The Tides of Time

Hilary 1991
Edited by:- Louise Dennis

Contributing Writers: Paul Dumont (Magdalen), Mark Dunn (Balliol), Paul Groves (Jesus), Michael Hagen (Balliol), Matthew Kilburn (St. John's), Robert Moss, Tim Procter (Corpus Christi), Roger Shaw (Corpus Christi), Alan Whitten.

Logos:- Paul Groves (Jesus), Louise Dennis (Somerville).

Front Cover:- Robert Moss.

Artwork:- Robert Moss.

Produced for the Doctor Who Society:

Senior Member: Dr Martin Grossel (Christ Church)
President: Jonathan Bryden (Corpus Christi)
Secretary: Paul Dumont (Magdalen)
Treasurer: Warren Peto (St. Edmund Hall)
Social Secretary: Tim Procter (Corpus Christi)
Committee: Alice Drewery (Somerville)
Matthew Kilburn (St. John's)

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Welcome to the fourth issue of The Tides of Time. It is worth noting that this has now been running for a year which for an idea that was born in the toast drinking stage of last year's annual dinner is quite good going. Those of you who are observant will know that I am no longer on the committee however it was felt that this should be no bar to my continued editorship (and no one else particularly wanted to take this on). Anyway my best wishes to Alice Drewery (Somerville Maths and Philosophers rule OK) and to Matthew Kilburn.

Incidentally, Alan Whitten's story, this issue, makes reference to THE MUTANT PHASE. This is an audio story produced by a group of fans as part of a series consisting of over twenty stories. In THE MUTANT PHASE the Daleks become the victims of fiddling with their genetic structure by mutating into giant insects that are fairly mindless and indestructible.

I have experimented with splitting up the reviews a bit this issue so that some of the longer ones appear separately rather than them all being in a huge lump at the end. Let me know what you think about this arrangement.

Don't forget to keep sending articles, Louise Dennis, Somerville.

Lastly I hope you all had a Happy Christmas.

Louise Dennis
The Deadly Assassin

When I was five or six years old, 'Doctor Who' stories fell into two categories. Those which I was too scared to watch (THE SEEDS OF DOOM and some of THE BRAIN OF MORBIUS or THE HAND OF FEAR) and those which I had the confidence to actually view, even if it was from the hall stairs or doorway (THE ROBOTS OF DEATH or THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG) THE DEADLY ASSASSIN falls into the latter category, with the result that I was actually able to enjoy the story without having to wait for the novelisation! Not having seen it since its 1977 repeat (aside from a showing of part 3 at the Tyneside Cinema in 1983), I was very pleased to see that it has hardly dated, and stands up excellently technologically as well as in the expected high quality of writing.

Apparently the fan establishment hated the story at the time (it was bottom of the 1976/77 DWAS poll), largely because of its portrayal of Gallifrey as being ruled by a pompous and decrepit race of Time Lords. With hindsight, I think most would now agree that there have been far worse 'Who' stories than this. The sets were dark and echoed those for the planet in THE WAR GAMES, being dark and somehow limitless. Although more ornate, David Maloney here wishing to convey the sense of decay in Robert Holmes' script, the trial scene is closer to the 1969 model than the clichéd, conventional English model of THE TRIAL OF A TIME LORD in 1986. The establishing shot of the interrogation cell has not been bettered since. The designers of THE HAPPINESS PATROL should have watched this story as a lesson in how to convey the sense of a large city in studio confines.

In a strange way 'ASSASSIN anticipates the Graham Williams years, with its audience 'bonuses'. The President's statement about the Honours List containing "one or two names that might surprise them" has to have referred to Harold Wilson's 1976 resignation list, in which the outgoing Labour prime minister dignified various dubious industrialists and showbusiness personalities. The name and initials of the Celestial Intervention Agency, the Gallifreyan CIA, was repeated so many times in one scene, that Robert Holmes mustn't have expected the audience to get the joke first time round.

Although he features little until the final part, Peter Pratt shines beneath the excellent mask in what has to be one of the best stories to have featured the Master. He is so much in the background, however, that one wonders whether Philip Hinchcliffe had definite plans to bring him back as a semi-regular as Nathan-Turner was to do in 1981. The final scene in which the Master's TARDIS dematerialises, showing the Master's face, reminded me that before THE KEEPER OF TRAKEN, the consensus was that the Master was regenerating. Jeremy Bentham stated as much in a 1980 'Doctor Who Weekly', Jean-Marc Lofficier concluding
the same in the original programme guide. Indeed the face does
seem to change slightly before the credits zoom in - or is this
just the fading away of the grandfather clock? It's unlikely
that we'll ever know.

Of course, no 'Who story is perfect - for one thing, the Matrix
duel scenes drag on a little - but, in an excellent season, I
for one am ready with Angus Mackay's Roy Jenkinsesque Borusa to
award the team "nine out of ten".

MATTHEW KILBURN

Supremacy of the Daleks

Part 2

Back at the work party Ian, Barbara, Karen and the others waited
and worked on, "This friend of yours, the Doctor, he will be all
right won't he?" said Zillarker.
Ian cut in - "Well with the Daleks you never can tell"
"You see," said Barbara, "he has encountered the Daleks before
and has thwarted their most diabolical plans."

Inside Temporary Dalek Control a chorus of Daleks shrieked:
"EXTERMINATE THE DOCTOR! EXTERMINATE THE DOCTOR!"
"Wait!" shouted the Doctor.
"WHY SHOULD WE WAIT. YOU ARE A KNOWN SABOTEUR OF DALEK
OPERATIONS AND MUST BE EXTERMINATED," said the Grand Dalek.
The Doctor cut in - "So that's why you helped me defeat the
Vandergarites to get me to this planet and then exterminate me,
isn't it?"
The Grand Dalek shrieked, "FOR A TIME LORD YOU ARE VERY
ASTUTE, DOCTOR."
"I have to keep up with the likes of you," said the Doctor.

"Ian," said Barbara, "I'm worried about the Doctor." "Barbara, there's no need to be. The Doctor can look after
himself," said Ian.
"But what if they've killed him?" said Karen.
Ian sighed, "Now listen you two. The Doctor has met the
Daleks before on many occasions and they haven't killed him yet
have they?"
"Yes, you're right," said Barbara.

"FIRST YOU WILL HELP US BUILD THE DEATH MACHINE OR YOUR FRIENDS
WILL DIE!" threatened the Grand Dalek.
"It seems I have no choice."

The Doctor arrived back at the work party just as they were
being led to the place of rest.
"Oh Doctor, thank God you're safe," said Karen.
"Did you find out what the Daleks are up to?" asked Zillarker.
"Yes, as it happens I did," said the Doctor and he told his
friends the full extent of the Dalek plan.
"But that's monstrous," said Zillarker. "Don't they have
feelings?"
"No," said the Doctor, "I'm afraid when Davros created them he
made them devoid of such emotions."
Ian cut in after a moment's pause. "So what you're saying is
they're products of someone's warped imagination."
"Yes and now that someone is the Dalek Emperor. Well he was
last time I saw him," said the Doctor.
"And what does that mean?" asked Ian.
"It means he could have promoted himself by now."

Inside the Temporary Dalek Control the grand Dalek stood by the
communications console and said, "URGENT MESSAGE TO ALL UNITS.
THE COMPLETION OF THE DEATH MACHINE IS OF TOP PRIORITY. ORDER
THE WORK DETAIL TO WORK FASTER."
"I OBEY" said the Dalek side.

"But what can we do Doctor?" said Zillarker, "because the
Daleks are invincible."
"Listen to me, young lad," said the Doctor severely. "The
Daleks may be the supreme creatures in the Universe but they are
not invincible. I've defeated them over fourteen thousand years
and I will go on defeating them."

Inside the Temporary Dalek Control the Grand Dalek said:
"THE WORK DETAIL MUST WORK FASTER. IF THEY DISOBEY...
EXTERMINATE THEM! EXTERMINATE THEM!"

The Doctor and his friends sat thinking of how to thwart the
Daleks' evil scheme.
"Well Doctor, have you got any ideas?" asked Ian.
The Doctor looked at Ian for a moment and said, "Well, Ian -
I'm very glad you asked that."
Ian began to look hopeful and said, "Oh good! So you've got
an idea then?"
The Doctor replied:
"Well to be perfectly honest, no."
Karen cut in - "Doctor, it's not like you to admit defeat.
What about Nitro Nine? It's worked before against the Daleks."
"Well! suppose so," said the Doctor. "It's just I've never
been happy about that stuff, ever since Ace travelled with me."
Karen replied, "Well, Doctor, it's the only solution I can
think of."

At that moment two Daleks arrived and said, "TIME TO RESUME
WORK. THE MACHINE MUST BE COMPLETED BY FIFTEEN HUNDRED REELS."
Wearily the Doctor and his friends got on to their feet and
then set off for the laboratory. Suddenly Zillarker turned
to the Doctor and said, "Pssst, Doctor, couldn't we sabotage the
machine in some way. You know make it so it doesn't work?"
The Doctor turned to Zillarker and said, "That is a very good
idea, young lady. Yes, that is what we shall do."
Valarn replied, "But isn't that risky? They'll obviously want
to try it out."
"I take your point," said the Doctor, "We'll make it so it works, but only on stun."

Soon the Doctor and his friends set to work on sabotaging the machine.

Inside the temporary Dalek control the Grand Dalek said:

"FOCUS ON THE DOCTOR."

The screen zoomed in on the Doctor and the Grand Dalek observed his work and said, "LET ME HEAR WHAT HE IS SAYING."

A Dalek touched a switch and the Doctor's voice could be heard.

"Now if I put these two wires together... like so... The machine will stun its victims instead of killing them."

"BRING THE DOCTOR TO ME," said the Grand Dalek.

Soon two Daleks had escorted the Doctor to the control area.

"DOCTOR YOU HAVE BEEN PLOTTING AGAINST US, WHY?" said the Grand Dalek as the Doctor's friends entered the control area.

"Plotting against you? Now why should I do a silly thing like that?" said the Doctor.

As the Grand Dalek spoke his next words, his voice began to change, "YOU ARE PLOTTING AGAINST US DOCTOR, ADMIT IT!"

Suddenly the protective cover over the Grand Dalek's head fell back to reveal the evil twisted features of Davros.

"Well, well, well, Davros, I see your body has decayed even further," said the Doctor.

"BUT DOCTOR, AS THE GRAND DALEK I AM THE SUPREME MASTER OF THE DALEKS."

"I doubt it somehow, Davros. You'll never achieve that rank."

The Dalek Supreme swung round and said, "THE DEATH MACHINE HAS BEEN COMPLETED."

"EXCELLENT," said Davros. At that moment the Doctor and his friends threw bottles of Nitro Nine at the Daleks.

"UNDER ATTACK! UNDER ATTACK! HELP! HELP!" shrieked the Daleks.

Ian and the Doctor grabbed a Dalek and pushed it down the corridor. The Dalek hit the wall and exploded.

"exterminate!" shrieked the Supreme Dalek. Soon a bottle of Nitro Nine hit him and he exploded.

Slowly but surely Davros's body began to decay and the Doctor said, "Well Davros, how does it feel to be the first victim of the mutant phase?"

"HELP ME," pleaded Davros. "HAVE PITY."

"I do have pity for you Davros, but the condition is irreversible. Goodbye Davros," said the Doctor.

"NO!" shrieked Davros and soon he was dead. Fortunately, because he was not wholly Dalek the creature he became under the mutant phase was unable to survive though it was to prove almost invincible when mutated from true Daleks.

Zillarker turned to the Doctor and said, "Thank you Doctor."

"Oh, don't mention it," said the Doctor.

Back at the TARDIS Ian said:

"Well Where to now?"

The Doctor replied, "I haven't the faintest idea."

ALAN WHITTEN.
INFERNO

INFERNO was the only 'Doctor Who' story shown this term that I'd never seen before. Settling down to watch episode one, I felt like a child on Christmas morning about to open his presents. What would I find beneath the paper?

From the outside, the gift looked pretty tempting. Here was a promise of seven episodes chock-full of Jon Pertwee, Liz Shaw, the Brigadier and the boys from U.N.I.T. Oh, yes! And there was supposed to be lots of green slime, too.

By the end of next week's meeting, I had at last seen INFERNO. It was rather good actually. Nicholas Courtney was very good as both the Brigadier and his parallel counterpart, and the eye patch suited him down to the ground. The hairy monsters looked almost convincing (but not quite) and even the green slime didn't outstay its welcome.

The prospect of what might happen if we ever should try and penetrate the Earth's crust was slightly disturbing, but more frightening was the implication that we are on the verge of a social collapse. If the U.N.I.T. stories really are set in the late 1980's/1990's then something is about to happen that will make us all walk around with Greg Sutton haircuts! And will 1990's men really use chat up lines which are so corny that they put my grandmother's feet to shame?

Anyhow, that leaves me with just one Jon Pertwee story still to see. Any chance of COLONY IN SPACE showing next term?

Ha Ha! Only joking! Honest.

ROBERT MOSS

ROBOTS ROBOTS EVERYWHERE!

Ah yes, ROBOTS OF DEATH, vintage Baker, a heady brew indeed. This scared me when I was about six, and it didn't disappoint the second time around, and yet it could have been even better. The robots themselves are excellent: the calm, collected voices and the faces reminiscent of masks from a Greek theatre make you feel vaguely uncomfortable, but the shots where we see through the robots' eyes, with the human victims appearing as a sort of thermal infrared image are downright disturbing. The scene when the Voc attacks Toos realises the full, chilling potential of this effect. Despite the decidedly un-miner like costumes, the crew portray the paranoia and tension inherent on an isolated 2 year mission well, and my only criticism is that more should have been made of this. How much more effective the full crew meeting after the discovery of the first killings and the discovery of the Doctor would have been if we didn't know that a robot had dunnit! the crew were picked off a little too quickly for my liking. Oh, and that sabotage of the Sandmininer's safety systems - am I being stupid or doesn't it fit in? Who did it
and why? Taran Capel to create a diversion so he could operate on the robots undisturbed? Paul because he was mad from robophobia? Answers on a postcard to... Never mind. The Doctor solves all of course, but the real interest in this story lies with the crew and the implications of a robot revolt. It's still a claustrophobic classic after all these years, despite the felling of slight dissatisfaction that more should have been made of an excellent storyline.

TIM PROCTOR

GOING UNDERGROUND

"It's the best Davison story," Adam said earnestly as I settled on the floor to see FRONTIOS for the first time, and after the first episode I had a feeling he might be right. The sense of mystery and suspense was genuine as the colonists struggled to comprehend their situation. Plantagenet and Brazen narrowly avoided being stock cliched characters, and performed well as hard pressed young idealists and gritty security officer. Davison too shone, emphasising the two sides of the Doctor. The strong, determined humanitarian fighting to help the casualties was shattered in an instant by the unthinkable happening - the destruction of the TARDIS, and once more the Doctor was vulnerable, almost desperate. Episode 2 kept up the standard. The discovery of the tunnels and the Doctor's frantic search for a solution seemed to be futile as law and order broke down following Plantagenet's disappearance. Then the Tractators appeared. "No," my senses screamed, "please don't let them look that silly!" Granted poorly costumed beasties don't necessarily ruin a story (to wit CLAWS OF AXOS, HORROR OF FANG ROCK), but sadly the plot, like the Tractators' victims, got sucked underground, and we descended into "Doctor Who Fights the Evil Weevils." Lots of running down tunnels and some very dodgy script features destroyed the superb opening. Turlough's ancestral memories were far too over the top - "the Tractators... the appetite under the ground!", we were never told just what Rove's involvement with the Evil Weevils had been, Cockerell's elevation to rebel leader was completely unconvincing and why oh why did the Gravis have to trot out all the "we shall rule the universe" twaddle. How much more interesting it would have been if the Tractators had been portrayed sympathetically, a native species defending their home against human trespassers, how much more effective if we had seen what the Tractators did to humans - a touch more horror would have negated the poor design. Instead we had the good old "race against time to prevent the unspeakable nasty weevil's doing something unspeakably nasty." Thankfully the acting remained strong throughout, but the suspense and sense of doom of the first two parts was never recaptured. A sad waste of an excellent plot idea; Christopher Bidmead almost had a classic on his hands. Maybe the Tractators sucked his brain out halfway through.

TIM PROCTOR
Competition Results

First of all I would like to thank all three of the entrants. Unfortunately Misters Bryden and Dumont's entries had to be disqualified since they were committee members.

Congratulations are therefore due to Paul Groves of Jesus College for submitting the only valid entry (despite having a very grovely tie breaker).

The Answers

The Crossword


Wordsearch

Crusaders - A Billy Hartnell story.
Cybermen - Tall silver people.
Exxilon - Planet in DEATH TO THE DALEKS.
Karn - Planet in BRAIN OF MORBIUS.
Nyder - Nasty friend of Davros.
Ranquin - leader of the swampies in POWER OF KROLL.
Roboman - what people were turned into in DALEK INVASION OF EARTH.
Sontaran - Alien which looks like a potato.
Stor - A potato.
Tara - Planet in ANDROIDS OF TARA.
Tesh - Tribe from Leela's planet.
Travers - Professor in Yeti stories.
Visian - Alien in DALEK MASTER PLAN.
Yartek - Leader of the Voords.
Yeti - Large balls of wool (and cute with it! - Ed.)

Kiv (MINDWARP), Lon (SNAKEDANCE) and Ray (DELTA AND THE BANNERMAN) were also allowed (but were not intended).

The following were not allowed (thanks to Paul Dumont)

Eat - what Adric does in BLACK ORCHID, FOUR TO DOOMSDAY, KEEPER OF TRAKEN, STATE OF DECAY, ..... Hi - said by Peri in REVELATION OF THE DALEKS. Horn - on the Nimon's head in HORNS OF NIMON. Hum - what the Doctor says to Ian in THE CHASE. Lake - in BATTLEFIELD. Man - killed in RESURRECTION OF THE DALEKS. Mind - in the Keller Machine in the MIND OF EVIL. Rat - in the sewers in THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG. Red - Planet colour in PYRAMIDS OF MARS. Sad - how the Doctor felt at the end of THE GREEN DEATH. Sir - how Gilmore is addressed in REMEMBRANCE OF THE DALEKS. Tar - is Ben Jackson in THE WAR MACHINES. TDK - quality of the tape the technician listens to in LOGOPOLIS. Tea - thrown around in REMEMBRANCE OF THE DALEKS. Tout - quality of the script of TIMECLASH. Ur - said the Dalek in THE CHASE. XI - plays cricket in BLACK ORCHID.

There may well be others.....

ROGER SHAW
Puzzles

Wordsearch

GALLIFREYALICS
ALPENTASETAYS
ZLEESONOCBBJEK
TOZLRMJHELENA
ARKAUTONRWARRL
KKCTRGWODEAETH
TENOMINERUTAND
RIBOSAUGENESIS
TOMSEEOSAKANAZ
TBKEYKPRAWDNIM

PAUL GROVES

Logic Problem

A recent convention promised the presence of no less than five Doctors in a panel together. When the time came however there were five empty chairs on the stage numbered one to five. The organisers were forced to relay a series of dubious excuses. Can you work out which Doctor was supposed to sit where, what prevented him attending, and where he was instead.

\[\text{Diagram of chairs 1 to 5}\]

Clues

1. Colin Baker’s excuse was that he was fighting Daleks, but not on Vortis. The Doctor who was on Vortis was not scheduled to sit at seat no. 4.

2. The Doctor that Peter Davison would have sat immediately to the right of was on holiday. Sylvester McCoy was not due to sit at seat no. 5.

3. Jon Pertwee was on Earth. He would have sat immediately to the left of another Doctor, had that Doctor not been ill.

4. The Doctor expected to sit at seat no. 2 was in fact on Peladon, but his TARDIS was in full working order. The Doctor on holiday was not supposed to have sat at no. 4.
5. One Doctor was on trial on Gallifrey. Tom Baker should have sat at seat no. 3, but his absence was not due to illness or holidays.

To transfer the information from the clues to the grid place a tick in any square where you have a positive piece of information. For instance if you know Tom Baker would have sat at seat no. 2 place a tick in the row marked Tom Baker and the column marked no. 2. If you have a negative piece of information use a cross. In the previous example you want to place crosses in all the squares in no. 2's column that represent the other Doctors and all the squares in Tom Baker's row that represent the other seats.

DON'T FORGET: Transfer information. If you know that the Doctor supposed to sit at seat no. 2 was not on Peladon, then clearly Tom Baker was not on Peladon.

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MARK DUNN
If one were to be, perish the thought, impressed under threats of exotic violence and strange tortures by a desperate magazine editor to write a review of DESTINY OF THE DALEKS, there are certain descriptive words that would somehow spring to mind: such as "bad", "clipped" and of course, "spam". As it is, however, I am undertaking this task of my own free will and therefore will hopefully offer a new and refreshing view of this particularly unexciting encounter with the Daleks.

I should perhaps point out at this point that I am a neophyte: which as well as being perfectly legal also means I know less than a tinker's cuss about who wrote, directed, produced and generally twiddled the knobs in whichever series you happen to be arguing about. So, my apologies to those who deserve them, as I attempt to explain the, let's be charitable, "lack of dramatic tension" in DESTINY OF THE DALEKS.

It would seem that the aim of this story is to re-introduce Davros to a new generation of kiddies, thus allowing him to become once more a threat to all right-thinking sentient races. The entire business with those tiresome Movellan robots is extraneous to the development of the story: a useful plot device to give a nice sense of urgency and the all important surprise at the crucial moment. Unfortunately it's about as lame as a one footed hedgehog. Nevertheless, while watching DESTINY OF THE DALEKS I became uncomfortably aware that something was wrong: what I was watching on the screen didn't seem to fit the dialogue. There seemed to be an extraordinary amount of coming and going to no apparent purpose, randomly interspersed with pieces of interesting and often quite clever conversation. Apart from the sudden appearance of, in those immortal words, "some kind of fighting force" the significant cast is quite a small one, meaning that the relevant conversations tended to take place between the same people; we can think of the Dalek's strident refrain of "Do not deviate!" as being both a recurring theme and a cautionary warning to us all.

Armed with these somewhat spartan observations I shall now attempt to draw a conclusion. It would seem then, to my mind, that these episodes were not badly written but have merely been inadequately transferred onto the screen. I'm sure on paper this script looked like an excellent idea, which indeed it is. suspend your critical faculties a moment and consider how it would sound on the radio. There the dramatic emphasis would rest on the dialogue and not on Auntie Beeb's special effects which could be replaced by some rather more colourful narrative; after all those Movellan robots did look very silly not to mention the exploding Daleks - I do seem to recall that each of those canisters were supposed to have the power of half a megaton of TNT.

So, let us consider whether it was conceived as a piece of fiction rather than as a screenplay. It certainly bears all the hallmarks of a badly executed adaption of a SF novel. The BBC budget or the talents of the production crew do not seem to have
been adequate to the task. Thus a good idea goes "cold turkey" on the screen. Still it's better than 'Sapphire and Steel'.

MICHAEL HAGEN

BLAKE'S SEVEN - 'DESTINY' (a satire on DESTINY OF THE DALEKS)

This is quite possibly the last episode of B7 ever. It was broadcast as a four part one off between the 2nd and 3rd seasons showing the fate of Blake and Jenna after they left the Liberator. The story starts with Blake and Jenna arriving in the usual quarry in one of the Liberator's escape capsules. Jenna is played by a completely different actress and Blake, dressed in outrageous fashions is still suffering from the bump on the head he received in STAR ONE. Of course they're not alone and soon we see the usual spacecraft landing and the rebel slaves. This time the spacecraft does not contain Servalan but a race of warriors. All goes fine until the stupid giant pepper pot things arrive. These are the most ridiculous creatures B7 has ever seen when all you need to defeat them is a flight of stairs. To top it all they consider themselves to be superior beings when they are so stupid that they have to chant what they're doing in case they forget - "Seek, locate, destroy!" etc. The story improves though when they bring on the classic B7 mutant - half man, half giant pepperpot. The plotline then consists of Blake making complete fools out of the pepperpots and siding with the people from the spacecraft (who turn out to be robots, yawn). The final straw is the ending. Blake kills both the robots and the pepperpots and everyone lives happily ever after. This is sick, any decent self-respecting B7 story would have ended with Blake and Jenna escaping by the skin of their teeth, whilst the whole planet exploded afterwards. In conclusion! I think this forgotten B7 story should stay forgotten.

PAUL GROVES

"DO NOT DEVIATE"

The turn-out for DESTINY OF THE DALEKS proves that pepperpot popularity still peaks (sorry Paul Groves but it's true!), but of all the mobile trashcan epics that have graced Who over the years, this one wins the title of SELF-PARODY OF THE DALEKS most easily. Terry Nation must have had a good laugh when writing it - all those wonderful Dalek choruses: "Seek, locate, eliminate!", "Do not deviate", "you are our prisoner, do not move!", and so on. The Doctor proves that Daleks can't climb, pretty poor for the superior race, but the equally superior (?) Movellans aren't much better, conveniently wearing those oh-so-vulnerable control units on their chests - shades of the Yeti, methinks. DESTINY OF THE DALEKS is a fun romp, Baker is as good as ever, Michael Goodison's Davros rants to perfection and Lalla Ward's Romana skips along through it all. The grimmer side is there, mainly in the scenes with the work party, but never too obvious. You have to have taken a Gallifreyan GCSE for real heart-stopping.

TIM PROCTER
Doctor Who in the TLS

Which Doctor Who book was described by the Times Literary Supplement as "distinctly kinky"? Which book did the TLS review twice? And which one is "undistinguished", "rather silly", and "just a little disturbing"?

The answer to all three is the same - David Whitaker's "The Crusaders", the first Doctor Who book ever reviewed by the TLS. All the 'Who books that were reviewed appeared in seasonal "Children's Books" supplements in the TLS. The TLS for Thursday, May 19th 1966 features Hergé's "The Black Island" - "one can envisage Tin-Tin winning the Duke of Edinburgh's Award" - Tove Jansson's "Moominpapa at Sea" and Patrick Moore's non-fiction "Legends of the Stars" ("curiously lacking in zest"). "The Crusaders" is reviewed as the second of three SF books, under the heading "Cowboys in Space". The first, Andre Norton's "The Beast Master", is well received. "The Crusaders", however, is not even proper SF: "The science fiction element... is irrelevant. An undistinguished historical story is neither helped nor hindered by the intrusion of the ubiquitous Doctor and his young companions." This is the kindest thing the anonymous reviewer has to say about the novel. He continues: "What makes a rather silly book just a little disturbing is its tone. Barbara is captured by a kinky Emir, who rewards her with a ceremonial flogging, from which she is rescued later than convention in such stories demands. This introduction of a 007 sexual - sadistic element into children's literature, however unimportant and lacking in quality it may be, is disquieting."

The last book to be scrutinised is "The Gravity Stealers", a collaboration between eleven young authors coordinated by Australia's ABC - "...these young people have not been wasting their time watching 'Doctor Who'", are the last words of the article.

More 'Who novels were covered in 1974 than in any other year in the history of the TLS; a magnificent total of five. Admittedly, one of them was "The Crusaders" again - "The history is strongly researched, the sadism distinctly kinky." This appeared on December 6th, and was credited to Marcus Crouch. However, the first two books of 1974 were "The Auton Invasion" by Terrance Dicks, and "The Cave-Monsters" by Malcolm Hulke, anonymously reviewed in the July 5th issue. Both cost £1.75, and a well-worn criticism is levelled against Uncle Terrance (and rather surprisingly, Mr Hulke): "no time is wasted on such irrelevancies as characterisation, description or realistic dialogue." In fact "The Cave-Monsters" is rather better than this - we are treated to the histories of Okdal, K'to and Barker, and there is a nice cutaway picture of the reactor beneath Dartmoor. "Nor is there any attempt to explain how any of the electronic hardware actually works." Hardly fair - all I know about induction I learnt from a foot note in "The Cave Monsters". The short (120 words) review's final criticism is accurate: "The illustrations are dreadful". And he hadn't even
seen that picture in "The Daemons" of a wide eyed, grinning Jo, spaced out on magic mushrooms (a year before she visits the Nuthatch) being menaced by... Honeysuckle tendrils.

The Hulke and Dicks books were in illustrious company - also reviewed, and still in print, were Joan Aiken's "Midnight is a Place", Susan Cooper's "Greenwitch" and Goscinny and Uderzo's "Asterix and the Goths". In December "The Abominable Snowmen", "The Zarbi" and "The Crusaders" share the pages with "The Blue Peter 11th Book", "The Bagpuss Annual" and "Paddington on Top". Marcus Crouch begins:

"In expert adapting hands good written fiction can make satisfactory TV material. The converse is seldom true. By the time it has undergone translation the excellent ham of Doctor Who is more than a little off..." This is because "...the qualities of the television series are essentially visual and aural: the dialogue is unmemorable." This is half true - no amount of prose can ever achieve the same effect as seeing a Zygon for the first time; but "Doctor Who"'s best dialogue is particularly memorable, even if it is only "Elrad must live".

Of "The Abominable Snowmen", Crouch comments: "The narrative creaks as jerkily as do the Yeti robots... it is no less exciting than many other formula stories, but it is far better seen than read." "The Zarbi" is described in one sentence, and no comment is passed. "The Crusaders" is rather more sophisticated", and after commenting on the kinkiness, Crouch concludes: "Children who come back to these books to renew past pleasures may find that the thrills have lost their urgency". In my own case, there were no past pleasures to renew, for my Doctor Who watching dated from the December 1974 repeat of "Planet of the Spiders". I remember enjoying the Eastern exoticism of "Snowmen", and being slightly bored by the two Hartnell tales.

The TLS maintained its tradition of reviewing at least one 'Who novel every decade, and Doctor Who nearly made the front cover for the first time. The cover for November 20th 1981 boasts "Juvenile Science Fiction", and inside is Sarah Hayes' lengthy review essay, "The mindstretching and the macabre". Among the books considered are the novelisation of "Time Bandits", Hugh Walters' latest, "The Dark Triangle" ("so undistinguished a writer... a reminder that enduring forms of literature attract practitioners of all levels of appeal and ability"), Richard Davies' new anthology "Space 7" and Douglas Hill's "Galactic Warlord" quartet, "adventure fiction of a very high order... the best thing since Dan Dare and Mekon". The 'Who book reviewed, uniquely, was being shown on TV at the same time.

Here is Sarah Hayes' verdict:

"...The only series more popular with young readers than Douglas Hill's is Doctor Who - a positive industry with a book appearing every month to keep up with the 116 separate stories that have been televised in the past eighteen years. The very first story - "Doctor Who and An Unearthly Child" has just been published for the very first time, and reveals a much sharper and more equivocal Doctor than the genial eccentric of later years.

"According to one librarian, Doctor Who is not considered by
children to be proper science fiction at all — although he time travels, visits other planets, meets intelligent machines and BEMs (often gigantic ones) and does all the usual SF things. He and his monsters have somehow become a cosy, familiar and inescapable part of our cultural landscape. Even the evil Daleks, intelligent beings embodied in machinery, have a chubby conical shape, a silly walk (or glide) and a splendidly predictable method of extermination." Sarah Hayes concludes with one of the most accurate comments on the series ever made: "It is the thrill of a known fear that doesn't linger in the mind that enlivens the best Doctor Who, on and off the screen." And so concludes, to date, the good Doctor's life in the TLS.

References:
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The Dominators

It has often been said that it is a great loss that the BBC have such a small quantity of Patrick Troughton material available for video release. Otherwise, I regret to report that it would have been a long time before THE DOMINATORS came up for consideration.

The basic premise of the story is a good one. Unfortunately this tale of a pacifist people forced to reassess their approach to the virtue of peace is not only told in such a way as to lack any sense of urgency in the narrative, it had also been done before in Terry Nation's THE DALEKS. Thanks to the fact that it was the second story, and that David Whitaker and not Derrick Sherwin was script editor, the Thals came across so much better than the bland, uninteresting Dulcians.

The character of Cully is perhaps the most successful of the Dulcians, not so much because of the acting of Arthur Cox, or that he has any great part to play in the story, but simply that he is not a typical 'Doctor Who' hero. He is by no means youthful, and is not an idealist, unlike the blinkered and naive members of his father's council. The impression given is of a man in early middle age kept out of office by the longevity of his parent. Such figures are common among tycoons and aristocrats, and do indeed spend their time, in general, in the sort of dubious enterprises in which Cully and his associates were involved when they came across the Dominators. Perhaps the writers were making a point about compulsory retirement?

The Dominators fare somewhat better than the Dulcians, although Rago and Teel are very much the ruthless servant of a bureaucratic war machine and the not yet corrupted, but confused, young officer attempting to find out where his
loyalties lie. Although this is something of a stereotyped image, more development would have been welcome. Perhaps it may have been seen in the abortive sixth episode.

It is difficult to accept that the BBC believed that the Quarks were to be the third great 'Doctor Who' monster, rivals to the Daleks and the Cybermen. Their execution is from the start calculated to provoke laughter rather than terror. The 'extermination' effect used in episode one is very effective for 1968, consisting of a still photograph of the victim blistering and then bursting into flames, but it is regretfully only used once. As the stumpy automatons are so easily eliminated by Cully and Jamie, they lose what credibility they have, and are rightfully consigned to the dustbin of television history.

It is a pity that this story was made in the sixth season rather than either of the seasons adjacent to it. As is well known, money was short when Peter Bryant's budget was allocated for 1968/69, leading to a series of drastic cuts including the number of stories.

This brings me neatly to the distinguishing mark of this story: that it is the only 'Doctor Who' story in the history of the programme to lose an episode in production rather than in the cutting room as PLANET OF THE GIANTS did. Various reasons have been given for this unprecedented, and so far as I know unrepeated action, including that of budgetary restrictions as mentioned above, but I don't believe them. After experiencing episode four, it is sorely tempting to believe that Morris Barry (the director) went to Peter Bryant and the two of them agreed the story should give up the ghost. Thus the convenient discovery of the impenetrably shielded bomb (contradicting the weakness of the Quarks) and the rapid exit from Dulcis. We do have something to be thankful for, though - as in so many Troughton stories, we are spared one of those sickly farewell scenes.

Mervyn Haisman and Henry Lincoln asked for their names to be taken off this story due to the amount of rewriting that Derrick Sherwin had indulged in before production. There are glimmers of Haisman and Lincoln's erudition in the transmitted story - such as the Latinate names given to the Dulcians, 'dulcis' itself meaning 'sweet', Semex being the Latin term for old man, and Bovem being the accusative case of the word for cow, all indicating the indolence of which Ancient Rome itself is said to have died. One wonders whether the fact that the script lacks the sparkle of THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN and THE WEB OF FEAR is due to the unfamiliarity of the writers with outer space, or with the fact that the script editing of Bryant has given way to that of Sherwin and the incoming Terrance Dicks. Certainly by all accounts Sherwin was not exactly thrilled with the 'Who' job, and anxious to leave after his arrival. This could be one of the reasons as to why the story is so uncomfortable.

MATTHEW KILBURN
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