THE TIDES OF TIME

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Welcome to the first issue of THE TIDES OF TIME, the society's magazine. There is, in my opinion, far too much written by me in this issue. Admittedly, I don't suppose many of you knew of its existence so I didn't exactly expect to be snubbed under. However, in future, any articles or artwork will be gratefully received, and almost certainly included, please send them to Louise Dennis, Somerville. I hope to produce an issue at the beginning of each term so anything that reaches me before 0th week will probably be included, if you intend to write or draw something over the holiday let me know and I'll give you an address to send it to. I think that's about it except to hope you enjoy THE TIDES OF TIME 1 and will also buy number 2 at the beginning of next term.

Louise Dennis.
FROM SKONNOS TO PERIVALE

A Personal retrospective of 1980s 'Doctor Who'

It seems very strange to be writing this article after what seems in some ways to have been a very brief decade. It can't, surely, be nearly ten years since the starburst title sequence and Peter Howell's rearrangement of the theme music heralded the start of the eighteenth season of 'Doctor Who' with 'The Leisure Hive', a story that, for all its faults, was strikingly different to what had gone before. The props may not have changed all that much, but Tom Baker was somehow more withdrawn, the incidental music had an altogether more sophisticated quality, and, of course, the titles and theme music had undergone a radical transformation.

Ah, yes. The decade suddenly lengthens considerably when I recall that there was another story in 1980 before 'The Leisure Hive', 'The Horns of Nimon', with its numerous shortcomings (and I'm sure I needn't remind anyone of them) did have quite an effect on some children a few years younger than I was at the time. For months after the close of the story, the five-, six- and seven-year-olds could regularly be seen stomping around my school playground with their hands affixed to their foreheads, fingers pointing at an angle of 45 degrees, declaiming such gems as "Who dares disturb the Nimon?" or words to that effect. Unfortunately for their young fans, the Production Unit Manager on that story, Mr Nathan-Turner, wasn't as keen on returning the Nimon as he was other creatures to have crossed the Doctor's path in the past.

The arrival of John Nathan-Turner as producer certainly sorted out the casual viewers from the fans, and indeed the hardcore fanatics from the regular 'Who'-watcher, among the nine- and ten-year-olds of my area. The rival attraction of the glossy, filmed 'Buck Rogers' on ITV, coupled with the revolutionary change in the programme's appearance, meant that only the hardened addicts were watching by about 'Leisure Hive' part three. I think the news that K9 would be departing was the last straw for many of my age group. I wasn't too bothered about this - while most of my contemporaries were only vaguely aware that at least one actor had played the Doctor before Tom Baker, I, as a 'Doctor Who Monthly' reader who wrote a synopsis of each story after it was transmitted to form a supplement to 'The Making of Doctor Who', knew that the series had survived in the past without K9. As we soon found out, it was shortly to do so without Tom Baker himself.

The news that 'Tristan' was to take over as the fifth 'Doctor Who' I think helped attract more viewers as the season progressed. I was quite fond of 'The Keeper of Traken' at the time until the sudden revelation of the Master as chief villain in the plot sent it above 'Full Circle' as my favourite story so far. The ending, as the Doctor and Adric left, was puzzling, leaving the advertised new companion, Nyssa, behind, and apparently criminally wasting the brief appearance of the Master. The problem was solved by the Master's regeneration - by its nature one of the few real 'horror' scenes in the series' history, and the 'dovetailing' into
'Logopolis', a superb end to the Baker era. It may be criticised as being incomprehensible to a large sector of the viewing public, particularly as, aside from the mathematics, it derived much from the programme's past, but I still find it an excellent send-off and the regeneration scene remains my favourite of the six.

1981 was the year in which there were the most 'Doctor Who' repeats transmitted in the 1980's. The fact that the BBC repeated seven stories - including four old ones in the BBC 2 'Five Faces' season - has to have been as factor in the ratings success of the first Peter Davison season. 'Doctor Who' is something of an acquired taste. The magnetism of several weeks of the Daleks, coupled by the format's originality, secured viewers in 1963 and 1964; they were held to the programme also by the fact that it was broadcast almost every single week of the year. In the era of nine-month gaps (1985-1986 being something of a special case) screening of repeats is vital to remind the public that the programme still exists. The lack of repeats since 1984 bears at least some responsibility for the low ratings that 'Doctor Who' has suffered since season 23.

1982 saw the Peter Davison era start in earnest, and saw - amid a fair amount of comment, including a 'Guardian' editorial - the translation of the programme to weekdays. While it worked in the short term, attracting a large number of viewers from the still at that time very popular 'Nationwide' which preceded it, the change of day from Saturday meant that the series was uplifted from what were popularly seen as its roots and, furthermore, lost part of its identity. The shifting from Monday and Tuesday, to Tuesday and Wednesday, to Thursday and Friday, to Saturday at 5.20 pm (too early for a forty-five minute slot acting as 'hook' to the evening's viewing) and then 5.45 pm (opposite 'The A-Team', a phenomenally successful programme which had built up its audience substantially during the eighteen-month hiatus), and thence to the 'death slot' against 'Coronation Street' for three years, has meant that the production team have for some time been unable to target the programme at a specific audience group. The ever-changing scheduling has meant that 'Doctor Who' is no longer sacred.

It was still sacred enough in 1983 for the BBC to sanction a twentieth anniversary special, 'The Five Doctors', after the Twentyteth Season proper. I was slightly dissatisfied with the stories: 'Arc of Infinity' didn't work as an opener, fusing 'The Deadly Assassin', 'The Three Doctors' and 'The Keeper of Traken' into a cocktail heady for some fans, but failing to deliver for this one; I liked 'Snakedance' as tying up the loose ends from 'KINDA' and rescuing the Mara from the shadow of that awful snake, and 'Enlightenment' as a very intelligent and truly fantastic story; but 'Mawdryn Undead' failed for me because of its undue dependence on the show's history, with its use of the regeneration concept, resurrection of the Brigadier, and so forth. 'Logopolis' drank the blood of 'Doctor Who' past and gained life; 'Mawdryn' was well... undead. 'The Five Doctors' lay somewhere between these two, reminding me now of many of the protracted TARDIS scenes
during this time, such as Tegan's (supposed) leaving scene in 'The Visitation' - all a little too cosy and domestic.

That year also saw my discovery of 'fandom'. Having heard of DWAS, and having made up my mind to join, I at last found the address (they were a much more secretive organisation in those days) in an issue of 'Frontier Worlds' - a successful, but now defunct fanzine - I had bought at 'Forbidden Planet' at a visit to London the year before, or, to be more precise, in a send-up of the Dr Who Appreciation Society newsletter, 'Celestial Toyrroom', rechristened for this occasion 'The Incestual Boysroom'. I recommend it to every (ex-)DWAS member totally fed up with their organisation skills... I was already buying the early 'Dr Who Bulletin', and the contrast between it and 'CT' was immense. 'CT' claimed to be a 'news' publication, but its advertising:copy ratio was heavily biased towards the former, stories rarely being developed beyond one-liners. 'DWB' started as a reaction to this incarnation of 'CT'; it was only when 'CT' got its act together that 'DWB', over the next year, took to its glossy, sensational format which has elevated its circulation to several thousand.

I don't think that I was alone in drifting through the 'Doctor Who' of 1983, 1984 and into 1985 in a state of near-euphoria. Things may have been wrong with the world, such as the African famine, but 'Doctor Who' was an institution, bowed and scraped to by BBC presenters, and seemed likely to go on forever. Seven million viewers per episode may not have been the highest or most healthy audience figure, but the success of the programme in America would guarantee the existing twenty-six episodes a year at least, and nothing could go wrong, could it?.

Good old Michael Grade changed all that. Suddenly 'Doctor Who' was an out-of-date children's series, only fit to be smirked or mocked. Most non-fans I knew thought the programme was finished. Although I think that there was little doubt that the show would rematerialise on our screens, there were a few nervous moments during that eighteen-month postponement, some of which were justified, such as the 'fourteen episode' rumour, and some of which weren't, such as the story that Colin Baker had been sacked and wouldn't be in the new season. This rumour, as later events proved, unfortunately had a good deal of substance.

My feelings have always been somewhat ambivalent towards Colin Baker's Doctor. I was quite warm towards his portrayal, but sometimes I think he went too far over the top in his use of what can perhaps be called 'cultivated outrage'. Somehow his 'alienness', while of similar manner to Tom Baker's characterisation during his first two seasons, albeit with more arrogance, seems to have deterred the audience enough for his viewing figures to drop by nearly three million in the first six weeks of the twenty-second season. The forty-five-minute episodes, all to some degree badly-paced, probably also share the responsibility. Perhaps, after an eighteen-month gap between seasons and a badly structured, fourteen part 'epic', which caused viewers to switch off after episode one, very few would have been
surprised had 'Doctor Who' not survived Colin Baker's dismissal.

Instead the world was treated to the appearance of Sylvester McCoy on the scene and a new look for 'Doctor Who'. I think more of my age group gave the programme a chance in 1987 (no nylon sycamore leaves stuck to monsters this year!), at least for 'Time and the Rani'. Unfortunately this season had all the appearance of being written at speed, with no time to actually think through the direction that was being taken. Thus there was a succession of good ideas gone wrong, such as 'Paradise Towers', which, had the background been sketched in more firmly and the temptation to do the whole thing in a 'high camp' style been suppressed, could have been a brilliant satire on urban society, and 'Delta and the Bannermen', consisting of an offbeat first part and a second and third part which went totally off the rails, the Doctor becoming not just secondary, but superfluous. I still think it could have been an excellent 'Screen One' or other one-off production, but the script was misplaced in 'Doctor Who'. After a season of such mixed quality, the forthcoming set of stories for the silver jubilee did not fill me with much confidence.

Nevertheless I received a pleasant surprise as the twenty-fifth season unfolded. It was much better than the previous two years, and for the first time in more than a decade there were new developments, as opposed to consolidation, of the ongoing subplot concerning the Doctor's identity. This theme has, of course, continued into the twenty-sixth season. Can the Doctor be a contemporary of the founders of the Time Lord race, Rassilon and Omega? Can Lady Peinforte in 'Silver Nemesis' have been right when she implied the Doctor was more than just a Time Lord? These are just two of the questions that have been raised in the two most recent seasons.

There is also a conscious move to make 'Doctor Who' more relevant to the times in which it finds itself. 'Political' issues, absent from much of the 1980s, have reasserted themselves. The racism subtext and the anti-Thatcherism of 'Remembrance of the Daleks' and 'The Happiness Patrol' may have been suppressed in production, but there is little doubting the ecological concern voiced in 'The Curse of Fenric', or the commentary on the revival of social Darwinism in the 1980s in 'Survival'. There have been greater attempts at improved characterisation, notably the attempt to give greater depth to Ace in the latter two stories, who has travelled a long way from the caricature encountered back in 'Dragonfire'. The 'Doctor Who' of Ian Briggs and Rona Munro, and perhaps also of Steven Wyatt, is one much more in tune with my outlook as we enter the 1990s.

It would be an incomplete retrospective of the decade without a brief mention of the sole producer for every season in production in the 1980s, John Nathan-Turner. One could write several books about this man and 'Doctor Who'; he himself already has done, and may write more. I think that he has made many mistakes; the change of title sequence and music in 1980 was too radical, too alienating for many regular viewers; his obsession with the series
past, while pleasing in the short term, ultimately resulted in overkill. His choice of Bonnie Langford as companion was an interesting gamble, but Miss Langford was sadly hamstrung by her media image. Despite these errors, it should not be forgotten that Nathan-Turner successfully kept the programme in the public eye via his knack for publicity and presided over at least four moderately successful seasons.

On the creative side, the three script editors of the decade (excluding Douglas Adams and Anthony Root) have all brought a distinctive flavour to the stories which they have supervised. Christopher H. Bidmead, in season 18, was probably right in trying to make the programme more 'serious' after a year under Douglas Adams but I feel he was wrong in trying to tie the programme down to 'Hard science'. While good, scientific stories have their place, attempting to place 'Doctor Who' on a purely scientific foundation, as Terrance Dicks complained while writing 'State of Decay', begins to appear somewhat petty. 'Doctor Who', with its reliance on time travel and regeneration, deals in meta-science, and it is easy for Bidmead to forget this. Eric Saward was an advocate of the "rattling good yarn" but not all the stories which he edited achieved this status; many suffered from poor structuring, viewer's patience being tested by such as the interminably long TARDIS scenes, which Andrew Cartmel, his successor, has found superfluous. Cartmel had a shaky start, with 'Time and the Rani' I suspect owing little to his influence and the rest of season 24, as previously stated, being of uncertain direction. However, he has attracted several good, new, young writers to the programme, such as Wyatt, Briggs, Ben Aaronovitch, Kevin Clarke and Rona Munro, whom I hope will continue to contribute under the new production regime anticipated.

The 1980s have been an exciting decade for 'Doctor Who', with four Doctors, various crises, and much doubt over the programme's backstage stability, coupled with the increasing impact of 'the fans' on the way the series is viewed, by both the BBC and the press. Hopefully the 1990s will offer a secure future for the programme, and consequently more enjoyable - as long as everyone is kept on their toes.

MATTHEW KILBURN.

***************
Dusk was falling. The travellers on the road drew together, uncertain of each other, but more afraid of the shadows lurking behind the trees than of their fellows. Some were on foot, their boots besplattered with mud, some on horseback. At the front and back of the group were two hired guards armed with rusting guns and polished swords.

"Can you hear something?" asked a timid man huddled deep within a greatcoat and large boots.

They paused, silent and listening. In the distance came the sound of galloping hooves. One of the guards checked his gun, then changed his mind and drew his sword. The travellers strained their eyes, peering into the gloom. Gradually the form of the rider became apparent, a man in the king's livery, gun strapped at his belt. He reined in as he came upon them.

"Is there one Milasen, here?" he asked.

One of the riders dismounted and walked towards him, "I am he."

The other travellers drew back from him. If he was in trouble with the King they wanted nothing to do with him.

"I keep my head down and stay out of trouble," muttered one man to his neighbour. The other moved away.

"I am sent from Lorndurnam. The King returns, he wishes to know if you are ready?"

"I have been ready for a long time," returned Milasen dryly, "tell them I have been ready for a long time."

The young man handed him a letter, "And I am to give you this." Milasen accepted it and put it away unopened, "My thanks."

The rider nodded and turning his horse galloped back the way he had come.

"We have been ready a long time," thought Milasen as he climbed back on his horse, "maybe we have been ready for too long. The time is not right."

It was raining. Either side of the road the embankments had turned to mud. In places small streams had formed spilling out over the road surface. The Doctor and Ace walked down the road, both carrying umbrellas, both cold, wet, and more than a little disgruntled.

"What exactly are we doing here, Professor?" Ace asked, surveying the dismal prospect.

"This is the planet Glia on the limits of the Nomar Empire."

"So?"

"So, I've been hearing some disturbing rumours about the Nomar Empire. I thought they needed looking into."

"What sort of rumours?"

"Massacres, persecution, political imprisonment..."

"This place is a dump," said Ace, interrupting him.

"It is a trifle neglected. I wonder why this road is so unused?"

"Maybe they've built a better one nearby. A direct link, or something, so hardly anyone comes this way anymore."
The Doctor frowned, the road to him was too empty. It felt of desolation, a relic of the past - not old, possibly only abandoned in the past five or ten years or so, but abandoned none the less. Ace was climbing the embankment to look at the view from the top. She called out something and pointed, her face was pale. Rather hurriedly the Doctor scrambled up after her, over the rise was a battlefield. It was some way from them, down a slope and in a valley. The dead lay sprawled in the mud. Through the rain the Doctor discerned the figures of stretcher-bearers going about their slow task, carrying off the bodies to be buried or burnt or whatever the local custom was.

"What happened?" asked Ace quietly.

"A battle I should say. The Glians, perhaps, against the Nomars."

"Who do you suppose won?"

"The Nomars, Nomar technology must be far in advance of anything the Glians have," he paused."We ought to go and have a look."

Ace nodded.

"You needn't come if you don't want to."

"Of course I'm coming, you'll get into all sorts of trouble on your own."

"It won't be a pretty sight."

"I'm alright Professor, and I'm not staying here!"

There was a track leading along the top of the embankment that made its way down, bordering a wood, to the battlefield. The Doctor and Ace squelched through the mud. The first body they came across was lying spreadeagled across the path, a man with long flowing blonde hair like an illustration of a saxon warrior. He had been shot in the back.

Rounding the first body, they came upon more. Some had been shot, others stabbed or hacked with swords. The weapons they carried were sabres and pikes, the odd one had a gun. The Doctor was torn between curiosity and distaste. It puzzled him that there was no evidence of advanced weaponry. He was also aware that, though a long, adventurous life had permitted him to become resigned and in a measure reconciled to such sights of carnage, it was unfair and unnecessary to force them upon Ace who was tough, but also young and impressionable. She was displaying none of her usual exuberance and was following him subdued and muted.

"I don't think there's much to be learnt here," he was saying when he heard a low groan. Bending down he found that a man he had supposed dead was alive, just. However, one look told the Doctor there was no hope of saving him. The man opened his eyes.

"Water?" he asked.

"Ace," said the Doctor,"there's a river running just inside the wood, you can hear it. Go and get some water."

"I've nothing to carry it in."

The Doctor looked down at the man's deeply slashed belly wound,"Use a handkerchief, we'll only be able to moisten his mouth anyway."

Ace moved off into the forest.

"Water," said the man again. The Doctor propped him up so he rested against his shoulder.
"It's coming," he said holding the dying man in his arms, "it's coming."

"Have we lost?" asked the man.

"I don't know, I'm a traveller. Who were you fighting? the Nomars?"

The man stirred in surprise, "Didn't you know? The Nomars have gone, pulled out. Only Glians left... they're soft here... good land... think they're still Nomars..." he rolled his head about fretfully. "Our land is overcrowded, too many people, not enough land..."

"So you set out to colonise this place," said the Doctor, beginning to understand the situation. These invaders had not been touched by the Nomar Empire. They fought with swords whereas their opponents had basic guns, no doubt a Nomar legacy, something it was considered safe to let the natives have.

"We outnumber them, even with their weapons," rambled the man. He frowned, "but they have the warrior king. They were so few, and yet still..." he trailed away staring ahead of him, "still they are our match," he concluded quietly. The Doctor knew there was not much time left. The man sighed quietly and then sagged in his arms, unconscious. The Doctor felt for his pulse, under his fingers it faltered and then died away. Laying him back down in the mud, the Doctor eased himself out of his cramped position and stood up, ineffectually and absentmindedly trying to wipe the mud off his trousers.

"Couldn't find anything?" asked a voice.

Turning the Doctor found himself confronted by a strange figure. It wore a long great coat beneath which the Doctor caught glimpses of what might have been an iron shirt. But most disturbing was the strange fitted helmet the man wore, obscuring all the features except the eyes. He held a revolver in one hand and a dagger in the other.

"Find anything?" queried the Doctor.

"King Goran has strictly forbidden looting of any kind, even from the other side."

"Oh! You think I was trying to steal something. I do assure you..."

"They all assure you. You can explain to my lord's deputy."

The man indicated to the Doctor to follow the path ahead of him. The Doctor quickly scanned the forest edge for signs of Ace but saw nothing. However, he thought, in this mud she could always follow the footprints.

My Friend

Having spent all summer in minor border skirmishes, our illustrious leader has decided to return home. Needless to say the Marlynsh invaders will attempt to cut us off. The army is seriously low on both food and morale. However, should we return safely, I hope you are looking after our interests. We must rid ourselves of this upstart who has seized the throne.

Yours,

Lorndurnam.

Milasen burnt the letter. It was unnecessary and left a bad
taste in his mouth which only served to remind him of his doubts in associating with such as Lorn-durnam. He also worried over the army and his men, King Goran was a fine leader but Milasen suspected the odds were against him.

Ace paused, listening. Already unnerved, she was finding it hard to decide whether the rustling she heard all around her was natural, the wood talking, or whether it was the only betrayal of the presence of some beast. Cautiously she moved on to the river which she could hear quite clearly now ahead of her, drowning out even the rustling in the undergrowth. Suddenly she emerged out on its banks. It was wide and fast flowing, though not very deep by the looks of things. She took off her rucksack and rummaged through it looking for something that would do as a handkerchief. Then quite distinctly above the noise of the river she heard a click like the safety catch being released from a gun. She looked up, a short distance away propped up against the rocks was a man. His hair was plastered with mud, turning it into one dark brown mass. There were streaks of mud on his face which was gaunt and drawn, and of both mud and blood on the jacket and trousers he wore. In one hand he held some sort of shot gun while the other pressed a blood-stained cloth to a wound in his shoulder. Though the rents in the jacket Ace could see glints of metal, as if he wore some sort of armour beneath it.

"Who are you?" he asked. "Are you one of the wild cats?"
"I'm Ace. Who are you?"
"Goran."
Ace spread her hands to show she wasn't armed.
"Let me see that wound," she suggested. "I know some first aid.
I don't mean you any harm."
"Which side are you on?"
"I'm a traveller, strictly neutral."
"Where are you from?"
"Nowhere near here."
He seemed to consider her. "Well," he admitted, "You don't look like a Marilynish woman."
He hesitated a moment longer and then lowered the gun, making at the same time a gesture of helplessness. Ace bent down to her rucksack once more.
"Don't touch that!" said Goran, raising his gun once more.
"I was only looking for the first aid kit."
"Leave it!"
Ace straightened up, leaving the rucksack. She moved slowly forwards. When she was three feet or so away Goran commanded her to stop. Then he threw away the gun and drew a knife.
"Don't try anything he warned."
With the knife resting against her throat, Ace examined the wound. The rag was filthy, but the blood had clotted so she didn't disturb it for fear of reopening the wound.
"How did it happen?" she asked.
"I was pursuing one of the Marilyn lords, but he met up with one of the soldiers and they turned on me. His dagger got me on the shoulder where the breastplate ends."
"How did you get away?"
He laughed slightly, "I'm more than a match for two Marilynish soldiers any day."
Looking at his face, Ace saw it was pale beneath the grime and judged him to have lost quite a bit of blood.
"I don't think there's a lot I can do," she said uncertainly. "The bleeding has stopped which is the main thing until you can get somewhere with better medical facilities."
He laughed grimly, "Like where? Alright," he added, "you're going to have to help me back to the camp."
Presumably having decided he could trust her, he put the dagger back in his belt. He placed his sound arm round Ace's shoulders and heaved himself up.
"That way," he said gesturing back at the forest.
"What about the gun?" asked Ace.
He grinned at her, "It's useless. The trigger mechanism's jammed."
"Can't you fix it?"
"Who has the knowledge?" he shrugged.
"I could have a look at it. I'm quite good with machines and things."
He looked down at her suspiciously.
"Are you a Nomar?"
"No, should I be?"
That moment there was a roar in the forest and some sort of big cat sprang at them out of the trees. Ace felt Goran shove her to one side as the huge beast came down on top of him.

LOUISE DENNIS

***************
One of those off hand remarks which so often occurs in conversation was the start of my connection with the society. A friend of mine said he knew of someone who may be starting such an organisation and would pass my name on (like many times since I do not actually recall being given a choice!). However I thought no more about it until I received two notes in rapid succession, one from Matthew Brookes saying he had no time to start up such an organisation and one from Roger Shaw who said that he had and asked me along.

The scene is set then, the time is February 1989, the place is a large(ish), airy room in one of the nicer parts of Corpus Christi college and meetings are taking place with an amazing degree of regularity. All credit is due to Roger here, as it is no mean feat to start up a society from scratch especially when it requires as essential equipment a video recorder, television set and room but has no money and cannot apply for a grant until it has some members and meetings, which it obviously cannot have until it begs, borrows or steals the aforementioned equipment and finds a home. However somehow during the course of the term it was achieved and the rest, as you know, is history (which incidentally is what I will probably be if I slag anyone off so I will not). The minutes of those early meetings make very amusing reading but unfortunately they are not around as I sit writing so I can not quote them though some parts are most memorable like the resolution "that it probably isn't too good an idea to find any members just yet" (passed unanimously) etc.

We move then from those heady and hectic days into Trinity Term and the quest for some members. The term card and constitution (yes, we do have one) were duly delivered to the proctors and in 1st week we held our very first meeting, "free to all" (I have carefully avoided the phrase "free for all" here...). "Pyramids of Mars" was the video showing (rather unfortunately complete with copyright message) and as I recall the meeting was very successful and we persuaded quite a few people to part with £1 to join for the term (with the promise of a £1 discount for full membership in Michaelmas included - free!). I do recall Simon Clifford (treasurer) and myself dealing with large numbers of membership cards in those early days and exceeding even our most optimistic estimates by about a factor of two.

Shortly after this Roger stood down as president due to his forthcoming Mods and the mantle fell upon Adam Stephens who has been at the helm since. Weekly meetings were held during the term and as I recall the only major disaster was during 5th week when the showing of 'The Deadly Assassin' was marred by technical problems which rendered the top quarter of the television screen virtually unwatchable and I am frankly still amazed that anyone stayed to watch it all, though quite a large
number of people did. We will (hopefully) show it again sometime. Thankfully the problem was sorted out in time for the following week.

An experiment was performed during the term in that we decided to show a "classic" serial over a number of weeks with an episode following the main video showing. This seemed to work quite well with 'The Chase' from 1965 being shown over weeks 2-7, though understandably many people who had joined after week 2 and consequently had not seen episode 1 did not normally stay. It seemed to us (and indeed still does) a good way of showing long and/or black and white stories which would perhaps be hard to show in one evening.

For posterity I will record what was shown during that term:-

2nd week 'Death to the Daleks' and 'The Chase' episode 1
3rd week 'City of Death' and 'The Chase' episode 2
4th week 'Earthshock' and 'The Chase' episode 3
5th week 'The Deadly Assassin' and 'The Chase' episode 4
6th week 'The Three Doctors' and 'The Chase' episode 5
7th week 'The Keeper of Traken' and 'The Chase' episode 6
8th week 'The Caves of Androzani' and 'The Ultimate Foe'

Perhaps as an aside I should mention how the stories to be shown are decided. During the penultimate meeting we invited people to suggest what stories they should like to see during Michaelmas; and subsequently used that as a basis for deciding on a selection. Unfortunately, as most people are aware, the BBC in their infinite wisdom managed to lose a large number of black and white episodes in 1973/74 and though some have since found their way back to the archives, not all officially "exist" and are therefore not available. This is the reason why a number of popular requests like 'The Tomb of the Cybermen' and 'The Evil of the Daleks' did not (and will not) find their way to the termcard. We also have to take into account the quality of the copies to which we have access, too, as most people prefer to watch high quality recordings, which again is somewhat limiting as regards a number of popular suggestions. Then there is the more practical side, eg. it is not easy to show a story like 'Inferno' which is almost 3 hours long in any other form than over 7 weeks as a "classic" serial, of which we are then obviously limited to one per term. After that we try to get a balance between all the eras of the programme based heavily on the suggestions list and eventually produce the termcard and hopefully please most of the members most of the time! I would stress that personal preferences do not feature in the decision making process!!

Also during Trinity Term Oxford was a venue for the long-awaited Dr Who stage play - 'The Ultimate Adventure'. It was Jon Pertwee's last week in the role and those fortunate enough to attend on the last night saw, much to everyone's
amusement and delight, his wicked sense of humour at work as a certain scarecrow named Worzel Gummidge put in an appearance. Members of the society attended on various nights and most seemed to enjoy the performance.

The summer vacation was then on us and the society took a spell of hibernation. However like all good things the break came to an end and it was back to the city of dreaming spires for another spell of hard work(!) and society activity.

We soon discovered, much to our delight and surprise that a speaker had agreed to come along in third week - more on this in a moment. First we had the delights of Freshers Fair. Standing next to the 'Comic Book Society' and opposite the 'Rocky Horror Society' and the 'Heterosexual Decadence Society' was quite an experience but we managed to sign about two hundred people on our list which was quite encouraging. First week saw a free meeting for freshers (refreshments included) with a video of 'City of Death' (again) being shown. There seemed to be quite a few members from Trinity Term who, it transpired, had largely turned up for the refreshments! We also signed up a good number of new members and the evening was definitely counted a success.

Meetings proper started the next day with the full version of 'Genesis of the Daleks' being shown and there were still more people wishing to part with some money, sorry, I mean join up! This flow continued until about 5th week which was very encouraging.

I do not think I can put off any any longer mentioning the Dr Who Society quizzes which I understand have achieved a certain infamy with the members. They were held quite often during Trinity Term and put in an appearance once or twice during Michaelmas usually having about six people taking part! Some of the questions were perhaps a trifle easy, for example "What science fiction series started on November 23rd 1963 and has run for quarter of a century" (no prizes for guessing that one). However a lot of fun was had by all who stayed and on one memorable occasion it was only the president's promise of coffee and alcohol which brought proceedings to a halt around midnight! Whether these will be continued remains a matter of some debate.

As I said the speaker meeting in 3rd week was a matter of much excitement. Terry Molloy, best known for his portrayals of Davros and Russell in 'Resurrection', 'Revelation' and 'Remembrance of the Daleks' and 'Attack of the Cybermen', respectively but also the real life version of 'The Archers' character Mike Tucker was coming to talk to us. Much arranging and rearranging went on behind the scenes but in the event all seemed to go well and I think everyone enjoyed themselves. Matthew Brookes must be congratulated on his procurement of a ring-modulator which enabled Terry to entertain us all performing Davros' voice and arm actions as well as relating some interesting anecdotes. On behalf of the society we would again extend our thanks to him for his time.
Video meetings were scheduled for all the remaining meetings of term but we were fortunate enough to be visited in eighth week by another speaker namely John "K9" Leeson who was also highly entertaining. He talked and answered questions for a couple of hours on many subjects relating to his career in acting and other television work. Slight consternation was caused when he was asked about his voice work on 'Remembrance of the Daleks' which he admitted he couldn't recall having done or been paid for, though he did a couple of hours later! Again we would extend our thanks to John for his time and a highly enjoyable meeting.

There were some changes on the committee during Michaelmas Term. At the end of term Simon Clifford (treasurer) and Ian Middleton (secretary) stood down due to other commitments though Simon remains on the committee in an ex-officio role. Warren Peto takes over as treasurer and James Cannon is the new secretary. Warren had previously been sponsorship and publicity officer and James, who joined the committee earlier in the term, had had no portfolio. Louise Dennis also joined the committee earlier in the term and was appointed Magazine Editor. The new line-up seems to be working well together.

Again for posterity, I include a complete list of meetings for Michaelmas term:-

1st week (Monday) 'City of Death'(Freshers' meeting)
(Tuesday) 'Genesis of the Daleks'

2nd week 'The Time Warrior' and 'The Mind Robber' episode 1

3rd week Terry Molloy speaker meeting
4th week 'The Visitation' and 'The Mind Robber' episode 2

5th week 'The Masque of Mandragora' and 'The Mind Robber' episode 3

6th week 'Revelation of the Daleks' and 'The Mind Robber' episode 4

7th week 'The Daemons' and 'The Mind Robber' episode 5

8th week John Leeson speaker meeting

Friday of 7th week was the day of the Dr Who Society Christmas Dinner. Black-tie was the dress and St Edmund Hall was the venue. After a glass (or two) of sherry we moved to the dining hall for the meal. We were honoured by the presence of our senior member Dr Martin Grossel who presided. The menu included soup, fish, chicken and fruit salad rounded off with cheese and biscuits and washed down with red and white wine and ended with port. The food and wine were of a high standard and the service was equally good. The president made a speech thanking the committee for their work over the year and offering a toast to "the committee and the society" and the vice-president replied on their behalf thanking the president for all that he had done and offered him the toast. Again I would venture to say that everyone present enjoyed the evening.
And so, that just about wraps up the report on the first (hopefully of many) year of life of the Dr Who Society. Looking back, although there have been a number of near misses, rushed arrangements and tearing out of hair I think that overall the year has been a good and successful one and I hope that all those who have been with us for this time have enjoyed it. We seem to have built up a very loyal membership (eat your heart out arts society) and thanks are due to them. Looking forward we can only hope that the year ahead will be as good and better and that we all can build on this foundation that has been formed to keep the society flourishing and successful next year, and in subsequent years, long after the current members have collected their degrees (or not!) and moved on.

I lay down my pen and raise my glass to the future -

Cheers

JONATHAN BRYDEN.
The Doctor Who Society Christmas Dinner occurred on a very auspicious day (my birthday). We met at St. Edmund's Hall to be plied with sherry before the meal. I even got a birthday card (with a candle and holly on it, but I suppose you can't have everything!)

The meal itself, whatever it may have been, was not Christmas Dinner, unless chickens are turkeys and croquette potatoes are roast. However the table looked nice with its anagrammed place names, revealing that someone on the committee obviously thinks Louise is spelt Louise. Jonathan Bryden spent the entire time in a state of extreme stage fright about his forthcoming speech. This was not helped by the malignant presence of the senior member who kept borrowing both the president's speech notes (written by the vice president) and vice president's speech notes (written by the president) and editing them. In the end both speeches went without a hitch (no thanks to Dr Grossel).

Then the results of the committee post elections were announced. What elections? I hear you cry. Well if you paid more attention to the president when he waffles on every meeting you'd realise that committee post elections are among the best kept secrets of the society. Actually Adam couldn't remember the results so the ex-president, Roger, had to remind him. In fact Roger probably made them up as that is when I found out I was suddenly magazine editor (What a coincidence that I had remarked to Roger on the society's lack of a magazine earlier in the evening), but then as he was the only voter in the first place I suppose it makes no never mind. The new committee members then had to give speeches:— As secretary James promised faithfully to record in loving detail everything said in committee meetings and almost immediately received his first presidential veto. I had Happy Birthday sung me (surprise, surprise!). Then just about everybody else gave speeches as well.

Things then degenerated rather, Adam was deposed a couple of times, numerous toasts were drunk and Dr Grossel had to have a TARDIS made for him out of the place names to keep him occupied. Teddy Hall in its ultimate wisdom then threw us out on the (totally unreasonable) grounds that it was 11 O'clock and time to leave. Thus ended a very enjoyable evening.

LOUISE DENNIS