

Tales of
TIME

TRINITY 1992 ISSUE 8

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY
DOCTOR WHO SOCIETY

50p

50p



Aunty Ainley

Two Short Stories

How to be a committee member

IN THIS ISSUE

Interview : Terrance Dicks

The McCoy Years

Title Sequences

Reviews, and MORE...



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Editorial



TIDES OF TIME : ISSUE 8

TRINITY TERM : 1992

Well, here it is. The first new look issue of TIDES OF TIME, 'Under New Management' as the phrase goes. We hope that you enjoy the contents over the next dozen or so pages, and that they will inspire you to enter articles for future issues. The magazine certainly can't be run on any long term basis without *YOUR* articles - they can be whatever you wish, although bear in mind that we will try to balance the number of articles of any particular kind in each issue - for example, one book review, one serial review, etc. There are literally hundreds of original articles to be written... so get writing! We can't guarantee to return scripts, and so please only send a copy of your original. Please also try and ensure that your spellings of names, characters, etc, are correct, as we can't check all of them! Send your final article (typed if possible, printed clearly if not, or the best option - on computer disk in ASCII format - which virtually guarantees inclusion!) to:

Mark Hanlon, St. Peter's College, Oxford. OX1 2DL
Julian Mander, St. Peter's College, Oxford. OX1 2DL

Alternatively hand articles to either Mark or myself at any Doctor Who Society meeting.

We would like to increase the circulation of TIDES OF TIME, and so we are opening submission of articles to ANY Doctor Who fan outside the University, although the majority of the magazine will remain definitely in-university contributors. As we gauge demand, we will set up a subscription process in order to allow readers to receive copies through the post.

Here's to the Michaelmas 1992 Issue!...

Julian Mander.
Editor.

Brought to you by:

Editor: Julian Mander
Article Co-ordinator: Mark Hanlon
Typing, typesetting, design: Julian Mander
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Special Thanks to:
.... Birmingham Railway Publications

The solution to ALL your problems...

"Aunty Ainley"



Dear Aunty Ainley,

When alone in my bedroom with my book shelves, I have this sudden urge to open IMAGE OF THE FENDAHL at the centre pages and sniff deeply. Is this natural?

Yours, Priscilla P.

Aunty Ainley replies...

How often I have heard this tale before. The problem arises with the name FENDAHL. Any attempt to pronounce it leads to the aforementioned symptoms... it should be "FEND-ARGHH-LER", or should that be "FENDA-HULL"... or then again "FEND-ALL"... excuse me... (rummage)... (flick)... (sniff)... (sniff)... (more rummaging)... Ah, that's better. Yes, I shouldn't worry about it.

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Dear Aunty Ainley,

So affected was I by your performance in "THE KING'S DEMONS" that I have recently taken, in crowded public places such as town centres, pubs and churches, to shouting "MEDIEVAL MIDFITTS" like you did. This is embarrassing. Please help me to stop!

Yours, Irongron.

Aunty Ainley replies...

You are suffering from a long term bout of "Throwback personification". We were warned about this as we were filming "THE KING'S DEMONS" and took steps to prevent the problem amongst the crew. However, we failed to stop it being transmitted to the viewers, and I'm afraid to say that the problem is incurable... however, may I suggest that you help to alleviate the problem by dressing in period costume during times in public - so that most people will only glance at you once - concluding that you ARE raving mad - and not keep staring at you while they try and work out one way or another.

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Dear Aunty Ainley,

Every time I see a sink plunger I just have to grab it and growl "EXTERMINATE" in a monotone voice. Can you help?

Yours, Davros.

Aunty Ainley replies...

As several leading psychologists would suggest, you need to solve this small problem by associating the very act of picking up a sink plunger with pain and humiliation. To this end, next time you "feel the urge", moisten the end of the rubber slightly and push firmly against the centre of your forehead. As you spend the next hour or so attempting to remove the plunger, the humiliation you will suffer should be enough to counteract the subconscious desire in future.

--- ● ---

Dear Aunty Ainley,

I am a member of the OXFORD UNIVERSITY DOCTOR WHO SOCIETY.

Yours, D. 'look I'm a cyberman' Banks

Aunty Ainley replies...

I sympathise, I too used to be... before I started using ointment. Look on the bright side, you could be a member of the OXFORD UNIVERSITY STAR TREK SOCIETY!

--- ● ---

Dear Aunty Ainley,

I must admit to not only being on the committee of O.U.D.W.S, but also to being the owner of a blue china TARDIS money box.

Yours, ashamedly

Aunty Ainley replies...

Once the initial mistake of actually going to a DOCTOR WHO SOCIETY meeting is made, then I'm afraid to say that there is little hope. May I suggest, in view of being the owner of a certain money box, you climb onto the roof of a very tall building, throw it off, and then follow its trajectory? ●

Write with all your problems to:

**Aunty Ainley, c/o Julian Mander,
St. Peter's College, Oxford. OX1 2DL**

REVIEW · REVIEW · REVIEW · REVIEW · REVIEW ·

TIME'S CRUCIBLE

Source: Dr. Who Original Fiction.

NEW ADVENTURES : "Cat's Cradle" Series

By: Marc Platt

I must admit that having just finished *Time's Crucible* I feel stunned and awed! Marc's novel sets out with an enormous goal - to develop the entire concept of the TARDIS's capabilities, and to write virtually the entire history of the planet Gallifrey, explain the rising of the Time Lords, and on top of that, to provide a stimulating, cha^{ll}enging, and down-right scary tale involving a huge leech-like creature called the Process, and the separate demises of the Doctor and Ace.

It did take quite a while to get into the story. Those of you who have read *Revelation* will know the feeling of being completely confused about what is going on, which does serve to detract from the story to a certain extent. I unfortunately have to say that the same is the case with the first eighty pages or so with *Time's Crucible*. However, whereas at the end of *Revelation*, you were still confused about the beginning, in *Time's Crucible* everything does get explained, and your picture of the situation suddenly explodes into full understanding. Marc has proved himself to be a very gifted writer with this story - you'll see his distinctive style that was evident with *Battlefield* and *Ghost Light* really coming out.

Part of the strength of the book was in the fact that you were never sure what was happening, or indeed what was going to happen next. Each small chapter (on average only 5-6 pages) seems self contained and almost unconnected with any other. Characters seem to be doing one thing in one chapter and something entirely different in the next. However, once you realise what is going on, it does become crystal clear. I'm almost of the opinion that I shouldn't say anything about the story line so that you can get as much out of it as I did, although being a review I suppose that isn't quite fair...

Basically, the TARDIS is invaded by an unknown force, which locks the Ace and the Doctor out of the TARDIS. However, the TARDIS is obviously on the Doctor's side and is trying to expel the invader. The Doctor regains access to the TARDIS, but the invader (a datavore) consumes all the information held in the TARDIS (including the TARDIS manual, prints, etc.) and as reality twists and dimensions crumble as a result

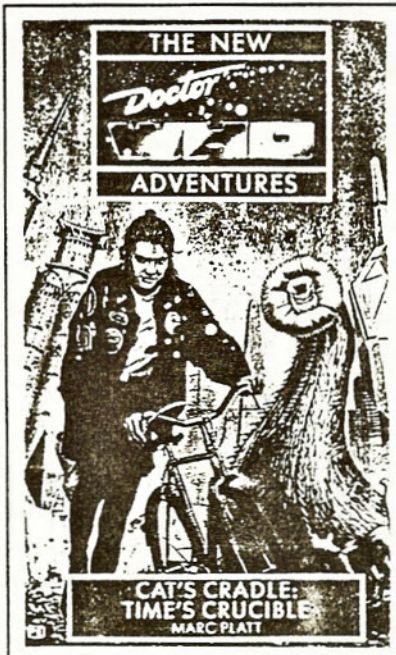
of the general battering as the invader tries to gain access to more and more of the ship, the TARDIS explodes apart and crashes with another vehicle in the Space-Time continuum, which happens to the craft of the first Time travellers from Gallifrey. Suddenly, we're immersed in a weird world with no horizon, random time streams which cross and alter, the crews of both ships at various ages of their lives doing things simultaneously, a strange liquid cat that keeps popping up for no apparent reason, buildings that crumble and lean at odd angles, crustacean-like guards who abscond people and take them to the Process, and the Process itself, a leech with a footmouth at each end that travels by one footmouth lifting off the ground, passing over the other, and planting itself on the ground while the other footmouth does the same - which gives it a kind of cart-wheeling effect.

The scale of the landscape is staggeringly huge, but because of the amazing succinct and dramatic descriptions your imagination constructs a huge landscape in your mind. All I can say is that Marc has a brilliant and creative imagination, and manages to convey a sense of awe to the reader.

As the story unfolds, it really does look like the Doctor has met his match. Things get more complicated as the Process meets its older self, a ghost Doctor keeps making obscure appearances, various pieces of the TARDIS are strewn about the landscape, and one of the crew is an arch-traitor.

As with the majority of the other New Adventures novels, there are numerous references to stories in the Doctor's past. While you would need to know more about Doctor Who to understand the references that Marc makes than you would for other novels, they do blend in nicely and really provide body to the story. It all adds nicely to provide an exciting, and above all, believable story. Is this a story that could be made into a film? No! The sets would be just too huge and complicated, and so you'll just have to be satisfied with what your imagination conjures up for you.

In summary, a brilliant book - go and buy it immediately. I'm off to read it again. If the other two books in the *Cat's Cradle* series (*Warhead* by Andrew Cartmel, and *Witch Mark* by Andrew Hunt) are as good as this, then I can't wait. I can realistically see a time when the Doctor Who New Adventures are as numerous as the Star Trek original fiction.



Review by Julian Mander

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ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN

Source: Dr. Who (TV)

"It's rather ironic. On Earth, Haley's Comet has always been associated with impending disaster." (Peri - ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN).

With retrospect, anybody with a rough idea of DOCTOR WHO's history may come to the conclusion that doing a story about the above mentioned comet may have been a bad idea. *ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN* opened the 1985 Season of DOCTOR WHO, a season which may have rung the programme's death-knell given that Michael Grade (BBC 1 Controller) suspended what he considered a tired and gratuitously violent show for 18 months, from which, in 1992, it has yet to recover. "Impending disaster" indeed.

ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN could be said to be the embodiment of Mr Grade's criticisms of the series as a whole. Although I feel that the first episode is largely excellently and tightly paced, logically developed, gritty in its action and humour - the second falls flat on its face because of exceptionally sloppy scripting and pointless DOCTOR WHO continuity. The Telos plot is appallingly developed as it attempts to create a new race The Cryons, do justice to the Cybermen and the characters carried from episode 1 - all in 50 minutes. Consequently, it fails in all three. Too much is crammed in the little time available and so each element becomes cursory and therefore uninteresting. Many people in the room by the end of episode 2 where having serious problems stifling yawns. The characters from episode 1 - Bates, Stratton and Griffiths - receive the worst treatment. Excellently developed until episode 2, the writer suddenly seems to run out of steam where they are concerned and the characters are killed off in a fashion which causes the viewer to think "why did they bother?" Any potential tragedy the scene had because the characters were doomed by their own natures was lost - the writer was merely disposing of excess baggage cluttering his script. Indeed one of the central problems of the story is the number of often violent and dramatically pointless deaths. The crushing of Lytton's hands seems unnecessarily violent, and, after the demise of almost every other

conceivable character, his final throes definitely suffer from a case of familiarity breeding contempt. By the end, the viewer just doesn't really care. The story is also bogged down in pointless DOCTOR WHO continuity. The central thrust of the story seems to be the Cybermen's wish to save their native planet Mondas from destruction by crashing Haley's comet into Earth. Fine. So why involve Telos, the Cybermen's adopted planet? The narrative would have been far less cluttered if the story were set on Mondas. Telos is included simply because we've been there before. The Earth sewers are included likewise because a past Cyber-story featured them. Thus the whole story borrows extensively from others and contains nothing original, while at the same time bores the casual viewer with repeated references to Mondas which no one but an ardent fan would remember. This lack of originality proves that Grade's diagnosis that the show was tired and worn-out was entirely correct.

What of other elements in the production? Matthew Robinson's direction, while not up to the heights he achieved in *RESURRECTION OF THE DALEKS*, is nevertheless of a far greater level of competence than many other efforts of that season. The opening shots in the sewers are particularly impressive as is some of the location filming. This is sadly marred by clumsy shooting in the cyber-tombs and embarrassing fight scenes. The casting is excellent: top awards must go to Brian Glover as Griffiths who made a dramatically pointless character believable, and surprisingly Faith Brown as Flast - another pointless character which engendered sympathy from the audience. Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant also performed well: thankfully the relationship between the Doctor and Peri was devoid of the bitching which made the characters decidedly unlikeable later in the season. But, despite these positive points, *ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN* can be considered nothing but an overall failure, proving that no amount of glossy production can veneer a lousy script. And this is one of the better stories of the season.

Review by Mark Hanlon

How to be a Committee Member

Some of you may think that committee members spend their time thinking up new ideas, organising things, sorting out paperwork, promoting the society and generally keeping things going. This is very far from the truth... if you want to be a committee member, then these are the skills that you should be practising...

PACING

Being doing this about 10 minutes before the society's meeting is due to start, spend your time at the front of the room pacing from one side of the room to the other with a folder or file tucked under your arm or a piece of paper in your hand. This signifies to the membership that the committee is actually doing something (contrary to the truth), but more importantly shows everybody that you are of some importance.

SEATING

Most people assume that the place for committee members to sit is in the front row, where they get the best view of whatever's going on - this is quite incorrect. As a committee member you should always sit either on a chair at the front with it's back to the side wall, or better still, on a table at the side of the room. This is so that everybody can see YOU... your own view of the proceedings is very much of secondary importance.

DOORWAYS

One of the most important tools of the committee member is the doorway. It is a well known fact that committee members hang around doorways, usually in groups of two or three either just inside or outside of the door. This is because the doorway is the only part of the room that everybody passes, so if you hang around near the door everybody is guaranteed to see you.

However, doorways have a much more important use and that is going in and out. It is a well known fact that the importance of the committee member is directly proportional to the number of times that they pass through the doorway in the course of a meeting. At most societies you can easily

observe the frequency with which committee members go in and out of the doorway before and after meetings. A certain committee has got this practice down to a fine art and has also earned a reputation for coming and going during the meeting itself.

STARTING THE MEETING

Most people think that society meetings are started by the President calling everyone to order - this is quite wrong, this simply doesn't work. The meeting is actually started by one of the lower ranking committee members, who picks up the chair that is holding the door open, holds it above their head, carries it to the far corner of the room and sits on it - then the President begins to speak. It is at this point that the greatest opportunity for self publicity arises. With great skill you should interrupt the President's series of announcements with one of your own - that way everybody will notice you and the President won't be able to do a thing about it.

So, if you want to be a committee member, just practice these skills regularly at all meetings and after a while everyone will assume that you are actually on the committee. At this stage, the committee will have no choice but to let you in.

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COMMITTEE SKILLS

You are now ready to boost your level of importance within the committee. Some people think that this is done by suggesting heaps of new ideas, but this is not the case. You raise your importance simply by criticising everyone else's suggestions - and thus gaining the reputation for being the most sensible person on the committee. Under no circumstances should you suggest anything yourself unless it's mindbogglingly obvious - people will just criticise you for it. Also make sure that you take on the least amount of responsibility possible, that way there's less room for you to screw up, and if someone else is about to screw something up, then let them - don't under any circumstances save the day unless you're sure to reap the credit.

Happy Hacking.

By Paul Groves

INTERVIEW

TERRANCE DICKS

Our thanks must go to Terrance Dicks for taking the time to visit us. He enthralled us with his tales of his involvement with Doctor Who, most of which is paraphrased below. After his talk, he allowed members of Doc. Soc. to grill him with whatever questions they wanted, and so we present a selection of the more interesting ones.



in something that I really didn't want to be doing. In those days, you had to cover one week in four.

What got me away from it was Doctor Who - one of the other writers was a chap called Derek Sherwin - he and I used to be on the same writing team for Crossroads.

Derek and I got to know each other quite well - he ended up being script editor during the last of the Troughton years, and he then got offered a job on "Love Story", which was also a popular series at the time. He was desperate to leave Doctor Who, and thought of me as he was looking around for a replacement. He phoned and said "How would you like to be script editor on Doctor Who?". At this time I was having difficulty earning a living as a writer, and the £ symbols flashed in front of my eyes with an offer of 3 months' regular work at the BBC.

At the end of the Troughton era, the BBC had almost decided to cancel the show. The ratings had been falling as Patrick got a little tired with the show, and it had already been running for 6 years which in those days was a very reasonable run for a show. What then happened was that a number of different things came together - colour, (which added enormously to Who), Jon Pertwee who had been cast fairly casually proved to be a brilliant choice, Barry Letts took over as producer, and finally, and which I say with all due modesty, was me! The whole thing just kind of took off. From then on, for ten years or so, the show never looked back. We had an audience which absolutely spanned the generations. It was the BBC's hook into Saturday night - Doctor Who at six o'clock was the way that the BBC grabbed the audiences. Barry and I loved the show, and we suddenly found ourselves the blue-eyed boys of the BBC.

Eventually, we all decided that it was time to quit. Jon was concerned that he was being typecast. People were offering him jobs, and he kept refusing them because he was doing Doctor Who. He was afraid that soon they would stop asking him. I think he made the right decision, and indeed he has gone on to do many other shows and jobs. Barry also wanted to go back to directing, and I wanted to be a writer and not a script editor. It was all a good and interesting 5 years of my life and as far I was concerned that was it.

However, what was starting to happen at this time was the novelisation of the Doctor Who stories. At the time of the original Dalek craze back in the 1960's, a firm called White Lion published a couple of novels, and they just sat there in hardback on library shelves.

Later in the '70s a publisher called Target Books were looking to start a children's range. They eventually ended up at White Lion, and the editor brought up the rights for the three original Doctor Who books - Doctor Who and The Daleks, The Zarbi, and The Crusaders - this was all before my time and nothing to do with me. Target republished those in paperback - at 25p! - and they sold like hot cakes! Target suddenly realised that they were onto a winner, and approached the BBC (who were actually not terribly interested in the project), and the BBC agreed to sell other rights for other stories. Target was almost saved as a firm overnight! I was approached and with sublime confidence; I said "Yes, I'll write some!". Gradually over the years it all took off. I asked around to see if any one else wanted to write some books, but no one was particularly interested or enthusiastic. I think I've now written about 60 or 70 Doctor Who books. I kind of built up a sort of commanding lead.

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"Let me begin where it all started - I went to a grammar school in London, where the only thing I was ever any good at was English. I got a scholarship to do English at Cambridge, and after three years got a III. When I came out I was faced with the problem of earning a living. I'd always wanted to be a writer - but how do you earn a living at it? I had had a friend who had entered into the big wide world a year or so earlier, and who said that they had these people in advertising called copy-writers, and various people who wrote adverts. I got into this, intending it to be a temporary measure, but it turned out to last for five years - it was during the boom in advertising - I really didn't like it but didn't make a move because there was so much money being thrown about.

I married, and soon discovered that a wife can be a financial asset. I used to say farewell to her in the morning (she was a teacher), and then retire back to my study for some coffee. I made my way into radio because it was quite easy to get into as it didn't pay much money in those days. I worked up from that into television. For a time I got some work in Crossroads. Just as I had discovered that I had a ghastly talent for advertising, I similarly discovered that I had a talent for soap, and here I was stuck

The writers soon realised that they were missing out on a good thing by not novelising their own stories. It soon became less and less an obvious assumption that I should automatically novelise scripts, and so my role began to peter out. As a result of all of this however, I got a track record as a best selling children's writer. Consequently, I've written many other non-Doctor Who books. Because of my continued connections with Doctor Who, I've ended up writing quite a few scripts, often when the BBC have had some kind of crisis. For example I did the Five Doctors, and a couple of years ago I did the Doctor Who stage show, which then went round on tour.

Much more recently, Peter Darvill-Evans came up with the idea of writing the New Adventures - some original fiction. It was thus that I did Exodus - which turned out very well. I've been asked to do another one - which will be written at the end of this year, and will probably be published in 1993.

And now our questions ...

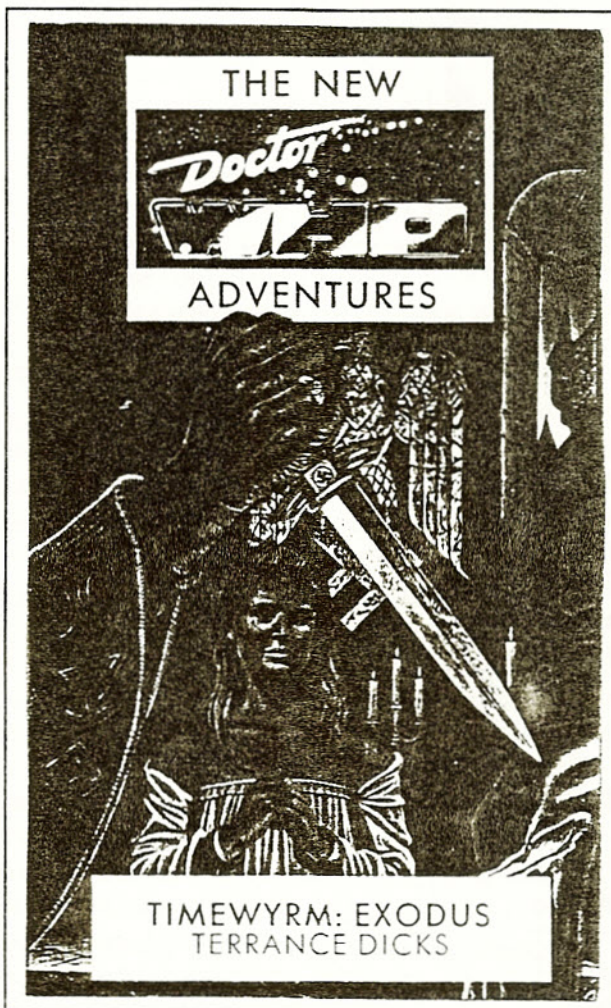
Would you like to see The Ultimate Adventure (the stage play) novelised?

I would love to novelise The Ultimate Adventure - however, Terry Nation's agent has once again obstructed plans to do so. If you write a story with Daleks in, it's not only a big hassle to get permission to use the Daleks, but you have to pay a proportion of any money raised to him. The last I heard, was that his agent had refused to allow the play to be novelised.

How many companions do you think that the Doctor should have?

Companions are always a problem. You know, there was a time when there were about nine of them - the TARDIS was getting like a number 9 bus! I remember writing The Five Doctors - it was all becoming quite a desperate business, remembering who was where... the other problem being that if somebody

doesn't have a line for three pages, it doesn't matter in a book... but it matters most desperately to the actor! I feel that two companions, one male, one female, and the Doctor, is the kind of absolutely perfect thing. And if you pick them right they can be very good. You can always get a little bit of variation with the companions and they are definitely one of the show's resources... but there shouldn't be too many and they shouldn't stay too long - it's the variety that's the kind of spice of the thing.



Tom Baker was renowned for his many and varied ideas for the show. Did you find that a problem? One of his suggestions was to have some kind of weird talking cabbage as the Doctor... what was your reaction to this?

This is the thing with actors, after a bit they start having ideas! Actually, I have a slight tendency to be a bit short with them. Barry Letts who was the producer during part of my time had a motto, which I sort of took over and followed when I was a producer myself - always *listen* to the actors. Now the

operative word is listen - don't necessarily take any notice, but listen - let them get it off their chests! Tom was always rushing up with about 17 suggestions at a time. The thing to do with him was to listen - and every now and then he'd have a really good idea - and if you got a good one, you'd say "Yes, you're right Tom, we'll do that" and he'd go away happy. Next time, you could say "No Tom, that's absolute rubbish"... and he'd say "Is it? Oh well, I expect you're right" and then go off again. It's all a matter of balance - not letting the actors constantly rewrite the show, being able to draw the line. Some ideas would wear thin quite quickly, such as a talking cabbage! Over the years, many ideas have appeared/been suggested. For example, one of the questions I used to be asked at conventions was "Do you think the Doctor should be a woman?" and I'd always say "I think he's got enough problems without sex changes!" The Doctor is predominantly a masculine figure - if you want a female Doctor, then go off and invent one - but leave the original one alone.

Would you like to see some or all of the New Adventures stories made into films, and do you think it's possible?

That's a yes and no answer - yes, I'd like to see it, no, it wouldn't be possible. The whole point of the books is to do stories that would be impossible on the screen. Everything on TV has to be paid for, so imagine entire martian space fleets, Nazi armies, and so on. If it had been done for television, it would have been written differently. That is the nice thing with the books - being free from those sort of constraints.

At what sort of rate do you try and write books?

My basic aim is to write one smash bestseller every three years. One of the ideas that I've been working on is a fictional work taking place around WWII. When I was asked to write a Doctor Who novel, I had very little time to do it in, and so I used the knowledge that I currently knew a lot about as a basis for the novel, and then to add more and more elements

to the story, on different levels, to build the story up, so that you end up with the Doctor battling against the Nazis, behind whom are the Black Coven, behind whom is the Time Wurm, and then ultimately the Warlords - to provide a multi-layered and intricate story.

Who would you like to see playing the Doctor in future?

I don't know. Up to the first four Doctors, they got it right every time - a recurrent miracle. After that, I think that they went a little wrong. If I was to take over, I would take the series back to where it all went off the rails, and have Tom Baker as the Doctor again, and then about a year later, go for the new Doctor. The thing is, the first four actors played the role with tremendous success - towards the end of Tom's time, it was easy to see that he was getting tired of the role and didn't have the energy to get himself out of the role. It is a star part - the Doctor must dominate the show.

What difficulties did you face as script editor?

Writers are extremely unreliable and dishonest - everybody's difficult and temperamental. Getting the scripts in on time is the main problem. We used to get lots of scripts in, but only a very few would be usable. We tended to stick with the same script writers so that we could be more certain with what we were getting, and at what times we would get them. You always get cuts and changes all the time having to be made - mainly due to the fact that it's impossible to time a script on paper, and especially as Doctor Who has to be made to a very tight time margin (to the nearest second). You should always make scripts slightly longer - it's a lot easier to cut something out, as opposed to adding something in. You have to keep looking ahead. The whole production process is very complicated. The script editor is responsible for the entire script, the writers, additions, deletions, etc, and for example, explaining to writers why there are scenes that they don't remember writing...

What was the reason behind the Doctor being exiled to Earth?

The answer to most questions on TV is mostly to do with money - its

cheaper to set stories on Earth than on an alien planet. The benefits are purely financial - it does tend to limit the scope of stories quite drastically. I believe that basic Who is: TARDIS lands, companions come out and look around, companions say "This isn't the pleasure planet you promised... Never mind, we'll go and explore - we'll go round this way, you go round that way..."

What do you think of Bob Holmes?

Well, I think he was super - I think that I claim to have discovered him. He was quite a difficult person to work with, and I tended to be the only person who could hold back his gruesome tendencies in his scripts... for example The Brain of Morbius story - I was asked to write it, and I wrote and they accepted the script. It originally went along the lines of Morbius having a robot servant who survives the crash, preserving Morbius's brain. When other spaceships arrived, it put together bits of body and then implanted Morbius's brain into the result. Morbius, finding himself in this mish mash of limbs is not pleased. This was the premise on which the show was commissioned. I made the mistake of delivering the scripts and then going away on holiday... When I got back, I discovered that a few changes had been made... Philip Hinchcliffe had decided that they couldn't afford to do the robot and so they wrote in the character of Solon. I was very annoyed, and went as far as I could to show my disapproval - which was to take my name off the show - and hence it was screened under the fictional name "Robin Bland"!

How big a part did you play in the construction of the Time Lords and the idea of Gallifrey?

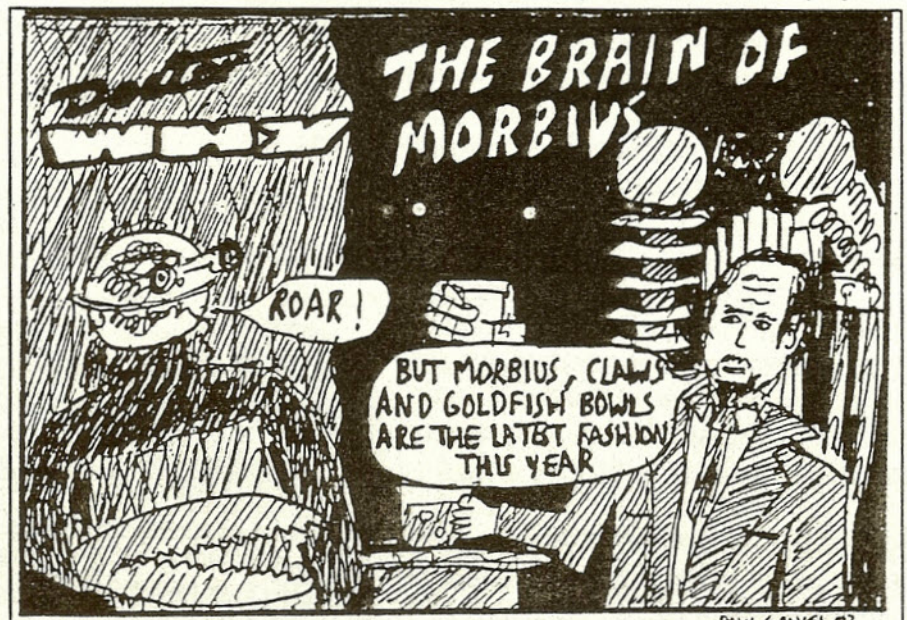
It all grew up in a very strange sort of way - all we knew about the Doctor at that point was that he was in some sense an exile, and possibly a fugitive, and it was hinted at that he might not have the right to have the TARDIS, but we didn't really know more than that. Derek Sherwin came up with the idea that the Doctor is presented with a problem so big that he has to appeal to his own people, and thus reveal his whereabouts, and hence face recrimination. That was really all we set out to do - although we found that the whole concept of the Time Lords tended to write itself. It was really Bob Holmes who created the whole mythology - and of course we went on to re-use the ideas in later stories and develop it further. He then enhanced the entire mythos in The Deadly Assassin, and developed it to the full. I liked that particular story very much.

Was there ever a contingency plan for when the Doctor used up all his regenerations?

Well, I'm sure that we could have weasled out of it! Did we say 12 regenerations? We meant 112! The thing to do on Who is to keep references vague - so that you have plenty of room to manoeuvre - and then you also limit the risk of people picking up on a mistakes.

— • —

Once again, we would like to thank Terrance Dicks for his time, and wish him every success on future projects.



◀ The Wig of Nimon ▶

A short story by

Paul Groves and James Brough

Episode 1

The stars were shiny like nails in the night. There was a sudden blaze of colour as stars crashed and worlds collided. A howling noise appeared... "Wooo-eee-ooo-eee-oooo-weeoo". It had begun.

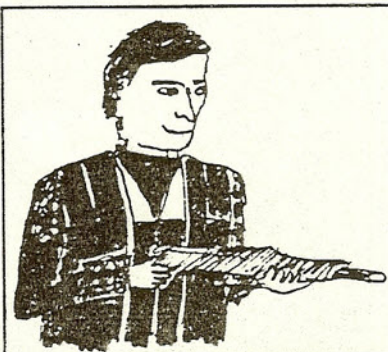
A galaxy somewhere in the backwaters of the less fashionable end of the Universe formed itself into an unspeakably malignant face, its jowls quivering with malevolence and rage. It winked out of existence only to be replaced by the words "Doctor Who" emblazoned across the universe, obliterating thousands of stars and planets with tacky early-eighties neon writing. It blurred and changed re-forming into the words "The Wig of Nimon", which in turn dissolved into "by Paul Groves and James Brough", which were then mercifully replaced by "Episode 1".

On an open planet in an irrelevant sector of the galaxy stands the lone renegade, tastelessly clad from head to foot in black studded leather. His eyes flickered down to the charge indicator on his gun, which showed that only one shot remained. He surveyed calmly the 45 heavily-armed Federation guards surrounding him. A grim smile creased his lips "Let's kick some ass", he thought as he raised his weapon. Before a single guard could react Rhubarb and Custard let fly their secret weapon.

Meanwhile, in a futuristic, yet clapped out space-time craft secreted at a location somewhere in space and time, stood that moderately obese, yet tastelessly dressed traveller in time and space known only as Ralph (only kidding). In the same room stood another tastelessly dressed traveller in time and space known only as Peri (sadly, we're not kidding this time). "When are we going back to Earth, you fat b*****d", utters the same.

"Peri, are you insinuating that I'm portly?", came the sharp repost. "For your information my dear, we are visiting an old friend of mine on Gauda Prime", continued the generously proportioned Time Lord.

Meanwhile, on the aforementioned planet, Avon stands astride the bodies of 45 Federation guards, plus Rhubarb and Custard who



A grim smile creased his lips, "Let's kick some ass", he thought as he raised his weapon.

"By the Wig of Nimon, I'm in the wrong bloody programme!"



he'd shot in the back for a f t e r s . Mourning the loss of his spaceship, he o b s e r v e s

around him the motionless forms of Vila, Dayma, Soolin, and Tarrant and smiles wryly. "So it's true", he thinks, "every cloud does have its silver lining" and with that thought Avon sodded off to find Orac.

There was a deep wheezing groaning noise as the Doctor struggled up the stairs from the room where the TARDIS had just landed. Gazing around him at the motionless forms of Blake, Vila, Tarrant, Soolin, Rhubarb, Custard, and countless Federation Guards, he exclaimed "By the Wig of Nimon, I'm in the wrong bloody programme."

Episode 2

The Intergalactic firework display is repeated.

"By the Wig of Nimon, I'm in the wrong bloody programme", exclaimed the Doctor.

There was another deep wheezing and groaning as one of the 'corpses' stirred and sat up revealing himself to be a raggedly dressed prat with an appalling perm.

"Avon", he groaned arrogantly.

"Avon", snapped the Doctor, "I am the Doctor, the definite article, the one and only."

"That was the line I was looking for!" exclaimed Chesney Hawkes. Tarrant shot him. From behind a pillar, Steel exclaimed "Who's the tasteless dressed moron with the perm?"

"Which one?" questioned Sapphire. They disappeared up each other's back sides, via the nearest staircase.

"That's it. I've worked it all out", said the Doctor, not bothering to wait until episode 3. "Someone is trying to bring lots of different telefantasy series to a point and create a Science

A blue sweated, black trousered Vulcan with a 10' collar oozed along the corridor cringing 'Lord Nimon, Lord Nimon'.

Fiction Singularity", he continued.

"What, an improbability within an inconsistency?" questioned Tarrant connectedly.

"Cut the crap, Curly", said the Doctor.

Tarrant waved his gun around, but put it away after a few minutes, because nobody was taking any notice.

They both strode out of the room arrogantly, immediately ducking into a strategically placed alcove as a black trousered, blue sweated villain Vulcan with a 10 inch collar oozed along the corridor cringing "Lord Nimon, Lord Nimon".

"At least Leonard got away from cheap science fiction", boomed the Doctor. Tarrant looked confused, this was one of his few abilities - in fact it was his only one, other than providing gun fodder for Avon and crashing space ships.

Suddenly a preposterous looking alien appeared behind them and screamed "Who dares disturb the Nimon?"

Without a moment's thought (goes without saying for Zarrant), our two heroes (?), pointed at Spock and shouted "Him".

Episode 3

Along came the titles again, setting off burglar alarms on countless planets.

Spock bowed and stooped before the alien and cringed "Lord Nimon, I have bought you sacrifices." He indicated the Doctor and Tarrant.

"You're not Soldeed", burbled the creature. "I shall destroy the three of you." With that it pointed its horns at Spock. Luckily for Spock though, the Nimon had forgotten to abduct a visual effects designer, so nothing happened whatsoever. Unluckily for Spock however, the aforementioned beast pulled out a 50 megawatt blaster. Fortunately for his logicalness though, the Doctor let out a huge breath and the Nimon, precariously balanced on a pair of 14" high heels designed by June Hudson fell over.

"Run". shouted the Doctor, already half way down the nearest corridor. Zarrant obeyed (another one of his talents), whilst Spock, still under the impression he was Soldeed rushed to assist the Nimon.

"What was that?" enquired Tarrant as he sped down a corridor which bore a remarkable resemblance to a previous one.

"That, you miserable fashion criminal," panted the Doctor hypocritically, "is a Nimon - an



example of the most ridiculous species ever to venture into the galactic conquest industry. Now, get in here quickly", he added, pushing Tarrant through the nearest doorway.

The Doctor, instead of following Tarrant, quickly doubled back and headed for the Tardis, past the cat from Red Dwarf, who was standing open mouthed dressed in beige flares and a dark brown plastic tablecloth. He then skidded to a halt and took a sharp left turn as the Tomb of the Cybermen suddenly appeared out of nowhere immediately in front of him.

Fighting his way past a crowd of young men in black anoraks clutching packs of blank videos, the Doctor reached the top of the nearest staircase and slid down the bannister, which promptly collapsed as he landed heavily on his feet at the bottom. Tripping over a paralytic Star Trek fan, he finally caught sight of the Tardis. But alas, his path blocked by 200 Gerry Anderson puppets.

The Doctor paused for thought, and then with arms in front of him in Tommy Cooper style he airwalked to the Tardis. The Anderson puppets, being totally crap, failed to notice the anomaly. On entering the console room, he soon lost his smug expression, as his gaze took in Avon perched on the console, pointing an old washing up liquid bottle covered in black and silver paint at Peri.

A perspex box containing a goldfish bowl and disco-rope cleared its "throat" and Avon immediately spun round to cover the Doctor, his costume squeaking in the process. "How did you get in?" blustered the Doctor indignantly.

"Oh, it wasn't difficult", smiled Avon, indicating Orac. The Doctor's face went from crimson to maroon. "And now I have a new ship", he continued smiling. This was not a pretty sight.

Then as he launched into a long soliloquy whilst staring at an irrelevant roundel as the console room wall, the Doctor quietly removed his weapon and broke it in half with minimal physical effort. Avon smiled again, "15-all now Doctor, but what do you propose to do about the Singularity?"

"Well, I'm buggered if I know", replied the bloated Time Lord, displaying only slightly more intelligence than Tarrant.

Episode 4 ...

has been cancelled by Jonathan Powell, because he thinks Doctor Who is horrible and he was frightened by the Vervoids. Instead, a "That's Life" Performing Pets special will be shown featuring the skateboarding duck, the car driving dog, and 2 Nimons that travel in time, destroying planets. ●

Era Review

"The McCoy Years"

Renaissance or death throe?

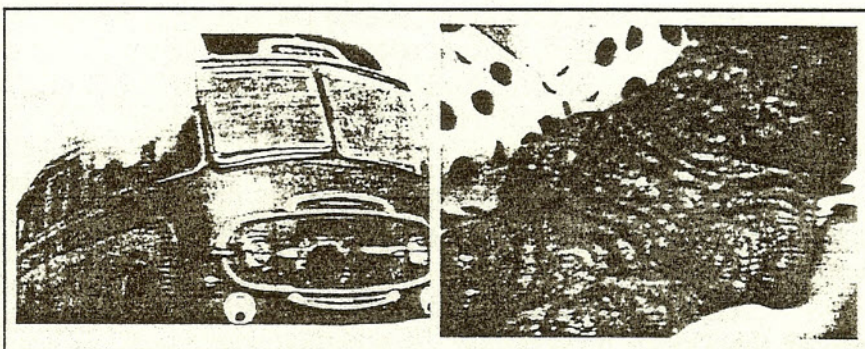
The congenital problem in writing this review is that the era can be viewed from two perspectives: retrospectively or from a contemporary position, but whichever perspective is chosen the conclusion will be invariably different from that which would result from the other perspective. Retrospectively, because of the absence of the show from our screens the era can only be regarded as the death throe of the programme, yet, viewing the three McCoy seasons from a contemporary angle, a more optimistic conclusion can be drawn that the show was getting back on its feet. Thus, a true appreciation of the McCoy years can only be arrived at if the era is viewed both from a contemporary angle and also the objective position of hindsight.

The Era begin in a mixed mood in September 1987. With the sacking of Colin Baker from the title role, the continuation of both the unpopular Bonnie Langford and John Nathan-Turner as companion and show's producer respectively, and the scheduling of the show against the giant Coronation Street on ITV, many fans felt they had little room for optimism about the show's continuation for any indefinite period. Other fans, however, felt that with the prospect of a new Doctor, era, and script editor to breath a blast of fresh air into the writing team, a revival of the show's fortunes was much the order of the day. *TIME AND THE RANI* - McCoy's first story - was to prove the optimists wrong. Which ever perspective *TIME* is viewed from, the only fair conclusion which can be drawn about it is - it's crap. The script, while being considerably better constructed and paced than many of the Colin Baker era, nevertheless possessed a hackneyed and tired central plot idea which on occasions was childishly inept in its execution. Sylvester McCoy was also attempting to run before he could walk : his performance was embarrassingly over-the-top in places and his interpretation of the role was definitely for laughs. The show lost 1 million viewers between episodes 1 and 2. *TIME AND THE RANI*, oddly enough, pleased Michael Grade . The story could be said to have saved the programme , since Grade was poised to axe the show without a second thought if it did not

meet his expectations - no more second chances were to be given . Maybe *TIME* wasn't that bad.

The second story, *PARADISE TOWERS*, was a distinct improvement. The script by Stephen Wyatt - definitely a writer of some calibre - was nothing short of excellent. A very original central idea about a mad architect creating a tower block unfit for human 'rubbish' to live in (nice bit of social comment) while seeking to artificially perpetuate his life, was graced by an excellent set of three-dimensional characters which were as shocking as they were funny (I found the prospect of the two dear old ladies -Tilda and Tabby - being cannibals quite disturbing). Despite this scriptural excellence though, *PARADISE TOWERS* was a televisual disaster. The direction by Nicholas Mallett was appalling, since what was without doubt an inherently black and unnerving script was transformed into gaudy camp comedy compounded by a dreadful performance by Richard Briers as the Chief Caretaker. Even the two cannibals failed to shock in their final televised form. Perhaps the only redeeming feature of *PARADISE TOWERS* as it eventually appeared was Sylvester McCoy. His excesses of *TIME AND THE RANI* were now firmly behind him and a darker, more introspective Doctor began to emerge. It is fair to say that Sylvester McCoy carried *PARADISE TOWERS*: his restraining influence allowed the viewer to appreciate some of the more sinister aspects of the story lost in the direction.

Whatever virtues *PARADISE TOWERS* possessed as a script were not reflected in the following story - *DELTA AND THE BANNERMEN*. This story contained a Hi-de-Hi holiday camp, flying buses, silly green babies eating rapid-growth bee's jelly, and Wales - destined for failure. The sheer naffness of the script was made worse by the appearance of Ken Dodd in a cameo role and lots of singing. As irony would have it, though, this was one of the more



watchable stories of the season due to Chris Clough's pacey direction. The story had an almost NEIGHBOURS-like feel to it, meaning it was utter offal but compulsive viewing. Ratings soared. *DELTA AND THE BANNERMEN*, in my opinion, is almost one of the ultimate nadirs in *DOCTOR WHO*'s history - once again, McCoy saved it.

DRAGONFIRE ended the season. At the time this was a big improvement on the bulk of stories in the season, since both in scriptural and production terms it embodied more of what viewers were used to in *DOCTOR WHO*. Retrospectively, the story is silly and scripturally unbalanced in places, but it witnessed the timely introduction of Ace as a perfect foil for McCoy's energy and now darker character. The season had its problems, more so when we view it retrospectively, but the general feeling by the end was that the show was moving back towards its proper rails: McCoy and Sophie Aldred as Ace performed well, and despite the occasional silliness, the programme had proved the last thing it was was stale. McCoy's first season produced a well-founded optimism which I shared. However, compared with other eras of the programme, it still had a long way to go.

REMEMBRANCE OF THE DALEKS opened McCoy's second season. It was, and is, a classic. Beautifully scripted, action-packed (excellent explosions and fight scenes), well-acted, superbly directed by Andrew Morgan, and mature enough to deal with such important issues such as racism, fascism, and Thatcherism (even though it's set in 1963), the story is one of the few gems of the 80's. McCoy and Aldred were now firmly settled in their roles, and proved that deep characterisation is possible in the Doctor-companion relationship, which so often in the past composed of the companion running around, tripping over a blade of grass, and asking questions. The Doctor in this story loses the title of the cuddly uncle, engineering mass genocide and developing an aloof air from his human companions around him. McCoy plays these darker aspects superbly: it is my contention that from this story Sylvester McCoy is the Doctor.

THE HAPPINESS PATROL was very much a reversion to the previous season's style of story: on Terra Alpha people were killed if they were not happy, and Bertie Bassett wandered around drowning people in strawberry fondant and dreamt up sweet deaths for anyone who got in his way. Very silly in places, but Sheila Hancock was superb. The most blatant of the McCoy era stories to attack Thatcherism.

SILVER NEMESIS attempted to celebrate 25 years of *DOCTOR WHO*, but after a superbly structured



first episode, the story unfortunately seemed to lose its direction and became a silly run-around for a statue, a bow, and an arrow. The Cybermen appeared in the story, but to no purpose. While the Daleks have always fared well in 80's *WHO*, the Cybermen had well-and-truly lost their way and become stock robotic villains who died rather well: Kit Pedler's conception of them as what man will ultimately become if he continues to replace worn-out parts of his body with artificial organs, had been sadly perverted. This story does, though, raise the welcome questions of the Doctor's origins. One of the underlying aims of McCoy's second season was to make the viewer once again ask "Who is The Doctor?"

THE GREATEST SHOW IN THE GALAXY concluded the season. This was Stephen Wyatt's second story, but it did not obtain the scriptural eminence of *PARADISE TOWERS* since it was full of plot holes and contained very little exposition of the story's central thrust. Nevertheless, an interesting script full of lively characters and, unlike *PARADISE TOWERS*, was superbly and atmospherically directed. McCoy's second season was a vast improvement on his first, and fandom was for the first time in years united in its support for the show. In retrospect, McCoy's second season was badly flawed-apart from the Dalek story by overlong scripts which had to be cut, and so produced unbalanced stories. This was a problem which actually became worse in McCoy's final season.

Ratings for the previous season had been among the best for some years, and the programme entered its 26th year in a confident mood with *BATTLEFIELD*. This was a strange story. On the positive side it contained enough dramatic plot devices and action to keep even the most cynical viewer hooked, yet for some reason it fell considerably short of the mark. Despite all its hooks, the script was strangely devoid of explanations as to what was going on, so while the narrative was easy enough to follow, there was no explanation as to the thrust behind it. In terms of production values, the



does not detract from the enjoyment of the story. *SURVIVAL* was the last original *DOCTOR WHO* story broadcast to date, perhaps ever. After the heights of *THE CURSE OF FENRIC* the story pales a little and is a little twee in places. Once again, questions about the Doctor's origins were going to be asked, but the continuing mystery idea was dropped since there was no programme to continue it in. McCoy, unfortunately, returns to the *BATTLEFIELD* style of acting, and one leaves *SURVIVAL* rather dissatisfied.

Was the McCoy era a last gasp or a renaissance? I feel the programme was definitely experiencing - or was on the verge of experiencing - an era of quality output. The fact that the BBC terminated the programme during McCoy's finest season illustrates the injustice of their decision and their prejudice towards *DOCTOR WHO*. Low ratings the programme may have had, but they were not a true reflection of the programme's quality. In literal terms, the McCoy era was the programme's last gasp: theoretically, however, I feel it was definitely the beginning of a renaissance.

Review by Mark Hanlon

story was also strange. In one sense the sets, special effects, and costumes were masterpieces for *DOCTOR WHO*, yet at the same, the viewer was painfully aware of the gulf between the demands of the script and the limitations of minuscule amounts of time and money available to the production team. McCoy also acts over-the-top in this story. During the previous season his interpretation of the Doctor's darker side was subtle - here he makes the character at times aggressive which does not suit his style of acting. Although *BATTLEFIELD* is compulsive viewing, it nevertheless can only be regarded as a failure. Viewing figures slumped to 3 million against a particularly strong batch of *CORONATION STREET* episodes. *DOCTOR WHO* was not to get another season.

GHOST LIGHT followed *BATTLEFIELD* and was described by a respectable broadsheet newspaper as "quintessentially splendid" - I agree. The story is one of the programme's most atmospheric, best-directed, best-acted, poetically-written, yarns in its history. The only problem is the story's incomprehensibility - it takes at least three viewings to fully understand. Nevertheless, a hugely enjoyable story which adds interesting layers to Ace's character.

The next story was *THE CURSE OF FENRIC*. McCoy's best. Not only is this story full of action, it sees a return to the behind-the-sofa atmosphere with some genuinely chilling scenes of vampires stalking through the mist taunting a vicar who's lost his faith in God, superb acting (particularly from McCoy), and a surprisingly mature perspective tackling sexuality to an extent never before witnessed in *WHO*. However, the story is again a little difficult to understand, but this



? Quiz ?

Answer the clues below, fitting the words into the grid, starting at the relevant clue number and proceeding in the direction indicated. If you hit a corner then turn with it, and continue.

The last letter of each clue is the first letter of the next. Clue #8 has been entered to show you how to fill in the grid. Also, omit the word 'the' in any answers.

By Paul Groves and Julian Mander

- 1 In *Remembrance of the Daleks*, one Dalek Faction was led by Davros, who led the others? [5:5]
- 2 Whom did Peri marry? [4:7]
- 3 In which story did the Doctor encounter Lady Peinforte? [6:7]
- 4 Which companion was brought up by an aunt who was a virologist? [5:4:5]
- 5 What is the surname of the actor who played the first Doctor in *The Five Doctors*? [8]
- 6 Which companion had a degree in Natural Science from Cambridge? [3:4]
- 7 Whose talons threatened Victorian London? [4:6]
- 8 What was the planet Voga made of? [4]
- 9 In which story did the Doctor encounter Sharrel? [7:2:3:6]
- 10 In which story did the *TARDIS*'s travellers find themselves exhibited? [5:6]
- 11 Who was Professor Keller? [6]
- 12 Whose 'back-blast' in *Warrior's Gate* caused the *TARDIS* to return to N-Space? [6]
- 13 Which is the only humanoid robot companion to have travelled with the Doctor? [8]
- 14 Whose horns helped parody a story from Greek mythology? [5]
- 15 Who was brought to *Logopolis* to join the Doctor as a companion? [5]
- 16 What planet did Princess Astra come from? [6]
- 17 In which story did the Doctor encounter Trenchard? [3:6]
- 18 Which Osirian did the Doctor encounter on Mars? [6]
- 19 What did the fourth Doctor discover petrified? [4:2:4]
- 20 Which planet was the setting for *The Mysterious Planet*? [7]
- 21 Which planet was the *Space Museum* on? .. [5]
- 22 Which planet hosted *Iceworld*? [7]
- 23 *ARDI* - The *TARDIS* became this in *Cat's Cradle: Time's Crucible*. [1:1]
- 24 Which entity threatened the entire universe, and hid in the Doctor's past? [4:4]
- 25 Inter _____, planet of *Carnival of Monsters* [5]
- 26 In which story did the Doctor encounter Koquillion? [6]
- 27 In which story did the *TARDIS* prevent the Doctor destroying it? [4:2:11]
- 28 The four compass points? [1:1:1:1]
- 29 This laced the London Underground and coincided with the appearance of Yetis [3]
- ANSWERS NEXT ISSUE!...

REVIEW · REVIEW · REVIEW · REVIEW · REVIEW ·

GAMBIT

Source: Blake's 7 (TV)

Somewhere during the summer vacation, Paul Groves, our ebullient Graphic Designer, discovered the eleventh episode of Blake's 7 series B, *Gambit*. Life would never be the same again.

Paul is the Blake's 7 expert on the committee, and thus we followed his recommendation when he suggested we show it in Hilary Term. After all, when we've just subjected the rest of the membership to a story as mediocre as "Attack Of The Cybermen" (think yourself lucky that we didn't force "The Mysterious Planet" on you), we needed our spirits lifting a little.

Studious observers of comings and goings at the front of the room may have noted the appearance of veteran DocSoc luminaries Warren Peto, Roger Shaw and Adam Stephens, as *Gambit* began. What was indicated by this expression of open democratic participation (voting with their feet)?

Gambit is remembered as one of the great Avon-Vila episodes of Blake's 7, in which the two pursue their more mercenary lines of business while Blake and the women go on a more virtuous tour of Freedom City's nightlife. Robert Holmes, who wrote this episode, populated many of his Doctor Who stories - and no doubt his contributions to many other TV series before his death in 1986 - with what were virtually comic double acts, such as Vorg and Shirna in "Carnival Of Monsters", Garron and Unstoffee in "The Ribos Operation". Avon and Vila fulfil this role well, as Holmes was to explore tedium towards Vila is only modified when Vila becomes useful to him, such as in his projected Big Wheel scam in *Gambit*.

Paul Darrow gets the chance to play Avon slightly more light-heartedly in this story. For much of the first two series of Blake's 7 - and a lot of the rest, for that matter - Darrow found himself with little to do except look menacing, insult Vila and make enigmatic threats to Blake. As the programme progresses, his wardrobe becomes even more dominated by black leather, he has control of the Liberator, and pursues Blake's mission for no great reason, and steadily goes mad. Here we see a devious Avon, whose motives remain ambiguous but at least seem to include self-interest and scientific curiosity, and who does lose control of the situation, and as a result his usual careful detachment. His reaction to the drunken Vila's agreement to challenge the Klute at Speed Chess is the most relishable outburst of horror in those Blake's 7 episodes I have seen.

I can't avoid mentioning the costumes. June Hudson seems not to have been responsible for these, and I didn't make a note of who was, but they allowed this episode to reach the apex of camp in late '70s television SF, and that includes the "Horns Of Nimon". Of those of us who remember John Leeson from his visit to Oxford in 1989, or have seen him 'in the flesh' or on camera

elsewhere, who recognized him as Toise with that golden hair-slide in his powdered wig? Negative, master. As for Audrey Woods as Krantor, this part was light years from the austere controller in "Day Of The Daleks".

All this lent colour (Max Factor) to what could have been a lack-lustre piece of television. Blake is, by this stage, becoming boring - that is, if he wasn't boring from the beginning, going in with Jenna and Cally, for obvious ruses such as that played in Chenie's bar when seeking Docholli there. The types who hung out there would have seen through Jenna and Cally's rather tame fight even if they were blind, never mind blind drunk. At least Gareth Thomas's big scene in this episode is saved by Denis Carey during his absent-minded-but-not-really-all-that-absent-minded professor role (which I wouldn't be surprised he overplayed in Shada) and Brian Croucher's Travis, not on as fine a form as he was in Trial, but nevertheless commanding attention on a performance as equally valid as Stephen Greif's in Series A. Both Traveses are clichés - the first the cold servant of the state, the second the barrow boy made good - but this isn't necessarily a bad thing. As Terrance Dicks has written, clichés are clichés because they work.

My main criticism would be that we don't see enough of the goings on at the Big Wheel. There is too much of Blake and co., while the viewer waits for Sylvia Colerige's eerie Croupier to return to the screen. Maybe earlier drafts of the episode had more action taking place there, and the Docholli storyline was amplified when the episode became part of the build up to "Star One". Then again, the visit to Docholli has more purpose than some other 'find-the-expert' story lines; the truth may be that Chris Boucher let Holmes's penchant for grotesque humour run away with itself in order to get the episode finished, and so the Blake scenes lack interest because Holmes didn't have any input into them. Servalan's appearances he spices up by introducing the obsequious, but none-too-bright, Jarriere, but Blake and Jenna, by this stage, have no potential for development along Holmesian lines.

Gambit may claim to be the best episode of Blake's 7 but I don't think it is, for the acting and writing is inconsistent from scene to scene, certain cast regulars appear self-conscious and even superfluous, and to extend the compliments and suggest that *Gambit* should have been the template for succeeding episodes is, of course, nonsensical. Its strength is that it isn't a run-of-the-mill space opera, but a character piece within an action-adventure format, something Robert Holmes excelled in. It works because it is a bizarre episode in a series which, unlike Doctor Who, usually had a little room for fantastic indulgence.

Naturally, that's without thinking of the uniforms in Killer... ●

Review by Matthew Kilburn

Title Sequences

Bernard Lodge, where are you?

I have always found one of the most enticing things about Doctor Who to be its title sequence. This was particular the case when I was a child. The famous 'slit scan' graphics that accompanied the last Jon Pertwee season and the first six Tom Baker seasons are widely recognized as having had a hypnotic effect, acting as a 'hook' to the programme without a scene having been played.

Since 1980, it hasn't been the same, somehow. John Nathan-Turner always claimed that the 'starfield' sequence, designed by Sid Sutton and used (with some modifications) between 1980 and 1986, was more subtle than the previous 'time tunnel' effect, relying on the different speeds of shooting stars, some remaining to build up into an image of the Doctor's face as protector of the universe. I accepted the theory, but at heart I was not convinced.

Of other opening credits, I've always admired those for POIROT, with its reliance, Who-like, on the lead actor's shimmering face. That my sister, not a Who devotee, should exclaim over Christmas when seeing this sequence "This is what Doctor Who should have" I discovered that it conveyed the same 'magic' to other people as well.

The essence of the Poirot sequence is that it disturbs. We are challenged, by the means of the crystalline superstructure hovering over David Suchet's turning head, with the towering intellect of the Belgian sleuth, presiding over the forthcoming episode. The title sequences for Doctor Who, under Patrick Troughton, Jon Pertwee and (until the 1980/81 season) Tom Baker, had the same effect. All of these were designed by Bernard Lodge. While Lodge refined the images over the years, moving from visual feedback (pointing a camera at its own monitor screens and recording the resulting electronic image breakdown) to the animation process known as 'slit scan' and first used in 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, the essential elements remained the same: discordant patterns evolve into the Doctor's face, replaced by logo, replaced by further



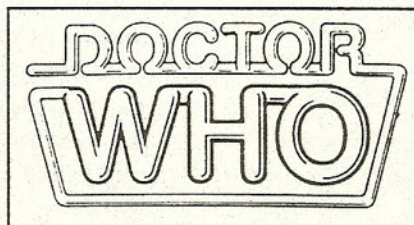
patterns over which the story title, writer and episode number are superimposed.

The second Jon Pertwee sequence is probably the best of these. A tunnel of lights is instantly replaced by a tunnel of similar proportions but denser surface, rapidly revealing Pertwee's face. His face is impassive, granting no promises. The tunnels repeat themselves, Pertwee receding down them before shooting towards the camera as an illuminated silhouette, confirming that the Doctor is the hero of the series - the archetypal light at the end of the tunnel. However, when we reach the light source, our hopes for a resolution are confounded by another, diamond shaped tunnel, designed to house the logo, which disappears in the distance. The remaining credits are superimposed over darkness, and before the narrative begins the screen goes black.

All this takes just thirty seconds. If you have not found this mildly unsettling, then you have missed part of that oft-discussed quality, the 'magic' of Doctor Who.

The effect was lost when Sid Sutton took over graphic design in 1980. The title sequence he introduced in THE LEISURE HIVE had much less substance, consisting essentially of two images, first the Doctor's face forming, followed by that of the series' logo, from a starfield background. Apart from the 'Venetian blind' effect used to introduce Peter Davison's face, the titles were not substantially changed for Castravala. While John Nathan-Turner insisted that he remained happy with the graphics, the opportunity was taken to reintroduce a tunnel of sorts when Colin Baker replaced Peter Davison as from THE TWIN DILEMMA. However, this was superimposed over the starfield, and, consisting of flickering coloured lights, was a poor apology for the psychedelic vortices of the 1970s.

Admittedly there was a manner of tunnel in all the Sutton sequences. This was the halo of stars and colours down which the faces of the first Tom Baker, then Peter Davison and Colin Baker, were successively propelled. This did reinforce the image of 'Doctor-as-centre-of-universe' which John Tulloch and Manuel Alvarado comment in "DOCTOR WHO - THE UNFOLDING TEXT", but lacked the



mystery previously conveyed, undermined further by Colin Baker's broadening grin. Although the lead actor's face had smiled during the Troughton and first Pertwee titles, impassivity laid more stress on the Doctor's alien nature. It also helped promise an experience that would thrill the viewer: this was not, as Pertwee described his face as it first appeared in the titles, a "benign" show.

The McCoy sequence, designed by Oliver Elmes of CAL Video (also the designer of the 'golden bricks' Nine O'Clock News titles used from 1985 to 1988) may be visually spectacular, but whether it conveys what the spirit of the programme should be is doubtful. Elmes said he saw Doctor Who as an "animated comic strip". This comment is not necessarily derogatory, but Elmes's view of the series did not appear particularly positive in context. Indeed, Elmes's graphics are discontinuous, moving from frame to frame rather like the original GRANGE HILL title sequence, and from his logo, while its formation is impressive, looks more at home on a publication such as 'BUSTER' than on a science fiction series that traditionally prided itself on realism, however heightened. As for the presentation of Sylvester McCoy's features, a great opportunity wasted. Had McCoy's face appeared first smiling, winked, then



become stern, then the nature of the Seventh Doctor, as he became, would have been encapsulated. Instead, it was the other way around, and the result was merely twee.

A mention has to be made of the theme music.

Television is an aural as well as a visual medium. While much ink has already been spent discussing the merits of the different interpretations of Ron Grainer's theme, it is the final form of Delia Derbyshire's arrangement that generally receives greater recognition than the others, characterized by its hypnotic rhythm that reaches a climax at the end of the opening sequence with the resounding two-note sting which burns the credits on the brain. It's no accident that Who story titles are more easily remembered from this era among those who haven't spent a large proportion of their lives consuming the literature.

So, what did happen to Bernard Lodge? Well, I don't think that I've seen his name since the sub-Rainbow credits for Malcolm Bradbury's 1989 satire for Anglia, ANYTHING MORE WOULD BE GREEDY. How are the mighty fallen...

By Matthew Kilburn

[SHUTTLE]

A story in three parts by Julian Mander

• 1 •

The emptiness of space - an infinite expanse of nothing. Where one can gaze and wonder at the billions of stars, systems, and planets, and still feel very alone. Where the heart can yearn and wander, and never find companionship... It drifted, tired and exhausted, resigning itself to another thousand years of nothing, and yet it hoped... hoped for something to happen. It felt that feeling of pure loneliness, when the future holds nothing but more loneliness - and all your hopes that this would not be so have disappeared and faded. And yet it felt some entity approaching, very slowly, coming directly towards it... at last.

• - •

"Earth station 8, come in Earth station 8. Over"

"Receiving you loud and clear, shuttle 2, over"

"On course and all routines checked out and running over"

"Good to hear it... see you boys in a few hours. Over and out"

"That's it Sean. Not long to go now and we'll be home. I sure could murder a burger just now!"

"It will be good to be back, no?"

"Yep."

"We'd better check on Andy. Can you hear us Andy?"

"Yes, I've located the panel fault, detached the panel, and am coming in. Prepare to open the airlock in about 3 minutes."

"Come on, let's go and see what he's found."

• - •

Andy groped and wheezed his way back down the length of the shuttle, applying his small rocket boosters sparingly as he floated back towards the airlock. He had plenty of fuel, but it was always safe to be cautious. You never knew, up here in space. Inside his backpack was the panel that he had removed from the outside shell. It was only a routine sensor-panel, it had started to give spurious temperature readings... different from all the other

identical sensors distributed at various points around the shell of the shuttle.

He finally made it to the airlock and manoeuvred his way inside. The outer door slid shut silently and a hiss indicated the life-giving oxygen being flooded into the chamber - the gauges on the wall rose and gravity was applied to the floor of the airlock. Andy could just make out the sound of Sean's voice from behind the other side of the inner door, and a moment later the chamber opened inwards. Andy fiddled with his helmet catch, "You know, it never ceases to amaze me - the feeling you get walking in nothing! Let's get a look at this panel with the toolkit."

Andy followed Sean and Robert through an inner door to the general work room. They reached the workshop, and Andy slung his backpack off his shoulder onto a bench. Opening the buckles, he opened the sack.

"What the ?"

"What's the matter, Andy?"

"I don't believe it, the bag is empty!"

"Stop prating around" Robert scowled. He had had enough of this trip already, what with Andy's constant jokes and so-called 'humour' with which he insisted on inserting into his conversation whenever an appropriate situation arose.

"No, I swear it's not here!"

• - •

Sean and Robert were trying to grab a little sleep before the final approach to Earth. It had been a long journey, and both were looking forward to seeing their loved ones back on solid ground. Sean yawned, rolled over and bit into his egg and cress sandwich... and sighed as he mulled over recent events. Andy was pulling another joke - he said that he had put the sensor panel into the backpack, secured it, and then brought it inside... and yet when he had opened the pack it wasn't there. They weren't going to fall for something as obvious as that - okay, so the instruments showed that the panel was no longer attached to the ship, and Andy hadn't had time to do anything with it as he entered the airlock... but what's the point in wasting time on Andy's practical jokes?

"What is Andy doing? I thought he would have tired of this joke by now?"

"I don't know. I would have thought so too. He's never taken it this far before. I'll go and see."

Robert pulled himself up, and wandered down out of the cabin and back towards the workshop. Andy had remained behind, checking and rechecking the rucksack, even as the other two had given up and gone to catch a little rest. Robert opened the door, but there was no sign of Andy - there was no sign of the rucksack or the panel either, while he thought about it. There were only four compartments on the ship - the control room, the sleeping quarters, the airlock and this cabin, the work room. He must be in the control room, concluded Robert, and turned to leave. Robert paused, puzzled, and turned to leave the cabin, and it was then that he saw Andy... lying against one wall, still, motionless, and quite, quite dead. His eyes staring, his face an expression of unsuppressed terror and pain. Robert froze, the consequences racing in his mind.

Trinity 1992

His senses snapped back to him with training, and he rushed over and knelt over Andy. It was definite... he checked for a pulse and any other sign of life, but there was none. "SEAN!" he screamed, shock starting to take a grip.

• - •

Sean enjoyed his rest periods. It was one thing that space missions never seemed to consider allowing the crew. Every moment appeared to have been planned for - if he was not carrying out space surveillance, he was performing weightless experiments for various technical institutions around the world. He dreamed of the day when people would pay for trips into space for relaxation, and allowed his mind to wander in and out of huge intergalactic space liners giving tours of galaxies and suns. Robert's scream reached him and jerked him from his thoughts - he could hear the terror and desperation in Robert's voice. He jumped quickly from his bunk and dashed to the work room.

• - •

"Come in Shuttle 2, come in. Over"

"Are you receiving us, Shuttle 2, Over."

"Is anything wrong, Over."

"God, why don't you reply?..."

• 2 •

An unusual guttural warping sound pierced the deathly still silence on the shuttle. Everything had now been put onto remote from Earth station 8. An old and battered blue box slowly formed in the shuttle's control room. A door in one side was flung inwards, and a tousled energetic-looking man appeared in the doorway. He wore a light grey baggy suit, whose pockets seemed to bulge out at the most unusual angles. A brightly coloured pullover adorned with question marks matched his red handled umbrella whose handle formed a large red '?' shape. A comfortable looking hat and a pair of striped trousers completed the picture of a youthful man with a look of quizzical mystery. This was the Doctor, known to his current companion, Ace, as 'Professor'. The Doctor stepped from his TARDIS and strode purposefully over to the bank of blinking lights and displays on one side of the control room. Ace appeared a moment later, trusty backpack slung casually over her shoulder. Her black leather jacket smothered in badges and logos of various designs and emblems. She glanced across at the Doctor, who was already engrossed in the intricate electronics and was busy tapping complicated sequences of instructions into one of the computers. Ace sighed the sigh of one who knows that someone else is getting them both into trouble, and went over to see exactly what the Doctor was doing.

"Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear..." the Doctor muttered to himself. Ace waited for further comment and a frown of exasperation appeared on he brow as one didn't come.

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"Well?" she demanded.

"Well what?"

"What's the matter with the old rust-bucket?"

"Nothing's the matter with the ship... it's more a question of the crew."

"Where are they?"

"That's just it... they appear to have vanished... the pilot's on automatic, the instruments show that no-one has left the ship, the only humanoid two life-forms on board are currently standing in the control room, and someone called Earth Control seems to be getting increasingly worried about a lack of response."

The Doctor reached up and toggled a switch which instantly resulted in a near-by producing a static-distorted message from Earth Control. *"Come in Shuttle 2, Over. Can you hear us, over? What has happened. Over. For God's sake answer!"* He pressed another switch, and the speaker cut off. "Well, let's see if we can find what's happened to the crew, shall we?"

He immediately made for the only exit from the room, and had more than a slight difficulty in squeezing himself through it - not that he was particularly fat - but more to do with the fact that the TARDIS had chosen to materialise almost directly in front of the exit. Ace followed him through - reminding herself that it would be a waste of time telling the Professor to stop being nosy.

• - •

Sean rushed into the work room to find Robert heaving himself across the floor towards him. His face was filled with terror, his eyes lying directionless. He suddenly stopped, and his head thumped onto the metal floor. Sean dashed to his side and knelt by him, lifting Robert's head up into his lap.

Dead.

Sean shut his eyes and fought back the choking tears as memories of time together flashed before him. After a few moments Sean lowered Robert to the ground and looked around - there was no sign of Andy at all. Confused, and rapidly slipping into shock, he crossed to one side of the room, opened a locker and rummaged through the pile of equipment and pulled out a phaser.

• - •

Ace and the Doctor were peering through a re-enforced perspex window into the air lock. The Doctor examined the control panel on the wall next to him and satisfied himself that at least one person had to operate the controls from inside the ship. He turned and proceeded towards the work room, as Ace, having stuck an "Ace woz 'ere" sticker on the window, went into the sleeping quarters. The Doctor took a brief look around the empty room and crossed to the closed locker on the far side. Reaching into his pocket, he pulled out his sonic screwdriver (a small torch-like device which had proved invaluable in many situations in the past... having lost his original one, the Doctor had made a Mark II version in one of the rare occasions when he actually got round to some DIY on the many things inside the TARDIS which were currently malfunctioning) and after a slight adjustment to the handle, the locker sprang open. A few

miscellaneous items - mainly circuitry and tools - lay on the shelves in no particular order, although it looked as though someone had rifled through them in some sort of hurry. He put his screwdriver on the top shelf, while he bent down and peered into a box at the bottom of the locker. A cry of "Professor!" coming from the sleeping quarters made him look up, and pushing the locker door shut behind him, he strode towards the door and turned the corner to find Ace. Ace was crouched next to a small table positioned next to one of the bunks in the small room that was obviously used for sleeping... it was slightly untidy, but not unbearably so. As the Doctor appeared, she pointed to a half-eaten sandwich that lay on the desk. "They haven't been gone long... this sarny's still fresh, and look, Professor, you can even see slight depressions where someone's fingers were holding it... which means that someone was here up to an hour ago." The Doctor stood deep in thought in the doorway, and then suddenly jerked his head upwards to reveal a huge smile, "Very good! We'll make a Holmes out of you yet... Come and see what I've found." Ace stood up and followed the Doctor into the work room, and almost cannoned into his back as he stopped abruptly at the entrance to the room. "Oi!" exclaimed Ace, "What do you think you're doing?"

The Doctor turned round. "Less than a minute ago, I put my sonic screwdriver on the top shelf of an open locker, which contained nothing more than various assorted pieces of technology. The locker was over there, and now look!..." The Doctor stepped to one side and Ace looked in the room. It wasn't a particularly big room, slightly grubby, but it definitely had a used look about it. In the centre of the room was some kind of work bench, with various pieces of equipment lining the walls and shelves. Against one side was a line of three identical lockers, one standing by itself, a gap, and then two lockers next to each other. Lying on the floor in the gap was the Doctor's screwdriver.

"You can't have done. There's your screwdriver, between those lockers."

"Yes Ace, but a minute ago, there were four lockers."

"Oh I see... so someone's moved it?"

"And who would that be?"

Ace paused and thought. "Well, I guess, er, seeing as, well, I dunno. Who?"

"Well that's the problem, there's no-one else on the ship as far as I know, and it's certainly not big enough to conceal anybody completely undetected."

The Doctor crossed over to the lockers and picked up his screwdriver. He turned back to Ace with a puzzled expression creasing his brow, "Something's going on here, and I'm not leaving until I know what it is. I'm going to need some equipment from the TARDIS - come on - we're going ghost hunting!" The Doctor disappeared back out through the door as he headed back to the TARDIS. Shrugging, Ace followed him along the small linking corridor, squeezed through the gap in to the main control room and then into the open door of the TARDIS. The Doctor had gone straight to the hexagonally shaped console in the middle of the room that formed the nerve centre of all the controls for his machine, and placing his screwdriver on a ledge at the top of one of the panels, he made a few rapid adjustments to some of the controls, and then wandered lost in thought into the depths of the TARDIS itself. "Humph!" thought Ace to herself - left alone again.

Not wishing to spend the next hour standing around and simply getting bored, she too disappeared through the inner door, turned the corner in the corridor and went into her room. Dropping her rucksack in one corner of her untidy room, she threw herself onto her bed and lay over one side so that her head and arms could reach under the bed. Here she kept her supply of chemistry books and notes. Smiling to herself, she pulled out a huge volume that she had been meaning to read for quite a time, and opening the cover, began to read.

"Ace! Where's my screwdriver?" made Ace pause half way down the first page. Her eyes flicked upwards and she turned towards the door. The Doctor stood in the doorway, looking slightly annoyed.

"What do you mean? I haven't touched it!" she replied indignantly. "You put it on the console, remember?"

"I know where I put it, it's just not there now!" He turned and strode back towards the console room. Giving up all hope of ever getting past the first page of her book, Ace pushed the large volume back under her bed and went to investigate. The Doctor was strutting around the console panel looking under flaps, inside panels, and seemingly getting more and more annoyed.

"Well, it can't have fallen or rolled anywhere, it was perfectly safe where it was." Ace stabbed, still a little annoyed that the Professor had accused her of moving it.

The Doctor stopped his pacing, looked at her with the expression of someone who has just had a revelation from God Himself, glanced at the controls next to him, and suddenly screeched a wild 'Arggh!', which made Ace jump back into the Doctor's favourite hatstand. She soon saw the cause of the problem - every light on the control panels had started winking, flashing, glowing, moving, the time rotor started rotating and oscillating, and the expression in the Doctor's eyes was not one that she would wish to see often. The Doctor suddenly raced over to her, grabbed her by the arm, and before she could even react, had propelled her towards the inner door, and was leading her through a maze of corridors and doors. She picked up the urgency of the situation, and decided against demanding an explanation on the spot. The Doctor suddenly did a sharp turn into a room, and Ace found herself looking at a room covered in wood panelling, with neat Victorian looking brass bars provided non-functional hand-rails and general styling. "Wow! Dig this... Neat professor!"

The Doctor was standing at a small six-sided wooden pedestal that stood in the middle of the room, flipping up dividers and boards, all revealing a compact electronics keyboard. The significance of the room suddenly dawned on Ace... "It's another control room!" she exclaimed. The Doctor suddenly eased, and turned to face her.

"Congratulations! Sorry for dragging you here so quickly, perhaps I can explain now. Everything that we've seen over the last hour is all related - the empty shuttle with no crew, the missing locker, the vanishing screwdriver, and now the seemingly explosive reaction in the control room..."

● 3 ●

"Well, all I can say is that it's about time I had an explanation!" Ace grumbled.

"You see, Ace, what's happening in the control room at present is that some organism is actually devouring the entire console. The purpose of coming here, is that I've totally isolated the primary console room from the rest of the ship - placed it in limbo, if you like. The whole room is now within an impenetrable vacuum, thus keeping the rest of the ship safe... for the time being."

"But how did it get on board, and why didn't we see it?"

"What we're presented with here, is something like a sort of molecular-digesting organism, which has the property that the TARDIS is actually supposed to have - that of changing its shape to suit its surroundings. As it digests something, it adjusts its shape to that of the object that it is replacing, so to the naked eye you'd never know. It came in disguised as my sonic screwdriver, which of course was placed on the console. As it finished digesting the molecules in the screwdriver, it 'hopped' straight into the thing touching it at the time - the console. As it started to feed, of course the electronics and micro-organic circuits went haywire!"

"Oh! And of course! It got your screwdriver because you'd placed it in the locker - and it was currently digesting the locker..."

"That's exactly right - it's certainly not fussy about it's diet... My guess is that it also explains the missing crew - somehow, one of the crew was in contact with it when it was ready to digest something else, and hence became next in line in the banquet. The other crew members obviously saw him die, and quite naturally held him. They must only have come into contact with it one at a time or else any other member of the crew would have been able to raise the alarm."

"How horrible..."

"Mmmm. We're very fortunate, Ace. If either of us had been touching the sonic screwdriver or locker at the time of transference... It hardly bears thinking about. Now all we've got to do is to remove the organism somewhere safe..."

"Which is probably easier said than done, right Professor?"

"Yes. The problem being that we've got to find somewhere safe where it's not going to cause any similar occurrences. The only way is to jettison the console room, and hold it isolated in some sort of force field. I can't risk doing so anywhere in space, and so it will have to stay as part of the ship - but in an isolated and inaccessible bit." The Doctor leaned over the other side of the console and pushed a sequence of buttons and entered a set of instructions into the main bank of instructions. There was a distant "GONG!" noise, and then silence.

"But what about the console room? We can't use this one all the time - it's miles away from the doors... hey wait a minute - how do we get out now? The doors opened into the main console room!"

"Did they Ace?" the Doctor asked quizzically, and smiled. He pulled a switch and two doors opened in one side of the room - doors that Ace hadn't noticed earlier. She looked out and could see the inside of the control room on the shuttle. Ace knew better than to ask silly questions, and so smiled, and allowed herself a little inward groan.

"Mind you, I don't like this one room as much as the old one. I'll get the TARDIS to configure a new one - with a few changes here and there of course - change is the spice of life, Ace."

He closed the doors, and a familiar noise filled the room - they were off again..."



