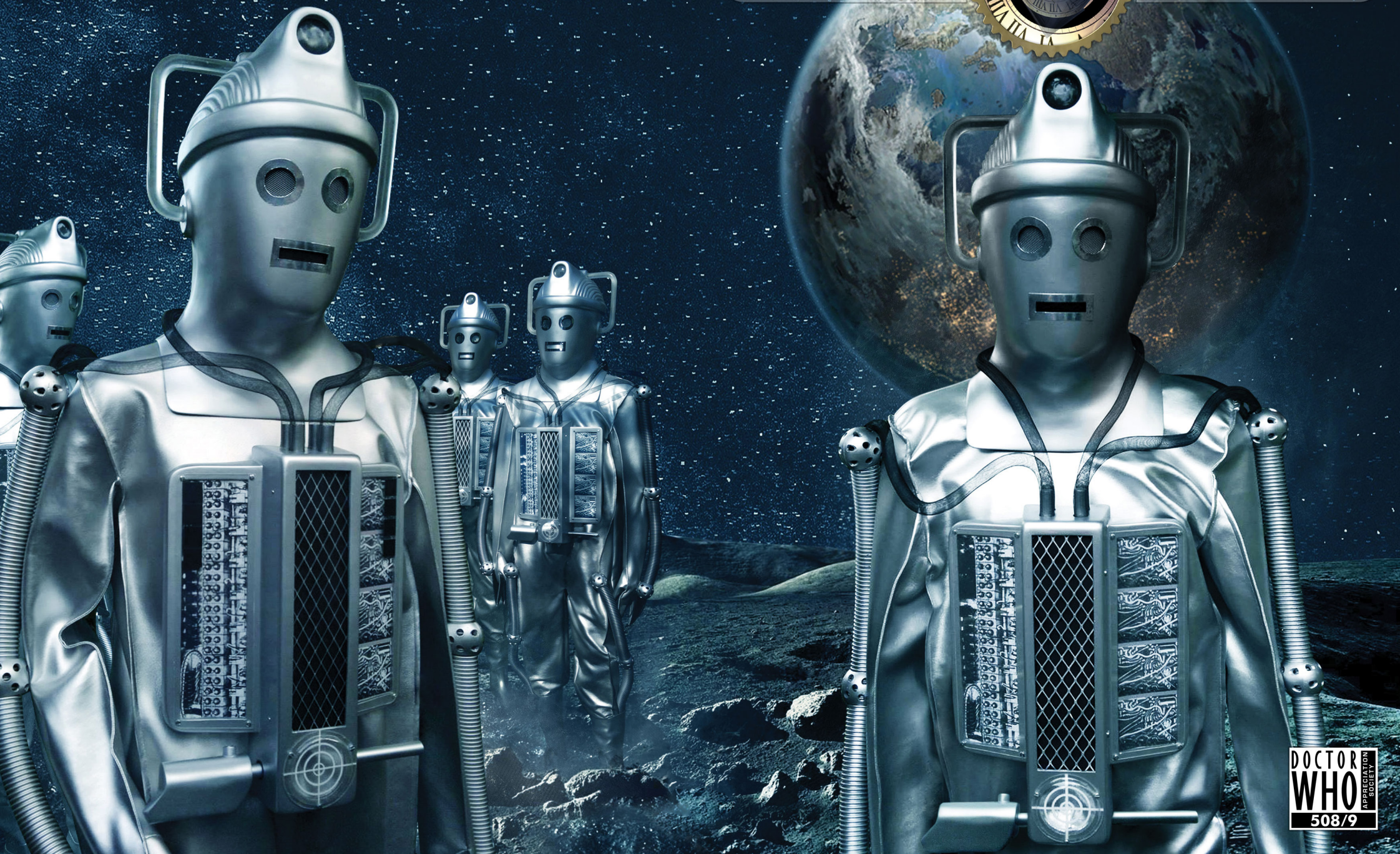


CELESTIAL



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## EDITORIAL

by Alan Stevens

"Thank you. That's what I wanted to know."

This issue commences with a previously unpublished and quite extraordinary interview with Peter Miles.

I say that because, having known the man for over thirty years, I feel that Dylan Rees has captured him precisely. The warmth, the humour, the eccentricity; this is Peter relaxed and in full flow, clearly demonstrating that there was much more to him than his signature role as the cold and ruthless Security Commander Nyder would suggest.

From someone who worked for Davros, we move on to a boy who employed a Dalek, as Ian Scales takes us back to 1980 and the fête of *Doctor Who*. Fiona Moore and I then pick up the sink-plunger, revisiting Peter Capaldi's encounter with Davros and the Daleks, before we all take a trip to John Darley's workshop for a spot of Dalek building!

Next stop, a *Doctor Who* forum, and Mathew Peck's account of how he sweats blood to run it successfully, while Dale Smith has his own encounter with the darker aspect of fandom's psyche. Which leads us effectively into our final article for this month, where Jez Strickley examines the irrationality of the Cybermen — a study beautifully complimented by Andy Lambert's chilling wrap-around cover.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge JL Fletcher's striking *Genesis of the Daleks* postcard, and David Bickerstaff and Steven Allen for furnishing reference photos of Daleks and Cybermen for these respective artworks; and also Andy Hopkinson, Alex Moore, Mary Milton and David Bickerstaff (again!), for providing me with some never-seen-before photographs to illustrate the Peter Miles feature. ▲



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# DOWNTIME WITH PETER MILES

By Dylan Rees

Peter Miles is a name familiar to most fans of genre television. He appeared in episodes of *Moonbase 3*, *Survivors*, *Blake's 7* and had three major roles in classic *Doctor Who*; most notably as Davros' right hand man, Nyder, in the 1975 story *Genesis of the Daleks*. Peter passed away in February of 2018, but his legacy as the perennial 'Bad Guy' was assured in the annals of Cult TV history long before then.



Early in 2015, I had the pleasure of spending an afternoon with Peter at his home in Ealing, and later at a pizza house around the corner, where the staff greeted him warmly. They even offered us a discount because Mr Miles was such a local favourite. At the time I was interviewing people for my book *Downtime: The Lost Years of Doctor Who* (Obverse Books). While researching this subject, I discovered Magic Bullet's phenomenal *Kaldor City* series, in which Peter gives a memorable performance as Firstmaster Landerchild. Producer Alan Stevens agreed to put me in touch with Peter and he readily agreed to an interview.

It was a bright winter morning when I hopped on the Piccadilly line from my home in north London and headed down to Ealing. Peter had generously agreed to pick me up from the station in a car that had seen better days: a door that refused to lock and a suspicious

screeching sound coming from the engine. It also had a poster promoting a local gig — where Peter himself was to sing in a jazz band — blu-tacked to the passenger window.

"I answer frankly, none of this smarmy stuff, and I say what I believe," was his opening remark, setting down the ground rules for our talk in his second floor flat.

The rooms were filled with trophies from his long career. Flyers and posters from various theatre performances lined the hallway. The sitting room had shelves stacked with DVDs, CDs and VHS recordings of his many roles, and the desk in the corner was piled high with correspondence.



"I still get fan mail for *Doctor Who* and other things." Peter seemed truly amazed by his popularity.

Knowing him to be a regular at conventions, I asked if he minded being the centre of so much attention.

"I adore it. Sci-fi fans have such deep respect for people who do well in their favourite TV shows, and they treat you as if it's your birthday all the time. They've got such a nice approach. I know I've signed many thousands of autographs in my life, and I'm not even *Doctor Who*, but I sure have signed them, and everyone who comes in front of me is a joy to meet. I haven't met one awkward

customer, or one strange person, not one. It's amazing."

For Peter, it was not only the fans that were a delight to be around. He explained that other *Who* alumni, such as Anneke Wills, were a source of great comfort to him: "Although they know they are only seeing you for the evening or for the weekend, they sort of befriend you, because we worked on the same show."

During the course of our chat, I learned that Peter attended his first convention in the early 1980s, appearing alongside 'Davros' actor Michael Wisher.



"We were seen as a double act, because I'm the only one in *Genesis* who could chat up Davros, query, and even contradict him. We were a team. Michael Wisher loved working with me and vice versa."

Of course, Peter also reprised his role of Nyder for the Big Finish mini series *I Davros*, in which Terry Molloy voiced Davros.

"Anybody working with Terry Molloy is going to have it easy," Peter told me, "because in my opinion he's topnotch. I think he's as brilliant at playing Davros as Michael Wisher, whom everybody reveres. When people are that good and are also team players, like Terry Molloy, it's a joy. To work with somebody with that approach to acting, it's a great experience and so easy to do."

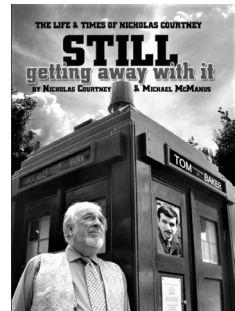
Our conversation then turned to other performers he'd appeared with and admired.

"I worked quite a bit with Nick Courtney, and I've been to lots of conventions with him. I remember in Coventry, at one of our events together, it was announced over the microphone that he had been appointed the President of the Doctor Who Appreciation Society! I nearly cried, I was so touched for him. I had such a high regard for Nick, he was wonderful."

Courtney passed away in 2011, and Peter attended his memorial service:

"It was held at the chapel in Covent Garden. It was beautiful too. Very cleverly done. They placed video screens on either side to display the story of Nick's life. Tom Baker gave the main speech and it was superb."

A faint smile spread across Peter's face as he reminisced. "I've got his biography right there." He pointed his walking stick at his modest collection of books. "Nick says wonderful things about me in it, so I'm even more touched. It was lovely of him."



Another *Doctor Who* star that died the same year was Elisabeth Sladen...

"That was a bombshell! I think it was a shock to a lot of people. She, and her husband, Brian Millar, were only a few doors away from me and, during the times Liz and I worked together, I would give her a lift in my car to the studio, and we would often socialise, but she kept her illness very quiet."

Because Peter had known Sladen for nearly forty years, I wondered if he could provide some insight into her character?

"She was a very professional actress. Very technical and very precise. She was absolutely thrilled to get her own series, *The*





*Sarah Jane Adventures*, and she was jolly good in it too, though I have to say, she never seemed to enjoy her success. As a person, some people might have called her 'a real live wire', but I'd go further; I'd say she was never able to fully relax."

And what of the four *Doctor Who* actors Peter has appeared alongside?

"Sylvester McCoy is terrific. We worked together on the BBV audio drama *Prosperity Island* and that was a lot of fun."

And Tom Baker?



"For me he's a big television star! Seven years as *Doctor Who*, and very good in the part; that's major. It was a real pleasure to work with him on *Genesis*. My goodness, he certainly knew the script was a masterpiece and gave it his all."

As for Colin Baker, Peter, who worked with him for BBV and Big Finish, is sympathetic.

"Colin is a fine actor and very aware that he will always be the Doctor, but he must have mixed feelings on the matter. I appeared in half as many episodes, but my involvement with the show was a happy one, whereas Colin was treated very poorly, with his time as *Doctor Who* cut short. To this day, there are fans who blame Colin for his misfortune, which is terribly unfair. Colin was a victim of

politicking and bad management, which is nothing new at the BBC."

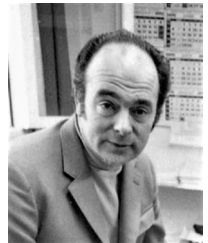
Peter also had the good luck to work with Jon Pertwee and his producer Barry Letts in *Doctor Who* and the *Silurians* and *Invasion of the Dinosaurs*, then later in the 1995 *Doctor Who* BBC radio play, *The Paradise of Death*.

"Barry was an interesting case," Peter chuckled. "If I was a school boy of 13 or 14, there is a phrase I would use and you'll know it; I would say that guy is a 'goodie goodie'. He's never naughty. Barry Letts quite rightly took *Doctor Who*, and the production of it, terribly seriously, but he had no sense of humour."



I asked him for an example of this.

"I saw Barry tell off Pertwee once. He said to him, 'Why are you always larking about, having a good laugh when you're rehearsing?' Jon said, 'Yes we laugh: it's about getting the team to work together; you make everybody relaxed; you make everybody like each other.' He was right of course. Larking about develops teamwork. Jon said to Barry, 'We're never late for work, we never muck about to stop recording or anything do we?' and Barry had to admit, 'No you don't.'"



"So Pertwee was right. But that's not to decry how good Letts was as a producer. I'm so pleased I worked for him, but he was very,

very serious. I'm not being rude, I promise you, because I'm so grateful for what he did for me, but you couldn't make jokes with Barry."



Most fans will be familiar with Peter Miles as an actor who specialises in playing villains. I asked him if he minded the association?

"Oh no, it has come out of my doing a lot of telly in a condensed time. Even if it was one part, in one episode, I'd always be playing a bit of the anti-goodie. All the sci-fi I did sprang from my role in *Silurians*. They spotted that part of me that could do villains. I also had a face that suited, for example, military types, I got cast quite a lot as military officers, either French or German. I played an SS Sturmbannführer in *Colditz* and I think Nyder represented Himmler in many ways."

So why did he think casting directors associated him with these roles?

"It's a combination of things that go through a director's mind very quickly: mainly the voice, the use of the voice in criminal roles, in nasty parts. Mine suggested an evil criminal to them and that was it. Because quite simply, and this is God's truth, although I am a versatile actor, this is not seen as good by casting directors. They don't like versatile. They want you in the same sort of part every time. It saves them any homework."



Peter was quick to remind me that he hasn't just appeared as villains.

"In my career, I've played a lot of comedy. Even more in my theatre life. I was doing lots of Alan Ayckbourn, at one time, lots of Feydeau, lots of Ray Cooney farces and other modern comedies. That was all me too. But

did the television casting directors say to me, 'We'd like you to play this comedy part, Peter'? No, they did not. Because although you're a versatile actor, it's not welcomed."

I asked Peter, out of all the roles he has played, does he have a favourite?



"Outside of sci-fi, my favourite part, which was written specifically for me, has to be the Reverend Ocelot for an audio production I did for Alan Stevens in 2012. It tested me as an actor, as it switched between comedy and tragedy, and, by golly, you really had to be on the ball to get the balance right. The play was called *Radio Bastard*, which is a very naughty title, and I hope it doesn't put some people off, because it's really very good and very funny. It was challenging and emotionally very intense to perform, but I wouldn't have missed it for the world."



"However, if it's sci-fi, it can only be Security Commander Nyder. There were so many sides to that character which let me show my range as an actor. You'll notice Nyder's voice changes and becomes warmer when he pretends to conspire with the Thals, and later



it has a more hysterical edge when he's pretending to conspire with Gharman against Davros. Nyder showed a human loyalty to Davros, which the Daleks could never match. It was great writing from Terry



Nation. That level of depth in a television script is rare, even back then.”

An actor’s work is sporadic, which must make it financially a bit of a struggle. Does Peter get regular repeat fees for all those classic television programmes he appeared in during the 1970s?

“I get a few hundred pounds a year from DVDs, because they are so popular.”

Then, as I mentioned, there’s also the convention scene, which in the UK has always been fairly healthy. How many has he done now — is it hundreds, or even thousands?

“No, no, I’m not like Colin Baker.” He lets out a impish chuckle. ‘But I’ve been to lots in my time. About five or six a year. They add up, but certainly not thousands. My friend Caron Gardner was sitting near me at the NEC. She



had a small part in the James Bond movie *Goldfinger*, playing one of Pussy Galore’s pilots, but she was signing for two solid days! I said, “My God, you must be popular to have made all that money!”

It was in 1999, that Big Finish Productions were given the license to produce brand new *Doctor Who* audios and, of course, they were soon knocking on Peter’s door. How did this come about?

“It was Gary Russell. I’d met him at the very first convention I attended. I knew him very well, and Gary Russell loved my work. Gary got me for Big Finish.”

Audio is a format Peter clearly relishes.

“I’m besotted, absolutely besotted, with recording CDs and doing radio.”

Fortunately, it was not only Big Finish and BBV who were after his vocal talents. As already mentioned, Magic Bullet cast him for their *Kaldor City* series and in one particular

story, *The Prisoner*, he performed memorably against Paul Darrow. How did he find his co-star?

“Paul is great fun. He takes the mickey out of himself, and is more modest than you would believe. If he admires a particular actor’s work, he’ll openly say so. I don’t think he’s done as much telly as he deserves. If I was a casting chap I’d have him on the box all the time.”

Peter was also reunited with actor Brian Croucher...

“Oh, yes, the last time we’d appeared together was in *Blake’s 7*. I was Secretary Rontane, a very cool customer, and Brian played the role of Space Commander Travis, who was on trial for his life. Prior to that we teamed up as a couple of crooks for an episode of *The Hanged Man*, a series made by Yorkshire Television. We were scheming to steal wages from a building site. I was the safecracker.

“We had some nice scenes together in *Kaldor City*. I recall there was one where Firstmaster Landerchild is thrown into a prison cell and then served a dead rat in a bun for his supper! I complain to Brian’s character [Cotton] and he says ‘That was clearly a mistake... the rat should have gone to the cell next door!’



“I love that dark, almost surreal comedy, and Brian has great timing.”



Peter feels that audio is a format that will last forever.

“People seem to love listening to drama on CDs and the radio. It has an immediacy. It speaks directly to you, whether you’re washing up in the kitchen, or lying down having a rest with your eyes closed. It triggers your imagination. Think about *The Paradise of Death*: that’s a good example. I defy anybody to not enjoy *The Paradise of Death*. It’s really entertaining and cuts across age groups as well. I think that’s one of the joys of sci-fi; it can appeal to any age. No wonder its fans are as plentiful as shoals of fish.”



Through his numerous convention appearances, Peter has become familiar with many fans, including Ian Levine. In 2006, he contributed to the Value Added Material on the DVD release of *Genesis of the Daleks* produced by Levine. What is his take on this rather infamous figure?

“Ian is a man that likes sci-fi and knows a lot about it. His career has ranged from the music scene through to drama. He interviewed me (at length) for the video [extra] in some room he hired out at the BBC. He assumed the voice of a very good schoolteacher, one that you’d like if you enjoyed working hard for somebody, and he had a lot of authority, right on the ball: if something wasn’t right, he said so immediately. You knew where you were with him, but he did talk rather a lot when it wasn’t his turn.”

Levine produced a number of unofficial *Doctor Who* related projects, often animating unmade or missing *Doctor Who* stories. These animations were never made commercially available and, for legal reasons, are never

likely to be. Nonetheless, Peter enjoyed the experience.

“I did two *Doctor Who* scripts for him and when we’d finished, Ian said, ‘Here is a piece of paper confirming the fee you’ll receive if these ever go out on the telly.’ It was quite handsome.”

But was Levine sincere in thinking they would be released?

“Perhaps he knew deep down in his heart they wouldn’t be, but I really can’t say. The second one I did for him was really super. The story was titled *The Dark Dimension* and I played a character called Hawkspur, which was a terrific part. And something happened when we finished recording it, that had never happened to me in my life before. It was after a terribly long day, let’s say about nine o’clock at night, and we’d worked like slaves, scene after scene. When we eventually stopped, there was a short silence and then everyone present gave me this huge round of applause. It was a wonderful thing. I was completely stunned that they would do that.”



Peter also recalled one of Ian’s evenings where he invited fans and industry professionals to meet over dinner.

“There was a restaurant he had hired out, and they were all fans there, and people from his other love, music; all these Northern Soul people. He paid for the meal, and then he stood up and said, ‘Ladies and gentlemen, the actor Peter Miles is going to perform his



famous line for us.’ He hadn’t told me about this, and I was shocked because I needed time to prepare. You can’t just become a part. And he hadn’t said a word to me!”

Peter met many other colourful characters during those convention appearances, both stars and fans alike. But had, I asked him, any of them ever become friends?

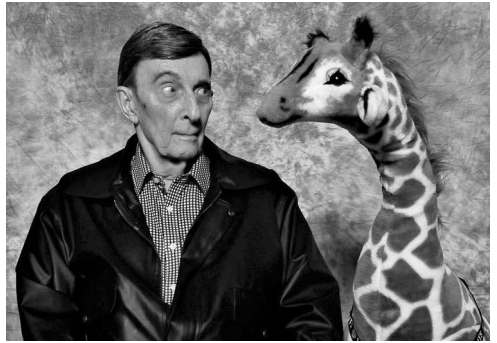


“A friend is different from an acquaintances or a fan. There are a small number of people who I would now consider friends. But I’m fussy. I don’t go around conventions looking for people who could become a friend of mine. I don’t have that attitude at all.”

Peter’s love of acting in the audio medium also moved him to write his own script.

“I’ve discovered I adore writing and I’ve scripted a farcical comedy which takes place in a nut-case hospital. It’s called, *Barking Mad* and I’ve mapped out every second of the farce in immaculate detail.”

He’d hoped to entice both Colin Baker and Sylvester McCoy to star.



Each character thinks they are somebody else. The Colin Baker character thinks he’s Romeo,” he explained. “He’s also besotted with sci-fi and doesn’t know it. He has a pet dog, that he feeds Whiskas, but the pet looks exactly like a Dalek, so he’s actually feeding cat food to a Dalek. There are a lot of allusions to *Doctor Who*.”

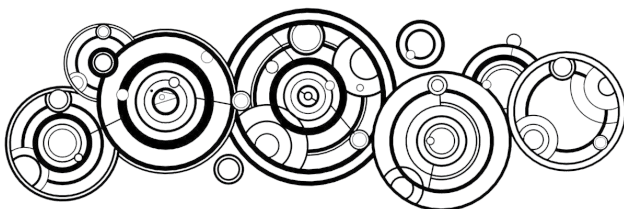
Peter would have co-starred too, playing “a mad surgeon who is a blood-thirsty devil, and can’t wait for the next operation.”

And this character’s name? What else could it be...

“He’s Doctor Nyder!”

The one regret I have, from my meeting with Peter Miles, is that I didn’t keep my recorder running once the formal interview was over, as during lunch he became even more relaxed, charming and entertaining, telling me stories of his life, his relationships and his friendship with Dusty Springfield.

Now Peter has left this world, his thoughts have also departed, but at least I can share with you my remembrances of this talented, generous and courteous man. ▲



# THE FÊTE OF DOCTOR WHO

## By Ian Scales

In May of 1980, I decided, more or less on a whim, to contribute a modest *Doctor Who* exhibition to a fête held at a small island school. My impression was that its role in the day's events would be low-key. However, I soon discovered that I had underestimated the popularity of the *Doctor Who* series at the time.

The Isle of Sheppey is an often neglected part of Kent that lies on the Thames estuary. It is noted for having an offshore, partially sunken World War II cargo ship, that is laden with bombs. My Dad once canoed up to its mast at an exceptionally low tide, only to be hurried away by an agitated coast guard. Apparently, the bombs are ready to go off at any time, potentially taking half the island with it.

In 1980, the town of Minster, where the fête took place, had only a few small schools, a post office and a village shop, together with a nonchalant attitude to the threat of annihilation. Before any disappointment sets in, this humble introduction is not a prelude to a dramatic explosion, a surprise visit from Tom Baker, or even one from Terry Nation (who lived fairly nearby in Lynsted). This article is about a small, largely unknown event, experienced only by the local people.

My mum taught at the primary school; a pretty place that was split into two parts — the main building being on a hill with some steps leading down to a playground, which, in turn, was adjacent to a large field. This field was where school events generally took place. Early on in the year, mum had mentioned that they were preparing for the spring fête. The school did not have the money to attract any local celebrities, but she wondered if I had some ideas about how to make it special. I was 14 at the time, possessing a rather prominent pudding basin haircut, and, more pertinently, a small collection of *Doctor Who* memorabilia, partly

due to the school's annual fêtes and their always-large bookstall.



Having visited official *Doctor Who* exhibitions, once in Blackpool and regularly in Longleat on the way back from holiday-making, it occurred to me that devising something similar might be fun.

Obviously I did not have access to the grand resources that those exhibitions enjoyed — my *Who* stuff consisted mostly of a collection of Weetabix stand-up figures, some vaguely undressed Denys Fisher toys, and a collection of annuals. But I thought they'd just about do.

However, I also knew that mum had become involved with a *Doctor Who* group based on the mainland, and this later turned out to be a useful resource.

In the run up to fête day, I managed to negotiate the use of the school staff room, a large area with plenty of wall space giving me access to display boards, and bookshelves on which I could present my assortment of posters and Target novels. The room also held a surprising number of empty aquariums, which turned out to





be ideal for showing off my Denys Fisher models and a Palitoy talking K9 and Dalek. With a lot of enthusiasm and some careful placing, I was able to make the space look fairly full. The fish tanks were positioned at intervals around the walls, as well as upon the two tables that I'd put in the middle of the room so that people could wander around in a circular fashion from entrance to exit.



The result looked fine, but... somehow, it lacked atmosphere.

In my mind, I travelled back to how I had felt when I entered the Doctor Who Exhibition in Blackpool. I could recall how the darkness was punctuated by illuminated exhibits. Without access to such facilities I would be forced to improvise, perhaps drawing the curtains and switching on various lights to add ambience. That first awed impression had also been formed by the sounds of the *Doctor Who* theme mingling with the distant brayings of Daleks. As I was fortunate enough to have what must have been a pretty advanced hi-fi system for its time, I was able to fade music in and out, manually, on my record/tape player, whilst transferring music from vinyl onto a cassette. That would prove useful for compiling effects to be played in the background at my own exhibition.

Accordingly, I spent an exciting day and evening scouring through my hoard of *Doctor Who* related LPs to find suitable sounds, themes, and scenes to mix. I had the Decca Records' release of *Genesis of*



*the Daleks*, plus the BBC *Doctor Who* Sound Effects album and a single of the theme tune. I also owned a copy of *Doctor Who and the Pescations*, but the screams on that LP had absolutely terrified me a few years earlier, so I wisely concluded that the prospect of toddlers being dragged into the staff room to the accompanying cries of agonised people was to be avoided. I decided to focus on *Genesis* instead — particularly the Dalek's final "We are Entombed" speech — and other memorable moments. In between these, I faded in and out some weird and wonderful noises from the *Sound Effects* record.

Armed with what was clearly the best mix tape ever made, I felt confident that I could create some atmosphere. I just needed a few more significant features to entertain any — and every — one that I hoped might decide to visit my small display.

As it turned out, one of mum's *Doctor Who* fan friends knew a guy who, rather cryptically, owed him some kind of favour — the important thing being that he possessed a Dalek! At the time we all assumed that this was an official Dalek. Examining the photo now, it seems home-made. But that didn't matter — it looked the part. I had also been fortunate enough to borrow a Voc robot outfit, and a mate of mine agreed to patrol the exhibition wearing it. The costume, created for a DWAS amateur film, was beautifully made, and fitted him perfectly. My attractions were finally sorted.



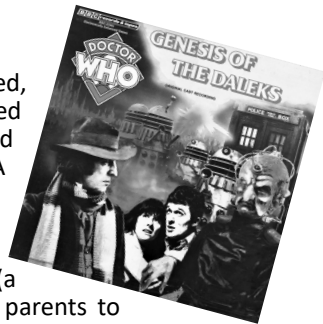
Fête day was rapidly approaching and it was, equally rapidly, becoming apparent that the Headmaster was promoting my exhibition as a major feature. The programme now proudly advertised that visitors would be able to have their photographs taken with a Dalek, which, I

heard from members of staff, was causing some excitement amongst the children. By a rather fortunate coincidence, the teacher next to my mum's room had been reading *Doctor Who and the Dalek Invasion of Earth* to her class for the past couple of months — completely independent of my idea to do a *Doctor Who* event.

Eventually, the day itself arrived and I remember spending the early hours checking over my displays, organising members of staff, creating a less-cluttered space for the Dalek and so on. But curiously, I have no memory at all of meeting my Dalek benefactor. Instead, the experience was punctuated for me by a series of staff, friends and parents, who appeared like extras from a farce, relaying items of news about the "Dalek Man". I was severally informed that "the Dalek Man in a Van" had arrived, that "the Dalek Man had installed the Dalek", and of the Dalek Man's sundry demands.

It seems to me now, that I returned to the exhibition from one of my excursions, and the Dalek was just... there... looming large and silently watching me from the corner of the staff room. Suppressing a sudden shudder, I dimmed the lights (well, turned some off) and switched on the tape recorder. A searing blast of the *Doctor Who* theme, followed by the sounds of Tom Baker arm-wrestling with Davros, filled the room. Then I waited, hoping that people would turn up.

The first trickle came fairly quickly. Children and parents moved at an appreciable rate around the area, taking pictures of the Dalek. Then more visitors arrived, and more, until the room seemed overflowing with people.



At one point I turned, and discovered that the Dalek had disappeared! A passing informant reassured me that it was with the queue outside (a queue?) ready for parents to take photos of it with their children.

My mum's recollection is that whatever favour that Dalek Man owed to her friend, it didn't appear to be one that brought much joy to the bearer. I was advised that whilst parents were happily snapping away with their little darlings outside the room, he had apparently demanded that they stop. "No photos!" he had shouted. I did not witness this. I couldn't imagine where he had even come from, or went, I only heard a hasty account, but apparently, after a pregnant pause, someone tactfully suggested that the Dalek be returned to the main exhibition area where parents could take more general pictures. Coincidentally many of these photographs involved their children being near the Dalek...

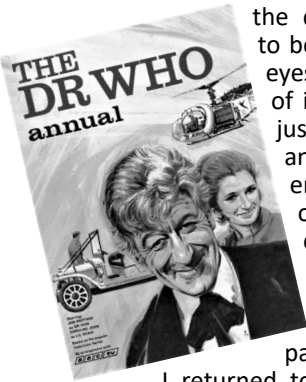
Meanwhile, my friend in the Voc outfit manfully threw himself into his role, walking up and down the gradually building queue in the hallway, terrorising the children. And as the day progressed, he granted them the photo opportunities they had lost with the Dalek.

It fascinated me, the clear pleasure that the children were getting, not just from appearing with a Dalek, but from the relatively meagre jumble of items on display, as they pointed out the monsters depicted in the various books, cards and posters that I had acquired over the years, to their delighted parents.

But my most cherished moment came during the break I took when one of the staff offered to stand in for me. As I made my way down the long hallway, I was surprised to see that there were still people waiting to come in: the queue continued all the way to the main doors. Outside I stopped short. The steps that

led down to the playground were filled by a line of people. It was the first time that I fully realised quite how popular an attraction my display had proved. The pride I felt was huge, not only for the work that many people had put into this tiny event, but for the television programme that I had believed was not really that popular any more.

I recall wandering over to the book stall. Distracted for a moment by the fact that the queue did not seem to be dwindling at all, my eyes fell on a collection of items that a lady had just pulled from a box and scattered over the emptying table. An oddly pink hardback cover was just visible. It was the first Jon Pertwee *Doctor Who* annual. After paying my ten pence, I returned to the exhibition and, proud as punch, placed my new acquisition on the display shelves alongside the other



annuals. It felt like the crowning achievement of the day.

As the event concluded, I learned that the Headmaster had been heard praising my efforts. The Dalek was gone, as mysteriously as it came, apparently retrieved by the Dalek Man who I still hadn't met. I was thrilled that *Doctor Who* could still attract an audience and I appreciated the opportunity that...



Hang on.... Whilst writing this, a vaguely disturbing, and certainly startling, thought has occurred to me.

Had Dalek Man actually been right there all those years ago, but sitting inside that bloody Dalek? ▲

## COOL THINGS

### THE MAGICIANS APPRENTICE / THE WITCH'S FAMILIAR

By Fiona Moore and Alan Stevens

*37 Stupid Things about The Magician's Apprentice and The Witches Familiar  
(And 13 Cool Ones)*

*(But we're not telling you which is which)  
(We're expecting you to work that out for yourselves)*

1. The commencement draws at least as much, if not more, from *The Deadly Assassin* and *The Ultimate Foe* as it does from *Genesis of the Daleks*.

2. The slightly hard-to-hear line from the soldier in the opening sequence on Skaro is: "There are clam drones two miles away."





This suggests that either Davros wasn't, in fact, responsible for the infamous giant land-clams in *Genesis of the Daleks*, or that this is what inspired him to make them.

3. Why does Kanzo think he can shoot down an airplane with a longbow?

4. Much as we love the cantina sequence in the film *Star Wars*, it's also responsible for one of the biggest visual clichés in telefantasy.



5. We'd just like to remind our readers that Davros' henchman in *Genesis of the Daleks*, Nyder, has a name which sounds like "neidr", the Welsh word for snake. Here, Davros has a henchman who's made of snakes.

6. Colony Sarff is riding a hoverboard throughout. Wouldn't that make him Colony Surf?

7. It takes eight snipers to kill a Time Lord. Thanks, Missy, for letting us know.

8. And, much as we love Missy, we have to ask why she goes to all the trouble of freezing the planes, hassling Clara and contacting UNIT just to find out where/when the Doctor is. Surely, if UNIT have the technology to find him, so does Missy?



9. That sequence also raises the fact that, with an unknown number of Doctors travelling the Earth in time and space, pretty soon it'll get to the point where you won't be able to throw a stick without hitting one.

10. And to add to that, it looks like the Daleks have Dalek-dickhead human agents scattered randomly throughout history, in the hope that the Doctor turns up. Sooner or later, there's going to be a population conflict.

11. While on the planet Karn, the Doctor hears from a talking nest of snakes that Davros has a message for him, so he promptly starts making preparations for his own death. Talk about an overreaction.

12. The audience in the twelfth century castle contains at least two men wearing plate armour. When you consider how hot and uncomfortable it is to wear that stuff for more than a short while, you've got to ask why.

13. The giant CGI snake is cool, even if its teeth are very un-snakelike.

14. Why is the "hospital" revolving, when we later discover it's on the planet's surface? Unless the planet itself is rotating that fast.

15. So you've got a cell whose entire security depends on prisoners believing they're in space and, therefore, not attempting to open the door in case they're sucked out into the vacuum. Wouldn't it be easier just to, I don't know, lock the door?

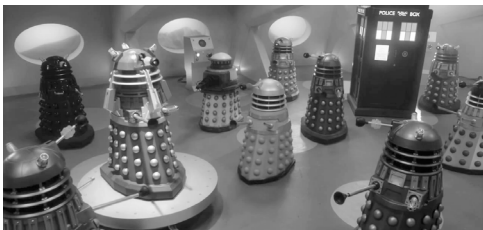
16. How did Davros get access to all these recordings? Does he have an extensive collection of *Doctor Who* DVDs?



17. The shock reveal at the climax of part one is that the Daleks brought Skaro back, and have been hiding the planet. And yet, they must have brought it back before then, since the Doctor meets Darla von Karlsen on Skaro in *Asylum of the Daleks* and doesn't seem particularly surprised.

18. How is it somehow worse to be on Skaro, than to be on a space station with Davros and a bunch of Daleks?

19. Haven't all those Daleks got anything better to do than just stand around in a room with the Tardis, like patrons at an art gallery?



20. We know from *Victory of the Daleks* that *The Stolen Earth/Journey's End* did not take place, and that entire space/time event disappeared down the Crack in Time. So the Dalek Supreme we see here could well be the one destroyed in *Journey's End*.

21. But all this raises the question of what happened to Dalek Caan, who was responsible for going back in time and saving Davros from the Nightmare Child in *The Stolen Earth/Journey's End* timeline, and how Davros has survived at all in this timeline. Mess with *Doctor Who* continuity, and it'll mess with you back.

22. Also, why is one of the quotes we hear in Davros' montage taken from *The Stolen Earth* ("Everything we saw. Everything we lost") which shouldn't exist in this timeline?

23. 'Maximum extermination' apparently means 'disintegrate'. Bit convenient for Clara and Missy's escape, that.

24. Given Missy's usual behaviour, the title of part two ought to be *The Witch's Overfamiliar No*? Oh, please yourselves.

25. The first five minutes of part two are spent on an explanation for how Clara and Missy survived the cliffhanger, which just boils down to 'we used space magic.' Seriously, at this point we're starting to miss the Ainley-Master's constant non-explanations for his improbable survival.

26. Where did the rope come from? Do Daleks manufacture it, and then leave it lying around the wasteland? Or if not, does Missy somehow carry such things around in her pockets?

27. Also, given that Clara and Missy are in a treeless desert (and, according to *The Daleks*, the nearest forest is a petrified one), where did she get the stick?

28. "It took me so very long to realise it was you, standing at the gates of my beginning." Can't have been that long, though, as Davros has known what the Tardis looks like and what it is capable of since at least *Resurrection of the Daleks*, and the Doctor had it with him during his battlefield encounter with the child Davros.

29. Why is the Special Weapons Dalek, which, according to the novelisation of *Remembrance of the Daleks*, was abhorred by the other Daleks as an abomination, casually hobnobbing with the Dalek Supreme? And if it's somehow been rehabilitated, why has nobody bothered to clean its casing up a bit?



30. Points for this being the first time in the episodic series that the Special Weapons Dalek talks, though this again raises the question of why it kept silent in *Remembrance*.

31. Why have the Daleks decided to remove all the closed-circuit camera surveillance, which was there in the original Dalek story, from their city? But not, it seems from the sewers?

32. Also, if Davros' chair is (as repeatedly established) his life support system, how can he survive that long without it?

33. And if Davros doesn't have any legs, where has Peter Capaldi put his?

34. If Davros has a personal forcefield round his chair, how did the Doctor get him out of it? Moreover, if that's the case, how was the Doctor able to threaten Davros with a mere gun in *Resurrection*?



35. Also, how did the Doctor not notice that the chair was full of snakes?

36. Since it's later implied that the Dalek voice is mechanical, how is it that we hear Dalek voices coming from the Dalek sewage?

37. The Master has a daughter. And we can only hope that future showrunning regimes really don't try to develop that bit of continuity.

38. Why do the sewage-Daleks attack the Dalek, but not the Time Lady or the human, who they must hate just as much (if not more so)?

39. As well as "mercy" the Daleks also have the words "okay" and "weird" programmed into their vocabulary banks.

40. Oh, and contrary to what's implied here, the word "love" is indeed in Daleks' vocabulary; just search the transcript for *Dalek* if you don't believe us.

41. And why can't the Daleks say: "You are different from me"? All this programme does is restrict Daleks' articulations to simply shooting things, which seems rather constraining.

42. Apparently, for this story, they also can't say the word "no".

43. "That's why they keep yelling: 'exterminate'. It's how they reload." Why do they also chant "destroy," "annihilate," and other things, then?

44. It may be an allusion to an infamous continuity error in Terrance Dicks' novelisation of *Destiny of the Daleks*, where it states that Davros' eyes open, but this seems to be going to an awful lot of trouble just to fix something that contradicts the transmitted version anyway.



45. "Anyone who's not a Dalek is an enemy of the Daleks". Except, it seems, for Davros and Colony Sarff.

46. If, as Missy points out, the Daleks know that having the Doctor's companion is how you keep control of the Doctor, then why are the Daleks dense enough to try to shoot her dead at the end of part one?

47. In part one, the Doctor tries to discourage Missy from coming with him to Skaro, and, in part two, he seems surprised that she survived the apparent Dalek extermination. And yet, his entire plan rests on Missy coming with him and surviving the events of the story, to save him from having his regeneration energy drained.

48. The core concept of this two-parter is a riff on the scene from *Genesis of the Daleks* where the Doctor likens the embryo Daleks to a fictional child who will grow up to be evil. Here, the Doctor rescues the child Davros from the minefield, an act that Davros himself views as a weakness, and indeed, thinks he can manipulate the Doctor into sharing his regeneration energy with Davros' own, monstrous children. What Davros doesn't realise, of course, is that the Doctor originally abandoned the child to the minefield.



49. The Doctor returns to rescue the child Davros when he discovers that the concept of “mercy”, although deeply buried in Davros, has been passed on to the Daleks to the point where the word can be found in their vocabulary banks; something which aids his discovery that Clara has been imprisoned inside the Dalek casing. This means the Doctor saves the young Davros, not because he couldn’t face killing a child, but because it allows him to save the life of his then-current pathological obsession, Clara.

50. So, in conclusion, Davros makes a fatal error in believing that “mercy” is a weakness within the Doctor that he can exploit.



However, he has confused ‘mercy for the enemy’ with ‘compassion for one’s friends’, which means that Davros has inadvertently given someone as dangerous, ruthless and manipulative as he himself, the means to drown him in his own shit. ▲

## DALEK PRODUCTION!

**By John Darley**

It is likely that the earliest Dalek builders picked up their tools for the first time on 28 December 1963. Just after tea. This is the date when the world first got a proper look at the psychopathic pepper pot aliens behind the plunger arm that had threatened Barbara the previous week.

It is also likely that their materials were nothing more than bits of cardboard and their only tool, sellotape, but innovation and evolution have to start somewhere. They started here.

Many of the children captivated by their first sight of those mechanical monsters would carry a fascination for them throughout the rest of their lives. There was, and still is, something about Daleks which gets inside you if you’re not careful, and it isn’t easy to let the obsession go.

If you happen to be one of the obsessed, then you’ll be nodding your head right now, as you read. The rest of you will, no doubt, be mystified head-shakers.

I don’t think there is any way of explaining exactly what it is about the Daleks that makes them so appealing. They just are. It could be the eerie way that they glide along, dome suddenly sliding sideways to point that one eye at an enemy; body then rotating to bring the eye front and centre again, without ever breaking that gaze. It could be their fractured personalities; the creature within ranting away as it slowly goes mad with claustrophobia. Whatever it is, the design is somehow... perfect.

Their creation is a credit to the joint efforts of script writer Terry Nation, designer Raymond Cusick, his assistant Jeremy Davies, and Bill Roberts of Shawcraft Models. There has never been anything quite like the Daleks. For the initiated, they never grow old.

I came to the Dalek party relatively late on, when they had glided out of the 1960s and were appearing, in colour, during the heady days of the early 1970s. The impact on the five-year-old me was no different from that which had driven children to obsession nine years earlier.



Out came the cardboard and sellotape and off I went. And to complement my efforts, I picked out a string of Dalek related toys and games from the Autumn & Winter edition of the Grattan Catalogue, and ringed them in felt tip as potential Christmas presents, for the attention of my parents, grandparents or anyone else who might be willing to chip in.

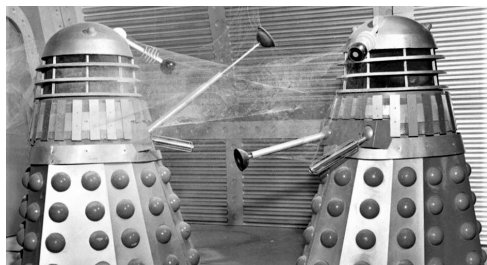
Yet even back then, I knew this was never going to be enough. Sure, I had progressed to constructing some pretty good Daleks out of fabric conditioner bottles and suchlike. I'd followed every demonstration on *Blue Peter* and had built the *Doctor Who* theatre, together with several Plasticine-domed Daleks. But I still wasn't satisfied.



I knew exactly what I wanted. I'd tried asking for one for Christmas, probably in 1973, but the request was somehow misunderstood and I got a Japanese tin plate robot instead. It wasn't even full-sized. What I wanted wasn't in any catalogue or modelled on TV. A full-size Dalek of my very own.

My attempt to build myself such a Dalek happened in the late 1970s and involved chipboard sheet, purloined from my father's workshop and haphazardly nailed together to form the rudiments of what I thought was the correct shape for a Dalek skirt. This didn't go down well with anyone, including me. It took up too much space in my bedroom and the ends of the nails poked out here and there and were potentially lethal.

In any case, my obsession was soon to be packed away, as other matters became a priority: High school, exams, college, relationships, jobs, mortgages. All the usual stuff that people insist you do in order to be classified as human. The Daleks were consigned to the realms of boyhood history.



But... as we all know, Daleks never actually die. They lie dormant, covered with cobwebs. Then, just when you think it's safe to wiggle the gun, you find yourself irradiated, like a fly on the end of a bug-zapper.

VHS tapes and BBC repeats resurrected the Daleks for me, and forced them firmly to the front of my mind. Watching many episodes for the first time since they were originally aired brought back childhood memories, and rekindled that desire to build and own a 'real' Dalek.

The difference this time around was that I was an adult. I had resources and money at my disposal (and only a limited number of people who would try and stop me). The key here was to start the project without actually telling anyone what I was doing. By the time they cottoned on, it would be too late.

Freeze-frame for one moment. Picture me with saw in hand, about to make my first cut...

What I didn't know was that there were other individuals out there going through the same experience. They had all realised that the obstacles to their building a Dalek had disappeared. And their actions were much the same as my own. They too were using their time, money and abilities to begin work on their childhood dream.

They also encountered the same stumbling block that I was currently attempting to circumvent. There were no official Dalek plans available, anywhere.

Unfreeze my frame as I put down the saw and scratch my head...

Back in the early days, when the internet was either young, or not there at all (such was the nature of dial-up) there was no way of accessing the information required to accurately build a Dalek to the standards of those seen on television.

Like myself, many would-be Dalek builders had, in the course of their journey to maturity, got their hands on a copy of the *How To Build A Dalek* guide published by the Radio Times in 1973.



As a youth, I had been terrified by the outlined construction process for the Dalek dome, which involved such outlandish material as shellac and fibreglass. It was obvious too, that the dimensions included in the guide were far from accurate. Anyone with even a small

Dalek obsession could see that the skirt was missing an entire column of hemispheres.

Fortunately, around this time, a new fifth scale Dalek kit, produced by Sevans Models, was released. The kit then went through a couple of revisions, which honed the accuracy and made it easier to assemble. I came across one of these kits (the later version) in a branch of Beatties, in the Meadowhall shopping centre, Sheffield, one Saturday afternoon in the mid-1990s. This was the 'missing link' that would get me started on a full-size build.



Before I began, I carefully drew around all the various components of the kit, transferring the outlines onto paper. My logic was that I would scale these up by five to obtain the dimensions required to make the full-sized prop.

Again, I didn't know it, but I was not alone. Across Britain (and the world) other people were dutifully measuring up plastic kits and reaching for their calculators.

Enter the internet (stage left). Everything changed. All of us quietly obsessing in private, were suddenly united. By today's standards, this notion seems fairly mundane, but these were different times. Discovering we were not alone caused a seismic difference. Resources were pooled, groups were set up and dimensions were exchanged. The game was on.

Many of the people who were around in those early days of the internet are still around today. They have followed the growth of online Dalek building from the very start. Yahoo was the first place where the like-minded gathered, forming *The Dalek Builder's Club* and *The Dalek Builder's Guild* — both groups doing their own thing but comprising, essentially, the same people. They eventually consolidated and moved to MSN. Frustratingly, the discussions held in the old groups couldn't be transferred over, and much of that information was lost. For me, this problem had a bearing on events which were to follow.

Nevertheless, by pooling resources the group was able to develop various sets of rudimentary Dalek plans. These were the final piece of the jigsaw and at last, my Dalek build had the green light.



My first full size Dalek was actually two. I was working with a friend of mine (who I shall call 'Ian' — because that's his name). We got very drunk together one night, and I confessed my Dalek-building aspirations. To my surprise, he thought this was a great idea, so off we went to build one for each of us. Mine was to be a 1960s *Chase/Power* style Dalek. His was to be a 1970s version, loosely based on the silver and black *Death* colour scheme.





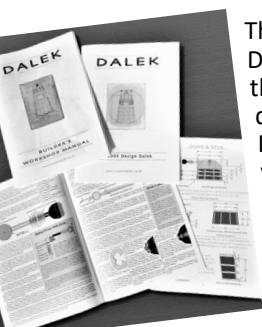
I tackled the necks, shoulders and collars while Ian focused on the skirts and fenders. We both worried about the 2x56 hemispheres. I also produced both fibreglass

domes, having thoroughly researched the methodology. The dome remains the one component that strikes fear into the heart of every Dalek building newbie. Producing your own is something of a 'rite of passage'.

These days, you can find out all you need to know about dome production and everything else at the swipe of a screen. Back then, we were asking the questions online for the first time. Answers often took a while to arrive.

Despite this, I became proficient in several practical skills, including carpentry and metalwork. Our Daleks were made predominantly from wood, so they were heavy, and hard work on the legs during operation. I later fitted the running gear from an electric wheelchair into my Dalek skirt to save on leg effort. At the time, this was an innovation which had only been done by a couple of other Dalek builders.

Throughout the construction process, I had begun to make notes on the build techniques that we were using. I did this at the end of each session, dutifully sitting at my screen, typing in the day's progress. By the time the Dalek was finished, I had compiled a full set of instructions, which were far better than anything that had gone before. These notes became the basis for *The Dalek Builder's Workshop Manual*, which was later to become the starting point for so many other new builders.



The first set of really good Dalek plans arrived around this time. They were developed by Malcolm Lear and uploaded to the various online groups. These were the perfect accompaniment to the *Workshop Manual*. The

two together gave aspiring Dalek builders much of what was required to get started.

Meanwhile our finished Daleks were paraded around our local neighbourhoods and attended several parties. Everyone was impressed. Ian and I decided we needed to put our process online, so we purchased a web domain, documented our build, and made it available at [projectdalek.co.uk](http://projectdalek.co.uk).

Around this time, the existing online communities were beginning to creak under the strain of all the information they contained. The Yahoo and MSN platforms were not ideal for the preservation and logical presentation of Dalek building information. They were designed more for chat, in much the same way that Facebook is today.

I decided we needed a platform that was better organised and divided up into logical sections, where information on the building process would not become lost. So, together with a small group of other builders who shared my vision, I set up a bulletin board, with the aim of giving something back to all those who had come together out of the pre-internet isolation, to pool resources and make Daleks happen.

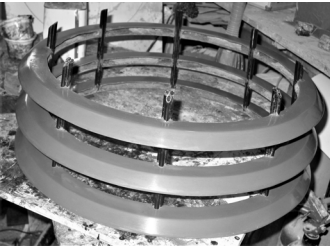
It was the beginning of the *Project Dalek Forum*. Over the next few years, the Daleks reappeared on our screens in the new series, and a whole new wave of enthusiastic young Dalek fans appeared. New plans were developed and new Daleks built.

I also caught the Dalek building bug again. I think this probably happens to most builders. If anyone tells you they are going to build a Dalek, don't believe them. What they are actually saying is that they are going to build their first Dalek... and then another... and another...

Having had enough of heavy wooden bodywork, I decided that my next Dalek would be made entirely from fibreglass and therefore ultra-lightweight. I also wanted to be able to pack it away inside itself, so the shoulders would fit inside the skirt, the neck

inside the shoulders, the whole thing inside the fender, for easy transportation. This was to be a grey, *Genesis* style Dalek.

Over a period of several months, I worked on my build, section by section. I already had some moulds available, stored away from previous projects. This was a great help, but I wanted to go a step further and produce a Dalek with no wooden components whatsoever.



On a standard Dalek, the neck section is almost always made from wood — either MDF or plywood — as is the inner part of the neck, (the neck bin) which holds the

dome in position. This makes the finished assembly quite heavy. I set about constructing the entire Dalek from a combination of fibreglass and carbon fibre parts. The neck rings were laid up in fibreglass and I created a set of moulds for the components that form the neck bin, while the trefoil struts that separate the rings (traditionally made from pieces of wooden dowel) were constructed from carbon fibre.

Even the operator's seat was made from fibreglass, held in place by lightweight aluminium tubing glassed into the skirt frame. The only concession I made was to use a piece of 18mm MDF sheet inside the (fibreglass) fender, because the casters had to be bolted to something bulky and solid.

The finished Dalek was (and still is) one of the lightest around. It packs into a standard saloon car without issue, and it is easy to assemble and operate. I shared this build on the forum as it progressed, to allow others to see what was being done and copy the methodology.

Many builders posted their progress too, and this constant stream of new activity within members' build diaries has meant that, 15

years later, the *Project Dalek Forum* is still going strong. It has enabled many individuals to come together and work on joint projects, honing existing Dalek plans and developing new ones for other Dalek types. It still holds every piece of relevant Dalek building information that was ever posted.

Who could have imagined, back in the early days, that so many like-minded people would eventually find each other and work together? The world is an amazing place. Many of the members currently online are familiar faces from the past, but there are also many new, younger members who appear to have been bitten by the Dalek building bug.

Today there is less fear associated with the use of advanced materials such as fibreglass. Even first-timers are often willing to give it a go and construct their Daleks from composites. They are also using CNC technology (Computer Numerical Control, which involves the automatic control of machining tools) alongside 3D printing, to assemble these nightmare creatures.



Where once an eyeball, or a plunger, would be 3D printed, saving a bit of time during the build process, today, it is possible to print even the larger Dalek body segments by breaking down the computer-generated parts into sections before printing and re-assembling the 'real world' results. It won't be too long before someone out there produces an entirely 3D printed, full-sized Dalek. It's incredible how far we have all come.

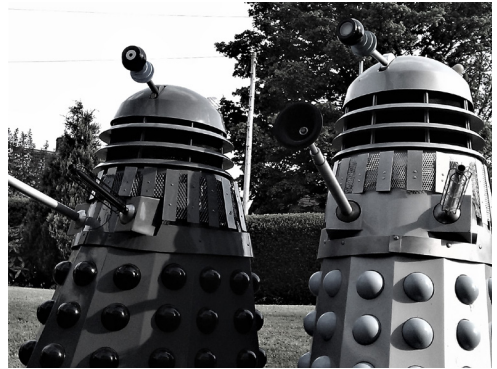
I still own the two Daleks that I have mentioned during this story. They sit there in silence. One is in the garage, the other guarding the spare room. I don't have a burning desire to show them off, or even jump inside and operate them. For me, it's

enough to know that they are there and that I built them. That childhood box is now well and truly ticked.

Much of my spare time these days is spent running *Project Dalek* and helping others to realise their Dalek dreams. Updates to the sites and the plans appear to have become a lifelong vocation. I'm not complaining. It's a passion, and Dalek building still fascinates me.

The resources that I help to keep alive are now well used, and (hopefully) well-received. However, the real credit should go to all those members and friends who have built their Daleks and then raised thousands with them for worthy causes such as *Children In Need*.

Of one thing I am certain. Over the many years this journey has taken, the Daleks have put a big smile on the faces of a lot of children. And some of us adults too! ▲



## PEACE, LOVE AND HARMONY FOR DOCTOR WHO INFINITY!

**By Mathew Peck**

Who in their right mind wants to administer a very busy *Doctor Who* Facebook group? You don't get paid for it, it's very stressful, and a lot of your spare time is used up dealing with disputes between irate group members. The answer is, quite simply, me and my fellow administrators! Indeed, it's not just one, but two *Doctor Who* groups, and a Facebook page, that I manage, but guess what? I'm loving every minute of it!

Our main group is *Doctor Who Infinity*, a rather new enterprise, with a little over 46 thousand members. We consider ourselves lucky to be one of the most active *Doctor Who* Facebook groups, with posts averaging one hundred a day, and many gaining hundreds of comments. Members share their love of the show through reviews, events, cosplays and photos, generating countless discussions which cover many different eras of the Doctor — from William Hartnell to Jodie Whittaker.



*Doctor Who Infinity* was created three years ago, at a time when our fandom became divided. Those who had been crying out for a female Doctor, clashed with diehard, often older, fans, who felt that this would betray the canonicity of the show and remove a valuable role model for boys. The announcement of Jodie Whittaker as the Doctor hardened the controversy, some feeling the decision had been taken solely to reignite interest in the franchise, with no real thought of how established fans would react to it. While many welcomed the change with open arms, others felt strongly they had been left out in the cold.

The upshot was that, as the debates became more political, people deserted the *Doctor Who* forums, with fandom dividing into those who were positive about Jodie Whittaker and those who were not. The slightest criticism could see you removed from fan groups on



either side of the debate. It felt very much like *Remembrance of the Daleks*, with two factions, in this case of pro and anti female Doctor warriors, battling it out. Worst of all was the name calling. If you liked the idea of a female Doctor you were a SJW (Social Justice Warrior) and not a fan, and if you didn't, you were sexist and also not a fan!



It was a difficult thing for me to watch. I had friends, good people, on both sides of the argument. Long term members suddenly found themselves removed from Facebook groups, and unfairly labelled for not

being onboard with the show's change of direction. If ever there was a gap in the fan market, this was it, and so we set about creating a *Doctor Who* platform that wouldn't alienate newcomers and would welcome debate from both sides of the divide, as long as it was respectful.

The influx of recruits that followed was down to the fact they were all looking for an escape from mind-numbing arguments about the casting of the Doctor. We reaped the benefit, garnering a great bunch of posters, whose opinions covered all eras of the show.

Thankfully, things have calmed down since Jodie's completed her second season, though the healing process is still ongoing. We encourage people to tell us what they've loved about the show throughout its history, and to explain their dislikes, but we don't allow personal criticism of other fans or offensive and derogatory comments directed at people who have worked on the programme.

As the group became busier, our 'classic only' members felt their notifications were being clogged with *New Who* posts, which is how *Doctor Who Classic Infinity* was created. Originally called *Doctor Who Retro Infinity* (the suggestion of one of our members — and a great name, in my opinion) many members disliked it, and when we put it to a

poll, the majority decided they wanted it to be called *Classic*. Although it is much smaller than our main group, with approximately 15 thousand members, *Classic Infinity* is as busy as our other pages, if rather less dramatic. It's a great place for new fans to learn about the history of the show.



"Don't be a Judoon" is the most important advice I give to new admins. The key is to be polite, courteous and helpful. It's easy to remove and block a member who has engaged in a heated exchange, but it's important to remember that we all have bad days.



Recruiting the right people for an admin role can be difficult. First off, you need someone who can give the time. Then we look for anyone whose posts have interesting content and generate lots of activity. As already noted, a tolerant mind-set is essential: an admin has to understand they are there to serve members, and not be too quick to punish if they get over passionate. We have admins and moderators from different time zones: Australia, France, USA, Canada — me in the UK. It makes selecting a venue for the staff Christmas Party a bit of a problem.

*Doctor Who* is hugely successful worldwide, so it amazes me how many GPs from abroad, and even pharmaceutical companies, try to join us, thinking we are a medical group. At first we didn't mind much because it

increased our numbers; but then someone posted instructions on how to conduct a successful prostate examination. That was when we realised it was best to vet the members first and go to post approval.

Our *Doctor Who Infinity* page, unlike the group, concentrates more on sharing polls and memes to other *Doctor Who* and sci-fi Facebook groups. Over the last year or so, we have increased this activity to enable us to reach a wider fandom: and it's a good way to get our name out there. Pages are preferred by some fans as there is less contention, you don't have to be a member to follow, and you can just dip in and out whenever you want.

It's always good to share polls from the page to all groups, to find out the general consensus on things like "Who is your favourite Doctor," (no pun intended) and "Are you enjoying the current series?" The most popular (and most interesting) polls are the ones that cause the most controversy, where fans forcefully defend their perceptions of the show's heritage. Clearly, for some, there is a credibility threshold that should not be crossed, even in a sci-fi fantasy.

An eye-catching Facebook page is very important, and that means a good cover picture. Those for *Doctor Who Infinity* and *Doctor Who Classic Infinity* are now put together by the very talented Aidan Wilkinson. You may know him as the 'Tardis Man'. A huge fan of the show, Aidan has a natural gift for rendering 3D models of the Tardis from different eras, and has been a regular member on *Infinity* for a number of years.

The question and answer posts are my absolute favourite thing on *Infinity*. I like to think it's something unique we do, but I'm sure it's been done by other *Doctor Who* groups in the past. Although most of our members can get to the conventions, to meet and talk to the stars, the question and answer posts allow those who, for financial, or mobility issues, are unable to attend these events, to connect with people who have been a part of the series.

Q&A posting basically involves the cooperation of people who are, in some way, connected with the "fam", and agree to talk about their experiences. Our members ask the questions, and our guests answer them.

We started with the artist Colin Howard, who created many magnificent *Doctor Who* VHS covers back in the 1990s. Colin is a particular favourite of mine and I love sharing his work on posts. He is an inspiration to many of the young artists in our community.

Olly McNeil, Tom Baker's personal photographer did a spectacular live broadcast for us, describing what it's like to work with the man who is, for many of us, the Doctor himself.

Before we knew it, Nabil Shaban (from *Vengeances on Varos*, *Mindwarp*, and more recently, *Sil and the Devil Seeds of Arodor*) had agreed to become involved. A true gentleman, he is always willing to answer questions and discuss his time on the show.



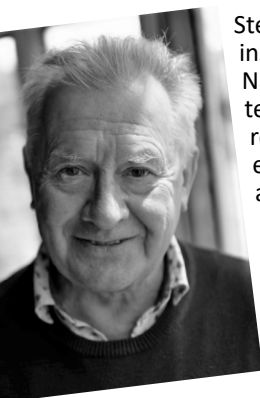
For *New Who* fans, we secured the services of Simon Fisher-Becker who played Dorium Maldovar in several Eleventh Doctor adventures, and Jack Shalloo, the pregnant guy from the series 11 story the *Tsuranga Conundrum*. I was also very lucky to track down Guy Siner of *Allo Allo* fame, who played General Ravon in the 1975 classic *Genesis of the Daleks*. Guy was worried that his recollection of the story was a bit hazy, as it was so long ago, but he was delighted to learn that *Who* fans still cherished the story all these decades later, and happily agreed to take part. The post was a success. He gave us a very good insight into what it was like for a young actor to be rushed from set to set, and how different it was recording



television back in the 1970s. Guy also had several little known *Who* anecdotes for us to relish, as well as some concerning his time when he appeared in the iconic 1976 drama, *I Claudius*, and on set with the legendary Johnny Depp in *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

Peter Purves, who played Steven Taylor way back in the William Hartnell era, has also been kind enough to contribute. Peter's recollection of his time as a regular cast member was excellent and there was so much to talk about, although he was less forthcoming when we asked him to recite the words to *The Last Chance Saloon* — I can't think why!

As part of our *Doctor Who Classic Infinity* lockdown, writer Stephen Wyatt (*Paradise Towers*, *The Greatest Show in the Galaxy*) answered questions about his contribution to the world of *Doctor Who*. His posts, in particulate, gained a great deal of attention from members.



Stephen gave us a fascinating insight into the John Nathan-Turner production team, his good working relationship with script editor Andrew Cartmel, and the departure from the previous season format of *The Trial of a Time Lord*, to more straightforward stories that were less concerned with the show's mythology. It's reassuring to know that

Stephen is still producing great material, with his recent Big Finish story *Psychic Circus*, a sequel to *The Greatest Show in the Galaxy*, and his latest novel (not *Doctor Who* related) *The World and his Wife*.

It's always such an honour to have these wonderful people join us, and we plan to invite more to *Infinity* over the coming years.

*Doctor Who Infinity* is busy all year round, but when the programme is on the air, things step up a gear. Each time an episode airs it is total bedlam. Even though our members are on post approval and we have a three day spoiler curfew and a special spoiler post for those who wish to discuss the latest episode, the influx of comments we receive is quite staggering. You find there isn't a moment for yourself, as you direct members wanting to have their say to the spoiler post. It all gets pretty hectic because it really is something you have to get right. Fans in other countries can be very unforgiving if even the slightest detail has been revealed. It's not okay, either, to tell them just to switch off their notifications, or avoid Facebook. They still want to access their *Doctor Who* groups to discuss other eras, or the episodes leading up to the one they are waiting to watch, and you have to take that into account.

For me personally, the last four years have been a rollercoaster, as I've watched the group grow from a handful of members, to the tens of thousands we have today, and it has become an important part of my life. I love doing my bit to help devotees enjoy their *Doctor Who* experience and long may it continue.



Many other Facebook groups like ours, which have been going a lot longer, and with more contributors than we could dream of, have found that their activity has declined over the years. We have to recognise that, at

some point, *Doctor Who Infinity* may go the same way. So we intend to make the most out of the fun whilst it lasts.

But who knows? Maybe we will continue debating our love of *Doctor Who*, and sharing memes, posts, and pics, To Infinity and Beyond. ▲

The *Doctor Who Infinity* page can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/InfinityWho/>

## THIS THING OF DARKNESS

### Dale Smith

I'm probably asking the wrong people here, but I'll give it a go anyway. Did you know that in 2017, *Doctor Who* became a woman? I know! Yet — apparently — it happened. And when it happened, The Internet didn't like it. At all.



Somewhere, a room full of *Ghostbusters* fans turned as one and said: "You don't say?"

Talk of the Doctor becoming a woman started almost as soon as John Nathan-Turner got his feet under the producer's desk, but it was always a bit of tabloid-bait rather than a serious proposition. 2017 was different. The revived version of the show was losing some of its shine. I don't mean: WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE MAGIC OF *DOCTOR WHO*? — rather that getting people excited about it was becoming incrementally harder. The #MeToo movement had put casual sexism and the importance of representation

To become a member of our *Doctor Who Infinity* Facebook group, follow this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DoctorWhoInfinity/>

For fans of the Original series, you can check out *Doctor Who Classic Infinity* here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ClassicInfinity/>

into the public consciousness. 2016's *Ghostbusters* reboot demonstrated there was an appetite for female representation in sci-fi and fantasy, while The Internet's reaction showed why society desperately needed it. Even more than that, *Doctor Who* needed an angle. The fiftieth anniversary had come and gone. The show had already played: "the Doctor can be someone else!"; "the Doctor can be a floppy haired child!"; and "the Doctor can be Malcolm Tucker!" cards. Short of convincing someone very, very famous to take a massive pay cut to work 14 hour days in Wales: "the Doctor can be a woman!" was an obvious card to play.



So why did The Internet hate the idea so much?

The obvious response is... obvious: The Internet didn't hate it, and why are you talking like the Daily Mail?

The Internet gets mentioned a lot, like *Doctor Who* Canon: as if it's a real thing that can give you a definitive answer about anything. Quoting The Internet's opinion is like casually



dropping into conversation that books hate Christmas. My online banking account had no opinion on Jodie Whittaker's casting. Even Tesco.com remained suspiciously mute on the subject. No, what people usually mean when they say: "The Internet doesn't like it" is that Twitter, or Reddit, or Quora don't like it.

But we can go further than that. Twitter didn't hate the casting of Jodie Whittaker. We know this because someone called Natalie Meehan checked for us. According to her analytics,\* on the day of the announcement, there were over half a million tweets with the hashtags #Doctor13, #13thDoctor, #DoctorWho, #TimeLord, or #JodieWhittaker. 80% of those were positive. So when you read those articles saying: "The Internet hates female Doctors", what they actually meant was: "About a fifth of people on Twitter forgot what they should do if they had nothing nice to say."

Now, let's be honest: when we speak about The Internet hating the idea of a female Doctor, we're not really talking about the people who didn't respond positively, are we? We're not considering people who were worried this meant that a sentient cabbage would be the next companion. We're on about the people who said: "Am I a sexist if I don't want to see a female Doctor Who? That's like accusing women of being sexist for wanting one of their heroes to not be turned into a man. If it's not sexist for them, it's not sexist for us... I think caving into feminist and SJWs [Social Justice Warriors] is not good, especially when polled, between 60—70% of fans didn't want this."\*\*

We're talking about the MRAs.

I hope with all my heart, that whatever your stage of life, you have reached it without knowing what an MRA is. But I'm afraid if that is the case, I'm going to ruin it for you.

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\*—Meehan Natalie

<https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/react-doctor-who-13/>

\*\*—<https://www.quora.com/Am-I-a-sexist-if-I-dont-want-to-see-a-female-Doctor-Who>

/Am-I-a-sexist-if-I-dont-want-to-see-a-female-Doctor-Who

Mens' Rights Activists are a boys-only club who take a keen interest in Feminism. They read that women globally get paid 63% of what men do; or that women are more likely to be injured in car crashes because seatbelts aren't designed for women's bodies and neither are the crash dummies that test them; or that the tiny minority of Fortune 500 Chief Executive Officers who are women are 45% more likely to be sacked than their male counterparts, regardless of their company's performance. They read these stories and they give whatever the opposite of a mating call is: "Feminism Has Gone Too Far."



The sad irony is that the MRAs are collateral damage in the same war for which they're busy cheerleading. The world has told them it belongs to Men,

but even more specifically, that it belongs to the Alpha Men. Taking their cue from a long debunked theory about wolves, they see life as a war between those Alphas and everyone else. If you let your guard down for one minute, even if you pause in kicking some desperate Beta in the face long enough to tie your shoelace, they will be at your throat. MRAs are the poor children who were so bullied by the world that the only way they can interact with it is to bully right back.



It's hard to feel sorry for an MRA when they're spewing venom into your online face, but we can at least comfort ourselves that they have An Agenda; they probably don't believe what they're saying, and they definitely aren't really *Doctor Who* fans. They can't be, or they'd know what the Doctor said about survival of the fittest.

And yet...

Let's go back to the beginning. Most sources agree that *The Time Machine* was one of Sydney Newman's inspirations for *Doctor*



*Who*. The importance of the novel to *Doctor Who*'s DNA can often be overstated, with the idea being little more than "What if

there was a time machine?", before it started developing in different directions. But *The Time Machine* is part of a wider genre, one that I'd argue *Doctor Who* fits into quite neatly. *The Time Machine* is a prime example of Victorian Science Adventure — a genre that embraces many of the works of Jules Verne, H Rider Haggard and, of course, HG Wells. You might see these tales as pure escapist fiction, or possibly the creaky antecedents of modern sci-fi. But the Victorian Era caught the science bug big time, and these stories are riddled with it. Either their heroes have invented some fantastical machine, or else they look at the world with a scientist's eye, often being fully fledged scientists themselves. This is the era of the Professorial Hero, the academic whose thirst for knowledge takes them into the heart of some escapade or another. Scientific sleuths, adventuring academics, and plucky professors.

And Doctors.

There were other things going on in the Victorian Era that affected the genre, of course. The burden of imperialism cast a long shadow: the belief that the British had gained such a vast Empire because they were the only ones with the rectitude to manage it fairly and justly, and the weight of that obligation to do The Right Thing. It wasn't so much that — when they were most tempted not to — these heroes pulled up their socks



and did it: more that their innate moral compass meant that they always knew exactly what the Right Thing was. When they held those two wires in their hands, they paused, even in the face of their best friend's urging,

because they knew they didn't have that right.

This was the era of the Great Man theory of history, the widely discredited idea that history only happened because exceptional men forced it to. This is the theory that says the best thing you can do with a time machine is kill Hitler, because that will prevent World War Two. But more pertinently, it is also the theory that informs the modern concept of what a hero is: the Campbellian Hero\*\*\* who has his roots in the Great Man theory, and is so ubiquitous that Rosa Parks becomes the Great Man who took a stand when she was too tired to stand. The much more impressive truth — that she was a member of a collective who carefully planned and executed a protest to enrage and engage Moderate America — doesn't matter; the audience wants her to be a lone Great Man, because that's the archetype that appeals to them most.



But it's also an archetype that appeals to boys who see the world divided into Great (Alpha) Men and the rest.

It's easy to argue that lumping the Doctor in with those Victorian bastions of Empire is missing the point; that it ignores the Doctor's compassion and desire to protect the weak. But it's equally as easy to point to any number of occasions where the Doctor's moral compass is assumed to point true as a matter of fact. Uploading River Song into a virtual world is saving her, and there's no need to ask her permission; Susan is starting to grow up, so obviously she'd agree that it is best she's dumped on a post-apocalyptic world to fend for herself; and of course there's nothing wrong with Anglicising a name because it's tricky for you to say, as long as it means you get to call a big, scary alien, Tim. The Doctor is the archetypal White Saviour,

\*\*\*—<https://academyofideas.com/2016/06/joseph-campbell-myth-of-the-heros-journey/>

swooping in somewhere they've never been before and deciding that This Clearly Won't Do. Don't forget, plenty a good Victorian had a heartfelt belief in protecting the weak. Only they believed the best way of doing it was to prevent the women and the coloured chaps from having a say in their own lives. That's



why the real bravura act of showrunner Chris Chibnall's first year wasn't casting Jodie Whittaker, it was sending a character so steeped in the tropes of Empire, to India during the partition.

But that just means the Doctor is a hero, doesn't it? Not an Alpha, for goodness sake. Of course not.

Although... when the Doctor is a man, some of his relationships with other men do look a little Alpha-y, don't they?

Right from the start, when Ian Chesterton burst into the Tardis, the Doctor bristled and snarked, but didn't outright challenge. No, he used his superior intellect to needle and belittle instead, trying to put Ian down in the eyes of the women without openly challenging him. When *The Power of the Daleks* came around, the Doctor did the same to Ben, apparently with the sole intention of bringing Polly closer to him than her distrustful companion. He called Harry Sullivan an "imbecile" for trying to undo a buckle he couldn't have known was linked to a bomb, but let Sarah Jane laugh off throwing around a box she knew full-well contained gelignite. Years later, he met a girl he liked called Rose and wasn't very happy to find out she already had a boyfriend: Mickey was christened The Idiot, and the relationship undermined to the point of break up... leaving the Doctor a free run at convincing Rose she'd be better off with someone like him.

I mean its clear that the Doctor doesn't really feel that comfortable hanging around with men. Adric... no, okay: even the most 'woke' individual would've wanted to take

Adric down a notch or two. But the Doctor has always had a better relationship with women... except in that one regard. There is no hanky-panky in the Tardis. Even after successfully pushing out Rose's boyfriend, even after she started to see him as a potential replacement, the Doctor couldn't quite bring himself to tell her how he felt. Instead, he perivacated on that desolate beach until the moment had passed. Then he moped about it for a while, and reminded himself how annoying women were anyway by picking up a ginger bridezilla, before trying the whole thing again with someone who had simply too much self-respect for his nonsense, and dumped his ass for The Idiot.

There are two distinct camps in *Doctor Who* fandom: those who think the Doctor is beyond sex, and those who think that the Doctor dances with pretty much every companion



who walks through the Tardis doors. But there's a third possible reading: that the Doctor would love to dance, but doesn't have the moves. It's a reading that appeals to a particular section of the audience, and another common trope. Nerd culture is suffused with reward girlfriends: the beautiful girls who never quite see the hero In That Way, until the story makes them realise that those nerds are actually the real Alphas. It's one of the many offshoots of the All Women Love Bastards myth that is the Ur Myth of the MRA boys' club. One of the cousins of the MRAs are the incels — the involuntary celibates — who complain that sex isn't fair because they're too nice for girls to want to have it with them, so some kind of rota clearly needs to be established. They buy into the toxic fantasy that treating women as if they were normal human beings is a surefire trip to the Friend Zone, and what you need is either to undermine them to the point where sex with you would seem like a nice confidence boost, or else get rich so you can buy a fancy car to impress them. And, in a certain kind of light, a machine that can

travel anywhere in time and space sure looks like a pretty fancy car.



The Doctor is demonstrably confused by human emotions: maybe everything else is an attempt to work around it?

That thought, however, is the gateway drug for joining the MRAs. You start by believing the world when it tells you that women are a different breed to men; that the game is: men can't guess — and aren't allowed to ask — what women want. Then you see that, somehow, some men are coping perfectly fine. Again the world pops up to tell you that's because they know the tricks. So you learn the tricks, and either they don't work, or worse, they do. If they do, you have yourself a girlfriend... yet deep down, you believe that's only because you told them how impressed you were by their rejection of traditional beauty standards. You've been denied that bewildering moment where you tell someone you like them, and they tell you they like you back. From now on, you've got to be on your guard, because other people know the tricks too. Even if they didn't, at some point your girlfriend is going to look at you and realise she can do better. Because you're the kind of loser who can't get a girl without resorting to tricks.

The world becomes a bewildering, Darwinian nightmare. It's kill or be killed.

And there is the Doctor, the most effortless of Alphas. Frequently mocking or even openly belligerent to men — particularly military men or those with power. Often mocked or underestimated, before being ultimately respected and admired for both his intelligence and his unswerving moral

compass. Confused by human emotions because he is a man of science and logic: science and logic, of course, being synonymous with masculinity, and always pitted against emotions, the most feminine trait. A man who, if he happens to ask a nearby woman to make him a cup of tea, doesn't have to put up with a lecture about damaging gender stereotypes and the burden of emotional labour before **HAVING TO MAKE HIS OWN CUP OF TEA ANYWAY!**



The Doctor arrives and effortlessly takes charge. He knows who the bad guys are and defeats them without anybody having to lecture him about how things aren't black and white these days. And he treats women almost as badly as that other famous misogynist James Bond: not just patronising and dismissive, or denying women the agency to make their own decisions and mistakes, but sometimes actively gaslighting his companions: leaving Sarah Jane thinking for years that she'd done something wrong and had been kicked out of the Tardis because of it; telling Ace that their visit to Gabriel Chase was nothing more than another random stop off, or forcing her, on numerous occasions, to face her biggest fears without warning or consent. There's a halo effect that comes from being the hero of a story. If the Doctor tells us that the only way to defeat Fenric is to destroy everything Ace trusted, most people are going to agree with him because he's the hero. You have to work pretty hard to





dim that halo if you want people to actually conclude that he's wrong. It's the same effect that means you're unlikely to scream: "Oh my God! He WOULD make a good Dalek!" when Davros tries to convince the Doctor they're two peas in a pod. There will always be some people who will assume everything the hero does is right, particularly if the things they're doing happen to chime with the things they believe about themselves.

I know what you're going to say. I've ignored everything the Doctor has ever done that doesn't fit my argument, from the Second Doctor's relationship with Jamie McCrimmon to the very fact that she is now a woman who still demonstrates her bewilderment at emotions. Isn't that all any of us do when watching *Doctor Who*? The character has had nearly sixty years of nuance and development, none of it under the guidance of a single figure pushing their idea of just Who Doctor Who might be. We all ignore certain aspects of the Doctor: if you're not willing to concede any of the points I've raised here, then at the very least you should be able to agree that we have collectively ignored, for decades, that William Hartnell was playing the (at least) ninth incarnation of the Doctor, a single-hearted scientist exiled from his home planet.



Yes, The kind of person who can watch the Doctor's speech about the futility of war in *The Zygon Inversion* and think he's tipping a wink that says: "Unless you're talking about a gender war: count me in for that!" is probably someone

who looks at a picture of a Rubin's vase and insists it's two faces.

When somebody says it's political correctness gone mad that the Doctor is now a woman, I can definitely appreciate the desire to put as much distance between us and them as possible, metaphorically and physically. But responding that: "they aren't

a real fan anyway" is like hearing someone launch into a tirade about Polish builders choking the NHS, and bringing down wages, and responding that they haven't had a bathroom fitted recently. It's not completely irrelevant, but it is definitely missing the point. And it's an attempt to shut down the conversation without having to get into the messy business of refuting it. In the world of politics, there's been a lot of talk about accepting what people say in good faith, and moving on from there. When the people who hate Jodie Whittaker as the Doctor on principle, attempt to justify themselves, they always claim that it's the writers pushing their agenda onto *Doctor Who*, that the writers are making it Political. Okay, they're maintaining that sticking to any old white bloke with an Equity card isn't a de facto political act. But they're also telling us there's a version of *Doctor Who* that they know, (and love) and inclusion and diversity isn't a part of it.

Those people are *Doctor Who* fans.

And that's a scary thing to admit, because if they are, and we are, then where does that leave us?

I know this person. I really like them. I think I know what they'd say:



"There are some corners of fandom which have bred the most terrible things. Things which act against everything we believe in. They must be fought." ▲

# IRRATIONALITY OF THE CYBERMEN

By Jez Strickley

(From an idea by Alan Stevens)

*"We were discussing spare part surgery and conceived the idea of someone with so many mechanical replacements that he didn't know whether he was a human or a machine."*

Doctor Christopher Magnus  
Howard 'Kit' Pedler

Have you ever felt off-base? That there's something illogical about your actions? Risk-taking behaviour is an example. Every sensible bone in your body is telling you that what you're doing simply doesn't stack up. But you go ahead regardless, as though there's something right, something rational, about your irrational act. Self-deception is another. You persuade yourself that an otherwise unreasonable action is actually reasonable and simply carry on with it. Unrequited love fits the bill as well.

Irrationality mangles reason and murders common sense. Like a distorting mirror, it blurs and befuddles reality, the faulty and the foolish substituted for the linear and the logical.

I'd like to suggest that irrationality is central to the development of the classic era Cybermen. Yes, I readily admit that they are framed as logic-driven and largely uniform cyborgs, free of the intellect-curtailing emotions associated with creatures of flesh and blood. But I think this representation is a mistake, although an understandable one. Unlike the Borg, the cybernetic villains of the later *Star Trek* series, the Cybermen

are presented, superficially at least, as more or less fully robotic. They have little or no organic feature to speak of. True, they do sport human hands in *The Tenth Planet*, and the semblance of a jaw-like mechanism in *Earthshock*, but for the most part there is only metal and plastic on show, excepting the occasional organic discharge (see *The Five Doctors*). Cyber-conversion with its flesh-mutilating mechanics is equally uncommon in the series, with just a few stories detailing this body horror. Is it surprising, then, that these cyborgs are depicted as machine life, as opposed to a futuristic melding of organic and inorganic parts that are more naturally prone to irrational behaviour? As I said, it's an understandable error.

But cyborgs they are, and it's this merging of distinct pieces which, rather than creating a harmonious synthesis, instead leads to a sort of logico-emotional schizophrenia. The flesh aspect resists its rational mechanical framing, plunging Mondas' last children into a splintered and contorted psychology. The irrationality of the Cybermen, if you will.

The problem exists from the very beginning. In their debut adventure, the Cybermen are in a desperate bid for survival, intent on draining the Earth of its energy and abducting its human population for Cyber-conversion. But all is not plastic and metal where Mondas' cybernised population is concerned. The Cybermen are credited with names: Krail, Talon and Shav. This nomenclature denotes a differentiation which is more than just practical, since numerical designations would surely suffice. Are these distinctive monikers, hangovers, then, from their pre-Cyber-conversion days? Or something else? An echo of a deeper psychological craving, perhaps? A craving which points to an internal conflict betwixt natural and synthetic selves; a sort of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* scenario, where the



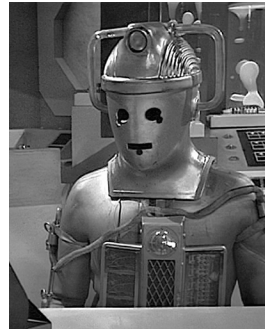
former is the mechanical façade of control and constraint, the latter a terrifying fury of feelings; the two forced together in a self-defeating synthesis.

In the original series, the Cybermen's various assaults on the Earth, from *The Tenth Planet* through to *Silver Nemesis*, reflect a power-seeking mentality. This condition establishes a dynamic between states of being: desire versus fulfilment; want versus satisfaction. Power-seeking is part of a finely balanced mental equilibrium, not dissimilar to a node in an ecosystem food web. Like the desire for revenge, however, it has absolutely no place in the logical processes of an intelligence freed from the trappings of emotion. Nevertheless, the Cybermen's insistence on destruction, largely directed at the human race, is surely a prime example of the drive for power and vengeance. The contradiction between rational and irrational action is clear. Is it any wonder that the Cybermen suffer from a personality disorder?



It is a derangement which sees the Cybermen locked into a mechanical repetition of their past actions — and failures. Their first reappearance witnesses the survivors of the now-destroyed Mondas attempting to eliminate humanity by way of the moon-based Gravitron device and its weather-controlling powers. There is a deterministic shape to this objective, as though the Cybermen are re-enacting their earlier efforts at the South Pole Space Tracking Station, albeit this time with mind-controlled humans to assist them (a strategy they will also reuse time and again). But there's a crookedness to this scheme, as well. The controlled humans aren't needed to operate the Gravitron, the Cybermen are perfectly capable of managing the device for themselves — but at the tracking station

years earlier, these human puppets would have proven invaluable tools, able to enter the base's "radiation room" with impunity; something the Cybermen were unable to do. It's as though there's an underlying obsessive-compulsive nature surfacing here, as the Cybermen go through the motions of their first gambit, but with the addition of certain changes to make it successful. Only they're decades late, and these adjustments aren't going to win it for them on the barren lunar surface. Still, somehow, they find these revisions all important; holding a kind of psychological resonance that makes their re-enacting absolutely vital. Yet, in failing to address the needs of their new setting, complete with a freshly-regenerated Doctor, there's an evident lack of imagination on their part, revealing their machine aspect. By barrelling ahead with tactics that are a revised version of those used in *The Tenth Planet*, but now applied to a *Moonbase* setting, their obsessive compulsive (read emotional) side is demonstrated. Much the same can be said of the events in *The Wheel in Space*, where the Cybermen once more endeavour to attack the Earth through a remote location with a small, isolated group of multinational humans, and are once again defeated.



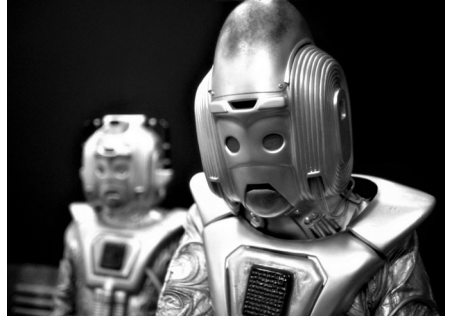
The recurrence of certain tropes in the Cybermen stories — a bleak and sterile situation, conquest by stealth, a race (namely, the Cybermen themselves) on the brink of extinction — is patent. Again and again these codes are fed into the Cybermen's narrative software, creating a still larger, all-embracing loop, which folds back on itself, as if the remnants of Mondas are caught up in some kind of cybernetic Sisyphean labour. This is where their Jekyll and Hyde conflict is at its most stark. The Cybermen appear little more than organo-clockwork puppets, endlessly acting out the very same moves, regardless of scenario.

Intriguingly, there is an echo here within the form of cybernetics. Broadly speaking, this is the science of communication processes in organisms and machines, which includes how feedback within a given system alters both the system and its environment. In the case of the Cybermen, maybe it's this feedback procedure which has come to bind them into an ever tighter logico-emotional knot from which there is simply no escape. It would indeed be ironic if the very science which was intended to lift them beyond the limits of the flesh was in point of fact their gaoler.



There is, it should be said, a deviation of sorts in *The Tomb of the Cybermen*, where the locational and human elements follow the same pattern, but it is the Cybermen who step out of their usual active role and become, initially at least, passive agents. However, there is still the repetition of needless complexity. The Cybermen have entombed themselves, but there appears to be no specific purpose behind their actions, bar energy saving. The human explorers are killed by accident, and despite the Cyberman Controller's proclamations that the tomb was a trap, this doesn't fit the facts. Any of the human explorers could have died in the process of unsealing the tomb, which dismisses the notion that it is designed to lure and then trap those who are physically and intellectually suited to Cyber-conversion. It also begs the question of how a purely logical race would wager its survival on indefinite entombment, and their release from said entombment on the unthinking curiosity of sufficiently intelligent explorers! It's almost as if the Cybermen were circuitously seeking their own demise, but most importantly, the ability to conceptualise that sort of reckless

behaviour must stem from an intellect which holds as much emotional content, however suppressed that content may be, as it does rational.



The Cybermen's treatment of Earth is a further example of their logical and emotional sides colliding. In both *Earthshock* and *Attack of the Cybermen* their core impulse is destructive, the former involving the elimination of a galactic conference aligned against them, the latter to destroy the Earth and prevent it causing the death of Mondas. Yet, logically, it's obvious that even if they had succeeded, crashing Halley's Comet into the Earth would never have been enough to atomise it, so Mondas would still have been destroyed by the energy exchange, leaving the Cybermen in another 'no-win' scenario.

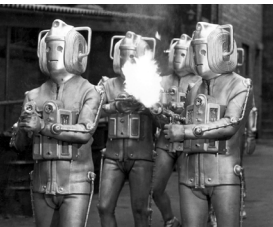
To go in search of rational purpose here misses the point. There is no logic behind these actions because they derive from an emotional bias. The desire to destroy for the sake of it comes from a proclivity for wanton violence which has little basis in rational thought. Rather, it's the product of feelings. In the Cybermen's case, we may presume the suppression of that passion only makes their fury greater; a fury which demands the destruction of whole worlds. Their centuries-long pursuit of Voga in *Revenge of the Cybermen* is a like case: purely harmful and with little genuine objective beyond raw vengeance.





Could it be that the destruction of Mondas lies at the dark heart of these dreadful deeds? An emotional loss on a planetary scale which locks the Cybermen into a bitter cycle of revenge? There is certainly a twisted logic to it. The repetition which appears throughout many of the Second Doctor's encounters, for instance, and which continues in fits and starts in later adventures, points to as much.

The marked exception is *The Invasion*, in which, although it features a secret incursion and an insecure alliance with a human traitor, the Cybermen's plans are rational and concise. Accordingly, this adventure takes place a number of years prior to *The Tenth Planet* and so predates the onset of their deep-seated trauma.



But, I would argue that there is more to it. I think that insofar as the loss of Mondas may be presented as the trigger for the Cybermen's later actions, it is a reactive sensation which comes

out of the core emotion fuelling their survival instinct: sadism.

To perpetuate themselves, the Cybermen must convert other living beings into Cybermen, violating and mutilating the bodies of their victims in the most awful fashion. During the original series of *Doctor Who*, Cyber-conversion is rarely seen. In *Attack of the Cybermen* we catch terrible glimpses of the process, most notably in the tragic figure of Lytton, whose partial conversion is the most graphic. Here we see that it is a practice performed whilst the subject is conscious – one cannot even begin to imagine the degree of mental and physical agony it entails.

In the face of such evidence, it's difficult to deny the view that a species that survives by inflicting the most severe pain on other beings is intrinsically sadistic. Inducing emotional distress in the Doctor is yet another example. The Cyber Leader's manipulation of the Time Lord's sensibilities by threatening his

friends (see *Revenge of the Cybermen*, *Earthshock*, *Attack of the Cybermen* and *Silver Nemesis*), not to mention the desire to make the Doctor "suffer for our past defeats" (see *Earthshock*), only goes to emphasise how these creatures relish the grief of others. Their hand-crushing torture of Lytton is surely the most disturbing instance. The earlier *Moonbase* stratagem comes into play here, too. The Cybermen could have simply punctured the dome, suffocating the crew and taken control of the Gravitron themselves. Instead, they opt to terrorise the humans, killing and enslaving them one at a time, then manipulating their zombified victims to destroy the surface of the Earth whilst forcing the rest of the humans into the role of impotent witnesses. The Cybermen's treatment of the humans manning the *The Wheel in Space* is equally elaborate, murderous and controlling. Who else but sadists could author such vicious plans?



It is clearly not the machine aspect within the Cybermen, which pilots their obscene actions, but rather the organic component. This is the element which demands voice and expresses itself through the most senseless and repetitive of schemes. Reliving the loss of Mondas through an endless loop of cypocat failures, unleashing pent-up psychological frustrations through a brutality framed as universal improvement, the Cybermen are anything but the race of emotionless pseudo-robots which has come to define them. Rather they are schizoid cyborgs, irrationality posing as reason, teetering on the brink of madness as their emotional content rages against its cybernetic caging: the very process which Mondas' finest clinicians imagined would stave off extinction and become the ultimate form of life, but whose purpose, and reason to be, evaporated with their home planet. ▲



FLETCH