Edited by: Louise Dennis

Contributing Writers: Paul Dumont, Paul Groves, Mark Duny, Matthew Kilburn, Ben Murphy, Tim Procter, Alan Whittern.

Logos: Louise Dennis, Ben Murphy.

Front Cover: Matthew Kilburn.

Artwork: Paul Groves.

Produced for the Doctor Who Society:

Senior Member: Dr. Martin Grossel (Christ Church)
President: Tim Procter (Corpus Christi)
Vice-President: Matthew Kilburn (St. John's)
Secretary: James Brough (St. Edmund Hall)
Treasurer: Claire Thompson (St. Hugh's)
Membership Secretary: Alice Drewry (Somerville)
Publicity Officers: Julian Mander (St. Peter's)
Mark Hanlan (St. Pater's)
Graphics Designer: Paul Groves (Jesus)
Jelly Babies Rep: Andrew Calvert (Keble)
Starfleet Liaison: Will Fitchew (St. Anne's)
TV Transport Bod: Matthew Dovey (Corpus Christi)
Ex-President: Adam Stephens (Christ Church)
Ex-Secretary: Paul Dumont (Magdalen)

CONTENTS

WHY ARE WE HERE? by Ben Murphy..................................................3
THE TIME TUNNEL: CLASSIC SCI-FI OR A HOLLOW TUBE? by Tim Procter.............................................4
PAUL GROVES' PAGES.................................................................7
YOU, WHO AND NINETY-TWO by Matthew Kilburn......................9
EMPIRE OF DEATH by Alan Whittern.............................................11
WHOOPS APOCALYPSE by Paul Dumont........................................12
REVELATION, BY PAUL CORNELL by Mark Duny..............................13
WHY IN THE UNIVERSE ARE WE DOING THIS? by Matthew Kilburn....15
EDITORIAL

'The time has come,' the Walrus said,  
'To talk of many things:  
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—  
Of cabbages—and kings—  
And why the sea is boiling hot—  
And whether pigs have wings.'

LEWIS CARROLL

Heigh ho, I appear to be in a literary frame of mind for which I shall apologise now rather than later.

Most of you will know that this is my very last issue of 'The Tides of Time' from now on it will be jointly edited by Mark Hanlan and Julian Mander from St. Peter's, for the record their home addresses are:

Mark Hanlan
7 Carnoustie Grove,
Clavering Park,
Harlepool,
Cleveland.
TS27 3PY

Julian Mander
7 Ascot Road,
Moseley,
Birmingham,
West Midlands.
B13 9EN

So in future you can all send your contributions to them.

Those of you who hoped that the PAUL GROVES saga of last issue had died a natural death (of Oxygen Starvation or something equally unpleasant) will be distressed to discover that it is still alive and kicking. The latest epic by him written under the pseudonym of Ian Middletoe ran to three sides of A4 and was a review of the review he wrote (as Gabriel Finch) of the cartoon he drew (for once under his own name). It opened with the words "Although I, personally, am not in favour of Tides of Time disappearing up its own rectum with self referential articles written under the pseudonym of ex-committee members..." as it happens, neither am I, so once again I am going to viciously and maliciously suppress one of Paul Groves' articles in the vain hope, perhaps, that the whole business can be cudgelled to death if it won't do the decent thing and lie down and die of it's own accord. If you object to my attitude, I suggest you talk to Mark and Julian and then they can decide (i.e. I am going to pass the buck).

A slimmer issue, this time, than last, containing no video reviews whatsoever, but perhaps this is just as well as much of the vacation has been taken up with trying to produce a Yearbook for another society I am a member of, and Tides of Time has taken something of a back seat. That said, I am very pleased with what I have received and amused to notice that two of my contributors have been simultaneously seized by the desire to justify the existence of the Doc Soc. AAAh, but do you agree with them? What is perhaps more to the point I have received lots of artwork (comparatively speaking) mainly consisting of two front covers (I hope you like them) so once again I have been saved from taking up the pen myself.

A brief note to say that my Latin translation of last issue is incorrect. Malum means evil as well as apple, but there you go, no one is perfect, and even the Doctor is occasionally wrong about some things.

Anyway, here's wishing Julian and Mark all the best.

[Signature]
WHY ARE WE HERE?

There comes a time when one has to confront the ultimate question of the universe; to unravel the deep mysteries of creation; to pose the question described by "The Prisoner" as unanswerable by man or machine. WHY? Why are people born? Why do they die? Why do they like to spend so much of the intervening time wearing digital watches? Fortunately, this is not that time - none of these issues will be touched upon here (except, perhaps, digital watches). The question I wish to answer is much more down to Earth; why do we meet every week in an oak-panelled lecture room in a sixteenth century quadrangle and watch videos of programmes such as "Blake's Seven", "The Prisoner" and, in particular, "Doctor Who"?

One common strand which unites these programmes is freedom; the central character or characters refuse to be dominated by outside forces, whether represented by the Federation, the Village, or the High Council of Gallifrey. But why should we find this so attractive? Complain as we may about archaic regulations, life as an Oxford student allows a great deal of scope for freedom, and we can pack it in whenever we choose anyway. There is however a way in which every member of the human race is trapped; we are all prisoners of time. In the other three dimensions, we may move as we please, but in time we travel relentlessly in one direction, and towards one certain goal. True, we may in a sense travel to the future according to Einstein, and we may bring that final goal closer towards us, if we so desire, but though we may pretend to trap time in our digital watches, we know that we can never really turn the clock back. Previous eras, both of human history and of our own lives remain permanently inaccessible; we cannot hope to see any longer the Oxford of Arnold's scholar-gipsy, or to see familiar sights with the eyes of childhood.

This gives "Doctor Who" a double attraction. On the one hand, the Doctor himself breaks the bounds of time in his TARDIS; he is able to travel from the neolithic age to the distant future, and to meet both his past and future self in the process. On the other hand, by watching him, we ourselves return, in a sense, to our own childhood. Speaking for myself, much of my childhood was spent without a television, and I would feel an outsider in the play-ground when other children would attempt to explain the plot of "Sapphire and Steel" to me, and argue incessantly over the opening sequence, and whose voice it was (most opted for God, I think). The Doctor Who Society provides a chance to recreate lost moments of childhood, and thus to transcend the barrier of time. It is also most appropriate that this should take place in Tom Quad, where, on a starry night when the tourists have all gone, one can still imagine that one is back in the sixteenth century, and that St. Cardinal Wolsey is going to finish rebuilding the cloisters, so that it does not always look so stupid. Thus Lecture Room 2 becomes for us a TARDIS, travelling through time and made bigger on the inside not by advanced technology, but by the power of imagination.

On the other hand, maybe we just like a good adventure story...

BEN MURPHY
A great departure here for Tides of Time, an article that is not about Doctor Who, however the President himself, he who can do no wrong, submitted it and naturally we comply.

TIME TUNNEL: Classic Sci-Fi or a Hollow Tube?

One warm June afternoon, the whole committee was packed into Matthew Kilburn's St. John's broom closet, feverishly wrangling with the thorny problem of what to show next term. The good Doctor's schedule had been dealt with; that left the other sci-fi. After the usual chorus of "more Blake's 7" and Claire Thompson championing 'The Prisoner', I innocently suggested an episode of 'The Time Tunnel', being reshown on Channel 4. Easily videable, ideal length of around 50 minutes, billed in the Radio Times as "Classic late '60s sci-fi." What could be better? I might as well have suggested we show 'The Price is Right.' Reactions to 'The Time Tunnel' ranges from "hardly classic" (Matthew Kilburn) through "entertainingly crap" (Paul Groves) to "Ooh it's awfful" from Adam Stephens in best 'Carry On Matron' voice! Does it really deserve such damning criticism? The Doc Soc Committee does, after all, tend to judge all against the best of the Doctor, a slightly unfair yardstick. Does 'The Time Tunnel' deserve more praise than it gets? Or to put things in Stepheiansian terms, is it actually any good?

It's initial credentials are not good. A late '60s Hollywood product intended for mass US viewing is not usually a recommendation, of TV or of movies, and TTT is further condemned by the fact that it is a creation of that master of sci-fi kitsch, Irwin Allen. For those unfamiliar with Mr. Allen's earlier works, one episode of 'Lost in Space' with Robbie the Robot should have you screaming. However Allen was not responsible for the scripts of TTT - he was producer. A different writer was used for each story, which meant that no storyline lasted for more than one episode, and that the quality of the plot varied greatly. Yet the first episode sets up a basic plot idea which is intriguing and entertaining. The US government is experimenting on a method of time travel - a tunnel through time that can be fixed on any point in history, or in the future. However, a senator arrives with the news that, due to defence cuts, the project is to be abandoned as so far it has not worked. Angered by this, one of the scientists, Tony Newman, goes into the tunnel himself and arrives on the Titanic. The project leaders, Dr. Ray Swain and General Kirk, send his colleague Doug Phillips back to help him. Yet the tunnel is by no means perfect, and the scientists find that they cannot retrieve the duo, only shift them out of danger to new points in time. Their contact with the pair also frequently breaks down, and once or twice the wrong person is brought back to the 20th century. So the time travellers are deposited unceremoniously into all sorts of famous historical situations; the US War of Independence, the French Revolution, Krakatoa, while the others struggle to bring them back to the 20th century.
Apart from the strong opening, TTT does have some ongoing qualities in its favour. Obviously it has an "American" look to it, which may endear it more to Star Trek fans than to admirers of the very British Doctor. Many of the episodes are on an epic scale with grand battle scenes and lavish sets, for example the depiction of the Trojan War in 'Revenge of the Gods' or the battle of New Orleans in 'The Lost Patrol.' It also has moments of occasional brilliance. Phillips' argument with a 19th century scientist as Halley's comet eclipses the sun is an encounter worthy of Doctor Who. At the end of the same episode ('End of the World') the pair are separated in time, and Tony arrives at the project a few years before he joined, meeting his friends who don't know him and arrest him as an intruder. While Tony goes through this mental hell (James Darren's best acting so far), the team back in the 20th century struggle to shift him as quickly as possible. My favourite moment so far, and the only moment of true horror, came in 'Revenge of the Gods', when a soldier was sent through the tunnel to help Doug, but returned aged by decades. The moment was lost though when the tunnel was used to reverse the process.

In terms of full episodes, the most pleasing have been those with a sci-fi theme, possibly because they don't rely on creating existing historical situations. 'Rendezvous with Yesterday' (the excellent first episode), 'One Way to Mars' which sees the pair on a mission to Mars which has been infiltrated by foreign agents, while 'Secret Weapon' has Doug and Tony posing as defectors and being used in tests on the Soviet tunnel, 12 years before the American version. What we have not seen yet is the distant future.

Sadly, though, one gets an impression of missed opportunities. The tunnel sets up some superb temporal paradoxes, only to waste the chance of some interesting theories. In 'One Way to the Moon' an undercover agent sees his future, trying to sabotage a space mission on which Dog and Tony have materialised. Surely if he had seen the events before they happened, would he not try to change them when they did happen, thus altering the future? In 'End of the World', we are shown the hysteria that occurred when Halley's comet came closest to the Earth. The fact that it missed is explained as being due to an unseen object in space. How ironic if the appearance of the tunnel itself had diverted the comet. Less forgivable is the almost complete ignoring of the idea of changing history, which does crop up in Doctor Who from time to time, for example 'The Time Meddler' or 'Genesis of the Daleks.' Tony and Doug never discuss it - in 'The Lost Patrol' they try to avert the massacre of British troops at the battle of New Orleans in the War of Independence, but the fact that they are trying to change their country's history doesn't seem to occur to them. They attempt to prevent the Battle of the Little Bighorn, General Custer's last stand against the Plains Indians, again with no thought of the consequences. In 'Reign of Terror', General Kirk glibly dismisses the whole idea - "they can't change history." Yet
they sure have been trying. And perhaps they have. In his short story 'Don't step off the Path', Ray Bradbury expounds a "ripple theory" of past events - seemingly minor events set up ripples of effects that get bigger and more important. Thus when a group of future hunters travel back in time to hunt dinosaurs and accidentally crush a butterfly, they return to their own time to find the alphabet radically altered. What sort of ripples might Tony and Doug have set up by chance meetings with important figures? Sadly TTT steers well clear of such challenging ideas. "You fool, you idiot, you... scientist!" screams a Soviet Soldier in 'Secret Weapon' (remember that one when a physicist spills your pint), and it seems a fitting insult, for no-one seems to consider the historical consequences of what they are doing.

If it was just a case of a good idea with unfulfilled potential, then I would still feel moved to champion TTT. However, the programme is fatally flawed. That the science involved is riper than physics O-Level I can live with, but as they travel through time, why do Doug and Tony always regain the clothes they set out in, in pristine condition? Even when we have seen them changing? At the end of 'The Lost Patrol' we see their old clothes materialise on them! "They must be getting ready to switch us again," muses Doug. The language problem is ignored too, as they materialise in France, Afghanistan and Russia yet still converse with all and sundry. A throwaway explanation would have done - they had done language courses to go to international science fairs, anything. This may seem like nitpicking, but when whole episodes are flawed then the minor points can be the saving grace. And some of the episodes are appalling. Historical cliches are piled on - General Custer was a glory-seeking fool ('Massacre'), we see fanatical Soviet military men ('Secret Weapon') and the presentation of Paris in the grip of the revolution in 'Reign of Terror', complete with abominable mock accents is truly bad TV. The plots also produce groans - most of the historical scenarios involve plots of convoluted running backwards and forwards through the scenery, with Doug or Tony getting captured by some hostile or other. 'Reign of Terror' was by far the worst, a dire farce of running from unbelievable revolutionaries, trying to help Marie Antoinette and save the Dauphin and get out of Paris, while General Kirk scoops up a French general in the tunnel because they resemble each other... Sorry but 'twas not good.

Well, it would seem that I've joined the rest of the committee in having a very low opinion of TTT. I still feel that the initial idea of parallel stories of people adrift in time and those struggling to retrieve them is a good one, and, to be fair, it can be quite entertaining as knock-about action. Unfortunately it succumbed to big Hollywood budgets, grandiose plots and an over-emphasis on action, while the lack of a single script writer meant that all continuity was lost. A shame, as after that first episode it really did have potential. But, as one of the Star Trek soc Committee said, "it's something else to show, isn't it?" TIM PROCTER
How many Doc Soc Committee members does it take to change a light bulb.
6 - one to remove the old bulb and five to argue about whose turn it is to carry the replacement.

How many Dr Who fans does it take to change a light bulb?
10 - one to replace the bulb and 9 to write reviews about it.
ACROSS
1. After Terminus (13)
6. Hand (5)
7. Usuria's Number One Export (3)
8. You will Obey Me (7)
11. Stepdaughter of Kassia (13)
13. Excellent (8)
16. On Loan from the Daleks (5)
19. Affirmative (2)
20. An Experimentalist (5)
21. Numismatic (4)
23. Chimeron Queen (5)
25. Teacher (3)
27. Martian Delegate (5)
28. In the Savages and something else (4)
29. During the second Ice Age (2)
30. All in the Mind (10)
31. A life on the Ocean Waves (3)
32. Must Live (6)
33. Not a Tesh (5)

DOWN
1. Selg Heil (6)
2. An Honourary Member (6)
3. In Four Different Story titles (4)
4. The Inflatable Enemy (4)
5. Got Promoted (6)
9. Tekker (6)
10. Assistant of 27 across (5)
12. Solonian (2)
13. Gough (9)
14. There were two of them (5)
15. Married 33 across (6)
17. Bow and Arrow (7)
18. Bambera (11)
20. Prison Planet (5)
22. Green and Greedy (3)
24. Golden Substance (7)
26. Lord (5)
30. Of Rassilon (3)

How many female companions does it take to change a light bulb?
4 - 1 to change the bulb and 3 to scream about the dark.

How many members of the High Council of Gallifrey does it take to change a light bulb?
7 - 1 to change the bulb and 6 to organise the ceremony.

How many Elemental Time Detectives does it take to change a light bulb?
2 - and it takes them six bloody episodes to do it.

How many GHOST LIGHT characters does it take to change a light bulb?
Squawk Bibble.

How many BBC executives does it take to change a light bulb?
None - They just spread rumours that an Independent producer may change it towards the end of 1992.
You, WHO and Ninety-two

It's strange to think that we are now entering the third calendar year in which no new episodes of DW have been seen on British television. The programme has not been cancelled as such: the BBC spokespeople insist that it is merely being 'rested' and will return when 'the time is right' made by a production company under contract from the BBC rather than 'in-house'. This story had been put out in successive months since September 1989 and no further news has been forthcoming. An optimistic message from Peter Cregeen, head of Series and Serials at the BBC, implying production would start this year, was later contradicted by Cregeen himself when he told Peter Darvill-Evans, DW editor at Virgin Publishing, that a new series of DW would not be made until 1993 at the earliest.

On this basis, the future of the world of DW, without prospect of a new series to sustain it, would seem bleak. However, aside from the fact that Who merchandising seems to have gained a life of its own whatever the BBC do, the BBC themselves have held out prospects for a possible revival.

By the time you read this BBC2's repeat of THE TIME MEDDLER, the 1965 Hartnell story (shown by us in Trinity 1990) may have already finished. This is part of a season of vintage Who that BBC2 are showing through the year. Future stories have not been confirmed at time of writing but will probably include THE KROTOONS to represent Patrick Troughton, and an unknown four-parter from the Pertwee era. Four further stories from the last three Doctors will be shown towards the end of the year.

The BBC Drama Department, who made DW, are not responsible for the current repeats season. The impetus appears to come from the Music and Arts department, who produce 'The Late Show' and organised the recent Lime Grove and 'A Perfect Christmas' archive days. The screening of a version of the pilot episode on the former occasion received a positive response from viewers, naturally, resulting in an attempt to have the Hartnell story PLANET OF THE GIANTS shown in October. When this fell through, BBC2 controller Alan Yentob sanctioned the longer repeats season, the first since 1984, and the first to include 'out-of-time' material (for which additional Equity fees have to be paid if more than 39 hours are shown per year) since 1982.

The producers of DW-related material will no doubt be pleased at renewed support from the Corporation. However, their confidence is already high. Virgin Publishing have announced their schedule for new DW fiction and non-fiction for as far ahead as August 1993, beginning with the CAT'S CRADLE trilogy written by GHOST LIGHT author Marc Platt, former comic script editor Andrew Cartmel and fan writer Andrew Hunt. Marvel comics recently increased the price of 'Dr Who Magazine' to £2.25, along with a page count raised to 52. BBC Video have curtailed their plans to release two stories a month for the
first part of the year; instead THE CAVES OF ANDROZANI and ROBOT have been released this month (January) with LOGOPOLIS and CASTROVALVA in March, and THE AZTECS and THE CLAWS OF AXOS in May. All have been shown by the Oxford University Doctor Who Society at some time or another. With typical eccentricity, news for later in the year is less promising on the video front, as BBC Video threaten to unleash an extended version of the McCoy holiday camp story, DELTA AND THE BANNERMAN, along with K9 & COMPANY, on the public.

We, of course, will be continuing, with some changes on the personnel front as several committee members head towards finals. As Louise will have mentioned in her editorial, this will be her final issue of 'The Tides of Time' - a new Society President (identity as yet unknown) will also materialise at the end of term. A full programme of videos, and hopefully the occasional speaker meeting, will, of course, CARRY ON.

MATTHEW KILBURN

Solution to the Whoword.

ENLIGHTENMENT
EXCELLENT
OCTAVE
OMEGA
SERVEN
DELGA
DOCS
STARK
ALOE
SKY"
EMPIRE OF DEATH

Part 2

Zillarker turned to the Doctor and said "You seem to know an awful lot about the Daleks, could you tell me how?"

The Doctor replied that's simple, my dear, I am the Doctor, their sworn enemy, you might say."

"The Doctor - but - the Doctor who was here 40 years ago had untidy black hair," said Zillarker.

Valarn cut in - "Zillarker, he and his friends did come out of a small blue box."

"In that case you must be the Doctor," said Zillarker.

Inside the mining area Vanadavargoss's life was about to come to an end. He made a dash for freedom. A Dalek gun flashed into life. Vanadavargoss's body turned negative, twisted in agony and fell to the ground dead. The Dalek aide shrieked, "BRING FORWARD THE SPECIAL WEAPONS DALEK!"

"I OBEY" shrieked another Dalek. Soon the Special Weapons Dalek arrived and it fires its deadly energy bolt and within seconds Vanadavargoss and his body were reduced to atoms.

Inside the Dalek control area the Grand Dalek received a report, "AN ATTEMPTED ESCAPE HAS BEEN DEALT WITH - AND THE ESCAPEE HAS BEEN EXTERMINATED," said the Dalek.

"THAT IS REGRETTABLE. ISSUE A WARNING TO THE WORK PARTY - FURTHER ESCAPES WILL BE DEALT WITH IN THE SAME WAY," said the Grand Dalek.

"How long has all this been going on?" asked the Doctor.

"Six months," said Valarn - "first we had cosmic storms - then we were subjected to a bombardment of meteorites then the Daleks arrived and started mining operations."

"I see - but do you know what they're mining for?"

"Probably the core of this planet," said Valarn, "but then what would the Daleks want with it?"

"A great deal I should think," said the Doctor.

"Maybe they're tampering with forces they don't understand or they're planning to destroy this planet," said Sharina.

"Don't be morbid, girl," said Valarn.

"Valarn," said the Doctor, "my young friend, here, could well be right."

"DALEK CONTROL TO DALEK MINING AREA THE CORE'S PRESSURE IS RISING TO CRITICAL MASS," said the Grand Dalek.

"SHALL WE SUSPEND OPERATIONS?" said the Dalek aide.

"NO - THE TRYZABANS ARE TO WORK UNTIL THEY DIE," said the Grand Dalek.

A tryzaban female called Zerelararn paused for a moment.

"CONTINUE WITH YOUR TASK" said the Dalek.

"I'm tired, I need a rest," said Zerelararn.

"THAT IS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS, YOU WILL BE EXTERMINATED," said the Dalek.

Dalek guns blazed into life - Zeralararn's body turned negative, twisted in agony and fell to the floor.
The special weapons Dalek moved forward - "TOTAL EXTERMINATION." said the Grand Dalek through the communications unit.

An energy bolt shot out from the Special Weapons Dalek's gun -and like Vanadavargoss before her - her body was reduced to atoms.

The Grand Dalek said -
"A MESSAGE TO THE WORK PARTY. IF YOU OBEY THE DALEKS THEN YOU WILL LIVE. CONTINUE TO DISOBEY THEN YOU WILL BE EXTERMINATED."

A chorus of Daleks shrieked,
"OBEY THE DALEKS. OBEY, OBEY, OBEY, OBEY!"

ALAN WHITTEN

My contributors, although not, for once, seized with the desire to review our videos of the last term, have developed the desire to write book reviews of the new adventures series. So here goes

Whoops Apocalypse

The third instalment of the Timewyrm saga has a lot to live up to. The first volume, Genesys, was a cracking read, with some superb scenes of Ishtar the goddess being chillingly malevolent. The second book, Exodus, is even better: one of the best things Terrance Dicks has ever written and one of my favourite McCoy stories. After finishing it I wondered how Nigel Robinson could surpass it.

I now know that he could not. I found reading Timewyrm: Apocalypse a real chore, despite the fact that the print is bigger and the page count is slightly less than the other volumes.

The cover of the book, widely held to be the worst in the Timewyrm series, accurately reflects Nigel Robinson's ornately lavish descriptions of settings. Both the cover and said descriptions are overblown and gaudy. Yet oddly enough once a place or person has been described the first time in Robinson's baroque style, for the rest of the narrative they are treated as if Robinson is writing for the bad old 128 page quota. The people become ciphers and the places become featureless.

So I'm not enamoured with the style of writing - what of the plot? Take bits of THE SAVAGES and THE MACRA TERROR, and most of all THE KROTOS, the climax of TIME AND THE RANI and on the way steal one of the best ideas from CASTROVALVA. And that's how you write a novel "too broad and too deep for the small screen"!

The New Adventures are written for a young adult readership: in an interview with DWM, Paul Cornell distinguishes that target audience from "adolescent readers who want sex and violence and believe that's what being adult is all about".

Now it has been argued that Genesys, with its topless
teenage girls and slice-'em-up action, is the adolescent's dream come true. However, at least John Peel does not pretend that he is producing anything other than entertainment. Nigel Robinson has added some Big Moral Ideas about genetic engineering and Judging People By Their Appearances.

He describes the Homunculus, a Clive Barker-inspired horror of fused limbs and organs, as an example of ultimate evil. As it tries to escape from it's tank "it groaned with an almost sexual pleasure".

Later on Ace is captured and her mind is about to be drained. The Matriarch (Robinson likes Proper Nouns) "looked down with an almost sexual delight as her machines probed and prepared Ace's mind for absorption..."

To misquote Oscar Wilde, "to have one gratuitous sex reference might be an accident, to have two seems like carelessness". If not tastelessness and pointlessness.

Exodus addresses big moral questions (crimes against humanity committed by an elected government expressing the will of the people) and is also a gripping adventure. by comparison Apocalypse seems shallow and trite, and isn't even a page-turner of a read. The book however remains a source of hope - for any fan writer reading it must surely think "I can do better than that!"

And do you know, they probably can.

PAUL DUMONT

revelation by Paul Cornell

This book concludes the first series of original 'Doctor Who' novels, and I admit I am very much in the minority in disliking it. the book is even, apparently, up for some science fiction literary award, and it certainly contains some very good writing. I can also happily accept the basic concept of the novel, that of the Doctor facing and overcoming his guilt, but the execution of it leaves a lot to be desired.

The story basically concerns the final struggle between the Doctor and the Timewyrm, paralleled by a battle between Ace and the boy, Chad Boyle, who had bullied her at school.

Most of the action is a battle of wills occurring within the Doctor's mind, so the scene is all set for a fantastical adventure, like a jazzed up version of the Doctor's fight in the Matrix in THE DEADLY ASSASSIN. And we are indeed treated to a lot of bizarre imagery, but whereas in THE DEADLY ASSASSIN the battle is a sequence of disconnected events, most with a war motif, culminating in the fight in the swamp, in Revelation every extraordinary happening has its explanation in the plot. Whilst I'm all in favour of plots having logical patterns, and loose ends tied up, to explain away the appearance of Death, waltzing with the Doctor, as the product of the Timewyrm's research into "fear totems" diminishes the scene somewhat. "To define is to limit," as Oscar Wilde once wrote.
There is also a problem with the underlying construction of the plot: it simply isn't underlying. The joy of subtlety is entirely absent. Every appearance and deed of any character has its accompanying paragraph of explanatory prose. This may sometimes be necessary in order to keep track of events, but becomes burdensome after a while, and is sometimes clumsy, for example the several scenes bolted on to the end to tie up loose ends. Also, the final victory was presented in rather technical psychological terminology, making the whole story seem to boil down to a cold mathematical puzzle.

The main flaw, though, lies in the way the characterization of the Doctor is handled. An instruction given to the writers of these novels is that we are not allowed to know what the Doctor is thinking and feeling, or to explore his personality in any depth: he must remain aloof and mysterious; all of which is a bit of a handicap to a novel set within the Doctor's mind and concerning his battle with his conscience. We learn that he is motivated by guilt at watching tragedies happen when he has the power to prevent them, prompting him to intervene in people's affairs. The rule is already broken, but the writer goes no further, so we learn about the Doctor's guilt complex again. And again. The three companions - Adric, Katarina and Sara - whose deaths the Doctor feels responsible for make two or three appearances, alongside a horde of dead UNIT extras, which I found quite amusing. The point is thumped home over and over, until the Doctor seems and almost one-dimensional character. The only other clues as to the Doctor's thoughts are the random aphorisms he tosses in occasionally and quite a lot of "wistful glances" and "wry smiles", whose meanings are (for once) left unclear, and whose repetition becomes irritating.

However, I did enjoy certain aspects of the book. The scenes between Ace and her childhood tormentor, Boyle, were superb, because we were allowed to know what Ace was feeling and why, although their appearance alongside the Timewyrm within the Doctor's mind was a little forced, and it was obvious a mile off that she would eventually forgive him. Also, the quality of the writing easily exceeded almost all other Doctor Who books, which made following the plot bearable; and the continuity references, those I spotted at least, were quite fun and well-used, but their ubiquity posed its own problems: one scene featured three women gathered Macbeth-like round a cauldron. This annoyed me at first because I thought they were previously established characters who I couldn't recognise. This turned out not to be the case, but then their identity was explained in such a way as to take away all of their mystery. The explanation wasn't even terrifically interesting.

The whole, then, was probably the most original, imaginative, lyrical, and dislikable, unsatisfactory and disappointing Doctor Who book I've read.

MARK DUNN

Well, children, they didn't like them much did they?
WHY in the UNIVERSE are we DOING THIS?

a VALEDICTORY ESSAY

I've been planning to write something along these lines for a long time, but as Louise is leaving the editor's chair this issue, and I will be deep in finals revision during the Easter vacation (a misnomer if ever there was one) this moment seems most opportune. In addition, my ideas have been further crystallized by an article in the highly literate DW fanzine 'Purple Haze', written by the veteran fan Jackie Marshall, entitled 'Why We Should Take Ourselves More Seriously', explaining why it is worthwhile to be a DW fan. Adapting this topic for our situation, why should the Oxford University Doctor Who Society exist?

One of my fellow historians at St. John's devotes a lot of his time to environmental causes. Just over a year ago now, he saw me putting up an OUDWS poster in college and asked "Why do you waste your time on that?" I found myself telling him that a hundred and fifty people or so enjoyed it enough to be members, but encountering a look of disdain from someone unfavourable to such hedonism, added something about THE GREEN DEATH and DW's political subtexts. This seemed more satisfactory to him, although I doubt that I gained a convert.

I don't think our founders were that conscious of their motives for starting the Society; Roger Shaw, our first president, after the last Doc Soc dinner took the assembled throng down Turl Street past Exeter and pointed out the spot where he had said to Matthew Brookes, sometime of that college, "There really should be a Doctor Who Society in Oxford". Tales have come down of video-watching sessions and highly speculative discussion meetings in people's rooms before the Hilary fifth week, 1989, encounter which is minutely as the first committee meeting proper, followed by the opening of the floodgates to the membership with the showing of PYRAMIDS OF MARS in eighth week. It was fun to set up, an opportunity to watch old DW stories, and I don't think psychosociological enquiry or whatever entered their heads.

I came along to the Freshers' meeting n Michaelmas 1989 because I have always been a fan of the series, even if rather isolated. I'd never been a member, at that stage, of a DW/telefantasy 'Local Group', or been a great merchandise or video collector like some people are, but I had, off and on, bought Marvel's 'Doctor Who Magazine' and even been a member of the Doctor Who Appreciation Society since 1983. I hadn't taken a lot of personal items, like ornaments, up to Oxford with me, so Doc Soc's existence brought me something familiar in a new context. What struck me as well was how friendly everything seemed under the genial President of the day, and more importantly, how all these very intelligent people spoke in a language I could understand, but not everybody else could.
"Our lives are different to... anybody else's, that's the exciting thing. Nobody in the Universe can do what we're doing..."

(The Doctor to Victoria, TOMB OF THE CYBERMEN)

The lure of subculture, an escape from the mass popular culture that generally defines our social identity, is a strong one for many people. Everyone is alienated from what the historical philosopher Ernest Gellner calls "Universal high culture" to some degree: that's one of the things which make us individuals. Interest in DW is one way of expressing this. Oxford University's own environment is sufficiently diverse to tolerate a relatively high profile Doctor Who Society that doesn't take itself too seriously.

This doesn't mean to say that DW's special appeal is only superficial. Admittedly the celebration of a seemingly defunct TV series may be of minor importance compared with civil war Yugoslavia or Lebanon, or starvation in Sudan, but DW has been a major part of British cultural life for nearly thirty years now and was distinct in a number of respects: 'Dalekmania' at Christmas 1964, for example, was perhaps the first great children's media merchandise explosion, anticipating later ones such as that around certain turtles in 1990. Few series have been allowed such flexibility of format as DW was in its heyday, despite the creative conservatism that the need to ensure a programme's continued success can encourage.

All this is stating the obvious. Perhaps we ought to return to the Saturday evenings of childhood, when the return of DW was compensation for the end of the summer holidays, or if you are a little older or younger, an extra Christmas present. I think I became interested in the programme because I started watching it when I was three or four, when the programme was going through a period of change, and so was I, as we moved house twice in two years. I became more aware of the past I had left behind. DW had a past that no other programme had. THE SEA DEVILS repeat in May 1974 alerted me to the existence of an earlier companion than Sarah, Jo Grant, and showed me a title sequence every bit as fascinating as that which accompanied Season 11. Then, of course, came PLANET OF THE SPIDERS - the first story title I remember - and the transformation of Jon Pertwee into Tom Baker. This was magical. Suddenly the programme was different, UNIT disappearing and Baker's persona magnifying. When I came to go to school, I seemed to be the only person there who knew that Tom Baker was only a Doctor Who, and that others came before him and would come after him. In early 1977, having moved house again, I remember watching THE FACE OF EVIL. As the Doctor explained to Leela that he couldn't take all his friends with him, I compared the Brigadier and the rest of the friends I had left behind in Nottingham. I suspect whoever wrote that scene was thinking in terms of the audience's identification with the companion; I felt closer to the Doctor.
I have wondered, as our intakes become younger every year, what their perceptions are. There were a lower number of new members this year than there were in the previous two years, so perhaps the magic of DW lessened after the time when I was five. I've written in 'Tides of Time' about the radical changes John Nathan-Turner inflicted on the series had on my contemporaries in 1980, so these might be borne in mind.

What does all this tell me? The circumstances which turn one into a fan are by no means predetermined. Part of the OUDWS's strength is that its membership is wide, including large numbers who drifted away from the programme in their teens, but the same pressures that produced the more hardened addicts must affect them to some degree. A lot of people seem to come along in groups, often with one or two more 'fannish' members at the core. This suggests that there is something socially enjoyable about the programme, or the Society, if only that part of the fun, as one person once put it to me, is the watching of videos of equally dubious origin and picture quality.

We're back to the programme's role in British culture. Watch the expression of people's faces next time we show some old clips. Whether we are conscious or unconscious of it, the programme's landmarks may echo our own.

I've referred to Jackie Marshall's 'Purple Haze' article at the start, and shall do so at the end. Miss Marshall believes that escapism, whether it's the study of a TV programme or playing golf, is necessary for us to remain sane in a mad world. Perhaps we, in Oxford, are reinforcing ourselves against the pressures of the future by borrowing from our pasts. We laugh at things which frighten us as children, and laugh with the actors who struggle to make sense of the tortured situations in which they have to believe to make them real for the audience.

"I had to face my fear. In the end, that was more important than just going on living."

(The Doctor to Sarah, PLANET OF THE SPIDERS)

Thus watching DW works because we are reminded we can overcome the distrust of the outside world that the programme's monsters fed on, and can face our fears with our own accumulated experience, just like the Doctor does.

Isn't this what he would wish?

MATTHEW KILBURN
NATURALLY, THE COMMITTEE WELCOME ANY SUGGESTIONS OR CRITICISMS FROM THE MEMBERSHIP.

And so here endeth my last issue of Tides of Time, and about time too, you may think.

I am merely writing this afterword to fill up space, and to provide myself with the opportunity, in my egotistical little way, of signing my name twice.

And since, as I have already mentioned, I am feeling literary tonight I shall hand over to Shakespeare...

'The rest is silence.'
HAMLET, Act 5, Scene 2.