

THE TIDES OF TIME



Number 49

Trinity Term 2023

End of an Era

THE TIDES OF TIME

Number 49

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THE TIDES OF TIME issue 49 for Trinity Term was published on 24 May 2023 by the Oxford Doctor Who Society, a registered student club of the University of Oxford.

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Endings and new beginnings

It's time for a change at *Tides* HQ

Hello everyone, and thanks for picking up this issue of *The Tides of Time*! It's been another exciting year for *Doctor Who*, with new details of the upcoming specials and Series Fourteen promising a lot of excitement to come! There's certainly been a lot of excitement among the Oxford Doctor Who Society, so fingers crossed it all pays off when the specials begin in just a few months time!

Despite it now being the RTD2 era, you'll notice that it's Jodie's final scene that gets pride of place on the cover! As mentioned in my last editorial, Ncuti Gatwa ended up bumping the Thirteenth Doctor at the last minute in *Tides* 48, so it seemed right to give her this one in return. Inside this issue, you'll find out about the society's predictions and thoughts for *The Power of the Doctor*, as we give the Thirteenth Doctor one last send off.

It's not just Jodie who's a cover star this time, however, with the Fourteenth Doctor acting like the Watcher on the back. Since the last issue, it's been clarified that David Tennant will be playing a numbered incarnation when he returns to the show, and as probably the only opportunity they'll have to be *Tides'* incumbent Doctor, he needed a spot too. While we're gradually finding out more about the show to come, there's still a lot we don't yet know - but you can see if you can decipher anything new from set photos printed in this very issue.

Aside from Jodie, David and Ncuti, we've also got plenty of other Doctors in this issue! Myself and John Salway review adventures from a host of different incarnations in Big Finish audios, while there are also features about stories from the era of the First and Second Doctors. John is also finishing off his Time Lord Victorious reviews in this issue, just in time for the BBC to announce Doom's Day - which sounds like a very similar project. Whether he'll review this multimedia story as well remains to be seen - we'll let him have a little bit of a break first!

Speaking of breaks, it's been about six years since I first got involved in *Tides*, and five since I became Editor. With a new era around the corner, and *Tides* about to hit the big 50, I thought that now was the right time to move on. I won't be going too far from fanzines, however - I'm set to take over as the new editor of *Celestial Toyroom* at the Doctor Who Appreciation Society. Even though I'll be writing elsewhere, I hope to pop in occasionally to help contribute to *Tides* issues put together by my successors!

Happy *Tides* and places,

James

Prepping a Power trip

Have our members refined their guesswork in time for Chibnall's last episode?

By Ian Bayley

The *Power of the Doctor*, as the last story of the Thirteenth Doctor and the Chibnall era in general, was always going to be historically significant. Even without its position as a celebratory BBC special, it is officially numbered as *Doctor Who's* 300th story, and the society's members treated it with that importance. As we have done every series since Series 10, we invited our members, including many freshers new to organised fandom, to submit predictions in sealed envelopes or online following our Michaelmas Week Two meeting. We knew that the episode would feature a regeneration and the return of Tegan and Ace, but also some epic plot involving the Master, the Daleks and the Cybermen. Companions Dan and Yaz would need to leave too, and the 87 minute runtime made it just about possible that five years of dangling plot threads could be tied up in this episode.

Many members focused on the events leading up to the regeneration, which, naturally, we expect to be dramatic. Thirteen's predecessor, for instance, wished that his essence, and perhaps his whole time as the Doctor, be defined by his final on-screen moments: "who I am is where I stand". Similarly, many thought that only the greatest of the Doctor's adversaries should be able to kill the Doctor and since the Master (Four), Cybermen (Twelve) and Daleks (Ten) had each done it once, it was natural for the focus to be on which of the three would do it for the second time. Those who chose the Master won out, particularly the person who suggested it would come as revenge – although, strictly speaking, it was the otherwise unforgettable Qurunx who dealt the fatal blow. Wrong predictions included that Thirteen would have a *Logopolis*-style fall and that the Master would try to deprive her of her unlimited regeneration capability.

If the Doctor would not make a last stand like Twelve, perhaps she would at least die with a meaningful sacrifice to save somebody special like Peri (Five), Rose (Nine), or Wilf (Ten). Thasmin had surfaced in *Eve of the Daleks*, and although the idea had been shut down in *The Legend of the Sea Devils*, many believed it would return and lead to a sacrifice for Yaz, or even a sacrifice by Yaz for the Doctor. Instead there was no sacrifice and the only hint of Thasmin was the romantic imagery of Yaz carrying Thirteen's body. There were none of the predicted kisses or confessions of love or even a sacrifice by Yaz for the Doctor. Those who believed that the Doctor would regenerate alone were correct.

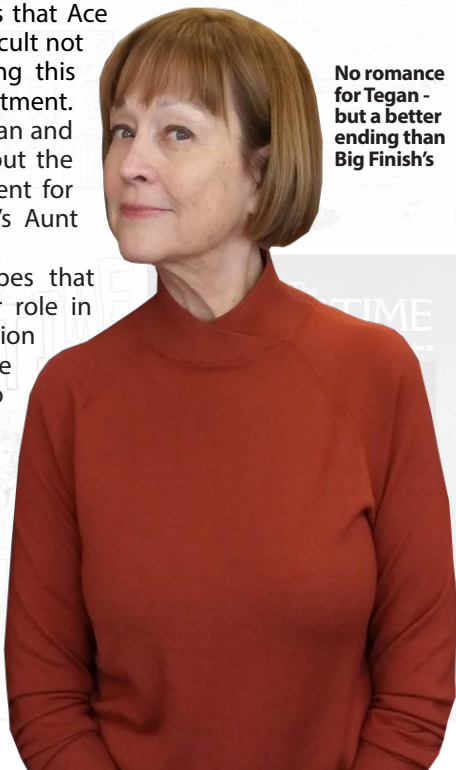
As for the regeneration itself, some thought that Graham would appear either before or afterwards to say "You're doing it, mate!". One person predicted that the Thijarians would visit the Doctor, in a manner reminiscent of Ood Sigma, since they "bear witness to those who die alone." Others thought that Thirteen would reference hope in her final words and that the last frame would be either the yellow light of regeneration or a fade to black so that we wouldn't see the next Doctor. While this wasn't right, two members both successfully guessed that the new Doctor would begin their run by saying "what" three times.

Most assumed that Ncuti Gatwa would be the Fourteenth Doctor, and that David Tennant would be some kind of transitional form. The presence of a Tennant 2.0 was predicted to be due to meddling by the Master or the Celestial Toymaker, but this won't be confirmed until next year. While some did predict that David Tennant would indeed be Fourteen, others thought he would simply turn up after a regeneration into Ncuti Gatwa, or that a "weird dual regeneration" would see Jodie split into both of her successors.

Aside from the Doctor's regeneration, *The Power of the Doctor* was also important as the first television appearance of Tegan and Ace for decades – and as it turned out, many more characters besides. While there were a slew of incorrect guesses for cameos, including Karvanista, Tim Shaw, and even Chibnall himself, the return of Classic Doctors was foreseen. So too was Graham's joining of an old companions support group with Ian Chesterton and Jo Jones, though Nyssa and Leela were two other proposed members that were not seen.

It was Tegan and Ace who took top billing, however, and there were predictions that their Big Finish adventures would be decanonised. In particular, there was a suggestion that *The Gathering*, where Tegan has a terminal condition, would be cancelled out and as far as we can be aware, this is the case. Some thought the episode might recognise other spinoff media, particularly *Farewell, Sarah Jane* where Tegan and Nyssa are married. This seems unlikely as we know she has seen off two husbands and is perhaps not up for another union. The importance of both companions to LGBTQ+ fandom led to some suggestions that Ace and Tegan might be an item, and it is difficult not to judge Chibnall a little for sidestepping this choice following the Thasmin disappointment. Callbacks were correctly predicted for Tegan and Ace, including a *Survival*-related joke about the Master being a cat, a baseball bat moment for Ace, and a *Logopolis*-reference to Tegan's Aunt Vanessa.

Speaking of callbacks, there were hopes that fan favourite Dan would have a greater role in the episode than he did. As a companion encapsulated in memes, it was inevitable that his departure would be expected to be accompanied by restatements of the catchphrases by which we remember them. As it turned out, Dan wasn't actually evil, or even the Master, and he didn't do any plastering. He also didn't joke about 'Rasputin' by Boney M, or take part in a fake marriage to undercover Torchwood operative Yaz. He did, presumably, go on a date with Di but this is not explicitly confirmed. Those who predicted he would be absent for most of the plot were, unfortunately, right.



No romance for Tegan - but a better ending than Big Finish's

Similar predictions for Jo Martin, meanwhile, were not borne out. While there were some suggestions that her regeneration would take place to fit her into a wider numbering system, predictions of a “a brief but plot-important cameo” came true in the end. It was also thought that more Division or Timeless Child reveals might take place, perhaps with an appearance of the fob watch or even eliminating the latter altogether.

Although both of those predictions were wide of the mark, the basics of the evil plans of the Master and the Daleks were confidently anticipated by those who were interested enough to try. The Daleks would be drilling under the Earth, a rogue Dalek would warn the Doctor of this, and Ashad would be unshrunk; nobody added that he was a clone, however. Three predictions that didn't come to pass were that the Master would kidnap Yaz, end up in a “nightmare love triangle” with the Doctor, and that Kate Stewart would die. Some members expected to see a lot of the Cyberlords but their appearance was, like others in the episode, just a glorified cameo. Perhaps this wishful thinking contributed to suggestions that the Earth and Mondas would be the planets firing missiles at each other.

As the culmination of years, and even decades, of pent-up fan demand for such a broad range of cameos, I think that these treats compensated for a failure to deliver on what reasonable expectations I had of the episode. Although it screened one year before the sixtieth anniversary, I believe it will fit better with the tradition of *The Five Doctors* as an anniversary celebration than the episodes we will watch in November 2023. With RTD restarting, however, next year is the time to look forward rather than back.

Predictions Scoreboard

	S10	S11	S12	S13
Oxford Doctor Who Society	16	1	11	19
Doctor Who Writers	34	7	8	29

Discounting comedy answers, these are some (very rough) estimates of how the society's predictions have fared against the show, with correct predictions gaining a point for us and incorrect ones a point for the writers. It was nice for WhoSoc to get a win in Series Twelve (admittedly, the method of prediction was a bit different from other years) but we still appear to be quite far behind in terms of goal difference - here's hoping Series Fourteen will be the reversal in fortunes we need to get back on level pegging with those pesky writers! - *Ed*.

The balance of *Power*

Looking back at Jodie Whittaker's swan song as the Doctor

By John Salway

It's taken a while for me to get to grips with writing this review. My initial viewing experience was one of joy and adrenaline as the plot ricocheted along at high speed and in unpredictable directions. In combination with the increasingly substantial 'kisses to the past', it caused my fan brain to overload. By the end, I suspect the entire street may have heard my banshee-like wail of: "IIIAAAN! It's IIIIAAANNNN!" On the other hand, after the party is over, there's no denying that if you stop and think about *The Power of the Doctor* for any period of time it is obviously full of massive flaws. Like a house of cards, the whole thing is liable to collapse if examined too closely.

From the moment the loony, cringey and wonderful Rasputin dance sequence began, I realised this was going to be a story where the vibe was more important than the actual plot details - at least to me. Shortly afterwards, this was confirmed when that very dead "lone Cyberman" Ashad was reintroduced with a clunky cloning explanation. I can see that this would be an insurmountable problem for many *Who* fans, and I respect and understand that. But despite my numerous complaints, and unfulfilled wishes, I had a wonderful time watching *The Power of the Doctor*. In the simplest possible terms, I got its vibe.

Let's get one key disappointment out of the way first - the absence of Thasmin content. In my optimistic naïveté, the one thing I thought *Legend of the Sea Devils* got right was preparing this plot line for a grand finale. There, the Doctor seemed to be repressing or simply ignoring her hidden feelings for Yaz, who in response encouraged the Doctor to be courageous by expressing herself. This seemed the perfect set-up for a crowd-pleasing, emotional climax in the final episode as the Doctor embraces her own emotions and does something brave to show her love. I obviously read that all wrong, however, as *The Power of the Doctor* has very little interest in exploring Thasmin beyond a series of subtext-laden ambiguous looks from Yaz. With hindsight, *Legend of the Sea Devils* now seems even more disappointing, and the whole thread seems like a missed opportunity.

Thasmin
was not
to be



I won't talk any longer about what this episode isn't - so what is it? Structurally, *The Power of the Doctor* is very much following in the footsteps of *Flux*, and in particular its final episode, *The Vanquishers*. The Doctor spends the first half being bounced around like a pinball, pausing only for the low-key and strangely timed departure of Dan, before the crux of the plot is revealed. After this point, the story begins to settle down into something more closely resembling a traditional plot, though narratively remains a bit of a mess. Elements like cyber-planets, kidnapped aliens, and reMastered paintings come and go like leaves in the wind as we rush towards what is the real inciting incident, the actual point of the whole thing - the Master taking over the Doctor's body and leaving her friends to save the day.

Once it is revealed, the Master's master plan feels audacious even while it is pleasingly barmy. Remove all the extraneous layers of plots, however, and it is surprisingly easy to grasp. It's a violation of the Doctor, and an exceedingly petty one at that. Where another episode might make some of these themes explicit, be they the Master's jealousy of the Timeless Child's eternal life, or renewed self-loathing after discovering that key parts of himself (and all Time Lords) were modelled on his sworn enemy, *The Power of the Doctor* lets them slide. There are strong motives and key character beats that are hinted at, but aren't pushed as strongly as they should be.

With the Doctor out of the way (which, in her final episode, is an unusual choice), it falls to Yaz, Kate, Ace and Tegan to save the day with a little help from some other surprise appearances. As a special centenary treat, the reappearance of Tegan and Ace is a delight. Both are well characterised, with Ace in particular being handled surprisingly deftly. The CEO element of 'new Ace' is wisely kept out of sight and mind as a somewhat polarising aspect of the character, while the exact details of how she left the Doctor are kept vague so that as many of the extended universe explanations as possible are kept valid. Is anything particularly ground-breaking done with this pair? No, but that's not really why they're here is it? Together, the pair provide pure fan-pleasing nostalgia-bait, and a special episode like this is one of the few occasions where I'm open to such coddling.

But even better is the marvellous decision to include David Bradley, Peter Davison, Colin Baker, Sylvester McCoy, Paul McGann and Jo Martin as various holographic and/or metaphysical echoes of the Doctor, turning *The Power of the Doctor* into a true celebration of *Doctor Who's* history. A little cheer went out as each attendee was revealed. Is it a bit cheesy and self-indulgent to have old incarnations come back to cheer the current Doctor on, and offer advice in her hour of greatest need? Of course it is! Why shouldn't it be? As long as it doesn't do so too often, *Doctor Who* has a right to revel in his own history, and I'm particularly delighted that those older Doctors who didn't get a chance to appear in the 50th Anniversary story finally got to appear here. It's especially smart to let Davison and McCoy talk to their companions of old, and deal with some of the baggage that (particularly in Ace's case) they've not had the opportunity to deal with before.

After plenty of action and plot shenanigans, the Doctor is restored once more and the Earth is saved. The Master has the last laugh, however, as she is struck by the energy beam of the very alien creature she was trying to rescue. This is a strangely unfocused scene, a plot hiccup that makes the Doctor's death seem incidental rather than a crucial moment in the plot. It would have made more sense for her death to tie more strongly into the main plot of restoring the Doctor's body from the Master's control, but the strong scenes that follow make up for this confusion.

After Yaz drops off the ever-increasing group of returning companions, our two leads are left alone to come to terms with the Doctor's impending regeneration. As the two of them eat ice cream, perched on the TARDIS roof as it hangs over Earth, there's a gorgeous bittersweet atmosphere to match the beautiful imagery. Jodie Whittaker and Mandip Gill are at their very best as both try to put on a brave face and enjoy their last moments together. They're so good, it *almost* makes sense when the Doctor decides to send Yaz away before her regeneration. Nevertheless, there is still the itch that this is less an understandable narrative choice, and more a necessary product of contract expiration.

The Doctor's last gift to Yaz is to drop her off at a companion support group where she is reunited with all the old friends we've seen so far, and a few more besides. I found it an emotional scene, and not just for the nostalgic thrill of also getting to see Jo, Mel, and especially Ian - our living link to the very first episode of *Doctor Who*. It's also such a lovely idea to officially bring the past companions together on screen to share the experiences they can't divulge to anyone else. It solves the age-old conundrum of how these characters come back to a normal life on Earth, with the Doctor providing them with the help they need. It also works as a suitable metaphor for *Doctor Who* itself. If the Doctor's power is their ability to draw together disparate people from various walks of life, then isn't that also what *Doctor Who* has been doing for nearly 60 years?

The episode closes on my favourite regeneration scene since the Ninth Doctor declared both Rose and himself "fantastic" before blasting into the Tenth. With the angst already dealt with, the mood is optimistic and forward-focused as the Doctor regenerates. It makes a change from the big, melancholy speeches that shamelessly attempt to pluck at the heartstrings which have become a hallmark of regeneration over the past decade and a half. Alone and content, in a beautiful location, the Thirteenth Doctor passes the baton with good grace and a big smile on her face. I couldn't really ask for anything more. If this had indeed been the end of TV *Doctor Who* for a while, as some have suggested may apparently have been the case, then this would have been a fitting conclusion.

As for what happens next? Well, I've said enough.

"Tag, you're it."



The Fourteenth Doctor is in

It's the end... but the moment has been polled for...

Power to the people

The post-match report from the end of the Chibnall era

By Olviya Silvary

After just over four years in the role, Jodie Whittaker bowed out from her time in *Doctor Who* in *The Power of the Doctor*. Not only did it have to end the Thirteenth Doctor's story, but, as Chris Chibnall's final episode as well, it also had to wrap up an era's worth of plot. As with all episodes, the society's members were asked to give their thoughts on the special – revealing a divide at the heart of the membership.

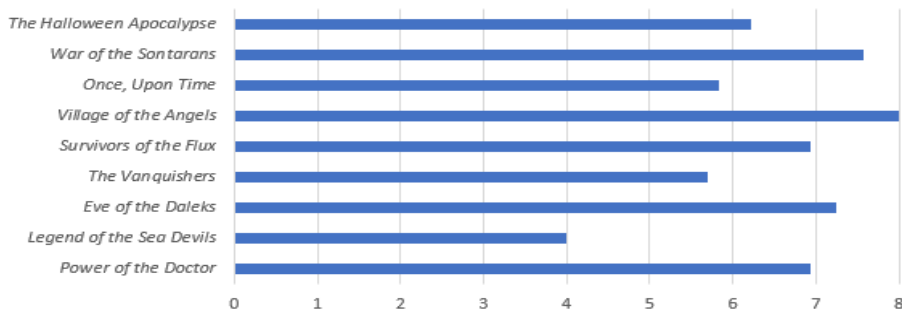
For some, the episode represented a “beautiful celebration” of Chris Chibnall's era, and *Doctor Who* more widely, which “flew by”. Over half of the 27 respondents gave the episode an eight out of ten or higher, with four giving it a perfect score. The most positive reviews tended to focus around the return of Classic *Who* companions such as Ace and Tegan, but the most warmth was saved for Ian, whose return garnered an “ecstatic” response. The special's status as event television was also noted, being “a joy to watch surrounded by other fans” and “a fitting tribute to the BBC and to the history of the show.” There was also some praise for Chibnall “harnessing his manic energy to create an emotional and entertaining celebration”, which produced a finale which was “fun and a lot more watchable than *The Vanquishers*.”

Others, however, were less keen on Chibnall's writing, with a smattering of threes and fours. One respondent argued that the returns of Classic companions showed that he “can't write good TV, so he wrote a fanfic instead.” *Power of the Doctor* was “frustratingly bad” for some, and was “only saved because of the fan service.” Even its most vehement detractors still noted that the episode had its moments, from Boney M's ‘Rasputin’ to the helpings of fan service, but still felt that it was “a slightly unsatisfying end to a slightly unsatisfying era of *Doctor Who*.”

There was also a little disappointment of the roads not taken, with some viewers wanting to have a proper resolution to hints of a relationship between the Doctor and Yaz. “It was action packed, with lots of fanservice, but could have done with more Thasmin,” one said, while another said that “the lack of a satisfying resolution for Thasmin was the only disappointment.”

Published by the OXFORD DOCTOR WHO SOCIETY • Trinity Term 2023 • Number 22

Average Rating



That said, whether they loved or hated it, members weren't keen on the fate met by the Thirteenth Doctor. The Qurunx was a blunt instrument to end a "horrendously rushed episode", one said, and "it was a shame Jodie felt like an afterthought in her own swansong." This may have been because there were "too many loose ends" in the story, and while not all of them were the episode's fault, "there were still too many to deal with." The Thirteenth Doctor's final moment, however, was a universal hit. "Tag, you're it' sums up the joyful, hopeful tone of her era," making "Whovian hearts explode a little bit."

As Jodie Whittaker gave way to David Tennant, one member reflected on just how far Chris Chibnall had grown into the role: "It was miles away from the austere feel of Jodie Whittaker's first series. Chibnall indulged his fannishness in a love letter to the series."

Comparisons to the rest of the era

From 27 respondents, *The Power of the Doctor* received an overall score of 6.93, making the member who said that the story was "mid-dling overall" extremely prescient. Among the 2022 specials, it comes above *Legend of the Sea Devils*, and below *Eve of the Daleks*, though only 0.3 away from the latter. Adding in Series Thirteen, and it still sits in the middle – sliding in just behind *Survivors of the Flux* to come in fifth out of nine. Looking to the Chibnall era as a whole, it's not quite the median episode (that honour goes to *Spyfall Part Two*) but does sit 18th out of 31, making it pretty close!

Comparing it to the polls the society has run since Series Ten, the 2022 Specials as a whole have an average ranking of 6.06 – which would be the lowest of the lot. That said, it only has three episodes, which makes it difficult to compare to the other series as the mean is more vulnerable to extremes. This is especially true in this case as *Legend of the Sea Devils* was deemed the worst of the Chibnall era overall. With Series Thirteen added in, the mean comes to 6.49, which is a little lower than Series Eleven's 6.86 and Series Twelve's 6.79 for but shows that the society had a relatively consistent opinion of *Doctor Who* throughout this period – even if these averages hide some significant highs and lows. It also means that Series Thirteen ranks below the average rating of the Chibnall era as a whole, which comes out as 6.76.

As we leave this era behind, it's time for the society to turn its attention to the Fourteenth Doctor's specials, followed by the long awaited introduction of Ncuti Gatwa. Will they come out ahead of Jodie, or will the 'Doctor of Hope' reign triumphant? Time, as always, will tell.

Whittaker's rankings in full

- *Rosa* – 8.52
- *Demons of the Punjab* – 8.21
- *Village of the Angels*: 8.00
- *Fugitive of the Judoon* – 7.94
- *The Haunting of Villa Diodati* – 7.73
- *The Woman Who Fell to Earth* – 7.61
- *War of the Sontarans* - 7.58
- *It Takes You Away* – 7.47
- *Spyfall – Part One* – 7.43
- *Nikola Tesla's Night of Terror* – 7.38
- *The Witchfinders* – 7.33
- *Eve of the Daleks* - 7.25
- *The Timeless Children* – 7.15
- *Ascension of the Cybermen* – 7.11
- *Kerblam!* – 7.06
- *Spyfall – Part Two* – 7.00
- *Survivors of the Flux* – 6.94
- *The Power of the Doctor* – 6.93
- *The Ghost Monument* – 6.89
- *Can You Hear Me?* – 6.62
- *Arachnids in the UK* – 6.38
- *Praxeus* – 6.29
- *Resolution* – 6.25
- *The Halloween Apocalypse*: 6.21
- *Once, Upon Time*: 5.84
- *The Vanquishers*: 5.7
- *Revolution of the Daleks* – 5.69
- *The Battle of Ranskoor av Kolos* – 5.33
- *Orphan 55* – 5.11
- *The Tsuranga Conundrum* – 4.53
- *Legend of the Sea Devils* – 4.00

Goodbye, Mr Chibs

Adam Kendrick takes a look back at Chris Chibnall's highs and lows during his time in control of the TARDIS

With the torch passing from one showrunner to the next, the cycle of *Doctor Who* repeats once more. Following the broadcast of Jodie Whittaker's regeneration story, Chris Chibnall has moved onto pastures new, leaving fans eagerly awaiting the 60th anniversary special, the return of David Tennant, and the arrival of Ncuti Gatwa's Doctor. No doubt some fans are already treating the Chibnall era as a transitional period before the show is undoubtedly 'restored' to its former glory by Russell T Davies; the televisual equivalent of keeping the car running until the driver nips back from the newsagents. They might point towards declining overnight figures, pretending a direct correlation exists between popularity and quality, while ignoring the decline in live television viewing and the rise of streaming platforms in recent years. Indeed, these were in decline even before the Chibnall era, as Peter Capaldi's final series also had the show's lowest ever viewing figures at the time. However, to write off the past five years as inconsequential would be considerably, perhaps intentionally, dismissive of the successes achieved during Chibnall's tenure.

Jodie Whittaker will forever be remembered as the first woman to officially play the Doctor. A self-proclaimed "Doctor of Hope", her character was driven by optimism and her enthusiasm for both science and spiritualism as she clashed with religious fanatics across three finales in a row. Much like Peter Davison's Fifth Doctor, she views herself as a mere traveller and pacifist, yet becomes compelled to intervene when faced with insurmountable odds. Whittaker deserves to be commended for portraying this legendary icon under intense pressure and scrutiny from the fanbase (often being held to greater levels of accountability than real-life politicians, let alone her predecessors in the role) and her performance grew stronger and more confident with every series.

Gloucester's
finest
Doctor
and tour
guide

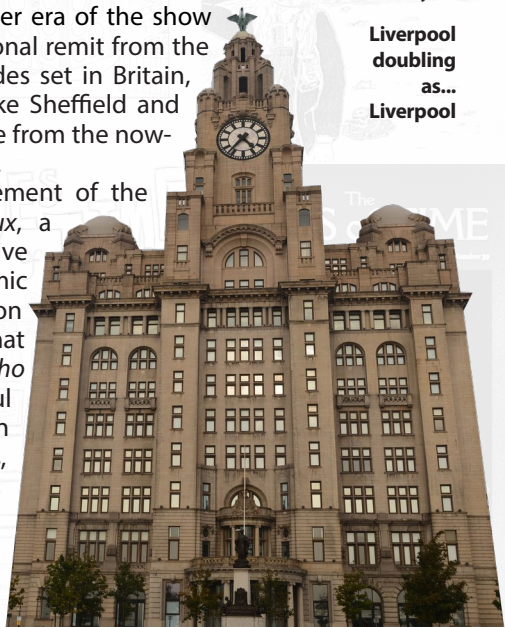


Chris Chibnall, meanwhile, should be celebrated for not just casting the first female Doctor, but for pushing for diverse representation: the fact that the earliest known incarnation of the Doctor is now officially a black woman can only be viewed as a statement of intent. While Steven Moffat's tenure argued that anyone can be the Doctor, Chibnall firmly established that *the Doctor can be anyone*, regardless of gender or race. Tosin Cole's Ryan Sinclair was not only the first black male companion since Mickey Smith, but also a representation of someone with dyspraxia who refuses to be defined by his disability. Mandip Gill became the first long-term Asian companion, and we even had the first British South Asian Master played by the brilliant Sacha Dhawan. He performed the character as highly volatile and dangerous, yet deeply insecure and seeking vindication.

Series Eleven and Twelve featured the first four-person TARDIS team since the Peter Davison era, with Graham, Ryan, Yaz and the Doctor forming an incredibly likeable family unit. Bradley Walsh provided plenty of comic relief over two series, but also plumbed emotional depths as Graham came to terms with grief over the sudden death of his wife Grace. It was simply wonderful to watch the grandparental relationship between him and Ryan develop as they bonded over their adventures, with Ryan finally accepting him as his granddad. Meanwhile, Yaz began aspiring to greater heights than dealing with petty parking disputes and gradually became attached to the Doctor first as an inspiring role-model, and later as her unrequited crush. In Series Thirteen, John Bishop quickly became a fan-favourite as Dan, thanks to his charming personality, cracking dialogue, and willingness to knock out some Sontarans with a wok. More significantly, all these companions received heart-warming farewells in which their life-changing experiences with the Doctor left them stronger, more self-assured, and happier.

Chibnall's *Who* was evidently influenced by both the Classic era and Russell T Davies' much-celebrated revival from the 2000s, with plenty of concepts borrowed from the latter. The soft reboot of Series Eleven opted for more traditional stories about fighting new monsters, both human and alien, and can perhaps be considered as a reaction against Moffat's more self-referential navel-gazing. Subsequent series, however, would reintroduce familiar monsters such as the Judoon, Weeping Angels, and Sontarans. The latter in particular were restored from being joke characters of the Moffat era to the ranks of *Doctor Who's* Big Bads, and given equal billing with the Daleks and the Cybermen. Along the way, the Thirteenth Doctor met female historical figures who typically get overlooked, such as Noor Inayat Khan, Mary Shelley, and Mary Seacole. Similarly, the TARDIS landed in historical settings beyond those often found in the national curriculum, from the Partition of India to 19th century China. Thus, Chibnall harks back to an earlier era of the show and reintroduces its original educational remit from the 1960s. Even with present day episodes set in Britain, the appearance of northern cities like Sheffield and Liverpool marked a refreshing change from the now-cliché pairing of London and Cardiff.

Perhaps Chibnall's biggest achievement of the past five years was producing *Flux*, a hugely ambitious and mostly cohesive six-part serial, under severe pandemic conditions. When future television historians look back on the impact that COVID-19 had on television, *Doctor Who* will be remembered as a successful example of how prestige television was filmed under difficult restrictions, with social distancing, social bubbles, and regular testing. The fact that we managed to get any *Doctor Who* at all during a major global pandemic is nothing short of a miracle.



Liverpool
doubling
as...
Liverpool

Of course, all these achievements will inevitably be overshadowed by the revelations concerning the Timeless Child, which revealed that the Doctor likely originated from a world beyond Gallifrey and played a crucial role in the creation of the Time Lords before having their memories ripped away from them. Contrary to what some sections of the internet would have you believe, the canon of *Doctor Who* has not been ruined forever, as if a collection of trivia and throwaway lines spread across 55 years of television should be treated as a sacred and immutable set of dogma. *The Timeless Children* is no worse than Moffat retroactively inserting Clara Oswald into every previous adventure, or having Paul McGann regenerate into John Hurt instead of Christopher Eccleston. Or when Russell T Davies wiped out Gallifrey in the Time War. Or when Robert Holmes decided that the Time Lords were petty squabblers who were no better than humans. Or when Terrance Dicks and Malcolm Hulke revealed that the Doctor wasn't a human who built the TARDIS himself. Instead, the Timeless Child simply offers a blank canvas for fans to speculate about; a playground for new stories from future showrunners and Big Finish. More importantly, where Moffat set out to prove that *Doctor Who* should never end, Chibnall argued that it should have no firm beginning either. The show itself is now metaphorically and literally timeless.

That said, with great revelations come great responsibility. Revealing too much of a protagonist's mysterious backstory risks spoiling the mystery of the character, as in the Han Solo origin film *Solo*, yet if too much information is withheld then the whole exercise feels like a waste of time. But would answering every question about the Doctor's past really enhance our understanding of the character, or be satisfying? Surely the Doctor's emotional response to having her identity shaken to the core, and her indecision over whether she actually *wants* to know everything, is more important? The fact that *The Vanquishers* ends with the Doctor being given all the answers, yet deliberately choosing *not* to know them, tells us far more about who exactly the Doctor is than anything that could be told in a lore dump. No matter how fascinating the Doctor's backstory might be, it doesn't matter to them right now or fundamentally change who they are. They'll always be the traveller who wanders through space and time to save the day.

None of this is to say that the last three series have been perfect, and the occasionally clumsy writing led to several missteps. This included a tendency towards killing off queer supporting characters during early series, as well as questionable moments in *Kerblam!* and *Spyfall* Part Two that weren't caught by script editors. As much as I enjoy watching 'The Fam' working together, there was also a clear difficulty in ensuring all four protagonists had equal screen time. Yaz's character felt conspicuously underdeveloped throughout the first series, for instance, while both Graham and Ryan's character journeys ground to a halt during Series Twelve. And despite having grand ambitions, it's hard to avoid the sensation that Chibnall ended up leaving his most interesting ideas on the table: Jo Martin's Fugitive Doctor was hugely underserved. An intimidating-yet-intriguing incarnation, she was defined almost exclusively by her connection to Whittaker's incumbent and was often relegated to cameo appearances, thus failing to receive any of her own television adventures. Furthermore, the eleventh-hour recognition of Yaz's romantic feelings towards a non-committal Thirteen meant that there was barely any time to satisfyingly explore this relationship before they had to bid each other farewell.

The era also highlighted, perhaps unintentionally, the limitations of the Doctor as a hero-archetype. While she can easily vanquish the Monster of the Week, she's unable to dismantle systematic problems such as worker exploitation (*Kerblam!*), racism (*Rosa, Demons of the Punjab*) and climate catastrophe (*Orphan 55*) – as if one individual could ever single-handedly fix any of these deep structural problems. She can fend off Daleks with her mates, but powerful men like Jack Robertson and Daniel Barton slip away without facing any repercussions (much like in real-life). She can eradicate an alien infection that feeds on plastic, but not the pollution which drew the infection to Earth in the first place. All she can really do is cling to hope and try to prevent things from getting any worse. This is almost certainly a reflection of the helplessness that some people began to feel during the middle of the 2010s, as the western world was shaken by political earthquakes in the vote for Brexit and the election of Donald Trump. Nevertheless, the problem with having a helpless protagonist is that they risk seeming too powerless, ineffectual, and frustratingly passive. Now that everything seems to be heading to hell in a handbasket, perhaps what's really needed is someone who can demonstrate that a better world is possible.

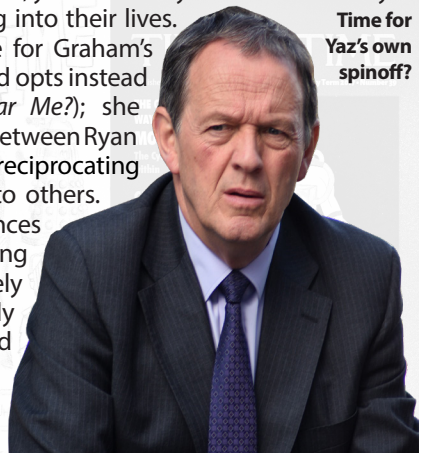
In a sense, this passiveness might stem from how under Chris Chibnall (whose previous credits include *Law & Order: UK* and *Broadchurch*), *Doctor Who* can be viewed as an intergalactic police procedural. The Doctor is practically a former inspector who resigned from a corrupt institution (Division, or more generally, Time Lord society) and went private, with former probation officer Yaz playing the Lewis to her Morse. In her debut episode, she explicitly states her mission to be “sorting out fair play throughout the universe” while confronting a hunter who breaks the rules of his own society. Hence, most of her stories revolved around stopping external threats causing death and disruption, climaxing with the literal embodiment of chaos and destruction itself in the Flux. Rather than overthrowing existing regimes and punishing the corrupt, her focus is on keeping peace and maintaining the status quo. What better description is there for the police? The TARDIS does resemble a police box, after all.

When it comes to interpersonal skills, Thirteen might actually be the most “alien” incarnation of the Doctor we've had for decades. Despite her outwardly friendly nature, in truth she closes herself off to others and keeps her past to herself. She immediately adopts the first people she meets as her new ‘fam’, yet never truly connects with any of them emotionally, despite quite literally falling into their lives.

She fails to think of an appropriate response for Graham's anxieties surrounding his cancer's remission and opts instead for awkward self-deprecation (*Can You Hear Me?*); she unwittingly interrupts a personal conversation between Ryan and Bella (*Orphan 55*) and is prevented from reciprocating Yaz's feelings by her fear of becoming fixed to others.

Rather than treating others coldly, these instances highlight how, despite her attempts at pretending otherwise, the Doctor remains a deeply lonely and introverted figure. It's clear that she's deeply troubled by her inability to escape her past, and that her effective immortality prevents her from developing more personal bonds with her short-lived human companions.

Time for Yaz's own spinoff?



And yet, despite this era's flaws and the endless, repetitive, and exhausting discourse, I really enjoyed tuning in and then discussing the latest episodes with the rest of the Oxford Doctor Who Society. Episodes like *Demons of the Punjab*, *It Takes You Away*, *Fugitive of the Judoon*, and *Village of the Angels* rank amongst the very best of modern *Who*, and I can guarantee that within a few years' time, this fandom will start re-evaluating the past three series and slowly cultivate a more nuanced view of Whittaker's Doctor, much like with Colin Baker and Peter Capaldi. Regardless of your own feelings, the fact remains that the purpose of the showrunner isn't simply to keep *Doctor Who* on the air so that there's something for families to watch during teatime. They also have a responsibility to experiment with new ideas, introduce audacious concepts, and leave their mark on the show's history so that their tenure feels distinct from everything before and everything afterwards. All things considered, it's hard to deny that Chibnall did his job.

Haiku for...

The Silurians

By **William Shaw**

**Felt tip cave paintings
Suggest a mind regressing
To the dawn of man.**

**A shot in the dark;
The reptilian chiming
Of monsters called off.**

**The thermostat's heat
Masks a human extortion
Bartering for science.**

**Tell us what you want
And interspecies friendship
May yet be achieved.**

**Ancient pesticides
Will create a modern plague
On the human blight!**

**Bodies are dropping
But the apes with microscopes
Are racing for life.**

**Angry men with guns
Will not find a solution
For coexistence.**



**The Silurians'
wait for peace
continues**

The Wright stuff

Travelling hopefully from Series Eleven to Season One

By Matthew Kilburn

Chris Chibnall's *Doctor Who* fandom was forged in the 1980s. It was an era when *Doctor Who* fandom was preoccupied by preservation and recovery to a degree which is difficult to capture today. Today's prevailing fan ideology seems to be the celebration of *Doctor Who* as an expression of perpetual change. In the 1980s, leading voices were preoccupied with reversing the series' perceived decline by appealing to the past. An opinion piece in one prominent fanzine, *DWB*, on the eve of Season Twenty-One in 1984 thought that it would demonstrate a return to the values of the 'monster season', Season Five, in 1967/68. Others might yearn for a return to Gothic horror. In recent interviews, Chris Chibnall has presented his decision to give the Thirteenth Doctor three companions as a return to the series' original format of 1963. Speaking to *Doctor Who Magazine* 577 (April 2022), he expressed his belief that the programme's 'inherent DNA' is 'An *Unearthly Child* and the first Dalek story' which a writer 'shouldn't try to get too far away from that, because that's what everyone loves about *Doctor Who*'. This is conceivably problematic, apparently discarding decades of development and reconceptualisation. Accommodating the evolution of *Doctor Who* over more than half a century, attempting to recreate the balance of regular characters from 1963, and innovating with the series' first woman lead, risked tensions which the first year of Chris Chibnall's *Doctor Who* had difficulty supporting.

This article can't explore all those tensions, but it can prod at some of the ways they resolved themselves and what this meant for the *Doctor Who* of 2018 as it adapted an ensemble model devised in, and for, the circumstances of the series in 1963. That ensemble of regulars had already been fashioned and refashioned several times before *Doctor Who* made it to studio in autumn 1963. The dynamic is generally the same. There are two teachers, who eventually gain the names Ian and Barbara - Ian having a high proportion of physical prowess, and Barbara's gifts being intellectual or empathic. There is the schoolgirl, initially a secondary modern schoolgirl of average intelligence or less, who is then reconceived as more unpredictable and alien. We know her as Susan. Lastly, there is the older man with 'a character twist' who becomes first 'Dr. Who' - an old man lost in the fog whom the other characters have to help, and then the eponymous time traveller wandering in the fourth and fifth dimensions motivated by the need to protect his granddaughter Susan.

Graham Who and Ryan Foreman

Drawing out the parallels between this group of travellers and those in the TARDIS during the Thirteenth Doctor's first season helps to illustrate why some viewers had difficulty adjusting to the 2018 cast of *Doctor Who*. Relationship patterns are carried through in ways which distort the dynamics audiences might have expected. The *Doctor Who* of 1963 and the *Doctor Who* of 2018 both have older men with a 'character twist', but in 1963 he was the title character, and in 2018 he was not.

Much of the narrative of *Doctor Who* in its first season is driven by the relationship between the Doctor and Susan. Making the 'older man' the grandfather of the problematic schoolgirl helped counterweight the obvious common interest of abducted schoolteachers Ian and Barbara while giving him some positive motivation. Without Susan to look after, the Doctor could have been a far colder figure, with only escape from trauma to drive him on. Worse, he might have desired to 'nullify the future', as suggested by one of *Doctor Who's* creators, C.E. Webber, but rejected by its presiding genius Sydney Newman. When some fan critics thought that Series Eleven of *Doctor Who* was led by Graham rather than by the Doctor, they were arguably both repeating a well-tryed criticism of twenty-first-century *Doctor Who* (dissatisfied fans using 'Rose Who' in 2005 and 2006, and 'Clara Who' for the 2013 to 2015 series) but responding to the debt Graham and Ryan's storyline owed to the Doctor and Susan.

Graham and Ryan travel partly because they are escaping trauma – the death of Grace for both, and cancer for Graham – much as the Doctor and Susan were escaping something unsaid in dialogue, but presumed to be the devastation or destruction of their home world. The shift from the post-war horror of mass annihilation to very personal, individual crises marks the relative distances British audiences had from total war in 1963 and 2018, and the magnification of individual over collective experience. Domestic crisis is also more in keeping with the reconfiguration of *Doctor Who* as pre-watershed Sunday night drama with a new set of genre rules to explore. The resolution of Ryan's first series plot arc has parallels with that of Susan, albeit adapted for a later age as the conquest of Earth by Daleks becomes the possession of individuals by a Dalek. Where Susan finds a place in the rebuilding of society in a sexual relationship, Ryan finds peace in enabling the part-redemption of his father, both from being puppeteered by a Dalek and from neglectful parenting. His dyspraxia marks him as unusual and difficult to an older generation, as Susan's unearthly knowledge did to her teachers in *An Unearthly Child*.

It's easy to exaggerate the parallels. Graham is not Ryan's grandfather, but he wants to be accepted by him as such. Nevertheless, both Graham and the first Doctor want to form a stable family unit with their vulnerable (step)descendant. Graham's initial scepticism regarding the presence of aliens in Sheffield in *The Woman Who Fell to Earth* recalls Ian Chesterton's refusal to believe the explanation of the TARDIS which he receives from the Doctor and Susan in *An Unearthly Child*, rather than anything expressed by the First Doctor. In some stories Graham performs a role as mischief-maker, a trickster role enjoyed by the First Doctor in Season One. He doesn't have a monopoly on this behaviour, however, acting with the Thirteenth Doctor as her accomplice or agent in disrupting events in *Rosa*. His glib witticisms when facing a giant spider in *Arachnids in the UK* are in a tradition of flippancy in the face of danger more generally associated with the Doctor, but arguably also in the modern tradition of companions as apprentice Doctors prominent in twenty-first century *Doctor Who*. Nevertheless, in fulfilling the role of eccentric source of wisdom, albeit a folk wisdom rather than science, Graham fills a traditionally Doctorish role in much of the 2018 series. Both, too, are defined by loss: the First Doctor has lost his home world, while Graham has lost Grace, and both are seeking reorientation in an anchorless universe.

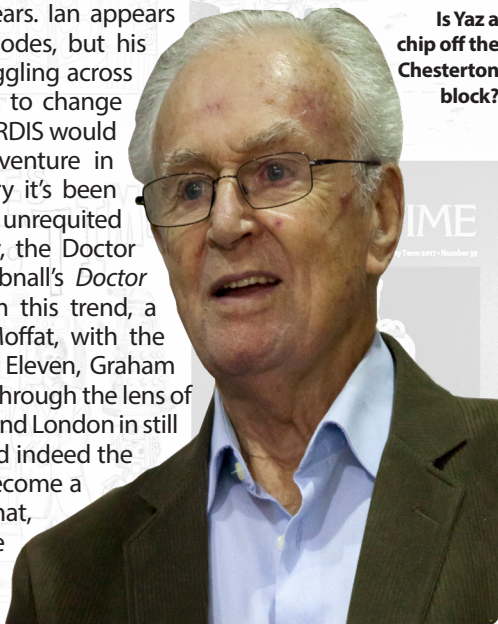
Yaz Chesterton

What, then, of Yasmin Khan? She is established early on as proactive, able to intervene in conflict situations. She is contrasted with Ryan as stable and reliable to his more chaotic nature, though both are unformed characters – arguably within and without the narrative – trying to work out what their potentials are. It's Yaz, though, who is better at the 'running and punching' role associated with the 1960s model of male *Doctor Who* companion. She adheres to her professional identification as a police officer, much as the First Doctor's two human companions in Season One couldn't escape their background as schoolteachers. Yaz is the Ian Chesterton of this scheme, though she is younger and female. She has Ian's knack of becoming most embedded in a new society, whether as an initiate of Rosa Parks or as a visitor to her own historical family in *Demons of the Punjab*. When allowed, she also deploys physical action decisively, be it a well-aimed kick moving the P'ting to somewhere it can do less damage in *The Tsuranga Conundrum*, or taking on Morax tendrils in *The Witchfinders*. In the same story, she even fulfils the role of science educator by asking informed questions of the Doctor – something supposed science authority Ian Chesterton found himself doing on occasion.

There are early indicators that Yaz's adventures were to have been shared with Ryan. They are friends from primary school reunited, as established in *The Woman Who Fell to Earth*. They compare notes on the racism they've experienced in *Rosa*, where Ryan pays her a compliment. However, this isn't the pairing which seemed most natural to viewers in script and performance. In *Arachnids in the UK*, Yaz's mother assumes the Doctor is Yaz's girlfriend, and for an intensely committed section of the audience, this sublimated attraction between Yaz and the Doctor became *Doctor Who's* linking theme, apparently before the programme makers knew what they were doing themselves.

The relationship between Yaz and the Doctor has echoes of that between Ian Chesterton and Barbara Wright, with both delayed from reaching a conclusion. Yaz's feelings for the Doctor remain unarticulated for years. Ian appears possessive about Barbara in early episodes, but his experience on Skaro in *The Daleks*, struggling across hazards to reach the Dalek city, seems to change him. Having a romantic couple in the TARDIS would have been a distraction from the adventure in 1963/64, but in the twenty-first century it's been part of it – Rose and Mickey, Martha's unrequited feelings for the Doctor, Amy and Rory, the Doctor and River, Clara and Danny. Chris Chibnall's *Doctor Who* initially seems to turn away from this trend, a signature of his predecessor Steven Moffat, with the primary romantic attachment of Series Eleven, Graham and Grace's relationship, always framed through the lens of grief. There can be no joyful running around London in still photographs for the Doctor and Yaz, and indeed the assumption that Ian and Barbara will become a couple on Earth in 1965 remains just that, interpretations of their behaviour in the opening villa scene in *The Romans* and spin-off media notwithstanding.

Is Yaz a
chip off the
Chesterton
block?



Doctor Wright

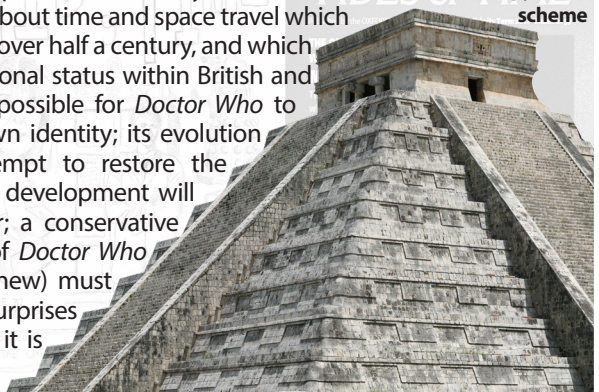
The Thirteenth Doctor retains a certain alienating prickliness from the Twelfth Doctor, though Jodie Whittaker leans into playing it as an almost endearing social gauche-ness. However, Chibnall's decision to adopt and adapt the four-regular structure of the 1963 writer's guide directs the Doctor into a Barbara Wright-shaped space. Like Barbara, she generally tries to engage with people on their own terms, applying what she knows of the cultures she visits. Disapproval is concrete, even if the Thirteenth Doctor is more spatially and temporally empowered than Barbara or indeed the first Doctor were. Jodie's Doctor is often pedagogic, most obviously in her lecture at the end of *Rosa*, recalling the observations on people and cultures Barbara might make in historical stories such as *Marco Polo*.

The most persuasive parallel, though, is that the Thirteenth Doctor and Barbara share the same faith. In *The Sensorites* episode two, *The Unwilling Warriors*, Barbara explains to Carol, one of the human astronauts, that the TARDIS travellers aren't wandering aimlessly; the Doctor is trying to return her and Ian to their own time. Susan provides a gloss, delivered in a tone on the borders of exhaustion and pessimism: isn't it better to travel hopefully than arrive? While one of Susan's traits is the need to settle and belong, Barbara adapts quickly to travelling in time and space. She welcomes new experiences and provides solutions to problems much as the Thirteenth Doctor does, trying to find ways through which don't involve killing. The Thirteenth Doctor defines herself as a 'Doctor of Hope' in *The Tsuranga Conundrum*, marries Umbreen and Prem in the name of hope in *Demons of the Punjab*. She's content with small victories such as the reforms at Kerblam, much as Barbara learns to be at the end of *The Aztecs*. Her parting advice at the end of *Resolution* is to travel hopefully, delivered like a teacher saying goodbye to a class. The legacy of Barbara Wright is alive in the Thirteenth Doctor.

The evidence above has been presented selectively. Nevertheless, embracing both the original character pattern of 1963 and casting a woman in her thirties in a lead role which was initially envisaged as a man old enough to be a grandfather demanded a reshuffle of characteristics and capabilities. Series Twelve reacts against this by sidelining Graham's anxiety over being recognised by Ryan as his grandfather, and instead raises questions about the Doctor's past with new details which revive and reconceive Season One's presentation of the Doctor as a refugee. In becoming the Timeless Child, the Doctor becomes an echo of Susan, the Unearthly Child; alternatively, Susan becomes a shadow of her grandfather's erased past, a past which is/was yet to be written.

As a series which tells stories about time and space travel which has endured across formats for over half a century, and which is conscious of its own institutional status within British and broadcasting cultures, it is impossible for *Doctor Who* to avoid travelling through its own identity; its evolution defies linear paths. Any attempt to restore the series to an earlier point in its development will result in something unfamiliar; a conservative or reactionary interpretation of *Doctor Who* (as Chris Chibnall no doubt knew) must lead to innovation which surprises and unsettles, whether or not it is judged creatively successful.

Barbara's pyramid scheme



Fourteen's minutes of fame

Georgia Harper shares her thoughts on the Doctor's future

I spent most of October dismissing, repeatedly and at length, the very possibility of Jodie Whittaker regenerating into David Tennant. Past Doctors show up all the time without needing a new incarnation, and Ncuti Gatwa had already been cast to take over the role, so it seemed inconceivable that this would take place. It also seemed to be a step destined to play directly to a vocal minority that expect Russell T Davies to retread his time in charge of the show, and return as *Doctor Who's* 'saviour'. Regeneration into Tennant again wasn't going to happen anyway, I told myself, and would be a terrible idea if it did.

Safe to say, I had a lot of humble pie to eat when *The Power Of The Doctor* was finally broadcast - but the Fourteenth Doctor didn't take long to win me over. First of all, the regeneration itself was spectacular - a fitting send-off for Thirteen with optimism about whoever she'd become. But this is not a normal regeneration - there's new clothes, an old face, and... "I know these teeth!" It's a brilliant callback, but also a clear signal that something has gone wrong - the Doctor is not supposed to retread the past.

Did the Doctor's brief transformation into Sacha Dhawan's Master send the process haywire? Does Neil Patrick Harris' forthcoming villain have something to do with it? Is something else afoot? And will someone **please** tell Ncuti Gatwa what the hell is going on here?! We're heading into the 60th anniversary with a crisis already unfolding and unanswered questions already burning - and it's great to have Tennant and Catherine Tate's Donna back for the journey. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that we'll see more than a brief glimpse of the now-Fifteenth Doctor too!

Change and reinvention are at the heart of *Doctor Who* as we know it today - my world would be very different if they'd never cast Patrick Troughton as William Hartnell's successor! It remains to be seen whether regenerating into an old face, with the baggage of nostalgia that brings, is the right move - but it's setting up to be a thrilling visit to the past that ultimately welcomes in a new future. I can't wait to find out what happens next.



The Doctor Donna, or the Tatennant?

Putting on Sunday best?

James Ashworth reports back on WhoSoc's reaction to the TARDIS's newest crewmember

Back on 18 November 2022, Whovians were taking part in a time honoured tradition. As with Jodie Whittaker and Pearl Mackie, fans of *Doctor Who* were tuning into a piece of event television in the hopes of catching a glimpse of the new companion. Would rumours of Olly Alexander taking to the TARDIS finally be confirmed? Or perhaps his *It's a Sin* co-star Lydia West? Once again, Russell T Davies surprised us all by unveiling a choice no one in WhoSoc had predicted as we welcomed Millie Gibson to the TARDIS.

Perhaps one of the first reactions amongst members was a reaction to how young Millie Gibson is. Born in 2004, she was just one year old when *Doctor Who* returned on TV, and is younger than some WhoSoc freshers. "I feel like I've achieved nothing with my life, and I was only born in 2002!" Maddie Moor joked. Even if her youthfulness meant some WhoSoc members began to appreciate their age ("The new companion is younger than me. I feel so old," said Sam Flower), they wished Millie well on her journey in the TARDIS.

"I'm sure she'll be great," Maddie adds. "Winning Best Young Actor at the British Soap Awards sets her up very well, so I'm hoping for good chemistry between Fifteen and her!"

For those less familiar with Millie's work on *Coronation Street*, speculation about how she might play her character abounded. "She gives me Jenna Coleman vibes in her appearance and soap background," said Vice President Ian Bayley.

As Society Historian Matthew Kilburn added, however, it's hard to know what to make of Ruby Sunday until she makes her debut. "She seemed to exude the aura of a *Blue Peter* presenter on her *Children in Need* appearance, which is no bad thing, as there are parallels between the role of a companion and the role of *Blue Peter* presenter."

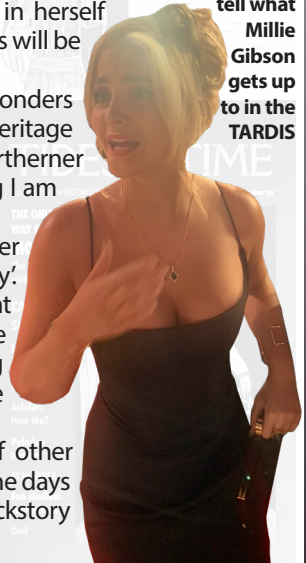
"Her Instagram feed depicts a young woman confident in herself and with a sense of her physical presence. How these aspects will be reflected in Ruby Sunday remain a mystery for now."

For others, just as Dan and Liverpool in Series Thirteen did wonders for scouse representation in *Doctor Who*, Millie's Mancunian heritage was a welcome one. "I am so excited to see another northerner aboard, and from the short videos we've had of the pairing I am immensely excited," said IT officer Thomas Barker.

Many members also remarked on similarities between her character name and The Rolling Stones song 'Ruby Tuesday'. "While Ruby's name is quite fantastical, and somewhat Moffatian in the vein of River Song, my first thought was the Rolling Stones," Thomas says. "The opening line of this song says that Ruby Tuesday 'would never say where she came from', so is Ruby Sunday something more than she seems?"

For now, the answer to Thomas' question, and those of other WhoSoc members, will have to wait. We're counting down the days until she gets to make her debut on the show, and her backstory starts being revealed.

Time will tell what Millie Gibson gets up to in the TARDIS



Ship shape and

The Editor reports live (or, as much as can be done so in

By **James Ashworth**

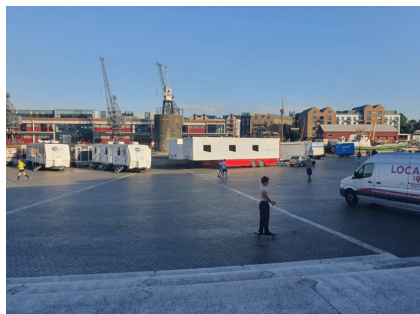


In June 2022, *Doctor Who* descended on the streets of Bristol. Sets sprung up across the city's historic centre, while David Tennant and Neil Patrick Harris were spotted filming scenes from their upcoming episodes. When the cameras weren't rolling, *Tides'* Editor made a special trip to capture some of the sets before they disappeared into the studio.

Above: A stall in the set's street market, with the 'Toy Maker of the Year' award seemingly a big hint about its owner - but is it a misdirect?

Below: Trailers lurk in the Lloyds Amphitheatre on Bristol's harbourside

Right: The murals and posters suggest Bristol will not be playing itself, but rather Camden, where filming has also taken place



Bristol Fashion

the medium of print) from the set of upcoming Doctor Who



Left: A longer shot of the stall set on the streets of Bristol - tie dye appears to be in!

Below: Grade's Gents Hairdressers are world renowned for their cuts, but it's Mr Emporium which catches the eye.



Millie Gibson writes:
 "This is ace !!!
 Save me some ;)"

Clara's Diner

Serves One **The Ruby Sundae** By John Salway

An ice cream fit for the Fifteenth Doctor's companion!

Equipment:

Sundae glass
 Ice cream scoop

Ingredients:

Strawberry syrup
 One scoop vanilla ice cream
 5-6 glace cherries, chopped
 One scoop strawberry ice cream
 Can of whipped cream
 Flaked/grated chocolate, 15g
 1 red jelly diamond

Method:

- Drizzle the glass with strawberry syrup
- Add one scoop of vanilla ice cream
- Scatter half of the chopped glace cherries, and drizzle with strawberry syrup
- Add one scoop of strawberry ice cream
- Scatter the remaining glace cherries, and drizzle with strawberry syrup
- Spray the top with whipped cream to form a dome
- Drizzle for the final time with strawberry syrup
- Scatter flaked/grated chocolate over the top
- Place the red jelly diamond onto the peak of the cream
- Enjoy!



Go heavy on the syrup!

James Ashworth

The Editor

A 1980s culinary odyssey through *Doctor Who* cuisine begins with...

Five courses rapid

It's sometimes said that food is the key to the heart. So when I was trying to woo a Whovian, what better way than to use a themed cookbook? While the 'Official' Cookbook, published in 2016, has plenty to recommend in the way of themed recipes, I had a different tome in my sights. Inspired by Toby Hadoke's documentary on the Season 23 Blu-Ray, I decided to wind back the clock to 1986 for the original *Doctor Who Cookbook*.

When a show has been running for as long as *Doctor Who* has, all manner of merchandise will, at some point, become available. While most television programmes aren't quite as ambitious as *Doctor Who's* marketing team, who have produced everything from themed Frubes to pants with Tom Baker's face on them over the years, a cookbook is a tried and tested option. Various shows have official and unofficial cookbooks dedicated to them, mostly based around recipes inspired by those in the programme itself. Even fewer still have recipes submitted by cast members, and in most cases, like *The Star Trek Cookbook*, these are mixed in with dishes inspired by particular characters. *The Doctor Who Cookbook*, however, may be the only book sourced entirely from the cast and crew of the show itself. As an act of devotion, single-mindedness, or perhaps both, I decided to embark upon a culinary odyssey through sci-fi cuisine – and what better way to illustrate its offerings than with a spread laid on by Nicholas Courtney himself?

The Brigadier's Banquet is the gauntlet laid down by *The Doctor Who Cookbook* to all those who read it. The smiling illustration of the Brig himself challenges you to tackle the book's recommended meal, assembling four courses in a manner fit for UNIT HQ. Starting with soup, the dinner takes you through fish, steak and a dessert, with optional coffee and chocolates to end the evening. It's a lot of work to prepare, but the end result suggests the Brigadier could just have easily commanded a host of cooks as led armies into battle.

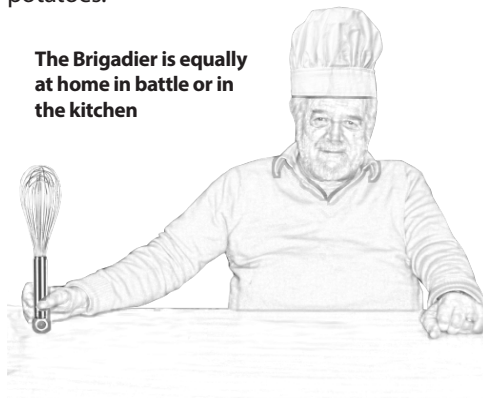
The first order of this particular battle is the Brig's Borscht. Fortunately, it's a cheap and quite easy dish to make, which is not always a given for *The Doctor Who Cookbook*, while Nicholas Courtney is very capable of putting together a clear recipe. Chopping all of the vegetables takes a while, but after that point it's mostly a matter of boiling them one after the other while you get on with everything else. If there's time, feel free to admire the work of Gail Bennett, whose illustrations are found throughout the book. While the drawing of the Brigadier fighting the Brigade Leader for soup may not be the finest in the cookbook, it certainly sets the scene for what can be found elsewhere. It may take a while for everything to boil through, but with a final dollop of sour cream you end up with a hearty soup that gets things off to a great start.

The fish course is a little bit of an oddity in the banquet, as there's no specific recipe for what Salmon Fume Ecosais actually is. Does Nicholas Courtney just want some salmon fillets served? I assumed he would want something slightly more complicated, and improvised salmon and cream cheese on toast. It's quick to put together, and gives you a dish with a classic set of flavours, but I will always wonder if this is what was intended.

Fortunately, the instructions for the main course are very straightforward, if a little daunting. While cooking a steak may not seem like the most complicated thing to do, the need to keep an eye on the steaks while also preparing your accompanying potatoes and braised celery makes this a challenge on the first time around. That said, I wasn't afraid of making a few modifications, including cutting the serving size and making use of vegan steaks. These cook surprisingly well, and are a great substitute that allows you to follow the recipe otherwise as written. Part of Nick's instructions call for them to be flamed in brandy before serving, which I was apprehensive about as I'd never done it before. As it turns out, it's actually quite achievable on the first go, and no trips to the hospital were required. Unlike the illustration, please do not use a flamethrower to do this – a simple match will do.

Once the steak is flamed, it's then ready to be served, and it's a delicious main. The majority of the flavour comes from the tangy dressing, which is a mix of a few different herbs and vegetables as well as the juices of the steak itself. It's so good that I'm tempted to make it again for other dishes. Even the braised celery, which I was somewhat sceptical about, proves to be worthwhile, as it provides a nice change of texture and flavour from the steak and potatoes.

The Brigadier is equally at home in battle or in the kitchen



When the main is over, and after an appropriate time has passed to work up an appetite, you can bring the meal to an end with Coupé Nick. Out of all the dishes, this one best gives you the sense that the Brigadier's Banquet is actually a real dinner plan, rather than something thrown together or depending on a team of fellow cooks. It can be quickly made in advance and served just as easily when needed, and it's very much worth saving until last. It may be simple, but Coupé Nick manages to balance sweet and sour flavours in a way that make it absolutely delicious. The lightness of the whipped cream is a good counterpoint to the earlier dishes, and is a good way to round things out.

For those with stomach space to spare, there is one final course that Nick recommends to finish the banquet - coffee and After Eight's. After all, what harm can a wafer-thin mint do?

The best compliment I can give to the Brigadier's Banquet is that I've made some of its recipes multiple times for guests or to use up some spare ingredients. Nicholas Courtney has clearly ensured that this set of dishes can scale to any number of people, and provide them with a delicious set of flavours. It may be somewhat on the expensive end of the spectrum, but it's a lovely treat for *Doctor Who* fans to enjoy. In fact, it's one of the reasons I decided to just work my way through the cookbook's entire set of recipes as part of a new blog series, *Fan Oven*. There are plenty of fascinating recipes to come - Johnny Byrne's Kipper of Traken will, at the very least, be something different. If this interests you, follow along here:

<https://columbus97jka.wordpress.com/fan-oven-a-culinary-journey-through-pop-culture-cookbooks/>

Dispatches from the Dark Times

An editor emeritus finishes up his thoughts on the Time Lord Victorious event - by starting at the beginning...

By John Salway

Trailer - Free, £256.44 total

The depths of space... a lone Dalek adrift in zero gravity... a desperate message for the universe... This is how the story of Time Lord Victorious was first introduced to the masses, as one of the galaxy's greatest scourges warns anyone listening about the threat posed by the Doctor. It's a very effective, attention-grabbing statement, that uses a short 30-second runtime to quickly convey that something is very wrong - so much so it even grabs the attentions of the Daleks...

Except, now that I've actually experienced most of the TLV storyline, it's become clear that this trailer is a little bit of a lie.

The Dalek featured is the last surviving member of the Dalek Time Squad, and we've seen his future in *The Hollow Planet*, *A Dalek Awakens*, and *Genetics of the Daleks*. In this trailer he seems genuinely terrified of the Doctor - and that doesn't really fit with what the Daleks have seen of the Time Lord across the range, nor with his manner when he encounters the Doctor again later.

Simply put, the Tenth Doctor definitely goes too far in his war against the Kotturuh in the Dark Times - he commits a literal genocide and commands a war fleet to this end. But his actions are tightly focused on this one particular goal, and there's no reason for the Daleks to presume a threat to the rest of the universe at large. In some ways, his actions were a blessing for the Daleks, as they would likely have been harshly judged by the crystal squiddy adjudicators if their species had survived until the Daleks' genesis.

And yes, this Doctor does end up fighting against the Dalek Time Squad and their own nefarious plans (with the aid of his other selves), but by this point he is greatly reduced in circumstance. He would have failed completely if not for the actions of Inyit, last of the Kotturuh - so why this Dalek seems so utterly fear-struck is hard to imagine.

Perhaps I've got it wrong, and it's not the Tenth Doctor, the Time Lord Victorious, that this Dalek seeks to warn us about, but the Eighth Doctor instead. Eight was, after all, last seen stealthily sabotaging the Dalek Time Squad's spaceship, toying with its inhabitants, and causing the explosion that sent this Dalek flying into the void. He would have personal reasons to fear this incarnation.

But that doesn't really work either, does it? The Doctor has always hated and fought against the Daleks, so that's nothing new, and would hardly constitute a threat to the universe. So after considering the options, I'm completely stumped as to why Trailer Dalek is broadcasting to the universe at large, and with such an authentically agitated tone.

TLV's song is ending

Thank you for bearing with me through my overthinking of thirty seconds of footage that, really, achieved everything it was intended to do by creating an intriguing mystery. But this Dalek message is also supposed to be a part of the range's canon, and in the relatively tight web of continuity that has made up Time Lord Victorious, it is one tiny snag that I can't quite rectify. Even if it is pretty cool!

What the TARDIS thought of 'Time Lord Victorious' - Free, £256.44 total

This short story, available online, ties the end of *The Waters of Mars* to the events of Time Lord Victorious at large, and is told from the perspective of the TARDIS itself. You'd probably worked out that latter point yourself from the incredibly dull and unwieldy non-title they've given the piece, which did not set my expectations high.

Telling a story from the perspective of the TARDIS is a big task. The TARDIS is incredibly powerful, non-linear, and fundamentally thinks differently from the standard human brain - just look at *The Doctor's Wife*. Here, by putting the TARDIS' thoughts into standard prose, we lose that sense of unknowableness. Instead, it turns out the TARDIS thinks in a fairly flavourless, matter-of-fact style. This is a big problem, because there isn't really a story here, more a series of continuity references and explanations that patch up some holes in the Time Lord Victorious lore, so any thrill would have to come from the execution. And it's just not there.

The story's main idea is that the TARDIS doesn't take the Doctor where he wants to go, but where he needs to go, and so is choosing to send him to the Dark Times for his own greater good. The idea of the TARDIS choosing the destination is, frankly, fairly old hat by now, rather than a revelation, but in this case it has disturbing implications. Does the TARDIS really think that the Doctor *needs* to go and fight wars in the distant past, for his own growth? Not to mention committing a genocide?

This is an occasion where I think I'm putting a little bit too much thought into a harmless little fluff piece that was probably cooked up fairly swiftly, but with something so insubstantial I don't really have much other choice! There's really nothing here but snippets of lore, and the story is eminently skippable.

Dalek Executioner and Dalek Strategist Figurines - £19.99, £276.43 total

This third set of Time Lord Victorious figurines, following the Dalek Scientist and Time Commander, completes the fleet of new Restoration Empire Dalek designs with my personal favourites of the range, the Dalek Executioner and Dalek Strategist. But have my best boys been treated with the respect they deserve in their latest outing?

The Dalek Executioner is without doubt the sexiest of the Restoration Empire designs. He cuts a sleek figure in black and silver, with red rings accentuating the roundels, and aspects of his underside painted red as well. His sinister red eye, however, has not quite translated so well to the physical realm, with a lighter pink colour used instead. I think I can see why, because it does have a pinkish glow in some of the promotional artwork. However, without the advantage of lighting effects, a matte pink doesn't really convey the correct effect. To put this in perspective though, it's a tiny dot of colour in an otherwise flawless model - I'm still very happy.

The Dalek Strategist has been my absolute favourite of the new Dalek personalities, and I'm pleased to report that his model is also a great success. Faithfully based on the original television Daleks, he's chunkier by far, with a longer eyestalks and arms as well. In contrast to the other Restoration Empire models, he's also got a perfectly flat base - after all, the Strategist is so old he doesn't even have hover capabilities. But the real joy in this model is how well they've captured the battering and bruising his casing has sustained over the years. As well as plenty of rust, he's got missing roundels, one that appears to have been welded back on, and one of his head slats is at an authentically crooked angle. It's this delightful attention to detail that really tells the story of this Dalek's career.

Moving onto the accompanying magazine, it continues the template set by previous releases with engaging graphics and some potted Dalek history. Unfortunately, I'm afraid typos and slight grammatical errors rear their head yet again. It's particularly egregious in a feature on Dalek victims, where a heading of "Simmonds [sic]" is immediately followed by text correctly naming the character twice as "Simmons". Again, these aren't major flaws but they do let down an otherwise very professionally finished product.

The included short story, *Exit Strategy*, this time concerns the Dalek Strategist, and his thoughts and actions after the end of the Eighth Doctor audio *Mutually Assured Destruction*. Seemingly trapped on an exploding spaceship, the Dalek Strategist ruminates on what went wrong with his plans, and what to do next, before deploying that classic Dalek tactic of an emergency temporal shift. In fact, as far as the timeline goes, he may have invented this particular trick! It's a neat little character piece that's pretty unessential, but since it allows my favourite Dalek to escape, potentially to appear in future releases beyond Time Lord Victorious, it's one I'm personally thankful for.

This third set of figures is undoubtedly my favourite so far, providing beautiful models of my two favourite Restoration Empire Daleks, and a story that gives me some hope this range of Daleks may continue onward. The manufacturers have certainly shown how well they can craft our favourite pepperpots, but for the final release, we'll see how well they handle humanoids, as Brian the Ood, and the Time Lord Victorious himself, complete the collection.



He may be a strategist, but he's supreme to us!

John Salway

Time Lord Victorious and Brian the Ood Figurines - £19.99, £296.42 total

The fourth and final set of Time Lord Victorious figurines from Eaglemoss sees them stepping out from their Dalek-y comfort zone and providing a pair of humanoid figures. These are the Time Lord Victorious himself (aka the Tenth Doctor in some snazzy Gallifreyan robes) and his not-so-faithful companion, Brian the Ood.

Let's start with the more successful figure. Brian the Ood's simple, sharp, signature tuxedo looks absolutely fabulous here, with pocketing details and wrinkles in all the appropriate areas. His face is well contoured and coloured, with some exceptional sculpting successfully creating the illusion of multiple tentacles around the mouth. Brian's pose is also a delight, as he stands, one hand behind his back, looking every inch the perfect servant - though from his appearances, we know better.

The Tenth Doctor model is also very detailed, but, due to the busy nature of the design and a fairly standard pose, feels like it has less of a personality. While recognisably the Tenth Doctor, the face (understandably) doesn't really look like David Tennant. Without the intense gaze shown in the official TLV artwork, his standard face-forward position conveys no particular emotion. The Time Lord robes and collar, meanwhile, are well-painted and convincingly distressed, with the pinstripe trousers and Converse shoes beneath a well observed-touch. Unfortunately, due to the small space present between the model's face and adjacent collar, the inside of the garment is painted in the same skin tone out of necessity. Ultimately, while I like this figure, I don't love it the way I do my Daleks or my new Ood friend.

This time around, the accompanying magazine keeps things simple, but this is by no means less effective. While there are none of the snazzy CGI models or infographics that stood out in previous issues, what we get instead is something TLV aficionados like myself are liable to find much more interesting - interviews with literally every writer to work on the project. These cover everything from the novels to the animated series, and provide lots of fascinating tidbits into the production process, such as how various lockdowns have shaped the saga. Some standout pieces of trivia include that the Master-starring Short Trips (*Master Thief* and *Lesser Evils*) were initially conceived for the Alex MacQueen incarnation, and that plans for ten episodes of *Daleks!* were shortened to five, leaving room for a continuation...

While there are (yet again) more grammatical errors in this issue than I would expect, focusing on the TLV writers feels like an appropriate way to end this series of short magazines. If *Time Fracture* and *Echoes of Extinction* hadn't been delayed by the pandemic, this release would also have been the last piece of TLV content as a whole, and highlighting the creators would have been the perfect farewell.

As someone who has had no particular interest in collectible figurines beforehand, I have been really impressed with the build quality of this collection, with the whole range now proudly displayed in my living room. The magazines, while short, have also proven far less disposable than I had originally feared. While I never saw myself making the leap to Eaglemoss' main *Doctor Who* range even while the firm was a going concern, these sculpts are of sufficiently high calibre that I would recommend them to the curious if they can be found online for a reasonable price.

We interrupt this article with a breaking reviewflash! Over to our gaming correspondent to fill us in on the details...

Life on the Edge

What happens when a non-Whovian steps into the world of Doctor Who?

By Rachel Rowlands

Doctor Who has a long history of attempts to make a game based on its lore. Whether that is through any number of board games; *The Adventure Games*; *Doctor Who: Legacy*; or *The Lonely Assassins*, there are plenty of options for those who want to step into the Doctor's shoes. However, there are fewer that actually let you enter the world of *Doctor Who*, with VR being a recent development in interactive *Who* gameplay. Following *The Runaway*, *The Edge of Time* promises to expand the medium into previously unexplored territory, bringing back classic monsters on a galaxy-spanning quest. Sadly, in pursuit of this grand adventure, *The Edge of Time* lost sight of what being a game is really all about.

From the get-go, I was pretty unsure as to what sort of game this was. The opening sequence shifts between a narrative-adventure game and a puzzle game, with just a touch of horror to spice things up, so I guess it's like a pretty standard *Doctor Who* episode in that respect. However, it became quickly obvious that the game developers were also unsure as to what sort of game this was. It's a puzzle game with barely any puzzles - and even fewer good ones. It's a narrative-adventure with a frankly odd structure and unconvincing plot. And, at the end, the game designers inexplicably (but not unwelcomely) decided to make it a first-person shooter. So, it's about four different, poorly executed, games rolled into one. Let me go through the opening sequence to explain what I mean.

At the start of the game, you're minding your own business in your local laundromat when, for some reason, the Thirteenth Doctor turns up on the TV screen and tells you that they're stuck at the end of time and space, and need you to go get some time crystals (i.e. the MacGuffins) to rescue them and save the universe from a computer virus (not really, but that's the metaphor they use). Then you glitch forward in time and the washing machines are suddenly full of incubating monsters. While the monsters don't actually do anything, there is genuine tension in the horror element. Each arc ('Laundromat', 'Spaceship', 'Angels' and 'Temple', as I shall call them) has its own monster, and some of the monsters are genuinely creepy - especially the Weeping Angels.

You then go through the back door into an office with a locked safe. The Doctor voiceover tells you that you need to open the safe; this is your first flavour of the puzzle-solving element. As a good little puzzle-solver, you start to look for clues. But no sooner do you begin your search when the voiceover tells you that you need a four-digit code. Then the voiceover tells you to look on the back of pictures. And then the voiceover tells you to look at the picture in the other room. At that point, you realise that this isn't actually a puzzle game because the voiceover *literally tells you how to solve everything before you have the chance*. Unsurprisingly, the random messages on the backs of the photos are the code to the safe, which doesn't make sense, and inside is the sonic screwdriver, which makes even less sense!

Afterwards, you leave the laundromat, do some extra bits and pieces, and end up in the TARDIS. On a side note, Daleks also seem to be taking over the world while you do this, but that doesn't really factor in yet. That gives you a pretty good impression of how the game continues.

In a story with a MacGuffin, usually the MacGuffin – while being the reason the plot is happening – is actually pretty secondary to the story itself. We're not so interested in the random thing that the protagonist has to find or take somewhere or throw in a fiery volcano or whatever. Rather we're here for the stuff that happens while they do this, and the game developers were clearly aware of this. However, we still expect the general arcs of the story to have *some* bearing on the MacGuffins. What's in the briefcase in *Pulp Fiction* doesn't matter, it's that the characters all want whatever it is which creates a good story. But such expectations exceed the reality of this game. Following the Laundromat arc, the next is about aliens on an abandoned spaceship who need constant love and attention otherwise they turn into monsters, like evil Instagram influencers. Does this, in any way, intersect with the 'end of the universe' plot or our need to get the time MacGuffin (beyond the crystal being on the spaceship for no intelligible reason)? No. It could have been any other story arc with a time crystal involved and would have worked out exactly the same way. The game itself seems to realise this, with a number of different and otherwise-pointless plot threads that, in the end, are all resolved simultaneously and are never to be heard from again. The only other seeming pay-off from this first arc is the acquisition of Emer, who is basically your guide/voiceover for the next bits. However, the Doctor was already fulfilling this role until this point, so it makes no difference at all. The voice changes. That's it. That's not to say that the abandoned spaceship plot is a bad one in and of itself. It's got a decent story and at least one genuinely engaging puzzle, but the whole thing is just not relevant. And the resolution is rushed, ending not with a boss battle but a Doctor monologue, as if the developers realised they needed to tie in the overall plot right at the end. It's all just slightly disappointing.

The next arc is a bit better though, tying into *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* for some reason. It's also got the Weeping Angels that I *definitely* didn't have nightmares about. Trust me, they were pretty scary on-screen, and in VR they are so much worse. The puzzles in this area are conceptually more innovative, if not necessarily well-executed. One in particular has a bizarre and illogical solution which, for once, has you thankful for the voiceover explaining exactly what you have to do.

However, this is all made up for by what follows. Following an angel jump-scare, you descend into the catacombs where you have to escape from a hoard of the things. Though the spaceship arc had some pretty decent jump-scares, they're nothing compared to the angels. I hated them. They were great. It took me many attempts, and much swearing, to finally escape from them. The puzzle-element above left something to be desired, but the catacombs were probably one of the best bits of the game – a true blend of gameplay and story.

**The
Angels
take your
headset**



But even this is eclipsed by my favourite arc: the Temple. Unlike the spaceship arc, it had actual narrative sense and build-up, while introducing you to the Daleks and getting progressively more difficult. It may have given me a bit of tonal whiplash when it suddenly switched from an adventure/puzzle game to a shooter, but I rolled with it and it was decently good fun. The shooter part made for a nice change of pace, though the functionality could be improved. You can't control where you go and there is a timer to reload, with no ability to dodge. As a result, you die a lot, and this gets a little tiresome. There is a reward at the end of this arc, however, with a proper ending which also has some relevance to the overall arc.

At last, you have all three crystals. It's time to face the big boss. In this case, the big boss is the 'mother' – the creator of the universe. She has decided that we're awful people and so, instead of re-evaluating her parenting skills, has decided to kill us all instead with the virus. Logically, her first move was to kidnap the Doctor. Or so we are led to believe. The reality is more convoluted, and frankly unnecessarily so. The game then tries to pull the rug out from under you and only succeeds in tripping itself up. It turns out that most of the narrative so far was completely irrelevant to the actual way to defeat her, which involves what I will call 'tiny pyramid powers'. The crystal MacGuffins turned out not even to be MacGuffins but just random things that you and no one else were interested in. To be honest, if they hadn't gone for this plot-twist ending, I probably would have rated it higher, but it really brought me crashing down following the otherwise enjoyable temple arc. This is capped off by the revelation that not only has the Doctor misled you, but they have also scapegoated you – an innocent bystander – and pretty much destroyed your life. But hey, you made some new friends, which makes up for it, right? Right?

While you ponder your new life, is also worth mentioning the technical side of the game. There are some solid pros, but they can get overshadowed by the often-irritating cons. On the plus side, there were subtitles, which isn't always a given, but they were very necessary as the music overwhelmed much of the dialogue. It was also difficult to see at times, with a lot of the scenes being quite dark. At least it made these subtitles easier to read! Aside from sound and vision, touch could also be an issue, with the hand control being quite imprecise in places and sometimes you just can't pick things up at all. Although it was decent on the whole, it did not allow for much of the dexterity and precision that other games have. There was also a sitting function. However, this made no adjustments to the gameplay itself, meaning you keep having to stand up or readjust your seat to reach things – something I can see as potentially being a real problem for someone who is physically disabled.

That is not to say that this game has no merits. It would have gotten one star if that was the case. The acting is genuinely pretty good, and there's a bunch of references to other *Doctor Who* stories. While the story arcs don't all make narrative sense, they are at least decently entertaining, and there are some good puzzles to be had. Despite this, the overall storytelling and confused game design really let down the atmosphere.

In all, I think the game developers managed to create what they set out to make: an episode of *Doctor Who*. However, it's very much more an episode than a game, with the developers seemingly not have wanted to compromise that format to make it more playable. If you're there for the *Doctor Who* experience, you could probably forgive the faults in the game itself. But if you're there for the playability, it leaves much to be desired.

Thanks Rachel! Back over to John for more Time Lord Victorious...

The Edge of Time TLV - £19.99, £316.41 total

The *Edge of Time* is yet another of *Doctor Who*'s furtive attempts to enter the video game space, but this time through the miraculous (and expensive) technology of VR following on from *The Runaway*. As someone without the money or house space to invest in a VR platform, I've had to rely on the help of Rachel, who kindly provided me with footage of the game to enable this piece.

But how, you may ask, can I possibly review the free Time Lord Victorious update to *The Edge of Time* without actually experiencing it myself? The answer is 'very easily', because there's such a terrible lack of actual content to talk about!

The update adds eight collectible items to the game's main campaign, so if you've already completed it, I hope you won't mind playing through it again! These items are all related to TLV in some way, from an Ood translator sphere (bringing Brian to mind) to the Doctor's battle-worn Gallifreyan collar. Why they're laying around in fairly unrelated environments for you to pick up is anyone's guess.

The other main feature in the update is access to the Ninth and Tenth Doctor's 'coral' TARDIS interior. It looks nice enough, and that's about it.

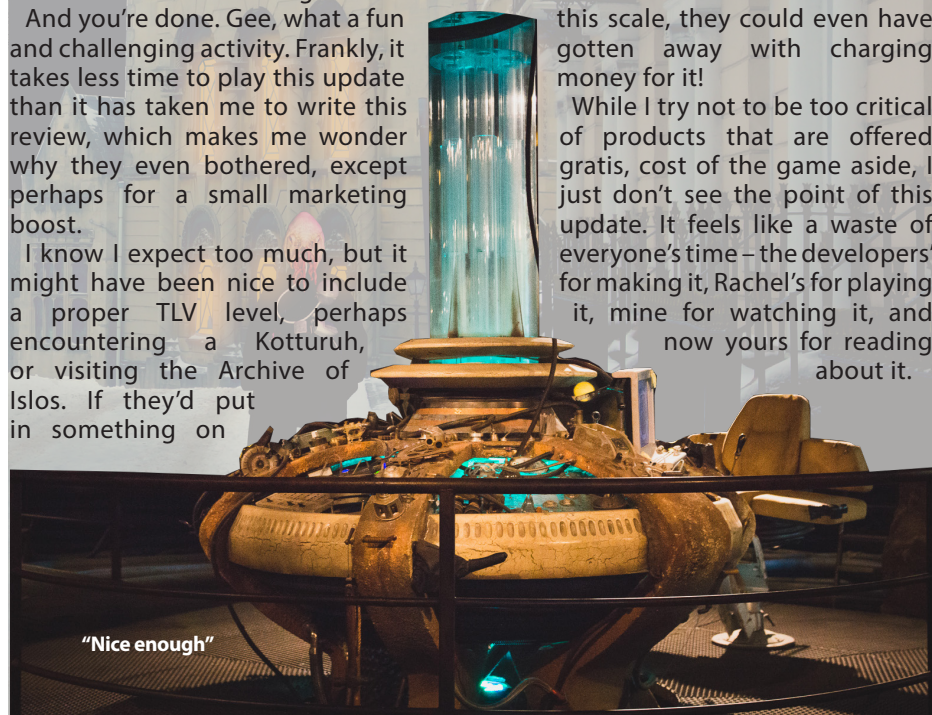
But wait! Within this TARDIS, you have access to one more task. All the TLV items you have collected are now attached to the wall, and you must correctly match each one with a related sound clip – so for example, when you hear the clip of Donna arguing with Halpen in *Planet of the Ood*, you must present the aforementioned Ood translator sphere. When all eight have been matched, you hear the noise of the TARDIS taking off as the screen fades to black...

And you're done. Gee, what a fun and challenging activity. Frankly, it takes less time to play this update than it has taken me to write this review, which makes me wonder why they even bothered, except perhaps for a small marketing boost.

I know I expect too much, but it might have been nice to include a proper TLV level, perhaps encountering a Kotturuh, or visiting the Archive of Islos. If they'd put in something on

this scale, they could even have gotten away with charging money for it!

While I try not to be too critical of products that are offered gratis, cost of the game aside, I just don't see the point of this update. It feels like a waste of everyone's time – the developers' for making it, Rachel's for playing it, mine for watching it, and now yours for reading about it.



Echoes of Extinction - £8.99, £325.40 total

With the TLV saga slowly, but surely, coming to a close, we come to the final audio drama for the range, a set of two 30-min episodes starring the Eighth and Tenth Doctors. Available both as a digital download and a limited-edition vinyl (which sold out almost immediately), it's disappointing that Big Finish are increasingly viewing physical media as a luxury item. I would have loved a CD edition of this release to go with my other TLV items – however, lacking a record player (as I think the majority do!) I've had no choice but to opt for the download.

The marketing for this one suggested something quite complex, with each Doctor having their own story that would somehow interact with the other. Big Finish's own listing describes it as "two interlinked adventures". I was expecting something akin to the format of their previous release *Flip-Flop*, with either story being a possible start or end point depending on which was listened to first. The truth, however, is far more simple. The Eighth Doctor starts the story off, and then the Tenth Doctor appears in the second episode that follows. There are the occasional "echoes" of the title, short audio clips that blend in from each side of the story – however, these are infrequent and completely incidental to the plot, with the Eighth Doctor not even appearing to notice them. There is also a little novelty as the two halves of this release bookend TLV as a whole, with the Eighth Doctor's adventure at the start of his experience, and the Tenth Doctor's escapade closing his.

As the story tends to progress in a linear manner, I will do the same, and start with the Eighth Doctor's episode. This is an intriguing little mystery that starts off almost like a sci-fi *Beauty and the Beast*, with a heroine, Jasmine, being held captive on a space-station by a mysterious, murderous monster who also seems to adore her. Throw in a dry robotic butler who wants to help Jasmine escape, but is also forced to stop her, and we have a well-crafted, intimate problem that's the perfect size for the short runtime, but with potentially huge consequences. The situation isn't quite as black and white as it seems, and as the Doctor meddles we learn the tragic origins of Jasmine, her monster and her butler. My only complaint would be that we don't get to experience enough of this backstory – it's got some fascinating ideas, reminiscent of *Black Mirror*, that would have been interesting to experience first hand rather than through a truncated flashback.

Flipping the (theoretical) disc over, we get to the Tenth Doctor's story, which I sadly found a lot less satisfying. This sees the Doctor join a three-person crew of mercenaries who seek to claim and sell a dangerous weapon on a destroyed world. Clichés abound as they begin to explore, with the Doctor railing against their money-hungry ways. Later, when the crew decide to split up, you won't hold out much hope for the pair that doesn't include our hero. Bizarrely, this is one of the most star-studded Big Finish casts of recent years, with Arthur Darvill and Mina Anwar pouring all of their considerable talents into two roles that could politely be considered 'cannon fodder' (or 'red-shirts', if you prefer). Ultimately, a lot of this episode feels like padding as we wait for the Doctor to confront the being responsible for the planet's destruction.

When he does, the script uses this as an opportunity to present what the Doctor has learned from TLV as a whole, as he gives an impassioned speech about not meeting violence with violence. However, this exposes quite a large flaw in the overall saga in that this isn't really a new or interesting angle for the character or *Doctor Who* as a whole; both of which have both railed against conflict for decades. Pick up any Doctor from any point in their tenure and they'd probably give the same kind of speech – so what's been the purpose of this massive event?

In a final coda, the Tenth Doctor briefly hears his younger self over the radio, and sadly recalls the conflicts that await him, from the Dark Times to the Time War. It's a well-measured moment that adds a little bit of emotional depth to this second half, but the too-straightforward plotting, and facile moralising, of the main plot leave it a disappointing follow up to McGann's absorbing opening instalment.

On the whole, this release well reflects Big Finish's contribution to TLV as a whole – mildly diverting and at times exceptional, but for the most part sadly average.

***Unit Field Log 14681 & 14682* - Free, £325.40 total**

Ahead of my visit to the immersive theatre show *Time Fracture*, I took a quick look at some of the in-canon promotional material. After all, this is technically official Time Lord Victorious story content, and I've pledged to be thorough in my duty to report on all TLV!

We'll start with the first two trailers of the set. The first, coming in at twenty seconds in length, is basically a trailer for a trailer. There's some shouting, a UNIT soldier, scientists, and a suspiciously familiar crack in the wall. The second trailer gives us some answers, explaining that we're at a UNIT site that has been built around the eponymous time fracture, which has been under observation for decades – but, *quelle surprise*, recently the readings have begun to increase, and the fracture itself is growing bigger.

Our main character is Dr Courtney, with some additional interjections by the intriguingly named Dr Yates – any relation to the famous UNIT captain, perchance? While reporting on the rise in Chronon and Artron energy levels, and studying the 'mysterious' artefact that has fallen through the rapture (which Yates correctly identifies as the Tenth Doctor's shoe), the readings begin to rise again, and alarms begin to blare as the video cuts out...

This is an interesting little teaser, and I look forward to seeing how the mini-story will develop over the next two parts, but it is slightly disappointing that the majority of the set appears to be a green-screen, lending the whole thing a slightly cheap, artificial vibe – was a wall and some monitors too great an expense? (Or was this due to the impact of Covid instead? – Ed.) The time fracture itself, here shown as a large glowing crack in the wall, is immediately reminiscent of the crack in time that dominated Series Five of *Doctor Who* on telly, and I look forward to seeing if it will function in the same way. Continuity wise, there's also an interesting mention of the UNIT budget being slashed, a presumable reference to their status as of the TV story *Resolution*.

***Unit Field Log 14683* - Free, £325.40 total**

The next trailer for *Time Fracture* sees things go from bad to worse for the UNIT team who are monitoring the time fracture as another day dawns and the anomaly continues to grow...

This third trailer in the *Field Log* series cleverly integrates footage from another, non-story based trailer into the ongoing narrative. Abstract footage of a Cyberman near St Paul's Cathedral and a Dalek rising from the Thames, which at first seemed only glossy references to classic *Doctor Who* episodes, are now revealed to be a consequence of the widening time fracture. In a clever in-joke to how those old episodes were filmed, our friend Dr Courtney points out that as these incursions occurred early in the morning, they were easily concealed from the public! Well, let's hope they're un-concealed by the time opening night comes around, because I want to see these monsters in the flesh (er, metal)!

Another shoe has arrived through the fracture as well, this time belonging to the Eleventh Doctor – does this mean both he and the Tenth Doctor be playing meaningful roles in the live show? Will we find the missing halves of these footwear pairs? As I later found out, it's not quite this specific in the show - the storyline is more broadly focused on *Doctor Who* as a whole than following specific Doctors, which is much to its benefit.

That said, this instalment does provide some hints as to how the show itself would turn out, as the time fracture has grown wide enough for a UNIT sergeant to pass through. This provided my first hints that guests would be following him into the portal in the show itself, but didn't suggest a necessarily promising outcome - after all, contact with the poor fellow is immediately lost as his safety line is whipped through the portal...

Unit Field Log 14684 - Free, £325.40 total

We're back for a final video trip to the UNIT black site, where Doctors Courtney and Yates are continuing to monitor the expanding time fracture...and with their previous attempt to send somebody through appearing to fail utterly, they seem to have one last trick up their sleeve...

This final trailer finally gives the juiciest intel about what exactly awaited the audience at the live *Time Fracture* show, as Dr Courtney reveals his plans to design a stable time portal for traversing the titular fracture and provides a well-thought out explanation for why we'll be able to walk between various time zones during the show. But this trailer even goes one step further than that by providing an in-canon explanation for the general public to be making such a trip, as it turns out the Doctor has left UNIT a list of hundreds and hundreds of civilian names - which could have included yours, had you dropped into the show during its run.

We also get to see who Yates and Courtney have been recording all this footage for, as the second half of the trailer sees the return of Jemma Redgrave as chief scientific officer for UNIT, Kate Lethbridge-Stewart. It turns out she's the one who's been sending us all this footage, so that we can make an informed decision whether or not to accept the Doctor's mysterious paper-based summoning. As always, it's a treat to see this character – perhaps less so the fact that she apparently keeps a photo of her dad in a prominent space everywhere she goes so that nobody **COULD EVER POSSIBLY FORGET**. Ahem.

All in all, I was quite impressed with this little series of trailers, which provide some interesting background work for the show while being perfectly skippable for those with less interest. They thankfully resisted the urge to reveal any of the surprises that lay in store, although eagle-eyed TLV watchers may have spotted that some releases seem to have let slip the source of the time fracture...oops. Regardless, I was suitably hyped for my upcoming trip to the live show!

Can John conquer the time fracture?



John Salway

Time Fracture - £49.95, £375.35 total

Well, this is it! We've finally arrived at the last piece of Time Lord Victorious that I'll be reviewing. It's a momentous occasion, and thankfully we've got a sufficiently exciting event to end on! Originally due to debut in 2020 before COVID-19, *Time Fracture* was a highly immersive theatrical experience that ran at London's Immersive|LDN venue near Bond Street from late May 2021 to early June 2022. More than any previous live event, it allowed guests to walk into the world of *Doctor Who* where they were met with a time-and-space-spanning tale that's brimming with talent, love and references-a-go-go. I had the privilege of visiting the experience a couple of times during its run, and previously contributed a short, spoiler-free review as part of my ongoing Time Lord Victorious coverage. As the show has now been closed for a while, with no sign of a re-emergence anytime soon, it seems appropriate to look back on the show in a little more detail. If you still wish to remain ignorant of the show's events in hope of a revival, then read no further. But if you dare to read the secrets within, prepare to enter the time fracture...

The adventure begins as you are welcomed to a secret UNIT black site by a somewhat familiar face, before being briefed by a recording of Kate Lethbridge-Stewart (which again seems to be the moniker she's going by at the moment!). This covered all the basic plot info you needed, repeated (thankfully not *ad verbum*) from the on-line clips previously released for those normal folks who don't obsessively document trailers.

You're then moved into the first part of the adventure, a large UNIT lab with an intriguing central power device, where the scientists are trying to combat the ever-growing time fracture. As increasingly bizarre events start to occur in the outside world, you spent about 20 to 30 minutes here being introduced to various UNIT members, ducking when systems overload, being relentlessly briefed and re-briefed, and asked to do some minor tasks such as inventing cover stories for various international incidents. It seems to be intended as a sort of ice-breaker, getting the audience used to interacting with the cast and encouraging them to play along with events, at which it succeeds. However, it all seemed quite unfocused, and despite the UNIT actors' best improvisational skills, there just isn't that much to see or do in the lab. With the time fracture itself tantalisingly within reach, you're just willing this introduction to go quicker so you can hurry up, get it opened and venture inside.

Eventually, with the Doctor's assistance and a snazzy set transformation to reveal a TARDIS console, the time fracture opens. After being beckoned inside, you head down a set of neon-lit stairs into the basement where the real heart of the experience lies. While it's an exciting moment, the rush to get everyone downstairs could have been improved – there are two different routes which come out at slightly different points, so on one occasion I ended up separated from the rest of my party.

Once downstairs, Time Lord guides (all of whom are implied to be unknown Doctor incarnations) wait to lead small groups of two to eight around the various time zones that have been joined together by the fracture. Each zone is small but perfectly formed, with gorgeous set design, expressive characters and many surprises waiting to unfold. In one moment you might be in an alien marketplace watching the Kerblam! man deliver a mysterious package to a pig-man, while the next you might be crouching through a fireplace to meet Leonardo da Vinci, who's building an anachronistic gizmo under the gaze of the Silence.

This section of the show is far and away the highlight, as you get to freely interact with the actors and props all around you. To a certain extent, you can also influence where you want to go and what to do next, although this is where your group size can have a large impact. While each area has its own little storyline, there is an overarching plot going on across the showfloor as Time Lord agent Zoria ventures across time zones on a mission to save Gallifrey from the fracture. You'll likely see her once or twice as you move about, but even if you miss them, the characters across the zones will give you enough information to piece together the gist of what's going on. My personal favourite moment occurred as my group were shown through a mysterious door, behind which we discovered a control room on Skaro – and Davros himself! This was accomplished superbly, with the actor fully embodying the character as if he'd just rolled out of the television. Crucially, this was no mere cameo, as the sinisterly seductive Davros convinced our party to take an important device with us...

Having visited *Time Fracture* both during and after certain COVID accommodations were in place, this section was the area with the most obvious change. During our first visit, there was a much smaller intake of guests to each show, and each Time Lord host would guide a very small group of around five people. This meant the show felt a lot more personalised, giving everyone more of a chance to properly interact with the actors around them. On our subsequent trip, groups were around eight or nine, making it more difficult to see and hear the actors. Unless you were in the front, you could feel more like a tagalong to somebody else's adventure. While I understand that the show probably needed a more dilute actor/guest ratio to make money once they were allowed to, it definitely made for a less enjoyable experience for me.



Your time on the main *Time Fracture* showfloor ends with the advance of a Cyberman attack squad, forcing guests to flee through newly opened doors to the next time zone – the space liner ZZ1, with its bar and cabaret stage. This is referred to as an 'intermission' - you can go to the bathroom and order drinks at the central bar - but the show hasn't really stopped by any means. As well as some talented live performances by in-character Crespalian and/or Silurian singers, who you can also interact with between sets, the plot continues in the bar as Zoria gets in a firefight with Time Lord Victorious' Brian the Ood. As she secures a case containing the chronometric weapon she has been seeking, the vessel's destination changes to Gallifrey... This whole section is a real treat, allowing you to sit back and relax, or continue to engage with the immersive experience. It's probably the best intermission in the business.

Davros
shows off his
seductive side

The experience's final section is a lot less open than the rest, but no less immersive for it. Small groups are gathered by the Time Lord guides and directed past the murdered corpse of Brian the Ood (boo!) in pursuit of Zoria through more time fractures to reach Gallifrey. Your first stop – the basement of Henrik's department store, where, in a surprising twist, you are attacked not by Autons, but Weeping Angels! This scene is expertly choreographed and lit so you never see the Angel actors move as they advance from towards you between flashes of light. As your guide spots a side route, you escape up some stairs to the National Gallery where a time fracture behind the Gallifrey Falls No More painting leads you to said planet.

Once you arrive at Gallifrey, the experience becomes as close as it gets to a traditional stage play. Directed to one of four standing sections around Rassilon's tomb, each representing one of the great houses of Gallifrey, you watch on as Time Lord officials argue for and against resurrecting Rassilon yet again. It transpires that he will actually cause the time fracture, destroying the rest of the universe to save his people. Rassilon, it seems, is not one for trying out new ideas. Thankfully, help is at hand! Not, as you might expect, from the Doctor, but from Davros, who uses the device he gave us earlier to summon Daleks to Gallifrey, exterminate some Time Lords, and usurp the plot to destroy everything for his own ends. *Now* is when the Doctor makes their move, as all of their incarnations can be seen and heard around the chamber. While some of the Doctors are soundalikes, most are recorded from the original actors. All 13 Doctors at the time, plus the War and Fugitive Doctors, are there to save the day in a cheesy, but uplifting finale. On the way out, via the UNIT HQ, you are at your leisure to pose for photographs with the newly materialised TARDIS, before emerging into the gift shop which sells show merchandise as well as more general *Doctor Who* models and figurines.

During my visits, I was unable to get a copy of the show's program (or Show Companion, as it labels itself) as it had sold out. I've since been able to acquire a second-hand copy, revealing it to be a suitably glossy production with a lenticular cover. It's a well-produced theatrical program, with lots of gorgeous photographs of the sets and brief interviews with various creative figures in the show's development. While the initial development team are credited in the program itself, the cast and company are featured in their own pull-out section - presumably so this could be updated frequently during the show's run over multiple cast changes. It's more than just a program, however, and contains a couple of in-universe pieces of ephemera – letters from the Doctor and Kate Stewart that mainly just reiterate *Time Fracture's* central premise, but also implore repeat visitors to keep the show's secrets safe (err, whoops).

Now we've been through the experience, it's my final time to ask the age-old question: how does this adventure tie into Time Lord Victorious? The answer is very sparingly, and not very well, save an appearance by Brian the Ood. We have heard reference to the time fracture in some other stories, particularly the short story *What the TARDIS thought of "Time Lord Victorious"*, but this seems to attribute the source of the fracture to the Doctor returning Adelaide Brooke to Earth, which is a completely different explanation to the one given here, so much so that I'm not sure the two can be easily reconciled.

James Goss interjects (via Twitter):

“If it helps, the Doctor’s actions in *The Waters of Mars* creates the fracture on Davies Street, which the temporal disruptor then opens. But for the show to spend time explaining it would be a chore when there is fun to be had.”

In my original review, I implored all of you to go out and see *Time Fracture* at the earliest opportunity. Sadly, this unique and impressive show was cut short by a variety of issues beyond its control, such as the cast coming down with COVID and the venue flooding. That said, the fact that it persevered through these difficulties is a testament to the talented people working both on stage and behind the scenes. While, at the time of writing, the show’s website is still online and encouraging fans to “keep in touch with future opportunities to experience” it, no such news has been forthcoming. If *Time Fracture* ever does return, I strongly encourage you to attend and experience for yourself the chance to step into a *Doctor Who* adventure.

Time Lord Victorious – The Finale

What was Time Lord Victorious as a whole trying to achieve? In a short article explaining TLV, producer James Goss described the event as “like a *Doctor Who* festival” with individual, standalone stories forming a bigger picture. The plan seems to have been to try to appeal to different audiences: one, people like me who are willing to commit to trying to follow the whole saga; and two, a more casual audience who might try one story, and then be hooked into considering more purchases. Unfortunately, I don’t think they quite got the balance right to appeal to that second group, with TLV appearing from the outside to be quite complicated and intimidating.

Part of the problem for this was been the structure of the story. TLV has a complex, time-bending tale, with different characters entering the narrative at various points in the timeline, and not all moving in the same direction – the best example of this is *Echoes of Extinction*, a story that features the Eighth Doctor’s first TLV appearance and the Tenth Doctor’s last. This makes it very difficult for the casual fan to know where to begin. What should be their starting point? Personally, I would recommend the two novels (*The Knight, The Fool and the Dead* & *All Flesh is Grass*) as a suitable introduction point, as they feature the core of the story, but they’re not at the top of either the release schedule or the chronological story order. A more straightforward, linear storyline might have made it far simpler to encourage potential purchases by simply pointing towards the beginning.

That’s not to say the puzzle-box structure of the project didn’t pay some dividends to those fully invested in the ongoing storyline. It’s been really interesting to see intriguing loose threads in some releases be tied up further down the line. My favourite example of this is *Master Thief*, a tale that initially seems completely unrelated to the TLV storyline but is later revealed to be connected to the Eighth Doctor story *The Enemy of My Enemy*. But while these links have provoked some brief “a-ha!” reactions, I’m not sure anything revelatory or game-changing enough occurs within the overall narrative to justify potentially confusing potential audience members.

In many ways, the multi-stranded nature of TLV caused it to suffer the worst of both worlds – both by appearing too complicated for many fans to bother with, yet lacking in meaningful plot and character development across the saga. So many of the individual stories are designed to function as standalones, which means they don't contribute a great deal to the overall narrative. For example, while I enjoyed *The Minds of Magnox*, you could skip it and not notice a gap. That doesn't prevent it from being a highly enjoyable story, but what's the point of an overarching narrative if large chunks can be skipped?

There are also certain releases that can be thought of more as TLV adjacent, despite their inclusion in the official story charts and content maps. For instance, the first on the release schedule, *A Dalek Awakens*, launched before TLV had even been announced. Although someone was canny enough to produce an audio drama tying into it, I can't personally see this escape room as a fully integrated part of TLV. The same is true of *Time Fracture*, in which there are certainly some references but ultimately it's more of a *Doctor Who* show in general than an innately Time Lord Victorious one.

Something that is very much integral to TLV, however, are the monsters. The main original villains, the Kotturuh, are a very well thought out race with a killer (no pun intended) gimmick that is easy to intuitively grasp, and a strong visual design. They are sinister, implacable and have a strong motive for their actions, believing their actions to be necessary for the universe. As well as proving a strong image of the race as a whole, the range has also done a great job of adding some complexity to this species with individual personalities amongst the group to ensure we don't just see them as a bunch of identical drones. While I have been impressed by this new creation, I think it was also the right decision to give them a definitive end that pretty much prevents them from re-appearing outside TLV. They have reached the natural conclusion of their storyline, and that's okay.

The re-invention of the Daleks is another aspect that has been a triumph, with the individual personalities and designs of the Restoration Empire succeeding where the New Paradigm Daleks before them had failed. By keeping the much-loved silhouette of the Bronze Daleks, but with new colour schemes and tools, you've got a sleek looking bunch. The personalities have also been well judged, with each Dalek model having a clear function represented clearly in both its visual design and easily distinguishable voices. The undoubted highlights here are the Emperor Dalek, a large-domed, booming force of nature with a gleaming gold casing, and the Dalek Strategist, a battered old Dalek whose casing dates back to the very first Dalek story with the most well-thought out personality of all. He's cunning, self-serving but ultimately fiercely loyal to the Emperor, and has been given the freedom to enact unorthodox plans. Across the entire range, the Restoration Daleks have boosted every release that they have featured in and their internal politics have been a joy to track across the timelines. I think it would be very foolish for such a well-planned and executed set of characters to be ignored after the end of TLV, and so I have my fingers crossed they will re-emerge in the future.



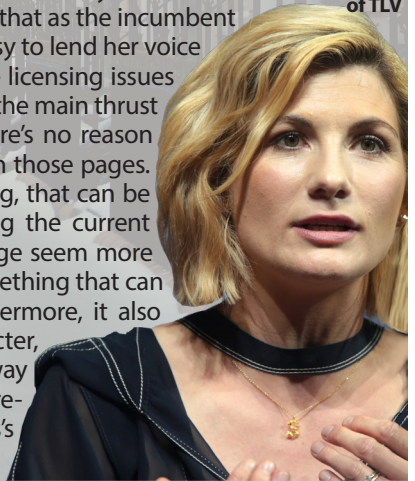
The
Bronze
Age is
over

Finally, Brian the Ood is the last really successful monster design, although undoubtedly the simplest in concept and design. He's an Ood that kills people. It's an inherently simple idea that you can immediately grasp, with some great wit in the notion of this innately polite assassin. The decision to use his translator, nicknamed 'Mr Ball', as an outlet for his more homicidal thoughts is also a great way to increase the fear factor and unpredictability of Brian without casting aside what makes him an Ood. TLV uses Brian in a really interesting way, moving him from an enemy of the Eighth Doctor to a companion of the Tenth, and featuring a little bit of development as he is separated from his usual time, and employers, as he begins to develop a little bit of independence. At the same time, he embodies the morally questionable road that the Tenth Doctor has decided to venture down – the Doctor shouldn't really be friends with an assassin, and it's telling that Brian has chosen to stick around. Clearly, he foresees more opportunities for death in the Doctor's future. Unfortunately, we leave Brian in a situation that makes it hard for him to return – though with changing timelines, who can say?

It's telling that when I think of the main players in the TLV saga, my first thoughts are about the monsters, because besides the Doctor there really aren't any other protagonists! This is a real flaw for the range, because it limits the room for ongoing emotional arcs and visible character development beyond individual stories, with the weight of all that material placed on the Doctor. And unfortunately, because we're focusing on past Doctors in TLV, there's only a small amount of freedom to develop them before they must resume their previous spot in canon. Everyone has to roughly end up at a similar point to where they entered. The Tenth Doctor, the main focus of the range, relearns a lesson that keeps popping up in modern *Doctor Who*, which is that he shouldn't take part in large scale conflicts as that isn't what being the Doctor is about. The Eighth and Ninth Doctors, meanwhile, don't really change at all across their stories, simply arriving, being the Doctor for a bit, and then leaving the situation.

It's really quite baffling that Jodie Whitaker, the current Doctor during Time Lord Victorious's release, isn't the main figure in this range. She does technically appear, making a few small cameos, but at a point where plenty of current *Doctor Who* fans were quite keen for some more Thirteenth Doctor content while the next series was produced, I don't understand why she couldn't have played an active role in this event. It is true that as the incumbent Doctor, Jodie Whitaker could perhaps be too busy to lend her voice to audio dramas and the like, and there may be licensing issues which make such things difficult. But given that the main thrust of the plot is contained within two novels, there's no reason the Thirteenth Doctor couldn't have appeared in those pages. If you don't want to bring her companions along, that can be solved with a single explanatory line! Including the current Doctor would have done a lot to make the range seem more up-to-date and relevant to fans, rather than something that can be comfortably ignored as a side-event. Furthermore, it also gives you more freedom to play with the character, and potentially leave her changed in some way by the events, rather than trying to fit into pre-set canon. This is perhaps Time Lord Victorious's greatest missed opportunity.

When you realise you're not a big part of TLV



Adapted from CC BY-SA 2.0 - Gage Skidmore - <https://flickr.com/photos/22007612@N05/42695382045>

Alternatively, this is where the range could really have done with an original companion character, or at least some relatable humanoid figures to re-occur across multiple stories. As it stands, Brian the Ood is the closest thing we get to a companion in TLV, and as a rather fixed character, there's only so much that can be done to develop him. But if you create a new friend to journey with the Doctor (or Doctors!) then you have complete freedom to do whatever you want with them. They can change and develop as epic events move around them. You can include twists about their true origins, or revelations about how they personally tie into events. You can make the audience care for them, emotionally invest in their well-being before tragically killing them, or you can have them learn so much from the journey that they outgrow the Doctor. Including such a figure could have helped to ground the range a little bit more in relatable emotion rather than focusing merely on interlocking a series of events, and would also provide a reason for each story to be essential, to see how the character grows. Even if authors didn't want to go to the trouble of creating another character, there were plenty of side characters who could have stepped into the breach as companion should they have been needed to.

If ever the BBC choose to produce another large scale multimedia event of this nature, and I really hope they do, I think the best thing they can do is lean a lot harder into serialisation. Here, they attempted to keep a lot of elements separate, in the hopes of attracting more of an audience, but I feel that led to a lot of confusion in the general *Doctor Who* community about what exactly TLV actually is. Producing a simpler, linear set of stories that follow one after another, and making the order between them clear (preferably with numbers!) could lead to a more intuitive range that's easier for the audience to grasp, even across novels, audio dramas and comics.

Such a structure would also help with my second suggestion, which is a more grounded, character-based approach. TLV features a lot of epic elements but is often rather clinical in the way it moves them across the board. Huge events are happening on a massive scale but we're given little reason to be personally invested beyond rooting for the Doctors. I recommend producing a story with a strong focus on (a) companion character(s), original or otherwise, that they have the freedom to develop across the range. Even Angela, the time travelling inventor from Comic Creator Pack #5, could be a stand-in companion for TLV - she even has a time machine she can add into the bargain! Give us more figures to relate to, so we can be hurt all the more when bad things happen, or be even more joyous when they triumph. By the end of such a large adventure, I want to feel like the journey mattered.

And put the current Doctor in it! I would have thought that one was a no-brainer.

TLV has produced a lot of really interesting stories that I can thoroughly recommend (and indeed have), and introduced some iconic enemies that I truly hope will live on past the end of the range. But when I look at the saga as a whole, I see less than the sum of its parts. Like a puzzle box, there are moments of satisfaction seeing pieces slide into place until every gap is neatly filled in, but I don't feel much of an emotional connection to the events going on. And *Doctor Who* is very much a show all about emotion. In the end, TLV feels very much a world unto itself, something self-contained that you can easily put on the shelf and forget about. Ultimately, I see a lot of missed opportunities - but that doesn't mean there's not some awards to hand out.

And the nominations are...

It took almost a year, and precisely £375.35, but I finally reached the end of my Time Lord Victorious journey. With every release now obtained and reviewed, it's time to look back and reflect upon what delights and disappointments the range has to offer.

Now we have full knowledge of the overall scheme, I can let you know which releases are most worthy of your attention. These hallowed releases will receive my special 'Brian's Bounty' award, in honour of everyone's favourite Ood assassin. Even if you're not too bothered with knowing the whole story, these special picks still come highly recommended by yours truly.

The Novels

Let's start right at the heart of things with the pair of novels that make up the central spine of TLV. These stories are what give the range its name, as the Tenth Doctor finds himself in the Dark Times and makes a stand against the Kotturuh, an ancient, implacable race who are assigning lifespans to the previously immortal beings of the cosmos, leading him to take up the mantle of Time Lord Victorious.

Stephen Cole's *The Knight, The Fool and the Dead* gets everything off to a great start with a pacy, exciting novel that makes the Doctor's ruthless, unwise actions by the end seem understandable and justified when viewed in context. Initially, I was concerned TLV would begin with an already unlikable Doctor à la the ending of *The Waters of Mars*, but here he's amenable and heroic until it all just goes too far. It ends with a thrilling cliffhanger as the Eighth and Ninth Doctors appear to stand against the Tenth, which is a fantastic idea – but imagine how much powerful that could have been if it was kept secret, rather than a main marketing point of the range?

Una McCormack's *All Flesh Is Grass* picks up the baton right where the previous novel left off, and the first half is a non-stop thrill ride as all three Doctors are out of the box, angry at each other and surrounded by duplicitous allies. The conflict is well-designed so the Doctors can't be held too accountable for the violence and destruction that follow, such that each of their perspectives make sense and aren't out of character. Things do come a little unstuck, unfortunately, as we head towards the conclusion, and some of the issues raised by the nature of the Kotturuh are fudged. If they are the ones assigning finite lifespans, and they've been defeated, why do we still have limited longevity? But these minor niggles are more than made up for with the energy and ambition of the book as a whole.

Both of these books are easy to recommend and make the perfect starting point for anyone interested in TLV, forming the main storyline from which other releases branch off, but do bear in mind that they're really two halves of the same story – if you're going to get one, you should really get both. Perhaps if they're ever republished we could get a double-pack edition? I'm delighted to award both books my first Brian's Bounty award! **This nominee truly was victorious**



Audio Releases

Never one to miss out on a good *Doctor Who* event, Big Finish contributed six different audio releases to the TLV range; a packaged pair of short stories starring the Master, a trilogy of audio dramas starring the Eighth Doctor, a Fourth Doctor story that ties in with the *A Dalek Awakens* escape room, and a two-sided vinyl adventure starring the Eighth and Tenth Doctors. But you also shouldn't overlook *The Minds of Magnox*, an audiobook released by Auntie herself through BBC Audio...

The Master duology, *Master Thief* by Sophie Iles and *Lesser Evils* by Simon Guerrier, represent the very best of Big Finish, and are sold together at an exceptionally low price point. They are two very intriguing, thoughtful stories that take their time to get into the mind of the Master, with Jon Culshaw excelling as he fully inhabits two different incarnations of the nefarious Time Lord. *Master Thief* also gives us a really intriguing ending that I thought might tie into TLV further down the line – in the end, it didn't, so I really hope Big Finish follow this up in the near future. A very easy Brian's Bounty to award.

He Kills Me, He Kills Me Not by Carrie Thompson starts a trilogy of Eighth Doctor audio dramas that show him directly before and after the events of *All Flesh Is Grass*. This one wasn't really my cup of tea, despite the always delightful presence of Brian the Ood. It clung quite heavily to a Western style that I wasn't a fan of, and kept Brian and the Eighth Doctor apart for longer than I'd have preferred.

On the other hand, *The Enemy of My Enemy* by Tracy Ann Baines was for me, the highlight of the McGann trilogy, and sees the Eighth Doctor teaming up with the Restoration Empire Daleks. These are a team of varied Dalek personalities that, along with Brian, are exceptional characters that I hope will have a life beyond the TLV range. Caught between a rock and a hard place, the Doctor snakes his way through satisfying twists and turns, as he tries to prevent war between the Daleks and an equally monstrous enemy. While the beginning and end of this story tie into ongoing TLV matters, the main plot is quite standalone, so I feel comfortable recommending this story as a Brian's Bounty.

Mutually Assured Destruction by Lizzie Hopley closes the trilogy, picking the Eighth Doctor up after the end of *All Flesh Is Grass*, trapped aboard a decaying Dalek time ship. While I enjoyed it, I felt it didn't quite live up to its premise, with the Doctor having a surprisingly easy time toying with the Daleks, who amusingly spend most of the time at each other's throats. It would almost have been better if we'd had this story entirely from the Dalek's perspective, hunting an unseen threat that's picking them off on their spaceship, like a horror movie in reverse.

Outside the trilogy, *Genetics of the Daleks* by Jonathan Morris is a Fourth Doctor story that is perfectly enjoyable, but one that failed to fully enthral me. A lot of time is taken up with a plot about evil stowaways taking over a spaceship, which really just feels like a lengthy distraction when we really want to see Tom Baker battle a Dalek! It may, however, feature the first canonical appearance of a new series style Bronze Dalek...

Rounding out Big Finish's TLV content, *Echoes of Extinction* by Alfie Shaw is the final Big Finish contribution to TLV, and forms a bookend to the range as we see both the Eighth Doctor's first involvement in the series and the Tenth Doctor's last. The cast is exceptional, but with the combination of a few thankless roles, and the titular "echoes" being something of nothing, it's hard to not be a little disappointed when the marketing seems to hint at a multi-Doctor story. In essence, it's really just an Eighth Doctor episode with a Tenth Doctor sequel. While I found the first half better as a whole, the second part has a really quite lovely conclusion that functions well as a coda for the TLV range as a whole.

Finally, *The Minds of Magnox* by Darren Jones is an audiobook read by Jacob Dudman that fills in some of the Tenth Doctor's span in the Dark Times travelling with Brian the Ood. Personally, audiobooks aren't a format I generally seek out, but this one really entertained me, with the large focus on Brian the Ood particularly appreciated. Jacob Dudman is an exceptional narrator, really bringing the story to life, and skilfully moulding his voice to play a wide variety of characters. More Brian content please! Needless to say, this gets a Brian's Bounty award.

Comics

Two different comic ranges were launched for TLV – Titan Comics produced *Defender of the Daleks*, a two-part adventure for the Tenth Doctor, while for three issues *Doctor Who Magazine* pages contained *Monstrous Beauty*, with the Ninth Doctor and Rose.

Defender of the Daleks is a visual love letter to Dalek history, with classic pieces of Dalek design and architecture on display on almost every page, in a very realistic style. There's so much Dalek love, in fact, that the story slightly neglects its main villains, gooey monstrosities called the Hond. This was also the first TLV release to focus on the Dalek Strategist, an ancient and sly fellow who keeps his eye trained on the future and his own survival. His fraught relationship with the Doctor starts here, and recurs throughout the range as one of its most compelling elements.

Meanwhile, *Monstrous Beauty* takes the Ninth Doctor and Rose into the Dark Times, straight into a conflict between Gallifreyans and Vampires. The artwork is quite different to *Defender of the Daleks*, going for a more stylised, high-contrast look that appropriately features lots of blacks and reds. Full of action-packed set pieces, this is a rollercoaster with a lot of exciting twists. It's also the only piece of TLV content to feature a pre-existing companion, so it's a shame that Rose's role in the narrative isn't larger – particularly as this adventure writes her out of the rest of the TLV range.

Both comics are very different but each blazes their own trail and really commits to their style of choice, so it's difficult to choose one above the other. Instead, I recommend you get them both – they're exciting, feature beautiful artwork, and function well as stand-alone stories without any further TLV knowledge required. A lovely pair of Brian's Bounties.

Series

Daleks!, a free animation series following the Dalek Emperor and Strategist, sees an assault on the Archive of Islos unleash a seemingly unstoppable enemy. Is it worth your time? Of course it is – it's free and not very long! This is just the kind of crazy, unexpected treat I love to see from *Doctor Who*. Yes, it's quite goofy and obviously hasn't got a massive budget, but it commits to being its own thing, which is a fun show with colourful 60s inspired visuals. Fingers crossed for a second series! A most enthusiastic Brian's Bounty choice.

Dalek Series Two looks great!



Merchandise

Obviously, we won't be going into every little mug, T-shirt or poster with a Time Lord Victorious logo on, or I'd have bankrupted myself even more than I already have! Instead, we will focus on some select pieces that were deemed worthy to appear on the official TLV content roadmap – the Eaglemoss TLV figurines and the special Brian the Ood T-shirt.

The Eaglemoss Time Lord Victorious figurines were available in four different sets, with the first three each containing two Daleks from the Restoration Empire, and the final set containing Brian the Ood (yay!) and the Tenth Doctor in Gallifreyan robes as the Time Lord Victorious. I've been thoroughly impressed with the quality of all of these, but the Daleks are undoubtedly the highlight here. The Restoration Empire Daleks have been a highlight of TLV across many of its strands, and these models show off their beautiful designs very nicely. Each set also comes with a magazine with fiction, fact files, interviews and more – they're not very long (and often typo prone) but they're nice inclusions. These collectibles are too niche for me to recommend to everyone, but they're quality products that I'm glad to own.

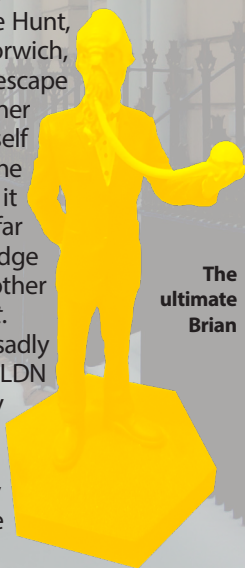
The Brian the Ood glow-in-the-dark T-shirt, however, is a must for every *Doctor Who* fan's wardrobe! The character of Brian was immediately iconic the minute he was announced – it's just such a simple, inspired idea to have an Ood assassin that I don't think you need to have experienced a single moment of TLV to get the appeal, since the Ood are one of those iconic alien races that even casual viewers will recognise. The glow-in-the-dark feature is a cool gimmick that well reflects Brian's dual nature, and in general it's just a very well thought out, effective design, and an immediate pick for Brian's Bounty. I want to see everyone wearing one of these at the next WhoSoc meeting!

Live Experiences

This is the section which will not be available forever, so you need to decide soon. If you wait too long, you won't be able to change your mind!

A Dalek Awakens is an escape room produced by Escape Hunt, and is available to play at their Basingstoke, Cheltenham, Norwich, Oxford Street and Reading locations. It's a perfectly adequate escape room, boosted by the killer gimmick of having a Dalek in the corner barking at you and trying to thwart your progress. The room itself is a tad empty and lacking in character compared to others by the company, with little detail beyond the tasks to complete. Give it a try if you live near one of the venues, but I wouldn't go too far out of your way if you don't. And don't worry about TLV knowledge – it works completely on its own, even if it does tie into some other releases – such as the slightly underwhelming *The Hollow Planet*.

Time Fracture, on the other hand, is a live experience that was sadly cut down in its prime. Making the journey to the Immersive LDN venue in London was more than worth it, as I and my time buddy found excitement, monsters galore, and plenty of surprises I found difficult not to want to tell to friends. This is my ultimate Brian's Bounty pick – it's amazing, it's unique, it's completely standalone – if you happen across a time machine, then please go see it!



The
ultimate
Brian

The Rest

Just a couple more bits and bobs to cover before we part!

The Road to the Dark Times is a Blu-Ray collection of some Classic and NuWho episodes that feature elements relating to the TLV story, be they Daleks or vampires or off-hand references to the Dark Times. It's a reasonably priced set with a good variety of stories, but disappointingly no bonus features whatsoever – which is a shame considering they could easily have included some already produced for the DVD range. None of the stories are essential re-watching to understand the TLV plot, so I would only grab this set if you want a fairly cost-effective way to obtain a few stories you don't have.

The Official Doctor Who Annual 2021 dedicated a few pages to TLV, providing a preview of characters and monsters within the saga, but now the event is over it's not worth picking this up for such material – just go directly to the stories you're interested in. It's a similar picture with *The Edge of Time* TLV update – while it's free, it's not adding anything.

Throughout TLV, various free short stories have been made available on the *Doctor Who* website, ranging from the atmospheric (*Canaries*) to the lore-establishing (*The Dawn of the Kotturuh*) to the fairly on the nose (*What the TARDIS thought of Time Lord Victorious*). While they do vary in quality somewhat, they're all free, so it would be churlish to look a gift horse in the mouth! If you're intrigued about TLV, these releases could be the perfect opportunity to dip your nose in, see if anything interests you, and have a bit of a taster.

Finally, the *Doctor Who* Comic Creator app has a series of five 99p TLV packs, which each contain an original comic, and some characters and settings from the range that you can use in your own comic creations. At such a low price point, I have no choice but to recommend these silly little packs – the comics are often faintly ridiculous, in my case provoking much laughter, which personally makes them more than worth the cost of entry.

A reviewer's work is never done...

No sooner had I finished with *Doctor Who's* first cross-platform odyssey than a new one was announced! This year sees the launch of another multimedia saga, *Doom's Day*, with books, audio dramas, comics, games, and more all planned. This time, the story revolves around an assassin named Doom who has 24 hours to locate the Doctor.

While the initial trailer has had a mixed response, lessons do seem to have been learned from Time Lord Victorious. The main concept is simple to grasp, and there looks to be a clear order to the instalments as they count down the hours remaining in Doom's search. Unlike its predecessor, there should be no confusion about the order pieces slot together.

The BBC press release about the series states that it will "kick off on *Doctor Who* digital channels". I'm hopeful that this means some free content will be made available at the start to draw potential viewers in, and provide a reason for them to continue paying attention to the developing story.

That said, I think they've made a mistake revealing a trailer so long before the first instalments are released, particularly as it hasn't been particularly well received. This will be the only exposure to *Doom's Day* that fans will have for months, which may turn off some of the potential audience. A swift progression between the announcement and the first release could have maintained some marketing momentum. As it stands, while *Doom's Day* was talked about for a short time after the trailer, there is a risk it will be forgotten in the minds of most *Doctor Who* fans before it even properly begins.

The experience reborn

Doctor Who: Worlds of Wonder *is worth a trip*

May 1991

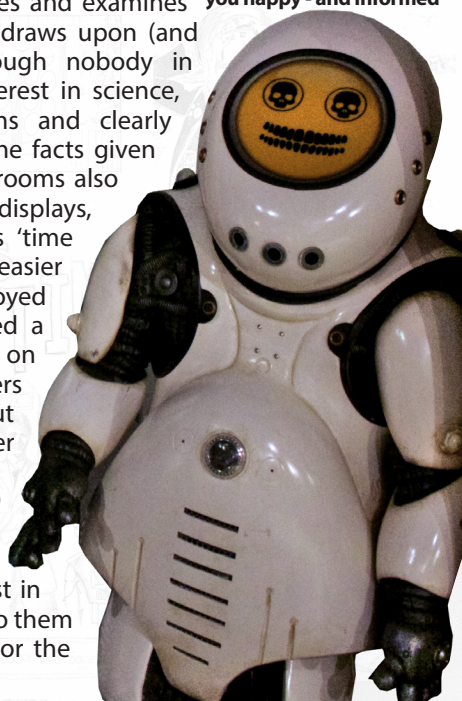
By Alice Hardaker

With the booming theme tune, swirling lights and big blue TARDIS doors, it was excruciatingly difficult for me to disguise my childlike glee and the urge to run straight up to the awaiting 1960s style console at the *Doctor Who: Worlds of Wonder* entrance – so I recommend not doing so. The first room of the exhibition is one in which you can applaud the incredible recreation of some of the show's original props without doing much more than revelling in how impressive everything is up-close. However, once you move beyond the introductory welcome clip from Mark Gatiss, your virtual tour guide, there's much more than just carefully curated costumes and sonic screwdriver collections to admire.

Detail is packed into every corner of each room, from information cards to screens playing video insights from experts on *Doctor Who*, its wider scientific themes and television in general. The exhibition purports to draw special attention to the scientific and technical aspects in particular, and I would argue that it does so very successfully. In a fitting tribute to the programme's initial intention to educate its young viewers in both science and history, the exhibition

The emojibots want to keep you happy - and informed

tracks 60 years of the Doctor's adventures and examines the real research and theories which it draws upon (and in some instances, preempted). Although nobody in our visiting group had an extensive interest in science, careful explanations of specialist terms and clearly drawn connections to the show made the facts given easily digestible for any visitor. Themed rooms also supported the educational aspect of the displays, with organisation by concepts such as 'time travel' and 'space exploration' making it easier for fans to pinpoint areas they truly enjoyed learning more about – I certainly added a note to look more into the information on 'Robotics and AI' that *Doctor Who* offers (*Tides* readers may want to check out 'Maximising smiliness' in #39 - Ed.), after being thoroughly entertained by a hallway greeting visitors with both K-9 and Season Twelve's eponymous Robot. Similarly, the costumes of Omega and older Ice Warriors sparked friends' interest in the classic series, which was less familiar to them than the hanging bodies of the Silence or the more modern Silurian masks.



The exhibition ultimately strikes a careful, but very successful, balance between imparting knowledge and embracing the fantastical side of *Doctor Who*. Admittedly, some of the informative video clips did feel at times as if they dragged a little, which is perhaps due to being clustered together in the same room corners. However, this is something I'm sure most fans similarly forgave when they too stumbled upon a Dalek voice modulator not too long after. The joy at being able to recount the Chinese takeout we had just enjoyed in robotic shrieks was a lot of fun, and it didn't stop there – cries of our rather creative script continued within the Dalek shell that fans could climb into over in the next room, before we emerged and were thoroughly berated by a Lady Cassandra projection. This highlights the wealth of props, interactive games and fun facts to enjoy in *Doctor Who: Worlds of Wonder*, of which there are arguably almost too much. Our ability to properly browse the final corridor of the exhibit was afforded to us by virtue of the kindness of the staff working, who kept the room open past official closing time especially so we could complete the trail. If you're planning to visit, I'd recommend booking an earlier time slot than mid-afternoon.

I'm glad that the staff did stick around, as the final piece of this room, 'Doctor Who's Liverpool Connections', was one I'd have been sad to miss. A wall-sized map of the city highlights different locations which had featured in the show during its long history, as well as information on some of its famous cast who came from the city. Be it my friend's surprise in learning Elisabeth Sladen's Scouse origins, or my own at just how close my childhood neighbourhood was to Paul McGann's, this nod to Liverpool allowed me to have a lovely moment of pride in my city's famous reputation for the arts. I certainly wasn't the only one, either – the enthusiasm of the World Museum's staff in interacting with fans and directing us to their personal favourite sections of the exhibit was infectious. From playing fashion critic with a staff member who was showcasing minute details of the Thirteenth Doctor's costume to the many cries of "Don't blink!" when approaching models of Weeping Angel, the visit was made significantly better by the excitement shared by all.

Though any fan of the show could be entertained by the exhibition, there was something a little more special about the fact that it was hosted in my home city, beyond the conveniently short drive and familiarity when navigating the museum hallways. In particular, appreciation must be given to the amazing artwork which greets visitors on arrival to the exhibition. A painting cherry-picking Liverpool's most famous landmarks meshes the city landscape with classic *Doctor Who* figures. From Sontarans to the Liver Building, the scene is reminiscent of Series Thirteen. Despite having my own reservations about what I believe to be a slightly exaggerated portrayal of the city, I'm sure I'm not alone in appreciating how the show, and now the exhibition, celebrates its connection to Liverpool so positively, which is sadly not how the area is often portrayed. Whovians only needed to stop into the museum's neighbouring Central Library to see the city also embracing the show's connections to Liverpool, with a mini-exhibit displaying everything from the Tenth Doctor's coat to books depicting the same events as Big Finish episodes. To be able to share my love of *Doctor Who* in the city, something I'd had little opportunity to do prior to joining WhoSoc, was an unexpected but incredibly welcome highlight of visiting *Worlds of Wonder*.

I can only hope Edinburgh enjoys hosting the exhibition as much as Liverpool did. Whether it's to learn some new scientific facts or merely to enjoy the array of Cybermen heads on show, the exhibition is well worth visiting for all who are yet to visit.

Surprises are in store as a third team enters...

The 2022 Varsity Quiz

Compiled by **James Ashworth**

Following two years battling it out in the Matrix, 2022 saw the Varsity Quiz return in-person for the first time since 2019. Instead of the star-studded event of that year, 2022 was a gradual easing back into the original format.

Of course, after so long online, it was perhaps inevitable that organisational issues would arise. When Cambridge's expected team of eight didn't arrive on their train as planned, the quiz itself was briefly called into question. In the end, three Cambridge members eventually arrived to take part, and the battle of wits was back on!

Though Cambridge's team may have been small, the quiz itself had grown. After the four round quiz in 2021, the quiz was up to eight for 2022. Each round was written by a different individual - thank you to all those who contributed! Sadly, two rounds, covering the Thirteenth Doctor and spinoffs, were not preserved for *Tides* to publish. Nonetheless, now it's your turn to see how you would have fared...

WhoSoc Varsity Quiz Scoreboard

2015

Cambridge 41 – Oxford 34

2016

Cambridge 68.5 – Oxford 59.5

2017

Cambridge 57 – Oxford 62

2018

Cambridge 43 – Oxford 44

2019

Cambridge 29 – Oxford 55

2020

Cambridge 43 – Oxford 49

2021

Cambridge 38.5 – Oxford 33.5

Cambridge 3 - Oxford 4

DOCTORS ONE-FOUR

1. What is the surname of the Britannic Base employee who is the first to name the Ice Warriors on screen?
2. What is the surname of the worker at the Sea Fort who names the Sea Devils?
3. In which season does the TARDIS visit Earth, Argolis, Tigella, Zolfa-Thura, Alzarius and an unnamed Medieval planet?
4. In which season are there four consecutive stories in Earth's solar system?
5. Whose second line is: "Well before you begin this rapturous reunion, there are one or two questions I'd like answered?"

6. The Doctor's second line to which companion is: "I read your paper on the teleological response of the virus.?"
7. What were Malcolm Hulke's first two stories?
8. Which two stories, screened in January 1978 and 1979, were the last written by Bob Baker and Dave Martin together?
9. Give the first four words said by a Cyberman on *Doctor Who*, which are given in response to a challenge by Cutler?
10. Addressed to Barbara, complete the first line said by a Dalek by adding five words: "You will move ahead of us and..."

DOCTORS FIVE-WAR

1. Why does the Fifth Doctor wear celery?
2. Who wrote the Fifth Doctor's debut episode, *Castrovalva*?
3. What animal can usually be found on the Sixth Doctor's lapel pin?
4. In the 2015 *DWM* poll to find the show's best episodes, which Sixth Doctor episode ranked the highest?
5. What was the last Seventh Doctor episode to be shot?
6. Which opera does Grace listen to when operating on the Seventh Doctor?
7. Name all the companions saluted by the Eighth Doctor in *The Night of the Doctor*.
8. Who played the War Doctor in *The Night of the Doctor*?
9. What are the last words spoken by War Doctor?
10. What alias does Grace give the Eighth Doctor in the TV Movie?

DOCTORS EIGHT-TWELVE

1. Name four of the five activities the Eleventh Doctor does to cure his boredom for an hour in *The Power of Three*.
2. How many Series One episodes do not contain the word "fantastic" in their final script?
3. Which Christmas carol plays as Wilfred Mott enters the church in beginning of *The End of Time* Part One?
4. In which episode does the Twelfth Doctor first warn someone not to look through his browsing history?
5. Name the food item which the Twelfth Doctor compares Bill Potts' eating of to Missy's murders.
6. Which colour jumper has the Ninth Doctor not worn on screen: red, blue, green, purple, black or white?
7. Series Five's *The Vampires in Venice* was not actually filmed in Italy, but in which country?
8. What is unusual about the title sequence in *The Night of the Doctor*, compared to others in *Doctor Who*?

9. In *The Christmas Invasion*, how many outfits does Tenth Doctor consider before picking his iconic look?
10. How many times do we see a chess board on screen during Steven Moffat's time as showrunner?

EXPANDED UNIVERSE

1. What is the surname of the siblings introduced as companions of the Eighth Doctor in *Terror Firma*?
2. Which actor, married to Rob Shearman, replaced Ysanne Churchman as the voice of Alpha Centauri in *The Bride of Peladon* and subsequent Big Finish stories set on Peladon?
3. On which island, invaded by the Nazis, is Bernice Summerfield living in *Just War*?
4. How many Virgin New Adventures is it between the introduction of Jason Kane and Bernice later marrying him?
5. *The Eight Doctors* is the name of the first Eighth Doctor Adventure novel. What is the name of the second?
6. Which author wrote the stories *Thin Time*, *The Mark of Mandragora* and *Border Princes*?
7. Which robot, sharing its name with a volcano, becomes emperor at the conclusion of *The Iron Legion*?
8. What species of animal is Mitzi, who plans to conquer Earth before being stopped by the Doctor and Rose? She subsequently becomes the latter's pet.
9. In *The King's Dragon*, the Eleventh Doctor encounters Enamour, a metal which manipulates people into wanting it. What similar technology, with a rhyming name, do the Eleventh and Twelfth Doctors encounter in a number of New Series Adventures?
10. 11 books were re-released by BBC Books for the 50th anniversary - one for each Doctor. Which Doctor features in the only book from this set based on a television story?

WHOUSE OF GAMES

Round One

Work out the answers from a simple code:

A = 1, B = 2, etc.

Doctor actors

1. [10][15][14] [16][5][18][20][23][5][5]
 2. [16][1][21][12] [13][3][7][1][14][14]
- New Series Companions
3. [13][9][3][11][5][25] [19][13][9][20][8]
 4. [23][9][12][6][18][5][4] [13][15][20][20]

Round Two

Put the words of the answer in alphabetical order.

1. What was the 2016 Christmas special called?
2. What was the overarching title of Season 23?
3. In which TV serial did Leela's eyes change colour so Louise Jameson could stop wearing contacts?

Round three

Remove the word 'ten' from answers.

1. Tim Shaw's species
2. First episode starring Peter Capaldi to have a single-word title

3. TV serial which introduced the Cybermen

Round four

Combine the two answers together.

Food and drink

1. A cup of brewed *Camellia sinensis* and the callsign of the UNIT helicopter in *The Green Death*
2. The Fourth Doctor's favourite sweet and the ship whose home box was found in the Delirium Archive
3. Food thrown at T'zim Sha in Sheffield and the aristocratic passenger of the number 200 bus

The Doctor's hats

- Where applicable, omit 'hat' from answer
4. The hat worn by the Fourth Doctor in *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* and the name of the colony ship in *Smile*
 5. The hat worn by the Eleventh Doctor in 1930s Berlin and the woodlouse-like species descended from the Menoptera
 6. The hat worn by the Doctor in *An Unearthly Child* and the short name for the androids at the Two Streams Facility

Kamelion	Omega	The Master	Clara Oswald
The Doctor	Dominators	Chronotis	Barbara
Polly	Ben	Meglos	Apalapucians
Tegan	Salamander	The Rani	Dulcian

Word Grid 1 : Try it online at: <https://puzzgrid.com/grid/67214>

Door handle	Gauntlet	Oilcan	Scanner
Bear	Cane	Torch	Mask
Handbrake	Ring	Rod	Lipstick
Key	Telephone	Pen	Bell

Word Grid 2 : Try it online at: <https://puzzgrid.com/grid/67026>

ANSWERS

Doctors One-Four

1. Walters
2. Clark
3. Season 18 (1980)
4. Season 15 (1977)
5. Alistair Gordon Lethbridge-Stewart
6. Sarah Jane Smith
7. *The Faceless Ones* and *The War Games*
8. *Underworld* and *The Armageddon Factor*
9. "They will not return."
10. "...follow my directions this way."

Doctors Five-War

1. He is allergic to certain gases in the praxis range of the spectrum. In their presence, the celery turns purple.
2. Christopher H. Bidmead
3. Cat
4. *Revelation of the Daleks*
5. *Ghost Light*
6. Puccini's Madam Butterfly
7. Charlie, C'rizz, Lucie, Tamsin, Molly (and Cass)
8. Paul McGann
9. Wearing a bit thin. I hope the ears are a bit less conspicuous this time.
10. Dr. Bowman

Doctors Eight-Twelve

1. Any from: Hoovers the house; Paints the fence; Practices with a football; Rewires the car; Cuts the lawn.
2. Three: *Aliens of London*; *The Empty Child*; *Bad Wolf*
3. Good King Wenceslas
4. *The Zygon Inversion*
5. A bacon sandwich
6. White
7. Croatia
8. *Doctor Who*, the series' title, does not appear.
9. One
10. Three: *The Wedding of River Song*; *Nightmare in Silver*; *The Caretaker*

Expanded Universe Answers

1. Griffin
2. Jane Goddard
3. Guernsey
4. One
5. *Vampire Science*
6. Dan Abnett
7. Vesuvius
8. A cat
9. Glamour
10. The Seventh Doctor (*Remembrance of the Daleks*)

WHOUSE OF GAMES

Round One

Doctor actors

1. Jon Pertwee
2. Paul McGann
3. Mickey Smith
4. Wilfred Mott

Round Two

1. Doctor Mysterio of Return The
2. A Lord of the Time Trial
3. Fang Horror of Rock

Round Three

1. Sza
2. Lis
3. The th Planet

Round Four

1. TEagle
2. SaLady Christina De Souza
SALAD + LADY CHRISTINA DE SOUZA
3. DeerstalkErehwon
4. TOptera
5. AstrakHandbots

Word Grid One

1. Doctor Doppelgängers - Kamelion, Omega, Meglos, Salamander
2. Multivascular systems - The Master, Dominators, Apalapucians, Dulcians
3. Own a TARDIS - Clara Oswald, The Doctor, Chronotis, The Rani
4. Stumble into the TARDIS - Tegan, Polly, Ben, Barbara



Word Grid Two

- 1. Sonic things - Door handle, Pen, Lipstick, Cane
- 2. ...of Rassilon - Gauntlet, Rod, Ring, Key

- 3. Things in the Doctor's pockets in *Mindwarp* - Oilcan, Bear, Torch, Mask
- 4. Bits of the TARDIS - Scanner, Handbrake, Telephone, Bell



41 - Oxford



Cambridge - 48

49 - 'Durham'



After getting off to a slow start, it was a pretty close game throughout. As a result of Cambridge's low team numbers, excess players from Oxford ended up substituting into an unofficial 'Durham' team at random before each round. In the end, Durham actually ended up with the most points overall, pipping Cambridge to the post by just one point. Had team numbers been better balanced, it really could have gone either way if everyone had been allowed to share their knowledge - so it's an unprecedented third party win for 2022!

Up the hill to Bedfordshire

Adam Kendrick reports back from the charity convention

First up - A Fugitive stops running for a brief chat...

Bursting into Bedford Who Charity Con 7, just as her Doctor did in *Fugitive of the Judoon*, Jo Martin was greeted with a huge round of applause from attendees. Though she had only appeared in two stories when the convention took place (now doubled to four), it was clear she was already a hit with fans. While she could only stay for a short time, she made a memorable impression on what was already a very enjoyable convention.

Jo has been a fan of the show from a very young age, and she used to wrap up her cousins in tin foil to role-play defeating them as the Doctor. She was told that she couldn't be the Doctor because she was a girl - fast forward to the present day and she had proven the naysayers wrong!

She says that *Doctor Who* must be treated as a job, first and foremost, but that being a fan made it a special experience for her. However, it would have made things difficult had Jo known in advance that she was auditioning for the Doctor, admitting that the knowledge would have seen her go to pieces.

Fortunately, it was kept under wraps until the casting was made, allowing her to get the part. It's a great piece of casting, and Jo embodied the spirit of the Doctor "sorting out fair play across the universe" by describing the need for foodbanks in the 21st century as "disgusting" and calling for change.

As a new person on the show, she said that the at-times chaotic filming sometimes left her out of the loop on script updates. However, Jodie Whittaker stepped in for her and was angry that she'd been left out. She described her fellow Doctor as an inclusive, supportive, and funny personality with time for everyone on set, both cast and crew.

Jo wasn't averse to causing a little chaos of her own on set, however, as the allure of having her own TARDIS became too much for her. She would often fiddle with the switches on the console at random, which made it a nightmare for continuity when shots from different angles needed to be taken.

While it was a shame she couldn't stay all day, Jo's presence at the convention was a delight from start to finish. Even though Chris Chibnall may have moved on, it can only be hoped that Russell T Davies might find an opening for her to return in the eras of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Doctors.



Jo Martin listens to David Banks

A selection of photos by Ian Bayley of props from the convention - first, a Sea Devil mask

Clothes maketh the man

When compared to the heroes, villains tend to have one crucial advantage. They may lose in the end, see their plans collapse around them, but they generally have one thing on their side - a memorable outfit! *Doctor Who* and *Blake's 7* are also part of this trend, with a series of baddies displaying an iconic look. Bedford saw three such villains assemble - Terry Molloy (Davros), Brian Croucher (Space Commander Travis) and the "excellent" Cyberleader David Banks.

For some actors, the ability to inhabit their costume can help to inform their performance. In the case of Terry Molloy, it was the limitations of his outfit that helped him bring his interpretation of the Daleks' creator to life. He had to wear a very restrictive mask with small slits to look through, which he compared to staring through venetian blinds. This restricted his peripheral vision, with the claustrophobia informing the paranoid aspects of his performance. The mask also restricted Terry's ability to speak, forcing him to speak in a pedantic way to be heard that informed Davros' voice.

Some actors suffer for their art, and it seems that this is especially true of villains. David recalls having to be physically inserted and released from the mask, which had to be opened by another person. The mask itself was tight, and the fibreglass rubbing against the face led to an issue even superior cyber-technology couldn't conquer - 'cyber-nose'. Of course, this may have been preferable to another issue which dogged the Cybermen - 'cyber-crotch'. The trousers of the costume kept splitting between their legs and required constant patching on set. David admits that it was a great relief to be able to perform without the costume when he returned to the role for Big Finish.

Costume errors also plagued the other villains, with Brian remembering being suspended from wires while filming his death scene in *Blake's 7*. While the wires themselves were up to the task, sadly his zip wasn't, leaving him temporarily trapped in his costume when the cameras stopped rolling. On the plus side, he claims to have mastered the art of the eyepatch, having successfully avoided bumping into anything during his time as Travis.

Terry, meanwhile, faced some costuming challenges of his own. He could barely fit inside Davros' "goldfish bowl" in *Revelation of the Daleks* and ended up whacking his legs on the interior struts during his initial performance. As a result, he ended up with a new addition to his costume - namely rope. This was used to tie his legs up under the chair so he couldn't move them out of place. While all his scenes were concentrated into a 40-minute block by director Graham Harper to account for this, he says the experience helped to inform the character because "there's no way you're not going to be grumpy while wearing such a horrible costume". On the plus side, when his prop hand was blown off during filming, he got some enjoyment from the fingers flying everywhere, including up Colin Baker's nose.

...the Cyberleader...



Simon Danes
chats to (L-R):
Terry Molloy,
Brian Croucher
and David Banks

Colin's Doctor is, of course, particularly memorable for his outfit. David had a brief opportunity to assemble his own costume when he performed as Jon Pertwee's understudy in *The Ultimate Adventure* stage play, allowing him to play the Doctor for two performances. His costume included a Greenpeace T-shirt to reflect the environmental concerns of the play and the era, noting that 30 years later, the warning is just as important as ever, if not more so.

They may have been bad on screen, but the host of villains made an excellent addition to Bedford Who Charity Con. Had their costumes been different, who knows? They might have been much more agreeable!

Finally - Colin concludes the convention

While Jo Martin and others were making their debut at Bedford Who Charity Con, there were also a few familiar faces among the crowd. The Sixth Doctor himself, Colin Baker, was among them, regaling the audience of his journey from fan, to star, to writer of *Doctor Who*.

Almost 60 years ago, in 1963, Colin was a law student living in a flat in Lancaster Gate, London. Having been out all day, he returned home to find a couple of fellow students watching a brand new show on television - *An Unearthly Child*, *Doctor Who*'s first episode. Casting a glance at the screen, he leaned on the bannister to watch it briefly, and 25 minutes later, he was still there. Thus began Colin's association with *Doctor Who*, avidly watching the show as it went out before becoming the Doctor himself 21 years later.

Colin says he had a "great" time as the Time Lord, an opinion that's more than a platitude. He said that despite his era's production issues, he couldn't wait to go to work every day with a wonderful group of people alongside him. He says that the important thing about being the Doctor is "not to listen to anyone who's been on the show. Do it *your way*."

Of the episodes he appeared in, *The Two Doctors* was his favourite as it allowed him to work with Patrick Troughton, whose success as the Second Doctor paved the way for all the subsequent incarnations. He remained good friends with the Troughtons, and even acted as the best man at David Troughton's wedding.

Colin was also something of a trailblazer during his time on the show, taking part in the recording of 'Doctor in Distress', which, much to his indignation, was recently described on *QI* as "the worst charity song ever." Although he felt that he shouldn't have been involved due to his position as the show's lead, he was persuaded to take part by John Nathan-Turner, for whom he owed a favour for casting him as the Doctor. While admitting that it may indeed be "slightly embarrassing" and "not a masterpiece", Colin maintained that it was very heartfelt how so many famous musicians of the time, from Phyllis Nelson to Ultravox, wanted to help with saving the show from cancellation.

Even cancellation couldn't stop Colin being the Doctor, however, as his three-year role turned into a 40 year career featuring charity specials, cameos and perhaps most importantly, Big Finish. Colin says that he's indebted to the company for 'never putting him in a duff audio', and continually finding new stories to tell. It also has an additional de-aging benefit, telling the audience that on audio, he still looks exactly how he did back in the 80s! He added that it was nice to see that *Doctor Who* inspired its audiences to become the creatives who are now making it. "People need to have their imaginations stirred," he says, with *Doctor Who* digging deep into human mythology and our hope for a saviour.

...a Dalek...

...and a 60's Cyberman

Colin himself is now among the people who have written for *Doctor Who*, including *The Age of Chaos* comic and the short story 'A Wee Deoch an ...?'. His love of reading and writing goes back to an early age, which he attributes to his mum being a teacher. His reading age was advanced enough at the age of four that he had the special privilege of being able to borrow two library books per week at school!

Asked how to get over writer's block, he says that it's something that everyone gets, and that trying to force creativity doesn't work. Instead of writing out the entire storyline, he starts from an initial springboard and lets the characters take over, with the narrative developing organically. One pair of companions he'd love to write about are Constance Clarke and Ace, who he thinks would both get along famously.

Following his surprise appearance in *The Power of the Doctor*, it's clear that Colin has no intention of giving up *Doctor Who* just yet. He still cuts an inspirational figure in his Big Finish adventures, and is more than capable of delivering in person too. When asked about the message of *Doctor Who*, he replied:

"There's always someone out there who can make things better. Let's hope the Doctor visits us soon."

Overheard at the convention...

Favourite Monsters:

Colin Baker: The Slitheen.

Sophie Aldred: The Haemovores/Weeping Angels.

Mike Tucker: The Sea Devils/The Kandy Man.

Miranda Raison: Anything with an animal head!

Were you frightened by *Doctor Who*?

Sophie Aldred: "I was so scared by *Tomb of the Cybermen* that mum stopped me watching *Doctor Who*. Fortunately, I got to kill them with a catapult later!"

Favourite Moment:

David Banks: Being put to death in *Earthshock*.

Brian Croucher: His first scene with Tom Baker.

Mike Tucker: Getting to make a TARDIS model on his first day on *Doctor Who*.



The WhoSoc team with the convention's guests

The real world shaper

Ian Bayley recounts the tale of a Doctor Who set designer

Roger Murray-Leach is a man who doesn't rest until things are just right. Taking to the stage at Bedford Who Charity Con, he preceded his talk by supervising the movement of props and the careful positioning of his chair as the stage was set. The notion that the audience were witnessing a metaphor for the set designer's meticulous attention to detail in both planning and delivery was not lost on the attendees. Unlike the other guests, all of which were interviewed, Roger took control of his time at the convention by addressing the auditorium directly from 20 pages of his type-written notes.

He began by setting his era in the context of *Doctor Who* history, with Roger using the opportunity to express his loyalty to the team he worked with. Incoming producer Philip Hinchliffe was a "new broom" committed, with Robert Holmes' help, to creating stories with "more depth" than before, and so when Philip left, so did Roger. Though the show is now nine Doctors later, Tom Baker remains his personal favourite. Describing him as both "eccentric" and "avuncular", Roger argues that children always knew they were safe when the Fourth Doctor was in charge.

As set designer, Roger's job was to support the crew and cast by working to "fulfil the director's dream" and his first project was Space Station Nerva, which was due to serve in both *The Ark in Space* and *Revenge of the Cybermen*. His guiding philosophy is that sets work best when they leave something to the audience's imagination, so he designed Nerva to "make sense". This included giving the cryogenic repository, intended as a last bastion for the human race, a sense of scale appropriate for keeping as many humans on ice as possible. This was achieved through his erection of vertically stacked pallets to house the bodies which would be accessed using a lift, while the use of mirrors doubled what the audience could see. However, this philosophy was balanced by the practicalities of BBC productions in the 1970s. The seemingly endless corridors of the station were circular to fit the exterior model shots, but also ensured that the camera's view was limited to the curve within its view; saving on additional fabrication. Roger also raised the floor to ensure that the painted linoleum look was not too obvious and to prevent the set from shaking while the heavy cameras were moved about.

Perhaps appropriately for a person who helped to turn the studio-bound *Ark in Space* into such an immediate and enduring success, all of Roger's bad memories from his time on *Doctor Who* concerned his location shoots. He had to install Styre's spherical spaceship for *The Sontaran Experiment* in the distant post-apocalyptic landscape of the Dartmoor tors while simultaneously setting up Space Station Nerva in Shepherd's Bush. While the set-up went as planned, it couldn't account for the human factor, as Tom Baker fell and broke his collarbone. Such an accident was tragic enough already, but the production team also had to disappoint a horde of local schoolchildren eager to meet their new Doctor.

Roger delivers his talk



James Ashworth

While the children were sent back, Roger followed Tom's ambulance to Torbay hospital. Though he had to be back in London for the studio preparations, he cemented a friendship with Tom, who was afraid he would be recast, while they waited for his X-rays. Similarly, *Revenge of the Cybermen* was singled out as the story he wished had not been commissioned on - not only due to the claustrophobic atmosphere of Wookey Hole but also because of Elisabeth Sladen's speedboat accident, in which she had to be rescued from drowning by Terry Walsh.

Stories involving water, such as the caves of Wookey Hole, weren't Roger's favourite



His next story was a welcome return to the studio as he designed Zeta Minor for *Planet of Evil*. His set was intended as a reaction against alien planets from other science fiction shows, which often consisted of 'soulless' open spaces with distant buildings in the background. This prompted the swampy tropical jungle produced for *Planet of Evil* with hanging creepers, red foliage and black pools that were meant to represent pools of literal nothingness. While the foliage for this story was straightforward, real-life plants presented a problem when putting together the greenhouse of Chase Manor for *The Seeds of Doom*, his next story. The sets had to be taken down and re-erected every week and dressed with plants from a local nursery. When the plants sent one week did not match the previous week's, he spent nearly the whole night redressing the set so that it would look the same just in case retakes were needed.

A similarly stately set was needed for the panopticon in *The Deadly Assassin*. The requirement for a Roman senate-like structure initially stumped Roger but again he was able to achieve what he needed, this time with a lot of glass and acrylic paint. On a smaller scale, he also created the message that the Doctor left to warn of the assassination in a language now superseded by Circular Gallifreyan while also introducing the Seal of Rassilon that has since been used widely. This symbol can also be seen in the High Council rooms of Voga, but for Roger, it is not just the reuse of an attractive design - they are meant to be the same symbol, indicating the presence of the Time Lords in Voga's history.

Roger's final story, *The Talons of Weng Chiang*, required the spirit of the Victorian period to be resurrected. In the studio, this required the sewers of London to be recreated, and Roger's commitment to detail took him into actual sewers to inform his design. As well as finding out that the smell of sewers rises, leaving the lower portions relatively bearable, Roger found that the floor is narrow to encourage fast flow. This helped inform his design, which had to be waterproofed with fibreglass to allow running water to flow through it. However, this caused problems when the studio flooded after the engineers forgot to connect the water supply properly.

The issues continued outside of the studio, with location filming once again proving problematic. On discovering a perfectly preserved Victorian theatre in Northampton to use, he was instructed to find other usable locations in order to make a trip up there worthwhile. When he couldn't find a Victorian hospital, only a Victorian morgue, the script was reverse engineered to fit as the filming deadlines approached.

While *The Talons of Weng Chiang* is a problematic story both on and off screen, it offered new opportunities for Roger when director David Maloney recruited him for *Blake's 7* where he designed not only the interior of the *Liberator* but the exterior as well.

While preparing for the show, he and David went to the cinema to watch *Star Wars: A New Hope* "to see what the competition was like" and they were both blown away by the opening shot of the *Tantive IV*, realising that audience demands for science-fiction were about to change. While films had huge budgets, television production was done "on a shoestring", with the equivalent of just under £28,000 in today's money for each episode. However, he argues that the era's television remains a triumph of ingenuity, comparing it with Jamie Magnus Stone's expedition to film *Spyfall* in South Africa which would have cost significantly more. He pondered if *Doctor Who* was a completely different show back then, less as an assertion and more as a philosophical quandary. While *Skyfall* may have had the budget, he argues that his episodes instead had the now-enviable freedom to experiment due to the ethos of public service broadcasting, and that the creativity this unleashed is perhaps the main reason why so many people watched and are still watching.

That was all we had time for in the April convention, with the meticulously planned review of Roger's entire career stopping at the point in which he left *Doctor Who* for *Blake's 7*. However, Simon Danes, the organiser, secured a promise from him that he would return to finish the story in October and so he did. Roger's main contribution to *Blake's 7* was to design the set of the *Liberator*. The sleek design of the ship was mirrored in its construction, with Roger arranging for an outside contact who made bodies for racing cars to construct the pieces of the set from fibreglass. He was rightly proud of the result, and its iconic design featured in every series but the last. It continued even after Roger left the BBC after the first series, angry at how stagehands had mistreated the set when moving it.

After leaving the BBC, Roger made the difficult transition into film. While he would achieve a BAFTA nomination for his work on *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years* (1981), it was a baptism of fire. In addition to the use of over 400 sets and six months filming in the US and UK, he also had to fight hard to prove himself due to his TV background, which was seen as inferior to film. Similarly, his work as Art Director on *The Killing Fields* (1984), a film nominated for seven Oscars about an American journalist Sydney Schanberg in Cambodia, was also difficult but in a different way, as the production brought a harrowing story to life in difficult working conditions that made him want to go home. However, Roger received a reward for his perseverance when, at the premiere, Schanberg himself revealed that the film had helped him to connect with his son. His time on *Local Hero* (1983) brought him unknowingly into contact with the future of *Doctor Who* when a young Scottish actor called Peter Capaldi told him how much he envied him for having worked on the show.

Roger's October talk was more interesting for its insight into his values, both personal and production, continuing the themes of his early talk. The script of a story, he explained, is like the base of a pyramid: many people have to work hard to build on top of it. Echoing his thoughts on Nerva Beacon, he said that sets need to feel lived-in so that the audience believes they have existed long before the scene begins. He illustrated this with the striking metaphor of "the half-eaten apple" that must always be visible. Unsurprisingly, therefore, historical accuracy is particularly important for Roger. Directors may think rough approximations are good enough but viewers will notice mistakes even in small details, be they anachronistic dialogue or table manners. Even if they don't notice something consciously, they may still sense that something is off. However, this reasonable expectation from the viewer stands in contrast to the sneering he once recalled from a critic that his designs for the *Liberator* showed no knowledge of the mechanics of space flight. This was a preposterous charge, he felt, given that the notions of space travel are themselves based on fantasy.

Both halves of Roger's talk were interesting, providing an insight into the often overlooked work of the set designer even if, paradoxically, their work is always on screen. Sets should be as much an extension of the characters who move around in them as the costumes clothing the actors, providing something to ponder when rewatching the many Hinchcliffe-era classics that have Roger Murray-Leach in the credits.

Haiku for...

Underworld

By William Shaw

**The quest is the quest
Even as this nebula
Buries us alive.**

**A sky made of rock
Prevents our prisoners' dreams
Expanding too far.**

**Official sadism
Marks a ruling class evolved
Into harsh metal.**

**The quest is over.
This self-aggrandising box
Won't stand in our way.**



**Harryhausen's
*Jason and the
Argonauts* is
probably closer
to Roger's
standards than
*Underworld***

Dr. Who's daughter

Adam Kendrick's preview of our Bedford 2023 coverage

Rather appropriately for the anniversary year of *Doctor Who*, one of the many guests at Bedford Who Charity Con was someone who played one of the earliest companions – or at least, the version of them who appeared on the silver screen! It was a pleasure to meet Jennie Linden, who starred as Barbara in *Dr. Who and the Daleks*, as she recounted her life as an actress at the convention.

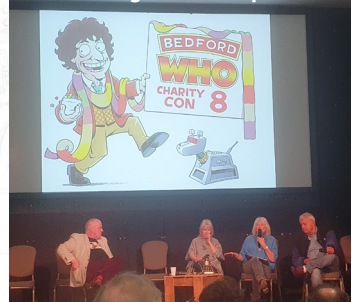
After winning a scholarship to the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama at the age of 16, Jennie began her acting career by performing in various plays, but it didn't take long until *Doctor Who* came calling. She wasn't aware of the sheer scale of Dalekmania when she was cast as Barbara, one of her earliest film roles, so she entered the world of the show without realising the following that it had and would continue to have for decades to come. Even though she might have been unaware of their infamy, she described the Daleks as "brilliant" and recalled how the lights on their dome needed to be manually flashed in time with the actor's lines of dialogue. She praised the highly detailed set and remembered seeing it on display at Selfridges to promote the film afterwards. Not everything turned out to be quite as glamorous, however – the Thals were played by porters from Covent Garden Market, who were paid handsomely to shave off their chest hair!

Though she wishes she could have reprised the role of Barbara for *Daleks' Invasion Earth 2150 A.D.*, she was committed to Ken Russell's *Women in Love* at the time, a role for which she would be nominated for a BAFTA for Best Newcomer. Part of the reason why she enjoyed working on the Dalek film was the opportunity to work with Peter Cushing, whom she described as a kind man who belied his high profile and spoke with a grandiose voice. Less amiable, however, was her brief encounter with Katharine Hepburn, whom she met during a screen test for *The Lion in Winter*. After a strong audition with Peter O'Toole, who confidently told her "See you on the set, kid!", Katharine informed her in no certain terms that "There's only one person who cries in this film and that's me!"

Jennie had a much better time with Roger Moore, whom she appeared with in his pre-Bond days in *The Persuaders!* and *The Saint*. She described him as "a very beautiful man" with amazing blue eyes, and that he never took himself seriously and loved practical jokes – for example, he once paid a prop man to clean the window of a stationary aeroplane while filming was taking place inside! The fun she had with these wonderful people was why she preferred filmmaking back then instead of today, along with the slower pace of production, having time to rehearse, and the ability to film on location rather than against projected backdrops.

Looking back on her role as Barbara, Jennie felt that *Dr. Who & the Daleks* has become a fascinating cultural artefact and is impressed by its continued presence on our screens almost 60 years later. Alongside the bright colours, striking Daleks, and a touch of big screen magic, Jennie is an important part of this film's enduring success.

Jennie on stage at the 60's panel



Tall tales and cool cats

Tales from New Earth *leaves much to be desired*

By James Ashworth

Back in 2006, *Doctor Who* visited New Earth for the first time. In some ways akin to the Classic Series' Peladon, the planet provided the setting for two episodes while providing some commentary on our very own world. Aside from a few mentions, the world then disappeared, seemingly never to return. Ever keen to spot a continuity gap, Big Finish brought *Doctor Who* fans back to the planet in 2018 with its *Tales from New Earth* boxset. Weakly plotted, and with all manner of mixed messaging, it's a release that is probably best avoided.

The boxset opens with *Escape from New New York*, a title that makes the story sound more interesting than it actually is. While Senator Hame investigates a series of mysterious disappearances, apprentice lift engineer Devon Pryce discovers that all is not well at Elevator Lodge. What should be a tight political thriller, however, descends into an unintentional farce. Perhaps the prime example is a scene where Senator Hame meets the Duke of Brooklyn to discuss the missing people. That the characters repeatedly use the word "ascended" to describe the missing people, and don't immediately link it to elevators in a city full of them, is already a stretch, but the audio then compounds the ridiculousness of the situation. After Hame agrees to assist the Duke in the search, the very next scene with both these characters has the Duke reveal he's managed to find an eyewitness, with Hame having apparently never left the building.

The Duke also represents a tonal conflict within the audio. In what is otherwise a story played relatively straight, this is a man who keeps otters – not otterkind, just otters – in his beard that he uses to spy on the city. If the audio existed in more of a heightened reality, this might make narrative sense, but as it is the character is a strange addition who promptly disappears afterward, never to be seen again. Meanwhile, Devon is not immune to some odd character choices. While it's not required that a story's lead be sympathetic, he acts as a bit of a jerk for a good proportion of the story, especially towards Thorn. While later stories will assert that Thorn is his boyfriend, a combination of lacklustre sound design and vague writing mean that's never really made clear until after his death as a result of the Lux's attempted takeover.

After this box set, Tales from Old Earth might be preferable



Speaking of the Lux, their use as the villains of not just this story, but the boxset, is an odd one. The most immediate issue is their name. *Doctor Who* fans are likely to recall the Lux family of *Silence in the Library/Forest of the Dead*, which these villains, and their company, have absolutely nothing to do with. As such, it's strange why another name wasn't chosen for these light-based adversaries. Their concept also leaves much to be desired. The plot of *Escape from New New York* boils down to the Lux trying to turn the population into themselves by using lifts as conversion units. Inevitably, this means that comparisons will be drawn with the Cybermen, and not particularly favourable ones. The Lux don't have any of the aspects of body horror or cold logic that make the Cybermen compelling, but instead a pseudo-religious angle that never really entices. While the Lumen, the Lux's metallic avatars, are specifically statuesque - a choice which could invite discussions of religious idolatry in the story - they also happen to look like smaller versions of the Statue of Liberty. This makes sense when a story is set in a version of New York. It doesn't when the rest of the boxset travels further afield.

After saving New New York from the Lumen, Devon decides to head off to the New Forest to speak to Thorn's family following his demise. Any emotional drama that could be wrung out of such a moment, however, is nixed as soon as Devon arrives and finds that they've all been gnawed to death. Could the Termitons, a race of termite people who live in patches of the New Forest and have a grudge against the trees for evicting them from most of their home, be responsible? Of course! While the story flirts a bit with the Lux, who the world has conveniently forgotten just tried to take over New New York, being responsible, it ultimately turns out that the Termitons are carrying out killings without their consent and so are the culprits after all. By portraying the Termitons, the New Forest's indigenous inhabitants, as universally aggressive and untrustworthy, the story unintentionally sends out some very mixed messages about peoples being evicted from their ancestral home.

After failing to meet Thorn's parents, Devon's other attempts to be important to the plot of *Death in the New Forest* also go awry. This is mostly due to the arrival of the Tenth Doctor, who proceeds to become the story's protagonist while Devon gets relegated to the role of secondary companion. While Kieron Hodgson does a good job at capturing this incarnation's vocal mannerisms alongside his role as Devon, it does raise the question of why David Tennant himself doesn't perform the role. After all, he was already working with Big Finish on the Tenth Doctor Adventures at the time this boxset was being made. The Tenth Doctor doesn't exactly cover himself in glory though, with the plot spontaneously resolving itself when the Lux decide to kill their former allies but let all of their enemies depart completely unharmed.

The Doctor also returns for the subsequent story, *The Skies of New Earth*, in case audiences were worried that Devon might get too much to do in his own boxset. Before the Time Lord's arrival, however, Devon becomes involved with a group of environmental activists campaigning against the use of a giant space laser used to mine clouds. In perhaps the least subtle use of Chekhov's Gun ever committed to audio, this laser is instrumental to both the Lux's scheme to brainwash the residents of New Caelum, and their defeat. It also muddles the finale, with this environmentally-minded story ending with habitat destruction saving the day.

It may be muddled, but *The Skies of New Earth* does turn out to be the boxset's best story, even if it's still not a masterpiece. The plot is at least somewhat logical, even if its engagement with the story's environmental themes evaporates once the Doctor arrives. It also creates the boxset's best characters – the duo of Oscar McCloud and Berkhoff. The former is a solar bear, a species of photosynthetic bear who use jet packs to get around, while the latter is a former mining executive bent on destroying his partner's habitat. The unlikely pairing are chalk and cheese but work well as characters as they infiltrate Berkhoff's former employer, Cloudburst. It's a shame that Berkhoff is unceremoniously killed in a confusing scene, but Oscar McCloud, complete with his own rock theme, lives to fight another day.

That day is *The Cats of New Cairo*, the conclusion of the boxset. Is it at last Devon's time to shine in his own boxset? No! This is Hame's story, seeing her return to her hometown at the request of the leader of all Catkind. Unfortunately, the Catkind live in a deeply misjudged portrayal of a generically middle Eastern country, complete with Anna Hope providing a dubious accent for a background character. Add in the hordes of native inhabitants, the Scorpionkind, who have no dialogue and are only out to kill, and it feels like a throwback to the worst of 1960s *Doctor Who*.

The only real saving grace of this story is Adjoa Andoh as Sister Jara, who, faced with a lacklustre script, does the only thing she can and plays the sinister cat as high camp. Jara isn't very nice, but is a delight to listen to as she tries to scheme her way through the plot. She even gets to bump off James Dreyfus's High Persian, which is another added bonus. While the cats get up to most of the plot, Devon spends most of his time either ineffectual or mind controlled, and isn't a particular asset to the overall proceedings.

As a result, *Tales from New Earth* ends like it began – confused, not fully engaged with its premise, and full of baffling decisions. Why are the Lux the main villains, when existing *Doctor Who* characters already have that name but are unrelated to this story? Why are the stories all an hour long, when they don't have enough plot? And given that David Tennant was performing as the Tenth Doctor for Big Finish at this point in time, why isn't he in it? As it is, Anna Hope and Kieran Hodgson do sterling work trying to keep the boxset afloat, but unfortunately it all comes to naught. In some ways, these stories do have to be heard to be believed, but it's also much easier to just save several hours by watching *The Secret of Novice Hame* again and pretending that these never existed.



These cats don't deserve the cream

The royal treatment

Peladon is at its best when it engages fully with its themes

By James Ashworth

Just over 51 years ago, the Doctor dropped in on a planet which was full of political debate, environmental issues, and conflict over international relations. He wasn't visiting Earth in the 2020s, but instead travelling to the eponymous planet making its debut in *The Curse of Peladon*. Since then, it's featured in a sequel episode, and a variety of spin-off media, but little of late save a brief nod in *Empress of Mars*. Rectifying that in 2022 was Big Finish, releasing a four-story boxset spanning the planet's history.

To start off with, it's worth addressing one of the goals that the creatives involved in the project stated in the included interviews - this box set is pitched as Big Finish's answer to *The Crown*. And to put it bluntly, it does not succeed on that score. *The Crown* examines the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, looking at historical events and societal change across decades. In itself, this isn't a bad idea for a series of Big Finish boxsets, with each monarch getting a set of four stories which lead into events in their successor's reign. *Peladon* does not do this, with each monarch getting one story with tenuous links to what comes next. Instead, audiences should be prepared for a series of essentially standalone stories, albeit with a common direction in mind.

That common direction is environmentalism, examining how trisilicate mining is damaging the planet. This harks back to the parallels drawn in the original *Peladon* stories between the planet's political climate and its contemporary in 1970s Britain.

That said, don't expect too much of it in the boxset's first story, *The Ordeal of Peladon* - or much else besides. To put it simply, *Ordeal* isn't a good story. It's very deliberately plotted to set up the boxset, and spends most of its runtime waiting for its guest star to arrive. What plot exists is either eminently guessable, or so mired in cliché, that it's hard not to know where the story is going - what could possibly happen to the diplomat on his final mission, for instance? While the cast give it their best, they're not helped by some unusual decisions, such as keeping King Peladon very much the same character as in *Curse* despite decades having passed. Without the ability for major change, it drags the story down further, and makes *The Crown* an even weaker point of comparison.

The boxset steps things up a bit with *The Poison of Peladon*, which is much more in the vein of a traditional *Peladon* story. There's political intrigue, secret passages and the odd fight or two as River Song helps Queen Thalira deal with a succession crisis. As writer, Lizzie Hopley successfully manages to create a *Peladon* story that feels like a direct successor to the TV adventures while also feeling suitably modern. It's very enjoyable as the mysteries gradually unfurl, while flirting between River Song and Alpha Centauri is also a highlight. The only real issue with it is the missed opportunity to make Queen Thalira a more morally grey character by having her involved with a scheme to save her own people by enslaving a group of aliens to improve the environment. In the end, the monarch is absolved of any and all blame, setting up a common thread throughout the boxset where opportunities to debate the merits of *Peladon's* royals are largely ignored.

Mining on Peladon is one of the main driving forces of the boxset's plot

There is something of an exception to this in *The Death of Peladon*, the boxset's third story, where the royals are something of an antagonist to the Sixth Doctor and Mel. While one of them is generally obstructive and annoying, the other, Queen Minaris, suffers from a general malaise that manifests as a persistent headache. While polluted water is elsewhere used in the story as a cause of sickness, no direct link is ever made to the Queen's illness – which seems something of a missed opportunity. The story itself is fine, but there's very little to remark on save it beginning to spin the wheels for *Peladon's* ace in the hole.

That ace is *The Truth of Peladon*, the final part of the boxset. It's a much smaller affair than the others, consisting of just four actors who generally engage in one-on-one conversations. However, its ambition is so much vaster. Unlike the previous stories, where the environment and political climate have generally been incidental to the overall plot, *The Truth of Peladon* actually engages with them. Tim Foley doesn't present a twee approach to the climate or biodiversity crisis, but instead brings his pen to bear with a full-blown volley against the inaction of politicians and the failure of systems to deal with these systemic issues with any pace. He takes a Dickens-esque approach to Peladon as the planet verges on the edge of catastrophe, and the outstanding cast of Paul McGann, Meera Syal, Jason Watkins and Nicholas Briggs bring it vividly to life. Also, the Eighth Doctor sings an Aggedor lullaby – you're welcome.

Peladon can be summed up by the handy mnemonic – bad, trad, ad(equate) and rad. Its even-numbered stories are definitely the highlights, and go some way to making the boxset as a whole worth it. While it's a shame that *Peladon* doesn't really explore the Brexit parallels the planet could offer (perhaps by continuing along the lines set by the Virgin New Adventure *Legacy*), its environmental discussions are an important warning about the very real dangers that our own world could face in the coming decades.



By royal appointment...

Should you find yourself needing more of a Peladon fix, there are a couple more Big Finish stories you can draw on. Surprisingly, there's not actually that many – just one in the Main Range, and one in the Companion Chronicles.

First up is *The Bride of Peladon*, the 104th adventure in the Main Range. It's actually quite an important one, being the departure of the Fifth Doctor's companion Erimem. Expect lots of lore, a high profile cast, and a solid adventure.

The Prisoner of Peladon, meanwhile, is also somewhat notable as one of very few Companion Chronicles to be narrated by a non-companion. While it's not the most original story, it's a better outing for David Troughton than *The Ordeal of Peladon*.

Roz-tinted glasses

The audio New Adventures live up to their literary forebears

By James Ashworth

Some 30 years ago, *Doctor Who* set off into realms of space and time “too broad and too deep” for the screen through the publication of the Virgin New Adventures, or VNAs. Over six years, the novels continued the TV programme in prose, and much like the show itself, their quality could vary. However, the series gained a significant following, with some novels now commanding extraordinary prices as supply of the books, many of which have never been reprinted, significantly outweighs demand. Though they ended in 1997, Big Finish stepped into the breach in 2018, releasing four new audio tales for the era in ‘The New Adventures: Volume One’.

The TARDIS team of the Seventh Doctor, Chris Cwej and Roz Forrester step back into action with *The Trial of a Time Machine*, penned by VNA author Andy Lane. Having created Chris and Roz back in *Original Sin*, it’s clear that he still remembers what makes these Adjudicators tick. The pair are plunged straight into an investigation, allowing for commentary on the nature of law and their own work as police officers. Meanwhile, Sylvester McCoy gets plenty of opportunity to shine in the morally conflicted world of the New Adventures, while showing off the character’s more vulnerable side. The story does a great job of representing some of the more ‘out there’ concepts that would likely never have made it to screen, living up to their promise of broader and deeper adventures.

After a strong start, our heroes find themselves in *Vanguard*, which represents another type of VNA adventure – the slightly naff one. Wars featuring bioweapons and robots have been seen before in *Doctor Who*, and while they can still work, *Vanguard* adds nothing to the mix. The plot never elevates itself above the level of ‘fine’, something which isn’t helped by a guest cast who aren’t able to sell it. Meanwhile, Sylvester McCoy’s overacting becomes distracting in a script that is otherwise played very straight.

However, the boxset immediately redeems itself with *The Jabari Countdown*, set with a group of codebreakers in WW2. It’s the standout of the set, and there is a lot of fun to be had while also being dark where appropriate. Unlike *Vanguard*, the TARDIS team are firing on all cylinders in this adventure, ably assisted by a group of well-rounded supporting characters. The audio also continues the VNAs’ work in LGBTQ representation, following in the footsteps of Aaronovitch, Davies *et al.*

Last but not least, *Dread of Night* is an atmospheric piece that leans into one of the series’ major arcs. Suitably moody, the story has fun while also exploring the novels’ darker side. It’s also very creepy, using the classic horror trope of sing-song voices much more effectively than other audios like *Scaredy Cat* while delivering a good twist as needed.

Though things may have been toned down from the novels, which is both a blessing and a curse, ‘The New Adventures: Volume One’ is a worthy successor to its prose counterpart. With Big Finish now spinning the Doctors off into their own ranges, and a pleasingly bombastic new theme arrangement just waiting to be used again, there’s no better time for the firm to make more New Adventures for a new decade.

The cover of ‘Volume One’ - even after five years, a Volume Two is very much anticipated.

Comeback or comedown?

John Salway on *Sarah Jane's adventures in audio*

With Big Finish recently launching their *Sarah Jane Adventures* follow-up series *Rani Takes On The World*, it seems an appropriate time to look back at their own attempt to give ex-companion Sarah Jane Smith her own series, simply named after its star character. Launching in 2002, about four years before the character's return to TV screens in *School Reunion*, it's certainly more gritty and down-to-earth than both previous and future takes on the character. And sadly, there's no K9!

Things start off well enough with the first adventure, *Comeback*. This release has to pack a lot in, establishing the series' status quo and more adult tone following Sarah's fall from grace as a journalist. Forced to live life on the run from unknown foes, she also finds time to just about squeeze in a trip to investigate an ominous village. *Comeback* benefits from a fast pace, ensuring it never outstays its welcome. We're also introduced to our supporting cast; Josh, a down-on-his-luck young joker with a history of arson; and Nat, an expert hacker who uses a wheelchair. Josh is quite realistically played, reminding me of real people I've met, but he's also annoying, frequently telling weird jokes and making silly voices. Nat, meanwhile, is nice enough, but remains a little unexplored throughout the series despite the best attempts of Elisabeth Sladen's daughter Sadie Miller. While it comes to a rather abrupt end, *Comeback* is a good introduction and shows a lot of promise for the range going forward.

Unfortunately the second story, *The Tao Connection*, takes that promising start and dumps it into a fetid ditch of homophobia and racism. Vulnerable young men, some implied to be sex workers, are being kidnapped and their blood drained from key qi points to produce a life extending formula. None of these men are characters or have lines. If this isn't bad enough, this scheme is being enacted by a monstrous older gay couple who hate and abuse each other. In fact, all gay relationships in this story are presented as transactional or exploitative in nature, including one bizarre moment where a seemingly straight guard mentions they used to perform gay sex acts for money. If all that wasn't enough, white British actor Toby Longworth dons a stereotypical accent to play the role of Chinese doctor Wong Chu, explaining the cultural philosophies of qi and tao which apparently underly this blood-harvesting operation. The whole story is ill-judged, grotesque, and downright offensive.

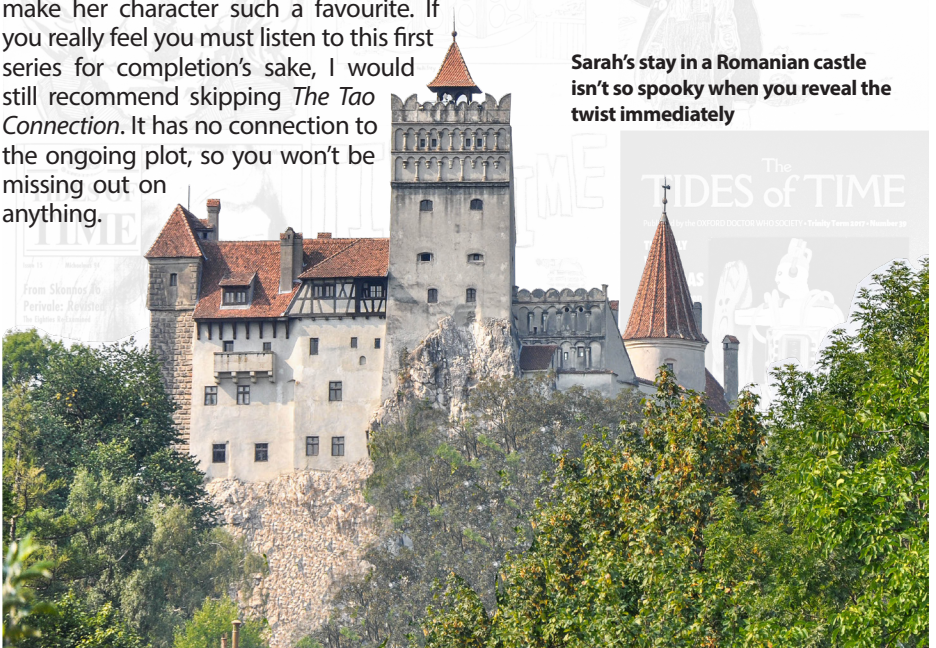
The third adventure, *Test of Nerve*, is obviously an improvement, but still not great. The story hinges on a single ethical dilemma for Sarah – will she choose to save her friend Nat from a bomb, or millions of Londoners from the release of deadly sarin gas? Though this dilemma doesn't sound too difficult to solve, the resulting conflict is entirely fudged. First, Sarah chooses to go save her friend – but then finds the traffic is too dense to get there in time, and so defaults to instead stopping the gas, which should definitely have been her first choice! Then, after the situation is resolved and all are safe, Nat has the gall to be angry at Sarah for saving the whole of London instead of her. I'm sorry Nat, but in this case that seems a bit unreasonable!

The penultimate story of the first series, *Ghost Town*, would be passable but for the very stupid decision to give away a major reveal in the very first scene! The pre-title sequence mentions a sonic weapon that causes sensory overload, hallucinations and death. So what could possibly be responsible for the ghost sightings and mysterious deaths that are occurring at a peace conference in Romania? This bizarre choice results in a very slow paced audio that sees Sarah and Josh travel to Romania, have some spooky moments, and eventually reach the answer while the audience wait for them to catch up.

The series finale, *Mirror, Signal, Manoeuvre*, unfortunately sees Sarah Jane Smith at her most unlikable. Consumed by paranoia, she ditches her friends to follow a lead, and is needlessly horrible to her Indian taxi driver (again, Toby Longworth in a dodgy accent). Rather than being afraid for our hero as she moves further and further into a trap, it comes across more as Sarah Jane receiving her just desserts. Following literally minutes of rising tension, the architect of the plot against Sarah is revealed to be... Miss Winters. You know, from *Robot*. While she is probably the only major villain from Sarah's TARDIS travels to be alive in contemporary times, it's still a bit weird for her to be promoted to Sarah's nemesis. Patricia Maynard does an excellent job reprising her role as the villainess, but her appearance is all too brief before Josh appears to save the day. However, Miss Winters is still free, with the battle lines drawn for series two...

The first series of *Sarah Jane Smith* is, unfortunately, a mess. I can really only recommend the first story, as the following adventures proceed sluggishly, nastily, and without much spark. Even the music is off – there's a generic electronic theme for the title music, and a cheesy 70's style guitar twang seems to end every scene. What's really baffling is how the series manages to take one of *Doctor Who's* most beloved companions and make her quite unlikable. The decision to keep things serious, with Sarah constantly on edge, means Elisabeth Sladen gets little chance to show off the charm and kindness that make her character such a favourite. If you really feel you must listen to this first series for completion's sake, I would still recommend skipping *The Tao Connection*. It has no connection to the ongoing plot, so you won't be missing out on anything.

Sarah's stay in a Romanian castle isn't so spooky when you reveal the twist immediately



Thankfully, the second series of *Sarah Jane Smith* is a major step up in quality from the first. There were a couple of years in between, which seem to have been used to examine what went wrong and give the series a bit of a retool. Rather than a series of discrete adventures, series two presents an ongoing serial written by one writer, David Bishop. This allows for more consistency in the characters across the series, as Sarah discovers she is an important figure in the beliefs of a mysterious cult, the Orbus Postramo, which is divided into two warring factions. One character who doesn't return, however, is Miss Winters. Despite her return for series two being heavily suggested in the previous finale, she has in fact been arrested, and subsequently killed, offscreen. It sends a clear message – this is not just a continuation of what we did before. We are making changes.

The most important difference that the series makes is that the cast are likeable again! The rough edges of the paranoid, under-attack Sarah Jane Smith of the previous series are gone as she heads into the series premiere, *Buried Secrets*, with renewed hope and a better relationship with Josh and Nat. Perhaps the best example of her change in character is a charming scene that makes a touching tribute to the late Ian Marter. It turns out Sarah heads out to a restaurant every year, where she waits for and remembers her old friend Harry Sullivan, who has been missing for a long time. This year, she meets his stepbrother Will, played by Tom Chadbon, who continues the tradition of Sullivan charm. It's really nice for Sarah to have a character who is closer to her age to bounce off of, and share an emotional link to – they feel more like peers and equals. In amongst all this sterling character work, the main plot begins, as a death at an archaeological site in Florence leads Sarah to learn about her prophesised destiny. It's an interesting and pretty tight thriller, once again promising a lot for the rest of the series.

Just like series one, however, the second episode of the series, *Snow Blind*, is the weakest of this sophomore run – but it's miles ahead of *The Tao Connection*. Sarah and Josh head to meet Will at the Antarctic research base where he is working, and find a lot of tension in the air. His boss, played by Nicholas Briggs, is deeply suspicious of Will and fellow researcher Morgane, and has been lashing out verbally and violently. But is his paranoia grounded in reality? It's a fairly plodding instalment, and with such a small cast of characters, there aren't many suspects when things start going wrong. While elements of the plot do link to the main story, this functions mostly as a standalone, which I think is to its detriment, as the ongoing storyline is a real strength of this second series.

Events really get going in *Fatal Consequences*, a story that truly does live up to its intriguing title. Following Sarah's interference in previous stories, the Red Chapter of the Orbus Postramo are accelerating their plans. In quite a step up from their relatively low key plots so far, they are preparing to release a deadly pathogen across the world. Despite the increase in stakes, however, the focus remains relatively small in scale, with the personal consequences having the most impact. While a little slow to get going, this story doesn't hold back on important developments and major twists once it gets going, some of which lead all the way back to the range's beginning. This audio has all the energy of a series finale, and all the cats are let out of the bag Sarah faces deadly danger twice over before the story ends. It never pulls its punches, with cast members killed off in its dramatic ending.

You might think the final instalment, *Dreamland*, would have to be an anti-climax after the shocking events of the previous part, but it's actually my favourite episode of the whole series. While still reeling from the, well, consequences of *Fatal Consequences*, Sarah is offered a place on the *Dauntless*, the first commercial space flight. As she travels to America and begins to train for the trailblazing journey, we get some excellent exploration of her character as she considers her purpose. While never believing herself to be the "Herald" of the *Orbus Postramo*, she does believe the Doctor may have left her on Earth for a reason, and she considers this flight may be part of that mission. There's such a bittersweet feel to this instalment – you're desperately wanting things to go well, and for Sarah to find that purpose she's searching for in space, but you know dramatically that something has to go wrong. And when the Red Chapter make their final move, things go very wrong, very fast. The final scenes here are really intense, consisting of Sarah stranded in space while Nat desperately tries to learn what's happening in Mission Control. As the rocket heads further out of radio range, and life support begins to fail, Sarah sees something she can't believe – and then communication is cut.

It's an exceptionally composed cliff-hanger, but with production of *The Sarah Jane Adventures* beginning the following year, there was no follow-up, and I can only imagine what would have happened if a third series were commissioned. That said, I really think it works as a conclusion to the series. After going through total hell, and all hope seeming lost, Sarah finally meets her destiny, whatever that may be. And it's a good metaphor for the series as a whole, too. Despite its woeful debut series, *Sarah Jane Smith* seems to have found a purpose by its end. I really enjoyed the second series and am happy to recommend it. And while I don't think the first series is necessarily worth your time, later events will mean a lot more to you if you can suffer through it.



What did Sarah see?

Snow Long, and Thanks for All the Yeti

The Abominable Snowmen at the BFI Southbank

By **Evan Jones**

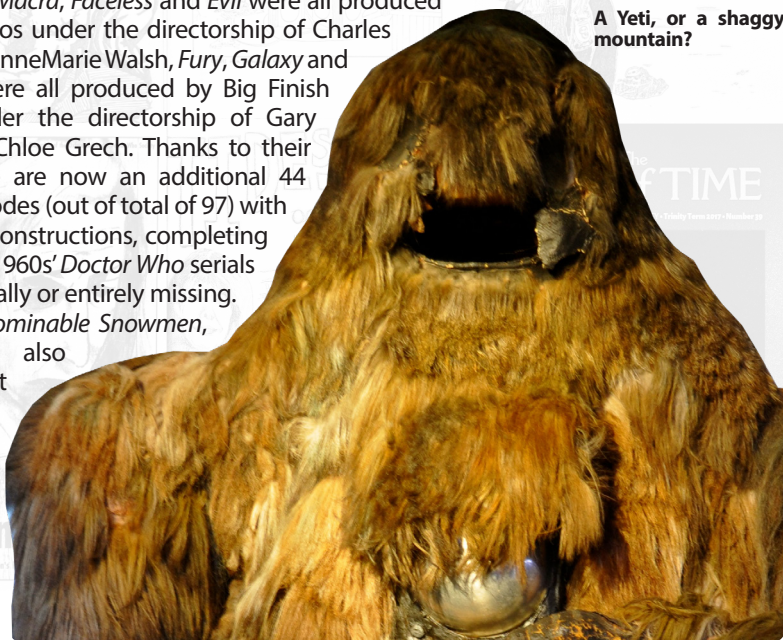
On Saturday 3 September, there was a somewhat subdued atmosphere to the regular proceedings at that day's BFI Southbank screening of a classic *Doctor Who* serial. For one, there was a noticeably less than full audience for that day's event, owing to the scheduling clash of two other prominent conventions happening that same day: Whooverville in Derby and Collectormania in Birmingham. From a casual glance of the auditorium, it appeared to be not quite as socially distanced as *The Evil of the Daleks* in August 2021 but equally not quite as packed-in as *Galaxy 4* in November 2021. The lack of a big guest star attached to the post-show Q&A (Frazer Hines himself was at the Whooverville convention) may have been a contributing factor as well.

The slight tinge of sadness in the air may also have resulted from the fact that, at the time, there were no more animated reconstructions on the horizon. The release of *The Abominable Snowmen* was to be the last of a wave of six animated reconstructions that started with 2019's *The Macra Terror*. This was followed by *The Faceless Ones* and *Fury from the Deep* in 2020 and then subsequently by *The Evil of the Daleks* and *Galaxy 4* in 2021. Whilst *Macra*, *Faceless* and *Evil* were all produced

by BBC Studios under the directorship of Charles Norton and AnneMarie Walsh, *Fury*, *Galaxy* and *Snowmen* were all produced by Big Finish Creative under the directorship of Gary Russell and Chloe Grech. Thanks to their efforts, there are now an additional 44 missing episodes (out of total of 97) with animated reconstructions, completing a total of 13 1960s' *Doctor Who* serials that are partially or entirely missing.

With *The Abominable Snowmen*, they have also ensured that the entirety of Victoria's run as a *Doctor Who* companion can now be watched on screen.

A Yeti, or a shaggy mountain?

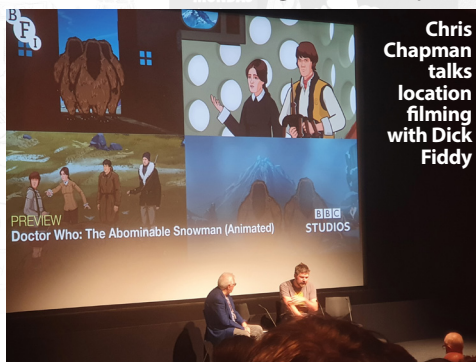


The Abominable Snowmen is a mostly missing six-part serial Season Five, broadcast from late September to early November 1967. While I had previously seen Episode Two, the only surviving episode of this particular story, I was, similar to previous animations, going into this one blind. I found *Snowmen* to be a particularly moody and atmospheric tale, not too dissimilar in tone to its sequel *The Web of Fear*. But whilst *Web* trades in the claustrophobia of the familiar London Underground, *Snowmen* is about the isolation and mystery of its remote Tibetan monastery setting. Nobody quite understands what the Yeti actually are and there's no-one coming to help them, at least not until the Doctor and his companions Jamie and Victoria arrive on the scene.

Snowmen is partly remembered for its extensive location work, with several days filming taking place in Snowdonia, North Wales. This reconstruction follows suit with lush-looking valleys for the exterior scenes and a dark, eerie cavern that traps Jamie and Victoria early on in the story. The Det-Sen monastery itself is satisfactorily recreated, though its courtyard seems unusually vast from within. The slow burn of this particular serial also invites viewers to critique the animation quality with much greater scrutiny, but thankfully the character animation is a considerable step-up from 2020's *Fury From The Deep*. There are more subtle, naturalistic movements all-round, with much improved group composition much improved and a merciful lack of 'windmilling' arms. The serial's climactic confrontation with Padmasambhava, the High Lama of Det-Sen Monastery who is possessed by the Great Intelligence, was also a particular visual highlight. The green lightning effects in particular give him some Chancellor Palpatine vibes. A surprise, to be sure, but a welcome one.

The animation also made a number of creative decisions that were considerably beneficial to this reimagining of the original production. Most sorely needed was the use of a diverse Asian cast for the monks that inhabit Det-Sen Monastery, replacing the original television cast of white actors wearing offensive yellowface makeup. However, this doesn't alter the voices put on by the original white actors, which may be difficult at times to hear. In a Q&A session after the screening, co-director Gary Russell confirmed that there wasn't even a question of depicting the original actors and was sternly critical of the story's director, Gerald Blake, in making such a casting decision – "What were you thinking?!" – and cited that many Asian actors were available for work in London during the mid-to-late 1960s. Russell went on to say that what was done in terms of makeup within this production was "far worse" than in *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*.

Moreover, there were entirely new sequences animated to accompany exposition within the story, such as a depiction of Padmasambhava entering the astral plane and becoming possessed by the Great Intelligence. This particular sequence feels like it was designed to parallel the opening of Episode One of *The Web of Fear* where the TARDIS is suspended in space, trapped inside a web. Audio maestro Mark Ayres has even gone to the painstaking trouble of extracting the sound effects from *The Web of Fear* and gently overlaying them into the surviving audio track for this same sequence; an applaudable and genuinely nerdy touch.



Chris Chapman talks location filming with **Dick Fiddy**

Audience response to the serial appeared to be very positive with each episode's cliffhanger receiving an enthusiastic round of applause. Troughton's impeccable comic acting was also responsible for several bursts of laughter, such as in Episode One where the Doctor delights in seeing an old knick-knack though he cannot remember what it's for ("Well, whatever it is, it's nice to see it again!"). Then, in Episode Two, he steers Victoria away from Jamie because he's having independent thoughts

("Victoria, I think this is one of those instances where discretion is the better part of valour. Jamie has an idea. Come along.") and in Episode Three he remarks that the Yeti "came to get their ball back". There was also a poor Yeti that fell into an earthly fissure as the Tibetan mountainside cracked open during the story's climax in Episode Six, which received much raucous laughter. This was subsequently confirmed to be an in-joke at the bequest of Gary Russell following a Chumbly receiving the same fate during the climax of the *Galaxy 4* animation. However, no 'Wanted' posters for the Master, in either their Delgado or Dhawan incarnations, were spotted throughout.

As already mentioned, there was a Q&A after the feature presentation with co-director Gary Russell as well as concept designer Ioan Morris and 3-D animator Rob Ritchie, despite protesting that he only sent "four things" to Russell upon request. Russell noted that, similar to AnneMarie Walsh's answer given during the *The Evil of the Daleks* Q&A, they had a greater period of time to work on this animation with 16 months of production rather than *Fury's* 12. One point of discussion was whether they needed to include snow, an idea which was swiftly vetoed due to the difficulty of animating and then tracking footprints in the snow. It later transpired that Tibet does not typically have snow anyway, except at the highest mountain peaks. Another discussion point was using the costumes of the monks in *Planet of the Spiders* as a basis for their characters here. Arguably the most trivial was a surprisingly lengthy discussion about the colour of Troughton's eyes, which are green in the animation, but appear to be somewhat blue in reality and possibly blue-green in some novels within the canon of the expanded universe. It's all rather academic, of course, if you watch it in black-and-white.

The Abominable Snowmen sends the recent wave of *Doctor Who* animations out on a high with this lovingly-produced reimagining of a fondly remembered serial, either for those who watched the original broadcast in 1967 or were impressionable young readers of the Terrance Dicks' novelisation first released in 1974. At the time, this was considered to be the end of the latest chapter in the missing episodes saga. But with more recent reports that *The Smugglers* and *The Underwater Menace* may be reconstructed next, a new one may soon be beginning.



The Survivors: *The garden and the factory*

Matthew Kilburn *speculates about the Daleks*

I've recently started to watch *Doctor Who* in order from the beginning, an expedition I'd not undertaken before, while making notes as I go on Twitter using the hashtag #EarlyHoursDoctorWho. At the time of writing, I've just finished the second story, nowadays usually referred to as *The Daleks*, but which has gone by many different names. Its writer, Terry Nation, submitted his storyline under the title 'The Survivors'. The production team at the time, when they needed an overall name for the serial, called it *The Mutants* (except for those few weeks when they referred to it as 'Beyond the Sun'). The titles show that the serial was not so much about the encounter of the Doctor and his fellow-travellers with one malevolent species, but about their interplay with the peoples found on another world and their situation. The Thals are as intriguing as the Daleks, combining a level of familiarity – their banter about jealousy and double meanings feels very early 1960s coffee bar chat, if not full-blown kitchen-sink drama – with experience and history at a remove from the television audience's. Instead, the Thals are much closer to, but crucially different from, their armoured counterparts in the city.

The defeat of the Daleks by the TARDIS team is just as much a victory for them as for the Thals, and is presented as a turning point in the history of Skaro. The capture of the Dalek city, Susan points out, gives the Thals the potential to move from an agricultural society only a few steps beyond subsistence to one capable of the high technology mass production of food. The Doctor, meanwhile, declares fertility is returning to the soil in the petrified forest. This might almost be a new Garden of Eden, but the continued presence of the city opens the possibility that it might become as illusory a paradise as that of the Eloi in H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*. This was a comparison with contemporary resonance, following George Pal's 1960 film adaptation of the 1895 novel.

As the Daleks die, the Thal leader Alydon announces an end to war on Skaro. William Hartnell's Doctor comments, flatly, that 'you' (whether Alydon or the Thals) will have other wars to fight. Nevertheless, once back in the forest, the Doctor is more ebullient, enjoying the respect paid him by the Thals and dispensing advice despite his proclaimed reluctance to do so. Even before the Doctor says that he never gives advice, he introduces the Thals to a compensator and says that they should never learn to use it, else they end up like their 'dead friends' in the city. This is just a minute or two (in episode time) after Susan sings the praises of Dalek technology, especially their fruit-growing. The Doctor and Susan, from their Olympian distance, have presented the Thals with a tree of good and evil and told them to eat selectively. Given that the travellers have awakened the Thals' curiosity, this situation seems unlikely to end well.

Is it the end of the Daleks, or the beginning of the next generation?

Displaying his most godlike perspective thus far in *Doctor Who*, the Doctor suggests that while he won't see his Thal friends again, he might visit their grandchildren. He hopes to find a thriving agricultural community, but the Thals are already likely to have an alternative. They are likely to need Dalek technology for some time before they can grow sufficient crops again on their own. It's possible to imagine them restoring the power supply, adapting to the city, and some then refusing to move out. A schism might then develop between the city-dwellers and the country folk, and within generations someone might explode a neutron bomb. The cycle begins again.

In the second episode of *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*, Ian questions how the Daleks can be on Earth when he and the Doctor saw them destroyed on Skaro. The Doctor replies:

“My dear boy, what [happened] in Skaro was a million years ahead of us in the future. What we're seeing now is about the middle history of the Daleks.”

The Doctor assumes the voice of narrative authority, but the viewer needn't assume that he possesses it. Indeed, the Daleks seen in *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* build on hints about their future development. In *The Daleks* Episode Five, Barbara suggests that the Daleks will find a way to escape their city, which the Daleks confirm as an aspiration in Episode Six. Their ambition changes from recovery to expansion, during which environments will be adapted to their use. In *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*, the Daleks can travel in any environment, rising from the riverbed, gliding across ruins and mines, and very probably climbing stairs too. The ambitions the Daleks adopted in their first story seem to have been more than fulfilled. Similarly, the Dalek scheme to adapt Earth into a world they can pilot around the universe is the height of environmental transformation. These details suggest that the Daleks seen in *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* might be the descendants of beings seen in *The Daleks*, and not, as the Doctor claimed, their forebears.

If the Daleks in *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* are descended from the city-dwelling Thals proposed two paragraphs ago, they anticipate a later theme in Nation's work. Nation's short story for the *Radio Times Doctor Who Tenth Anniversary Special* (1973), 'We Are The Daleks!', depicts the Daleks as the result of an experiment in accelerated human evolution carried out on the planet Ameron. Away from *Doctor Who*, the *Blakes 7* episode *Terminal* (1980) features brutal shaggy-haired apes known as Links, the product of an experiment in human evolution on the eponymous planet. The viewer is encouraged to think that the Links represent the ancestors of humanity, but when one of the eponymous Seven (Cally) articulates this, their antagonist Servalan replies:

“The planet's evolution was massively accelerated. It developed through millions of years in a very short time. The creature you saw is not what Man developed from. It is what Man will become.”

It's in keeping with a streak of pessimism in Nation's work that some of the Thals we meet in *The Daleks* might be the progenitors of the Daleks of *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*.

This article is speculative, and makes no claims about authorial intent. It does, I hope, show that *Doctor Who's* narratives invited viewers to bring their own interpretations at an early date, and that sometimes a textual explanation for an event might run counter to other, less direct evidence which is more in keeping with exploration of a particular story or stories' themes.

Contributors

You have already read their words about Doctor Who. Here is what they had to say about themselves:

Adam Kendrick is a chemistry graduate who has been involved in the Oxford Doctor Who Society for more than a decade.

Alice Hardaker is an Eighth Doctor enthusiast, final year law student and WhoSoc's unofficial translator of Liverpoolian colloquialisms in Series Thirteen of *Doctor Who*. While she's more used to writing debates than *Tides of Time* articles, the opportunity to celebrate the show in an article about her home city wasn't one she could pass up on.

Evan Jones is a mathematician who lives in Warwickshire. He likes to blog about Doctor Who and maths at <https://thebloggerontheinside.wordpress.com>, if you like that sort of thing.

Georgia Harper works in autism campaigning; her hobbies include apologising, more autism campaigning, and championing the Whittaker era. At the time of writing, she is eight seasons into watching all of *Doctor Who* in order.

Ian Bayley is a computer science lecturer at Oxford Brookes University. His favourite Doctors are Four and Twelve.

James Ashworth is a writer and journalist who has only just left the WhoSoc committee, despite graduating several years ago. He probably knows whatever you need to about the latest scientific developments and deep lore from 1990s *Doctor Who* books.

John Salway is an ex-WhoSoc committee member and creator of the Big Who Listen, a blog which chronicles every release in the Big Finish *Doctor Who* Main Range.

Matthew Kilburn is still a writer and editor based in Northumberland and Oxfordshire at once. He is still interested in hearing reasonable prices on TARDISes.

Olviya Silvary was, until recently, WhoSoc's Publicity Officer, and has been bingeing all of NuWho while finishing their degree in English at Trinity College. While their heart still lies with Eleven, Amy and Rory, they're looking forward to what awaits us all in November!

Rachel Rowlands is a history graduate who hasn't seen *Doctor Who* since David Tennant's first era, but is happy to lend a hand (or a VR headset) when needed.

William Shaw is a poet, blogger, and lifetime member of Oxford Doctor Who Society. His first book, *The Black Archive on The Rings of Akhaten*, is available now from Obverse Books, and his favourite Doctor is Clara Oswald. Find his blog at williamshawwriter.wordpress.com and his Twitter @Will_S_7.

THE TIDES OF TIME

Number 49
Trinity Term 2023

