket watch, he glanced at it: thirty-three minutes past three. All the threes. Dismally, he peered up and down the local and express tracks. No sign of movement: he’d probably end up waiting for quite some... time.

He’d backed into something small and hard: someone pointing a pistol at his back. Odd that he hadn’t heard whomever it was come in. Calmly, though not without an inward sigh of ‘not again’, he raised both hands to shoulder-height.

“NYPD. No sudden moves... sir.” The quiet assertive tone of voice was recognisable enough as a law enforcer’s, but the American accent was not even attempting to be genuine.

“Ah. Well. Not to speak ill of the city’s finest, but firstly, I’d have spotted a real flatfoot a mile away; secondly, even if the city is on Orange Alert I doubt your average policeman would be quite that trigger-happy.” The Doctor smiled tautly as the muzzle was tentatively
withdrawn. Just a few moments longer... “That’s better. Now, if you’ll permit me to explain myself, I’m sure you...”

The rest went unspoken, as he quickly twisted aside, wrenching the pistol away before his assailant would have a chance to fire it: the firearm rebounded off a gaily-painted I-beam before coming to rest on the concrete of the platform. The Doctor was already moving into a counterattack, a practised aikido defence designed to subdue the ersatz policeman easily and without harm.

And found his moves countered with even more ease, inhumanly quickly, to a point where he found himself losing his balance at the very edge of the platform...

Two hands seized him by the neck in an unbreakable grip, holding him above the rails. He struggled for a moment, grasping the arms of the false cop, before giving in and simply hanging there, gasping.

“So, Doctor,” a slightly mocking voice said, emanating from a man of his general size dressed in correct uniform for an NYPD cop of the period, “we meet again.”

The Doctor stared at him. “We’ve met?”

The man nodded, sending the wan light glinting off a pair of circular-lensed shades.

“Tell me my name.”

“Rumpelstiltskin!” cried the Doctor in desperation.

“Cheek,” said the man flatly, tightening his hold on the Doctor’s neck. The Time Lord grunted in pain. “…Well?”

“I know the face,” the Doctor said, after a moment, voice strained. Even his respiratory bypass system was under pressure from the grip: his assailant knew his work. “…Give me a minute.”

“Tick-tock, tick-tock,” sneered the false cop, cocking his head from one side to the other in a vaguely familiar manner. “Not so funny when the boot’s on the other foot, eh?”

“I don’t know what you…” The Doctor tensed suddenly. “Did you hear that?”

“I heard nothing.” The interloper’s voice was pure ice, like his stare through those shades. “What is my name?”

“I’m telling you, I can’t remember. Now will you please let me go?”

“Begging already? That’s not like you. Well, I should say, not like the former you. Dear me, has regeneration changed you that badly?” The man put his head on one side in a way that reminded the Doctor strongly of a cyborgic friend of his. Was it possible that...?

“I’m waiting.” The man’s voice was raised above a distinct and distinctive sound, a kind of dissonant roar combined with a demented shriek from the rails. A wind had picked up out of nowhere.

“I can’t be certain...”

“You better had, Doctor: your time’s running out fast.” The man didn’t miss a beat, though the sounds were getting louder.

With a start, the Doctor glanced to one side. Sure enough, the whispering roar had become almost deafening, now joined by a chorus of grinding brakes, clattering wheels, a brace of brilliant headlights and the imminent approach of a Bronx-bound 4 train.

Wide-eyed, the Doctor glanced back at the man who held him in the path of the blunt-nosed vehicle: eye to crimson-irised eye (for the shades covering this particular quirk had vanished without trace) with an expressionless face so very like his own...

And he remembered.

“Isidore!” he yelled...
spacesuited Doctor was floating free in microgravity, with Isidore, whoever he was, suspended alongside and looking rather like a genie. “Phoenix, Firewalker, as happy as a pig in mud, if I’m any judge, over.”

The Doctor waved airily. “It’s been a while since I actually enjoyed a proper spacewalk. Quite a strange feeling, drifting away and knowing that there’s literally nothing holding you up… Q’s standing by on the grav-belt, so I won’t exactly drift.”

“Should hope not, Doctor. What’s up with this particular bit of space-junk?”

The Doctor’s voice was grave. “Two things are ‘up’, Chandra. One, three people disappeared from this station last year, with no explanation whatsoever; two, this ‘bit of space-junk’ shouldn’t even be in orbit. There’s nothing to hold it up, and drag forces should have brought it down at least a month ago.”

“What the hell is it?”

The Doctor turned himself round to look at the massive, vaguely dragonfly-shaped mass of machinery, flooded with the Earth’s reflected light. Chandra, switching the scanner to lock on to the onboard helmet-camera, watched with him. “It’s generally known as the International Space Station: but most of the nations rich enough to keep it in the air have long since forgotten about it.”

“A haunted house in space?” Isidore chuckled eerily. “That’s a new one.”

The Doctor scowled at him through the visor of the suit’s helmet (Isidore, a cyborg, needed no suit). “I don’t believe in ghosts, Isidore. But I’d like to find out what happened here. Q, forward a few degrees, stop at the airlock there.”

“Righto, Doctor. Here we go.” The well-bred, tidy voice sounded almost cheerful.

“…Right. Thanks, Q. Now for the interesting bit. You may have to ready to brace me on this one: if I say ‘Brakes’, I mean brakes. Got that?”

“Roger and wilco, Doctor.”

The Doctor nodded, and seized hold of the locking wheel for the outer door of the airlock, tugging hard. With all his might, and a little help from the grav-belt, he tried to pull it round: it wouldn’t budge more than a fraction.
He was about to call for Isidore, but the cyborg was already there, black suit only visible as a silhouette against black space. Without another word the cyborg put his own precisely directed strength to the task, and eventually the door unlocked, stiffly. If it hadn’t been for the absence of atmosphere, it would have creaked almost deafeningly.

Isidore looked to the Time Lord. “What next?”

The Doctor thought for a moment. “Isidore, you check out the power and communications couplings, see what damage has been done and when. Chandra, no change, if communications go or something else goes wrong, you get the rest of us out. Clear?”

“Clear,” Chandra and Isidore replied in unison.

The Doctor moved forward into the gloom, pulling his way hand-over-hand. “In I go.”

The Doctor found himself thinking more and more of Isidore’s rather flippant appellation of the station as he made his way from one capsule to the next. Not only was it empty of people, it was empty of air, as he’d discovered when trying to repressurise the airlock, and unlit, as he’d found when making his way through the inner door. Strange indeed.

“Enigma, Phoenix, I think I see a light ahead…”

“Phoenix, Firewalker: copy that, you’d better go check, over.”

Easier said than done, thought the Doctor, reaching forward to squeeze his way through into the final segment of the station, dreading what the task would have been like in the bulky spacesuits of this period.

“No, false alarm.” He peered down. “I forgot the lab section had an Earth-facing window. Isidore: what’s the situation on communications?”

“There isn’t one. All comms beacons have been burnt out. Probably about the same time contact was lost with the Station in the first place.”

“How about power links?”

“Coming on just as soon as I can plug everything back in. It’s a right mess out here.”

“I can imagine. Q?”

“Yes, Doctor?”

“Try and boot up one of these computers as soon as there’s power to run it. Search for anything remotely off-kilter in the records and flag it up on-screen, paying particular attention to spring 2003 and summer 2006.”

“Wilco, Doctor. Out.”

“Phoenix, Enigma, power restoring…now.” Isidore’s words were matched by the sight of the onboard lighting finally snapping on, bulb by bulb along the structure illuminating.

“I’ll keep a close eye out for power-surges.”

“Right.” The Doctor was concentrating on the computer’s screen as Q locked its sensors in the spacesuit’s gauntlet onto the nearest data-transfer ports, busily comparing old and new data, flagging up particular lines of numbers from the external sensors of the station itself. “Firewalker, Phoenix, you’re the one with the engineering degree: anything unusual? Over.”

Chandra was flicking controls irritably on the scanner. “Turn down the gain on the camera, will you? There’s too much flare to see the screen.”

The answer came back curiously distorted and cracked through: “Firewalker, Phoenix, you’re breaking up, say again, over.”
“Phoenix, Firewalker. Turn down the visual…” Chandra found herself cut off by a spray of interference. Then the subspace link went dead. “…Doctor?” She tweaked expertly at the switches on the jury-rigged communicator, but still no response. “Phoenix, Firewalker, do you read me? Over.”

She switched the scanner to ‘external’ and was relieved to see the ghostly figure of Isidore still floating nearby. “Enigma, Firewalker, do you read? I can’t raise the Doctor. Respond.” But there was still no reply. Isidore was waving frantically, but she couldn’t read what he was saying.

Any more of this, she thought, and I’m going out there for him myself.

“Firewalker, Phoenix: Chandra, do you read me? Over.” The Doctor was perturbed to say the least. The communications systems on a suit that was supposed to be fully redundant – not to mention virtually indestructible – had failed entirely. He hadn’t been able to get through to Isidore either…

That was it. “Q, abort current program and store results. Get me through to Isidore on short-range, now.” A slight beep at his wrist acknowledged the order. Funny: Q would usually say “Righto” at that point.

The tumbling figures on the screen paused… and resumed.

“Q, this is no time to be cheeky. Put me through.”

Another beep, and the screen went blank. The lights also went out.

“Q, what is this -?”

Then all hell broke loose. The lights flickered wildly, almost angrily, and out of nowhere a kind of psychokinetic force of some sort plucked the Doctor up and hurled him against the wall of the science capsule. In that moment he was dimly thankful that the suits had been so sturdily built, even as he tried to wrestle whatever it was away from him: the lights on the helmet had failed to kick in, and he was fighting blind. “Q, brakes -!” he choked.

Isidore had swung round to the corresponding outer section of the station, but there was nothing he could do. With the subspatial interference about the place, any attempt at transference might just turn him into cosmic soup. So, he listened futilely to the sounds of the fight, knowing nothing of whom the Time Lord was fighting.

The strange force had shunted the Doctor bodily through the interstice between capsules, right into the connecting module. Gently, he was trying to fight back, but in the absence of gravity, light or anything against which he could brace himself, he was losing the battle, being hammered repeatedly from one side of the hull to another. The suit was beginning to suffer under the pounding, sparking out from the left hand upwards: desperately, he lashed out at his unseen attacker, but his boot only collided with a storage-bag, and something vaguely brittle within it snapped. There was a spreading darkness before him… the airlock was opening in the side of the capsule.

He had not time enough to flounder for a handhold before the force flung him straight out and into space.

Chandra saw him being flung out. “Doctor!” she yelled in fear and frustration.
The Doctor was, even as he fell, relieved to be free of the force that had attacked him: he was hardly worried about the state of the suit. Built as it was for the average space-tourist, there were plenty of emergency systems, including some manual ones, which could be deployed if worst came to worst. Picking his moment, he pulled a control marked brightly against the colour of the suit. The most basic of fail-safes kicked in at his command.

He braced himself, though not enough as it turned out, against the buffet of the recoil: otherwise, it had been a textbook launch of a tepid-re-entry parachute. Folding his arms over his chest, he peered down: it looked like a moderately calm day on the Atlantic, which was just as well. He could always use what was left of the grav-belt’s power to slow him down the rest of the way. But a warning readout from the suit flashed on the back of his left hand: batteries low, air low. Surely not: he hadn’t been out in space that long—

Twelve percent? That would rule out the grav-belt option outright. He’d have to divert as much power to the air-scrubber as he could to ensure it didn’t give out before he hit atmosphere. Unless… wasn’t there a backup oxygen tank? Empty. How? Still, all the more reason to conserve what he had: he might just make it…

He could feel the deceleration strengthen. It wouldn’t be too long before he landed: he might just make landfall if he could catch a prevailing wind with the ‘chute. No, wait, the jetstream would blow him out to sea…

He was still a few thousand feet up when the ‘chute disengaged with a pop of miniature explosions. “No -!” he said aloud, as he was flung down at speed. He hadn’t dropped a million feet to be beaten at the last three thousand…! Within a few seconds he had steadied himself into standard freefall position, able only to hope that he would make a softer landing by hitting the ocean. In one desperate effort, he stabbed at the comms control, hoping someone would hear him on a conventional radio frequency: “This is Tango Phoenix, Tango Phoenix. Mayday-Mayday-Mayday…”

But there was no reply, not even as he hit the surface.

Blue, he thought muzzily as his senses returned, lots of blue. What happened to the sky? Then reason reasserted itself. He had to strike upward for the surface before his air ran out: already it was getting thinner. Wait – it was being vented out: he could see the bubbles released… He lashed out with both arms and both legs. The effort was excruciating: his vision was beginning to go cloudy. If he went into metabolic coma he’d sink without trace; if he didn’t the lack of air might well kill him – it was already wearing him out. He wondered, as some orange halo punctuated the gathering darkness, whether his next self might evolve a set of gills…

Next thing he knew, he was at the surface, indeed on a hard deck, struggling for breath like a beached fish and shivering under a leaden sun. Someone slapped a respirator mask over his face, and he gulped down the air gratefully. Rescued. “…Doctor?” he heard a young man’s voice say as he tried to sit up. A pair of cool fingers tried to take his pulse.

“What is it?” he slurred in response, and was rewarded with a startled stare. Evidently the young man had been calling on another doctor on board.

He took a deeper breath, and struggled to stand: the young man tried to stop him. “Hey, easy, you’re not…”

“Unsinkable,” he finished, his voice hoarse. “I know. Unfortunately.” He staggered to the rail and peered out at the miles of deep blue sea. Then, a flash reflected in the surface caught his eye. “What -?”

The young man in the white shirt and blue tie stared up with him at what looked like a high-altitude fireworks display. An image the Doctor recognised all too well from the news reports of February 2003. The ISS had commenced its final break-up.

“Oh no,” was all he could say. ☹

**Next Episode: QUO VADIS?**
I’m a Doctor Who Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here!

The world’s TV companies are running out of ideas for dirt cheap TV shows. Fortunately, with a new series on the way there are a lot of people from old Doctor Who looking for work...

(1) I’m a Doctor Who Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here! Paul McGann, Brian Croucher, Paul Darrow and Katy Manning are marooned in a BBC set store without any of the creature comforts of their showbiz lifestyles. Meanwhile in the studio misguided fans set them the nightly task of coming up with a half-arsed fan rip-off with nothing but what they find around them. Each night a loser will be voted out of the show and allowed to return to touring repertory theatre. A special DVD of Paul McGann asleep will be available from Big Finish.

(2) Doctor Who Celebrity Ready Steady Cook: In the Green Pepper kitchen, Brian Turner serves up a pan-fried Morris Minor stuffed with button mushrooms for an Omnivorous Drashig; meanwhile in the Red Tomato kitchen Phil Vickery is taken aback when Shockeye of the Quawncing Grig (The Two Doctors) turns up with a giant bag which appears to contain a female Doctor Who companion and two iceberg lettuces. "You're sure you only spent a fiver?" asks Ainsley Harriott. "Certainly," says Shockeye. "She needs the work." Then, in the Quickie Bag section of the show, Mr. Barbecue grills some chicken.

(3) Doctor Who Fat Club: Overweight Doctor Who characters such as the Fat Controller (Attack of the Cybermen), the Captain (Pirate Planet), King Yrcanos (Mindwarp), the sixth Doctor and Mat are put through a brutal fitness regime by the Dominators and Bonnie Langford.

(4) 999 Doctor Who Special: Michael Buerk narrates as various bit-part characters from Doctor Who go to their deaths in circumstances that just shouldn't have happened: "He then made the fatal mistake of touching the green slime", "Kevin Pratt, 37, was standing on the Thames foreshore with a metal detector when...", "This harmless looking rubber sofa became a potential deathtrap" and "He made the fatal mistake of touching the green slime" (oh no, not again). The show features lots of non-voyeuristic camcorder footage.

(5) College Girls II - Doctor Who Companions: Dodo Chaplet, Victoria Waterfield, Jo Grant, both Romans (they hate each other, you know) and Nyssa give up being towed around the Universe and being tied up and exposed to hideous danger week in, week out, and enrol at St. Hilda’s College, Oxford where they can be tied up and exposed to hideous danger week in, week out with only the minor inconvenience of an OX4 postcode.

(6) Time Team Devil’s End October Special: Corenza Lewis, Phil Harding and Mick Aston investigate a Bronze Age burial mound in Wiltshire. Meanwhile, Tony Robinson has organised a re-enactment of ancient pagan ceremonies in a cave beneath the church, rituals which have of course no connection with his membership of the National Executive Council of the Labour Party. However, Channel Four loses contact with the dig site, either because of the awakening of an ancient Space Daemon or more likely because Phil Harding has chucked a pickaxe at Robinson for telling him that he was digging in the wrong place. Next week: Tony does Telos!
(7) TV’s Top 100 Billion Worst Doctor Who Stories: an infinite number of CD script writers are given an infinite number of typewriters.

(8) Back To The Floor – The Third Doctor: Jon Pertwee takes on the role of a UNIT corporal. During an invasion of Earth by the Intergalactic Zombie Lords, he learns the true meaning of the terms "cannon fodder" and "Action by HAVOC."

(9) Faking It Doctor Who Special: A group of people have only two weeks to transform themselves into a convincing Doctor Who. Mawdryn, the Abbot of Amboise, a Mexican dictator, a robot built by the Daleks, Meglos the Shape Shifting Space Cactus and Omega The Dark Lord of Time all make a decent effort, whereas Sylvester McCoy is just pants.

(10) Doctor Who Scrapheap Challenge: Two teams of Doctors have just ten hours to design and build a time machine using only the contents of a junk yard in Shoreditch.

(11) I Want That Host: parasitic Doctor Who monsters such as a Wirrm, The Mara and a Nucleus of the Swarm are shown round a variety of mid-priced humans in attractive suburban locations. This show was formerly known by the working title Who Not To Wear.

(12) Songs Of Praise, From A Nameless Village In Northumberland: the chorus of Shine, Jesus Shine is interrupted when Haemovores break into the church and kill everybody. But it turns out to be a trap planned by the seventh Doctor and Thora Hird, Vampire Slayer.

(13) Ultimate Ground Force: Alan Titchmarsh creates a Moroccan garden in Basingstoke while Tommy Walsh shows you how to clear a plot of land of Vervoids, Spiridon Death Orchids, Wolfweeds, Krynoids and Melanie Bush, using Napalm, Agent Orange, and scythes.

(14) The Game of Rassilon: out-of-work ex-Doctor Who stars and monsters compete to see who will get the chance to put on the Ring Of Rassilon and win an eternity of living death ( = an everlasting supply of convention appearances).

(15) Hell’s Kitchen: Michael Grade is roasted on a spit for eternity by twelve of the most evil demons in Hell and Gordon Ramsay.

(16) G-string Doctors: another high-quality non-titillating documentary on the adult entertainment industry. This week, we visit a street in King’s Cross where illegal hardcore porn videos and Doctor Who CD’s are made, to find out why the former have more convincing plots.

(17) Doctor Who Celebrity Bargain Hunt Live! Two Doctors, each with a companion and an antiques expert, trawl an antiques fair for items they hope will make a profit at auction. The Red Team (fourth Doctor and Romana) do a fantastic deal. OK, so the stall holder may have green scaly skin and one eye, but they manage to come away with a Gutenberg Bible, eight Louis XV chairs and a Gainsborough for £175. The Blue Team (fifth Doctor and Adric) spend £2000 on a complete set of BBC Doctor Who books, so David Dickinson kills them.

All of these programmes will be shown by Channel Four or BBC TWO in 2005.

James Davies and M. Khan

The Tides of Time 30 · 10 · Easter Vacation 2005
The Road Not Taken?
An Analysis of Season Twenty-Six, by Daniel Saunders

Season twenty-six is often viewed as a key moment of transition in the history of Doctor Who. It is seen as the point where the series changed from the family adventure serials of seasons one through twenty-five into the adult, character-based stories that would characterize the New Adventures. It is certainly true that in season twenty-six an attempt is made to examine Ace in the way that would characterize the novels for the first time since the early stories of season one (with the possible exception of season seven). However, I would argue that this is concentrating on superficial changes and missing the point. I think that season twenty-six is different not only to the television stories that preceded it, but also to the novels that followed it, because of a fundamental difference in the way that these stories are told. In this season unlike most, if not all Doctor Who stories before or since, it is not plot or a desire for spectacle that drives these stories, but rather characterization and themes. This can be seen clearest by examining each story in turn, starting with the ones that demonstrate it most clearly.

‘The Curse of Fenric’: Magic and Realism

It is easy to imagine ‘The Curse of Fenric’ being made in any previous season of Doctor Who. It would be about a group of vampires attacking a 1940s naval base to release an ancient evil. In the background would be themes of faith, love, betrayal and war. However, the story as transmitted differs in one key respect. It is about faith, love, betrayal and war and somewhere in the background is a plot about vampires attacking a 1940s naval base to release an ancient evil. This probably explains why the plot does not really withstand close inspection. To mention just a few points: why does the Doctor spend the first half of the story trying to work out what is going on if he already knows? How did Fenric create the time-storm that took Ace to Iceworld if he was trapped? What exactly does the eponymous curse do? A lot that happens apparently by chance is attributed to it, but no real idea of how it works is given. Worst of all, why does Evil From The Dawn Of Time care about a chess puzzle? In another story, these problems would probably be insurmountable, but here they do not really matter, because they are simply not relevant to the story (as opposed to plot). This story is about its themes, as developed through the characters.

A key theme of the story is love and faith. The two are seen as interconnected to some extent. Reverend Wainwright is unable to read the biblical passage stating that love is greater than faith and hope, perhaps because having neither faith nor hope, he doubts whether he can feel love, or possibly because he feels unable to judge any one as more important than the others. There are many relationships built on love and/or faith in this story: Ace and Audrey, Ace and the Doctor, Ace and Sorin and, in a less personal sense, Sorin and the revolution, even Millington’s faith in Fenric (and of course Reverend Wainwright no longer has faith in religion or in the essential goodness of mankind). The story seems to be arguing that love and faith are vital and powerful emotions (they hold back
the haemovores) and that in many ways faith in something or someone is more important than whether or not that faith is justified. If Wainwright still had religious faith, he would have survived, regardless of the veracity or otherwise of his beliefs.

The converse side of faith is betrayal, a breaking of faith, and this is another important theme in the story. If love and faith are powerful forces for good, then it is only natural that the ultimate force of evil is represented by betrayal. The British and the Russians plan to betray each other, Fenric betrays Millington by killing his troops, betrays the haemovores by having the Ancient One kill them and plans to betray the Ancient One by releasing the poison that will result in his (her? It’s female in the novelization) polluted world. And of course, the Doctor only wins by “betraying” Ace’s trust in him by criticising her, but this is in fact a betrayal of Fenric, as it allows the Ancient One to kill him.

Another important theme is that of war. This is connected to betrayal, as war is portrayed as a betrayal of the common man by governments, who fight wars for their own reasons, with one of the soldiers stating that war is “a game played by politicians.” This theme of the story does, however, make for slightly uncomfortable viewing, as its suggestion that war is always wrong is undermined by the war in question. After all, as a Jew, I owe my life to the people who were willing to risk their lives to defeat the Nazi tyranny and I find the suggestion that they were duped into doing this by corrupt politicians naïve and even slightly offensive. Similarly, the democratic British government (which at this point in time included socialists as well as conservatives) is shown to be as bad as the Stalin’s brutal and totalitarian regime in the USSR. If anything, the USSR seems to be presented in a slightly better light: the Russians just want to steal the Ultima machine, but the British want to destroy Moscow.

‘Ghost Light’: Families and Other Animals

There are three things upon which everyone who sees ‘Ghost Light’ seems to agree:

1. It is the most complicated and difficult to understand story in the TV series.
2. It is the TV story with the most references to other works of art (in the broadest sense of the word), mainly, but not by any means exclusively, Victorian novels.
3. It is about the nineteenth century debate between creationists and Darwinians, with Light representing creationism (he is referred to as an angel by Ace) and the evolving
Josiah and Control showing Darwin’s theories in action, while Reverend Matthews, a staunch creationist, is turned into a monkey.

The first point lies outside the scope of this article, but I can not miss the opportunity to point out that while ‘Ghost Light’ may require the viewer to work out what is going on, rather than spoon-feeding explanations, most of the story does, once you start to think about it, make sense. However, as with other stories in this season, the main emphasis is not on plot, but on the themes. It is surprisingly rarely noted that the second and third features of the story are interrelated. The large number of references to nineteenth century art and literature help to emphasise the period setting of the story and provide a ready-made atmosphere by referring to contemporary fictions that the viewer already knows. This is useful for a studio-bound programme attempting to take an audience back to the past on a limited budget.

More importantly, some of the references, despite apparently being throwaway lines,
forgotten their origins as the mistress of the house and her daughter, and the story also deals with the origins of Ace’s anti-social behaviour.) An obvious instance of this is Gwendoline singing a genuine Victorian music hall song with the lyrics “That’s the way to the zoo/That’s the way to the zoo/ The monkey house is nearly full/ But there’s room enough for you”, a scene that acquires darkly comic overtones when Reverend Matthews is later turned into a monkey. Similarly, the Doctor’s question about Josiah and Control, “Which is the Jekyll and which the Hyde?” reminds us of the theme of that story, the animal nature of man, a key point in the Darwinian debate, while when Ace refers to the light (and Light)-shunning Josiah as “Dracula”, we remember that the Count could change from his human form to that of certain animals and back again. Josiah’s line about Gwendoline’s “metamorphosis” when she wears male dinner dress (itself possibly a reference to another nineteenth century controversy, that on the role of women, especially female suffrage) reminds us, intentionally or otherwise, of books of that name by both Ovid and Kafka, stories that feature people changing into other forms of life.

Names are also an important way of symbolising the themes of the story. Both Nimrod and Josiah are biblical names, making clear that they are both subservient (at least originally) to Light, who represents the creationist view of the universe, a point stressed when Ace quotes the biblical “let there be light.” Josiah is also the first name of Bounderby in Dickens’s *Hard Times*, a character constantly telling people that he is a self-made man and therefore an appropriate namesake for Josiah, a literally self-made man. There are characters called Gwendoline/Gwendolen in two nineteenth century stories that revolve around unknown personal origins, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Daniel Deronda*, emphasising the character’s forgotten background. Redvers Fenn-Cooper’s name is redolent of that of James Fenimore Cooper, the author of several novels (most famously *The Last of the Mohicans*) that stressed the idea of the “noble savage” (a phrase used here by the Doctor to refer to Ace), a common idea in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, emphasising the purity of the so-called “savage races” that live in an almost animal “state of nature.” This again indicates mankind’s animal origins.

‘Survival’: Kittens and Yuppies

‘Survival’ has more emphasis on theme and less on characterisation than the other stories in the season, because it is an allegory and so uses its plot, rather than its characters, to develop its ideas. The whole story is a critique of the philosophy of “survival of the fittest” (preached by the contemporary government under Mrs Thatcher), whether in economics or society, which is shown to reduce people to the level of savage animals. The Cheetah people, Paterson and the Master personify the ideas of survival of the fittest, all using violence against other people to try and achieve their aims, regardless of the consequences. The Cheetah people fight each other, even though this speeds up the destruction of their planet. Paterson teaches the youth of Perivale how to fight, while the Master wants to use the Doctor and later Midge to help him escape from the planet of the Cheetah people and then discard them when he no longer needs them. He and the Doctor begin to change into Cheetah people when they fight, showing that violence encourages the animalistic, savage side of people. The Doctor represents an alternative point of view, telling friends that it is only by not fighting the Cheetah people or running away from them that they can survive.
He encourages them to cooperate to escape and realises that “If we fight like animals, we die like animals.”

The first episode is particularly strong, with the allegory still in the background, there for the intelligent viewer to find, but not forced. There are some subtle touches like the shopkeeper’s joke about the man who does not have to run faster than the lion, as long as he runs faster than his friend, neatly reinforcing both plot and theme. Unfortunately, the next two episodes see a drop in quality. It becomes a bit of a runaround, with some obvious padding (the motorbikes) rather than developing its ideas and the subtlety of the first episode is abandoned in favour of Midge, dressed as a yuppie lecturing the self-defence class on survival of the fittest.

This is also an appropriate place to discuss the season’s focus on Ace (excepting ‘Battlefield’). Rarely had a companion been the focus of so much attention and, uniquely, Ace is turned from the collection of buzzwords and loosely connected characteristics (likes: explosives, loud music, badges; hates: conformity, authority, clowns) of her first six stories into one of the most realistic, if not the most realistic, of all the companions. The writers have actually sat down and thought about what must have happened to her as a child and adolescent to turn her into the confused and unstable person she is. As a result, she becomes arguably the first companion to be more than just a set of reactions, at least over a period of more than one story. ‘Fenric’ explores her confused relationship with her mother, indicating that her problems started at home. In ‘Ghost Light’, we find out about the death of her friend in a racist attack that made her both angry and opposed to bigotry of all kinds, while Survival shows the sheer boredom of her youth that prevented her finding any constructive outlet for her anger. ‘Survival’ also explores that anger on a metaphorical level, with her descent into the savagery of a Cheetah-person reflecting the way her anger is in danger of consuming her.

After all this, it is difficult to see what else the writers could have done with the character of Ace without repeating themselves (as the New Adventures did), especially as ‘Survival’ indicates that she now has her emotions under control and I believe that it was planned that she would leave halfway through season twenty-seven, joining the Time Lord academy as a result of the Doctor’s tutelage during her time with him.

‘Battlefield’: Odd One Out

‘Battlefield’ is the most “traditional” Doctor Who story in season twenty-six, placing the story ahead of the characters and themes. This is perhaps one of its problems. There are a couple of large, character-based themes that are not really developed. For example, there are hints that the script wants to deal with the complexity of love, both romantic and familial. Morgaine loves her son, yet is ready to let him be killed if military strategy requires it. She hates Arthur and is desperate for revenge on him, yet breaks down when told that he is dead. However, this complex character and her emotions are not explored. It is often argued that this is because there are too many characters in the story to allow time to fully develop any of them. I am not really sure that this is the main cause, as there do not really seem to be many more characters than usual. A more likely reason is the uncertain tone of the piece. It seems unable to decide whether it is a light-hearted action story (in the
traditional style) or a more downbeat character-based drama. As a result of this confusion, characters and themes are introduced only to be ignored as things get blown up.

One theme that is elaborated on a little is warfare (as the title implies). There are several key scenes contrasting the “honourable” warfare of chivalric romance with that of the twentieth century. The most obvious is the Doctor’s speech to Morgaine about the (im)morality of nuclear weapons, but the sequence where the Brigadier finds Morgaine and her soldiers at the war memorial also serves to contrast the two methods of waging war. The Destroyer might represent nuclear weaponry; intended to be used as a last resort, he is kept chained up as long as possible, as he is likely to cause as much harm to those who set him free as to their enemies. Similarly, the story seems to be setting up an honourable death for the Brigadier, saving the world from the immoral Destroyer, while the introduction of Doris would add poignancy (or possibly cheap sentimentality, depending on your point of view). Unfortunately, while Lethbridge-Stewart did indeed die in the early drafts of the script, in the story as broadcast, he survives, which is a bit of an anti-climax.

The Road Not Taken?

Season twenty-six represented a fundamentally new method of storytelling for Doctor Who, with plot sidelined in favour of thematic depth and strong characterisation. However, the effects of this experiment have largely been ignored by subsequent stories across various media. While many of them, especially the New Adventures, owe a considerable debt to this season in terms of characterization and a willingness to use adult themes, these themes have almost always remained secondary to the plot. Ultimately, the thematic emphasis of this season remained “the road not taken” as subsequent stories returned to the more traditional emphasis on plot.
A Child of the Gods

by Alex M. Cameron

“...a child of the Gods.” (The Doctor, ‘The Daleks’ Master Plan’, of Katarina)

HE CAPERED ALONG THE PATH trod by nobody before him with an almost demented kind of joy, the tools jangling on his sash. For the first time in his short life he had escaped the smothering influences of his House; no lessons or fancy robes, no boring rules, responsibilities, traditions, restrictions, history; no Uncles, Cousins, Drudges and, perhaps most importantly of all, no Satthralope.

He was Free!
Free to explore. Not as a conqueror, but as a pioneer, a seer of sights unseen, conquering only with his eyes. Someone like that wild old man who’d arrived at the House a week ago: Innocent and he had taken him at first for an Outlander and been afraid of him when he first stepped over the threshold, until he’d begun to speak in a distinctively urban accent, and then they both knew he had to be a Time Lord. He called himself Curator Rathafen, and wanted to speak with Uncle Quences.

Over dinner he gleaned more information about this Rathafen, practically weighing him down with questions, and thought: what a glorious thing it must be, to be a Curator! It seemed these keepers of ancient things were as important as ordinary Time Lords, but spent most of their time in the Outlands rescuing ancient things (‘artefacts’, whatever they were) from the deserts and the mountains and showing them to those stuffy Time Lords who lived in the Capitol and talked about nothing but boring things for ages.

Rathafen had come to tell Uncle Quences and the rest of the House about some really old thing that was hidden somewhere near to the House itself, according to old maps found in the Chapter Libraries: like a House itself, but buried like a decim in the Otherstide pudding, either on Mount Lung or on the plain below it. The Curators had been looking for it, but couldn’t find it – and it had occurred to him, how pleased everyone would be if he
found it! Maybe Rathafen would persuade Quences to let him become an apprentice Curator rather than join the Academy, and...

His excited reverie had become a pleasant dream as, despite the protests of the dining table, he fell asleep amidst the remains of a formal luncheon.

He’d woken late in the day, with a Drudge fussing around him and his mind made up. He dismissed the Drudge as best he could, and set about gathering what he would need. An old aarn-lamp, to see by; his Chapterhouse mess-blade; an old pudding-knife pillered from the table to serve as a trowel; and a dust-whisk stolen from Satthralope’s copious collection. Threading them quickly onto the sash of his tunic, he thought of the strange and ancient things he might unearth, somewhere out there.

He left without telling a soul; not even Innocet could be trusted not to give him away.

Thus it was that he was bounding with glee along a path of his own through the arid wilderness of the plain, the brightness of the orange sky and the icy freshness of the air adding to his excitement. It was almost as if this day had been made for him, knew what he was about to do today. The sky shimmered with a strange kind of cloud or aurora, rippling as he gazed up at it. The sight filled him with a kind of awe.

Then, he realised. In amidst the rippling was a dancing dark speck — the body of a flutterwing, something long and slender stuck in it. It was so beautiful and crazy that he almost clapped. It was falling towards him, twitching feebly through the breezy air in its many colours.

Somebody shouted in a language he didn’t know: he started back as an Outlander, no, three of them, stormed towards the place where the dying creature was about to land, with bows in their fists and quivers slung at their hips like stasers.

Still, he got to the flutterwing first. It was all but dead: not quite, though, for the long, supple body could still be heard quietly skittering across the rocks, the wings whispering glassily. This was probably the only time that this flutterwing would ever know anything of what it was like to live on the ground. He wondered. Did the Outlanders collect the wings, or eat some part of the bodies? The flutterwing trembled once more as he teased the long, long arrow out of its side. It sounded almost like a dying sigh. Was it in pain?

He had never known what it was like to be hurt, before. He wondered what was going through whatever mind a flutterwing had. Slowly and deliberately, he turned the arrow round, and jabbed its sharp worked-flint head into his left palm.

The old rocks, older than he, older than his race, echoed to his shrill cry of surprise and outrage.

Mindlessly, his left hand still stinging furiously, he hurled himself, yelling without words, down the shallow escarpment at the three Outlanders who had shot down this beautiful creature and caused it pain. Unprepared for the sight of a wild-faced young Prydonian, and fearing others might follow in his tracks, the Outlanders scattered, pelting for their upland burrows in clouds of desert dust.

Roaring, he followed them as far as he was able: but the dust soon eclipsed all landmarks, nearly smothering him. Coughing and dizzy, he was forced to stop. Only then did it occur to him that he had ventured out into a place that not even the Curators knew well, and that he had well and truly lost his way. Mount Lung could be any one of the distant blue smudges waverling in the distance, and there could be any number of rivers,
ravines and wild beasts to confront on the way back. He sank to his knees, shaking, a
whimper building in his throat, feeling more despondent than he’d ever felt before.

A desperate idea seized his mind, and he sprinted off in the direction of the Outlanders’
settlement. If he was never to make it back to Lungbarrow, perhaps he could ask one of the
Outlanders to take him in. “Wait! Come back!” he cried, but there was no reply but an
empty echo of his words: the Outlanders had long vanished. “No-o!”

He ran and ran, but however hard he pushed himself, he seemed to stay in the same
place, the same stones closing in around him, a trap. “Help me…!” he screamed, full of
panic –

And then he fell into a nightmare, the sandy ground opening up like a quagmire
beneath his running feet, swallowing it up, throwing him down into darkness with the stones
and the dust, bumping and rolling uncontrollably. Jangle and bump and jangle and –

With a final thump he hit a dusty floor, winded, the darkness almost complete, his
hearts still pounding. Something glowed balefully, violet… his lamp. Amazing that it hadn’t
been broken in his fall. He clutched at its pear-shaped contours, dangling against his chest,
held it up and shook it.

Round room… shadows across the walls… strange, ancient. His jaw dropped as he
realised he had found the old underground House quite by accident, had fallen through it
into some sort of shrine. Groggily, careful of his bruises, he sat up and held his little aarm-
lamp aloft, picking out a weird mural on the wall with its phosphorescence. Figures danced
across the stars with smaller people and monstrous creatures he didn’t recognise; only one
symbol, the Old Gallifreyan for ‘infinity’ that he’d once before spotted on the front of a
heavy book of Quences’, was familiar, and repeated around the room. None of it made any
sense, but it struck him with a sort of wonder. Longer ago than he could imagine, someone
had painted all of these, might have worshipped all these weird figures. It might have been
superstition, but it looked beautiful.

His vision swam momentarily: he looked down with a sense of disconnection at a still-
bleeding left hand. It looked a funny shape… He swung his gaze upwards, and suddenly the
painted people were coming to life, dancing round him, round and round and round for
ever and ever and…

Darkness. Hard. So cold…

He came to himself again almost at once; or, thought he did. An elegant-looking
woman, aged as Satthralope but somehow also as young as he was, was standing by him,
holding him by the arm, looking into his eyes.

*Listen, little one.* The voice seemed to come out of a dream. *It is a dream, but it may
not last very long. Your real self is lying unconscious down there – no, don’t look – but I
have prolonged a little the time that passes over you, so that we may talk.*

“Who are you?” he tried to say. The sand trickled in the hourglass the woman held,
making the same sound as the flutterwing’s trembling body.

*I am the dream that your people try to forget or dismiss; I am also the only defence you
currently have against My kinswoman, Death. That arrow was poisoned, little one. Yet the
little that I know tells Me that you are too vital to destiny to fail now. Let us make a little
exchange, then: you will stay alive, and become My Champion against those who would
upset the continuum by action or by inaction…*
Don’t listen to that prissy miss, another figure from the mural interrupted her: a dazzling figure in formless, faceless white. You are My quarry now, understand? I will have My tribute from you now, even that which you refused Me for the first time.

She moved forward, and suddenly he felt his whole leaden body rushing towards him.

Scream.

The elegant woman took the angelic figure by the hand. Enough. I doubt You will get Your money’s worth from him now. To him, she said: Go now, My Evergreen One, while you still have time. I shall be at your side, but do not forget you are only mortal.

He nodded dumbly, eyes already glazed over with fever where he lay half-inert on the floor of the catacomb. Her voice, whoever She was, became lost in an interference pattern of many, many others. Perhaps he was going mad, like people did in the stories he’d been told. He’d barely understood half of the words She had been using, but he understood that he and She had been swapping something. He’d find out what it was later, maybe...

The aarm-lamp guttered as its component gels began once more to separate, and went out, plunging him into a morass of visions and monsters through which he crawled in a state of blind terror like a three-legged tafelshrew (mangling his injured hand against his convulsing chest) for what seemed like forever, before exhaustion overcame him and he slumped into oblivion once more.

To Cousin Innocet, several hours and many tens of miles later, he said confusedly: “I don’t know what I saw; I don’t even know whether I saw it; but it looked real, I was talking to it, it was like a sort of god...” Innocet merely nodded, glad to see him alive once more after his brush with death, and said nothing.

To Chandra Petrovic-Bowman, seven regenerations, over a thousand personal years and unnumbered parsecs later, he concluded his story somewhat differently: “You know, I think I have those Outlanders to thank for my change of heart: once I’d learnt what it was like to feel pain, I didn’t feel like I was a discoverer, only a victim.

“So I knew I wasn’t going to go out into the margins of my own planet and be a mere Curator.

“From then on, I was determined I was going to be someone who could heal, could offer some sort of remedy wherever I found pain.”

“A Doctor?”

“A Doctor.” 🌡️

MORE SHORELINES

The Road to Hell: part two

I made some rash promises in the closing editorial last time. You will have noticed that there is no article on the Big Finish CDs, or on Peter Davison’s Doctor. These may appear next time. There are some unplanned differences as well – I lost several fonts when my hard drive crashed, and have not yet tried to salvage them from the forlorn hard drive of my older PC. So, goodbye Bell MT (one of my favourite typefaces) and Lucida Blackletter, and hello Baskerville and Manuscript.

More from me this issue after Alex Middleton’s Blackpool article.
DocSoc: The Early Years

*Paul Groves* takes the Society from the age of Sylvester and Sophie, to the evening of Paul McGann, and beyond...

**Origins of a Society**

With production of a new series of *Doctor Who* well under way, it’s a good time to take a trip in the TARDIS to 1989 when the last series of *Doctor Who* was made. Coincidentally 1989 was also the year when the *Doctor Who* Society started at Oxford. Although there was an earlier *Doctor Who* Society which started about 1976 and survived until about 1980, little is known about it and it didn’t show videos, though there is anecdotal evidence that they succeded in hosting a Tom Baker speaker meeting.

In Hilary 1989 a group of students decided to set up a society to show old *Doctor Who* stories every week and set about the formidable task of finding a TV, a video, a room and some members, without the luxury of any money! The first committee meeting was held on Saturday 18 February and the Society was registered with the proctors the following Monday. Although there were eight on the original committee, the first three presidents, Roger Shaw, Adam Stephens and Jon Bryden, deserve a mention. These three seemed to newcomers to run the society as a triumvirate, and bore most of the responsibility for finding video collections to draw upon and sorting out what rapidly became a much larger organization than originally planned.

At 8pm on Wednesday 8 March 1989 in Christ Church Tom Quad Lecture Room 2, the Society was launched with a free inaugural meeting. Top of the bill was ‘Pyramids of Mars’, and for the princely sum of £1, members were enrolled for the remainder of the academic year. That first meeting also heralded the start of two of the Society’s greatest traditions, the use of free Jelly Babies to bribe potential new members into joining and the first ever Society quiz, which began with the infamous question, ‘What science fiction series started on November 23rd 1963 and has run for a quarter of a century?’.

That first meeting was a roaring success and, once again, Oxford University was host to a *Doctor Who* society.
The First Year

Weekly meetings of the Society, which quickly became known as DocSoc, started on Monday May 1st with ‘Death to the Daleks’. DocSoc has met every Monday in term time since. For the first four terms, the main feature of a complete Doctor Who story was accompanied by a serialised story, shown one episode a week. These provided a way of showing long or black and white stories that might not have gone down well in a single sitting. The first serial was ‘The Chase’. In those days, the world wide web was just an obscure tool used by the particle physics community, so the main tool for promoting the Society to new members was posters. For many years, posters were put up around the colleges to advertise the Society’s wares.

Michaelmas term 1989 brought a number of firsts for the Society. At its first Freshers’ Fair, DocSoc was next to the Comic Book Society and opposite the Rocky Horror Society and the Sexual Decadence Society! About 200 names were signed up (including mine), overwhelming the committee, who hadn’t printed enough termcards. The first free freshers’ meeting screened ‘City of Death’, starring Tom Baker and co-authored by Douglas Adams; this has a strong claim to the title of best Doctor Who story ever and remained the freshers meeting story throughout the Christ Church years. By mid term, Society membership had passed the 100 mark. Other firsts included the first speaker meeting featuring Terry Molloy (Davros) and an end of term visit by John Leeson (K9). The term ended with the first Society annual dinner at Teddy Hall.

Hilary 1990 began with the issue of the first Tides of Time magazine under the editorship of Louise Dennis. Louise edited a further six issues and the magazine came out three times a year for the next five years. The term ended with the cult pantomime classic, ‘The Horns of Nimon’, which spawned a brief tradition of committee members camply screeching ‘Lord Nimon, Lord Nimon, it is I, Soldeed’ at each other. Another tradition that began in the first year was the showing of amusing interval clips, including a Dalek uttering the word ‘Bollocks’ and chatting up a video editing machine and Tom Baker swearing at K9.

Exactly a year after the Society started, it spawned a sister society, the Star Trek Society. In the early years, the two societies worked very closely together, and they met in the same room until 1995.

The Christ Church Years

The Doctor Who Society met in Christ Church for just over three years. Meeting attendances were in the 40 to 60 range. There usually weren’t enough chairs to go round, so late comers sat on the tables around the edge of the room. Humour was an important feature of the society at the time. Tom Baker’s antics and some of the poorer special effects and dodgy guest actors always raised a laugh. Although there were hard core Doctor Who fans amongst the membership, most people just came to be entertained. This tradition extended to the termcards, where committee members competed to dream up the best story descriptions. My selection of the best is scattered through this issue of Tides.

Back in the early 90s, college lecture rooms tended not to come ready equipped with TV and VCR, so the Society had to borrow an old TV from a member. In the first term, members had to make do with a portable. Initially, a video recorder was rented from Radio Rentals. After putting up with a series of increasingly dodgy machines was foisted up on us,
the Society brought a secondhand (but almost new) VCR in 1991, in conjunction with TrekSoc.

The Society’s TV and VCR were kept in the room of a member at Christ Church and a tradition was born of committee members carrying the equipment to and fro across Tom Quad at the start and end of meetings. At the end of meetings, this turned into a veritable procession ending in 1989/90 with the ‘rickety stairs of doom’. A year later, this was replaced by ‘the carpet of death’ when Adam Stephens was renting a room in the archdeaconry, and, in 1991/2, the ultimate nadir was reached when the TV and video were stored on the third floor of Peckwater Quad.

Another feature of the Society’s early years was dubious quality pictures on nth generation pirate videos. In those days, very few Doctor Who stories were available on BBC Video. Although many people had recorded 80s Doctor Who when it first went out, older episodes were harder to come by. Sources included Australian and American re-runs, early video recordings and showings on the early satellite broadcaster SuperChannel, the short-lived BSB channel, Galaxy, and eventually, from 1992, UK Gold.

Firsts in the Society’s second year included bringing non-Who series such as Blake’s 7 and The Prisoner onto the termcard to round off meetings and the introduction of a few Sunday afternoon screenings a term, mainly of black and white stories, but including the odd film, Blake’s 7 triple bill and interview video. There was also a punt party and the first of three Christmas parties, held jointly with TrekSoc.

The highlight of Hilary 1991 occurred on Monday 4 February. This was the Society’s mystery guest speaker meeting. The guest’s identity was so secret that many of the committee didn’t know who it was until an hour beforehand, Speculation centred around Sylvester McCoy, Sophie Aldred and, of course, Colin Baker, although there were rumours that it might be Nicholas Parsons, the third Haemovore on the left or even Patrick Troughton! Thirty minutes after the advertised time, Sophie Aldred (pictured left) walked in and spent two hours answering questions from the floor. The room was packed, people even sitting under the tables, and it turned out to be the most successful meeting ever.

Also that term, an experiment was tried in the from of showing the entire Key to Time season in one term. Unfortunately, the Society ended up suffering from Tom Baker overkill.

The Society’s fourth president was Tim Procter, the first not to have served on the founding committee. This was a major milestone as many of the founders didn’t think the Society would survive beyond them. Tim’s presidential trademark was a long multicoloured scarf and his vice-president was Matthew Kilburn (whatever happened to him?). To mark the new
area, the Society changed its logo to one designed by one Paul Groves. During Tim’s presidency, the Society played host to two more speakers: the excellent Terrance Dicks and the very knowledgeable Jeremy Bentham with a video presentation. This marked the start of a tradition for holding Society meals at Pizza Express. There was also a Saturday visit from Southampton University DocSoc, including a Whoniversity Challenge!

Tim’s term of office ended with the first of a series of presidential assassinations. Seconds after his introductory speech began, two gunmen, bearing an uncanny resemblance to TrekSoc President, Andrew Jackson, and myself, burst in and took the president hostage. His successor, James Brough, smiled in an Avon-like manner and assumed control. Although James only served one term because linguists spend their third year abroad, he managed to extract an amusing letter and a cheque for £21.79 (the cost of his interview video) from Tom Baker in lieu of a personal appearance.

The St Peter’s Years

For Michaelmas 1992, the Society, along with TrekSoc, moved college to St Peter’s, home of new president Julian Mander and stayed there for nearly three years, through the presidency of Anthony Wilson and into the John Wilson (no relation) era. Julian also edited four issues of *Tides of Time*. Also worthy of mention from the St Peter’s years was Gary Mechan, who edited five issues of *Tides* and, as the longest serving secretary to date, typed up the entire minute book.

A new college meant a new logo, though this lasted throughout the St Peter’s era. the Miles Room, where DocSoc met, had the advantage of its own newish TV and video recorder, giving reliable pictures and ending the tradition of the television transport procession. The room also had more chairs, though the Society often overflowed onto the extensive window ledge in the first year there. This era marked a major improvement in the picture quality of the videos, with lots of stories available on BBC video and plenty of opportunity to tape things of UK Gold.

Highlights of the first year at St Peter’s included the return of Jeremy Bentham, a couple of Laser Quest sessions and spotting the colour orange during *Space 1999*. An experiment of showing *Bagpuss* episodes during the interval caused much controversy and I am pleased to record that the anti-*Bagpuss* faction of the Society eventually won out. At the end of his presidency, Julian was rewarded with the most complex assassination in Society history. In the middle of ‘The Green Death’, the vice-president was assassinated with two clicks and a shot. A gun was found under Julian’s chair and he was charged with the murder and

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handcuffed during episode four. In the following trial, he was found guilty and sentenced to a ‘green death’ by plastic swords of the aforementioned colour.

During the St Peter’s years, the Doctor Who Society began to change. The freshers intake started to drop as the newer generations of students were too young to remember the series’ golden years. The Society also got older as many established members stayed on to do masters or doctorates or to work in Oxford. Over the three years at St Peter’s, meeting attendances dropped from 40-60 to 20-40.

Features of the later St Peter’s years included Friday night drinks, frequented by the committee and a few others, the introduction of a Society soft drinks facility after St Peter’s bar became restricted to college members and the broadening of supporting features to include non-SF, including Yes, Minister and Robin of Sherwood. Highlights included the return of Terrance Dicks and John Leeson and the Mark Hanlon presidency, which lasted for one week in Trinity 1994, while he wrote his CV, and ended with an assassination and the restoration of his predecessor. Though to be fair, Mark had already served as vice-president for a year. A major event for many was the Society’s fifth anniversary dinner on 8 March 1994 at Pizza Express. The committee of the day were joined by many of their predecessors, including three who travelled from far flung corners of the country to be there.

Mansfield and after

The Society’s third home was the Council Room in Mansfield College. The move there coincided with a re-branding of the Society as OU Who – The Society of Cult Television. The Society moved to Mansfield during John Wilson’s presidency – treasurer David Martin was a student there – and remained there under his successors Corinne Berg and, for a short period, Nick Lipscomb. Highlights of the Mansfield years prior to my escape from the spires of Oxford included a speaker meeting with Lalla Ward (pictured right), the inauguration by David Bickley of the Society’s web page and the live en masse viewing of some weird American thing featuring guest appearances from
the seventh Doctor and the Pertwee era logo. When Nick was president the Society had to go on its travels again, but by that time I had left Oxford, and someone else will have to write that part of the story.

With the Society back in its original Christ Church home and the Doctor coming back for real this time, everything is coming ‘Full Circle’. When the new series starts next year, you should see a surge in members as people start showing an interest in the new series. Many of us who served on the committee in the past took both the Society and ourselves far too seriously, a disease of both youth and Oxford, and we regret all the time we wasted on bickering and paranoia, a highlight being the removal of the image of a former President, Soviet style, from a publicity photo. So my closing message to you is don’t take the Society too seriously - it’s only a TV show and, above all, have fun. ☺

Paul Groves, ex of Jesus College, haunted the cult television societies of Oxford from 1989 to 1996. He served on the DocSoc committee from Trinity 1991 to Michaelmas 1993, including two terms as secretary. He designed seven term cards and was a regular contributor to Tides of Time. He also helped to start up the Star Trek Society and founded Captain’s Log magazine. He now works for QinetiQ in Farnborough, specialising in GPS and navigation technology.

Termcard nostalgia!

A selection of some of Paul’s favourite video listings from past termcards:


‘The Doctor gets more ambitious with his fishing trips. Squid is on the menu tonight’ (‘The Power of Kroll’, Hilary 1991)

‘The Cybermen get their priorities right and blow up Adric’ (‘Earthshock’, Trinity 1991)

‘The Doctor fights seventeen pairs of silver flares to prevent the biggest bang in history’ (‘Revenge of the Cybermen’, Michaelmas 1991)


‘Nyssa takes her clothes off and suddenly everyone starts to die’ (‘Terminus’, Hilary 1992)

‘Fat Doctor meets inflatable Davros’ (‘Revelation of the Daleks’, Michaelmas 1992)
Lloyd’s List

Matthew Kilburn looks at Doctor Who in 1966 and 1967, under the producership of Innes Lloyd.

In the last issue of Tides, I looked at John Wiles’s period as producer of Doctor Who. As those who read it will have realised, I’m generally sympathetic to the aims of John Wiles, and his story editor Donald Tosh, who hoped to enhance Doctor Who’s ability to tell stories that challenged the Saturday teatime viewers preconceptions about history (‘The Myth Makers’ and ‘The Massacre’) and the place of humanity in the universe (‘The Ark’) as well as more precisely defining the character and function of the Doctor himself. Yet the Wiles-Tosh period was short, lasting on screen only from ‘The Myth Makers’ episode one (16 October 1965) to ‘The Massacre of St Bartholomew’s Eve’ episode three (19 February 1966) – barely four months.

John Wiles resigned as producer late in 1965; Donald Tosh resigned apparently in sympathy, although Tosh appears to have left the production office first, not returning after his Christmas holiday and finishing his work on ‘The Celestial Toymaker’ seemingly as a freelancer. Wiles remained in day to day charge of Doctor Who for at least the first two weeks of January 1966, but by the end of the month both replacements had taken up their posts.

The decisions that Innes Lloyd made as producer were the products both of circumstance and his background. He was not a writer-director like Wiles, but a experienced producer with a technical background and many years of experience in outside broadcast, having produced BBC television’s Wimbledon tennis coverage and the school quiz series Television Top of the Form. Lloyd’s priorities as they affected scripts were interpreted for most of his period as producer by story editor Gerry Davis, who came to Doctor Who from the football soap opera United!

John Wiles and Donald Tosh had been appointed to their posts when Donald Wilson was head of serials, but soon afterwards Wilson had been succeeded by Gerald Savory, who was unsympathetic to Wiles and Tosh. Savory complained about the futuristic Steven’s unfamiliarity with cricket in ‘The Daleks’ Master Plan’, and vetoed Wiles’s plan to replace William Hartnell with another actor. Although the exhaustion of co-ordinating ‘The Daleks’ Master Plan’ is usually credited as the main reason for Wiles’s resignation, the story was largely run by its director, Douglas Camfield, and Savory’s attitude to Wiles must have been a major factor.

Early in 1966 Gerry Davis wrote to David Whitaker, rejecting ‘The New Armada’ storyline on the grounds that Savory had requested ‘strong, simple stories’. While Davis may have wanted to emphasise to Whitaker that Davis and Lloyd were no longer to be bound by decisions made by their predecessors – ‘The New Armada’ had been in development since before Whitaker’s departure as story editor in October 1964 – it’s plausible that Savory
wanted to change the direction of a series which might have been thought of as having too many as for Saturday teatime. Davis later reported his wish to avoid stories too complicated for a child audience, and it might have been just such an argument that won him the job.

Lloyd’s first few months as producer emerge as administratively responsible ones. The season was commissioned as far ahead as ‘The Savages’, the synopsis for which was delivered in January 1966, and there seems to have been no intention of writing these commissioned stories off. An overview of the budget statements recorded in The First Doctor Handbook suggests that ‘The Myth Makers’ and ‘The Daleks’ Master Plan’ had exceeded their budgets by arrangement, and Lloyd may have decided to make a virtue out of the subsequent financial belt-tightening. Gerry Davis spent money on storylines in the first part of 1966, but nothing was allowed to develop further for several weeks with the exception of ‘The War Machines’. Instead, the scripts already paid for were rewritten in-house. This procedure was sometimes drastic, as in the case of ‘The Celestial Toymaker’, where Donald Tosh’s scripts, from an idea first submitted by Brian Hayles, were altered by Davis to remove not only two characters whose presence had offended Savory, but also (in the view of John Wiles), most of the menace present in the story. In another case most of the work seems to have been in reinterpretation of the delivered script without extraordinary rewriting: ‘The Gunfighters’ as executed underplayed Donald Cotton’s subversion of the Hollywood western.

Another priority of Lloyd was to put William Hartnell at ease, after Wiles’s attempt to remove him. From part three of ‘The Gunfighters’ Hartnell’s Radio Times listing (pictured left) showed his name in the largest font size available to credits of performers, a privilege on Saturday night already enjoyed by Jack Warner in Dixon of Dock Green. At the same time, Peter Purves and Jackie Lane, playing Steven and Dodo, were demoted, their names appearing after the main guest cast in Radio Times and no longer having a prominent place in the closing credits. The identification of the Doctor not only as the lead character but the narrative focus of the series was enhanced by the continuity-breaking references to the Doctor as ‘Doctor Who’ which begin in ‘The War Machines’. Up to and including Donald Tosh, story editors had told writers that the lead character was to be referred to in dialogue as
‘the Doctor’, even though in script directions, in the closing credits and in Radio Times he was described as ‘Dr Who’. Where Alistair McGown, in his essay on ‘The War Machines’ in The Complete First Doctor, thought that this was an indicator of Davis’s unfamiliarity with the series, it could just as easily have been a deliberate decision. For the first time in the series’ history, the Doctor could be named, after a fashion, and thus confined.

Sydney Newman defined his house style as ‘agitational contemporaneity’. John Wiles had been agitational, but Innes Lloyd placed an emphasis on the contemporary. Wiles inherited a format from Verity Lambert that prohibited the TARDIS from landing on contemporary Earth, or certainly contemporary London, for any length of time. Commissioning ‘The War Machines’ rejected this assumption. One spark seems to have been the need to replace Steven with a contemporary companion, but another might have been the need to defend Doctor Who against a potential replacement. Quick Before They Catch Us ran from Saturday 7 May 1966 to Saturday 24 September 1966, and was an adventure series set in contemporary London aimed at Doctor Who’s core early and pre-teen demographic. The BBC was keen to identify itself with youth trends, and Doctor Who needed to show that it was not becoming out of date. Dodo, who represented early 1960s preoccupations of class divisions and (at least before Gerald Savory vetoed her Lancashire accent) working-class northern England, thus rapidly followed Steven, to be replaced by the trendy Polly. With Polly came the London-accented Ben. Doctor Who’s teatime world only allowed London clubbers fizzy drinks, but it was at least aligned with the Swinging London which had taken hold of the popular imagination.

‘The War Machines’ saw Hartnell’s Doctor briefly mistaken for a disc jockey, perhaps Jimmy Savile (already a veteran with two decades of DJ-ing behind him in the mid-1960s), but it would take more than this to make the Doctor contemporary. Innes Lloyd inherited the idea of recasting the Doctor from John Wiles, but he had the diplomatic skills to put the scheme into effect without turning Hartnell into his antagonist, or alienating his head of department. The replacement of Gerald Savory by Shaun Sutton at this point may have helped Lloyd. Sutton had come to the Drama Group on the disbandment of the old children’s department and might have been more sympathetic to the serial form and teatime

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slot than Savory, a veteran of the pre-war West End theatre and subsequently a Hollywood screenwriter before he joined the BBC.

One of the arresting qualities of Patrick Troughton’s Doctor, when contrasted with William Hartnell’s performance, is the way the Doctor’s superior intelligence leads less to the detached arrogance and paternalistic condescension often symptomatic of the first Doctor, but instead to a disregard for hierarchy and a compassionate egalitarianism. The first Doctor appears to have been drawn from immediate post-war concerns. He is an exile, cut off from his own people, rather like the exiles from Nazi Germany during World War Two, or those from eastern Europe during the Cold War. Emigrés populated British scientific and cultural life in the post-war period of reconstruction, and became part of the ruling elite without having a grounding in the British class structure. So while Hartnell’s Doctor seems patriarchal and old-fashioned, he isn’t placed in a specifically British context Lloyd and Davis’s remodelling of the Doctor, whether by conscious design or by accident, exploited a weariness with post-war technocracy; the Doctor becomes much more overtly an anarchic spirit, entrepreneurially offering solutions to problems that prevailing structures can’t perceive.

The downside to the reimagining of the Doctor under Lloyd’s regime is that it lost some of the complexity of the relationship between the Doctor and his companions exhibited under previous regimes. Hartnell’s Doctor, though superior, is anarchic compared to Ian and Barbara because as teachers they have stakes in the post-war consensus, as paid and paid-up members of the post-war British public realm. Their successor, Steven, represents the misplaced confidence of the space age, against which the Doctor appears conservative but is, in fact, well ahead of Steven’s time period’s scientific achievements. With the Troughton Doctor, Ben, and Polly, the contrast between the Doctor and his companions was weakened.

The arrival of Jamie, and later Victoria, allowed the Doctor to become a guide to the modern, instead of a guide to the unusual. This restored the imbalance between the Doctor and his companions, at the same time making the Doctor appear like a representative of modern Britain, in contrast to his eighteenth- and nineteenth-century young British assistants. In turn, this allowed the Doctor to make more visits to contemporary or near-contemporary settings, as these would be strange situations to his companions. The relocation of the Doctor’s adventuring begun by the introduction of Ben and Polly was thus accelerated. Of season five, only the first story, ‘The Tomb of the Cybermen’, is set on an alien world; three, ‘The Abominable Snowmen’, ‘The Enemy of the World’ and ‘Fury from the Deep’, are set within a few decades of the date of broadcast; ‘The Ice Warriors’ and ‘The Wheel in Space’ are set in futuristic human societies; and ‘The Web of Fear’ is set within a few years of broadcast. When Peter Bryant and Derrick Sherwin decided to strand the Doctor on Earth at a couple of years after Lloyd’s departure, they were arguably only pursuing a stronger version of Lloyd’s policy, refining the Doctor’s contemporaneity by introducing the futuristic Zoe to give the Doctor companions to represent past and future.

An oft-made criticism of Innes Lloyd’s producership is that, from ‘The Tenth Planet’ onwards, there is a great reliance on the ‘base under siege’. In season four, ‘The Tenth Planet’, ‘The Moonbase’ and to some extent ‘The Macra Terror’ and ‘The Faceless Ones’ conform to this formula. Even then, ‘The Moonbase’ is as much a haunted house story; the
Cybermen do not so much besiege the base as infiltrate it and possess its crew and technology. Gerry Davis claimed credit for the ‘base under siege’ strand, arguing that it reduced the cost of *Doctor Who* by relying on one large set. It seems to have been season five, produced after Davis’s departure, which made more use of this philosophy, as seen in almost every story that year except ‘The Enemy of the World’; the effect, combined with a return to six-episode stories, seems to have been to allow more location filming and thus vary the flavour of each serial more by its ‘look’ than by the subject matter of each serial.

The emphasis on visuals under Lloyd is also suggested by the return under Lloyd’s producership of the *Doctor Who* monster; indeed, Lloyd initiated the so-called ‘monster season’, season five. It’s remarkable how little of season three is dependent on monsters; with the exception of ‘The Daleks’ Master Plan’, only ‘Galaxy Four’ and ‘The Ark’ were at all monster stories. The trend of commissions under John Wiles seems to have been reacting against the twelve-part Dalek epic. Innes Lloyd instead embraced the Daleks and developed new monsters from aspects of their appeal. The first Lloyd-Davis commission introduces the War Machines, a crude interpretation of the effectiveness of the Daleks, making them robots without dialogue. The Cybermen and the Chameleons, like the Daleks, portray humanoids transformed after a catastrophe; and the same could almost be said of the Fish People, although they are specifically a servant caste among the Atlanteans. Season five sees the Yeti – a suspicion that they are War Machines wearing rugs functionally confirmed by the scenes of them fighting soldiers in ‘The Web of Fear’ and the Ice Warriors, a further cyborg species. Patrick Troughton is said to have rebuked Jon Pertwee on the set of ‘The Three Doctors’ for presuming that he was the star of the show; Troughton argued that the Doctor was only there to support the monsters. Troughton’s billing in *Radio Times* never reached the print size attained by Hartnell, and perhaps Troughton’s flippant comment is an accurate indication of how he perceived the Doctor’s role at this point.

Innes Lloyd is often quoted as having described his style as ‘gritty’. As executed, it was tempered by Gerry Davis’s inclination towards whimsy and romance, a style which continued to predominate after Davis’s departure and as Lloyd was setting up his own exit from the series. This is because adventure storytelling was at the height of Lloyd’s list of priorities. ‘The Abominable Snowmen’ has little to do with science and much to do with magic. It’s never explained how the robot Yeti are made, nor where their spheres come from. Teaching science had been put aside just as teaching history had; the accent was now on unadulterated entertainment.

It worked. In ‘A Forty Year Adventure in Time and Space’ (published as issue 118 of the Canadian *Doctor Who* fanzine *Enlightenment*) Lance Parkin wrote that ‘Innes Lloyd’s contribution to the show isn’t often recognised, but he’s the man that created *Doctor Who* as we know it.’ Lloyd recognized that *Doctor Who*, built upon science and history, could be rolled onto foundations prepared by the viewers. Much as I admire the series as it was before Innes Lloyd took over, and much as I find less to enthral me (as an adult) in the Lloyd stories compared to those which went before, it was Lloyd who established what the essential elements of *Doctor Who* were for its audience, and that by concentrating on these it could continue beyond its third season, when cancellation may have been close. Whenever *Doctor Who* branched out in new creative directions for at least ten years after 1967, it would be Lloyd’s template that was being refined.

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The Space Museum

*Alex Middleton* visits the new *Doctor Who* exhibition at Blackpool

I set off on my journey to Blackpool in June rather relishing the role of ‘reviewer’. Indeed, with hindsight I realise that I was relishing it a little too much. I think that I put a little too much pressure on myself to react, and consequently I think I was a little hard on the exhibition in the notes I made during my visit. Let me begin, then, by stating that the new Blackpool *Doctor Who* exhibition is, quibbles aside, basically excellent, and well worth a visit. Any criticisms I may make must be considered in the light of this statement.

The exhibition’s prominent location on Blackpool’s Golden Mile makes it easy to find, although the sound of the electronic fanfare of Dominic Glynn’s arrangement of the theme blaring out onto the seafront makes it positively conspicuous. Hearing the theme music of my favourite television programme played at full volume in a public place made me feel slightly embarrassed, if I’m honest. I felt rather like a child who is being told off by his parents in public. (“Shhh!” I felt like whispering, “not here! Please not here!”) Nevertheless, I entered the exhibition with my head held high. As I did so, I felt keenly the absence of the old Longleat thrill of entering through the police box shell. They must find one for this exhibition. As I see it, if they could knock one together for the Gateshead Garden Festival in 1990, (“Your future is safe in the hands of the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation”), then they can do the same for an ‘official’ BBC *Doctor Who* exhibition.

After purchasing a ticket from Betty from *Coronation Street*, I passed through a pair of ersatz police box doors into a murky corridor. Though reassuring in itself (all *Doctor Who*
exhibitions must have murky corridors), it must be said that this corridor is the weakest section of the exhibition. It starts well: the first display is the mock-up of a rather Larkin-esque sixties living room familiar to anyone who visited the exhibition at the Museum of the Moving Image in the early nineties. I still rather like this. I like the idea that an exhibition about *Doctor Who* should examine the programme externally as well as internally. That this is the first exhibit is particularly useful: it is almost as if the visitor enters the world of monsters and spaceships, like the children of the sixties, through the cathode ray tube. The exhibit is also useful in drawing attention to the programme as an historical artefact. We see the social environment in which *Doctor Who* was received, and are therefore invited to speculate about the ways in which the programme might have reflected the values and expectations which existed within that environment. Indeed, it would be nice to see future exhibitions associated with the series exploring this aspect further. Apart from anything else, this might make the ‘classic’ series more accessible for those with no experience of it.

However, my nitpicking instinct couldn’t help but notice that the clock on the mantelpiece suggests that the waxwork sixties child is watching ‘An Unearthly Child’ at about twenty-five past eleven – not, I fear, *Doctor Who*’s natural habitat.

As I ventured further down this corridor, however, my nitpicking instincts were able to run riot and take control. After a revolving police box model (perfectly all right for what it is) there are two shallow panels on the right, whose contents, frankly, feel a bit cheap and cobbled together. One panel contains photographs of the TARDIS: the police box on the caravan from ‘Marco Polo’, the secondary console room from ‘The Masque of Mandragora’, the interior from the TV movie – in short, nothing I couldn’t have thrown together myself with a couple of back issues of *DWM* and a pritt-stick. No information is provided to elucidate the contents of the panel. The second panel is downright baffling. A ‘glam’ picture of Sophie Aldred dominates (“Who’s that, Daddy?”), orbited by a seemingly random assortment of *Who* paraphernalia: the front cover of Paul Cornell’s *Happy Endings*, (hardly a representative *Who* novel in appearance, or, for that matter, content), a Haemovore mask from ‘The Curse of Fenric’, and the *DR WHO ANNUAL 1974* are just three items included. Frustratingly, there appears to be nothing approaching a unifying theme. Most confusingly, it mixes merchandise with props from the series, and therefore the external and internal worlds of *Doctor Who*. If it were up to me, the two would be segregated. Why, for instance, is the Haemovore mask not in the impressive ‘Fenric’ display located in a different part of the exhibition?

A nearby panel is similarly confusing. The achievements of the commercial wing of the BBC appears to be the unifying theme, as the panel is dominated by a poster from BBC Video advertising the thirtieth anniversary of 1993. The poster is surrounded by a number of *Who* VHS cases: ‘The Dominators’, ‘The Two Doctors’, and ‘The Deadly Assassin’, amongst others. Fine, I suppose, although I wouldn’t have considered this an essential addition to any exhibition about the series. Why, then, does the panel also contain a pair of black braces, draped over the rest of the exhibits? Braces? Whose braces? I have been a ‘fan’ of the series for a long time, and even I don’t understand the significance of this. Are the braces an actual prop from the series, or are they there simply because they look like an actual prop from the series?
Therefore, as I reached the end of the first corridor of the exhibition, I was unimpressed. Up to this point, the whole thing gives the impression of being somewhat disorganised, as if it were cobbled together hastily from the wreckage of the Longleat and Llangollen exhibitions without any real regard for coherence. Most importantly, the early sections of the exhibition make almost no concessions to those with no prior experience of the series. In 2004, fifteen years after the cancellation of Doctor Who and months away from its spectacular return, any exhibition about the series should start from first principles and make no assumptions at all about the visitor’s prior knowledge. As it stands, the first written information the visitor encounters accompanies the aforementioned revolving police box model, and runs exactly as follows:

The TARDIS is The Doctors advanced time and space vehicle … Landing in 1960s London the mechanism failed. And the craft was left with the outward appearance of a Police telephone box, common in the 1960’s … IT HAS A DIFFERENT DIMENSION INSIDE AND APPEARS TO BE MANY TIMES LARGER ON THE INSIDE THAN THE OUTSIDE.

What? To me, this sounds more like something that one of the kids from the Whose Doctor Who? documentary might say than something I would expect to find written as part of an official exhibition about the series.

However, whatever my reservations about the early sections of the exhibition, the console room, which is located at the end of this first corridor, won me over and took the edge off my original scepticism. Indeed, I began to feel the onset of an attack of conscience about how critical I had been up to then. As has been pointed out by others, the console prop is much nicer than the version used between seasons fifteen and twenty which I think it is intended to represent. Particularly effective is the presence in one of the panels of a smaller version of one of the time controller globes from ‘Remembrance of the Daleks’. Why did no one ever think of using one of these as part of the real console? Unfortunately, the portraits of the Doctors that traditionally appeared in the roundels of the Longleat console room are no longer present. This is particularly unfortunate since no attempt has yet been made to introduce us to the character of the Doctor. In their place is a portrait of John Nathan-Turner. Upon noticing this, I amused myself by imagining a small child pointing to the former producer and saying, “Is that Doctor Who, Daddy?” An unsettling idea, I hope you will agree. As was the case at Longleat, the console is surrounded by displays of certain of the series’ monsters. The first display contains an Ice Warrior, and has before it a TARDIS-ish console with flashing buttons and so on. Unfortunately, this gives the visitor the impression that he or she might be able to control the creature to some small extent. No such luck. The buttons simply produce silly electronic noises that sound like those cheap keyrings that came out of Christmas crackers in the eighties. Further buttons by my knees invited me to ‘PUSH’. This I did, wasting about thirty seconds trying to determine what effect I was producing by doing so. I eventually realised that I was simply changing the colour of the flashing lights on the control panel. I was reminded of the Hitch-Hiker ‘Do not press this button again’ gag. Interactivity is not the exhibition’s strong point, I fear.

Leaving the console room, the next display announces itself as ‘T.A.R.D.I.S. WARDROBE’. This is clearly a means of grouping together all of the surviving costumes
which are insufficiently significant to justify a display of their own. An information panel reads: “Here are the remaining Costumes from many of the Stories. All of these items are authentic Can you identify what they are and which story they appeared in?” While I’m glad that the exhibition includes such material, I can’t help but feel that this attempt to engage the visitor in a form of memory game is rather pointless. Quite simply, fans will be able to identify the costumes, and non-fans will not. I very much doubt that there is enough of a grey area between the two demographic sections to justify such labelling. In the exhibition’s defence, I recognise that it must be difficult to balance the needs and expectations of the fans with those of the general public. However, speaking as a fan, I would be quite happy for an exhibition such as this to disregard the specialized knowledge of the fans, and address itself entirely to the needs of non-fans. Again, in an age in which many of those non-fans may not have even seen *Doctor Who*, I feel that this is especially important.

After the TARDIS wardrobe the visitor encounters the Cybermen. The display is one of the largest, containing a selection of ‘Earthshock’ and ‘Silver Nemesis’ costumes arranged in dramatic positions around the cyber-console prop from ‘Earthshock’. This is an impressive display, let down once again by poor labelling. Indeed, I cannot resist citing the word-processed information panel in full, *exactly* as it appears:

Originally from the tenth Planet the Cyberman’s spaceship has a central console similar to The Doctors, As displayed here.
Gold and Powdered Gold is the only material which will destroy these Beings who have given up all vestiges of being human.

The poor quality of the written information provided is the exhibition’s chief weakness. These words misrepresent the Cybermen, (who, after all, are they?), as well as being unnecessarily specific. Who cares that the ‘Earthshock’ console looks a bit like the TARDIS console? Is that really the first thing we need to learn about the Cybermen? *Powdered Gold?* Is that important? If I were writing a ten thousand word thesis about the Cybermen I could probably do so without referring once to powdered gold; if I had to explain the Cybermen to someone in *two sentences* it would never occur to me in a million years to specify the different forms of gold with which the Cybermen have been defeated over the years. Come to think of it, I wouldn’t necessarily mention the whole gold business at all. The labelling reminds me of the factual *Who-books à la* Peter Haining that I used to write for myself in blank exercise books when I was a young child, (“Thousands of years ago a crippled kaled scientst called davros …”). Before you think I’m getting carried away over such a trivial point I should tell you that *all* of the labelling in the exhibition is as slapdash and semi-literate as this, catering neither for the informed fan nor for the average Joe. I hope that it is clear that this is not the complaint of a fanboy. Rather, this is the complaint of a fan trying to place himself in the position of someone with little or no prior experience of the series. I shall climb down from my soapbox for the time being. After this point, the exhibition is wonderful, with only minor flaws. Indeed, the pangs of conscience that I had experienced in the console room began to give way to full blown guilt. The visitor moves down a very narrow, very dark corridor whose walls contain displays featuring a variety of props and monsters from the series: the Tractators, the Malus, a mummy case from ‘Pyramids of Mars’, Kroll, a Tetrap, and one of the husks from ‘Ghost Light’. All look great, and all are well arranged. This part of the exhibition is genuinely creepy, actually, and reminded me of
the thrill of my first Longleat visit when I was a very small child. Speaking of Longleat, it is immediately after this that the visitor encounters the props and costumes damaged by the fire in the former exhibition in 1997: one of the cleaning robots from ‘Paradise Towers’ and the robot from ‘The Visitation’. Very sad. Nearby can be found the ‘Giant’ Robot and Drathro, both of whom look excellent, (ignoring the gaffer tape sprayed silver which seems to be holding the latter together).

Immediately after this is a corridor containing costumes worn by Doctors and companions through the years. For some reason, this is always my favourite part of any Doctor Who exhibition. Hartnell and Troughton are poorly represented, (the former by a walking stick, the latter by a single pair of trousers), and only Pertwee’s ‘Three Doctors’ jacket represents the third Doctor’s extensive wardrobe. This is pretty ironic now that I think about it. After all, Pertwee’s Doctor often changed his entire costume halfway through an episode. What has happened to all of those frilly shirts and velvet jackets? They couldn’t even find a proper frilly shirt for ‘Time and the Rani’. Fortunately, Tom Baker’s season eighteen costume is represented in its entirety, although it would be nice if the exhibition could get its hands on one of the earlier scarves, which are more representative of the fourth Doctor’s era as well as being arguably the most distinctive items of clothing in the series’ history. I wonder where they are? The last three of the television Doctors’ costumes are almost intact, and hypnotised me for quite some time. I wish I could account for this fascination. I’m not the sort of person to worry too much about my own wardrobe, and yet I find (for instance) the slightest variation in the question marks on Davison’s collar absolutely captivating, (‘The Caves of Androzani’ is a good example, for those of you who have never observed this phenomenon). I could even tell you, without checking, in which stories McCoy’s jab is beneath rather than above the lapel of his jacket.

The pride of the exhibition is a huge, darkened, high-ceilinged room, arranged in circular fashion around the central exhibit of Bessie. Around the walls are a variety of costumes: ‘Greatest Show’ clowns, a ‘Two Doctors’ Sontaran, the Garm, a Plasmaton, the statue of Nemesis, the Gods of Ragnarok, the giant brain from ‘Time and the Rani’, Control from ‘Ghost Light’, a Mogarian, a Foamasi, Nestor, the Pipe People from ‘The Happiness Patrol’, the pink Terileptil from ‘Mindwarp’, Omega from ‘Arc of Infinity’, a Nimon, one of the Navarinos from ‘Delta and the Bannermen’, the Magma creature from ‘Caves’… hang on a minute: one of the Navarinos from ‘Delta’? Moodily lit and placed between the Nimon and the Magma creature? There’s something not entirely appropriate about that. The Navarinos were supposed to look ridiculous, weren’t they? There was never any suggestion that they were in any way frightening or malevolent. The upshot of this is that an intentionally ridiculous alien stands between two unintentionally ridiculous aliens. It bothers me to think that the sight of the Navarino might confirm the suspicions of any cynical non-fans that Doctor Who was full of ridiculous-looking, robbery aliens that were never remotely frightening. This, I realise, is a minor quibble, and nobody’s fault. One problem with this display which could be rectified very easily, however, is the music. Someone clearly thought that fans and non-fans alike would enjoy listening to a very short section from Roger Limb’s soundtrack for ‘The Keeper of Traken’ on a constant loop. Curiously, this is not the case. Initially genuinely bewitching, the noise is bound to irritate the hell out of anyone who stays in this room for more than about a minute. Indeed, it made me want to find the speakers and ‘do a McGoohan’.

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When the Third Doctor, Jon Pertwee, was exiled to Earth in January 1970, he agreed to work for UNIT, the United Nations Intelligence Taskforce...” The collision of fiction and reality represented by these words never fails to bring a smile to my lips.

This review has been over-critical, I know. I must emphasise again that the exhibition is basically excellent, and clearly the result of very hard and dedicated work. Its chief asset is its sheer size. The exhibition represents a combination of all of the exhibits from Longleat and Llangollen, and consequently there is an enormous amount to see. So extensive and enjoyable is it, in fact, that I stopped making notes and decided to simply enjoy myself for large periods of my visit, (I haven’t even mentioned the Daleks, or the ‘Brain of Morbius’ display, or the welcome return of the ‘Land the TARDIS’ display from the old days of the Longleat exhibition, to name but a few omissions). Make no mistake, I will be paying a return visit. However, it must be said that the exhibition has its faults, (perhaps ‘teething problems’ would be a fairer way of putting it). To my mind, there are two important and interrelated problems: the lack of any attempt to introduce the uninitiated visitor to the series, and the often useless, occasionally downright comical, and invariably poorly punctuated and solecistic written information which accompanies the displays. Oh, and as in the 1970s and 1980s (see above!) they simply must find a police box for the exterior of the exhibition. A Doctor Who exhibition just isn’t a Doctor Who exhibition without one.

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**Picture credits**
The illustrations in this issue came from various sources, and especially worth mentioning are: Arthur Bullard’s site, for the TARDIS picture outside the University Museum (www.photonhunter.co.uk); Tim Merca’s photo albums for the Brooklyn Bridge (www.timmerca.com); NASA for the picture of the International Space Station; The Camelot Project, University of Rochester, for Aubrey Beardsley’s ‘Morte D’Arthur’ (www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/cphome.stm); ‘The Tallest Buildings in the World’ for the Blackpool Tower (hem.passagen.se/alphaz2/towers.htm); ‘Emil Schmid oder Weltrekordreise’ for the Space Centre, Kourou (www.ernstmaissen.ch/weltreise); and bbc.co.uk’s WhoSpy for the back cover image.
The Daisiest Daisy?

_Daniel Saunders_ analyses the Jon Pertwee era of _Doctor Who_.

Most people seem either to love or hate the Jon Pertwee era, but I do not feel that strongly either way about it. Puzzlingly, the praise and the criticisms both seem to be true depending on what parts you focus on and I am not just talking about the fact that season seven is much more adult in feel (and qualitatively much better) than the other seasons. Every aspect of the show seems to have good and bad points.

The criticism most frequently levelled at the Pertwee era, especially seasons seven and eight, is that they abandon the essential element of _Doctor Who_, the flexible format, and do nothing more than lazily imitate _Quatermass_ and _The Avengers_. There is certainly some truth in the statement that the Doctor’s exile went on much longer than it should have done and that it limited the stories that could be told. However, it is difficult to argue that this was a unique betrayal of the essence of the programme. Since the start of the Patrick Troughton era each successive production team tried to find a single style of story to use for a long period. I think that criticism of this tendency is often focused on the Pertwee era, partly because the Earth-based formula used here makes it particularly obvious, and partly because the action-adventure format chosen is less popular with fans than, say, the melodramatic horror of seasons twelve to fourteen.

The Doctor himself seems to receive a lot of criticism. I feel a bit sorry for him: if he criticises the military or the government he is described as rude and arrogant and if he does not he gets called authoritarian and militaristic! The fourth Doctor could be just as rude, but somehow he does not seemed to get blamed so much. Perhaps this is because the third Doctor is rude to characters that we find more sympathetic than the fourth Doctor’s targets, as they are often just ordinary people trying to do recognisable jobs (for example, the third Doctor insults countless civil servants) rather than megalomaniacs in space. I think the criticism misses the point a little. The Doctor’s rudeness is supposed to be a little unpleasant; it is an attempt to make him a more rounded character, with faults and weaknesses, rather than a superhero, even if the writers did go a bit too far on occasion and make him actively unpleasant. More worrying is the overuse of convenient plot devices to get him out of trouble, such as his Vennusian karate and the sonic screwdriver. But again, you could level the same allegation at the fourth Doctor (respiratory by-pass, anyone?). Personally, I find the third Doctor, while far from my favourite, to be one of the most charming and lovably avuncular of the Doctors.

With the introduction of the exile and UNIT, the Pertwee era has the largest semi-regular cast in the programme’s history. The season seven regulars are arguably the most realistic ones seen up to that point. Liz can be seen as an improved version of Zoe, with her improbable and convenient photographic memory and frequent screaming removed, but
her intelligence and scientific knowledge almost on a par with that of the Doctor maintained. Similarly, the Brigadier is an intelligent and calculating soldier whose plans are always the product of careful thought that is made clear to the audience, even if the Doctor disagrees by reasoning differently.

However, in the following years these characters are watered down. It is perhaps understandable that the production team wished to replace Liz with a companion with less knowledge of science, to make exposition easier (although one could also argue that the writers of season seven had managed to work around this problem). However, all too often Jo is presented as lacking not just scientific knowledge, but common sense, turning into a “dizzy blonde” stereotype. Nevertheless, a few stories show how the character might have been handled better, making her ignorant of science, but competent in other areas. For example, ‘The Mind of Evil’ has her quell a prison riot almost single-handedly and shows her as the only character not uncomfortable around Barnham, while ‘The Curse of Peladon’ and ‘The Green Death’ have her involved in sub-plots of her own.

Similarly, the Brigadier changes from being intelligent and open-minded (he even believes the Doctor has a time-machine with no evidence in ‘The Web of Fear’!) to an idiot who wants to solve every problem by shooting at it or blowing it up, regardless of what the Doctor advises him to do. The writers seem to have understood that the conflicting views of the Doctor and the Brigadier in season seven added to the drama, but failed to realise that it was only successful because both sides put forth rational arguments that the audience could understand.

Season eleven, although often regarded as the worst of the Pertwee seasons, sees some improvement in the characterisation of the regulars. Sarah is presented as a much more competent person than Jo and in ‘Invasion of the Dinosaurs’ she solves as much of the mystery as the Doctor does. The treachery of Captain Yates in the same story is a long-overdue piece of character development. Given the large semi-regular cast, the earthbound setting and the fairly long stories, long-term character development could have been a consistent part of the Pertwee era. This opportunity was wasted, but we can at least be thankful that an attempt was made to rectify this.

Characterisation is an area where the era seems to be both terrible and excellent. The Master is arguably the villain with the worst motivation in the whole series. Only ‘The Mind of Evil’ provides a hint of a realistic motivation for him, when we see that his worst fear is being laughed at by the Doctor, an interesting idea that really should have been enlarged upon. A
deep-seated psychological need to impress the Doctor goes some way to explaining why he keeps trying to take over the Earth despite knowing that the Doctor is exiled there.

However, there are several villains with more understandable motivations. Hepesh in ‘The Curse of Peladon’ is misled by Arcturus and genuinely believes that his actions will save Peladon from slavery, while his last words touchingly express the hope that he was wrong. The environmentalists trying to establish a pollution-free golden age for Earth in ‘Invasion of the Dinosaurs’ are the most sympathetic villains in the series and have a similar motivation the heroes of ‘The Green Death’. Season seven is almost unique in Doctor Who, with no blacker-than-black villains other than the Nestene Consciousness.

The ‘villains’ of ‘Doctor Who and the Silurians’ and ‘The Ambassadors of Death’ are xenophobic, but the scripts go out of their way to show the roots of this fear, which tragically comes from nothing more than a series of misunderstandings. Stahlman in ‘Inferno’ is arrogant, but can hardly be described as evil, while the characters in the alternate universe are products of the brutal totalitarian society they live in. To go off at a tangent to make a pedantic point, from what we see of the alternate world, ‘Inferno’ is a criticism of all totalitarianism, rather than just Fascism; it could just as easily be Stalinist. Indeed, the fact that Stahlman is German for Stalin could be seen as a reference to both Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. The Brigade-Leader’s sarcastic line ‘That’s alright Doctor, I knew you tried’ (when the Doctor’s first attempt to return to ‘our’ universe fails) is often said to as show that he is a coward and a bully, but I find it oddly sympathetic. If you had seen your colleagues turn into monsters and your world destroyed and the only man who might be able to save your life has just given you a more or less incomprehensible reason why he can not help you, would you thank the Doctor for trying to leave so he can save another world or would you start making rude and sarcastic remarks? I know what I would do.

The Pertwee era is also notable for being the first period in the show to make a sustained attempt to include themes in the stories. Several earlier stories had included strong themes or morals, but it is only in the Pertwee era that this really became a frequent part of the programme. It is something of a shame that the era is often criticised for this. I think this occurs for two reasons. The most obvious is that the theme is often unsubtle, as the story stops while the Doctor delivers the sermon of the week. More subtly, the fact that in the video age we are used to jumping from one period to another masks the fact that this was the first sustained attempt to appeal to an adult audience with more intelligent stories, rather than by increasing the horror and suspense in the series. It was only when I recently watched a lot of stories for the first three Doctors in order that I realised just how much deeper the stories seemed in the Pertwee era (and this from a die-hard fan of sixties Who!). Admittedly the stories are far from intellectually challenging, many themes are undeveloped and many morals simplistic, but for a show that was still seen by most viewers as light-hearted family entertainment, this is a praiseworthy development and later attempts at more intellectual stories are indebted to it.

Perhaps the final word on the Pertwee era is that it is proof that in Doctor Who, as in life, the sublime and the ridiculous are never far apart. Or maybe that should be “Boney, I said, it’s just one step from the sublime to the ridiculous!” ②
The Way Back

Matthew Kilburn on the old series, the new series, fandom and OUDWS.

*Doctor Who* is inevitably a cultural product of its time. Its success, measured as a mainstream television programme, depends on how effectively it leads or reflects as many of the moods of the moment as it can. I’d argue that for most of the time, until the early 1980s, it was very successful in doing this. To give two examples, narrowly focused on the Doctor: in the 1970s Tom Baker’s Doctor argued for individual responsibility and rebelled against ossified power structures at a time when more and more British people were becoming impatient with the welfare state and trade union power. He also combined distant authority with a mode of address which suggested that it knew all about playing, vital for children for whom the Doctor’s heroism comes from him being neither and both surrogate parent and imaginary childhood friend. Peter Davison’s Doctor sometimes seemed like a lost child, but his characterization in part evoked the early twentieth-century ideal of the public-school gentleman, fashionable at a time of nostalgia for past national glories and of epic television drama adaptations such as *Brideshead Revisited* and *The Jewel in the Crown*.

In contrast, while the 1980s wore on the Doctor seemed to drift with the programme, as if the production team had no enthusiasm for picking up on current concerns. Colin Baker’s initially exceedingly confrontational Doctor was dressed in a style that suggested the character’s alienation from all about him, and he was performed in a manner that could seem more appropriate for the stage than for television, and that recalled the ‘shouty’ television anti-heroes of the late 1970s. Sidestepping, the casting of Bonnie Langford seemed determined less by the potential of the actress to take her career in a new direction, about which she has spoken at the time and since, but to exploit her status as a television icon of the 1970s, surely a mis-step at a time when the programme needed to emphasise that it was au fait with 1986 after being condemned for being old-fashioned by Michael Grade. Sylvestor McCoy’s Doctor was fatally undermined from the beginning. Jonathan Powell’s directive that *Doctor Who* was ‘for children’ perhaps leading to the overplaying characteristic of much children’s television at the time; the restraint introduced in seasons 25 and 26 helped make the Doctor more worthy of respect, and the more overt political content of the scripts edited by Andrew Cartmel did at least chime with the renewed interest in environmentalism of the late 1980s, even if it was expressed in ways which recalled the shrillness of the hard left of the earlier part of the decade. Unfortunately too many of those at the BBC involved in making *Doctor Who* saw the programme as a nostalgia piece for Cartmel’s lead to have much effect.

Fandom was affected too. I have a few fanzines from the late 1970s and, contrary to the impression passed down in some strands of fan lore, *Doctor Who* fandom does not seem to have been dominated by those nostalgic for the 1960s. That strand is certainly there, but most of those involved seem to have been more preoccupied by details internal to recent stories – for example rationalizing the history of the Mordee expedition from ‘The Face of Evil’ and how the image of the Doctor on the cliff was Baker’s face – and not by saying how bad the current stores were compared with their predecessors of a decade before. That was very much a 1980s preoccupation. The impression is of a youth cult run mainly by one generation of young people, and non-Who influences are more overt than at any other time in *Doctor Who* fandom’s history. I’d guess that the artwork is as influenced by prog rock album covers as it is by Chris Achilleos’s Target book illustrations; there’s a lot of Celtic influence. Issue 7 of the 1977 volume of the DWAS fanzine *TARDIS* even includes a tribute illustration of Marc Bolan (*next page*), probably to most people more of a 1970s pop culture icon than either Jon Pertwee or Tom Baker.

By the time I discovered fandom in the 1980s this kind of reference was no longer fashionable, and almost everybody seemed to be hankering after another era. In late 1983 *DWB*, now *Dreamwatch*, but then a photocopied fanzine positioned as more enthusiastic cheerleader for John Nathan-Turner than...
the more moderate DWAS, said that season 21 would be a ratings winner because it was going to be as much a monster season as season 5, disregarding the changes in the television and cultural landscape between 1967/68 and 1984. In the letters pages of TARDIS battle raged between those nostalgic for the early 1970s or even ‘the dear, much-missed black and white days’, most of whom generally seemed to think the Nathan-Turner producership at least a tolerable imitation of what they had watched as children, and those who missed Graham Williams’s producership. JNT seemed only to please people when aping the past.

I didn’t object to this very much. I didn’t like being a teenager in the 1980s. The welfare state and the nationalized industries which had made up the Britain of my childhood were being reformed or dismantled. I had never been one for pop music but the music and trends of the 1980s offered me nothing with which I could identify. My contemporaries at school were hyper-competitive people heading off to pubs and clubs in increasing numbers from the age of 13 and 14 onwards. The 1970s were ridiculed as an era of ‘hippiedom’; I remembered them fondly and said so. I was not popular, for my opinions, my accent and my overt interest in learning. Doctor Who seemed to be neglected and misunderstood within its BBC context, and misunderstood by my contemporaries was certainly one aspect of how I felt at school.

I’d hoped that Oxford would be better; but socially everyone I met in the JCR seemed to move so quickly, and once I’d spent one Saturday evening in the library, college people stopped calling round. I hadn’t intended to get drawn into DocSoc, imagining that I’d be working on Cherwell or Isis, but it took all my week to research and write my essays to a level with which I’d be satisfied and I found I didn’t have time for journalism. Discovering DocSoc was, however, a revelation. I met people who were on my wavelength for the first time, not just because of their knowledge of the programme but because their critical faculties were formed by it as well. I learned that Doctor Who was watched by lots of different people, and that DocSoc members were drawn from a variety of different subcultures. Indeed, many of those who had had fan ‘careers’ and owned many of the stories on pirate videos didn’t come to the society, partly because many of them were worn out by exposure to the fan-tastic fan culture of the 1980s, or because they had seen most of the surviving episodes on the video circuit, and had other priorities in Oxford. The Society had a large number of people with experience of fan culture but the majority had probably never heard of fandom. I used to map out the room – it seemed to me that the IndySoc people sat in one area, the Christ Church curious in another, representatives of the RPGSoc and OUSFG incrowds down the middle, and by 1992 the tables at the back were colonised by the Tolkien Society committee. Non-aligned or DocSoc committee members were scattered round about, at the sides of room and at the front, sometimes on the floor if we had run out of table or chair space. I started to buy more fanzines, and would occasionally read out extracts from the front of the room in breaks between episodes. (These didn’t become universally ‘bar breaks’ until the end of the 1990s, with many members remaining in the room and watching interview clips or old children’s shows like Bagpuss.) One of these moments was particularly revelatory. I was reading out Ian Berriman’s ‘La-La Love You’ from Five Hundred Eyes 5 – ‘with apologies to Felicity Kendall and the Pixies’. I knew that Felicity Kendall’s name was misspelt, but I didn’t know who the Pixies were. Claire Thompson, the black-masquarad, black
velvet-clad treasurer, called out from the middle of the room that I was reading the song – as it was – wrongly. I was not stunned, but I think slightly discomfited, to realise that Doctor Who fanzine writers – whom I’d previously vaguely envisaged as bespectacled, tweedy quasi-academic figures sharing similar tastes to me – could be fans of a strand of music of.

Around this time, Timewyrm: Revelation was published. The greatest shock for me was that Paul Cornell reimagined Ace – whom I’d wanted to like on television, but who seemed so badly conceived as a character, despite Sophie Aldred’s energetic performance – as an NME-reading young woman, au fait with the bands of the time like the Happy Mondays and James. I’d heard a little of the former at the time, but not of the latter. I think – most music passes me by, I confess. I realised that part of the reason I’d liked Doctor Who was that, even though I’d criticized it for not reflecting the late 1980s, I’d appreciated that it was detached from the popular culture of the day. Yet reinventing Ace as a credible contemporary teenager seemed right. The New Adventures were onto something, and increasingly developed this contemporaneity throughout the novels. There was still some Cartmel-like preaching, but much of how the New Adventures dealt with 1990s trends and concerns, whether CDs, artificial intelligence, the revival of UFO mania, sexual identity, seemed to be exactly what Doctor Who should be doing.

Three of the writers for the new series contributed to the New Adventures – Russell T. Davies himself, Mark Gatiss and Paul Cornell – and the books must to some degree have acted as a laboratory for the Doctor’s return to television. Many of the quotes Russell has given to the press recently emphasise the need to make Doctor Who modern: in The Sunday Times (6 March 2005) he says of Rose “She’s got a life – the old companions didn’t have a life.” This isn’t quite true; there were hints that Sarah Jane Smith had an ongoing career interrupted by her travels with the Doctor, and Benny Summerfield had a life which provided situations for the novels; but Rose will be the first television companion where we actually see something her flat, her boyfriend, her mother.

One change in Doctor Who fandom after 1989 was that fans seemed more able to say that they liked other science-fiction and fantasy series too. Perhaps the cerebral Jean-Luc Picard of Star Trek: The Next Generation seemed like a surrogate Doctor-figure; later on, Who fans seemed to embrace Babylon 5 (low budget, CGI-innovative space opera outwith the apparently all-embracing Trek franchise) and then Buffy the Vampire Slayer (definite appeal to children and adults alike; ‘companion’ figures turn tables on Giles as the Doctor). Indeed, when the commissioning of the new series of Doctor Who was announced in 2003, it was widely trailed as ‘a British Buffy’. However, that was in 2003, and eighteen months later Buffy seems to be something the new Doctor Who is keen to put behind it. “We’ve had all those yellow school buses and prom days. We’ve had enough of that”, Russell T. Davies told The Sunday Times. He explained further in The Guardian (7 March 2005): ‘It’s still fun and light and funny - like Buffy was in the first three years, before it went tragic - but it’s still a drama.’ Fans of the ‘dark Doctor’ seen in many of the New Adventures, but less prominent in the BBC Eighth Doctor novels, may be disappointed, as may some devotees of contemporary American genre TV.

It’s too early to say what the immediate effect on our society will be. Television in Britain has changed over the past fifteen years. Not only have all the surviving episodes of the old series been released on video or DVD, or recycled on UK Gold, but viewers now watch television in a different way. Viewers aren’t expected to use their imaginations to fill in gaps in the same way; they demand visual effects which look real. Additionally, the group which made up the bulk of the Society’s membership, the people with fond memories of growing up with the series, have now almost gone. This year’s freshers were probably about three when the series finished. Lots of people will have grown up with the programme as part of the landscape on UK[TV] Gold, endlessly recycled on weekend mornings; the magic of fond childhood memories being revived (and most people found that the series was as good as they remembered, even if they coated their appreciation in irony) can no longer apply to a large number of people as it did even five years ago. The new landscape will have to be negotiated very carefully, as, like Doctor Who itself, we change ourselves to take advantage of our new environment. ☺

The Tides of Time 30 • 43 • Easter Vacation 2005
Kourou, French Guiana, 2007

This was certainly a day for Gilead Whyte of the ESA. Sent out (as the resident ufologist) to check up on UFO reports in the Atlantic alongside a coastguard responding to a mangled mayday, he’d ended up bringing back a fallen astronaut, and the stir his mysterious ‘Tango Phoenix’ had created was beyond belief. Jean-Marc looked as if he didn’t know whether to promote him or thump him for attracting so much unwanted media attention. At least this ‘Doctor’ seemed more or less at ease in the Centre Spatiale Guyanais – he’d introduced himself to all as Thomas Jerome Newton, which Gil reckoned had to be a joke – and then asked to stow his spacesuit. Gil was just relieved to see and hear another Brit in a thousand square miles, after all these French-speakers who couldn’t get his Bolton accent.

Now Dr Newton was fiddling with an Agency laptop, one of Jean-Marc’s old Mac notebooks. He was talking, quite literally, to the hand: “Q, load and run BlueCloud. Acknowledge.” The thing on his hand – presumably a next-generation PDA: it looked like a glorified wristwatch attached to a harness around the man’s fingers – beeped back.

“Er,” said Gil, peering at the screen as it flickered, “can I ask what you’re doing?”

Dr Newton raised his other, right, hand, as if to warn him off. “Searching for leads on the station: just trying to collate as much information as I can. I’m also trying to find my friends. But I can’t do a thing unless this machine starts talking to me again. Q, I mean, not the iBook. So much for modern technology.” He shook his head, sending his long hair bouncing like a shampoo ad.
“Wait a mo, you mean there’s someone else up there?”
“Is, or was. The… our craft was in a matched orbit with the station; I just hope none of them tried to leave it to save me.” He looked serious.
Gil shrugged. “Sorry. I only wish I could help.”

The Doctor looked blankly at the rapidly refreshing screen, waiting for Q-4880 to finish its search of news and technical reports, running vaguely through means of repairing the circuits on the subspace commlink, but thinking more concretely of another time: the twenty-fifth century, but the same kind of event. A node in the Vigilant planetary defence network had blown up as it was being installed. Human error, the report had said: the Doctor was beginning to see a different pattern in operation, one more akin to that of Torus Antarctica.

Paging through the results of the search, he could find little more information than what he had already garnered in 2003, save that there was finally some official explanation for the February shuttle incident. Official but wrong?
He shook his head at his own paranoia, and shut the laptop down.

It was a little while, even with his usual ingenuity, before he had finished work on restoring power and function to the communicator: he put that down to a paucity of tools for the job. There didn’t seem to be all that much wrong with it, considering that it had cut off without warning up by the station. Very, very odd. He put that thought to one side, keyed the microphone on the headset he still wore, and spoke into it: “Firewalker, Phoenix: Chandra, do you read? Over.” He paused, fearing the worst.
An electronic voice cleared its throat pointedly.
The Doctor swivelled round sharply in his chair – before him, framed in the doorway of the TARDIS, stood Isidore and Chandra, still wearing her red spacesuit sans helmet. “Loud and clear;” the latter giggled.

The day wore on, and to Gil’s thinking Dr Newton and his team were looking a bit worn out. Bypassing a bit of red tape, he’d secured them some quarters. Newton just set up shop there with the laptop; his PA in the red spacesuit could be seen taking Newton’s blue spacesuit apart; but Newton’s black-suited bodyguard, or twin, or whatever, seemed to have wandered off. The PA – Chandra – just shrugged. “He looked a bit peeved. I wouldn’t cross him.” Gil just wondered at how blasé he’d become to all these strange people invading the place: well, least they seemed to know what they were doing, which was more than could be said for him, or the ESA, at the moment, what with all those cutbacks and that fright over the ISS disappearance. He’d lose more sleep over what the hell was going on at 400 kays up than where the hell Newton was from, that was for sure.

The statistical displays were beginning to waver before the Doctor’s eyes: he blinked irritably, but the pattern, the sense, was lost. Tired. Such a human thing to be feeling, but he needed to heal, after the battering he’d taken. Shutting down and disconnecting the laptop, he pushed it to one end of the desk and stretched himself along the rest of the desk, resting his head on the iBook. Surprisingly comfortable… he’d give himself a couple of hours before getting back into the swing of things…
“Wake up,” said a voice, Isidore’s. It sounded brutal. The Doctor stirred, flexing cramped limbs. He must have dozed off for longer than he thought.

“Get up, now.” Each word was strictly enunciated; Isidore must be furious. A hand at his shoulder yanked him into a sitting position: he blinked blearily at the sight of a dozen people staring back at him.

“No need to lose your temper,” he muttered, addressing Isidore. “What time is it?”

The cyborg waved the query away. Jean-Marc spoke: “The entire Internet has been infested with the worst worm ever seen— it has spread to everything and everyone, and nobody has found a cure for it.”

“Well, don’t look at me,” the Doctor protested, “I’m a Time Lord, not a programmer.”

Isidore hadn’t taken his gaze off him. “It came from here. Whatever your Q downloaded wasn’t as squeaky-clean as you thought.”

“A Linux distribution loaded onto a single computer can’t possibly—!”

“So it’s Unexplained.” Isidore shrugged. “Isn’t that your speciality?”

Bedlam was about the only word Gil could think of to describe the Centre Spatiale in the following hours. With email comprehensively down, it was like being in the 1970s: memos were going round on paper, and every ’phone that could be had was being plugged into Mission Control as everyone tried to field all the demands and questions coming their way.

“Symantec have announced a worldwide Flash One denial-of-service attack,” called one of his fellow-techs. Another sang out, “NORAD want to know what’s happening.”

Dr Newton was pacing the floor. “Call back Symantec and tell them to call NORAD,” he snapped, before adding in Gil’s direction, “Are there any ’phones left in the place? I’d like to call in some expert help.”

Gil shrugged. “Might as well use my mobile: I doubt there’s a free landline left in Kourou.”

“Gilead Whyte,” pronounced Dr Newton, “you are a lifesaver.” He took the mobile smartly out of Gil’s hand, and started pacing again as he punched in numbers, a long string of them from the looks. There seemed to be a long and rather suspenseful pause as Newton waited to be connected, sticking his finger in his free ear to cut out the din from around him.

“Come on, come on…” He was practically creating a regular groove in the floor.

Finally he seemed to get through to someone. “Yes? Yes, I know this is a secure line, that’s why I’m using it… yes, of course I have clearance: this is the Doctor speaking….” He rattled off a series of numbers and codenames. “If you could put me through to General Crichton… away? Well, Bambera, then, or Kramer… look, don’t start. I have been allied with UNIT since 1968: any officer will vouch for me. Well, call Geneva if you have to. Ring Lethbridge-Stewart. This is urgent… do you mind? I… hello? Hello?”

He switched the mobile off, looking angry enough to throw the thing to the floor.

“Blast. Some young woman at the other end didn’t know me from Rassilon, and wouldn’t put me through because I couldn’t prove my clearance. Which I can’t do anyway, because all the records are on a series of servers at Geneva that she couldn’t possibly access from… wherever it is they’ve set up headquarters these days. Honestly!” He let out a sharp sigh and handed Gil’s mobile back to him, then added as he saw the tech’s expression: “What is it?”

“You’re… not a secret agent, are you?” Gil managed to say.

“No, Gilead: I’m an extra-terrestrial, in a bit of a corner.”

He seemed to sort of enjoy Gil’s amazed reaction.
Isidore was angry beyond words when he had set out on his little walk: brain the size of the proverbial planet, and the Doctor had simply asked him to stay out of trouble. Well, yah boo. At least he’d set the Doctor’s little case-study a little further forward overnight, though he probably wouldn’t get the credit for it. What had the Doctor said? Consult the locals? All they like sheep had gone astray: none of them looked like they had the faintest idea what was going on. He’d taken a ramble round the place, using a little camouflage trick to get into even the restricted quarters of the spaceport, but even now he was none the wiser, and he was determined to head back to Mission Control and tell the Doctor as such.

He had to ‘vanish’ a few more times on the way: some very nervous-looking guys in disruptor-pattern uniform, probably the local Marines, trotted past with carbines in their hands. Locals they undoubtedly were, but they didn’t look like the sort you’d want to interview in a hurry. Damn, if security was being stepped up this might make things a whole pile more difficult for all three of them.

Brooding on this, he made his way back through the main blockhouse, over hearing as he went the words ‘Silicon Eater’: the nickname they’d given to the worm down Kourou way. Superstitious bunk. And wrong. Worms didn’t ‘eat’ chips, just made them a bit too busy. Like the corridors of this place –

He almost bumped into another tech, a young woman with a strong look of Louise Brooks about her, right down to the haircut and the sultry eyes, incongruous in a place like this. “Can I help you?” she asked, innocently.

“I think you just might be able to,” he said. “You are -?”

“Pandora,” she said, with a sly smile.

“You seen Isidore?” Chandra asked, rejoining a very harassed-looking Time Lord back at the central Mission Control chamber. “I wanted his help to confirm a theory… Still, there’s something I wanted to talk to you about.”

“The suit?” asked the Doctor.

“I’ve been through it inside out with the handscan, as you asked. Apart from a few dents here and there, it’s absolutely kosher.”

“What?”

“There’s not a thing wrong with it. Batteries reading about 75, oxygen 35 but I think the venting system might’ve leaked most of it out; reserve ‘chute is fine, as was the reserve oxygen. I didn’t have the controls to check the gray-belt, but the connections for it looked fine. The hardware’s not the cause of your suit failure. We techs have a saying: in hardware, no more problems. It’s all software. That’s why I wanted to…”

The Doctor’s face turned pale. “Isidore. He was right all along. It wasn’t BlueCloud, but Q. Something on that station infected it… and that suit was controlled by Q. Idiot of me: it was Q. all along!”

With that last shout, he had unsnapped the wrist-computer and cast it to the ground with a skitter of precision-made metal and alloy.

Q-4880 rebounded against the foot of a desk and came to rest, speechless, innocuous and inert.

The Doctor stared at it venomously: but he was shaking. What else had been infected? And with what? More questions: and no more answers than before. ☀

Next Episode: SUI GENERIS

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