TIDES OF TIME

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Article Submission

Articles for Tides of Time #16 should be submitted to the Editor or the Deputy Editors by 3rd week of Hilary Term. Articles submitted as a computer file should be in PC ASCII, with no tabs; double quotes for speech, single for all other; double hyphens for a dash. Thank you.

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The Doctor awakens, regenerates, and finds himself on the set of a cheap TV show. Ah well, nothing's changed there.
Readers of the self-proclaimed *Doctor Who* magazine — *Doctor Who Magazine* — will no doubt have been horrified to read recently of the crimes of a little known *Doctor Who* historian, Jean Marc Lofficier. It seems that Mr Lofficier, possibly abetted by his wife Randi, referred publicly, and in print, to serial A as *An Unearthly Child*. He has further compounded this act of felony by, in an effort to "reduce confusion", continuing to refer to serial B as *The Daleks*, while all and sundry are aware that it should be properly called *The Mutants*. What right, the people ask, does he have to make such a decision? I mean, it’s not as if there’s any precedent for calling it *The Daleks*, now is there?

Is there anyone out there who finds *DWM*’s recent “this is what you should call...” spurgie pretentious, rude and irritatingly politically correct? If you drop the (and I use the word loosely) title 100,000 BC into a conversation the automatic reaction, however well-versed the converser, is either to think “What?” or to mentally categorise it as the working title for *An Unearthly Child* (and the person you’re talking to as an imbecile). Let’s face it, Gary Russell, Marcus Hearn, Craig Hinton (who, until recently, I had come to respect) and all the other fools out there, it’s called

Gary Russell, commenting that he thinks *Sentinel* is a much better title than *Earthshock* but he wouldn’t dream of changing its name (*Sentinel*, of course, being *Earthshock*’s working title), is completely missing the point. Names are there to allow people to understand what it is you are referring to. In the same way that very few people would understand the title *Sentinel* very few people would understand the title *Inside the Spaceship*. It’s a matter of familiarity, of the ability to communicate, not historical correctness. You can’t change years of use just by a declaration in a tie pot fan magazine because one or two people care about what the oh-so-magnificent team of *Who* historians Howe-Stammers-Walker (the team which brought you D*catalog* [Without being able to spell it — Ed]) say.

So the end result is, don’t worry Mr Lofficier. You may continue to be held in ridicule for your inability to think of anything new to write except for another edition of *The Programme Guide*, but this names and titles business will, hopefully, be quietly buried.

Until the next time, of course.

*Anthony Wilson*,
President O.T.U.D.W.S.
The Man That

Children’s stories and other
people’s misconceptions

Part One

What is Doctor Who? Why is it
that an educational children’s
programme from 1963 onwards con-
tinued for 26 years, continually fit-
ting in with what was required of it?
How has it developed, from early,
scratchy, black and white record-
ings, a fan following who delight in
those same black and white films,
made on a shoestring budget and
with no pretensions to prosperity?
Why, on the verge of cancellations
so many times, did it continually
come back for more? How could it
be that the only way the juggernaut
could be stopped was through inter-
nal BBC politics, rather than some-
thing lacking within the show itself?

All difficult questions, none of
which can really be answered. One
thought does spring to mind — that
of shoe-horning. Doctor Who has
continuously been forced into this
ill-fitting designation of ‘children’s
programme’ and has continually striven
to break free, right from the
very beginnings. Take, for example,
the first series. The original brief
was, as noted, an educational chil-
dren’s programme. Susan was the
hook to get the children involved;
Barbara would teach them history;
Ian teach them science. The Doctor,
of course, was not supposed to be
the lead — that fell to the teachers
— he was merely supposed to cart
them from place to place, time to
time. Not a desperately hopeful con-
cept for a 26 year old programme,
but very definitely children-oriented.

And yet in the first story, An Un-
earthly Child, we are presented with
something very different. True, all
the ingredients are there as pre-
scribed, but more. The ‘dotty’ grand-
father figure of the Doctor in
evidence so soon afterwards is not
here. Instead we have a stubborn
old man who, it is implied, might
dash somebody’s head in with a
rock as said person, being injured, is
slowing them down. Furthermore,
we have, in episode 4, one of the
most brutal fight scenes the show
has ever seen. Not very ‘Saturday tea
time’ so far.

But, in The Daleks, things like that
are already changing. At the begin-
ning, the Doctor’s stubbornness
and desire to see the city land him
and his companions in danger, but, by
the end, he is furious over the Da-
leks’ “Senseless, evil killing”. Finally
in this opening triptych we have The
Edge of Destruction, memorable for
the image of a maladjusted teenager
about to stab her teacher through
the heart with a pair of scissors,
something which could well come
out of Dead Again as much as Doc-
tor Who.

The idea of four people locked
in one room, trying to kill each
other, is not a particularly pleasant
one either. Sartre wrote a play called
Huis Clos meaning ‘behind closed
doors’ (or, as a pun on the title
‘closed eight’ — they go round
in circles). In it, three people are
locked in a room in much the same
situation, and the results are truly
horrible. An example more people
may recognise is Abel and Cain in
Neil Gaiman’s The Sandman [Right,
that’s it, that’s the last bloody Sand-
man reference I’m allowing in this
magazine — Ed] — Cain continually
and repeatedly kills Abel “for his
own good”.

Deeper into the season we have
presented one of the most gruesome
facts in human history — the Aztecs’
practise of human sacrifice. While no
sacrifice is ever actually seen, the
knowledge of what is occurring is
emblazoned into the observer’s
mind — and the imagination is often
more horrible when there is no vis-
ual image to relate to. On top of this,
of course, is the Doctor’s certainty
that the past cannot be changed —
says (and our Billy’s at his best in
these sort of moments), “The past
cannot be rewritten. Not one line.”
The knowledge of such horror, with
the fact that our heroes can do noth-
ing about it (to be honest, Barbara
does not convert Auntie, she merely
confirms his already strong doubts)
is not pleasant.

Of course, this doesn’t always
happen. The Reign of Terror, for
example, is a serious historical ac-
count: the story is woven around
historical fact and there is no attempt
to alter history, even though those
who marched to the guillotine num-
bered tens of thousands.

Much changed after the first sea-
son. With the success of The Daleks,
and comparative lack of success of
the historicals, the latter were either
ditched altogether, or used for other
than educational purposes — such as
The Romans (or Carry On Nero).
In The Time Meddler, admittedly
more serious, we are looking at a
pseudo-historical story: science fic-
tion in a historical setting.

The Daleks made a few more outings
(or innings) as well. The Chase
is a typical Nation run-around,
but both The Dalek Invasion of
Earth and The Daleks’ Masterplan
are tight and rather gruesome. The
former is quite violent — knives,
whips and other more unique methods of killing — while Larry meeting and getting killed by his brother is a horrendous moment. Also, this is the first time a recognisable setting is used, but everything — right down to the chimes of Big Ben — is subverted. We are presented with a clear, concrete future, and it is a future with no hope.

The Daleks' Masterplan, it is all more personal. Ideas flash (all right, amble) across the screen — a skeleton is shown in full for the first time; Steven is possessed and acts like a walking corpse [ARE YOU SURE THAT JUST WASN'T PURVES' 'ACTING' SKILLS] — Edi; the Vaaga plants possess people, instilling the desire to kill. Of course, it would be hard not to mention the deaths of two companions, even if they were there only briefly. Both, along with many others during the Doctor's travels, sacrifice themselves for the greater good. During Hartnell's time though, this is rare — heroes don't often die.

Other aspects of travel appear in Season Three. In The Massacre, the deaths of the Huguenots at St Bartholomew's Eve is presented by showing a series of woodcuts. As in The Aztecs the symbolism is clear; perhaps more obscure than reality. Again the Doctor speaks of not being able to interfere — something Steven finds very difficult to take. In The Ark we are introduced to the idea that the time travellers themselves can cause problems — Doctor's cold resulting in the slavery of some of the last survivors of the human race.

The Celestial Toymaker is a fairy tale, and, like the best fairy tales, it works by being not desperately friendly. Childhood images — clowns, policemen, dolls, cards, jesters — are all pervaded. This comes most clearly in the very dangerous game at the end — played with a child. When this was fully made it was actually made more comedic than originally intended, in a prime example of shoe-horning.

Both The War Machines and The Tenth Planet are set to near-contemporary. Many children remember being terrified of the Cybermen much more than the Daleks — probably because they are so much more human, so much more 'distorted' people. Almost as a result of the low-quality costumes, the menace is more tangible, as a man trying to get out can be seen within.

With regeneration, the programme threw away the last vestiges of the facade of scientific realism (even if it appeared occasionally). With Troughton's Doctor, the stories, and the viewer, began to walk a very different path.

The Macra Terror, despite the very silly crabs, is actually quite distiring. For children, it's a Butlin's holiday camp with a difference — scratch away the veneer and something nasty will come crawling out (or scuttling, perhaps). The idea of, "You will be happy. By order," could almost be a precursor of The Prisoner — certainly not a children's programme.

Patrick Troughton

WHAT YOU SEE IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT YOU GET

Following the McCannite Faceless Ones (something becomes your friend — a reverse possession — so trust no one) we have the famous The Evil of the Daleks. This takes the facade idea of The Macra Terror to extremes: it is reality itself which (itself) is a fake, and behind reality, through the cupboard which could lead to Narnia but doesn't, lurks something terrifying. OK — not something terrifying — in fact, the Daleks. And here the childlike comes in: the Doctor's Daleks — Alpha, Beta and Omega — playing games is very childlike and almost childish, yet it works. Why?

In this story the Doctor is fighting everything embodied in the title: Troughton's Doctor is here to deal with Evil. He makes everything safe again. By comparison Hartnell wandered through time observing — he could not change factual past — but the impression is that the second Doctor, had he been offered the chance, would have tried. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the writers never offered the chance. By the end of Season 4, the concept of the series had altered to something beyond recognition. At the very beginning, the Doctor would arrive, get caught up in events, and leave — indeed in Season 1 it is almost a game of "How are we going to lose the TARDIS this week?" This changes with The Rescue, something endemic even in the title: the feature characters are making a difference. They could easily have left without Vicki [GETS MY VOTE] — Edi, but chose not to. For plot reasons, it could be said that Susan's departure affected the Doctor deeply, for the creators of the programme it had been necessary, with Susan leaving, to find a new reason for the Doctor to exist. The consequence of this was that he stopped looking after one person, and began to looking after everyone. The ultimate change is obvious: over 25 years we move from Hartnell, who wants to protect his granddaughter, to McCoy, who wants to protect the universe.

Sonia Teyh and James Brough

Next issue the authors tackle everything from Tomb of the Cybermen to The Talons of Weng Chiang.
COSTUMES II

Critical Mass

ON A ROCKY, barren planet a man stands. He is about five and a half feet tall and comparatively thin. He might have once work a dark jacket over a sweater covered in question marks, all underneath a fedora hat; but today, even in the scorching heat, he wears a sackcloth underneath a hooded cape. He looks lost, as if searching for some answers, or questions.

The Doctor didn’t come here often. It was the future of a small blue-green planet, which had once swung in a glorious orbit as the third around a completely insignificant sun. Now it was an almost lifeless hulk, which didn’t do much swing as dodger in its endless journey. It might have been Earth — it had that potential once, to be as great as that Empire that now spans so many planets. But one day it had become the battleground for a war light-years away — a centuries old conflict between the Rutans and the Sontarans. And, on that one day, it had been gutted, all but destroyed. Now there seemed to be no hope. Perhaps there wasn’t.

The Doctor desperately needed the break. He wasn’t one for lying down and relaxing, but now he was beginning to feel the centuries. He had just left Ace, on what could not — even charitably — be described as good terms. Soon he would have to go and get Bernice; soon he would have to continue his ceaseless struggle against the overwhelming forces of darkness in the Universe.

He often wondered about the darkness. Space, of course, was dark and, as far as he was able to make out, so too was the Time Vortex. Not that he looked very hard — it was something he had read once — "he who gazes into the Abyss for too long must take care, lest the Abyss also gaze into him." (Goethe, well, someone German.) And, right at this moment, he didn’t want anyone gazing into him.

But darkness was, well, pleasant. he enjoyed walking at night, enjoyed gazing up at the stairs. Darkness came in a myriad of shades, while light consisted of only one, burning, blazing. The Doctor had once, in a more preposterous incarnation, considered himself to be a light shining in the darkness of the Universe, but now only darkness filled his soul. Perhaps darkness was really how it should be; perhaps he was the wrong. No, mustn’t think that way — that way only led to madness.

He wandered into the back of one of the few buildings built since the coming of the war. Everyone inside was dressed like him (at least he got the suit right; today he was travelling incognito, was not offering his help). There were people at the front of the building singing, or chanting, and gradually, as it filled up, more and more joined in. The Doctor sat on the floor at the back — there were no chairs of course — and closed his eyes, listened to the singing. For the first time in many a year, he felt at peace.

It had begun with the Daleks, he mused. What had possessed him then, to destroy another species, to lift those who left from their home? Especially since, being Daleks, they would probably just go and wipe out another species and steal their home planet instead. They’d probably call it New Skaro, since the Daleks lacked imagination on a fundamental level. Then there was Fenric, and all that business with the Timewyrm. And then the Hoodi. Had he really got so used to pain and suffering that he didn’t mind inflicting it himself if the ends justified the means? What of the Silurians? Hadn’t he said then, “There should have been another way”? Shouldn’t there have been this time?

Congregating at the back of the building were a number of children. Stereotyped was the word the Doctor would have used to describe them had he been in a more cynical mood. But, clichéd or otherwise, still they were there — sun-tanned, dirty from the sand outside, and some with tear streaks down their faces. Other words, from another book, sprang into the Doctor’s mind: “Children are our hope for the future.” He also remembered Death’s response: THERE IS NO HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. THERE’S ONLY ME. He had a vague feeling that it was Terry Pratchett, but he hoped that it wasn’t. Whoever it was, he was wrong anyway — there had to be hope for the future, somewhere, somehow.

The Doctor sat at the back of the church, surrounded by people singing for the love of a life they hardly had, and wondered why he had ever thought there was wisdom in a war.

On a rocky, barren planet, not unexpectedly, a rock stands. It is about eight feet tall. It might have once looked like a Police Box, common in the 1960s of another, so similar planet. But today, even the box is disguised. A man approaches, pulls open a door in the rock that you would have sworn hadn’t been there and enters, removing his cape. A pause, and then, with only a slight sound, the rock fades away, as if it had never been.

He would never return.

And what of the future of this once happy planet? What had been left the children as Legacy? A death-count innumerable, a birth-rate severely curtailed, but somehow the culture had been rescued from the brink of barbarism. By what? There should have been no order, there should have been a total degeneration of society, but there was something in this plucky species which made them cling onto the cliff with their fingernails. It wasn’t far to the bottom now, but they wouldn’t fall even the tiniest bit from here. They could, and would, build themselves up again, and perhaps don’t even realise that yet. All that holds them together is their way, their religion — a few thousand in their hoods and capes, ceaselessly performing their critical mass until their god comes to heal the world. Perhaps he would.

Anthony Wilson
Grief Encounters

Sunrise

It was a tall building, classical, imposing, but nevertheless there was a certain welcoming quality about it. It towered over the other buildings of the Capital, and this in itself was no mean feat. Its name was the Megara Basilica, the Prime Residence, and it was the President's home.

He was an old man now, aged by the years of settling disputes, and had recently taken to rising early in the morning, before dawn, and watching the sun rise over his beautiful city. Then he would take breakfast — though he ate little — before beginning his day's work, although for some years there had been nothing of any great importance to attract his attention.

This day was different. He was woken, early for him (and probably in the middle of the night for the others) by the strident warbling of the telephone beside his bed, and, as he switched it on, his aide, Marcus, appeared on the screen, telling him all about a strange blue cabinet that had appeared from nowhere, two floors below his bedroom.

Well, he thought, Doctor, it's been a long time.

Marcus, he was secretly satisfied to see, was just a little disappointed at his total lack of surprise when he heard that three aliens had appeared from inside the cabinet, and merely looked resigned when he requested that they be conducted to the rooftop balcony and be given a quiet breakfast.

After dressing (slowly, he noticed, and with a small, but perceptible, amount of pain in his right hip), he waited for Marcus to accompany him to the balcony, where he saw the aliens for the first time. There were two young girls — one with long brown curls and one with short auburn hair — and an affable-looking young man wearing a long cream coat.

He had never seen any of them before in his life.

The man came towards him and shook his hand vigorously.

"Hello," he panted, seemingly out of breath. "You probably haven't recognised me. I'm the Doctor — I've changed since we last saw each other, several times in fact — and this is Tegan," he indicated the girl with the short hair, "and Nyssa. I'm sorry we've arrived at an inconvenient time. The TARDIS isn't as reliable as she could be, but, I'm glad to say, she's in a much better condition than when you last travelled in her. I must say that this place has improved, as well."

"Yes," agreed the President, "it has. But it wasn't very easy." A thin, sad smile spread across his face as he noticed the parcel the Doctor (he found the man's identity, and its perfect irony, surprisingly easy to accept) was holding.

The Doctor followed his gaze. "Ah," he said, "a present or, rather, a long-overdue apology." He handed the parcel to the President, who carefully placed it on a nearby chair.

"I'm sorry," the President said, "I'm forgetting my manners. Marcus, would you like to give these ladies a tour of the building? I'm sure they'd be more interested in that than an anachronism of two old," he glanced at the Doctor, "men. Would that suit you, ladies?"

"You bet," confirmed Tegan (in what the President remembered was an Australian accent, and a strong one at that), gazing appreciatively at Marcus.

"Thank you, that's most kind," replied Nyssa. Marcus conducted them inside the building, with an unsuccessfully concealed smile on his face.

The President and the Doctor were left alone.

"So," the President inquired, "why have you come back to me, now of all times? To say sorry?"

The Doctor sighed. "Yes, I am sorry. But I had no other choice. I wasn't exactly in the best of health at the time, and you seemed to be the obvious solution to the problem. And now, I thought too... I don't know. I just thought it might do you good."

The President's eyes narrowed. "You thought you'd decide what was best for me, so you practically marooned me on an alien planet, to solve a problem for you. And now. And now... and now I'm an old man, and you're young again. Remind you of anything?"

The Doctor's face hardened. "It was never like that. I knew what I did was wrong. But, at the time, I thought it was best for all of us. I'm sorry. I did what I thought I had to do. I know that's no excuse, but it's the truth."

"You couldn't stay with me forever. You were young, rash, impulsive, looking for a cause you tried to believe in. I tried to give you that cause. I thought it would work."

He straightened, unrolled his hat, placed it atop his head.

"Perhaps I should go now. I'll collect Nyssa and Tegan on my way out. Good-bye."

He was just about to disappear inside the building when the President called out. "Doctor!"

The Doctor turned.

"I..." the President started, then gave up and started again. "You were right. I'm sorry."

"Thank you."

The Doctor smiled, a smile as clear and bright as the morning sun. He doffed his hat to the old man, and then vanished into the rest of the building.

The President, alone once more, reached for the parcel and slumped into a chair. When he tore open the red and white Hamley's wrapping, he was not surprised to see the black and white fur of a toy panda inside, and he smiled, as the city below was slowly illuminated by the rosy fingers of the dawn.

John Wilson
Thieves

After the gurgling stutter of the bright yellow Volkswagen Beetle had died away, and the woman who could not quite have been called 'elderly' had emerged from its cramped interior, her light grey hair unadulterated by any plastic bottle, no sound could be heard echoing off the drab, grey concrete of the borstal's car park save for the monotonous rumble of the distant motorway.

Barbara always thought of the place as 'the borstal', no matter what actual name might now be inscribed on the cracked, plastic board at the building's entrance. The word 'borstal' conjured up for her the right image of worn Victorian brick and worn Victorian architecture, with ceilings which were too high and lights which were too low. It lay on the outskirts of suburbia in a place which had once been a town, but had long since been swallowed up by the spreading stain of London. Here sulky youths, now of both sexes, came because of what they had done, or because they had nothing to do, and here too came Barbara Chesterton, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, to try to teach them history.

To get in, she had to show her visitor's card to the rusty camera perched beside the windowless double doors, even though she knew the camera's resolution was too poor for the guard inside to actually read it. She was duly admitted anyway, the strident buzz demanding her to push the doors much more distinctive than the burst of white noise which might, or might not, have been the guard's voice emanating from the speaker grill besides the door, telling her to do the same thing. Inside, it was hot and stuffy, and, putting her card back inside the handbag, she found Eric Stephens, the director of the place, waiting to meet her.

"Hello, Mrs Chesterton," he said, offering his palm to her, which she shook. It was slick with sweat. The two strips of overhead neon lighting cut two white slashes across his gleaming, rimless spectacles. Barbara began to feel queasy, as she often did in his presence.

"I'm afraid we've had to make a couple of changes to your little group," he oozed unctuously. "As you probably have already heard, James was released yesterday — his family are looking after him — and I've had to put Sarah in the quiet room for a couple of days. But you've also got a newcomer, Dorothy. She's spending a couple of weeks with us," he laughed loudly and nasally, "after deciding to play with fire, a bit too literally. Thankfully there wasn't anybody in the house she burnt down — it had been a ruin for years, anyway. Still, I'm sure you'll like her." And he laughed again, making Barbara wish that he had been in the aforementioned house. But she smiled at him, after making sure that her class would be in its usual place — it was — she proceeded, bidding farewell to Mr Eric Stephens, Director of the Centre, to her usual classroom two corridors and two locked doors (Stephens sent an assistant with her to open them, since she was not permitted to have the keys herself) away from the borstal entrance.

Awaiting her was the usual (with three differences, she reminded herself) collection of scruffy young men and women, most of whom regarded her with outright hostility in their eyes. At the back of the room, she noticed one unfamiliar face, that of a young teenage girl with chestnut hair and deep brown eyes which seemed full of a certain quiet toughness. Barbara memorised her face; it seemed to her that there was a new addition to her class who could either be a great help or a great hindrance, and she wanted to make sure that it was the former.

"Hello, everyone," she said. "Today I thought we might look at the Aztecs, who are a favourite subject of mine. Have any of you ever heard of them?"

Silence.

Barbara carried on, undaunted; it didn't do a teacher any good to have a skin which was anything other than thick. "The Aztecs were a great civilisation which lived around the area which is now Mexico, for hundreds of years. Their culture was at the same time highly cultured and primitive; they had superb architectural skills and had developed a very intricate system of bartering, using cocoa beans for everything from money to wedding and engagement rings." She had to stifle a smile at his last fact, as old memories stirred themselves in her mind.
“But despite this, they never invented the wheel...”

As the class continued, Barbara felt herself beginning to connect with the audience, to break down the (and she laughed at the cliche while still admitting it to herself) barriers, both real and imagined, between herself and the small group of deprived or maladjusted teenagers sitting in the room with her. Gradually, the hostility in their eyes was replaced with acceptance, grudging and limited but acceptance nonetheless, as they permitted themselves to be drawn into what she was saying. The descriptions of the temple sacrifices — near-hysterical priests clutching still-beating hearts in their gory hands while they chanted to the masses below — visibly affected them (even though they were more enthralled than perturbed, she had to admit to herself), while her impassioned description of the Aztecs’ destruction, exterminated by Cortez and his army, wielding weapons that the Aztecs couldn’t comprehend, let alone defend themselves against, she could swear actually saddened some of them.

When she had finished her account, she wiped the black board loaned to her class by Stephens, and prepared to pack up the small number of books she had brought with her.

Then she heard a voice behind her.

“Didn’t anyone try to stop them?”

She turned back to the class. As she had thought, it was the new girl who had spoken.

“I’m sorry, er. Dorothy, what was it you said?”

“Cortez and his army. Why didn’t anyone stop them? I mean, Cortez killing them, and showed them the wheel and stuff like that? They wouldn’t have all been killed, their civilisation wouldn’t have been wiped out.”

Somebody sniggered.

As she stood there, thinking of events in history, both the world’s and her own, she debated what to tell the girl. She couldn’t tell her of what she had tried to do, twenty five years ago (or five hundred, depending on how you counted) or how she had failed, prevented not by any human action, but by the unstoppable face of history. As she stood there, Barbara realised she could only tell her the truth.

“I don’t know.”

A tapping at the window brought her out of her sudden fugue. Uninvited, Eric Stephens let himself into the room, almost exactly (as she noticed) the minute hand on the room’s clock swept up to join its shorter partner in a vertical line.

“Come on everyone, time to go,” he brawly, clapping his hands chop-chop in a ridiculous manner. The class, once more sullen, filed out of the room. Except for one. As Barbara looked up to see who it was, she already knew.

The girl, Dorothy, looked up at her and spoke in a voice that she knew was intended for her ears, and hers alone.

“I would have. I would have stopped them. If I’d been there.”

Her message conveyed, the girl left the room. Stephens watched her follow the others up the corridor.

“I told you about that one, didn’t I?” he said. “A real fighter.”

“Yes,” replied Barbara, staring off into space. “A real fighter.”

Who put glue on the President’s Perigosto stick?
Chesterton’s Return

HERE WAS a Beatles tune on the radio. Lucy couldn’t quite place it. Ticket to Ride, she thought. Richard would have known — he had all the albums and the singles — but he was at school.

She tipped the soapy water out of the plastic bowl and watched the water gurgle down the sink. Picking up a tea towel she wiped the suds off her hands, selected a cup and began drying it.

Suddenly, she could hear the scraping of a key in the lock. “That’s odd,” thought Lucy, “Steve shouldn’t be home yet.” He must have forgotten something, she presumed. She put the cup down and went to greet him.

“Steve?” she shouted in greeting. The door swung open but it wasn’t her husband who stood there. It was a stranger. Tall, dark hair, lean but well muscled, and a good tan. His clothes were smart but they seemed well worn, as if the man had been running halfway round the galaxy in them.

“Who the hell are you?” demanded Lucy. She took a step backwards, towards the kitchen and the reassuring presence of the set of kitchen knives.

“I was going to ask you the same question,” the man replied. “What are you doing in my flat?”

“Your flat? What are you talking about. What do you want?” Adrenaline was pumping through her body, expecting that at any moment the man would make a lunge for her. Surprisingly he didn’t; he just stood there, eyes examining the details of the hallway, taking in all the details. He seemed someone accustomed to being in strange places.

“I should have expected this, I suppose,” he said, half to himself. “I’m sorry, did I startle you?” He held out his hand. “My name’s Chesterton, Ian Chesterton. I used to live here, thought I still did.”

Chesterton? The name sounded familiar. “I-Lucy Hewet,” she told him, taking his hand. He didn’t grab her, which was a relief. “Chesterton? Didn’t you disappear some, er, 3 years ago?”

“Er, yes.” Was that embarrassment in his voice?

“Eloped with a schoolteacher, didn’t you? What are you doing back here?”

“It wasn’t quite like that…”

“Really?” There was an edge of skepticism in her voice; she was beginning to relax now. “Listen, why don’t you come in? You can’t just stand there.”

“Thank you.” Ian shut the front door and followed Lucy into the kitchen.

“Tea?” she offered.

“Yes, please,” Ian replied eagerly. It had been a long time since he’d had a proper cup of tea. The TARDIS food machine was good, but it was no substitute for the real thing. At times he had felt like that character Dent in those books he had found in the TARDIS library.

“So, where have you been all this time?” Lucy asked him as she filled up the kettle. “Out of the country?”

What was he to tell her? That he’d been kidnapped by an old man and his young granddaughter and had been dragged from one end of the universe to the other; from the beginning of time to the collapse of civilisation? That he’d met people he had only read about in history books? That he fought monsters that she couldn’t imagine in her wildest nightmares? He settled for a simple yes.

“Anywhere interesting?”

“Oh, plenty of places. America, Mexico, China, France, Rome, Skaro…” The lattermost reference came out accidentally, he still wasn’t used to being back.

“Skaro?”

“Er, yes, it’s a small town in, er, Spain,” he told her, thinking on his feet.

“Oh, right.” In the background Ian could see small wisps of water vapour emerging from the spout of the kettle accompanied by a quiet bubbling noise sounding as the water began to heat up.

“How long have you been living here?” Ian asked, trying to steer the conversation away from his whereabouts for the past two and a half years.

“About two years,” replied Lucy. “When you didn’t turn up the council had to re-let the flat.”

“Yes, of course.”

“I think all your stuff’s in a council warehouse somewhere. I’m not sure exactly. There’s a bunch of letters for you somewhere — in the lounge, I think. I can get them for you if you want.”

“If you wouldn’t mind.” He needed a few moments alone, away from her inquisitorial conversation.

“No, of course not.” She disappeared into the lounge.

He looked around the kitchen. It was tidier than he had ever left it — no piles of exercise books waiting to be marked, no dirty dishes left in the sink, no socks lying on the floor begging to be washed. New cupboards had been fitted and the place was spotlessly clean. It was home, but it wasn’t home. Just as he felt that he recognised something, it would suddenly take on an alien quality — unfamiliar, disconcerting.

“I’ve got them.” Lucy told him, re-entering the kitchen. She handed him a bundle of envelopes of varying sizes and colours, wrapped up in a strong elastic band.

“Thanks,” he took them off her and slipped them into his inside jacket pocket. “I think I’d better be going, I’ve taken too much of your time already.” Now he just wanted to get out. This wasn’t home. Home was a blue box, bigger on the inside than out, with white gleaming walls and corridors that stretched on for infinity. “Thank you for everything, I just can’t…” He stumbled out of the chair he had sat in and almost ran out of the kitchen, his only thought leaving this place.

“But won’t you stay… your tea…”

“I’m sorry…” Ian opened the door. “Good-bye.”

Unnoticed the kettle whistled mournfully to itself.

Brenda Foulkes

* The author wishes to apologise for the Hitchhiker’s reference, or she will when I threaten her with this very large knife — Ed
It was early in 1994, on a Tuesday morning, that the man in the blue police box arrived. He came with the now-familiar wheezing, groaning sound as the battered shape, almost glowing with a livid blue rarely seen these days in London, materialised, quite literally, out of thin air.

The area was open to the sky, but the surroundings of the man in the blue police box as he stepped from his travel machine were those of stone walls. He glanced at his wrist, to a device which might have been a watch and grinned a catlike grin. He had arrived bang on time and in exactly the right place.

Around him, all seemed to be in upheaval. The man in the blue police box knew exactly why, of course. Today was the day that the Crown jewels were being moved to their ever-so-secure accommodation — that with the conveyor belt to keep people moving past all the time.

And so, secure in the knowledge of what he had to do, the man in the blue police box strode into the glorious spring morning and tapped an official-looking woman on the shoulder.

UNIT Files
SUBJECT: 'The Doctor', 'Doctor John Smith'

Occasionally arrives on Earth, usually at times of national crisis.

If the Doctor is involved, look for a blue police box.

No matter what he looks like, or who he is travelling with, listen to what he has to say and follow his advice.

That was the long and short of it, thought UNIT's Captain Jennifer Miles, officer-in-charge of the Crown Jewels operation, as she tapped the 'close screen' and 'classify' codes into the computer keyboard. What she had to do was obey a complete stranger, by order, whether she liked it or not. Still, to be fair, he seemed quite a personable man, even if his sense of humour and pun bordered on the macabre.

The screen briefly flickered up more information, something to do with a Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart. If this was the Lethbridge-Stewart (and, let's face it, thought Miles, there can't be that many) then all he was famous for was something she could now be involved in. His ability and judgement during his time as CO of UNIT were renowned. Bambera had also mentioned the Doctor in connection with Dull Sword at Vortigan's Lake. Now she could follow in their footsteps — this would look good on her record.

"From what I have learned recently," said the man in the blue police box, "there is a great possibility that the Master is going to steal the Crown Jewels."

"Why?" she asked. "What does he need them for? If all I understand is true, surely he could simply travel to a gem-rich planet and just pick them up."

"To be honest," replied the man in the blue police box, "I'm not entirely sure. Perhaps it has to do with the psychic residue of so many people looking at them, looking up to them. All falling apart now, of course."

"But you never can tell — with the Master it might just be spite and malice."

"Fair enough," she responded, beginning to feel somewhat out of her depth, "what do you suggest?"

The excitement and drama that Captain Miles had expected with the Doctor's presence was not what she got. In fact, the man in the blue police box spent three days doing nothing more that helping to rewrite the security program and adjusting the system. To help him, he used various bizarre components, the like of which no scientist Jennifer spoke to had ever seen. (He had told her that they were designed to disintegrate if investigated, "to prevent distortion of the time lines.")

Eventually, the security was so fully redesigned that not only did the jewels have even greater protection, but also that the machinery could detect the appearance of a TARDIS or similar time-altering devices. The Master, she had been assured by the man in the blue police box, would now not be able to fulfil his desire.

So it was four days after the man in the blue police box had arrived that he left. He wandered back across the green to his travel machine, currently in the shape of a blue police box, and pulled the door open. Suddenly he spotted a continuity error — despite what it said on them, he remembered that the doors to the TARDIS actually pushed inside rather than being pulled. But no one had seen, no one realised. He glanced around again and grinned his catlike grin — all was in order, all was prepared. He had carefully calculated how to bypass all security systems, while the devices he had added to the system would later effectively and completely mask his presence.

With a quick stroke of his pointed, black beard, the man in the blue police box re-entered his TARDIS, laughing.

The following day The Guardian ran the headline, "Crown Jewels Stolen", while The Sun read "...". While all was now doubly secure, someone had crept in and wandered of with the lot. No hope of getting them back.

Belatedly, Captain Jennifer Miles checked the Unit file on the Master. The report told her what she needed to know. Hours later she was still sitting, staring at the computer, feeling her fragile world collapse around her into myria and myria of glassy shards.

Of course, the Master didn't steal the Crown jewels — he didn't need them and, anyway, we would've heard about it if he had. The story is one of reliance on computers, of orders delivered by machines to people who didn't know why. Older soldiers, like Brigadier Alistair Gordon Lethbridge-Stewart, would have realised what was going on, but he is not UNIT's 'ideal image' anymore and, anyway, is now too old. But perhaps he, even now, could have told someone what the moral of the story was.

Anthony Wilson
Imagine, for a moment, a different universe...

"A corridor stretches out ahead of me, dark and glooply to my sight, gleaming metal and rusted architecture. There is dirt beneath the clean surfaces. I do not understand it here, perhaps there is some different way of doing things, some history that forces this travesty (in my mind) on their people. When in Rome ... but I can't accept that. Even here, they are human, not cattle or sheep, to follow the same patterns, have the same ideas. Even worker bees can fly to any colour flower without being stung to death. This is worse than real death, for it is death of the imagination."

"The dark figure pauses in his considerations, rests a thoughtful finger on the side of his chin, strokes the measure of rebellion, the music-maker, in his pocket. He watches the scene ahead, staying to the shadows that always exist, even in a world where they force light."

Consider, for a moment, the plot of your everyday or garden cyberpunk/dark, flash s.f. novel. With a dash of black humour. William Gibson, for example, but we want something less fake-tech oriented and a little more human. Bruce Sterling, maybe. Barry Longyear. If these names ring no bells, think of Graeme Curry, a little known name but one still registered in the annals of Doctor Who. But more of him later.

The plot might go as follows. Man arrives in a different, high-tech culture. People look different, they think (or they are forced to think) differently. He is different, an outsider. A stranger in a strange land. He questions the validity of their existence, condemns it, and forms a subversive company — possibly beginning only with himself — to combat it at the most fundamental level — belief. We are introduced to what we consider, as does he, the horrors of their culture. The truth of culture shock is brought home to us by, perhaps, a robot or the perennially popular mad scientist/politician, maybe even a combination of any, or all, of these. Something dear to us is made poisonous in their world-view. Maybe there is some sort of satire on contemporary politics or politicians. Horror strikes and moral outrage occur to us: even though we barely recognise their society, we presume to judge it. We are meant to judge it. With the help of other strange outsiders, the man fights at all levels and eventually manages, at least temporarily, to suppress what he considers a despicable individual or practice and bring about the consciousness of the problem within society itself.

Corruption bites deep at the heart of this sort of novel. Perhaps not fitting for a children's programme, less for the science fiction children's programme, Doctor Who. Now, let us look at Graeme Curry's creation, The Happiness Patrol. This could have been. I believe, one of the most striking moments of contemporary science fiction in the programme's history, and anticipating the major rush of interest in human-oriented (as opposed to machine-obsessed) cyberpunk. On a par, perhaps, with something like Lapalooza/rough — Ed or the underrated Warriors' Gate. Before you ask, no. I didn't think that the episodes as they stood were particularly worthy of praise, but I saw their potential greatness and the powerful storytelling of the man behind them: Graeme Curry. Remember his name.

You know, they considered making it in black and white, even discussed it in a magazine interview. It would have worked far better in monochrome. The dark grey TARDIS could have been sprayed white. The distinction between the black, male Earl, and the white, female Patrol would have been more notable. Fifi would not have been quite so ridiculous [well, I liked him — Ed] and the true horror of this situation would have been brought home to us more clearly. A matter of distinguishing between the clear-cut black and white rather than the various, laughable, vibrant anduel shades of luminous pink. The Kandy Man should have followed the authors directions and been an R & D madman in a white coat rather than a Bertie Basset — although the satire on athletics of having him as the R & D madman with a Bertie head are unmistakable.

It would have worked. It could have worked — to a certain extent it struggled through some drawbacks, used McCoy's flamboyant, musical style to the best advantage and made it work. But is should have worked so much more memorably — for the best reasons — than it did. The novelisation is superb science fiction. It should, I insist, have operated in conscious knowledge of its science fiction leanings; and then, as the Doctor tells Earl in the book: "Come on, the dream's over. Back to the nightmare."

In a different universe, we would have followed.

Corinne Berg
THE Scum

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SEX MAD: Hanlon at
a recent orgy
HANLON EXPOSED!

THE CAREER of Mark Hanlon on the committee of the Oxford University Doctor Who Society has been one long saga of sex, corruption and power struggles.

Of course, there was only so much the valiant body of men and women that constitute the Committee could take. They had to get rid of the slobbering monster, who had for years been embezzling the society, flaunting his many mistresses, indulging in hard drugs, and plotting against anything that breathed.

Their chance came unexpectedly, as the result of one of Hanlon’s own repeated grabs for power.

Hanlon had managed to manoeuvre the committee into making him the President for a day for ‘CV points’ and ‘to honour the work he has done’. It was a position he did not intend to give up.

They contacted The Scum and gave us evidence of his nefarious doings. We promised to help denounce him; they promised to get rid of him. The date we set for his removal was 6th June — D Day.

As the title credits of Planet of Fire 3 rolled, I and my brave photographer stormed into the Miles Room and presented our evidence to Hanlon, who was presiding over the meeting. This evidence included:

- Photographs of Hanlon canoodling with Ms Katy Manning, who was naked.
- The tie which he used to tie up his sex slaves.
- A copy of his debauched book Sex — An Oral History (available for The Scum’s gift shop at £12.99)
- Revealed that though professing to be a supporter of the Labour party he had been involved in electioneering for the Conservative party, and that we had the blue rosette to prove it (this prompted Hanlon to cry ‘You Bastard!’).

Not only will we be meeting in SPC, with a President from that college, but the candidate and the President will be living in the same house. The worrying aspect of the Corpus Christi Mafia of recent years is nothing compared to

the SINISTER PENETRATION of this society and
ULTIMATE CONTROL thereof by denizens of Oxford’s saddest college
— Alice Brewery

At this point, the disgusted and dethroned President of the Society, Mr Anthony Wilson, leapt up and launched a vicious attack on Hanlon.

A much more violent attack was initiated by Mr James Brough, an ex-President of the Society who was disgusted at the way Hanlon had debased the highest office in the land. He pulled out a sword, supplied by his own private arms dealer, and stabbed Hanlon, who died eventually.

Not one to bear a grudge, Wilson gave the dead Hanlon a glowing obituary and everyone settled down for Planet of Fire 4.

Eventually the bastard recovered and he was presented with a tape of new age music. If violence fails — try bribery!

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100 YEARS FROM NOW
The Scum, November 14th 2094

RUMOURS are growing over the imminent return of Doctor Who to our 3D Holoscreens. A spokesperson for Amblin Television said today that they were hopeful of clinching a deal with the BBC. Rumoured to be up for the role of Doctor Who are Macaulay Culkin Ill, Keanu Hasselhof, grandson of the noted thespian Michael, and Jon Pertwee’s lisp, which was preserved after the ‘actor’s’ death in the late 1990s. Here’s hoping! ✨
SPORT: THE DOCTOR WHO ALL-COMERS SOCCER MATCH
MONSTERS TURASH COMPANIONS!

"WE stuffed 'em!" declared the Monsters' manager, Jonathan Powell after the end of what had proved to be a thrilling match. The three goals scored by the Monsters XI proved to be more than enough to bury a weakened Companions team.

The first goal came after a drop-ball situation after K9, who had got stuck in a minor incline in the pitch, had vapourised the ball. A new ball was provided by Mr Powell (though what he was doing with that radio control is any guess). After Peri came on for K9 (a useless lump of silver-coloured cardboard, declared the manager of the Companions XI, Mr Nathaniel Turner afterwards). However, Scaroth cheated in the drop-ball by ripping of his mask as soon as the referee let go of the ball. Jo promptly screamed whereby Scaroth took possession of the ball and started a skillful run towards the companions goal. He then passed to the Master, who passed only to hypnotise Harry before scoring. It was then that Nathaniel Turner, regretting putting a corpse - the dead Adric - in goal.

The second goal came just after half-time. A great surging run by the Cyberleader brought him to a scoring position, just outside the companions box. He struck a mighty shot, which rebounded off both Nyssa and Steven, who being Monsters XI 3 Companions XI 0 placed the ball on the spot. He kicked it, but the moves-like-lightning Raston Warrior Robot (Raston Warrior Robot to his friends) had saved the ball almost before it had left Ian's foot, and had the ball 'in the back of the Companions net quicker than you can say, "Jon Pertwee has an enormous cock."

All in all this was a convincing win for the Monsters. The three Sentinels in defence proved to be an impenetrable wall, and the Emperor Dalek was a fixed pivot of strength in midfield, mainly because nobody had designed the bloody thing to be moved. Next week, the Monsters take on the Doctors XI; the Companions take on Lower Houghton Kindergarten.

The Cyberleader after being sent off opportunity came twenty minutes later. A neat passing manoeuvre between Peri, Tegan and Ian brought the ball in to the opposing penalty box. Ian then passed to Susan, who promptly twisted her ankle and fell over. The referee immediately blow for a penalty. Massive objections were raised by the Monsters team, who protested that Susan always falls over. A fight broke out, resulting in Tegan being sent for an early bath. Mr Nathaniel Turner was soon following her to the changing rooms.

Tension was mounting as Ian

'DR WHO' A RISK TO HEALTH

SCIENTISTS working at the Oxford University Department of Televisual Studies today released a 4,561 page report which revealed that in computer projections, 99.99% of people who are exposed to more than 2 hours a week of 'Dr Who' will die before the age of 120.

Professor K Rawen, Head of OUDTS, today called for a nation-wide ban on all 'Dr Who' related products. A government spokesman refused to comment.

I INVaded FIVE PLANETS IN ONE NIGHT!

THE DALEK SUPREME TELLS HIS STORY OF GALACTIC CONQUEST TO THE SCUM SEE PAGE 34
Dear Aunty Ainley,

I'm a lonely bachelor in my late thirties, living on my own. However, everyone seems to be against me. I've got lots of men with big guns who went to see me dragged through the streets, my name is slandered and libelled throughout the Sirius sector, my only form of human contact is a man with a silly grin who fluffs his lines, and, worst of all, there's this ridiculous monster which is squatting in one of my caves. What can I do?

Yours
Dr Jek

Dear Dr Jek,

I think it's obvious what it is you must do. You must try to get out more, meet people and make friends. I'm sure you'll find that people don't hate you as much as you think they do. I think the fact that you're a bachelor has a lot to do with it. Surely there are some nice girls you could ask out; you take them on picnics and nice walks in the park. I've sent you a leaflet: *Aunty Ainley's Guide To Getting Girls By Kidnapping*. I'm sure it'll come in handy.

Yours
A Foamsi

Dear Foamsi,

Yes, I see your problem. Have you considered buying a Universal Translator? They're frightfully handy in situations like yours. Ask Brock, I think he's got one.

Yours
Aunty Ainley

Dear Aunty Ainley,

I've just met this man. He's slightly mad and humps a lot, but basically he's a good sort. I wondered if there's anything you could suggest to get us closer together. Yours
An Aztec Lady

Dear Aztec Lady,

In situations like this, I always take my prospective partner out for a drink. It helps to break the ice. You take this man of yours to *The Olds Sacrificial Knife & Altar* or, failing that, you could share a nice cup of hot chocolate.

Yours
A New Adventure Writer

Dear Aunty Ainley,

We have a problem. The Cyberace is at the end of its tether. We've been reduced to wandering the galaxy in a space-ship made of toilet rolls, armed only with bad special effects, and we've been reduced to just four in number. Is there any way out of this mess?

Yours
The Cybercontroller

Dear Cybercontroller,

I think you need to relax a little. Take a well earned break and chill out for a while. You have to stop conquering the universe and be cool for a while. You should try having a holiday. I hear Telos is a nice spot this time of year.

Yours
The Honey Monster

Dear Honey Monster,

There aren't many parts going round for 7 foot tall, orange, furry creatures, but I think I can help you. My good friend, John Nathan-Turner, is looking for someone to play Kroagnon in his latest Doctor *Who* serial. You could give that a try.

Dear Hanlon,

Here you go! I've written a problem then why not write to Aunty Ainley at the following address: Aunty Ainley, c/o Gary Meehan, Lincoln College, Oxford. OX1 3DR.

Aunty Ainley concept by Julian Mander and Mark Hanlon

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Aunty Ainley concept by Julian Mander and Mark Hanlon

A U N T Y  A I N L E Y  C O M M E N T S

A previously unknown parasite has attached itself to certain members of the DocSoc committee. The symptoms are obvious: the invading organism takes the form of a furry fungal mass upon its victim's face, chin and neck. There is only one known cure: a packet of razors and an appropriate quantity of shaving foam. Keep your eyes peeled!
Epilogue

IN MANY years time a man sat in a room. He has been existing here for over 9 years; 'living' would be too strong a word. The room is in a building on a planet many miles away. He is not the only person in the building but the function of all the others is only to keep him there. They are his jailers, although they would consider that to be an exaggeration. They are his friends, they tell him. They just want to look after him, once he would almost have liked to believe them. But a lot of things happened once.

Once before he had been a prisoner.
Once he had met a man who had changed that, and other things. With force and threats sometimes, but things had changed nonetheless.

Once he had, against his better judgement, fought for freedom in a universe gone mad.

Once, more than once, he had kissed the woman who, once, had ruled over it.

The woman sat in another room, on another planet. What her name is is not important — the one she has at the moment is her fourth anyway, and presently would mean nothing to anyone. She looks almost lonely, although how seems strange as, with her svelte figure, dark eyes and clipped, black hair, it is hard to see how she could fail to attract companionship. Perhaps she is missing someone.

The Titanic and the iceberg.

He sits at the computer terminal, remembering how long it had taken them to give it to him. He remembers other things also, though none distract him from his task. He remembers the mind-numbing and memory-altering procedures he had been through. He held out longer than anyone the faceless men in the white suits had known, save perhaps one. But that was in another country, and besides that man is dead. This man knows it, for he killed him.

Once he had shouted, shot blindly in a panic and rage that his emotionless soul only rarely allowed to show through.

Once he had felt blood splattering on his hands as he held the body of the man who he, by that time, had almost respected.

Once he had seen his acquaintances (friends?) shot down around him like so many before, like so many more that he had never seen, like so many who no longer existed except in memories. And those who had remembered them were mostly dead as well.

Once he had thought he had been betrayed again.

Once he had realised that it had all been for nothing.

He had given into the procedures after a time, but it is difficult to constrain a mind so unstable. So they constrained the body instead. His name was removed, all traces of his existence forgotten. Nowadays he was spoken of only in whispers, as a rumour. Those who know he did keep quiet in case they should be silenced permanently. He is a lost, lonely man, with only a simple computer terminal to keep him occupied. Perhaps that was all he ever wanted.

History marches on, heedless of those it traps in its patterns.

Despite nine years to rest in, the man is tired. But he cannot sleep, now — he is nearing his goal.

He is surrounded by blank, faceless soldiers.

He accomplishes the impossible, breaking into an unbreakable, high security computer network, leaving no trace of his passing. But then he often accomplished the impossible.

He stands astride a body.

Pulses travel the distance that is space at unimaginable speed. They have a target; they know what their function is.

He smiles.

The shots ring out.

Far away, a computing device superior to all others ever made, clicks into life with a whirl and a buzz.

Once he had been a hero.

Prologue

Sonia Thynn-Owl
From Skonnos

A look back on 1980s Doctor Who from 1989 and 1994

It seems very strange to be writing this article after what seems in some ways to have been a very brief decade. It can’t, surely, be nearly ten years since the starburst title sequence and Peter Howell’s rearrangement of the theme music heralded the start of the 18th season of Doctor Who with The Leisure Hive, a story that, for all its faults, was strikingly different to what had gone before. The props may not have changed all that much, but Tom Baker was somewhat more withdrawn, the incidental music had an altogether more sophisticated quality, and, of course, the titles and theme music had undergone a radical transformation.

It seems even stranger to be retyping the above almost five years after I first did so on my old manual typewriter. It’s now over six years since the 18th season of Doctor Who began, and the beginning of what until very recently was the ‘modern history’ of the series, John Nathan-Turner first appearing as the producer of the programme and applying his very visible ‘signature’ to Doctor Who as it emerged from the 1970s. Now it looks like we are on the verge of a new era, with new names behind the Doctor’s future. Indeed, John Leekley, Peter Wagg and the rest of Spielberg’s creative team at Amblin Entertainment appear to create a new Doctor Who from the stones of the edifice the BBC neglected for so long, a building whose architecture was a mixture of various styles, sometimes with little respect for what had gone before, sometimes a lovely recreation of earlier work, but often missing the crucial details incorporated by the previous custodians.

My perspective has changed too. In 1989, I had seen very few old Doctor Who stories, and had never had access to the pirate videos that were then the hard currency of the programme’s core fans. Thanks to the OUDWS, of course, things have changed. I still own only a few copies of actual stories, as I don’t think I would ever organise my time sufficiently to watch them at the moment. However, over the past five years, I have been able to see most of the series’ episodes; in fact, I have probably watched more Doctor Who during my time at Oxford than at any other point in my life.

Some of my assessments have changed since 1989, when my opinions were made up from impressions left at different ages and the judgements laid down from above from the lights of Doctor Who fandom. We all know now that there are many ways in which a story can be good and bad. The Leisure Hive was not liked by the Heads of Department at the BBC because director Lovett Bickford spent more money on it than he was allowed to. However, when I last saw it in 1992, I thought it one of the more sophisticated Doctor Who stories produced: the incidental music composed by Peter Howell combining with a series of impressive visuals, such as the spacecraft docking sequence and the plant-like realisation of the Argolins, to create a believable world in which a languid society, centred around individual pleasure, fails to stop the evils of the past coming to surface again. Having said that, I do think the Foamasi would have been better wearing business suits, as in some of the original drawings, an image I believe that was rejected by the producer as too close to the self-conscious satirical allusions enjoyed by his predecessor, Graham Williams, in the seventeenth season.

Ah, yes. The decade suddenly lengths considerably when I recall that there was another story in 1980 before The Leisure Hive. The Horns of Nimon, with its numerous shortcomings (and I’m sure I needn’t remind anyone of them), did have
to Perivale Revisited

quite an effect on some children a few years younger than I was at the time. For months after the close of the story, the five-, six- and seven-year olds could regularly be seen stomping around my school playground with their heads attached to their foreheads, fingers pointing at an angle of 45 degrees, declaiming such gems as, "Who dares disturb the Nimon?" or words to that effect. Unfortunately for their young fans, the Production Unit Manager on that story, a Mr Nathan-Turner, wasn't keen on returning the Nimon or any other creatures to have crossed the Doctor's path in the past.

I have seen The Horns of Nimon twice at OULDS, and have enjoyed it both times. It goes out of its way to parody the clichés of Doctor Who that script editor Douglas Adams reportedly hated, but a number of fans thought should remain as necessary elements in the drama whose hackneyed nature should not be pointed out. Corridor scenes involving Soldeed and later Romana and the Nimon are repeated, for example, drawing the viewer's attention to the repetitive nature of the series; the Doctor's 'all-knowingness' is undermined by both Romana and K9 at various points as well, something that was then controversial, and was disliked by John Nathan-Turner. It must be time for the Society to have a look at this story soon (It comes up next year — Ed). The Nimon are simple and effective, and their threat, the consumption of worlds, society by society, planet by planet, a favourite of the Williams era. Importantly, a lot of it is played with more conviction than may of the stories that John Nathan-Turner put out in the later 1980s.

The arrival of John Nathan-Turner as producer certainly sorted out the casual viewers from the fans, and indeed the hard-core fanatics from the regular Who watcher, among the nine- and ten-year olds of my area. The rival attraction of the glossy, filmed Buck Rogers on ITV, coupled with the revolutionary change in the programme's appearance meant that only hardened addicts were watching by Leisure Line Part 3. I think that the news that K9 would be departing was the last straw for many of my age group. I wasn't too bothered about this — while most of my contemporaries were only vaguely aware that at least one actor had played the Doctor before Tom Baker, I, as a Doctor Who Monthly reader, who wrote a synopsis of each story after it was transmitted to form a supplement to The Making of Doctor Who, knew that the series had survived in the past without K9. As we soon found out, it was shortly to do without Tom Baker himself.

Since writing the above, I have seen more evidence to the reception of Doctor Who at the close of the 1970s, and have thought about the problem of the mass audience desertion of 1980 more. I subscribe to what I suspect is becoming a received opinion, that the audience were less than impressed by some of the excesses of the seventeenth season, and the arrival of Buck Rogers simply delivered the final blow, following in the wake of Star Wars as it did, although I suspect Buck Rogers was more vulgar (Judge for yourself — Buck Rogers is being repeated on BBC 2 on Mondays at 5 p.m. — Ed). Doctor Who was to find itself fighting against the perception that it couldn't compete with science fiction films from the US for the ensuing decade. When Michael Grade himself expressed this view during the 1985-86 hiatus, the BBC were fatally seen to endorse this view, even though John Nathan-Turner's request for more money so that the production theme could spend more time and devote more of the BBC's resources to the programme had been consistently rejected.

A difficulty with resisting the Star Wars legacy, was that both Graham Williams and John Nathan-Turner visibly attempted to accommodate it. John Nathan-Turner did this by trying to make Doctor Who more visually sophisticated, but within a few years the video effects and the elegant costume designs (Foamasi and giant cacti not withstanding) had degenerated into a parade of CSO and brightly coloured, barely mobile alien races far worse than the bulk of the monsters created by the visual
effects and costume departments in the 1970s.

Williams was quoted in Doctor Who — The Unfolding Text in 1983 as saying that the strength of Doctor Who was that it was part of the British tradition of character-led drama, but he was a professional and, anticipating R2D2, introduced K9 to appeal directly to the gadget-fascinated child audience the same way that the Philip Hinchcliffe producership might have been losing. But, to return to the 1980s...

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

I noticed I put 'Doctor Who' in quotation marks there, when I was referring to the programme as the name of the lead character. I'm not sure if I would be so strict nowadays, now we know that there several uses of the name in the 1966/67 season, one way or another. Certainly, the orthodoxy of the 1980s was that the Doctor was just 'the Doctor', not 'Doctor Who', but it was only in 1982 that the character was described as such in the closing credits.

I still like The Keeper of Traken, even though we learn who the villain is rather late in the day, and that discovery is reliant, in part 3, on the audience remembering who the Master is and what he looks like, and the make-up applied to Geoffrey Beevers is different to the mask worn by Peter Pratt in The Deadly Assassin. Although the early reviews of the story referred to its 'renaissance' theme, the look is far more generally ancient régime than that: the Fosters are the stylised 18th century peasants, and Trakenite society seems far from the ideal world that the Consuls so devotedly defend. Harmony for the 'Whoniverse' of Christopher H Bidmead was the cause of stagnation, breeding the decay on which the Master could feed.

An article by Philip McDonald in DWM a couple of years ago argued that entropy was not just the theme of Logopolis but the whole 18th season. Certainly The Keeper of Traken is about social decay, the veneer of perfection obscuring the moral corruption of the Trakenites. That it is the Trakenite leader who is most aware of the problems of his society, Tremas, who becomes the raw material for the Master's regeneration at the end of the story leaves the viewer in a suitably pessimistic mood for Logopolis.

I don't now think that Logopolis depends as much on a knowledge of Who lore as I once thought, although it is still a bonus. Most of the time it copes well with the fact that money had largely run out by the time it went into production; Logopolis the planet appearing as fragile as the fabric of the universe that the computations of the Logopolitans were defending. The regeneration is still my favourite, the most organic interpretation of the Doctor's periodic transformations, and the flashback sequence (the first of many to appear in the 1980s) for once is dramatically valid, the viewer being reminded how much the Doctor's circumstances had changed since the fourth Doctor had struggled up from the UNIT lab floor, over six years ago.

1987 was the year in which there were the most Doctor Who repeats transmitted in the 1980s. The fact that the BBC repeated seven stories — including four old ones in the BBC2 Five Facts of Doctor Who season — has to be a factor in the ratings success of the first Peter Davison season. Doctor Who is something of an acquired taste. The magnetism of several weeks of Daleks, coupled by the format's originality, secured viewers in 1963 and 64 (and helped to introduce Patrick Troughton); they were held to the programme almost by the fact that it was broadcast almost every single week of the year. In the era of nine-month gaps (1985-86 being something of a special case) screening of repeats is vital to remind the public that the programme still exists. The lack of repeats since 1984 bears at least some responsibility for the low ratings that Doctor Who has suffered since Season 23.

One can go too far in pursuing the absence of Doctor Who repeats as the lost cure for the programme's ills following 1985. The Five Facts of Doctor Who helped weaken the association of Tom Baker with the role — a wise precaution if Peter Davison was to successfully overcome his predecessor's seven-year signature. As those who have read Marcus Hearn's articles on press coverage of the programme in DWM...
may have gathered, not even John Nathan-Turner’s publicity machine could stop newspapers from identifying Tom Baker as the Doctor until well into Davison’s time in the role, by which time the actor had already signaled his intention to leave.

However, the idea that the public will flock back to showings of old Doctor Who stories is a false one; the ratings for the screenings of The Daemons in autumn 1992 were significantly lower than those of the Gerry Anderson series and The Man from UNCLE which preceded it, and not even Genesis of the Daleks, which followed The Daemons the following January, could improve the series’ poor showing. At least Planet of the Daleks, shown on BBC 1 last autumn against Coronation Street, achieved figures comparable to the Sylvester McCoy seasons in what had become BBC 1’s scheduling graveyard. The decline in the appeal of Doctor Who through the 1980s affected not just the new episodes as they went out, but the older stories which had begun with a strong hold on public affection.

1982 saw the Peter Davison era start in earnest, and saw — amid a fair amount of comment, including a Guardian editorial — the translation of the programme to weekdays. While it worked in the short term, attracting a large number of viewers from the still at that time very popular Nationwide which preceded it, the change in day from Saturday meant that the series was uplifted from what was popularly seen as its roots and, furthermore, lost part of its identity. The shifting from Monday and Tuesday, to Tuesday and Wednesday, to Thursday and Friday, to Saturday at 5.20 p.m. (too early for a 45 minute slot as acting as a ‘hook’ to the evening’s viewing) and then 5.45 p.m. (opposite The A Team: a phenomenally successful programme which had built up its audience substantially during the 18 month hiatus), and thence to the ‘death slot’ against Coronation Street for three years, has meant that the production team have for some time been unable to target the programme at a specific audience group. The ever-changing scheduling has meant that Doctor Who is no longer sacred.

It was still sacred enough in 1983 for the BBC to sanction a 20th anniversary special, The Five Doctors, after the 20th season proper. I was still dissatisfied with the 1982 stories, Arc of Infinity didn’t work as an opener, fusing The Deadly Assassin, The Three Doctors and The Keeper of Traken into a cocktail heavy for some fans, but failing to deliver for this one. I liked Snakedance as tying up the loose ends from Kinda and rescuing the Mara from that awful snake, and Enlightenment as a very intelligent and truly fantastic story, but Mawdryn Undead failed for me because of its undue dependence on the show’s history, with its use of the regeneration concept, resurrection of the Brigadier, and so forth. Logopolis drank the blood of Doctor Who past and gained life; Mawdryn was well ... undead. The Five Doctors lay somewhere between these two, reminding me now of many of the protracted TARDIS scenes during this time, such as Tegan’s (supposed) leaving scene in The Visitation — all a little too cozy and domestic.

John Nathan-Turner used to talk of early in the 80s of Doctor Who as an ‘action-drama’ series. It was commonly understood by fans at the time that he was talking of a ‘return’ to the Pertwee era as the collective fan memory comprehended it ten and more years ago, a series with ‘realistic’ performances and uncompromising action scenes, together making ‘serious’ drama, unlike the allegedly juvenile and frivolous excesses of Tom Baker who, under the producership of Graham Williams.

Subsequent exposure to the diverse forms of televised Doctor Who from the 70s has made this interpretation of the Pertwee and Tom Baker eras obsolete, and cast doubt on what Nathan-Turner was trying to do. It would suggest that when Nathan-Turner spoke of ‘action-drama’ he was in fact thinking more in terms of his earlier background on All Creatures Great and Small, a series which avoided being serial melodrama like the soap operas, but at the same time, like its successors One by One on the BBC and Heartbeat on ITV, derived most of its appeal from human interest stories set in specific times and locations.

He may have intended to combine elements of this with more traditional aspects of the programme, such as technological hardware, alien species and the rest, in order to create a new Doctor Who that Nathan-Turner believed could do well in the context of the early 80s, when the glossy American soap operas reigned supreme. Indeed, for much of the decade, Nathan-Turner was working on the BBC’s answer to Dallas and Dynasty, Impact, alongside Hazel Adair and Peter Ling, creators not only of Compact, the 60s series to which Impact was to be a sequel, but of the notorious Crossroads.

This interest of Nathan-Turner’s in human interest drama affected his producership of Doctor Who in a variety of ways. Early on, he asked Johnny Byrne, series consultant of All Creatures to be his script editor; Byrne refused, allowing Christopher H Bidmead to come in and add a much needed scientific and social awareness into the 18th season. When Bidmead left, John Nathan-Turner is alleged to have then invited Ted Rhodes to succeed him. Rhodes had been script editor of All Creatures but turned John Nathan-Turner’s invitation down, instead becoming a senior officer on that ill-fated vessel, Triangle.

More generally, as I noted in my original article, early 80s Who did become ‘cozy and domestic’. Bidmead and Nathan-Turner had set up a larger, more ‘vulnerable’ TARDIS crew by the end of the 18th season,
broken badge, hammering home the fact that the Doctor had had to pay a heavier price for this week’s victory. He, and the audience, had been reminded that people die. Yet the demands of the programme’s adventure format required that Adric’s death be all but forgotten when it came to the next story, *Time Flight*, a dismal failure by common consent, and arguably John Nathan-Turner’s first major miscalculation — a few scenes shot on Concorde does not additional viewers make, particularly when the budget demands a large number of studio exteriors inappropriate to the story’s ambitions.

That year [1983] also saw my discovery of ‘fan-dom’. Having heard of DWAS, and having made up my mind to join, I at last found their address (they were a much more sere and organised in those days) in an issue of *Frontier Worlds* — a successful, but now defunct, fanzine — I had bought at *Forbidden Planet* in London the year before, or more, to be precise, in a send up of the DWAS newsletter, *Celestial Toyporn*, rechristened, for the occasion, *The Incestual Boysroom*. I recommend it to you (ex-) DWAS member totally fed up with their organisational skills....

I was already buying the early *DWB*, and the contrast between it and *CT* were immense. *CT* claimed to be a ‘news’ publication, but its advertising copy ratio was heavily biased towards the former, stories being very rarely developed beyond one-liners. *DWB* started as a reaction to this incarnation of *CT*, it was only when *CT* got its act together that *DWB*, over the next year, took to its glossy, sensational format which has elevated its circulation to several thousand.

The warfare which resulted in the competition between *DWB* and DWAS has always struck me as sad and unnecessary. It is probably a result of the mass-marketing of *Doctor Who* as a cult, which reached its height after 1983, which has dragged an inflated, but confused, fan body in its wake. DWAS, whose founders after all pioneered *Doctor Who* as a ‘high concept’ are still having problems with an age where there are several paths an individual can take if he or she wants to find out more about *Doctor Who*. DWAS members still generally supports the Society’s conservative stance, as it tries to stay out of controversy, but *DWB* is always vocal in its criticisms.

*DWB* attacks DWAS for providing a poor service to its members, but, when they improve, accuses them of over-involvement with market forces, copying the achievements of *DWB*, which is now a growing commercial empire. Dreamwatch Media, and has not been a ‘fanzine’ for some years now. DWAS also opposes the political origins of *DWB*, founded, as it seems to have been, with the covert support of Ian Levine (uncredited story consultant from 1980 to 1985, veteran fan, and intimate of John Nathan Turner during the early 1980s), which has turned it at times into a vehicle against Nathan-Turner, as if he were a malicious demon whose purpose in life was to destroy *Doctor Who*. Such an attitude reveals a poor understanding of the problems of producing a long-running television programme in the changing environment of the 1980s, and perhaps a willingness by those who know better to mislead the less cunning fans of *Doctor Who* into thinking that there are simple answers to problems way beyond the sphere of influence of even the most active editor of a small magazine.

I don’t think that I was alone in drifting through the *Doctor Who* of 1983, 1984 and into 1985 in a state of near-euphoria. Things may have been wrong with the world, such as the African famine, or *Doctor Who* was an institution, bowed and scraped to by BBC presenters, and seemed likely to go on forever. Seven million viewers per episode may not have been the highest or most healthy figure, but the success of the programme in America would guarantee the existing 26 episodes a year at least, and nothing could go wrong, could it?... Good old Michael Grade changed that. Suddenly, *Doctor Who* was an out-of-date children’s series, only fit to be smirked at or mocked. Most non-fans I knew thought that the programme was finished. Although I think there was little doubt that the show would rematerialise on our screens, there were a few nervous moments during that 18-month postponement, some of which were justified, such as the...
'fourteen episode season', and some of which weren't, such as the story that Colin Baker had been sacked and wouldn't be in the new season. This rumour, as later events proved, unfortunately had a good deal of substance.

According to a 'interview' Ian Levine gave to DWB in 1992, John Nathan-Turner encouraged the press to think Michael Grade was to blame for the postponement of the series, firstly because Grade had already been in the news over the attempt by Thames Television to buy future seasons of Deilas from its maker Lorimar — overturning a long-standing agreement with the BBC — and also because he didn't want to antagonise the real enemy of Doctor Who, his immediate superior, Jonathan Powell, then Head of Drama and subsequently the Controller of BBC 1.

The statements that Michael Grade came out with fatally damaged Doctor Who as an ongoing series, the BBC hierarchy itself bursting the bubble that had protected its special status on television, drawing attention to its flaws without actually doing anything to remedy the situation. That the rumours floating around fandom were clearly generated 'backstage' makes the whole business more sordid. A riven Doctor Who world was revealed, where the producer was isolated within the BBC Drama Department and at the same time had moved dangerously close to the makers of fan opinion at a time when Levine, from within the production office and through his ally, Gary Levy of DWB, was manipulating fandom to suit his own personal, somewhat reactionary agenda, further destabilised the series at a time when it needed support.

My feelings have always been somewhat ambivalent towards Colin Baker's Doctor. I was quite warm towards his portrayal, but sometimes I think he went too far over the top in his use of what can be called 'cultivated outrage'. Some- time his 'allieness', while of similar manner to Tom Baker's characterisation during his first two seasons, albeit with more arrogance, seems to have deterred the audience enough for the audience figures to drop by nearly three million in the first six weeks of the 22nd season. The 45 minute episodes, all to some degree badly-paced, probably also share the responsibility. Perhaps, after an 18 month gap between seasons and a badly structured, 14 part 'epic' — which caused viewers to switch off after episode one — very few would have been surprised had Doctor Who not survived Colin Baker's dismissal.

I still feel that The Trial of a Time Lord was a bad idea, showing that Nathan-Turner and his superiors had not learned from the mistakes of The Tripods, the overextended adaptation of John Christopher's novels which Doctor Who replaced on autumn Saturdays. As for Colin Baker, I had the good fortune to ask him at a convention appearance what he would have done had the BBC said to him at the end of the 806 that they would like him to continue as the Doctor, but they would like him to play the part differently. Colin rightfully said that the situation would not have occurred, as the BBC doesn't work like that, but obviously he would have done what his employers told him to do, as indeed he always had.

The character of the sixth Doctor was the creation of an overconfident production team who misunderstood what Doctor Who was all about, and was endorsed by a Head of Drama who thought that Doctor Who was a dated embarrassment. As a result, it became exactly that.

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

I wouldn't say now that Paradise Towers could have been brilliant, but it could have been made with competence. Richard Briers admitted that he didn't take his role seriously — and neither did anyone else as a result. The costumes were straight out of the worst excesses of a Bob Blox series. Performances in a fantasy series must have conviction, and those in Paradise Towers didn't. As my grandfather said to me when watching part 3, "This used to be serious — now they've turned it into a comedy." Paradise Towers needed to be bleak. Its makers couldn't come to terms with the situation the scripts demanded, and it remained in a no-man's land between comedy and straight drama. It is questionable whether the story should have been attempted at this stage in the programme's history. Delta stretched the audience's expectations at a time when a more conservative approach with regard to story content may have been wiser. Experimentation can be tried more easily in a self-contained 50 minute episode than in a 3 x 25 minute serial. The format itself was dated by this time, as Zenith was showing with Inspector Morse and his two hour investigations on ITV. I wouldn't say that Dragonfire was among the best Doctor Who stories produced, but at least its story-line was uncomplicated and most of the performances were sound.

Nevertheless, I received a pleasant surprise as the 25th season unfolded. It was much better than the previous two years and, for the first time in more than a decade, there were new developments — as opposed to consolidation — of the ongoing subplot concerning the Doctor's identity. This theme has, of course, extended into the 26th season. Can the Doctor be a contemporary of the founders of the Time Lord race, Russian and Omega? Can Lady Peinforte in Silver Nemesis have been right when she implied that the Doctor was more than just a Time Lord? These are just two of the questions that have been raised in the two most recent seasons.
With hindsight, one can see that the subject of the Doctor's identity was overhyped in 1988 and 1989. The line, "I'm beginning to wish I hadn't started all this," in Remembrance of the Daleks was wonderfully amusing, considering its possible implications for the continuity. Andrew Cartmel was trying to break away from, but the end result of the Cartmel approach was that the Doctor simply found himself in a straitjacket even more binding than that made by Ian Levine and John Nathan-Turner in the early 1980s, and the less comprehensible. The Doctor must be a man who makes moral choices, and his godlike actions in Remembrance, Sutee Nemesis and perhaps also Curse of Fenric imply that he had very little difficulty wreaking apocalyptic vengeance on his foes. In the long term, he is simply less interesting, as the fascination of the New Adventures books with the 'darker Doctor' has shown. It would have been better just to have downplayed the mythology with which the three seasons before McCoy and Cartmel arrived had been saturated; but, by 1987, Doctor Who present could not easily be disentangled from Doctor Who past. There were too many audiences to satisfy, and the task could not be achieved.

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

So, here we are in the middle of the 1990s. Seasons 25 and 26 did strengthen the programme's 'liberal' values, but they tended too far towards the extremes of political correctness. The ecology themes of Battlefield and The Curse of Fenric were laid on with trowels. Ace was an attempt to bring some reality into the series' fantasy, but she was an unrealistic character — no street-urchin talked or dressed like that — and, heresy of heresies, Sophie Aldred was really too old for the part. I sometimes wish that Allison from Remembrance had been the new companion, providing a rational foil to the anarchic seventh Doctor.

Instead we had what was in some ways an unbalanced line-up, the Doctor and Ace both standing outside the system: Ace as a sanitised vision of an uneducated anarcho-terrorist, her guardian angel being the god-in-waiting figure of the Doctor, dealing for much of the time with problems he has set up before. This has an appeal on paper, and some appeal on screen, but the seventh Doctor was flawed in the eyes of the viewers because he began as a clown, sending the part, and the series, up. I don't think that this was Sylvester's intention. I understand that there are out-takes from Dragonfire floating about which show the voice of the gallery urging him to overplay every last action. However, this is the shape in which Sylvester McCoy's Doctor was first encountered by the viewers (a last, loyal five million) and it was an image perpetuated all the way through his run through the part, the Doctor Who caption slides for his tenure always showing him striking a comedic pose. The seventh Doctor was, of course, fighting a losing battle — being scheduled against Coronation Street was the kiss of death — and John Nathan-Turner's by now flagging publicity machine had never been enough to secure the image of the relatively popular Peter Davison Doctor.
of McCoy’s interpretation.

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

I am not going to be embroiled in the ‘John Nathan-Turner: Good or Bad?’ argument here. I think my opinions of his decisions have been stated or implied above. Perhaps someone else could write an article about the man for the next Tides of Time.

On the creative side, the three script editors of the decade (excluding Douglas Adams and Anthony Root) have all brought a distinct flavour to the stories which they have supervised. Christopher H Bidmead, in season 13, was probably trying to make the programme more ‘serious’ after a year under Douglas Adams, but I feel he was wrong in trying to tie the programme down to ‘hard science’. While good, scientific stories have their place, attempting to place Doctor Who on a purely scientific foundation, as Terrance Dicks complained while writing State of Decay, begins to appear somewhat petty. Doctor Who, with its reliance on time travel and regeneration, deals in meta-science, and it is easy for Bidmead to forget this. Eric Saward was an advocate of the ‘rattling good yarn’, but not all the stories which he edited achieved this status; many suffered from poor structuring – viewers’ patience being tested by the interminably long TARDIS scenes, which Andrew Cartmel, his successor, has found superficial. Cartmel had a shaky start, with Time and the Rani I suspect owing little to his influence and the rest of Season 24, as previously stated, being of uncertain direction. However, he has attracted several good, new, young writers to the programme, such as Wyatt, Briggs, Ben Aaronovitch, Kevin Clarke and Rona Munro, who I hope will contribute under the new production regime anticipated.

Christopher H Bidmead, whom I was far too harsh on five years ago. Bidmead was writing what I termed ‘meta-science’—it’s just that he was doing it using concepts with some scientific validity. In the computer age, he was the script editor Doctor Who needed. It is a pity he could not work with John Nathan-Turner, and there was no money available to give him, and his successors, the full-time assistants that they needed. John Nathan-Turner was a presentation man, but not even the most thorough producer or director could do much with bad scripts which were still unfinished when the director joined the production, as many in the Cartmel era seem to have been.

There is a new production regime imminent, it seems, but it is not of the sort I was expecting in 1989. Amblin, according to some reports, will be unable to employ very many British writers as their proposed series of Doctor Who will be made in California, under US union rules. This is a pity, not just for the writers mentioned above, but for those from this country who will be prevented from contributing to a television series that has been part of the British national fabric for a long time, although I am sure that there are many American screenwriters who are very capable of writing for the series.

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

I would no longer agree that the 1980s were an exciting time for the programme, for the 1980s were a decade of decline, as the viewers deserted and the production team lost the ability to make the series. The tragedy is that the plug was pulled just as writers such as Marc Platt, Ian Briggs and Rona Munro were painfully learning how to make Doctor Who, helped by directors Nicholas Mallet (as far as Fenric was concerned) and Alan Wareing. Whether they could have done any good is doubtful, as the general audience had lost interest. Doctor Who—for reasons which I suspect Anthony and James will go into their series of articles this year—ceased to be a popular programme, and a barrier of incomprehension rose between it and its audience. In the 1980s, Doctor Who, devised as a programme to entertain, inform, and stimulate a wide audience, stopped doing the task it has performed so successfully for nearly two decades, and for whatever reason, it failed.

Matthew Kilburn
Based on an article first appearing in The Tides of Time #1

...
UNTITLED

The NEW Doctor awoke.

The room spun around him. To say that he had a headache would have been a gross understatement.

His surroundings finally coalesced into the unmistakable shape of a control room.

It was decorated in shades of beige and a pale maroon, the kind of decor that would cause the word 'tasteful' to resign its job immediately and go and set fire to the nearest public building. This, in turn, would be the kind of metaphor that should it ever become public, might cause the whole concept of metaphor to elapse to the nearest inhospitable planet, hand in hand with the concept of recursion, which we'll be hearing more about later.

Anyway, it was only the hexagonal shape of the main console and the presence of the occasional roundel on the wall that gave the Doctor even the slightest hint that he was aboard a TARDIS. Was it his TARDIS though? It certainly didn't look like it.

He glanced at his watch.

His eyes bulged. It had been five years since he and Ace had walked into the distance on Perviaca downs. He remembered nothing of the intervening period, his mind a bank of fog. Where was 'Ace'? Somehow, he knew she'd gone her own way, but when, where and why, he knew not.

He felt different. He glanced down at himself; his new too small crumpled beige linen suit was in tatters, exposing bits of flesh here and there. He'd regenersted again. Why or when, he didn't know. Perhaps he'd banged his head on the console again. After all, it did seem to have moved to the other end of the room.

His thoughts turned to the TARDIS computer. It bloomed and declared, "Hi there!" in an over-cheery American accent. It hadn't done that before. He'd always preferred to use the telepathic circuits.

"Wardrobe," he thought.

"Wardrobe!" the computer exclaimed joyfully, his Scottish tones gone, replaced by an over-theatrical English accent (again).

An entire wall lit up with the images of a selection of clothes. He selected a pair of maroon

TIDE OF TIME #15

crushed velvet fleeces, a purple and olive striped shirt and a mustard yellow suede (not suede) jacket with lapels wide enough to attract the interest of the Civil Aviation Authority. At least this latest regeneration had preserved his impeccable dress sense.

He changed quickly into his new outfit and staggered over to the console. The masses of brightly coloured buttons were gone. Instead, each panel simply contained a large screen and a mouse. The Doctor picked a random panel. A large multicoloured logo was gyrating on the screen, accompanied by the words, 'Microsoft Windows for TARDIS', version 16.7. The Doctor clicked the mouse and a selection of smaller logos filled the screen.

He pondered the display for a few seconds and then double-clicked on the deanimationisation icon. A massage box appeared, informing him that the drive system was not installed.

He thumped the console and strode purposefully to the interior door. It slid open for him with a whirring noise (what had happened to the tum?) revealing the inside of a lift. What had happened to the corridor?

"Please state your destination," said the lift politely, but transatlantically.

"Engine room," replied the Doctor curtly.

"Thank you for using travelling; have a nice day," boomed the lift as it deposited the Doctor inside the cavernous engine room.

The problem was immediately obvious. All three of the TARDIS's drive units had been unplugged and pushed up against the far wall, a plastic sheet draped carelessly across them.

In the centre of the room, where the drives should have been, sat two young men in easy chairs, separated by an expensive coffee table. Behind them was a large screen and a flimsy cardboard backdrop.

One of the men bore a remarkable resemblance to James Brough. This was probably because he actually was James Brough.

The other bloke was me. "Hello and welcome to TARDIS 101," I was saying to a small TV camera. "This week, my guest is James Brough, President of Oxford University Doctor Who Society from 1992 to 1999, slightly later on in 2012. As usual, we're discussing the latest favourite moments from Doctor Who."

"What are you doing in my engine room?" demanded the Doctor.

"Making a TV program," I replied, slightly sarcastically.

"I'm here?" exclaimed the Time Lord.

"I'm here," I answered, with cross arms and legs the other way.

"Yes. You're supposed to be making a TV show of old Doctor Who," I maintained.

"I'm aware of that," replied the Doctor, displaying unreasonable irritation. "But, that still doesn't explain what you're doing here."

"That's the whole point of TARDIS 101," I explained. "We're re-making all the worst bits of Doctor Who to entertain the Friday night after closing-time audience."

The Doctor's features went from crimson to maroon. Then, without another word, he stormed out. The producer scurried after him, waving reams of paper about.

I turned to my guest. "Now, James, your first candidate for TARDIS 101:"

"Mel, Mel, Mel, Mel, Mel, Mel," interrupted James. "Oh, and Bonnie Langford."

"Why?"

"Well, Mel because she's Bonnie Langford and Bonnie Langford because she's Mel."

"I see," I replied noncommittally, inserting a suitably timed pause. "Unfortunately, I can't let Mel into TARDIS 101 for the simple reason that she's already in there."

James shrugged disinterestedly.

"You're really not interested?"

I glanced at my notes. "Next we come to your least favourite story."

"The Mark of the Rani," my guest replied.

"And why?"

"Because it's shit!" grumbled James curtly.

Now it was my turn to skew. "Fair enough."

I opened the door to TARDIS 101 and letting in the appropriate idea.

I re-adjusted my position in the seat, which was designed for looks, not comfort, and continued. "Now we come to production personnel."

James Brough re-adjusted his own posture and answered. "June Hudson, for believing that anyone would take seriously a monster consisting of a man in a black body stocking, a body-
fitted bull mask and twelve inch heels."
"No, that's not going in," I declared.
"And why not?" demanded my guest, leaning forward aggressively.
"Because I happen to be the Horns of Nimue."
James Brough opened his mouth to argue, but, as soon as he spotted my hand hovering over his microphone control, he closed it.
I smiled in accomplishment and announced, "Next!"
James remained leaning forward and spoke.
"A talentless self-loving oik, with a nose the size of Concordia and hair like an albino bristle-pad, whose idea of thoughtfulness is to rub the back of his neck when he forgets his lines and splutters at people."
"You're not talking about Pertwee by any chance?"
"Purish the thought," lied my guest with an ironic smile.
"In he goes," I declared, cranking open TAR-DIS 101 and lobbying in an unfortunate Pertwee. I turned back to James. "And finally?"
"TARDIS 101."
"TARDIS 101?"
"TARDIS 101."
Several BBC executives, wearing a lime green and pink Light Entertainment tie, burst in, brandishing a large anti-aircraft gun. "We'll have no self-referentialism here," he declared, blowing James Brough's head off with accomplishment. Accomplishment, being a pacifist, was having nothing of this and stormed out in anger.
"Oh, get out!" bellowed Anger, "I'm not a bloody tax service."
"And no bloody Mechanisms either," roared the BBC executive, destroying both accomplishment and anger in a single blast. The single blast retained a low profile, fearing for its personal safety.
However, the low profile shimmered and transformed itself into a man in a shiny jacket, looking not unlike Michael Palin in the classic "Monty Python Blackmail sketch," although not too similar to him for legal reasons.
The man clapped his hands together obsequiously and turned to face the camera. "Hello and welcome to Galactic Challenge," he oozed. "Tonight's star prize is a week as Supreme Master of the Universe. How about that?"
The studio audience whooped and cheered.
The host extended a hand in my general direction. "Without further ado, let's meet our contestant," he declared.
I found myself on the move, the set of TAR-DIS 101 rotating away, revealing a new, and considerably less tasteful, set. Seated behind two brightly coloured desks were the Doctor and my producer.
The host performed a couple of minutes of introductions, too mind-numbingly tedious to elaborate on, and then moved on to the first question. "Who created the Daleks?"
"Ferry Nation," buzzed the producer with pretentious overconfidence.
"No."
The producer opened his mouth to protest, but the Doctor cut across him. "I believe it was Davros."
"Correct. How many segments of the Key to Time are there?"
"Six," buzzed the producer.
"Actually," interrupted the Doctor, "there are seven; I dropped one and it broke in two."
"Seven is correct," confirmed the host, rolling his dr's like Magnus Magnusson does.
The producer quietly simmered.
"Who performed the lead in the 2005 performance of Doctor Who and the Daleks: The Musical?"
"Terry Christian," buzzed the Doctor.
"Correct."
"That's not fair!" whinged the producer.
"He's got a bloody time machine!
"Stop! This is getting far too silly," boomed the thick Lancashire accent of a thin man with a pony tail, who'd just appeared out of nowhere.
"Oh! That's my line!" complained a pompous man in an early seventies army officer uniform. I reappeared from behind the contestants' podium and, summing up my epistolary powers, placed a large plot hole directly beneath the army officer. He fell through it.
I proceeded to place a similar plot hole underneath the other man, but it immediately disappeared. There was only one possible explanation. "So, Meetmail Editor, we meet again," I declared.
"Indeed we do," declared the Editor.
"What is your business? I enquired. Adding dodgy comments to people's stories was one thing, but making personal appearances in the plot was a whole new development.
"I'm stopping your story," replied the Editor snarling.
"You think so?"
"It's my bloody magazine."
Suddenly, there was a loud pop and a man dressed entirely in maroon appeared out of thin air, without even waiting for me to provide him with a hole in the plot to enter through.
"Yes, but it's my Society," declared the newcomer.
"Actually," interrupted the Doctor, "it's my Society."
"Your Society?" queried the man in maroon sceptically.
"You don't think all these people come along every week to watch you, do you?" pointed out the Doctor.
The Doctor's fourth incarnation appeared on a nearby monitor in front of a psychadelic swirl; he never makes personal appearances these days. "Actually," he began, "you now come to mention it..."
"Enough!" boomed the glint-clad quiz show host. "This is my show, so we'll decide the matter with a tie breaker question." He strode up to the main screen and depressed a grossly overproportioned button. Categories flashed across the screen, finally settling on 'obscure progressive rock of the late eighties and early nineties.'
The host removed a card from a slot beneath the screen. "Fingers on buzzers, now," he declared. "Right, which album featured the Cardiacs' 1988 single, 'Is this the life?'
"On Land and in the Sea," buzzed the Doctor.
"Wrong!"
I pressed my own buzzer. "A Little Man and a House and the Whole World Window," I answered. It was very much the Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch of rock album titles.
"Correct!" boomed the host and, with a click of the mouse, the Editor, the man in maroon and the fourth Doctor were gone. Being the writer has its advantages, you know.
"And now, back to Galactic Challenge," declared the host to one of the cameras.
As I'm sure you, the reader, don't want to be bored by the remaining 37 questions, I'll make use of the proverbial fast forward device to take you to the end of the show.
The host was hoversing around the Doctor on the finale podium. "Well, I'm afraid you don't get to spend a week as Supreme Master of the Universe," he oozed.
"Probably just as well," replied the Doctor dryly, "I imagine the paperwork would be a nightmare."
The host collapsed into artificial hysteries. "Oh, you are a card, Doctor." He turned to the audience. "Isn't it great to have a contestant with a sense of humour, eh." Patronising bastard.
"OK," oozed the host, "let's see what you have won.
"There was an over the top fanfare, followed by a dramatic pause.
"Yes," boomed the host, "You're the new Doctor Who!"
Hysterical cheering emanated from the audience.
The new Doctor awoke.
The room spun around him. To say that he had a headache would have brought whole new dimensions of meaning to the word 'understatement."
His surroundings finally coagulated into the unmistakable shape of a central room...
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