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Welcome to the third issue of THE TIDES OF TIME. It is nice to be in the position of having to leave articles out of the magazine due to lack of space, one of the victims being my own story. It seemed a better idea to start a new story at the beginning of a new year with (hopefully) a lot of new readers rather than continue from halfway through a story which was introduced largely as a space filler in the first place. As Alan Whitten had written me a two part Dalek story it seemed an opportune moment to include it.

I was unable to attend the Whoniverse convention in Abingdon (I was trying to earn the rent at the time) so have no idea how well it went. I did, however, attend the Carousel convention in Cardiff where I was disappointed to find I was the only O.U. Doc Soc member present when two-thirds of the Hertfordshire Local Group had made it (their names were John and Phil). I, personally, enjoyed the convention very much, though many people were disappointed that Peter Davison had to cancel his appearance at the last minute due to a disagreement with his agent. It just confirms my opinion that enjoyment of these occasions often depends on whether you know anyone there (there were several people present who I had met previously (not always at Dr Who related events)). The picture appearing on the back cover was obtained there in return for a donation to the charity.

This term looks good at the time of writing with Colin Baker hopefully coming to give a speaker meeting and our newly created social secretary organising an annual dinner. Even if these don't materialise I hope you all enjoy watching the videos. This term of course we are introducing the separate showing of black-and-white episodes on a request basis at the weekends and showing only the later colour ones during the week. I'm looking forward to receiving reviews of them all for next term's issue. The ones I received for this issue were ideal, some long, some short, some completely irrelevant (Sarah Storch watch out!). Anything you do write (or draw, I may have found lots of budding writers but artists are a little thin on the ground) should reach me by 0th week of Hilary. Send them to Louise Dennis, either at Somerville or at 203 Cowley Road.

Louise Dennis
Sixth of One

Colin Baker. The Doctor who will be remembered by many readers of this article as the only actor to play the part indubitably to have been dismissed by his BBC employers. Even before this unhappy event his characterisation had proved one of the most controversial in the programme's history.

"Change my dear. And it seems not a moment too soon."

Thus spoke the sixth Doctor as he confronted an incredulous Peri and a more accommodating audience in the final part of "The Caves of Androzani" on March 21, 1984. However, one could say that Colin Baker had been the Doctor for as long as seven months, as it had been in August 1983 that the BBC had presented him as the Fifth Doctor's successor.

It was thought in some quarters at the time that Colin Baker was the ideal Doctor of the BBC executives, thought to be reflected in his much-reported ambition to outlast Tom Baker's seven season tenure, and in the outlandish costume premiered at the January photocall, indicating the contrast between the sixth Doctor's outspoken ebullience and his predecessor's subdued - some may think even bland - character. One criticism of the Peter Davison Doctor had been that he, and the stories in which he appeared, lacked humour. The secret of success appeared to lie in the overstatement for which it was thought the public remembered Tom Baker (still the Doctor to much of the audience in 1983/4) and this was reinforced in Colin's first script.

"I am the Doctor, whether you like it or not."

"The Twin Dilemma" was a decisive break with what had been built up over the previous four seasons, but in a sense fulfilled it. The return to realism in "Doctor Who", as opposed to the increasingly bizarre style of production advocated by Graham Williams, always had the potential to degenerate into pastiche. "The Twin Dilemma" seemed to fit this role. An egomaniac, over-theatrical Doctor, and a whining assistant, were pitted against a ridiculous-looking monster that not even the cast could take seriously. It was lucky for the production team that there were nine months between "The Twin Dilemma" and "Attack of the Cybermen" in broadcast terms, giving the new Doctor the opportunity of an early relaunch.

"Attack of the Cybermen" and "Vengeance on Varos" displayed many of the strengths and weaknesses of the previous two seasons. In the first case, a potentially good story was weighed down by continuity-based complexities, most notably the character of Lytton. In its new slot, the programme should have been avoiding confusing references to past stories, however good
Maurice Colbourne's performance. "Varos", while deriving its plot from the then active computer/video games craze, suffered not only from the old cliches such as the final "whatever can we do to repay you?" scene, and the long-exhausted Doctor-helps-rebels seam, but also from poor pacing, the consequence of placing the majority of episodes in the season with writers who had no "Doctor Who" experience, despite the cruciality of mastering the new forty-five minute format.

"Finito TARDIS! How's that for style?"

"The Mark of the Rani" marked a return to an older style of "Doctor Who" story, based on science or pseudo-science and relating to a firm historical background - this time George Stephenson's period of employment as chief engineer at Killingworth Colliery, then in Northumberland. Viewing figures for this story increased by over a million (from 6.28 to 7.29) indicating that the straightforwardness of the dialogue (in contrast to Pip and Jane Baker's later contributions to the series) and the plot were appealing to viewers.

It was during the next story that the world of "Doctor Who" was turned upside down. "The Two Doctors" seems in retrospect a rather pedestrian effort; great fun being had by all as Patrick Troughton and Frazer Hines helped Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant through the padded scenes six-parter connoisseurs cherish. The story was overshadowed by events in the real world that made the major news programmes.

For "Doctor Who" fans the announcement of the postponement of season 23 carries the same kind of memory-enhancing effects as Kennedy's assassination does for others. Various excuses were made by the BBC for BBC 1 controller Michael Grade's unexpected decision, eventually settling on the ludicrous "the problem is not just financial, it is also about scripts and resources," to quote from the letter sent by then BBC managing director Bill Cotton to DWAS coordinator David Saunders. Considering scripts and directors had been assigned, and location filming for the first story already organised, the story reported in the Merseyside Local Group newsletter, and subsequently in "DWB", that the postponement was all part of a scheme to ruin Doctor Who's USA distributor Lionheart Television, enabling the BBC to buy out the other two shareholders and thereby increase their international sales revenue, seems more plausible.

"You microcephalic apostate!"

Although heavily derided immediately following the time of its broadcast, in retrospect "Timelash" stands on fairly firm ground as far as its plot is concerned. The acting was let down by two thespians: Paul Darrow (Tekker) and David Chandler (Herbert), one of whom was obviously cynical in his work attitude, and the other saddled with a part that only existed to supply an under used plotline about the inspiration for H.G. Wells' early writings. Colin Baker, however, showed his talent for lending dignity to material that did not reach its full potential on screen. This was to come in useful in 1986.
According to one version of the postponement myth, Michael Grade made his insidious decision after previewing "Revelation of the Daleks" which failed to match his idea of a programme whose place in the schedules was at 5.20 pm and only at 5.20 pm. The story does perhaps contain needless gore, such as the destruction of Davros's hand and the impaling of Jobel. Despite this, or indeed because of it, the story reached first place in both the Marvel and DWAS polls.

"We're going to..."

Amid the speculation concerning the series' future Eric Saward wrote "Slipback" for the Radio 4 children's series, "Pirate Radio 4". This, apart from its derivative ending - the ship "Vipod Mor" travelling back in time to start the Big Bang, lifted from Steve Gallagher's Davison script "Terminus" - was probably Eric Saward's most original contribution since "The Visitation", being witty both in characterisation and execution.

Between March 1985 and September 1986 the production team seemed to be under the constant supervision of Grade and other senior BBC figures, although Colin Baker and John Nathan-Turner have denied this was the case. However the new series did have the air of one produced within severe restrictions.

True, there was a large amount of tabloid pre-publicity, and at first glance the season appeared extremely well constructed. Individual stories were to be rendered more exciting by the Doctor's third court appearance before the Time Lords. However, as the fourteen episodes progressed it became apparent to all but wishful thinkers that there was something seriously wrong.

**Valeyard or Knacker's Yard?**

Firstly the main storylines were hardly inspiring. Philip Martin's Sil plotline for episodes 5-8 was probably the most successful but, like "Vengeance on Varos" they suffered from the worn dramatic cliches of Doctor-helping-rebels-against-monsters. Pip and Jane Baker's "Terror of the Vervoids" had an enticing premise - an Agatha Christie country house mystery in space - but withered on a vine polluted by the Baker's excessively pompous dialogue (the series by this time lacked Eric Saward to regulate it), the miscasting of Bonnie Langford (not that she didn't try very hard to overcome her problematic persona) and the terribly outdated and embarrassing Vervoid costumes.

Just as important was the "Trial of a Time Lord" itself. It lacked the robustness to carry anyone but the most ardent "Doctor Who" fan, and its interposition with other plotlines caused at best confusion, weakening any tension that remained in the flat production. This particularly applied to the first four episodes, where the audience were presented with questions that were not answered for two months, such as the "bleeping" of the word "Matrix" every time Glitz mentioned it. Although the final two episodes were better, they suffered from the deficiencies of the rest of the season. Two episodes cannot
explain the plot holes of twelve, although the writers made a valiant effort to get themselves out of the pit they'd dug.

"Carrot juice, carrot juice, carrot juice..."

One thing that can be said in favour of the twenty-third series is that most of the performers acquitted themselves well. The Doctor was more restrained than before, perhaps making his character more endearing to a broader audience. Nicola Bryant improved tremendously, as less revealing costumes and maturer lines gave her a chance to act. The contributions of Nabil Shaban, Tony Selby and Michael Jayston can also be commended.

Nevertheless they seemed to have little impact on the programme's ratings, hovering at the very low figure of about four million. Much of the blame for this, apart from the ramshackle season format, must lie in the scheduling. "The A-Team" had gained a great deal of television exposure in between March 1985 and September 1986, whereas no "Doctor Who" episodes were shown, leaving B.A. Baracus and the rest in a commanding position. The Doctor was also affected by Michael Grade's decision to take TV-am's hype about the puppet Roland rat saving the breakfast ITV franchise holder seriously enough to make the rodent the "hook" for Saturday evening's viewing. Instead, however, of gaining around seven million viewers as expected, the rat was a dismal failure who never got his claws into the top 100, "Blockbusters" wiping the floor.

After all the publicity attendant on Michael Grade's "The jury is still out" statements, and the programme's ratings collapse following the introduction of more "humour" and a reduction on "violence" (presumably referring to gratuitous gore such as Shockeye's rat-based diet in "The Two Doctors"), the BBC hierarchy appear to have needed a scapegoat.

The news that Colin Baker was to be removed from the helm of the TARDIS first broke in an article written to accompany episode thirteen in the "Daily Mirror", after a cryptic comment by Colin Baker on that morning's "Saturday Superstore". It was confirmed by an official statement about three weeks later.

In later interviews, Colin Baker was repeatedly quizzed about Michael Grade, the continuing tenure of John Nathan-Turner in the producer's chair, along with aspects of "Who" such as scripts. In all cases he generally displayed moderation, despite the wish of publications such as "The Sun" for him to do otherwise. Nevertheless he still felt ready to return to "Doctor Who" with his appearance in "The Ultimate Adventure" in 1989, in which he seemingly effortlessly succeeded in overlaying Jon Pertwee's stamp with his own.

Hopefully if he manages to appear at a meeting sometime this year you will be able to find out for yourselves whether his views have changed over the years.

MATTHEW KILBURN
All you have to do is complete the very easy crossword and find as many 'who' related words (in any direction) as you can in the wordsearch (For example 'Cybermen' is in there somewhere if you can find it !!!).

Then complete the tie-breaker in 5 pages or less and send your answers to Roger Shaw, Corpus Christi college before the end of sixth week.

Answers and the winners name shall be published next issue.
ACROSS
1. (& 2D) a story featuring 12D. 
3. Channing.
6. Invaded San Marino.
9. Clone Leader.
10. Gallifreyan.
16. Destroyed by Jo.
17. Mutant or Solonian.
19. A key destroyed it.
20. Invader of Earth.

DOWN
1. Elder of Sarn
2. See 1A.
4. Used by 21A.
5. Used K1.
7. The Deadly Assassin.
11. Home of the Frogs.
12. A character in 1A and 2D.
13. Location of an Eye.
15. Directed by M. Hart.
17. In Kasterborus.
18. Time Lord interveners.

WORDSEARCH

| C Y B E R M E N S |
| R A N Q U I N R L |
| U R R H B N E A T |
| S T O O T D K K R |
| A E T R Y E T I A |
| D K S N A I S I V |
| E X X I L O N H E |
| R O B O M A N Z R |
| S O N T A R A N S |

TIE BREAKER

I think the Oxford University Doctor Who Society is really wonderful because...

RULES

1. Only members of the OUDWS may enter.
2. Members of the committee and their families may not enter.
3. All entries must be received by Roger Shaw by Saturday 5th Week.
4. The winner shall be announced during the meeting in 7th Week.
5. The Judge's decision shall be final in all matters concerning this competition.
6. The minimum bribe level shall be £1.
Supremacy of the Daleks

Part 1

The year was 5575 and the planet Martarakis lay out in space. It was a bleak and desolate planet with a rocky and sandy surface. The planet Martarakis wasn't completely lifeless, far from it. In fact it supported an intelligent peace loving race known as Tryzabans and as our story opens they are in trouble. Trouble with a capital T. A number of their people were now prisoners. Slave workers for a hostile warlike race called the Daleks.

Zillarker and her friends sat in their place of rest thinking over the last few days and wondering if help would ever come. Zillarker turned to her brother Valarn and said, "It's no good Valarn, I can't go on much longer."
"Try Zillarker," said Valarn, "that's all I ask you to do. Believe me, help will come soon."

At that moment a Dalek appeared and it grated in its electronic voice, "WORK FORCE RETURN TO YOUR DUTIES."
"Why?" asked Valarn, "What are you making us do?"
"NO FURTHER QUESTIONS JUST WORK!" said the Dalek.

Jondar the leader of the work party stood up and said defiantly, "No!"
The Dalek replied, "OBEY THE DALEKS OR SUFFER EXTERMINATION."
Jondar replied, "We won't work unless you explain what we are doing."
The Dalek replied, "THEN YOU WILL BE EXTERMINATED."
The Dalek's gun blazed into life and Jondar's body turned Negative, twisted in agony and fell to the ground dead.
The rest of the work party looked on in terror as their friend and colleague was gunned down, "THAT WAS A WARNING TO YOU. ALL DISOBEIDENCE WILL BE DEALT WITH IN THE SAME WAY," said the Dalek.

Inside the TARDIS that mysterious traveller in space and time known as the Doctor was pacing up and down the console room with a worried look on his face, wondering why his old enemies the Daleks went to all that trouble to help him and his three companions Ian, Barbara, and Karen deal with the Vandergarites. "Maybe they didn't want such an interplanetary war," suggested Karen.
"No Karen, the Daleks have always been and always will be warlike. Helping their enemies is totally alien to them," said the Doctor.

Without warning a message appeared on the computer screen and it read:
"GO IMMEDIATELY TO PLANET MARTARAKIS. DALEKS HAVE INVADED."
Instantly the Doctor became alert - he paused for a moment and then said, "That's it - that's the reason why they helped us so they could get me to Martarakis to kill me."
Barbara glanced at the Doctor with a look of concern on her face and she said, "Then I take it we're not going."
"Not going - Not Going!" exploded the Doctor. "Of course we're
going. If the Daleks have invaded the planet then we've got 10 to stop them."

Barbara gave Ian an uneasy glance and said, "Ian, this is the Doctor we know—always getting involved."

On the planet Martarakis the Dalek Supreme reported to the Grand Dalek and said, "ALL PRISONERS ARE WORKING NORMALLY. THEY KNOW IF THEY RESIST THEY WILL BE EXTERMINATED."
"EXCELLENT!" shrieked the Grand Dalek, "THE DEATH MACHINE WILL BE COMPLETED AND ALL LIFE ON THIS PLANET EXTERMINATED."

Soon a chorus of Daleks chanted "EXTERMINATE, EXTERMINATE."

On the rocky, sandy surface of Martarakis a wheezing groaning filled the air and the small blue Police Box that was the TARDIS materialised.

The door opened and out came Ian, Barbara, Karen and the Doctor.
"So this is Martarakis," said the Doctor. "A bleak desolate planet. Just right for a Dalek invasion."
Ian glanced around their surroundings and said, "Yes Doctor, you're right. I wonder what the Daleks are up to this time?"

The Doctor thought for a moment and finally replied, "Well we won't find out the answer standing around here so I suggest we go and find those mutated pepper pots and then thwart them."

Inside the city of Martarakis, that was the temporary Dalek control, the Grand Dalek studied the instrument readings and said in its harsh metallic voice, "OUR INSTRUMENTS SHOW THE DOCTOR HAS ARRIVED."

The Supreme Dalek continued "STAGE ONE OF OUR PLAN IS NOW COMPLETE. THE DOCTOR MUST BE BROUGHT TO US AND EXTERMINATED."

The chorus of Daleks chanted, "EXTERMINATE THE DOCTOR! EXTERMINATE THE DOCTOR!"

Outside the city the work party worked on, with Daleks watching their every move. "I just can't go on any longer. What are they making us do?" said Zillarker.

Soon the Doctor and his three companions arrived and the Doctor said, "Good day I'm the Doctor can my friends and I help you?"

Inside the temporary Dalek control the Grand Dalek turned to a Dalek aide and said, "THE DOCTOR HAS MADE CONTACT WITH THE WORK PARTY. GET HIM AND BRING HIM HERE."
"I OBEY!" shrieked the Dalek aide.

Outside the city Zillarker said to the Doctor, "Have you really come to help us?"
"Yes, now I understand that the Daleks have invaded your planet," said the Doctor.
"You know the Daleks!" Zillarker replied in a shocked tone of voice.
"Yes," said the Doctor, "the Daleks and I go back a long way."

Soon the Dalek aide appeared and said, "DOCTOR YOU WILL ACCOMPANY ME TO DALEK CONTROL."

The Doctor stepped forward, "Oh good, tea time already is it?" "THE GRAND DALEK WISHES TO INTERROGATE YOU," said the Dalek aide.
The Doctor replied, "Then we mustn't keep him waiting."
As Ian, Barbara and Karen moved to join the Doctor the Dalek aide said, "YOUR FRIENDS WILL REMAIN HERE WITH THE WORK PARTY."

Soon the Doctor stood before the Grand Dalek and said, "So what are you mutated pepper pots up to this time as if I didn't know."

The Grand Dalek replied, "WE ARE BUILDING THE ULTIMATE DEATH MACHINE THAT WILL WIPE OUT ALL LIFE ON THIS PLANET, WHEN THAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED THE DALEKS WILL RULE SUPREME. NO ONE CAN WITHSTAND THE POWER OF THE DALEKS!"

The Doctor cut in - "Yes, yes, yes, I've heard it all before, but what makes you think this time you will succeed?"

"IF WE FAIL DOCTOR. YOU WILL BE EXTERMINATED," said the Grand Dalek.
"Yes, the usual threats," said the Doctor.

Back at the work party Ian began pacing up and down and said, "If only we knew what the Daleks are up to because with that information we'll stand a better chance of defeating them."
Barbara cut in - "Ian, the Doctor will find that out for us, now, won't he?"

Back inside the temporary Dalek control the Doctor said, "Don't you pathetic creatures realise you'll never rule supreme."
"THE DALEKS ARE THE SUPREME CREATURES," said the Grand Dalek.
"Oh, you may have the secret of time travel but all you're doing doing is tampering with your own biological make up of which Davros made a botch job and it's hardly surprising that you become victims of the Mutant Phase," said the Doctor.
"YOU HAVE SAID ENOUGH DOCTOR. NOW YOU WILL BE EXTERMINATED," said the Grand Dalek.

ALAN WHITTEN
WANTED

ADAM THE BAD

FOR CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

$10000 REWARD

Warning: Adam is a master of disguise and uses many aliases such as "William Hartnell", "Dr. Rossotti" and "Davros"
Trinity Term Review

Day of the Daleks

I was pretty impressed with the plotline on this one (very Blake's Sevenesque), but unfortunately the Pertwee Era production style and the inclusion of "those stupid pepper pots" turned it into little more than a farce. The most memorable moment in this one was definitely the presence of the motor trike just waiting for the Doctor and Jo to escape on it.

DAY OF THE DALEKS could have been an excellent McCoy or Davison story, especially if they replaced the Daleks with say the Jaggaroth, En Masse this time (time travel link here, also Styles murder could have resulted in Scaroth not dying at the end of CITY OF DEATH).

PAUL GROVES

It's a Kinda Magic?

Would this story have a better reputation had Tom Baker appeared in it in Season 18, as the story was originally intended for him? What if the jungle had been created at Ealing, as it was in THE CREATURE FROM THE PIT? In fact, is there a classic serial here, hidden by the tacky special effects? Tantalisingly the answer to all these questions is "maybe". Maybe a brooding Baker would have conveyed the evil of the Mara more capably than the fresh faced Davison: and yet the story is about loss of innocence, the innocence Davison embodies in CASTROVALVA. The intrusively lit studio jungle made the fears of the Dome dwellers appropriately ridiculous - there is nothing out lurking in the shadows for them to fear because there are no shadows on Deva Loka, only shadows in the mind. And as for that snake (or, as DWM Season Survey readers put it, THAT SNAKE!) can't it just be overlooked, as the Magma Monster usually is in ANDROZANI?

And yet I feel if I bend over any further backwards making exceptions that I'll be unable to get up off the floor again. The fact is KINDA is one of those "little girl who had a little curl" stories - when it is good it's very very good, and when it is bad it is horrid. So in the first two parts we had the stunning surreal visions of the inside of Tegan's mind. And in part four we had the snake. In between there was the presentation of a nervous breakdown, which has rarely worked well in Doctor Who (e.g. EDGE OF DESTRUCTION). Mary Morris was nicely vindictive as Panna - "Bring your fool with you" - and Adrian Mills was and is far too nice to be convincing as Destruction Incarnate, and here was hampered by a chest wig awesomely artificial. And as for that deep, philosophical meaning to the story, "Civilisations rise, civilisations fall", it was dealt with far less pretentiously in THE HAND OF FEAR.

In fact I most enjoyed this story when it seemed to anticipate Davison's superior campus comedy, "A VERY PECULIAR PRACTICE". All the characters seemed to fit. When Hindle said something
like "Discipline never did me any harm" a vision of Bob Buzzard sprang to mind; Nerys Hughes was almost as seductive as Barbara Flynn's Rose Marie in her white lab coat, and that just leaves the blunt and bluff old Sanders to compare with the blunt and bluff old Jock. The only question left is, are the silent, enigmatic Kinda the equivalent of the silent and enigmatic nuns? Very peculiar indeed...

PAUL DUMONT

KINDA has a lot going for it. It's originality is without question. Okay, we have seen Buddhism before, but does PLANET OF THE SPIDERS really count as an exploration of its ideas?

The acting was also really excellent. Hindle's declining sanity is also something that has not been seen often in Doctor Who, and what could have silly and embarrassing scenes were made genuinely sad thanks to the actors. The line "You can't mend people!" is a particular favourite.

This is also one of Tegan's best stories, in particular the 'dream sequence' which is one of the few truly horrifying scenes in Doctor Who, very well acted and directed. None of Cartmell's coloured contact lenses here, which is where most of the horror these days comes from.

I will also note here that Tegan's possession by the Mara is a real trap, and not the usual plot device of the companion blundering into danger. Indeed the plot flows smoothly, without the usual contrivances. Tegan passes on the Mara to Aris who leads the Kinda in an attack on the Dome just as Hindle is ready to press the self destruct button at the first sign of threat.

This is where the story's problems start, though, and why opinion is still split on this story, many people seeing it as a downright turkey. It is poorly paced and edited, so much of the potential excitement is lost. Terrance Dicks' novelisation was a wasted opportunity to correct this.

And then there is The Snake, undoubtedly the most pathetic creation in the Whoniverse. Coming at the climax of this story, this stuffed bin bag tends to make forget what has gone before, which is a great shame. The production team were to give it another go the following year however...

MARK DUNN

Snakedance

It is possible that no story ever written has been so well suited to the personality and characteristics of a single Doctor (in this case Peter Davison) than SNAKEDANCE, story 6D, the second in the 20th season by Christopher Bailey. Davison's vulnerability, his deep seriousness and warmth as a character made him the perfect foil to the psychic threat of the Mara.

SNAKEDANCE was presumably written in order to redeem the totally undeservedly negative reaction to KINDA in the previous season. It is unfortunate that whenever one mentions KINDA one's thoughts seem to go to "that rubber snake at the end of episode 4". As it happened, some of the snake special effects in SNAKEDANCE were not much better, but there were very few of them and SNAKEDANCE had so much else to offer to a receptive
The acting in these four episodes remains to be equalled by a majority of current stories. Among those worth a mention are John Carson (Ambril), Colette O’Niel (the deeply wonderful Tanha), and Martin Clunes (Lon) whose bored aristocratic character was absolutely wonderful. Janet Fielding was excellent and one became completely convinced that luckless big-mouthed Tegan had really been possessed. Peter Davison was excellent, but then I personally believe that he always was good as the Doctor, but I felt that Sarah Sutton who plays her part very well was a bit superfluous to the plot, "Why couldn’t she have contracted some disabling illness like in KINDA?" I heard myself uncharitably asking at some stages.

The sets and costumes were also very good and helped evoke the sense of the culture of Manussa so well I thought, even though it was often pretty obvious that the whole thong was studio based. I think that Manussa was the great triumph of this story - we saw a society that was complacent and the product of many centuries of changing cultures. This made the fact of the Mara’s existence all the more poignant. The Mara, I believe (as a snake) was an attempt to reach and aspire to "higher" things in Doctor Who. The snake is an ambiguous symbol of healing and evil, but it shakes people out of their complacency - and the Doctor, himself, had to go through a kind of healing ritual (being bitten by Dojen’s snake) in order to face the Mara. The Mara, itself, the script took pains to emphasise, was a threat from within us, and thus unless we guard against that kind of moral and spiritual complacency and laxity that was on Manussa we too would fall victim to those things that the Mara represented - greed, hatred, cowardice etc.

I even noted a literary allusion, because in the ceremony in which Lon played the Federator, he is offered "fear in a handful of dust." This struck me as being extremely similar to a line in T.S. Eliot’s "The Waste Land": "Look, I will show you fear in a handful of dust". Eliot’s "Waste Land" is a similar place to Manussa in that it lacks moral and spiritual values and seems to cry out for us to guard against this condition. Thus SNAKEDANCE’s superb plot and script worked. Not only did it make a very interesting point about human nature through its symbolic aspects, but it managed to have three dimensional characters and interesting situations as well without having to resort to the usual contingent of electrocutions (and other such grizzly deaths) and fights with silly laser guns.

Perhaps other writers and directors should follow the example set by this story? In any case SNAKEDANCE remains for me (and I suspect for others too) a high point in the Davison era and a high point in Doctor Who in general.

EVARISTE GALOIS (no this isn’t a pseudonym for Louise Dennis!)

Vengeance on Varos

I thought VAROS was excellent, an original plotline and very gripping. The Punishment Dome effects were excellent and contained many good ideas. The inclusion of the two "members
of the public" watching the action on TV, but never being directly involved, I thought was a great idea and worked very well.

My only criticism is that Sil was a bit of a joke. The story would have been more dramatic if Sil was a sinister humanoid (Jaqueline Pearce would have been excellent here, much better than in THE TWO DOCTORS.)

In summary, probably Colin Baker's best story.

PAUL GROVES

"Decay" after a Decade

Whenever a Script Editor gets really stuck to fill up those extra five minutes of a story, he turns to The Book of Rassilon. Within its pages is the sum of the knowledge of every Script Editor who ever lived. Here can be found the time honoured entries concerning Running Down Corridors / Passages / Cave Systems, cross referencing to Catacombs (see Burning Torches, Availability Of) and Tunnels (see Shadows, Menacing Appearance Of). Dialogue references include Companion's Expression of Futility (e.g. "What can we do?") and What to Say when Captured.

Terrance Dicks, as a former script editor, partly wrote the book himself; and STATE OF DECAY contained some classics.

SURLY VILLAGER: They protect us from... the Wasting.
DOCTOR: Did you say... the Wasting?
(An eerie silence descends)

Of course, what we don't have is the later scene in the TARDIS:
DOCTOR: All right K9, carry on scanning for CVEs. Oh No!
ROMANA: What's wrong?
DOCTOR: I never found out what the Wasting was.
K9: Master, it was the provisional title for STATE OF DECAY.

There are the character types such as the Rash Rebel ("I say we must attack NOW!") and the Oppressed Defeatist ("But resistance is utterly useless"). There is also the namecheck given to the story title. "I've never seen such a state of decay" compares with the glories of "A final visitation", "Tell Dexeter we have come full circle", "Oh no it's the Ice Warriors" and "That Susan Foreman is an unearthly child, isn't she?"

It is well known that Andrew Cartmel has thrown away the Book of Rassilon, and is using the Book of the Old Time - every foe seems to come now from some old and unseen time in the Doctor's past. But in fact the two books are very much the same.

For example, one of the cliches in Book of Rassilon might be called the Secret Air Duct: the Book gives directions that such a blatant plot device must be introduced in the space of one line, to stop the viewer from cringing too much. There's a line in GENESIS that goes something like this: "You can get out of the Kaled dome through the secret air duct over there". General derision greeted Owen Teale's line in VAROS, "No, I know a better way to exactly where the Doctor will be. There's a secret air duct over there..." although this was compounded when the air duct turns out to be the same stretch of the
Punishment Dome corridor the Doctor has been running up and down with wooden bits added. And yet the idea of a convenient secret passage forms the basis of the definitive Cartmel era story, THE CURSE OF FENRIC. Not only that, but Fenric himself can be found in his bottle down there between camp and church!

The fact that no drama can be completely free of cliches, especially Doctor Who, which relies on them as a form of shorthand to ease the viewer into the complexities of the story. VAROS and GENESIS have tired, casually used cliches: so do THE HAPPINESS PATROL and BATTLEFIELD. In both, "Sympathetic resonance equals fatal avalanche" and "I'll have the armourer rustle up some silver bullets" are signposted as blatantly as the Doctor and Romana's exchange about the Record of Rassilon and Type Forties. Their dungeon conversation, however, is distinguished in its treatment of a cliched situation by the use of wit, humour and suspense. These are the three characteristics that made STATE OF DECAY (and, to be fair to Andrew Cartmel, GHOST LIGHT) so enjoyable. I have a friend who has fond memories of Season 18, and has only come to see the E-Space trilogy in Trinity term. As he said, after seeing STATE OF DECAY, "It's not just nostalgia, is it? They really were better then."

The three strengths of DECAY were acting, script and design. The direction was not particularly remarkable. Early in part one hand held camera was used when the two Time Lords roam the forest; when the Three Who Rule celebrated the Arising, the camera (aptly enough) rose. The slow motion climax of the direction. The story is not an action-adventure, and does not require acrobatic camera moves.

I have made fun of some of the more ordinary aspects of the script, but as a cohesive whole there is no comparison between it and anything Season 26 by Baker's sombre playing, a hallmark of Season 18. He doesn't come across the Great one in part four and say "Now for that game of chess nobody has seen us play before". Character motivation is credible; the viewer appreciates the Doctor's irritation at having to rescue Adric, because of the feeling that there just isn't time for it. There are also the incidental pleasures of the Doctor's version of Henry V, the running joke about Earth technology, an adequate use being found for K9, and Romana showing the Tower guard how to use the computerised key.

The acting is of a high standard from the rebels as they steer themselves around Uncle Terry's more obvious cliches. Tom Baker and Lalla Ward sparkle together; but it is the Three who rule the show. Here we have the Gothic Who versions of Claudius (Hamlet's uncle), Lady Macbeth and Polonius. Especially good is Zargo's line, delivered as an afterthought following exultation over the Arising: "... But why do I feel afraid?" The performances were of such evident quality that there is no need to dwell on them further.

The main idea behind the visuals of the story was simple but successful - colour coordination, emphasised by the director's preference for long, wide shots. So we had the Tower interior and the Three in rust brown and scarlet, Village and Villagers in pallid yellow-green, and the chamber of the Great One a lurid bright green bordered with blue. The consoles in the scout
ships did look centuries old; the throne room seemed vast. Above all, these sets were well lit.

All of which makes the climactic special effect of a rocket turning over look extremely ridiculous, and Aukon suddenly snarling "Ancient Enemy!" when the Doctor casually mentions Time Lords sounded very clumsy. However set against this the discovery of the engine room, and row upon row of drained cadavers... and it's clear this story, not CURSE OF FENRIC, is the archetypal Vampire story.

PAUL DUMONT.

Planet of the Spiders

I have to defend PLANET OF THE SPIDERS. Admittedly the Metebelis Three scenes were PLANET OF THE Clichés but the special effects were actually quite good for 1974 - barely a blue line on the video/telecine mix of the whomobile's flight after Lupton. The straightforward regeneration dissolve from Pertwee to Baker was compensated for by it's surrounding presentation, particularly the incidental music and the crescendo which built up into the scream of the title music as the third Doctor became the fourth.

MATTHEW KILBURN

The Most Fell Beast of All

Many and varied are the monsters that have in the past tried to conquer this planet. Hitherto, they have always been defeated and the world saved - overgrown artichokes and pepper pots, knights of the Round Table, Norse Gods, giant tabbies, vampire bats and snakes - all these we have seen on our screens, and all have been overthrown. But now I bring you warning of a class of monster so hideous, so evil, so fearsome that even the boldest of warriors quake when they see one - so terrible that none can overcome them, so numerous that already the vanguard of their army outnumber the humans of Earth. I refer to no lesser creature than - the SPIDER.

Run all you like - there is no escaping. Remove them from the house and they come crawling up the drain. Already they have taken over all older houses in this country - not a farmhouse is safe, not an old rectory is free from the foul beasts. Big ones, little ones, black ones, red ones, Tarantulas and Black Widows - they hide in corners, beneath plugs, next to taps, lurking ever ready to spring out at the unwary shaver or bather. Soon it will be too late, and they will have taken over the world. Bring in the doughty fighters of UNIT now, and perhaps we will be saved yet. But I flatly refuse to do a review of PLANET OF THE SPIDERS until someone has got them out of here...

SARAH STURCH
(That'll teach me to bully people for reviews! Ed.)