

Gallifrey, the long way round

Issue 3 – Winter 2018/19



SPECIAL ISSUE

PRIMEVAL

and

PRIMEVAL:

NEW WORLD

Also in this issue:

New Fanfic

Reviews

Jumanji

Blake's 7

Doctor Who

...and much, much more!

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Gallifrey, The Long Way Round

Issue #3—Autumn/Winter 2018/19

Editor-In-Chief: Nick Mays
Editor: Lynda Pinfold
Editor: Annie Worrall
Consultant: Alex Pinfold

Design: Nick & Brandon Mays

Online Publisher: Long Way Round Publishing

Website: www.gallifreythelongwayround.co.uk

Editorial & Advertising Queries:
LongWayRoundPublishing@gmail.com

Contributors This Issue:

Toby Hadoke, Colin Davies, Veerle Kik, Fiona Moore, Nick Mays, Alex Pinfold, Lynda Pinfold, Annie Worrall, Andrew Skilleter, Westley James Smith, Sheena Mays.

Front Cover Artwork:

Sara Canning as Dylan Weir from *Primeval New World*
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If you are interested in contributing to this Fanzine, please contact us on the email address below.

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Email:

LongWayRoundPublishing@gmail.com



FEATURES:

MAIN FEATURE

4: PRIMEVAL

23: PRIMEVAL: PTEROSAURI! - Fanfic

26: PRIMEVAL: CHIPS AND WINE—Fanfic

BLAKES 7

28: JACQUELINE PEARCE OBITUARY— By Toby Hadoke

30: OH, BABY! - by Annie Worrall

32: POWER BECAME MY LOVER- Fanfic by Annie Worrall

36: CYGNUS ALPHA REPORT—By Annie Worrall

DOCTOR WHO

40: DOCTOR WHO—YEAR THREE

45: THE WOMEN WHO LIVED—Interview by Nick Mays

53: THREE'S A CROWD—Fanfic by Mark Leney

58: UP TO SCRATCH—Tom Baker talks about his new novel *Scratchman*

62: DOCTOR WHO—SEASON 11 REVIEW—by Annie Worrall

SUPER HEROES

70: VEERING OFF: SUPER UNDIES by Veerle Kik

FILMS

75: JUMANJI NEEDS YOU!

80: ZATHURA—A Space Adventure - by Colin Davies

REGULARS

81: OUT OF THE VORTEX—News , Reviews & Previews

84: THE BACK OF BEYOND

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EDITORIAL By Nick Mays, Editor-in-Chief



Just over fifty years ago on Christmas Eve 1968, astronaut William Anders took the now world famous, iconic photograph 'Earthrise' from the window of Apollo 8 as it orbited the Moon. This Apollo mission was a the latest of NASA's programme, inspired by President John F Kennedy, to land Men on the Moon before the end of the 1960s. Just 7 months and three more lunar missions later, on July 20th 1969, Apollo 11 touched down on the Moon and Neil Armstrong became the first human being to walk on another planet. (well... as far as we know, anyway—think Roswell and crashed flying saucers and all that)...

The fact is though, as a six year-old back then, I was fascinated by the lunar missions. Along with my family, I'd be glued to the TV watching the flickering black and white images from hundreds of thousands of miles away, marvelling at the technology involved (the lunar module had an on-board computer which possessed less computing power than a modern digital watch has) and the sheer bravery of the Astronauts. It really seemed as though the future was within grasp—and which little boy (or girl) didn't want to be an Astronaut?

But in sci-fi terms this was already history. We'd already landed on the Moon and Mars, established bases, sent great gleaming starships into the furthest reaches of our galaxy - to Infinity and Beyond you might say. *The films to see in 1968 were 2001, A Space Odyssey ("Just what do you think you're doing, Dave?") and Planet of the Apes ("Damn you all to hell!")*, while on TV we had *Doctor Who* and, later on, *Star Trek*.

But art imitates life and vice-versa, so to many, space travel became somewhat passé; a theme explored over the next decade in films such as *Capricorn One (1978)* with a faked Mars landing (which grew out and indeed fed into, conspiracy theories that the Moon landings never took place at all and were faked in a TV studio) and *Alien (1979)* in which the Nostromo is a lumbering, grungey fossil fuel transporter ship with an equally grungey crew who care more about their pay bonuses than the wonders of space exploration (let alone an alien xenomorph running amok).

For me, though and millions more of us, space will *always* capture the imagination. The latest Mars lander may 'only' be a remote controlled robot, but that's still brilliant. I have no doubt we'll be out there one day. In the meantime, we have the worlds of sci-fi and fantasy created by those same imaginations. Enjoy Issue #3!

Nick & Co



“Big shiny holes in the Universe that spit out dinosaurs”

Or “Where is the Past?” - a *Primeval* retrospective

Primeval is famously the ITV show with all the dinosaurs! Yet, even from the first season, the series is so much more than the misadventures of a team chasing down pre-historic monsters. This essay is not an episode guide, but will look back over the six seasons of *Primeval* as an appreciation of a modern day classic science fiction experience. The show in many ways was as much about its ideas as complex plotting, and the story arcs were optional for casual viewers who could concentrate upon the concepts or visuals of the show without feeling as though they were missing something essential.

Dinosaurs are very much at the centre of the action in the first episode, a fast-paced hunt for unknown creatures as the main characters pursue reports of wild animals and discover the principle fantasy elements, and each other, for the first time. The speed with which the show boldly introduces itself to a new audience is reminiscent of *Rose*, the first episode of the revived *Doctor Who* series. But, just as the Daleks are not ever-present adversaries in that show, whatever public perception might believe, dinosaurs are used in a sparing and economical way after the pilot here. As we shall see, numerous narrative avenues are explored. But first, a basic introduction to *Primeval*.

Impossible Pictures evolved *Primeval* from its popular *Walking With Dinosaurs* documentary series, a show that recreated the distant past by means of new technologies, and its various sequels. Creators Adrian Hodges and Tim Haines had a good track record from these earlier shows and their adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle’s classic novel *The Lost World*, an exciting and effective adventure drama that perfectly captured the spirit of the late Victorian and early Edwardian exploration literary genre while still visually appearing very modern. Hodges had recently worked with Billie Piper in bringing the *Sally Lockhart* Victorian fantasy adventures of Philip Pullman, *The Ruby in the Smoke* and *The Shadow in the North*, to life, and would also create new television versions of Terry Nation’s *Survivors* and Alexandre Dumas’ *Musketeers* tales along with a noteworthy adaptation of *Labyrinth* by Kate Mosse. The original cast of *Primeval* included Ben Miller (Johnny English, *Death in Paradise*), Douglas Henshall (*Shetland*, *South Riding*, *Collision*), Juliet Aubrey, James Murray, Lucy Brown, Andrew-Lee Potts, and former *S Club* band member Hannah Spearritt. Starting in 2007, *Primeval* belonged to a generation of good quality British fantasy drama series that included *Doctor Who*, *Robin Hood*, *Merlin* and *Torchwood* amongst many others.

The central fantasy concept of *Primeval* is not the dinosaurs or other creatures that appear in our time but the means by which they arrive, and by which our protagonists and antagonists travel the other way to fantastic places in the past and future. Portals between the present day and other times begin to appear, and the idea is developed to a point where we discover that all of time is linked by a web of connecting portals in a pattern that can be learned and predicted. These are called Anomalies and, while marketing and fandom have added this definite article as a name for the portals, within the true context of the story the word anomaly is initially used by the characters as a scientific term to describe the unknown phenomena. Interesting is that, while other shows portray time travel as possible by use of technology – the Tardis for example dematerialises itself and its occupants and transports itself to another time by means of some other dimension disconnected from reality altogether, characters in *Primeval* are able to pass into and through a naturally occurring event and step into another time, and then step back again. *Primeval* thus presents the so-called fourth dimension of time as a very physical extra direction that bodies, animate and inanimate, can move in, and in few other places are the past, present and future portrayed as co-existing and concurrent in this way, as close and reachable under the right conditions as a mile this way or two miles the other. Thus, the title of the essay “where is the past” since, in the *Primeval* universe, this is a very valid and literal question.



The Primeval Cast for Seasons 4/5

Apart from this central premise, however, much of the show is presented as ‘pure science fiction’ in terms either of real or imagined fields of study. The term pure-SF generally refers to ideas derived in the most part from genuine scientific theories or discoveries, usually then extrapolated into

fantasy ideas by taking the principles to conclusions or into the territory of hypothetical events based upon the theory. The study of pre-historic life and conditions by means of studying the surface of the planet, and the fossil records therein, is such a genuine branch of science. Having established the fictional reality of time portals, or Anomalies, within this world, the show then has its characters discuss their nature and properties, experimenting with how they can be detected, monitored, predicted, used to travel through time and, ultimately, harnessed for the energy that sustains them.

It is this atmosphere of science fiction in a very old fashioned, mid-twentieth century sense of fictional endeavour, itself inspired by the late-nineteenth century writings of authors such as H.G. Wells or Conan-Doyle, that marks this show out as different. If there was a wish on the part of its creators that *Primeval* should be different from *Doctor Who*, a rival on the opposite channel at the time, then it is in the discovery of scientific ideas over the spectacle of magical fantasy amongst its younger audience that such a wish might have been manifested. This may not be a truly reliable rule, with real science inspiring writers on *Doctor Who* and other overtly fantastical shows, but it is true that, within the *Primeval* world, all of the story elements are natural phenomena or within the scientific understanding of the characters, with nothing explained away as mythical or a superpower. And, of course, as within any creative field, cultural influence flows both ways no matter how much anyone involved wishes to remain entirely original. There are clear aspects of *Doctor Who* in *Primeval*, and later episodes of *Doctor Who* that are equally clearly inspired by the ingenuity and energy of *Primeval*. This essay will touch on some of these elements, but not in exhaustive detail.



Abby and Jenny

Before moving on, there are two points of interest related to the above observations that need to be mentioned. The first is the *Primeval* view of time, not as a scientific idea but as a narrative one. Most time travel drama on screen sees the characters travel within the limits of human history on the Earth or, if going further backwards or forwards in time, explore space as well as time and usually extra-terrestrial life to populate it. The obvious reasons for this are the need to encounter other characters for the series regulars to interact with, the budgetary considerations of allowing designers to create settings within their experience and available references, and the demands upon the audience if there are no familiar human or unfamiliar futuristic or alien cultures to relate to. *Primeval* manages to avoid all of these constraints, visiting settings in the distant past and future while taking characters from the 'present day' of the show to populate them. The singular atmosphere of authenticity this creates is a perfect example of the 'less is more' principle in screenwriting. Again, it consequently also recreates the more theatre-derived radio and television fantasy of the 1950s and 60s even if this was not the actual intention. Secondly, most fans of classic-era *Doctor Who* will immediately notice similarities in *Primeval* with the season eleven story *Invasion of the Dinosaurs*, in which scientists in the present-day use technology to bring dinosaurs (and one or two people) from the past to the present before letting them

return home again. The process seen in the *Doctor Who* episodes might be artificial, operated by the scientists intentionally rather than a natural event, but the vision of UNIT trying to track and trace the creatures, while the Doctor designs gadgets to trace and combat the source of the problem, will give most fans of both series the occasional moment of *déjà vu*.

As already mentioned, the series' first episode launches the show into *Jurassic Park* inspired territory straight away with a dinosaur on the loose presenting a challenge to a contemporary setting, albeit with our modern-day audience identification protagonists tracking the creature through the Forest of Dean rather than a tropical island. The creative decision to use a dinosaur would have been considered carefully, balancing the risk of labelling the show against the benefit of giving casual viewers an easier way into the show than trying to grasp the more mind-bending time travel ideas. In later years, *Doctor Who* showrunner Steven Moffat faced criticism for placing his science fiction concepts at centre-stage over the usual thrills and spills of his predecessor, Russell T Davies, and alienating portions of the audience. The balance that *Primeval* achieves in the first season is maintained throughout each successive season, even almost without change into the *New World* series (of which more later).



A tense moment for Nick Cutter

Other season one episodes show the viewers underwater and flying dinosaurs, presenting three very different scenarios from a single basic premise. The latter is an especially effective episode, evoking Alfred Hitchcock classic *The Birds*, that uses a golf club hotel to create a traditional 'base under siege' environment. It also puts Professor Nick Cutter and government public liaison officer Claudia Brown, attached to the project, into a Doctor and companion style pairing in which Claudia has a Sarah Jane Smith moment, q.v. The *Brain of Morbius*, in which temporary blindness heightens the tension and gives the character a 'big reveal' moment of the main threat that the audience has seen already. In a way, this technique, of the viewer sitting on the edge of their seat waiting for a character's grasp of the situation to catch up with their own, also evokes the storytelling approach of Hitchcock. There's also a subtly risqué moment part way through the episode, where a red flag is required to lure a creature towards a waiting tranquiliser rifle, where Cutter persuades Claudia that she must take off her blouse for the purpose, before Stephen, one of Cutter's university colleagues and a fellow team member, remembers his own red vest and saves her dignity.

However, the other three episodes of the first season take a different path. One of the best features a section of the London Underground infested with a colony of giant, and visually brilliant on screen, scorpion-like spiders that swarm and scuttle realistically around rooms and tunnels, hide in shadows, drop from the ceilings, and climb up the sides of tube trains. But in this literally dark and terrifying horror homage, there is a second threat of a gigantic pre-historic centipede that really can kill and is almost responsible for the first main character demise. Another story sees a flock of Dodos emerge from an anomaly but, even here when the plot might have been left limp by the creatures not having any intrinsic threat level, we discover that one of the birds is infected with a horrific, burrowing mind parasite that takes over and transforms its victims mentally and physically.

The season finale involves imaginary creatures from the future, evolutionary mutations with superhuman abilities travel back into their past and our present and become the series' most dangerous threat from here on. What all of these three episodes have in common is their divergence from the pure science fiction objectives of the show in recreating plausible

threats from real science such as the study of fossils. The giant insects likely are based upon this but, whereas the threat of a dinosaur is going to be the size of its teeth, the actual capabilities of the spiders and the centipede are definitely imagined. The parasite on the other hand is absolutely the kind of thing that you might find in Doctor Who, and the 'future predators' could be from any of a hundred or more time or space travel themed horror films. So, a point to note here is that Primeval is very much a comparable show that Doctor Who fans might enjoy conceptually, in the ideas within individual stories, and in the way that both shows employ homage and humour. More on all of these points later.



Danger! Dodos!

An important theme running through the first season, and one that helps to establish the characters' identities, is one of loyalty. Nick Cutter is arguably the lead character in the first couple of years of the show, and thus his loyalties are the most complex. At this stage, Helen Cutter, having disappeared at a point before the main narrative commences, but shown in a pre-titles sequence, is an ambiguous figure that is not obviously either a protagonist or an antagonist. Having been lost in the anomalies before finding her way back, Helen has been affected by her experiences. But she offers information and at times of crisis saves other characters. She simply puts her own survival first and the show, told from the viewpoint of its protagonists and therefore the view of the Home Office and the anomaly research programme of which all the main characters are a part, therefore portrays her as an unknown and potentially rogue element. The question for the viewers to ask at this point is whether, if the show were about Helen and her adventures, would we view the secret organisation that abducts and then interrogates her in a less altruistic light?

Nick, as her husband, does see her predicament in this way, and thus his loyalties are divided between his family, the agency he works for and upon whom he relies for his research into the anomalies, scientific advancement and discovery when the Home Office has more immediate concerns in mind, and his team. His colleague Stephen appears to be a loyal and heroic figure, but the revelation that he concealed an affair with Helen Cutter while he was a student and, while suffering the effects of poison from a creature attack, his interest in betraying his girlfriend romantically with teammate Abby both point to a lack of loyalty. Connor Temple, still technically a student of Nick though this story element is largely forgotten even within season one, has his loyalty questioned when he is indiscrete when discussing his work with friends. However, this is shown to be a lapse and Connor ultimately becomes the only regular to appear in every series, including *New World*, as a rock upon which the protection of the Earth rests. Claudia's role in the series is a singular one, as will be covered in a moment but, at least in the first series, we see a character with confused loyalty. In one scene, as Cutter tries to enlist her support against head of department James Lester, she asks him not to make her choose a side, and Lucy Brown plays a character trying be loyal to two parties not entirely in harmony and hold the team together exceptionally well. Of course, the show from season two onwards would present the actress with all new challenges.

The final act of the first season was ahead of the game in presenting a clever narrative twist that used time as a plot mechanism rather than just a plot device. Early in the season, Cutter discovers a ruined camp in the distant past that, due to the belongings they find, is assumed to have been set up by his wife Helen during her absence from the present day. The sixth episode of the season, however, sees Nick take Helen to the past and set up camp, realising almost too late that the items they are using are those they discovered and that a body found buried on the first occasion is one of their own team. In travelling back to a point beyond that where they originally emerged, their own camp being victim of the attack that destroys it, Cutter has created their own past in a concept later described in *Doctor Who* as a Bootstrap Paradox. Furthermore, in taking the babies of a pair of mating 'future predators' on the trip in a failed attempt to return them via the anomalies to their own

time, Nick and Helen Cutter cause damage to their own timeline. A creative choice here that will please some fans and aggravate others is the decision never to explain or discover exactly what that change was or how it was made. This show, despite many similarities in tone and style, does not have a character with omniscience that verges on a superpower who can reel off explanations to their assistant in time for tea. How could anyone with a background only in established science and known history, who has only just discovered the existence of time travel, possibly unravel a time conundrum? It is again to the series credit that Cutter is smart enough to work out that something has gone wrong with time due to interference but not so smart in understanding things that character has no knowledge of that his credibility would be undermined.



Jess in pensive pose

There are some advantages to altering the narrative timeline within the show, but there are risks too. The end of season one and the first episode of season two reveal that Cutter has returned to a changed world, one in which Claudia Brown never existed but has been replaced by an identical character with a different name and backstory but effectively the same person. *Doctor Who* fans only need to think of the alternate version of Liz Shaw in the parallel universe continuity of the 1970 serial *Inferno* to get an idea of this. The basic format of Cutter and his team for a department of the

Home Office has been replaced by a secret organisation called the Anomaly Research Centre, a para-military organisation with its own private army and secret headquarters very reminiscent of UNIT in, again, the 1970s era of *Doctor Who*, with some of the *Primeval* regular characters changing slightly to fulfil the kind of roles that such a set-up requires. Moving the goalposts so dramatically, and using an irrevocably changed timeline to justify it within the story being told, does create opportunities to throw new challenges at the characters, and by extension the actors playing them, as they try to readjust. It also allows the show to change anything that its creative team wanted to explore based on earlier episodes without going through a slow introduction over the course of a season. The risk of course lies mainly with the possibility that casual viewers who are not time travel aficionados will not have any idea what has just happened or understand that narrative justification for the choice. To a fantasy fan, the rationale of trying radical concepts with an imaginary world is the old question of why explorers climb mountains. Because the challenge is there, and the excitement of exploring it is an end in itself. One fascinating aspect of the *Primeval* approach to the alternate timeline concept is this: many shows, *Doctor Who* in the aforementioned *Inferno* and again with the 2006 story *Rise of the Cybermen/Age of Steel*, visit an alternate reality with characters similar to those we know, and played by the same actors, but who have had different experiences and relationships. But in *Primeval*, when Nick Cutter finds himself in the alternate version of time he becomes trapped there. He never gets back and, therefore, neither do the viewers. We too are doomed never to see Claudia Brown again, or the 'original' versions of the characters we came to know in season one. Even when Douglas Henshall moves on to other work and we no longer have Cutter, the storyline is a continuation of the one that begins here, in the final couple of minutes of the last episode of season one. That is courageous creativity!

We mentioned in the previous paragraph how *Primeval* changed its format from one about a team of lecturers (Cutter and Stephen), a student (Connor) and a zoo keeper (Abby) making an informal team that works with the grudging support of a regular Home Office department into one about a top secret military organisation where these characters are specialists but, effectively, also government agents. This is a massive tonal shift, carried off

brilliantly by a cast who keep their characters so true that the viewer could easily forget or fail to notice the change in the characters' roles and agendas. What does need to be remembered though is that *Primeval* was complying with a trend of science fiction in that era, which would have made the new surrounding easier for casual genre fans – i.e. not the fans who disassemble every scene online while the credits are still rolling – to accept almost sub-consciously. *Doctor Who* introduced *Torchwood* initially in episodes during the 2006 season and then a year later as a full spin-off. Marvel was working on *Iron Man* at the same time, which would introduce another very similar set-up with SHIELD and its agents. Comparisons between the ARC and *Torchwood* are the easiest of the two, with the Anomaly Research Centre itself appearing very similar to *Torchwood One*, destroyed in *The Battle of Canary Warf*, and James Lester being a similar character to Yvonne Hartman. Even when the action switches to *Torchwood Three* in Cardiff, aka *The Hub*, the similarity in narrative terms is still very strong, especially in the kind of threats faced by both teams and obvious comparisons between the Anomalies and the Rift as the source of those dangers. Jack Harkness tackles the office and field roles of the head of the organisation, whereas *Primeval* splits this between Lester and Cutter, but once you get onto Gwen/Jenny (the Claudia twin) as the dominant female lead, Tosh/Abby as the underrated team expert, Owen/Stephen as the hard-edged male second lead, Ianto/Connor as the essential team member everyone disregards and comic foil for Jack and Cutter respectively, you start to see a clear template. That is not to say there is anything wrong with this being the case, and many cult classic shows of the past have shared similarly common set-ups, but it is interesting to see how these two shows developed comparable ideas in parallel.

Another change from the first season, facilitated by the alternate timeline and resultant change in the characters' backstories even to the point of removing specific scenes from their lives, is the rapport established between Andrew-Lee Potts as Connor and Hannah Spearritt as Abby. Having developed a close relationship off-screen, the two are given a lot more opportunity to play with this on-screen too. With the spikey side to their dynamic lessened, the alternate Abby/Connor pairing is almost a comedy double-act from the first episode of season two. They exchange banter, and glances that say a hundred words, and engage in scenes clearly

written to allow the actors to imbue them with a sketch comedy quality according to the director's discretion. This is another element that will remain until the last season with both characters in the show, especially as the pairing is overtly developed as a romantic one (the actors were an item off-screen too) in later seasons, ultimately with the implication that they are still together when only Connor appears from the original regular cast in the *New World* season.



Connor and Abby

Due to this fanzine having a great many fans of *Doctor Who* as a favourite show amongst its readers, one element that this essay will be keeping a tally of is the number of times that *Primeval* adopts the age-old 'base under siege' format for individual stories. The basic premise of a team combating something unknown in many ways, and which must stay unknown from the general public despite the threats usually involving familiar urban settings, lends itself especially well to the style. Having given viewers the otherwise evacuated golf club hotel in the first season, the second opens with a wonderful story set in a shopping centre out of hours. When the night security staff are attacked by roaming dinosaurs, the show again kicking off with the familiar and iconic prehistoric lizards previously immortalised in the collective public consciousness by Ray Harryhausen and Steven Spielberg, the ARC team are sent in to investigate. The shopping centre fulfils the base under siege function to perfection, with the show able to use its wide-open spaces, arcades, escalators, lifts, car park, department stores, bowling alley, security office and locker rooms to create an environment so detailed that this episode's atmospheric claustrophobia and verisimilitude sell themselves absolutely. Two final comments to be made about the new season

opener involve the way that it ties in and develops the established continuity. Radio wave emissions are added to magnetism as known properties of the anomalies, discovered by Cutter and Connor when radios in a store are affected by the anomaly in the shopping centre. Secondly, when a dinosaur eventually dies by decapitation when the anomaly closes, we have further confirmation of time being a literal place in this universe. You step directly from one time to another, with the anomaly as a door, just as you would be partly in one room and partly in another while stepping through the door of a building.

The fifth episode of the second series expands upon this yet further but, in the process of teaching the characters and viewers something new about the anomalies, opens an unfortunate plot flaw that is never really revisited. In order to see through an anomaly before sending a team in to investigate, Connor builds a small robot with a video camera. It drives through the anomaly in 'our' world into an 'alien' past world and sends back a picture that, by seeing a lost girl trapped in the past, prompts Nick and Stephen to launch a rescue mission. The question raised is this. If the anomaly not only emits but also conducts radio waves, why do those who enter the past or future not maintain contact with the present? Many storylines involve loss of contact and the resultant uncertainty as a motivating factor and source of dramatic anxiety. Yet the robot built by Connor suggests that characters should be able to maintain not only verbal but also visual contact until the opening closes. Another characteristic of the anomalies explored more in a second series episode is that of environmental factors. It is a trope of the genre that writers do not give too much consideration to the incompatible conditions that space and time travellers might have to cope with. Travellers in the Tardis occasionally



The Mer-Creatures!



Abby with 'Rex'

wear suits in the first instance, but *Four to Doomsday* is an example where a clever alien promptly switches on the 'Earth normal' life support and the characters simply take them off again. A radioactive landscape is a significant plot point in the first Dalek story, and this is an excellent example of the idea done well. Yet even then it only affects the immediate setting of that time and place. Intriguingly, the second episode of season two sees the toxic atmosphere of a prehistoric era flooding through the anomaly as well as the ubiquitous creature incursion. This had been inferred by an earlier episode where warm and cold currents were affected by water flowing through an anomaly, but here the scenario of the air itself flowing both ways through an anomaly is touched upon as an environmental threat.

There are a couple of season two episodes that are especially notable in a dramatic sense. The first is an episode that introduces a young female park keeper or forest warden (the episode does not give her exact job title) who is an antagonist in plot terms, in that she is responsible for the incident that the team are trying to resolve, but who demonstrates altruistic and benevolent motivations. Even whether she is misled by her feelings is ambiguous, since it is easy to relate to her reasons and situation. This is the first really tragically emotive story, where the viewer's sympathies will naturally lean towards a character not part of the team and, in a sense, in opposition to them. Valerie is totally

plausible as a wildlife carer who might be seen in the enclosure of any zoo, and is a similar template to Abby herself. The main difference is that the creature that Valerie cares for is more dangerous than Rex, the lizard that Abby cares for in secret despite his prehistoric and scientifically valuable origins. The difference is one purely of plot driven circumstance. Abby has to become a team member with a guilty secret, Valerie has to become a tragic victim.

The other episode that excels dramatically is the next one, in which first a basketball player and then Abby are snatched by an aquatic mammal like an ancient Walrus and taken to a disused industrial location where the anomaly has appeared. They are deposited in a water-filled pit, actually flooded by water flowing out of the anomaly, that takes the form of a concrete storage area capped with mesh. As the anomaly reopens, more water floods into the abandoned factory and it becomes a race against time for the rest of the team to locate Abby and Lucien before the area floods entirely. Where this episode and Hannah Spearritt's performance truly excel is in the realistic portrayal of the entrapment underwater with the levels rising, combining two primal fears – attack from a predator and drowning. As the water level rises, Abby and Lucien are subject to the closing gap above between the water level and the mesh, through which they can see and reach the air above but not breathe it, and the threat from below. Their heads necessarily remaining above the surface, at least while this is possible, their bodies are submerged within an unknown volume and depth of water within which swim creatures that at the very least will inflict life threatening trauma with a good bite. The way this realism is treated in the episode is tense, gripping and very adult.

In addition to creating these weekly perils, season two is different from season one in teasing a second and more traditional adventure plot of villains and traitors lurking in the shadows. We discover double agents, Helen is revealed to be the *femme fatale* implied but not confirmed in previous episodes, and the new secret organisation turns out to have a nemesis agency led by Mrs Cutter and the spy in the camp mentioned above. In a big break from the format of the first eleven episodes, season two gives us a two-parter as a finale that takes the form of a 'heroes versus villains' battle, a proper showdown! More creatures, all your favourites from the story so far in one place in fact, revelations, character confrontations, the

dramatic sacrificial death of a main protagonist in a typical redemption storyline, and the demise of one if not both of our heroes' opponents, make this a generic comic-book yarn in one way but a necessary attempt to meet mainstream genre expectations in another. Before moving on to look at series three, which pushed the boundaries in a different way with a full 10 episode run, there is one important if coincidental *Doctor Who* comparison to be made. There is one significant episode of the latter show where time travel works in almost exactly the same way as in *Primeval*. *The Girl in the Fireplace* gives us a spaceship that acts as a nexus, similar to the multiple-anomaly meeting point seen more than once in *Primeval*, that allows one to step, by means of portals, into different times or places and back again, with each side of the portal being discernible from the other in some way, such as being able to see or call out to the world on the other side.

These comparisons, specifically and between the two shows in general, are relevant because the start of season three sees the gap separating them diminish drastically, as *Primeval* shifts from being about adventures in science to being equally about adventures in other pop culture fantasy genres. The first few episodes of the third season very much fit the description of being primarily an homage to other films, shows, or generic science fiction and horror works. The opening story has an Egyptology theme and is set in the British Museum, and is presented with enough ancient, evil relics and Egyptian curse tropes that it could virtually be a Mummy film itself but for having the regular cast of an ITV television show. We also learn a lot about the pseudo-science of the anomalies, in order to set up the rest of the season, as the team discovers that magnetism can contain anomalies and thus move them from one place to another contained within a suitable structure, that electrical current opens and closes them, and that a record of their appearances in myth and legends can be used to plot and predict them. In two final ways, this episode demonstrates a leaning towards the, by now better established than when the shows initially rivalled each other in 2007, formula of *Doctor Who*. Firstly, the use of in-universe science to explain real-world superstition (q.v. *Doctor Who* story *The Daemons* from 1971) and the prominent use of real landmarks as recognisable and iconic locations.

Although set in England – a quaint, innocent, US market friendly, 'Midsomer' version at that – the next episode features a setting that is

very American horror inspired, and perhaps does not fit a hundred percent into the show as a result despite the story compensating for this. The large, dilapidated house set back from the road, complete with mid-West styling and verandas, will be instantly familiar as the Bates Motel or its infinity of screen lookalikes. There is an old mystery of lost children, one suspected of having murdered his friends, that is also old ground, but here introduces a new regular character in the form of Danny Quinn, a policeman still following up the disappearance of his brother. But then the story throws yet another ingredient into the mix, of a cute and comical but extremely dangerous kind of mythical goblin that is the source of the haunted house reputation of the site. Yet another example of *Primeval* now explaining superstitions and the paranormal away with fictional science, but there is a sense that this pseudo-magical creature could have wandered in from the set of *Merlin* as easily as having come through an anomaly. Not that this is a problem, and it makes for a fun and effective work of televisual fantasy, but it does underline a definite change of creative direction.

This essay will look briefly at some of the main characters in a while, but the cast changes come thick and fast during the early part of season three. While the first two years were relatively stable, with a shock factor in the death of Stephen Hart during the season two finale, the third to fifth episodes of this season see the arrival of future team leader Danny, the final episode for Nick Cutter, and the last regular episode for Jenny, who you will recall was the alternate universe version of season one main character Claudia. Lucy Brown as Jenny leaves the show quietly and without fanfare after an almost humorous fantasy episode about humans being transformed into fungus monsters by spores from a prehistoric era. But the last appearance of Douglas Henshall as Cutter is given, and rightly so for the character who was initially the leading protagonist, the same kind of style and treatment as a big, end of season finale, complete with another 'heroes versus villains' showdown, momentous events, and a very large explosion. Suffice to say that, of the two, only Jenny is around to make a return appearance in a later episode. And in another nod to that other popular British science fiction fantasy show on the other channel, Henshall gets to have fun playing an evil double of himself in his final performance. The first episode also introduced an Egyptologist called Sarah who becomes, with almost unlikely speed, a key member of the team despite have no obviously compatible skill-sets.

Interestingly, two consecutive mid-season episodes take the opportunity to look at time, and travel through it, from slightly different angles. The sixth episode is the third classic 'base under siege' type episode that sees Danny, Connor, Sarah and Abby take refuge from a rival government department, more exciting than it sounds – promise, in a derelict wartime research bunker. It is full of old artefacts, photos, documents, canned food, a record player, a diary that the team decode and read to learn of the deaths of the original research team, and period clothes that the team dress up in. There is no real plot justification for this latter story element, which is not as disrespectful as it appears since the diary about the previous occupants dying in a mysterious tragedy is not decoded until after the party has started, but the creative choice to lead into the episode with the characters dressed in period attire, listening to an old record, and muttering portentous lines about past mysteries, is a brilliant one that works absolutely a hundred percent. Everything tying in to a reoccurring anomaly perhaps stretches coincidence a little far but is essential within the format of the show. The next episode then features a very rare connection with the recent past, at least in terms of being within the comparatively short period of human civilisation in the grand scheme of time, with a character emerging from medieval England and going on a pseudo-comedic rampage through modern London. Even more unusually for this show, one of the protagonists, Sarah, time-travels back to medieval England and interacts with the people there. One small observation on the style of the show to be made at this point is that, with its extensive use of modern British commercial architecture as a futuristic backdrop for a government backed team of gadget wielding investigators fighting high-tech opponents, there are moments when *Primeval* feels a lot like the 1990s sci-fi hit *Bugs*, but with more dinosaurs.



Ariel Attack!

Before continuing our journey through each season of this amazing show, it is important to step back for a moment and look at some of the characters that populate it and, in doing so, draw a comparison with *Doctor Who* in the 1970s which might, even as a subconscious cultural influence, have influenced how the creative team see the construction of this format. Stephen Hart in the first two seasons and Captain Becker, in the following three, both fill the role of the action hero, a decent survival expert with a good working knowledge of weapons. While the backstory that gave the show its depth also loaded Stephen with baggage that might have become difficult to sustain, Becker is the sort of likable and jolly decent chap that used to make ideal UNIT captains. ARC chief Lester is similar to the Brigadier, if not in narrative terms as a primarily HQ based leader then certainly in terms of his dynamic with the rest of the team, his outward lack of patience with the scientific types, characterised by dry humour, concealing a genuine warmth and concern. Cutter is so much like a Scottish version of Jon Pertwee as the Doctor that this hardly needs further comment for anyone who has seen both portrayals. Connor is a younger version of Cutter, this being a reason why Cutter warms to him despite his early mistakes being a theme of the first season in particular, but allowing him to have romantic attachments and subplots allows the character greater depth than just being the student genius – a flaw in the concept of the character of Luke in *The Sarah Jane Adventures* arguably. *Primeval* is especially notable for its strong female characters, and all the more so because their strength is defined by their value to the team or threat as opponents, their intelligence and wit, an ability to make their own choices and the narrative of the show support those choices as valid, in their confidence, and wonderful performances by the actresses who bring them and these qualities to life on the screen. Claudia and Jenny, both played by Lucy Brown, are able to perform in a work environment clearly a long way outside their own comfort zone, Abby as a zoo-keeper has compassion but also a lot of fire and commitment, and Sarah is an academic who is happy to engage with the missions. Helen Cutter and Christine Johnson are real threats to the team, and civilisation as we know it, but have nuances and charm that also make them the kind of villains that you feel a connection with. Danny is a typical maverick cop who could have walked out of any number of police procedural shows about maverick cops, and in a way, this gives a new lease of life and energy to the show.

Behind the scenes, there is a break in production between the third and fourth series that, to the great credit of the show and all concerned, is virtually imperceptible when all the episodes are watched in a short space of time. It could be argued that there is a greater tonal shift between seasons two and three than here, despite the show being cancelled after three years by ITV and revived some time later to be filmed in Ireland as an impressive co-production. This survival instinct, worthy of some of the creatures themselves, would serve the show well again when moving into a sixth season. The final act of season three and the beginning of season four fall more into the traditional adventure genre, and the early stories of the latter certainly do involve a greater than normal amount of dinosaur chasing. The cliff-hanger on which ITV initially pulled the show involved Abby and Connor becoming stranded together in a prehistoric landscape, while Danny became stranded too but in another different era. The show returns with the similarly unlikely return of Abby and Connor to the present day, when they discover a device for controlling anomalies lost in a previous episode. Despite the characters of Lester and Becker remaining in the ARC organisation to provide continuity, our main viewpoint characters are Abby and Connor from the start, we and they exploring together the show and how things have changed since the final ITV episode. It makes for a very interesting format change.

Primeval was originally all about scientific discovery, both the pseudo-science of the show and glimpses of real world science, and about meeting new characters as they came into contact with these wonders for the first time. Here, we see a new team, a new Anomaly Research Centre, and new technology for dealing with the anomalies and any creature incursions, and it is all established already. We are looking in on something that is familiar, but where we have to learn about the characters and setting rather than seeing every new element from the beginning. Simplicity was a factor of the show in the early seasons too, and an episode even makes a plot point out of the fact that there really are no conspiracies but just people getting on with saving the world from a potential natural disaster. In the revived show, there are definite conspiracies to follow and characters with hidden agendas and ambiguous involvement with the story abound. Sinister plots seem to lurk around every corner

of the ARC organisation, not least with a new and very modern theme of public-private initiative introduced. To adjust to this new direction, the show also becomes more serialised at this point.

Returning to the narrative, another new element is the concept of explorers other than Helen Cutter having discovered the anomalies and be living in that 'world' and therefore outside of our own idea of time. This evokes the 'group of survivors' genres popularised by Terry Nation's *Survivors* (obviously) or *Lost* and is a logical route that feels right. One character emerges from this storyline to become a member of the team. Lady Emily Merchant is fascinating and alluring straight away, due in part to the way that Ruth Bradley brings her to life but also because adding a Victorian adventuress to the mix, in a suitably exciting 'boots and leather' costume, is such a bold idea with so much potential.

There is a small amount of time travel of the conventional kind that ensues, but which is kept in its place without altering the point of the show, and the idea of someone taken out of their own time is also present but not over-played. *Primeval* as a show is perfectly balanced, and this development is no exception. One of the subtle ways that a cultural difference is suggested is the way that Emily calls the anomalies Gateways rather than immediately and implausibly adopting the contemporary term.



Abby and Emily get tooled up!



Jess

The new season also has the capacity to be a little darker than the show in the past. The fourth episode of the fourth season features a school setting and the death of a teenage girl, alone in a gymnasium with a creature and locked in by a security system. Jess Parker, a new character and operator of the complex monitoring systems now employed by the ARC, watches her death on CCTV, unable to help or even communicate, except to give a commentary on what she sees to a team on the ground who are unable to prevent the tragedy. This is played in the episode in a very affecting and poignant way that maybe would not have been allowed by ITV, but which makes *Primeval* an even stronger show than it already was. But, despite these changes, *Primeval* remains a remarkable example of a show that remained consistent against the odds. The pace and visual style of the episodes in terms of design and direction, scene length, lighting and so on, the type of characters and the tone of the dialogue the actors were given, and the basic format of the main episode plots, is very much the same from the first season, through the first studio change, and even into a radical

shift of production when the show moved to Canada for its final season, complete with a *New World* suffix but essentially the same show and especially to those who might be unfamiliar with the regular cast. The serialised nature of having a few running sub-plots, more prominent from season four onwards, does have the negative effect of breaking the tension sometimes, with a prison setting that had brilliant 'base under siege' potential not quite being used to its best effect.

Another slight change, that really begins with the fourth season although not entirely missing from the first three, is that of creating or developing romantic pairings. Abby and Connor had already been a 'thing' for some time but, when we catch up with them in the prehistoric world and thereafter, they are unequivocally a couple and converse in those terms. Captain Becker was a regular through season three, but here is the subject of Jess' affections. Jess is part of the new team, taking over monitoring the anomalies and coordinating the teams in the field and managing internal security surveillance. She is less of the outdoor adventure type seen with Abby, but also not the upwardly mobile management type seen in Claudia/Jenny, is a character who is happy to work in an office environment under the gaze of other characters' seniority, and who dresses to impress in a fashionable way while also staying the right side of the impractical eye-candy trope. The third main relationship seen is between two new characters, team leader Matt Anderson and time-travelling adventuress Emily Merchant. Various sub-plots create a tension between them, but events in the episodes diffuse this and allow Lady Merchant to become one of the show's many memorable protagonists.

On the subject of characters, season four has two notable episodes to round off the run, featuring single story returns for Jenny Lewis, last seen in the fifth episode of season three, and her replacement as team leader at that time, Danny Quinn, previously lost in time along with Abby and Connor in the season three finale. Both characters get a very good return, with Jenny appearing in a story where an anomaly threatens her new marriage and sees the team unexpectedly attending the wedding while fighting off wolves, while Danny gets closure on the backstory with which he was introduced in his first episode.

The fifth season presents us with two episodes that arguably show off the series at its best and worst at the same time. The second episode of the season is an unusual underwater adventure in which a submarine discovers an anomaly beneath the waves and returns with an apparently dead, but actually only stunned, dinosaur on board. The ARC team is contacted and Matt, Abby and Connor join the crew for a return mission to investigate and close the anomaly. A creature attack disables the propulsion system, however, and the magnetic attraction of the anomaly draws the helpless sub into the past. A short circuit from the damage has disabled the submarine's power supply and it's a race against time in more ways than one to restore power, release the now conscious dinosaur, return to the present, and seal the anomaly while evading a nuclear armed torpedo fired by the Navy to seal the anomaly by means of an electro-magnetic pulse from the blast. This is simply a brilliant drama that ticks the boxes of a *Primeval* episode, a claustrophobic base under siege, characters trapped in a submarine, and a political angle between the government, the Navy and James Lester as head of the ARC. Having Matt, Abby and Connor together as a team, separated for once from their ongoing secondary storylines, is a great success that shows how well this line-up works without other distractions. The pacing of the episode is just right, maintaining an even level of tension throughout. The design of the submarine is excellent and the practical application of special effects and lighting on the day are perfect. The guest cast includes a notable and fine performance by Allan Leech as a submariner, now better known for his role in *Downton Abbey*.

On the flipside, the same episode is let down by some extraordinary editorial lapses. Now, the story is indeed the main concern and, as noted above, it is a brilliant episode. There is however a reason for this paragraph, so we ask you to bear with us. The plot point of the propulsion motors shorting being the cause of all the electrical systems on the submarine failing, and Connor having to search the entire boat to reset or repair numerous fuses or trip switches, completely fails to understand the function and purpose of what fuses and trips are for in the first place. Clearly, nobody on the creative team was an electrician! The means chosen by the team of ejecting the dinosaur from the boat is to trap it in a torpedo room and open both ends of a tube so that the room floods and the dinosaur is sucked out through the tube by the external pressure. Now,

aeroplanes fly through low pressure and this is a very old trope of aviation narratives, so it is clear to see the inspiration. However, the pressure imbalance acting on the hull of a submarine always faces inwards. Even with a compartment flooded, the water pressure is equal at the most. To pressurise the water in the compartment so that it is so much greater than the ocean outside would rip the submarine apart, and that is ignoring the obvious oversight that submarines are designed not to allow both ends of a torpedo tube to open at the same time precisely to prevent flooding the boat. Even the fictional pseudo-science of the anomalies gets muddled and is contradicted within the same episode, since the magnetic attraction that pulled the boat on one side of the anomaly would slow the boat and pull it back again as soon as it passed through since the boat itself is not polarised. Once back on the correct side of the anomaly, any competent submariner would then have used buoyancy to escape its influence without repairing the propeller. The final piece of bad science is the nuclear armed torpedo, which is both silly and scientifically impossible. Anyone with a passing interest in modern warfare will know that submarines carry their nuclear weapons on very powerful missiles such as Polaris or Trident, the whole point of nuclear armed submarines being that they hide in the open sea and you attack the enemy with the missiles rather than the boats. Putting the weapons on a short-range device like a torpedo not only undermines the whole concept but one hundred percent ensures the destruction of your own submarine. The other reason for launching the weapons on rockets is that an atom bomb is very heavy and a torpedo, which only has horizontal thrust, carrying one would simply nose-dive to the sea bed. None of this makes the story unenjoyable, it does underline a shift in emphasis towards fantasy sci-fi in the show. The original *Primeval*, which sold itself on putting the 'science' back into science fiction, would never have allowed a script with so much bad science past the submission stage.

The next episode is very different plot-wise, but similarly is brilliant and awful at the same time. Again, the quality of the story and performances win through, but only just. Jess discovers and passes to Abby a newspaper article from the nineteenth century that indicates that Emily, after leaving the team at the end of season four to return through an anomaly, was put away in Bedlam asylum for her belief in the things she had seen. Matt travels back to the same time and place to

rescue her, at the same time tracking a Raptor that is killing people on the streets of Victorian London and has been called by a lurid press nickname. Emily is subject to a husband who refuses to believe that a dinosaur can be responsible for the deaths and is indeed planning to put Emily inside the asylum to avoid a scandal. Both the dinosaur and Lord Merchant are dealt with and Matt and Emily are free to return to join the ARC once more. Ruth Bradley is absolutely wonderful, quite possibly the most alluring female *Primeval* actress in her guise as a masked avenger in a stunning outfit and cape, armed with lethal knives, as she tries to save and protect 1860s London. Lucy Griffiths as Marian in the 2006 series of *Robin Hood* was given a similarly effective makeover. Victorian London too is recreated in wonderful detail and in a superb Dickensian atmosphere, comparable to the settings seen in *Doctor Who* during the Steven Moffat era or those of the afore-mentioned *Sally Lockhart Mysteries* starring Billie Piper.



Primeval Victorian-style

The problems, however, arise from the idea of a Raptor prowling the streets of London in a densely populated era without anyone noticing it or, if they note it, going into denial and refusing its existence. Of every historical generation, the Victorians are the “most” likely to believe in a giant lizard from the Thames eating people. Secondly, the notion of Lord Merchant allowing his incarceration of his wife in Bedlam to reach the press, for Jess and Abby to discover the news item about it, is absurd. She would disappear and certainly be admitted under a false name. Nothing in Victorian society would destroy his reputation more than people knowing that his wife was committed. And finally, the episode also creates an unresolved recursive paradox. Since Matt has rescued Emily, she will no longer be sent to the asylum, so he will no longer rescue her, so she will no longer be saved, so Jess will find the article, so she will be saved, then she won't, then she will, and so on. This should cause major problems to the timeline, and it cannot be said that ‘this is not *Doctor Who*’ as an opt out for that kind of issue as the main plot arc of season two revolved around almost exactly that same thing. In this instance, the quality of the episode papers over the cracks once more. Matt and Emily are brilliant, the setting looks and feels really good, and Ruth Bradley is so stunning visually and in her performance of what could have been a generic role that lots of viewers are going to be watching her rather the continuity errors anyway.

The fourth episode is what in US television is called a ‘bottle’ episode, a term that originated with *Star Trek* to describe an episode that saves resources by utilising only existing sets and regular members of the cast, but it presents a tense and engaging scenario whilst also developing the relationships of Abby/Connor and Jess/Becker to a point that sets up character motivation in time for the finale. It is another two-part finale that delivers too, with a tense and urgent storyline that also ties in with the overall story arc and the show’s themes as a whole. There is an obvious wider issue in any kind of SF about phenomena that start as a mystery but, in order to sustain a long series, become so numerous that viewers ask why nobody has encountered them before. Here we get a sensible explanation for why the anomalies, hitherto unnoticed, have proliferated enough to warrant the existence of the ARC and a team to investigate and contain them on a full-time basis. The concept that the anomalies are in reality part of an even bigger recurring natural phenomenon gives the whole show a greater degree of plausibility.

Another theme of *Primeval* from the first season onwards is that of cause and effect, a reason why it was strange that removing Emily from her own time was not discussed as more of an issue. When it is revealed that one of the ‘new’ team members is actually an agent sent back in time to prevent their own future, the dystopian outcome visited in a number of previous episodes, there are obvious questions raised about paradoxes and timeline

divergences that time-travel fantasy fans will ask and recognise and that, to the show's credit, do receive a pay-off in the final act of the season.

Before moving on, mention should be made of Janice Byrne as April. Initially introduced in the role of assistant to Connor, it is immediately obvious that she has been planted within the ARC as an agent of the sinister commercial organisation that takes the position of antagonist for the fourth and fifth seasons. By the first part of the finale, April has dispensed with any pretence and becomes the most delightfully evil villainess in a show that has several. By the time that her own diabolical villainy leads to her demise at the beaks of a flock of terror birds, she has taken to wearing tall black boots and a tight-fitting, seductively unzipped and revealing black dress, hair flowing over her shoulders, in a look that is wonderfully comic-book and wrong for the show but so completely brilliant at the same time that you just have to admire the boldness, glamour and unashamed sex-appeal. Barry Letts actually paid off Susan Jameson because this was basically the kind of character that was envisioned for her to play in the 1971 *Doctor Who* story *Colony in Space*.

planet, with Philip Burton, chief scientist and originator of the project, becoming Professor Stahlman and Tobias Vaughn (*Doctor Who: The Invasion*) as he is consumed in the downfall of his work but by means also of a noble redemption story. In story terms, the New Dawn power plant becomes a kind of Chernobyl metaphor at the centre of a script filled with nuclear power similes that are perhaps unintentionally more accurate than other scripts, in this show and elsewhere, that intend to portray atomic power and get things wrong. Of course, generator accidents such as Chernobyl and a nuclear weapon are completely different, and so, when New Dawn essentially overloads and blows its lid off, the portrayal of an EMP (electro-magnetic pulse) emanating from the blast is an effect that would not follow a power station accident but, being from the same field of physics, is a sequence of events that lends the fantasy plot a degree of verisimilitude. Taking all of the ARC teams into the field of operations to deal with the greater than ever crisis also results in Lester and Jess, as the only two people left in the main control area, to get in on the action and deal with a creature attack of their own. Knowing that this episode would be the last with that cast and setting, the show-runners ensure that all of the main plot elements are resolved along with the romantic pairings, Abby and Connor in the final sequence becoming engaged. The episode ends with a fan fiction teaser that pays off some of the potential for paradoxes in the issues discussed earlier...



April, played by Janice Byrne

The final episode of what might be called the 'original' show is a very good one too. The commercial organisation against which the team have been fighting up to this point appears to have won the day, a classic means of heightening tension, with the power of the anomalies contained in a single reaction within a futuristic power station. As the situation reaches critical, and the whole world literally begins to fall apart, fans of *Doctor Who* will possibly be reminded of the Inferno project in that show's 1970 season. The heart of the scientific research operation is out of control, counting down to destroying both itself and the



Anomaly!

And so, the show moves into a third phase, moving to a second era of co-production and this time in North America under the roof of a Canadian studio. Another classic of British science fiction had gone to Canada in the past with excellent results, *The New Avengers* seeing some of its finest episodes come from the move, and *Primeval* too reaped great rewards from running an extra season. Only one of the original cast appears, with Andrew-Lee Potts playing Connor in the first and last episodes, but the new team, recall this is not the first team refresh on the show, are similar enough to the British characters to lend a sense of continuity. This is aided by the remarkable effort on the part of the production team in matching almost exactly the visual house-style of the original show in terms of direction, lighting, music and so on.

does not have plans to wipe out the human race. Sara Canning as Dylan Weir takes the role of Stephen or Captain Becker, the number two in charge and experienced in survival skills and weaponry. Crystal Lowe and Danny Rahim as Toby and Mac fill the role of Connor and Abby, except with a role reversal whereby the female of the duo is the technical expert who monitors the anomalies and without Mac having Abby's zoology background; Dylan is the second in control, the weapons expert, and the animal expert, which gives Sara Canning a notably competent and emotionally reliable role. Miranda Frigon as Angelika fulfils the unimpressed behind the scenes authority figure position, as head of Evan's business interests, that Ben Miller enjoyed for the previous five seasons. The first episode of the new season is also familiar ground, with



The anomalies and the creatures that come through them to threaten 'our' world look like the effects created for the previous British and Irish produced seasons too, so this feels absolutely like the same show. One interesting format switch that does keep the concept fresh is the change from the protagonists being agents of a government department, led by James Lester, that are cautious of the commercial New Dawn (and rightly so) to the new main cast being the owner of a similar commercial organisation and being cautious with equally good reason of a government project that is essentially the equivalent of the Anomaly Research Centre. This makes for a fascinating overall change while the internal dynamics of the team itself, now private rather than public, is allowed to closely match that of the original show.

dinosaurs finding their way into a city and having a feast on its population before being tracked down, but it is to the show's credit that the next episodes again vary the storylines. The next anomaly opens underwater and releases a giant pre-historic snake, in a story that nicely revisits the concept of tracking anomalies according to their record in myths and legends that had not really been talked about since the beginning of season three, before the anomaly in episode three asks 'what if the other side of the anomaly is not on the ground' and leaves Evan and Dylan trapped simply because they cannot reach it. The insects in this episode are especially terrifying and gruesome, courtesy of a higher censor rating than the original show, and are reminiscent of the beetles in *The Mummy* (1997).

Niall Matter as Evan Cross is the new Nick Cutter, investigating the anomalies to discover why his wife died years earlier – except that Evan's wife really was eaten by a dinosaur and

The final era of *Primeval* continued to give the show vibrancy and variety by following the tradition set by the earlier seasons of placing the action in a series of memorable locations.



Dylan Weir—Don't mess with her!

A railway museum, a crashed transport aircraft, a university campus, and an open-plan home & garden store all keep the adventures feeling fresh and new. This continuity of approach helps to soften the tonal change of the higher censor grading and more mature themes. On a surface level this is represented by more graphic injury detail, but actually runs deeper than this. The background of Mac as neither an academic nor a wildlife conservationist leads him to hunt a pair of creatures with a rifle against the wishes of the other team members, hunting being a more topical and dramatically taboo subject than if this show were made in decades past. The catalyst for these events also highlights the deeper emotional subtexts of *New World*. Mac is prompted to anger by the death of his lover, Samantha, due to a lack of precautions and awareness at Evan's unofficial base of

operations at his factory. This itself is a product of the shift from following a dedicated government operation to moving the narrative to an amateur one. The fall-out from the deaths of Sam and another worker are touched upon in the next episode too, with the difficulty of maintaining a cover story at enquiry level falling upon Ange while Evan and his team do what television heroes do and go out chasing more dinosaurs. But more immediately, we see the grief and sadness of Mac having lost his own partner mirrored in the creatures as he first guns down one and then the other as it paws mournfully at its bloodied mate. The anti-hunting subtext is very strong but at the same time is not overtly discussed in the dialogue, leaving the viewer to experience the power of the moment and draw their own conclusions. The rail museum set episode features drug growing and dealing as part of the story and a script that includes numerous humorous references to drug use by the main characters. In a way, however, this is not merely a product of the show moving to North America as a production but also reflects the fact that fans who first encountered the show as children would now be a Young Adult audience with different reference points of their own.

The drama of the *New World* season is aided by stepping back from some of the things introduced in the later seasons of the UK/Irish production. Not being linked to the ARC or having any direct access to the technological advances seen in those episodes, apart from one mislaid anomaly tracker, means that Evan and his team do not have a reliable Anomaly Alert system but do have one that cleverly from a writing viewpoint is developed along similar lines to Connor's, using interference to mobile phone signals rather than to a radio frequency. They also cannot open or close the anomalies, lock them or move them in sealed containers. All these things were a part of the original series' theme of scientific discovery and progress, but arguably had reached a point where too much control over the anomalies could become a plot device or crisis opt-out for writers finding themselves painted into a corner. Fans of *Doctor Who* will immediately think of the sonic screwdriver and K-9 no doubt. This partial reset, by following a different group of characters but leaving the series' universe otherwise intact, also met the obvious requirement of the Canadian show being accessible to new viewers. Sadly, for the show, these were not numerous in number and so *Primeval* ends after this further run of 13 episodes. While making something new, however, the new studio also made

commendable efforts to add familiar nods to the previous seasons, such as bringing back the Terror Birds from 4.7 and having Evan and Dylan use a silver blanket to lure a dinosaur in much the same fashion as Connor and Abby in the opening episode of season three.

Towards the end of the *New World* season there is another interesting minor shift in format and tone, with a run of four episodes that focus less on the anomalies, or what comes through them, and more upon personalities and conflicts of interests and ideals. The narrative becomes more about Cross and his team facing their internal issues on one hand and the threat to their unofficial operation posed by the military. In terms of the latter, while this never quite becomes 'the *A-Team* with added dinosaurs', there is a valid comparison to be made with the team being chased by their own Decker equivalent. The first episode of the four is the season's 'bottle' episode, with Evan Cross suffering the ill effects of hallucinogenic dinosaur urine (please, don't ask) becoming the catalyst for a major exposition episode that examines some of the mysterious backstory. It was perhaps a bit too much of a shortcut, telling a part of the story arc that had received quite a build-up in previous episodes in a rather perfunctory way that seems to undermine the effort of setting the backstory up in the first place. This is followed by a story that is again more character led, filling in some more personal backstory for Evan Cross, as we meet a fellow electronics inventor and former rival. The next episode is a confrontation between Cross and Dylan versus the military as each side pursues a Terror Bird, escaped from a secret military research programme that has been 'stealing' dinosaurs, in a 'firearms driven' showdown that probably would not have been possible to achieve plausibly in the UK series. Whether this is a good thing or a bad thing in overall terms for *Primeval* as a show, or simply a reflection of how storytelling reflects the culture of the regions that it takes place in, is likely to divide opinion.

Likewise, the Canadian version of the format does not explore the ethics of whether Cross actually has a moral right, or obligation, to claim history as his own responsibility and work outside of the law, and this is not discussed on screen as much as the original show might have done. The last episode of the four again slows the pace down and keeps the confrontation plot going in a traditional type of adventure story that involves capture and

escape tropes, villains (at least from the one-sided viewpoint of the show's chosen perspective) explaining their diabolical masterplans, and four main cast members trying on the prop handcuffs.

Any loss of focus in the middle part of the season is more than compensated for, however, by one of the very best two-part finales in the show's overall run. Each of the main players gets a share of the story and some kind of personal plotline or mission, and the final episode sees the welcome return of Andrew-Lee Potts as Connor Temple in a note perfect performance, something of a challenge without any other characters from the first five seasons present. The duel between the civilian operation and the military is carried on into this last story, but we also have the welcome return of anomalies and adventures in pre-history along with another 'temporal junction' of multiple portals similar to one seen in the original show. Here, it really plays a central role in the outworking of the story. Cross has become even more of the Cutter replacement, leading his own team to research the phenomena but with a personal agenda to put everything back in its place to avoid altering the timeline, something his predecessor was frequently concerned about after the Claudia/Jenny situation.

Paradoxes are the core of this absolutely triumphant finale, taking the concepts and ideas of every era of *Primeval* and working it all together into a single epic but not over-long tale. As things start to become altered in a manner beyond the protagonists control, their efforts to repair time while blind of the circumstances leads to personal loss, inner emotional conflicts, and a beautifully worked out version of a 'bootstrap paradox' (q.v. *Doctor Who: Before the Flood*) in which Evan Cross, driven since before the events of the first *New World* episode by the death of his wife in a creature incursion, becomes and therefore always was the creator of his own tragedy. As with the final British/Irish produced season, the finale ends on a fanfic teaser without spending too much time setting up an unresolved new storyline.



Face off in the episode *Babes in the Wood*

Before closing this essay, there is time to mention in a single paragraph some episodes of modern-era *Doctor Who* that share interesting similarities with *Primeval*; those who enjoy these episodes might also find they like *Primeval* and vice versa, if you like *Primeval* but are not yet familiar with modern *Doctor Who* then these might be a good place to start. *The Girl in the Fireplace* has been referred to because it shows time travel mechanics in a similar way, the *Under the Lake/Before the Flood* two-part story is referenced a couple of times because it is the *Doctor Who* story that best explains and demonstrates the fantasy concept of the present causing itself to become by means of influencing the past, and the hitherto unmentioned *Dinosaurs on a Spaceship* has a title that covers its superficial similarity well enough without further comment. Thematically, two *Primeval*-like episodes include the season one story *Father's Day*, about the potential harm caused to the present by altering the past in ways that endanger the very protagonists at the centre of the paradox, and *In the Forest of the Night*, in which a supposedly calamitous phenomenon turns out to be a benign natural cycle. But maybe the most obvious example of a *Doctor Who* episode that directly resembles *Primeval* is *Planet of the Dead*, that features portals that look like, act like, and perform an identical narrative function to anomalies and set up a plot that is exactly the sort of thing that would happen in *Primeval* except for exchanging pre-history for alien world, making the swarming threat metallic rather than reptilian, and allowing the Doctor to modify a vehicle in an overtly fantasy way to escape. Finally, another *Doctor Who* story that is almost exactly like *Primeval* is an audio reading called *Day of the Cockroach*, set in a bunker in a superbly claustrophobic tale with another giveaway title.

In conclusion, *Primeval* is a show that demonstrates both consistency, delivering a recognisable format year after year and through multiple changes of studio and

creative teams, and variation in its ability to keep a limited concept continually fresh and filled with new ideas. Returning to dilemma and issues from earlier seasons adds continuity not only in narrative terms but also by showing that the concerns of characters such as Nick and Helen Cutter are important enough in the series' fictional universe that others later share them without being primed. We also see public sector and commercial agendas as viewpoint and opposing ideals in dealing with the same questions and opportunities, and the series by switching sides and occasional ambiguity encourages the viewer to consider multiple points of view in considering the implications. Sometimes co-operation brings calamity, yet sometimes lack of it also brings the same. Characters achieve success and face failure, survive and fail to survive, make friends and enemies, see friends become enemies and enemies become friends, face nature on its own terms while also trying to tame and understand it, and above all convey that infectious sense of wonder that sells the whole thing to the viewer week after week.

The cast of *Primeval* are all brilliant, bringing to life a plethora of character creations that, even in opposition, blend into an easy ensemble. There may be very little grit amongst them, but neither is there an overdose of unrealistic glamour. If there is a quality that links most of the regular characters over the six seasons, it is that relatable familiarity that these are ordinary people living extraordinary lives, and it might be in the depth of this being a show as much about people as fantasy that the secret of its enduring success lies. This is *so* much more than just "the one with the dinosaurs."



PTEROSAUR!

A Primeval fan fiction

Connor looked on with rising terror as the event played out before him with a slow-motion inevitability. .

The spherical shape of the anomaly glowed as it hovered just above the ground outside New Look, the shopping centre thankfully having been quiet and easily evacuated when the alert had sounded at the Anomaly Research Centre. Perhaps that was why the usually thorough effort of the team on the ground had fallen short of the usual standard. Too easy. Somehow, the girl on her bike had been overlooked by everyone, including himself, until this moment. The soaring shape of the Pterosaur had spotted her at the exact same moment that she had spotted the shadow of the pre-historic bird swooping down on where she stood. The girl leaped from the bike and ran, not away from the anomaly but towards it, as the Pterosaur flew down towards both the girl and therefore the anomaly, as Matt Anderson, team leader, took aim with a powerful tranquiliser rifle.



The point of convergence of these events, and the obvious consequence, was so clear to Connor that, in that split second, he could not understand why Matt, the girl, or even the giant prehistoric bird could not see where everything was heading. Leaving others behind in his rapid thinking was always his problem, but, surely, he was not the only one alert to the situation? No, for a shout of warning came from the young woman beside him as Abby Maitland yelled at the girl to change direction. But the girl, who looked about ten years old, was either not able to hear or too frightened to comply.

Connor was running at full speed towards the shifting, glowing patterns of the anomaly, otherwise described as a temporal event through which it was possible to travel through time, and was reaching out for the girl, ignoring Matt's shouts of warning, as both the tranquiliser dart and the Pterosaur flew past him and collided as the creature's beak closed around the girl's arm. He felt sure that he could see the creature begin to fall and loosen its grip as it disappeared from view, heading back to its own time millions of years ago. Impelled to keep running, Connor followed them. As he left his own century behind in the future, his first thought was not of where he was going to but rather concern for Abby. She called his name, and her voice sounded from close by his shoulder and not as a distant echo. His girlfriend, the love of his life with whom he had been stranded in the past for a whole year, had taken after him and was falling into the unknown at his side. Of course, she was. The bright light of day shone into his eyes and it took a moment for them to adjust and take in the scene. For a moment, Connor felt like one of those cartoon characters who comically runs beyond the edge of a cliff and carries on for some seconds before realising there is no longer any ground beneath and, only at that moment, fall from a great height. Having emerged from the anomaly, Connor took a moment to realise that he and Abby were some distance above the canopy of a tropical jungle with rock edifices to either side but a drop into the trees directly below. Only then did their forward momentum seem to fail them.

The tree branches slowed Connor's fall, but also tore at his skin and clothes on the way down until he landed in a heap on the soft ground. He looked up just in time to see Abby land much more gracefully in an athletic tumble and get to her feet almost straight away. As he climbed up slowly and painfully to a standing position, an enormous weight crashed into him and sent him sprawling across the ground, picking up more grazes than from the initial landing. Whatever had knocking him over had rolled to a stop close by and Connor looked up dazedly to see a familiar figure lying next to him in the dirt. Matt Anderson had followed them through. Abby first picked up Matt's rifle, then Connor, before turning to the new arrival.

"Why did you follow us through, Matt?" asked Abby; "Who's going to get us back now?"

"Someone has to protect you amateurs," replied Matt; "Besides, Jess said Becker was on his way."

"Protect us?" demanded Abby; "We did okay last time, thank you, and you nearly killed Connor!"

"He looks okay to me," said Matt, dismissively; "The question now is, how do we get back through there?"

Matt pointed up at the anomaly, sparkling in the daylight above the tree tops.

"Aren't you forgetting something, Matt?" asked Abby; "The girl we came to rescue, remember?"

"Actually, the girl *you* came to rescue," argued Matt; "Against procedure. Slight difference..."

"Oh yeah..." said Connor, interrupting him, "Listen to who's talking! Let's not mention Emily then!"

"That was different," said Matt, straightening for an argument

"That's not important," said Abby; "We need to find the girl, then work out a way home"

"Agreed" said Matt, getting in ahead of Connor to concur with Abby

"What she said..." added Connor moodily, unsure of why he just could never get Matt's respect.

"The trees look damaged this way," pointed Abby, leading the way into the jungle after first tossing the rifle back to Matt. Past experience had taught her not to give Connor guns, even tranquilisers.

They soon found the girl, who revealed her name to be Chantelle, trying to extricate herself from beneath the sleeping but heavy form of the Pterosaur. Connor and Matt carefully lifted the creature while Abby pulled the girl free. The party of four returned to the clearing into which they had fallen.

"*Awesome...!*" cried Chantelle, looking up at the sphere of light above them.

"Isn't it just..." agreed Connor, "But how are we going to get up there?"

"Can we reach it by climbing to the top of one of these trees?" asked Matt, more towards Abby.

"Don't you remember how far we fell?" asked Connor; "Sorry, I forgot to bring my jetpack!"

"Well, we can't stay down here forever!" snapped Matt

"But that's just it though," argued Connor, "We can end up here forever!"

"That's not helping," said Abby; "We need to work together. Can we throw a line through?"

"Maybe", said Matt, "But we fell quite a way and we have nothing to fire a line any distance with."

"How about jumping across into it?" asked Connor

"Where from?" asked Abby

"One of those clifftops," explained Connor, "I mean, it seems to be a sort of valley"

"Yes!" exclaimed Matt; "It's too far to just jump, we would end up back in here, but..."

"Ropes!" shouted Abby; "We need to make a rope to swing across!"

"And we need to get *up* there of course..." added Connor; "Without being caught by anything"

"Rope first," said Abby; "Chantelle, stay here and shout if the anomaly - the light in the sky - changes in any way, and I mean *absolutely* any way at all. We need to know."

"Abby, Connor" said Matt, "Look over there for anything we can make into a strong rope. I'll go this way, we'll meet back here in an hour. Let's hope it stays open for that long."

"*And* another hour after that to climb up there..." added Abby, pointing up to the top of the valley.



It was three hours before a rope of sufficient length had been turned, to a satisfactory if unremarkable standard in the time available, and a path had been found to the top of the valley. Facing the anomaly was a protruding escarpment, allowing one end of the rope to be tied to its head and a person swing beneath it and reach the anomaly. Matt volunteered to try out the arrangement.

“Listen,” said Matt, “Don’t follow me through unless the anomaly looks like it’s about to close”.

“What’s the plan?” asked Connor

“If I can hold onto my end of the rope then I’ll try and secure it on the other side,” said Matt.

“That’s a good idea,” agreed Abby; “But hurry up, that anomaly must be going to close soon...”

“Wish me luck!” said Matt as he set off along the side of the escarpment as far as the rope would allow.

“Where is he?” asked Connor a few moments later as Matt jumped and disappeared from sight.

“There he is!” shouted Chantelle, pointing at the anomaly as Matt swung through it.

“Now we find out if we’ve got to do the same...” said Connor; “Bet he drops the rope”

“Nah,” disagreed Abby, “Look! It’s not fallen back through and I think it just got straighter!”

“So...” wondered Connor, “do we risk it?”

“Yes! Look!” cried Abby, pointing to the anomaly as it slowly appeared to swell in size.

Connor pulled off his belt and, reaching forwards, flipped it equally over the rope. The anomaly was rapidly growing lighter and pulsing, expanding and contracting with increasing speed, a sure sign that it was going to close at any moment. Abby took hold of both ends of the belt and passed them to the girl after whom they had entered the anomaly on their rescue mission. With a gentle push from Abby, Chantelle sped away down the improvised zip wire and disappeared through the anomaly. Taking off his jacket, Connor dropped it over the rope and climbed a short distance over the precarious edge of the cliff before grasping the sleeves. Abby too climbed down and, passing her arms between Connor’s, also took hold of the sleeves. The couple jumped...

Matt and Chantelle stood in the middle of the road and watched the anomaly begin to close. The rope was secured to the roof rack of a 4x4, so that, on this side of the anomaly, the line was suspended a short distance above the road surface. As the light of the temporal gateway pulsed brightly one last time, two figures holding onto the sleeves of the same terminally ripped jacket appeared through the anomaly and tumbled over and over along the road until they lay exhausted at the feet of Matt. With a final flash, the anomaly closed, severing the rope in two.

“They’re back” said Matt, talking to James Lester through his communicator.

“And in one piece!” gasped Abby, staring at the sliced rope laying in the road.

“I really need to finish that drone...” added Connor.

Together, Abby and Connor lay on the hard tarmac, stared up at the familiar blue sky, and laughed.

THE END



Chips and Wine

A Primeval: New World fan fiction

Flicking on the headlamps, Dylan turned onto the highway and accelerated away from the offices of Cross Photonics and into the fading light of evening. Another sighting located, another anomaly found and secured, another night that the neighbourhood could sleep or work in safety. As far as recognition went, this was a terrible job. But there was satisfaction to be had in what they were achieving, and it was a great team. With the onset of tiredness after a long day came the realisation that the call had come just before lunch. It was now getting late, and breakfast had only been a cereal bar. Now Dylan had a craving for candy, and that was never good. Even worse for her fitness regime, there was a candy store on the opposite side of the street. It was not that she craved a lot of chocolate or that she would over-indulge, because Dylan knew that was not really a weakness. But common sense was telling her that a proper meal of balanced nutrients was what she really needed. The other factor, however, was that her apartment was right across town and still a good hour's drive away. Stopping the SUV in a parking lot, Dylan made her way back along the sidewalk to the candy store and went inside.

The old man behind the counter smiled at Dylan as she entered before returning his attention to the boy at the far end of the shop, probably making sure the child paid for all of his candy. Scanning the shelves, Dylan's weary eyes settled on what she was looking for. The blocky *Hershey's* logo stared back at her from the shelf but, as Dylan reached out for the brown and white wrapper of an *Air Delight* bar, her attention was caught by another product to one side. Looking at her from the side of a green card box was the reddish brown, scaly hide of a huge lizard, a dinosaur. Blood dripped from sharp teeth, its claws ahead of its body ready to bring down more prey. With a snarling roar, the beast turned its head and looked straight at Dylan. She looked around for an escape, and there was a narrow path between the trees if only she could reach it in time. The ground vibrated as the giant reptile advanced upon her and cut off her escape. Staring at the ground in disbelief, Dylan's breath caught in her lungs. She was up to her knees in thick mud, unable to move and slowly sinking deeper and deeper. The cry for help died in her throat as a second creature appeared, and it was pursuing Evan and Mac in the opposite direction! Her only source of rescue, of survival, was fleeing into the forest. She could smell the breath of the creature on her face...

"Can you pass me a Hershey's please, Ma'am?" asked a voice beside Dylan.

"Sorry?" asked Dylan, looking around and rubbing her eyes.

"You're between me and the candy bars," explained the boy.

"Here," said Dylan, passing him the *Air Delight*. "Take this one"

"Thanks." said the boy, retreating back to the far end of the shop.

"Excuse me?" asked Dylan as she turned to the counter; "Could I just have a bottle of water?"

"That's a dollar, Ma'am," said the shopkeeper, dropping Dylan's coin into the till.

Once outside, Dylan drank some of the water and pulled out her phone on the short walk back to the truck. After a few rings, the call was answered.

"Hi, Ange?" said Dylan; "I'm really sorry about the time, but it's been a long, crazy day and I can't keep my eyes open and do you mind if I swing by because your apartment is a whole lot nearer than mine and... yeah... okay, no, thank you, you're a life saver... thanks, I'll see you in five!"

The drive to Ange's apartment took only a few minutes compared with the hour it would have taken to reach Dylan's own, assuming that she would have made it at all without taking a break. As her guest collapsed into a deep sofa, Ange poured two glasses of wine and tore open a bag of chips, sitting in a chair opposite Dylan across a small table.

"You look really tired, Dylan," said Ange; "Don't drive home. Just stay here for the night"

"Thanks, but are you sure?" asked Dylan; "I mean, technically you're my boss, right?"

"But you get on well enough with Evan, and he's your boss too" said Ange; "What if..."

"He's never asked, and I don't think he's going to, or that it would be appropriate!" replied Dylan.

"...Which is the right answer" smiled Ange; "But, seriously, you can crash here tonight. I would rather you crash in here than crash out there, that's for sure"

"Thanks," said Dylan, sipping the wine; "Appreciate it"

"What I'm worried about is how hard Evan is pushing you guys," said Ange, clearly moving the topic of conversation in the direction of Evan Cross' less business-oriented activities; "I mean, you're human! Just the four of you, trying to save the world day and night? Come on! It's no wonder that things don't always get done at the factory..."

"Well, I don't really know about that," countered Dylan; "I only work with Evan on the bug chasing."

"But what if you get tired and make a mistake?" asked Ange; "We can't afford the risk of something happening to you, to *any* of you. Not again. Not after..."

"Sam?" asked Dylan, completing the sentence; "Yeah, that was rough"

"And next week it could be you, or Mac, or Toby, or..." Again, Ange faltered mid-sentence

"Evan." said Dylan; "Yeah, I know. He knows... we all know! But what's the alternative, Ange?"

"Maybe this is something for the authorities" said Ange; "Maybe we should just hand over what we have so far and let an organisation deal with this that's equipped to deal with it?"

"Like who?" asked Dylan; "There *are* no authorities equipped to deal with this. We don't even know what 'this' is, and we certainly don't know enough to hand anything over in a way that it's going to make sense to someone with no experience. Right now, we have the most experience."

"Lieutenant Leeds wants to help," sighed Ange, "As much as you and Evan don't want to accept him"

"No, we don't," said Dylan; "Maybe because I'm a conservationist, not a soldier"

"And Evan?" asked Ange; "He's no conservationist, or at least he wasn't. What's his excuse?"

"You'll have to ask him," said Dylan; "But I think I trust Evan's judgement more than the military".

"Maybe if..." began Ange, but whatever she was going to say was cut off by a beep from Dylan's phone.

"Sorry," said Dylan, putting down her glass; "Duty calls. It's another sighting."

"Come back later if you like" said Ange; "and take care of yourself... and Evan"

"I will," said Dylan as she headed for the door, SUV keys in hand; "And thank you"

"Here!" called Ange, tossing Dylan a cereal bar; "Keep your strength up! You're going to need it..."

As the sound of the SUV receded into the night, Ange Finch reached for her own phone.

"Hi... can I speak to Lieutenant Leeds please?"

THE END

OBITUARY:

JACQUELINE PEARCE

The actor Jacqueline Pearce, who has died of lung cancer aged 74, was well known to a generation of television viewers thanks to the smouldering intensity and depth she brought to her role as the vampish space villain Servalan in the popular BBC science fiction series *Blakes 7* (1978-81). Created by Terry Nation, *Blakes 7* concerned a morally ambiguous bunch of rebels led by Roj Blake (Gareth Thomas) pursued by the forces of a totalitarian government known as the Federation.

Initially brought in for a single episode, Pearce did such a good job as the evil regime's coolly calculating Supreme Commander that she became a recurring character and the show's main villain. With her striking looks, cropped jet black hair and propensity to stride across the universe in glamorous attire (which the naturally elegant Pearce carried off effortlessly and with a perfectly judged level of camp), Servalan was no stereotypical evildoer. Pearce augmented the character's ruthlessness with a damaged sensuality and an undercurrent of vulnerability. Years later she was delighted to receive letters from (now grown-up) viewers telling her that Servalan had been the object of their first teenage crush.

She was born in Woking, Surrey, the daughter of Stella and Reginald Pearce. Her father worked at the Vickers Armstrong aircraft factory nearby in Weybridge, and Jacqueline was brought up in Byfleet, where the family shared their home with another couple, May and George Wilcox. Stella walked out when Jacqueline was 16 months old, and the Wilcoxes shared parental responsibility with Reginald.

Jacqueline was educated at the Marist Convent, West Byfleet. Although she found her schooldays traumatic, a lay teacher at the convent opened her eyes to drama by giving her elocution lessons and taking her to the theatre. After an unsuccessful stint at secretarial college, she won a place at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London where her contemporaries included John Hurt (who became a friend for life) and Anthony Hopkins.

On graduation, she secured the services of a good agent and television parts came quickly – the first in a 1964 ITV *Play of the Week* starring Ian McShane and Hurt. It also featured her husband, the actor Drewe Henley, whom she had met when he directed her in a short film while she was at Rada: they had married within nine months, in 1963.

Pearce quickly broke into films, featuring prominently in the Hammer horrors *The Plague of the Zombies* (1966 – her character's rise from the grave memorably ended in decapitation by shovel at the hands of André Morell) and *The Reptile* (1966, playing the title role). Other films included *Don't Lose Your Head* (1967, from the Carry On... team), *Don't Raise the Bridge, Lower the River* (1968, in which she starred alongside Jerry Lewis, Bernard Cribbins and Terry-Thomas), *White Mischief* (1987), Bruce Robinson's *How to Get Ahead in Advertising* (1989) and *Princess Caraboo* (1994).

After her marriage to Henley ended in 1967 (and he subsequently married Felicity Kendal), she took an impetuous sabbatical in Hollywood. She studied at the Lee Strasberg Actors Studio in Los Angeles and worked as a receptionist for her friend Sammy Davis Jr (whom she had met when they worked on adjacent sound stages while he was filming in the UK). When she returned home, she felt her career had stalled, but her extensive body of television work in the UK included guest spots in *The Avengers* (1966), *Public Eye* (1966), *Man in a Suitcase* (1967-68), *Callan* (1969), *Hadleigh* (1973), *Special Branch* (1974), the BBC Shakespeare series (*Measure for Measure* in 1979), *Doctor Who* (1985) and *Casualty* (2006).

Further roles included a performance of sad beauty as Rosa Dartle in the BBC's 1974-75 production of *David Copperfield* and a pair of memorable fantasies aimed at a younger audience – *Moondial* (1988, in which she played a dual role) and *Dark Season* (1991, an early success for Russell T Davies that starred Kate Winslet).

Her theatre work included West End appearances in Harold Pinter's production of Simon Gray's *Otherwise Engaged* (Queen's theatre, 1975) and JB Priestley's *Dangerous Corner* (Garrick theatre, 2001), and an Edinburgh fringe run of her one woman show *A Star Is Torn* (1999).

During a break in her career she moved to South Africa for several years, initially to care for orphaned monkeys. In her autobiography *From Byfleet to the Bush* (2012), she was candid about her struggles with mental health. She nevertheless remained a glamorous force of nature – even when hard up and between jobs she would cash her dole cheque and immediately head to the West End to buy champagne.

She maintained her links with cult fiction by reprising the role of Servalan for CD releases of *Blakes 7* (2012-18) and starring alongside Hurt in a series of *Doctor Who* adventures (2015-17), both for the audio company Big Finish.

A second marriage also ended in divorce.

• **Jacqueline Kay Pearce, actor, born 20 December 1943; died 3 September 2018** •

***Obituary* © Toby Hadoke; printed in The Guardian 4 September 2018.
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Oh Baby, Thank You For That

- A tribute to Jacqueline Pearce -

It still doesn't seem possible to me that Jacqueline Pearce has died. Despite her fragile appearance, she always seemed to me indestructible. I knew she was living on borrowed time: after all, she was a heavy smoker and had had two run-ins with that evil overlord, Cancer. Yet I find the thought that she is no longer with us unbelievable, so identified is she in my mind with Servalan; a character whose fate at the end of *Blake's 7* is not revealed.

Servalan probably wasn't even Jacqueline's greatest role. Rose Dartle in the BBC production of *David Copperfield* was a part she was born to play and she performed it with extraordinary power. She was a most moving Marianne in *Measure for Measure*. And I am still haunted by her grotesque Chessene in *The Two Doctors*. But Servalan is the performance that most identifies her for me.

How like the character she was in real life it's impossible for me to know...I only met her twice...but she herself said that the character was born from her own, "dodgy psyche", so it's reasonable to assume that Servalan embodied many of her qualities.

Servalan, though a bit of a monster, had much to offer as a role model for women. Her appearance lifted the dullest episode: she sparkled, even when dressed in feathers and made up to look like a drag queen (her description of herself in *Traitor*). Style and personality could triumph over bad makeup, unflattering design or perhaps even genetic inheritance. I found this a useful reminder that looks aren't everything; particularly as I have never shared Ms Pearce's ethereal beauty – a beauty that still graced her, even in her twilight years.

But it was her unapologetic demeanour as Servalan that I most relished.

Servalan owned her actions and accepted their consequences without self-pity or recrimination. She didn't need to be reminded that she wanted to survive, as Blake did in *Seek Locate Destroy*...she never doubted it. "Where there's life, there's threat!"

encapsulated not only how she viewed the rest of the world, but what she saw as her purpose: she lived to destroy anyone who was against her, and that was, potentially, anybody. And she had the same self-belief in the rightness of her actions as all the men I ever worked with, seeing no need to justify what she did. This was revelatory to me as a young woman trying to assert herself in a mainly male work environment and discovering that the place for such a woman was usually in the wrong.

Ms Pearce and I had both grown up in a religious atmosphere (not within the family but at school) and were over-familiar with guilt so Servalan's attitude was refreshing. And while I didn't aim to copy her murderous intentions, watching her did make me question the usefulness of guilt and whether I too might enjoy life more if I didn't carry the stuff around with me. How Jacks must have relished the opportunity to play the role of a powerful leader unaffected by such missish feelings. Up yours Reverend Mother, indeed!

Not that Jack's portrayal of Servalan lacked subtlety. It would have been so easy for Servalan to have become a pantomime dame and indeed in the awful audio adventure, *The Sevenfold Crown*, that's exactly how Jacks played her. But given a nuanced script, she always managed to hint at the vulnerability and damage that lay beneath Servalan's steely surface. *Sand* by Tanith Lee saw her at her luminous best, but even in the potentially ludicrous *Children of Auron*, Jacks acted the psychic miscarriage that her character undergoes with attack, poignancy and truth. In *Seek, Locate and Destroy*, her first appearance, she moves so effortlessly between seduction, political cunning, vindictive rage and moral certainty, that it's astonishing. There is nothing predictable about the Supreme Commander she creates, except the certainty that she will come out on top.

My personal connection with Jacks occurred in a draughty hall in Peterborough at a convention; only the second I had attended. I had been briefed that she liked to be addressed as Jacqueline or Jacks but never Jackie, but I had not been told how tiny she was. I waited for her to arrive at the

signing desk (presumably she had popped out for a fag) and an elfin figure, cocooned in what I seem to remember was a fur coat, came smiling towards me.

“Oh baby,” she beamed, holding out her hands, “have I kept you waiting? Thank you!”

“*Baby!*” I was seventy, overweight and far from glamorous. I couldn’t help but reflect that the years had been much kinder to her than they had to me, despite her illnesses. Yet instantly I felt as if I shared some of her glamour and sparkle, as if I was one of her intimate gang.

I think I remember the fur coat...I’m almost certain she was wearing one...but since such a coat has featured in some of the more ribald accounts of Jack’s life as told by her fellow actors, I can’t be certain. But if she did, she must have been fully clothed under it...I’m sure about that....well, pretty sure.

“Fur coat anecdotes”, and there are many in circulation about Jacks, have, for me, become symbolic of what she was: her truth if you like. Warm, comforting, luxurious on the surface: stark naked underneath, and prepared to expose this to the world. Her autobiography, *From Byfleet to the Bush* is so uncompromising that it hurts to read it. Yet it also demonstrates the wicked humour and self-awareness with

which she faced a world that had not been kind to her, stripping away her own pretensions and confronting ours. “Take me or leave me,” seems to have been her mantra.

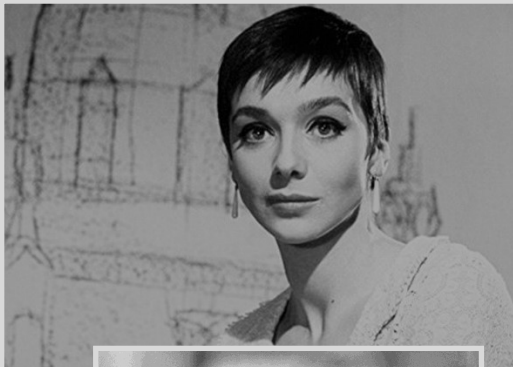
Everyone that knew Jacqueline agrees that she was a one-off human being, more at ease with animals than people, finding her happiness first in the African bush caring for orphaned monkeys and later, with her beloved dogs. It’s comforting to know that her final years were some of the most serene she had enjoyed. I feel privileged to have had the force of nature that was Jacqueline Pearce as a brief part of my personal life. And of course she has left us with one of the most iconic female characters in Science Fiction to enjoy.

For me, while Servalan lives on screen and in my memory, then Jacqueline too, remains alive, her creation conveying a kind of immortality to her as an actress and a person.

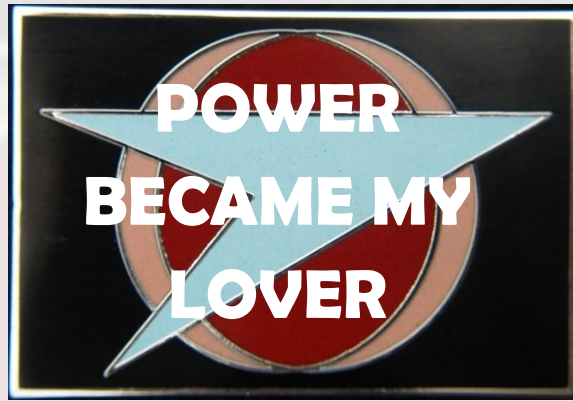
And, oh, baby, I thank you for that.



Annie Worrall



“Call me Jacks.”
The many faces of Jacqueline Pearce



A Blakes 7 Fanfic

by Annie Worrall

**Let me count the ways (let me count the ways)
How I'll get you (I'll get you)**

"I think I prefer to keep them as they are.....Ma'am." The pause was just long enough to be insolent but not long enough to be classed as out-right insubordination. "I'm sure my father would support my choice."

"Your father?" Major Kasabi's response was automatic. She knew full well who the cadet's father was.

"Councillor Servalan...." The girl raised her eyes to meet Kasabi's, dropping them almost immediately before it constituted a full blown challenge. She held her slight figure ramrod straight and her hands, held out in front of her to display her long, blood red nails, did not tremble.

"Ah yes...Councillor Servalan. The longest serving member of the Senate. The President's Eminence Grisse. And your father. I believe you may have mentioned him previously. You have my assurance that there is little chance of my forgetting who you are.." Kasabi was gratified to hear a hastily suppressed titter from the other cadets. "Well if *Councillor Servalan* supports your decision..." she paused for several seconds, "we will have to see how you fare assembling a gun. Cadets, stand down and move to your seats."

While her orders were being obeyed, Kasabi considered the enigma that was Cadet Servalan. She had the recent edict prohibiting nepotistic appointments to thank for her presence. After Colonel Fletch's disastrous campaign against the Wasis it was clear that something needed to change. Old Star Killer had insisted on that before agreeing to move in and clear up the mess. Fletch was a disaster waiting to happen. He had achieved his military eminence only because he was the President's nephew. But no one had expected the massacre of his entire expedition through his incompetence. In fact, had the Wasis been a little more than gill-breathing savages, they might have made use of the fleet of ships and the T16 troop carrier left on the planet and caused serious harm to the Federation.

So now, Alpha elites, even those as well connected as Servalan, were expected to start their military career in the Cadet Core and prove their worth, like ordinary Alphas, before receiving promotion. It remained to be seen if the initiative was anything more than a paper exercise.

Suppressing a sigh, Kasabi turned her attention to her class.

"Now this," she explained, holding up the latest in long range weaponry, "is a Mark 20. I expect you to learn to dismantle and reassemble it in under a minute. Watch carefully."

‘You're stickin' safety pins inside my atrium

“So I had to fail her. Everyone else finished well within the time. She just flailed about with those ridiculous nails. Eventually she dropped the bloody thing on the floor while my back was turned and blamed Lara Mortaine. Claimed she’d jogged her arm. When I didn’t buy it, a couple of the other Cadets protested on her behalf but I refused to back down. Male cadets of course. I’m pretty sure she’d seduced them.”

“Inventive.”

“That’s one word for it. I’m less charitable. But I’m forgetting.... you used to have a bit of a thing for her, didn’t you?”

“ Briefly. Over two years ago.”

“Briefly?”

“Three months. The magic wore off quickly.” Don Keller took a slow sip of his adrenaline, absently stroking Kasabi’s shoulder as she snuggled against him on the couch. “For me at least..”

“But there was magic?”

“As I said...she’s inventive...very beautiful and utterly ruthless. Oh it was subtle...little references to her family’s pedigree... one of the founding families you know. Hints about her father’s power if I did something that displeased her. Eighteen years old and spoiled rotten. Dangerous. I got out before it was too late.”

“So no regrets?”

“None. I find there’s a lot to be said for age and experience.” He bent down and gave her a kiss.

“You do realise this is just a pleasant diversion?”

“Yes. I seem to have ricocheted from a lover who wanted me, body, soul and breath, to one who’s true love is her vocation.”

Irritably, Kasabi pulled away from his embrace. “It’s all I’ve got, Don. If it’s not enough you’ll have to look elsewhere..”

Babe, I'm hurtin' (I'm hurtin') And now you'll feel the same (feel the same) That's my plan

“ We have noted your concerns but do not feel at this stage that there is sufficient evidence to investigate them.”

Kasabi entered the training room, so lost in her thoughts that she barely registered the cadets standing crisply to attention.

Once again her concerns about Servalan had been dismissed.

“Sit, “ she ordered absently.

Too fearful of her powerful father to take action. The Service she loved was being taken over by venal opportunists and degenerate fools. There was even talk that they were thinking of promoting Travis...Travis...a mad dog if ever there was one. No wonder Alpha grades were rebelling. No-one cared any more.

“Major.” The honeyed voice broke into Kasabi’s reverie. She looked up and as expected, the subject of much of it was gazing directly at her with that demure, yet slightly contemptuous expression she wore habitually. “Is there a problem, Ma’am? We are waiting eagerly for you to begin.” Servalan smiled, brilliantly but insincerely. “Of course,” she continued, “ if you are unwell....”

“Thank you, Cadet.” Kasabi spoke more sharply than she had intended and Servalan looked down at her manicured nails and flexed them provocatively. “Get out your rederiters. The topic under discussion...”

Kasabi activated her own device and the topic flashed up. *It is inevitable that the newly proposed retraining therapy will result in command officers acting on their orders without judgement or restraint. Discuss.*

"You are to research this topic for the next twenty minutes. Pros and Cons. You know the system. Then we'll hear what you've each got to say on the subject. You must take account of the Articles of the Jupiter Convention about humanitarian Warfare as well as the need for discipline within the service. Links to appropriate sites will appear on your screens. Any questions?"

Predictably, Servalan raised her hand.

"May I ask, " she said, barely bothering now to sound polite, "why you are requiring us to discuss current policy? I thought these lessons were about the history of Space Command. Current policy is hardly history, is it? I'm asking for clarification...Ma'am."

"We are studying it because it's my job to ensure that potential officers understand the proud traditions that underpin our Service and that they think carefully about initiatives that may or not threaten those traditions," Kasabi snapped back. "And because, as your superior officer, I am telling you to. Is that clarification enough for you? Last words. Please get on with it."

Kasabi glared at the class until each cadet had settled to the task and then picked up her own rederiter. Perhaps if she contacted Colonel Samur with her concern. At least Old Star Killer....

"Permission to speak....Ma'am." Again that fractional pause, and Servalan was on her feet now. This time the challenge was open.

"Denied. You have your instructions."

The fleeting expression that passed over Servalan's delicate features was so virulent in its anger that Kasabi was taken aback. Don was right. Something had twisted the girl's nature. She thought of her own daughter. What would she have to experience to make her so full of hatred as this girl seemed to be? So determined to win at all costs? She felt a moment of pity for Servalan. "Respectfully," the young cadet continued, in a manner anything but respectful, effectively quashing any impulse Kasabi felt to reach out to her. "RespectfullyMa'am....I refuse."

Damn the girl. Did she want to be put on a charge?

"And your reason for this insubordination?"

"I refuse to follow an instruction I regard as treasonable."

"Wha...?" Kasabi choked back her appalled laugh. She steadied herself. "That is a very strong accusation, Cadet. You'd better have good evidence if you are to continue with it."

"I'm just giving you my honest opinion, Ma'am. Isn't that what you expect of us? I'm not accusing you." Servalan smiled, her large eyes wide and guileless. "Yet", she added, too quietly for Kasabi to hear.

This is war

"Well I've submitted my report again. Totally unsuitable for command. I just hope they listen this time." Kasabi leaned forward across the table to emphasise her point.

Don looked troubled. "Don't put your neck out too far. Her family are bad enemies."

"You're not saying that I should put her forward? Damn it, Don. Things are bad enough as it is with Travis rampaging about. If creatures like her take charge as well .. Who knows how far she is capable of going?"

"Just thinking of you, Bel. I won't be around to protect you when I go to Virn...."

"Don't kid yourself. I've never needed protecting. What we had...it was fun...a lot of fun, but you can leave for Virn without a single regret."

"Oh can I? I'm suddenly to be sent off to the back of beyond and all you can say is, "it's been fun!" You frighten me sometimes Bel...you're too like her..."

"Like Servalan? Thank's very much. If I thought you meant that..."

"Oh don't get me wrong. You're everything she isn't... upright...decent... principled. But you're two halves of the same coin...you care for different things but you both care too much..."

"I thought I didn't care enough!"

"For me..."

"Oh for you! I care as much as you want me to, Don. I'm too old for you and you're not exactly the commitment type."

"Let's not start that argument again."

"I've said I'll be here when you get back. That's if the lovely Gina hasn't claimed your affections in the meantime."

"Mmmm. We'll have to see." Don's foot found her leg under the table and began softly rubbing it, his eyes glinting mischievously. Kasabi closed her eyes in momentary pleasure.

"Veron has combat practice. We have at least an hour. I gather you're interested so shall we leave?"

"I thought you'd never ask. I can hardly ravish you here in the mess hall."

"Mmm, ravish. I like the sound of that." Smiling, she bent to pick up her ditch bag. "You may be right though, there is some sort of connection between us."

"Connection...? Oh you're still on about Servalan. Besides the desire to ravish me, you mean?"

"Get over yourself... Not everything revolves around you men. We're both strong women ...that's the connection.... In a way she loves the Service as much as I do but for very different reasons. It's a shame we seem to be on opposite sides."

Well, in the beginning we felt like it was meant to be I fell for you and skinned my knee

My Dearest Don,

Kasabi is dead. I killed her myself. I wonder how you would have reacted if I'd found you alive and told you that? You see, while you were dying here on Virn she left the service and took up with a rebel group. After I'd ended her career of course. I need hardly add that I took great pleasure in executing her. Slowly.

I had so hoped to find you still living. Your death has robbed me of the opportunity to tell you what it did to me when you left. I did tell her. I whispered it in her ear as I watched her die. I would have so enjoyed hurling it in your face as well - seeing your expression when you learned that it was my father that sent you on this mission and made sure you'd be abandoned here, just as I'd been abandoned. Because I asked him to. Did you really think that I'd leave you and that bitch you took up with to enjoy yourselves together? At least I am sure now of your death. Another mission accomplished.

Oh Don. When you were mine, it was the first time in my life that I'd ever felt I was loved... Loved not for what I could be but for what I was. Surrounded by love.

Do you know how that made me feel?

It made me feel protected and safe. I discovered my true self because of your protection. I felt my spirit renew as you caressed me. I believed I was capable of anything.

And then you ripped it all apart and left me naked in the cold. So very cold...

Did you suffer here on Virn? I hope you did. I hope your dying breaths hurt you like hell. I hope it felt like being opened up slowly by claws. Because that's how it was for me when you left me.

You can save your pity though. I'm not going to thank you for it Don, any more than I thanked your whore Kasabi, but together you made me what I am today. The Steel Queen, they call me, now. And yes I am strong. Very strong. But do you know where that strength comes from?

I'm strong because I'm still just the girl next door. The girl I was when you loved me. The girl who loved you back with all her heart and you betrayed. The girl who learned from you both that power is far stronger than love and a much more reliable protector.

The girl who became Supreme Commander of Space Command while you and your whore perished in miserable wastelands, forgotten and alone.

Revenge is so very, very sweet, my love. So very sweet.

Your own *Servalan*.





Artwork © Westley James Smith

Going to that anniversary convention? Got everything a *Blakes 7* fan ever dreams of, so they say...



Staged 28th to 30th September 2018 at Brentford Lock, London

Report by Annie Worrall

My fourth visit to one of Ian Kubiak's Conventions (fifth if you count *An Afternoon with Josette Simon*). Each convention had been special in its own way but not for the faint hearted. Queuing ...endless queuing (particularly at Cygnus Alpha 2 when Paul Darrow's autograph lines threatened to spill over into the next week.)

This one was a three day affair. Would it be different?

Well yes and no.

The unexpected death of Jacqueline Pearce just 25 days before she was to star at the event, inevitably affected our feelings and expectations and could have cast a pall over proceedings. In fact it had the reverse effect. It made us all the more determined to celebrate *Blakes 7's* 40 years wholeheartedly while some of the original cast are still with us, and the energy and fun factors were high.

It helped that the venue for the event was so nice: a suite comprising five rooms and spacious corridors in a hotel overlooking an attractive canal, and a far cry from the slightly claustrophobic setting of the other conventions. Queuing was at a minimum and the seating for panels comfortable ...though I did miss the raked seats of earlier conventions. Dealers rooms (I was selling, but more of that later) and a wonderful display of costumes, props and models offered something to do between panels besides waiting to be called for photo shoots or autographs. And a large, if pretty expensive, bar and restaurant area made it easy to catch up with friends and chat to new acquaintances.

But some things hadn't changed at all: the kindness and professionalism of Ian, Jo and their helpers; the affability of the guests; the friendliness of the fans; all that was worthy of the highest of high fives. And taking the experience to the next level was the quality of the treats on offer:

The Panels... Brilliant panels.

The interview with Josette Simon.

The Tribute to Jacqueline Pearce.

The videos of Jacks and the cast of *Blakes 7*.

The presentation on special effects by *Making of Blakes 7*.

Throw in an appearance by Servalan and Travis and Mueller's robot and, (forgive the cliché) I was in *Blakes 7*'s seventh heaven.



Robert Dick on his trade stand, chatting to Paula Black, wife of G.T.L.W.R. contributor Brad Black

Where to start? Perhaps with the first panel with guest actors from the series, which was way more interesting than I'd anticipated. John Leeson was in great form, admitting that the headdress he'd had to wear as Toise, was exceptionally heavy and hard to wear and that he and Aubrey Woods had between them decided to give camp a bad name. Sasha Mitchell told us that Jacqueline Pearce regarded Arlen as her daughter (bit of a revelation that) and Gillian McCutcheon, nothing like the cold, evil Kostos in real life, stated that she'd never met Jacqueline despite having shared a big scene with her as the Liberator broke up! Sally Harrison and Judy Matheson, both glamorous still despite the passage of years, recalled the hardships of the shooting locations and Gillian remembered her naïveté in agreeing to perform her stunt only to realise that it would actually involve falling quite a distance.

We also learned that John is a wine buff and has a book out describing his visits to various vineyards. This great opening was followed by the eagerly anticipated Evening with Josette Simon. I thought it might be a repeat of the previous interview she had given with Ian Kubiak but this was very different. In that interview she had been gracious but a little guarded and measured in what she was prepared to

reveal. Here she was relaxed, playful, thoroughly enjoying her time with her fans.

After an insightful discussion about her acting career and her attitude to being a "black actress" (she regards herself as an actress who is black), she entertained us with some deaf sign language, which she has taught herself. There was a great joke when she pointed out the absurdity of signing 'Down and Safe' when the recipients would be unable to see her. But the biggest laugh came at the end, when someone asked her what she would like her obituary to be and another audience member shouted out, "Down and Safe."

Not so funny was her account of playing Cleopatra at the Royal Shakespeare Company and being struck on the head by a heavy throne as it descended from the wings. Incredibly, she had carried on with the performance against doctor's advice, finding that the adrenaline rush of being on stage enabled her to transcend the pain. Somehow that seemed to sum her up.

Josette also revealed that she had been very close to Jacks, living with her in her flat and on her houseboat. Jacks had been professionally supportive of Josette, helping the inexperienced actress cope on set, and in turn she had supported Jacks emotionally during some difficult times. She recounted helping Jacks pack for her trip to LA and the high hopes Jacks entertained of breaking into Hollywood. Sadly this was not to be, perhaps Josette mused, because she had just missed the era of the Hollywood Grande Dames, among whom she would have triumphed.

Such an entertaining evening in the company of an endlessly youthful, impressive person.

That was only day one, and it's obvious that doing justice to every panel will involve writing a book, so I'm afraid you'll have to be content with the highlights.



Gillian McCutcheon as Kostos, performing her own stunt in the B7 episode *Terminal*

The Directors, Designers and Constructors panel was fascinating because it became clear what a struggle it was for Michael Bryant, Vivian Cozins, Brian Lighthill and Andrew Morgan to deliver their episodes on time and for the model makers and designers to keep up with the demands of the scripts. Roger Murray Leech apparently constructed the Liberator in his sitting room and an elaborate matte painting shot set up by Andrew Morgan in *Children of Auron* was ruined by a tiny fly. Michael Bryant spoke about how serious the cast had been during the filming of season A, whereas directors of later episodes recalled a more relaxed and jokey atmosphere.

A wonderfully ribald panel followed. We learned a good deal about Hard Core Leather, a Soho establishment that supplied most of the cast's leather outfits and June Hudson's outrage (persisting, unabated, to this day) when the spikes of the infamous Avon red lobster outfit were removed without her knowledge by David Maloney. Judith Cross was revealed as one of the principle reasons why *Blakes 7* fandom is still going strong. She was the Producer's Secretary during the making of the series and took it upon herself to answer fan letters and provide additional material to the fans. Without her, fan clubs like Horizon would have struggled. Ralph Wilton proved something of a star, naughtily entertaining us about his time as Production Manager. All spoke with affection about Jacks and shared several eye raising stories about her. In fact 'fur coats and no knickers' was a bit of a theme throughout the panels! But June's memory seemed best to sum up the phenomenon that was Jacqueline Pearce when she told us that it became a tradition for Jacqueline to make a grand on set appearance in each new costume, to the applause and appreciation of the crew.

Saturday evening saw many of us sitting down to dinner with the stars. In truth, the dinner itself was not very memorable but we were treated to more, extremely moving tributes to Jacks and shown

footage of a previously unseen interview she gave shortly after her return to England for cancer treatment. And then Jonathon Helm, the man behind the tweet phenomenon, *Making Blakes 7*, gave us an informative, dazzling presentation of the trials, tribulations and triumphs of the special effects team responsible for creating the series' universe.

In addition to the above goodies, there was a smashing display of costumes, models and props to enjoy and, as I mentioned previously, both Servalan and the robot from *Headhunter* made an appearance (the latter, surprisingly, more scary than Madame President). The sellers' room was crammed full of goodies: fanzines and news letters from the Horizon Fan Club, art work, books, the Myth Makers/KOCH MEDIA *Blake's 7 DVD*, and *Blake's Legacy: 40 years of rebellion*, a new book in which fans write about what the series has meant to them. My fellow editor Jackie and I were responsible for selling the latter (the third editor, Susan had unfortunately succumbed to a virus), and we had a lovely time between interviews, meeting its contributors and other fans.

Throughout the two proceeding days, the actors, directors and background boys and girls that, sadly, are no longer with us, or had been prevented from attending through work commitments or ill-health, had never-the-less been given a presence at the convention through the stories about them that the guests shared with us. Vere Lorrimer and David Maloney received due praise for their unique contributions; the work of Ian Scoones and his team (did he really make himself a waistcoat from a dead cat he found in the street?) was celebrated, and the sad loss of Gareth, Jacqueline, David and Peter acknowledged.

Sunday was a day for both new beginnings and tributes to the passing of the old guard. The Big Finish team were there in force, gladdening us with a promise of continuing adventures for the crew; Wendy and Stuart Jackson (as huge as his father) were there to remind us of David's contribution to the series' success, as was Julian, son of the incomparable Peter Tuddenham.

And then the main event, the arrival of the stars, an entrance enlivened by some pantomime villainy from Travis 2.

This final panel with Jan Chapel, Brian Croucher, Stephen Grief, Michael Keating, Sally Knyvette, Yasmin Bannerman and Alistair Locke was both melancholy and life affirming. Each spoke feelingly about the recent loss of Jacqueline, and paid tribute to her excellent acting. Each confirmed their commitment to carrying on their *Blakes 7* roles in Big Finish productions and their enjoyment at working with each other again. And each, generously, paid tribute to us, their fans. It was a funny, sad, and ultimately uplifting half an hour.



A heartfelt toast to the memory of Jacqueline Pearce

But perhaps the thing I shall take away from the convention was the number of young people in attendance, some cosplaying the characters, some writing scripts for Big Finish. The engaging Yasmin Bannerman, who is boosting her career by playing Dayna for Big Finish. The Johnny Who Entertainments team, heroically dressed in full leather Federation Guard and Mutant gear, there to promote their video, *Athena*, which pits the might of the Federation in the shape of Servalan's (and judging by the leather, Avon's) daughter against Unit and the second Doctor Who. Great stuff!

Jaqueline would have been so chuffed to realise that her legacy will continue in the hands of the next generation for at least another 40 years!

I didn't win any of the tempting goodies being auctioned, but I went home with a bag full of zines, books, autographs and pictures, a head buzzing with memories, and a heart bursting with the affection of my fellow fans, and the friendliness of all the guests.

A truly wonderful Convention. In fact everything this *Blakes 7* fan had wished for!



The Guest Panel. L to R: Michael Keating (Vila), Jan Chappel (Cally), Stephen Grief (Travis Mark 1), Alistair Lock, (Zen/Orac in the Big Finish audios) Yasmin Bannerman (Dayna in the Big Finish audios), Sally Knyvette (Jenna), Brian Croucher (Travis Mark 2)

DOCTOR WHO

YEAR THREE

September 1965 to June 1966

By September 1965, Doctor Who had been in production for close on two years—quite an achievement for any drama series outside of the soap opera genre. Not only that, but the Saturday teatime favourite was actually on air for 42 weeks out of 52, which made for an exhausting schedule for all involved in the production, not least its leading man William Hartnell, who was beginning to show signs of the ill-health which would eventually lead to him handing the TARDIS key over to his successor.

Also, the show's Producer, Verity Lambert, having championed the series against great opposition from the BBC bosses and other departments and, like Hartnell, showed unwavering faith in its ability to continue, was keen to move on to new projects. Her departure undoubtedly hit Hartnell hard, as her successor, the scholarly John Wiles, had a different vision for the show's direction, which put him at odds with its irascible star. The clashes between Wiles and Hartnell became the stuff worthy of a TV drama itself. The fact that Wiles didn't want the gig in the first place and treated the show as unworthy of his talents did not endear him to Hartnell.

Memorably, Wiles delivered an ultimatum to BBC bosses along the lines of: "Either Hartnell goes or I go." This led to the show's third Producer Innes Lloyd being appointed in short order with a brief to get the ship back on a steady course...

For a show that dealt with travel to the past and the far future, its own present relied heavily on its past glories such as the Daleks, which were already beginning to lose their lustre with fans. As the show entered its third full year, its future was in question...

Perhaps this is reflected in the fact that Season Three fares worst in the BBC archives, with the greatest number of complete stories and parts of stories being missing.

Thankfully, telesnaps taken by the late John Cura and a handful of BBC publicity photos, give a visual reminder of these missing stories. Thankfully, off-air audio recordings made by fans at the time, coupled with lovingly recreated official audios and fan recons allow us to still experience those lost gems from Doctor Who's third year...

Galaxy 4

It was perhaps appropriate that the final story created under Verity Lambert, as the show's original producer, should be about a strong female leader who is responsible for trying to achieve the impossible, though perhaps interpreting the Rills as analogous of the BBC Board might be a step too far. The central idea of *Galaxy 4* is a good one. The subversion of two popular fiction tropes, that glamorous women equals desirability and terrifying monsters equal evil and menace, should have been a fascinating exercise, but the execution never quite matches the intention. The Rills never appear to be a threat, the design team subverting the subversion by giving the frightening alien monsters cute robots, and the Drahvins are too cold and hostile for the trick to work properly. Even Steven, who should form some kind of emotional attachment in order for the comment on 50s/60s popular SF to be effective, does not see these 'Amazons in Space' as good company. However, whatever the failings of the serial might be, Stephanie Bidmead as Maaga is notable as one of those great non-recurring guest performances that made *Doctor Who* essential Saturday evening viewing in the pre-colour era.



The Chumbliens from *Galaxy Four* never gained the popularity of the Daleks...

The Myth Makers

This story can be seen as many things, though it is frustratingly one of those lost serials that cannot in practice be seen at all. It works as a comedic farce, as the '*Doctor Who* version' of a classic work of fiction, as a nod to the play *Troilus and Cressida* by William Shakespeare based on the same original source, as a tragedy with a final act that might subvert an

audience' expectations in the manner of its telling, and it works within the context of how the show has often treated history in order to make it engaging and entertaining for all ages. But, in the context of film and television history, this play also works as a parody of the great cinematic historical epics, specifically *Helen of Troy*. *Doctor Who* spoofing the cinema of its age has always been a creative theme; Epics, Westerns and tales of smugglers or Highland Clans in the 60s, Hammer Horror and the similar works of other studios in the 70s, Space Fantasy in the 80s, and variously *Harry Potter*, *Twilight* and Comic Book Superheroes in the modern era. Perhaps it is in this tradition that *The Myth Makers* can be remembered as having the greatest relevance to the show holistically rather than as a missing curiosity?



**"Shh! Keep the noise down in here or we'll never fool 'em!"
In which the Doctor becomes a mythical Horse Whisperer...**

The Daleks' Master Plan

By virtue of how stories were blocked for production reasons, this sequence of adventures have for many years been considered as a single story. Looked at objectively, however, the serial we call *The Daleks' Master Plan* is actually a collection of narratives that foreshadowed the format of modern day *Doctor Who* in many ways. It begins with a single episode, starring a guest character who takes on the main role for one episode only in the manner of Sally Sparrow, that is also reminiscent of the 'prequels' that now offer an online taster of a story to follow. This leads into a six episode story by Terry Nation, with one episode by Dennis Spooner, telling of the events on Kembel in which Sara becomes a travelling companion of the Doctor

and Steven. Viewers then enjoyed a stand-alone Christmas Special, followed by a five part adventure by Dennis Spooner that was a chase through space and time similar to *The Chase* in season two. These four stories are linked; three feature the Daleks and three feature the Doctor and his companions, but not the same three (excepting lead-ins to next episodes). The first Dalek adventure featuring the Doctor is totally different to the second apart from being linked by recurring characters and a plot-arc, in modern terms, about a new item of Dalek technology.



Sara Kingdom: A new companion for the Doctor. This might not end well...



Told you so!



... Didn't do the Daleks much good, either!

By linking the separate stories by means of story arcs and recurring characters like Sara Kingdom and Mavic Chen, plus a prequel and a special, and by making this the very best *Doctor Who* 'event television' in the classic era, this dark and complex but also very humorous story is so close to present day expectations that it really is a shame that it can no longer be experienced in full on-screen.

The Massacre

Before there was *Blink* or *Turn Left*, we had *The Massacre*. It has been said of the 1960s adventures in the past that none were true historical stories as all featured time travel and, with the Doctor, an alien character visiting from another world. But here, even that latter component is missing. Steven Taylor is a time traveller but one without any prior knowledge of events, and fits into the narrative in very much the same way as a contemporary character would.

The story is a masterpiece, one that is not really mourned in the same way as *Master Plan* but no less worthy of appreciation. Complex, full of characters with identifiable motivation and purpose, driven by a sense of urgency and danger, and with a human angle too, this was a great period drama whether it was labelled as *Doctor Who* or not and would have graced any broadcast schedule. The cast too was impressive, with talented actors in every part of the plot. You could say that *Doctor Who: The Massacre* was what Irwin Allen show *The Time Tunnel* should have been like, but wasn't...



Steven joins the conspirators in 'The Massacre'

The Ark

The Ark continues the trend begun earlier in the season of dividing larger productions into separate, smaller stories that are linked by common elements and therefore share production costs but which offer greater narrative versatility. The story that we call *The Ark* and label as a four-part serial is, in reality, two linked short stories in a 45/50-minute format. Apart from the setting of the ark itself, the two tales share no characters or plot and work perfectly well in isolation. Taken as a whole, the two stories combined tell a tale that probably would not make it into the modern show. The themes of fear and anxiety about the dangers of raising an inferior and subservient race to the point of being able to take control away from their masters was probably on the xenophobic side even for the mid-1960s, and it is unlikely that a comparison with post-war colonial independence was anything more than subconscious in the mind of the writer. Yet, undeniably, it is a plot idea that would not reach the script stage in a modern episode of the show, with the self-governance of the Monoids here portrayed as a bad and dangerous state of affairs from every angle, and the message of 'teach them your language today and arm yourselves tomorrow' pretty clear throughout.



"Ark at that! Go and investigate what it is, Number 3."

"Eye-eye, Number 1!"

The Celestial Toymaker

This is a serial that divides fans somewhat, though it used to hold a status of 'lost treasure' without any argument in days of fandom past. Perhaps it is because the

concept here is simply too clever for the story's own good, in much the same way as *The Mind Robber*, and, at some point, the dream has to end and normality (in-Universe normality, that is) must resume. Add these two stories together, mix in a bit of *Amy's Choice* and *The God Complex*, and you might have something along the lines of the US show *Once Upon A Time*. And therein lies the reason why the strength of *Toymaker* is also its weakness, in that the idea is so good and so huge and virtually limitless that it's a concept worthy of its own show. The demands of being part of a *Doctor Who* season mean that the games must have a vulnerability that can be exposed relatively quickly, a villain that can be defeated despite the almost god-like qualities of his and his domain's premise, and there has to be a goal or endgame, whereas a feeling of hopeless futility, and coming to terms with it, is the real driving force of this kind of drama. The realm of the Toymaker is too good to only see once, deserving a visual realisation comparable with the War Zones in season six, and maybe that is why modern fandom is torn between feelings of wonder and disappointment?



"Of course it's all fun and games until somebody gets hurt."



Is the Toymaker just clowning around or is he up to something more sinister?

The Gunfighters

To understand what is going on before your eyes when watching this story, it is vital to put it within its historical context as drama and not that of its period setting. It seems odd, now that crime, post-*Star Wars* space fantasy, occult fantasy, and swords and sorcery have dominated mainstream film and television for decades, to think that a whole generation grew up through the 1940s and 1950s in which the main entertainment genre for young people was Westerns; not just cowboys and Indians, but trailblazing, exploring the Rocky mountains, the 7th Cavalry making heroic stands, and sometimes just life in the mid-West of the late 19th century. Some of the best-known drama series of all-time hail from this period and scene, such as *Rawhide*, *Gunsmoke*, *Bonanza* and iconic favourite hero *The Lone Ranger*. *Doctor Who* doing a parody of the Western genre was as obvious as the modern series recording episodes that parody *Big Brother* or the *Twilight* saga.



The Gunfighters: The accent is on fun... and funny accents!

What the story definitely is *not*, is an educational performance of real American history, and it cannot be viewed as such and measured by the standards of, say, *Marco Polo* or *The Aztecs*. We will return to this issue in season four, in which *The Smugglers* is a parody of 1950s smuggling adventure movies and nothing to do with actual Cornish history. Seen in this fantasy-comedy sub-genre, *The Gunfighters* is not only very effective but also uproariously funny!

The Savages

Ask most *Doctor Who* fans what *The Savages* is about and, not without reason, it might take a few moments on Wikipedia before the conversation gets started. There is nothing wrong with the story as such, but it has three drawbacks that hold it back from modern day

fame. Most obviously, it is not in the archives but exists only as a soundtrack. But this is not really the same kind of problem as with some other more visual episodes, as the surviving images suggest that there was not much to see on first broadcast anyway, with the story told mostly in exposition. Secondly, it is a very traditional type of story with a lot of familiar tropes in an era of great change and creativity. But, perhaps most of all, it is a story told in the wrong format. The fantasy idea at the heart of the story is fascinating, and you do not really need the titular savages to be characters at all. A glimpse of the people who live 'outside' would be sufficient to make the point, while leaving the main drama to explore the real ethics and background of the premise. This is the kind of story that used to make brilliant dramas in the BBC science fiction anthology show *Out of the Unknown*, and it would be interesting to see the episodes just to make a clearer comparison. As is often the case, the need to extend the storyline to fill four episodes, and create three dramatic climaxes at 25-minute intervals, works against the effect that the play should have achieved.



The Savages: "Wild? We're furious, I tell you!"

Next issue: the show enters a period of considerable change, as radical as in 1970 or 2018 but spread out progressively over the course of several stories from *The War Machines* to *The Evil of the Daleks*.



Girl Power!!!

Christel Dee and Simon Guerrier,

Authors of

'The Women Who Lived'

Interview by Nick Mays

With the casting of Jodie Whittaker as the first female incarnation of everyone's favourite Time Lord, the time could not have been better for a book which celebrates all those women who have been in the Doctor's orbit throughout the long lifetime of the show. And in late 2018, just such a book materialised...

The Women Who Lived was written by Christel Dee, long-time *Who* fan, cosplayer, presenter of *Doctor Who: The Fan Show* and *FiveWhoFans* on YouTube, and Simon Guerrier, another life-long *Who* fan, and author of several *Doctor Who* and *Primeval* novels, and script writer for many *Doctor Who* comic strips and audios. Each entry throughout the book is lavishly illustrated by several different artists, all female, many of them *Who* fans in their own right, depicting each of the female subjects in a variety of styles.

Just after this engaging volume hit the bookstores, Nick Mays for *Gallifrey*, *The Long Way Round* caught up with Christel and Simon...

Nick Mays: *Congratulations on such a brilliant book with 'The Women Who Lived'. What inspired you to create a book focussing on the many women in Doctor Who's long history? Not just the companions, but supporting and sometimes even minor characters?*

Simon Guerrier: Thank you. It was all Christel's idea - but as soon as she suggested it, I thought, "Oh yes! Brilliant!" Once we got talking about how it would work, we knew that even with a very inclusive definition of "companion" we wouldn't have enough women to fill a whole book, so we soon got into the knotty question of who else to include, arguing for our favourites and ones we thought would make the best entries. We wanted a good mixture of characters - from all periods of the series, some friends, some enemies, some returning characters, some one-off ones.

Christel Dee: When Jodie Whittaker was announced to play the Thirteenth Doctor, I thought it would be really timely to have a book that celebrated the incredible women throughout *Doctor Who's* 55 year history. I had previously worked with Simon on *Doctor Who: Paper Dolls* (I provided a few pages of cosplay tips), and I was really keen to do more writing. I got in touch with Simon and asked what he thought of the idea and if he would like to team up with me to write it. Thankfully, he was up for it so we worked on a pitch together, which we then took to BBC Books. As part of the pitch, we came up with a very long list of female characters which were whittled down to just over 75. We ensured there were characters from all periods of the series, both popular and obscure.

NM: *Having read your book cover to cover myself, I think it seamlessly bridges the appeal for long-time and new Doctor Who fans. Was this your intention from the start?*

SD: Yes, that was the idea. We knew the Thirteenth Doctor was going to bring lots of people to - or back to - *Doctor Who*, and the book seemed a good way to introduce the history of the series in a fun, engaging way. But I'm a very old fan of the series, so I wanted something that would appeal to me, too. We purposefully chose a few slightly more obscure characters and ones with lives that haven't been much explored.

CD: Very much so. I was thinking when pitching the idea for the book about the new audience coming to *Doctor Who* with the Thirteenth Doctor. I thought this would be a fantastic opportunity to introduce them to the rest of *Doctor Who's* 55 year history in a fun, digestible format. But with the wide variety of characters, this book is also a great read for more seasoned fans.

NM: *Of course, apart from the prose, there's the fantastic illustrations. Was it again a deliberate policy from the off to include artwork - much of it by fans - rather than rely on photographs?*

SD: Yes, that was in Christel's pitch at the very beginning. It gave the book an original identity. Even though we're talking about a lot of old characters from the show, we're presenting each one in a new way.

CD: I was really keen to involve fans in some way and the having illustrations rather than pictures just brings something new and unique to it. I also think it unifies both the old and the new as they are all part of the same universe, rather than have a combination black and white and colour photographs.

NM: *How did you approach the artists to contribute to the book? And did everyone say 'Yes'?*

SD: Christel and I suggested a whole bunch of artists to our editor Beth at BBC Books, but I'm not sure how the decisions were made about who to approach - and how to allocate which characters to whom. I suggested lots of artists I knew, had worked with or whose stuff I admired, and one or two of those then got in touch to say they were grateful to be put forward but weren't able to take part. Christel was keen to give work to the brilliant artists she'd seen on Tumblr and elsewhere - in the case of several artists, I think our book is their first professional, paid commission, which is something I'm very proud of.

CD: Simon and I each put forward a list of suggestions to BBC Books who handled the commissioning process. We had a little input into the illustrations themselves and we both stayed up really late one night to come up with short briefs for each of the characters but we weren't part of the decisions around who was eventually commissioned.

NM: *Please excuse the bluntness of the question, but as I know from experience, sometimes experts are asked for contributions to books "for the exposure"; Did all of the artists get a fee for the use of their work?*

SD: Of course they did! Yes, they were formally and professionally contracted, paid and got copies of the book, too.

CD: Simon covered it!

NM: *Good to know. How did you both divide up the work on the book? Did you each pick a selection of characters?*

SD: Yes, basically. I know older *Doctor Who* a bit better than Christel - mainly because I'm so much older than she is and have had more time to watch it. Once we had a list of characters to cover, Christel bagsied the ones she felt most comfortable with. That was mainly characters from the series since 2005 but included earlier ones too, such as Ace. Then we worked

through our lists, sending each other our first drafts which we reworked between us. And then when we were done, the entries went to editor Steve Cole for his notes and approval. So it was pretty collaborative.

CD: Simon covered it again!

NM: *How has the book been received “out there”? Has there been any negativity? If so, do you care?*

SG: It’s generally been very positive. A few shops sold out quickly and had to buy in more stock. Christel and I have done events where the book has sold very well and people are enthusiastic. Everyone at BBC Books seems happy. As for negativity, a few people online have been bothered about the cover because they feel one or other character should feature on it. And if you don’t like the current series, or *Doctor Who* being a woman, this probably isn’t the book for you.

CD: I’ve received so many lovely messages on Twitter and Facebook from people who have purchased the book and who are enjoying it. I’ve been to a few conventions and singings with Simon and everyone has been lovely to us. It seems to be selling really well and selling out in some places which is fantastic. In terms of negativity, what I’ve found interesting throughout this process is the amount of complaints targeted at me, rather than Simon. A few people suggested I didn’t write the book at all! But a tiny minority of the fandom seem insulted by *any* of the work I do because I’m young, enthusiastic and I’m earning opportunities and gaining access to *Doctor Who* stuff that they’re not. At the end of the day, any kind of media visibility comes with haters but like I said, it’s a tiny minority because *most* people don’t sit on Twitter and Facebook all day being nasty about people!

NM: *Sadly, that’s the two sides of social media and fandom isn’t it? Stepping back a bit, what brought you both to the world of Doctor Who and when?*

SG: I have been watching *Doctor Who* for as long as I remember - my earliest memory of anything is the cliffhanger to episode one of *Full Circle*, with the Fourth Doctor and K9. I really became a “fan” rather than just a general viewer in the 1990s when *Doctor Who* was no longer on TV and you had to exert some effort to be involved. About the same time, I realised there were people who made their living as writers and sometimes got to write *Doctor Who* things, and that seemed a good idea.

CD: My first experience of *Doctor Who* was *The Empty Child* in 2005 starring Christopher Eccleston as the Ninth Doctor and Billie Piper as Rose. I found it by accident, just flicking through channels looking for something to watch. When the credits rolled, I thought, “*I have to know everything about this!*”. I loved the concept of an everyday setting being invaded by aliens or the TARDIS just landing in your garden. I also love the Doctor as an anarchist/outsider who doesn’t follow the crowd which is something that really resonated with me.

NM: *So, some ‘old chestnut’ questions for any fan: Who are your favourite Doctors?*

SG: Again, I like them all but, because he was *Doctor Who* when I started watching, I probably think of Tom Baker as the definitive one.

CD: My Doctor is David Tennant as that’s the Doctor who really got me into the show. I adore Peter Capaldi. He’s like a wizard! I really like Jon Pertwee as he’s just got so much swagger. But honestly, I think they’re all fantastic in their own way!

NM: *Which are your favourite villains/monsters?*

SG: Koquillion, the monster from 1965 story *The Rescue*, is my favourite. I'm also a big fan of the Draconians and the Pt'ing, and I was terrified of the Mara, Mawdryn and Sil.

CD: The Doctor's best friend and enemy, The Master! I love their relationship. I also love the Ood because they're super cute!

NM: *And, topically with your book in mind, who are your favourite companions?*

SG: Again, I like them all. I'd really like to write for Leela because I haven't yet.

CD: My favourite companion is Ace. She just kicks ass! I'd like to think that's what I'd be like as a companion - beating up Daleks and shouting 'Ace' and 'Wicked' all the time.

[Christel was unable to answer my final two questions]

NM: *Even more topically with Doctor Who season 11 having just aired; What do you both think of Jodie Whittaker's female Doctor, and do you think that we could expect to see more female Doctors in the future? Or maybe alternate the sexes with each regeneration?*

SG: She's brilliant. I've really enjoyed this series. Yes, I think we can expect to see more female Doctors. I don't know how they'll decide who comes next, but it's good that it has opened up.

NM: *Finally, we always hear the doom and gloom merchants on social media say that Doctor Who will finish soon, the BBC are fed up with it etc. etc. Do you think the show has a future and what would you like to see happen with it?*

SD: Oh, it's not like the late 1990s, when there was only one single new TV episode in 16 years. There was a time back then when it seemed like *Doctor Who* would never come back and fandom might quietly fade. Now

things are very different. Even if, unlikely as it seems, they decided to cancel it, I'm sure it would be back within a few years. It's a very popular series. The ratings this year have been extremely high, the response generally positive - and that's just in the UK, let alone the huge following it has round the world.

As for what I'd like to see happen to it... I think they should have a kettle in the TARDIS, so when they get in from their adventures they can have tea.

NM: *Simon and Christel, thank you very much and good luck with your book's continued success.*



**The Women Who Lived
by Christel Dee & Simon Guerrier
is published by BBC Books,
RRP £16.99
See Book Reviews, Page 81**





ROSE TYLER

PLAYED BY **Billie Piper**
 OCCUPATION **Shop assistant, defender of the Earth**
 FIRST APPEARANCE **Rose (2005)**

THERE WAS ONCE A GIRL WHO LONGED FOR SOMETHING MORE

One day, at the dull department store where Rose worked, scary mannequins started lumbering towards her. Then a man took her hand and told her to run. Rose immediately asked questions, trying to reason things out. The strange man – the Doctor, he called himself – could see she was perceptive. He got her safely out of the building, and then blew it up.

The explosion made the news, but Rose kept quiet about what she'd seen, knowing she'd been involved in something extraordinary. Then the Doctor turned up at her flat, where they battled the disembodied arm of one of the mannequins. Rose pursued the Doctor, asking more questions. Dissatisfied with what he told her, she went online to look for answers herself. She was trying to process what she'd learned when Autons attacked – and the Doctor rescued her once more.

Rose was now confronted by the fact the Doctor was an alien, whose spaceship was bigger on the inside, a man who knew impossible things about impossible creatures. Yet Rose was also intrigued by the Doctor, attracted to him, and dared to take his hand as he ran towards the secret base of the Nestene – the alien consciousness controlling the Autons.

There, Rose's courage saved the lives of her boyfriend Mickey, the Doctor, and everyone on Earth from the alien menace. Mickey was utterly terrified by what he'd experienced, but Rose was left exhilarated. Even so, when the Doctor offered her the chance to travel with him in his spaceship, she declined. After all, there was her boyfriend to look after, and her mum.

But then the Doctor told her that his ship also travelled in time. She could be back home before anyone noticed, couldn't she? Rose raced towards the open door...

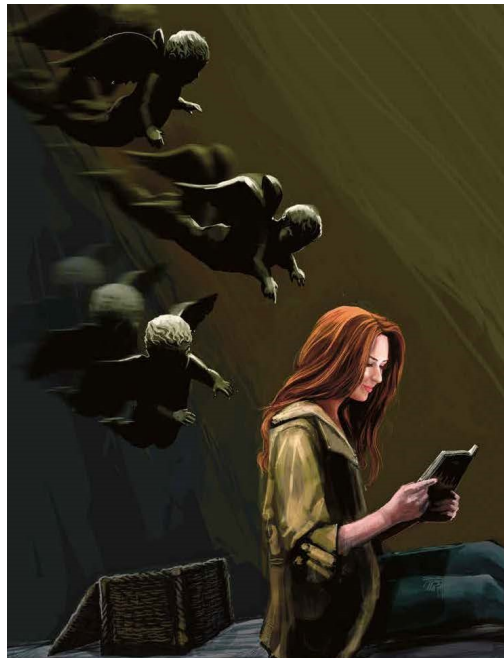
THE WOMEN WHO LIVED

**Rose Tyler
 Illustration ©
 Gwen Burns**

**Text (c)
 Christel Dee/
 Simon
 Guerrier**

**Amelia "Amy"
 Jessica Pond
 Illustration ©
 Lydia Futral**

**Text ©
 Christel Dee/
 Simon Guerrier**



AMELIA "AMY" JESSICA POND

PLAYED BY **Caitlin Blackwood and Karen Gillan**
 OCCUPATION **Kisogram, model, journalist and author**
 FIRST APPEARANCE **The Eleventh Hour (2011)**

THERE WAS ONCE A GIRL WHO DIDN'T WANT TO GROW UP

When Amelia was seven, a spaceship crashed in her garden and out clambered a hungry Raggedy Doctor. She fed him fish fingers and custard.

Amelia wasn't scared by the crashed spaceship or this strange man. But she was scared of the crack in her bedroom wall and the voices she heard through it at night. And there was something else... Something she couldn't remember.

Before the Raggedy Doctor could solve this mystery, he had to dash to his spaceship – saying he'd be back in five minutes.

The girl waited. He didn't return. Despite her claims, people thought she'd imagined him. Over the years, she started to think they might be right.

Twelve years later, the Raggedy Doctor turned up again at her house, still in his raggedy clothes. Amy said she didn't believe it was him, but in truth she had never stopped dreaming of the magic man she knew would one day come back...

“Twelve years. And four psychiatrists!”

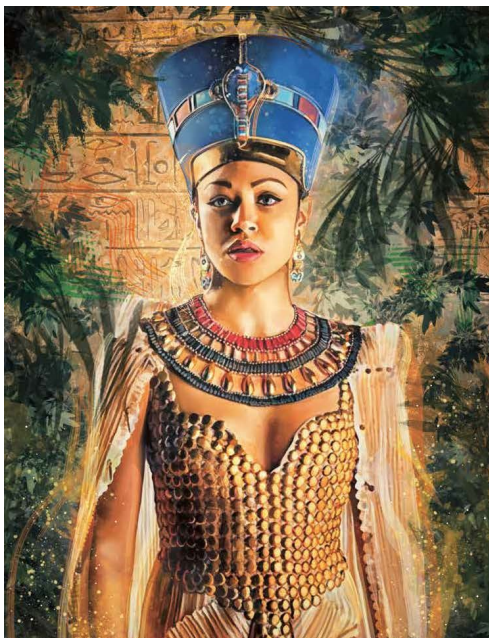
Again he disappeared, and again Amy waited. Two years later, on the eve of her wedding to her childhood friend Rory, he returned and this time he took her with him in his spaceship. They had many adventures.

They learned that the crack in her bedroom wall all those years ago was one of many cracks in time and space, which could swallow people up as if they'd never existed. The girl's parents had been taken and she'd forgotten them. Then the man she'd been going to marry was lost, too.

The Raggedy Doctor helped to put things right and recover Amy's loved ones in time for her wedding day. But in doing so, the Doctor was lost himself.

However, Amy had spent so much of her life waiting for him that she couldn't forget. Her memories were so strong she was able to bring her Raggedy Doctor back from oblivion.

THE WOMEN WHO LIVED



QUEEN NEFERTITI

PLAYED BY **Riann Steele**
 OCCUPATION **Queen of Egypt**
 FIRST APPEARANCE **Dinosaurs on a Spaceship (2011)**

LADY OF GRACE: Sweet of Love, Lady of All Women and Lady of the Two Lands, Nefertiti had many titles as queen of Egypt and wife of the great pharaoh, Amenhotep IV. They had six daughters, but Nefertiti thought her husband boring, "the male equivalent of a sleeping potion."

In 1334 BC, the country was attacked by weapon-bearing giant alien locusts. Nefertiti and a traveller known as the Doctor brilliantly stopped the invasion.

The Doctor told Nefertiti that her people would need her leadership and assistance after such an ordeal, but she was determined to join him on more extraordinary adventures. He couldn't resist her wiles, and she seems to have been the earliest-born Earth person ever to travel in his TARDIS.

In AD 2367, Nefertiti was part of a perilous mission to prevent a strange spaceship from colliding with Earth. She took the advances in technology in her stride, asking the staff of the Indian Space Agency if they had been able to communicate with this craft, an ability far beyond her own time. She also took it in her stride when the spaceship turned out to be full of creatures called dinosaurs.

Nefertiti held her own against the people of the future, too. When Riddell, a hunter from AD 1902, said he didn't take orders from women, she commanded him. "Then learn." When he made further sexist comments, she told him she would snap his neck in a heartbeat. But in fact, she was drawn to this man of action, so unlike her tedious husband.

When a wicked trader called Solomon realised who Nefertiti was, and how valuable a queen of Ancient Egypt might be, she coolly volunteered herself as his prisoner to save the lives of her friends. But she would never be his possession, and when the chance came she curtly knocked him down. In so doing, she helped the Doctor save the spaceship and the dinosaurs onboard.

Nefertiti then settled with Riddell in the African plains in 1902. A strong ruler can do anything she chooses.

THE WOMEN WHO LIVED

**Queen Nefertiti
 Illustration ©
 Sophie Cowdrey**

**Text ©
 Christel Dee/Simon
 Guerrier**

Simon Says...

NM: *You're very well known as a Doctor Who novelist (also of Primeval and Being Human) and writer of scripts for Doctor Who audios and comics - you have a vast body of work of which you must be very proud. One of your major works was 'The Companion Chronicles', which featured many female characters, such as Ace, Zoe, Sara Kingdom and so on. Did this help you in putting together 'The Women Who Lived' with Christel?*

SG: We tried to base the entries in the book on what we see and hear in TV episodes rather than stuff from books and audios, let alone anything I might have invented myself. But writing all these books and audios and things means I've watched and rewatched *Doctor Who* a lot, so that helps when I have to write something new. Writing a book like this *feels* like flexing different muscles from the audio plays.

NM: *Who was your favourite female companion to write for?*

SG: Ha! Ha! Ha! This question will get me in trouble because I'm friends with some of them! I like them all, but it was really exciting in 2005 to write my first "main range" *Doctor Who* audio for Ace, who I'd followed on TV and through all the books in the 1990s.

NM: *Would you ever like to write for the TV series itself and have you ever been approached to do so?*

SG: No, I've never been approached to write for the TV series. I doubt that would happen - to anyone - without having some TV-writing credits first, because *Doctor Who* scripts are so technically demanding. The fact I've written *Doctor Who* in other media isn't really the same thing. But in principle, yes, I'd like to. I just need some more experience in TV.

NM: *You've also scripted various Doctor Who comic strips. Is this a difficult process and do you have to think visually,? How much collaboration do you have with the artist tasked with bringing your script to life?*

SG: I find all writing quite difficult because I spend my whole time thinking, "*This isn't good enough*" But in comics, yes, you have to think visually. I often sketch out pages - badly, with stick people - to try and get it right. With most of the comics I've done, there's very little discussion with artists: you write the script, they get on with drawing it and you only really hear back from them if there is a serious problem with what you've written. But I had a lovely time on the *Doctor Who Adventures* comic strip giving daft things to John Ross to draw, and when we've met up we've got on very well. I had more back-and-forth commissioning covers for the *Bernice Summerfield* range of audio plays from comics artist Adrian Salmon.



Christel Continues...

NM: Christel, you of course are well-known for your work as presenter on Doctor Who: The Fan Show and FiveWhoFans on YouTube. So, like Simon, you've made a career out of your fandom, which is great. What was/is the best thing about hosting the shows?

CD: The purpose of the *Fan Show* was to celebrate the creativity of fans around the globe and make them feel more involved in the show - *Doctor Who* means a lot to me and it was wonderful to be part that. I was also the show's Researcher and later became its Assistant Producer. I really enjoyed working behind the scenes, planning and developing content each week, writing scripts and editing the episodes. Every week was different and we had a lot of creative freedom. I was also luckily enough to meet and interview a lot of the cast and crew from Peter Capaldi's era and got to film abroad in San Diego and LA.

NM: You are also well-known for your Cosplay and features on this in Doctor Who Magazine. Do you think Cosplay has become a major 'movement' in its own right now?

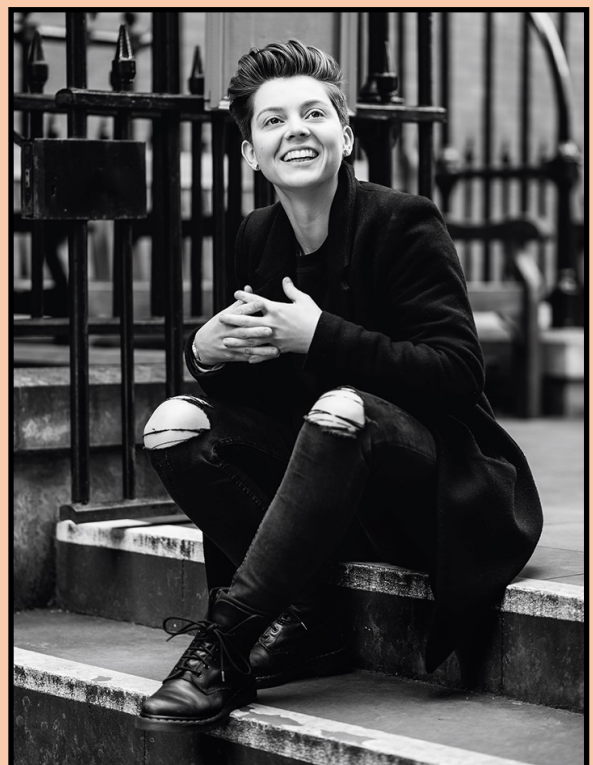
CD: I don't think it's a 'movement' as such. I've been cosplaying and attending conventions for 12 years and to me, it has always been a 'thing'. I suppose it's just become more popular over the past few years with the growing success of TV and movie franchises (e.g. *Marvel*, *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*), comics and gaming which has brought 'geek' into the mainstream.

NM: You are also a member of DWM's 'Time Team'. How does it feel when you and your fellow team members, as relative youngsters, view so-called 'Classic Who' against 'Nu-Who' and how do they compare to each other?

CD: *Time Team* isn't about viewing 'Classic Who' against 'Nu-Who'. It's not about comparing it, that's not what we're there to do. We're simply there to provide honest commentary. Being 'relative youngsters', we're bound to come at it from a different perspective to someone who grew up with the classic era. But I think what's great is how some of the members of the *Time Team* who haven't experienced the classic show before have been pleasantly surprised at the similarities between 'Classic Who' and 'Nu-Who'. It's highlighted that it's all one show, rather than two categories.

NM: Now that you've got 'The Women Who Lived' under your belt, would you like to write other Who books? Maybe have a go at writing some novels? Or maybe there's a TV script waiting to be written?

CD: I've got a few ideas for new books that I plan on pitching but that's all I'm saying for now!



FANFIC:

THREE'S A CROWD

BY MARK LENEY

He knew the Doctor was around here somewhere, he just needed to find him. Jamie McCrimmon made his way down the dimly lit metal corridor in the direction he hoped would reunite him with his friend. Up ahead the corridor ended in a T-junction and as Jamie drew nearer he heard footsteps approaching from the right. They didn't sound like the metallic boots of a Sontaran warrior, but all the same Jamie pressed his back against the nearby wall as he waited to see who or what would emerge.

When the culprit came into view Jamie let out a sigh of relief that the tall figure in front of him was not a Sontaran, but at the same time it wasn't the Doctor, as he had hoped either. At least he didn't think it was.

The man was wearing a fancy looking velvet jacket in some shade of red that Jamie was not familiar with, a white shirt with frilly sleeves and collar, black flared trousers and boots and a black cravat around his neck. He had an old-ish face with a prominent nose and his hair was white, seeming to stand up on his head like the wool of a sheep. Whoever he was, he seemed to recognise Jamie and smiled when he saw the young Scot standing with his back pressed to the wall.

"Well, well, well, Jamie McCrimmon!" the man proclaimed. "Fancy seeing you here! I was just thinking about you!"

"Who are you and what have ye done to the Doctor?" Jamie demanded, backing away from the tall stranger wearily.

"My dear, Jamie... I *am* the Doctor." The man told him with a reassuring smile.

"Yeah, right!" Jamie scoffed. "Ye don't look anything like him!"

"Yes, I know this might be difficult to understand, but I am him I assure you and I did used to look like the man you're more familiar with." The Doctor explained patiently. "How else would I know who you are?"

"I don't know. Maybe ye can read minds or something?" Jamie ventured.

The Doctor massaged the back of his neck sheepishly.

"Yes, well I suppose that is a possibility." He admitted. "Alright, Jamie, I'm asking you to trust me for now and I promise that I will help you find your Doctor. If he's here."

"Of course he's here!" Jamie retorted. "Why wouldn't he be?"

"Alright, alright!" the Doctor raised his hands placatingly. "Now I trust that you know that we're standing in the middle of a Sontaran research facility. What do you say we find somewhere a little less out in the open where we can talk more freely before we get spotted by a guard, hmm?"

Jamie nodded his consent. "Alright, but I've got my eye on you, 'Doctor'!" he said gruffly.

He and the Doctor continued on together down the left-hand corridor.

"So, what are you doing here, Jamie?" the Doctor wondered. "I don't remember you and I ever being here together before."



"What's that supposed to mean?" Jamie eyed the Doctor suspiciously.

"I do remember that the Time Lord Celestial Intervention Agency sent me on a few missions before my exile to Earth, but my memory of those little errands is a little sketchy. There was an incident involving Sontarans, but I'm pretty sure this wasn't it." The Doctor said.

"Maybe you're just not remembering it right, if you are who you say you are?" Jamie countered. "Yes, the Doctor and I have been sent here by the Time Lords to steal a powerful Sontaran weapon."

"That's funny." The Doctor rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "You see that's precisely the reason I have been sent here too, but I have been told to destroy the weapon, not steal it. The CIA is afraid that this weapon might make the Sontarans a threat that could potentially threaten Gallifrey."

"Aye, that's just what my Doctor said as well." Jamie nodded.

"Well, since we have a common goal perhaps we should find your Doctor and try working together." The Doctor suggested.

"Och, he could be anywhere!" Jamie threw up his hands in resignation. "We got separated from each other quite early on."

"Yes, that does have a tendency to happen all too frequently I'm afraid. Still, we should at least try to find him, don't you agree?" the Doctor persisted.

"Aye, I suppose you're right." Jamie sighed.

They continued their way stealthily along the corridor.

"Now, if you and your Doctor are on the same mission as I am then it's reasonable to assume that I, or should I say, he will try to find the weapon that I'm here to destroy." The Doctor mused.

"You're here to destroy it. We're here to steal it remember?" Jamie reminded him.

"Yes, I hadn't forgotten." The Doctor replied. "That's what troubles me. Not only have the CIA sent two different versions of me on the exact same mission, they've also given us conflicting objectives."

"Maybe you're only supposed to destroy the weapon if my Doctor and I fail to steal it?" Jamie suggested.

"Perhaps." The Doctor conceded. "But the only way that you could fail is if you were captured or killed. If I was killed in the past whilst failing this mission then I wouldn't be alive here now to destroy the weapon, if you catch my meaning?"

"I think you've given me a headache!" Jamie complained.

"Don't you think that it's a little odd that we haven't encountered any Sontarans yet?" the Doctor wondered, suddenly changing the subject.

"Aye, well my Doctor had something to say about that." Jamie replied. "Apparently these Sontaran beasties like to fight so much that they wouldn't spare ordinary soldiers to guard their wee weapon because they'd want them all to be fighting on the frontlines. So instead this entire facility is guarded by robots. The Doctor was able to deactivate them temporarily with some sort of wee gizmo that the Time Lords gave him, an electromagnetic whatsa-thingy. It was only supposed to be able to disable the robots for ten minutes though."

"How long has it been since you activated the EMP?" the Doctor wondered.

It was at that moment that one of the Sontaran robots decided to hum menacingly around the corner.

"Does that answer yer question?" Jamie stammered as the robot prepared to attack.

Two slender mechanical tubes slid out from the robot's armoured torso which were immediately recognisable as the barrels of some sort of projectile weaponry.

There were no side doors for the Doctor and Jamie to duck into and if they turned to run they would be cut down instantly. They seemed to have very few options indeed.

"Get down!" the Doctor shouted urgently whilst simultaneously throwing himself on top of Jamie.

The Doctor flinched and closed his eyes as a loud electronic fizzing sound filled the air followed quickly by a bang. What with the robot's auto-targeting systems there was no way that it would miss at this range, the Doctor only hoped that his body would be enough to protect Jamie.

For long moments the Doctor lay there on top of his friend wondering why he wasn't dead, or at least hurt.

"It's alright you two. You can both get up now, it's quite harmless I can assure you." An infuriatingly familiar voice spoke over them a short distance away from the direction the robot had been.

The Doctor opened his eyes and looked up to see himself standing beside the smoking remains of the Sontaran battle-drone with a rather smug looking smile across his impish lined face.

"You!" the Doctor muttered grumpily.

"Doctor!" Jamie exclaimed happily as he recognised his Doctor.

With his black hair, frock coat, baggy checked trousers, crumpled blue shirt and crooked bowtie there was no mistaking the second incarnation of the Doctor, though as far as Jamie was concerned this man was the original article, accept no substitutes.

The Doctor and Jamie walked up to the new arrival as soon as they were both back on their feet.

"I suppose I should thank you." The Doctor said begrudgingly.



"Not to worry, I'm sure you would have done the same for me." The former Doctor replied. He held up a lump of smoking black and twisted metal. "I'm afraid I used up the last charge in the EMP to disable that drone. We may not be so lucky with the next robots we encounter so I suggest we get a move on and complete what we came here to do." With that said the Doctor tossed the spent device away, nonchalantly, over his shoulder.

"Yes, well, the weapon we're both after is just down this corridor according to the schematics that were given to me by the CIA." The Doctor pointed off down the corridor opposite to the one that the robot had emerged from. "Shall we all go together?"

"Certainly." The former Doctor agreed. "After you!" He extended his hand in a gesture that indicated that the taller Doctor should proceed ahead of them.

"No, no, I insist, after you!" the Doctor bowed and swept his arm.

The former Doctor frowned, but nonetheless proceeded to walk off down the designated corridor. His successor followed behind him whilst Jamie brought up the rear.

If any of them heard the faint bumping that came from the vents above them they did not show it.

Before long the two Doctors and Jamie had reached the room that they knew to contain the Sontarans' mighty new weapon. The door to the room appeared to be wide open and completely unguarded and for that reason the three time travellers were a little reluctant to enter.

"Och, it's gotta be booby trapped!" Jamie ventured astutely.

"For once, Jamie, I'm inclined not to argue with you." His Doctor agreed.

"Yes, well, don't worry, chaps. Nothing the old sonic screwdriver can't handle, I'm sure." The other Doctor assured them. He reached into his velvet jacket and produced the familiar tube-like device.

"Right, first of all I think we should make certain that the sonic screwdriver is absolutely necessary." The Doctor continued. Once again his hand delved into, this time, an outer jacket pocket and he pulled out an old 17th Century Spanish doubloon.

"Stand back, you two." The Doctor instructed and Jamie and his younger self complied obediently.

Once he was certain that they were both far enough away from the opening the Doctor flipped the coin towards it. The glittering golden disc spun end over end through the air before suddenly exploding in a shower of sparks into nothingness.

"Yes, just as I thought." The Doctor mused. "A disintegration field. Well, we'll soon have that down."

He set to work with the screwdriver, running it around the perimeter from bottom to top and then, finally, the bottom again. The device whirred like an electronic grasshopper as it performed its task.

"There, that should do it." The Doctor assured them as he returned the screwdriver to his inner pocket.

"After you!" the younger Doctor smirked.

The Doctor smiled at his younger self condescendingly.

"Fortunately, I happen to have another Spanish coin upon my person." He replied, producing it with a flourish, like some amateur stage magician.

The second Doctor rolled his eyes as his future self flipped the coin towards the opening.

This time it passed through the door unscathed and clattered upon the metallic floor.

The Doctor smiled smugly as he followed his coin through the door and into the room, stooping to pick up the golden doubloon and return it to his pocket as he went.

Jamie and his Doctor followed him inside.

In the centre of the room there stood a tall, intricate monolithic monstrosity that could only be the weapon that they had all come for. It resembled some kind of futuristic doomsday laser cannon stood on its end pointing up towards an opening in the ceiling that was currently closed.

"So, Doctor," the younger Doctor said. "Just how were you planning on destroying that thing?"

"How were you planning on stealing it?" the other Doctor returned.

"It just so happens that I do have a means of destroying it." The other Doctor assured him. "You can come out now, Jo!" He called up towards the opening in the ceiling.

His call was immediately answered by a loud repeated banging noise upon the closed hatch until finally it burst open and a young, pretty blonde woman in a black catsuit lowered herself feet first through the opening, smiling down at her Doctor as she did so.

Jo Grant jumped onto the top of the weapon and then climbed down the length of it until she was at ground level, standing alongside the Doctors and Jamie.

"Miss Grant!" the second Doctor beamed happily. "So nice to see you again!"

"Have you still got it?" the other Doctor asked his young friend.

Jo nodded and unslung a blue backpack off her shoulders.

"Yes, Doctor, it's right here." She assured him, unzipping the bag and reaching in to pull out a slender cylindrical device which could only be a bomb.

The Doctor took it from her and attached the device to the outer shell of the monolithic weapon. He pressed a button which caused a panel to slide open revealing a countdown display and more buttons.

"Right, if I set it to go off in say, fifteen minutes, that should allow us all enough time to get back to our respective TARDISEs, don't you agree?" the Doctor said cheerfully as he set the timer.

"Um, Doctor..." Jo said nervously, tugging on the sleeve of his velvet jacket.



"Yes, Jo, what is it?" the Doctor smiled patiently at her and turned to see what she was pointing at.

When he turned around he was faced with what appeared to be a glimpse into a distorted parallel universe. Standing behind him and Jo there were two exact doppelgangers of them both, smiling evil smiles and pointing what looked like Sontaran blasters at them. The second Doctor and Jamie were no longer anywhere to be seen.

"Yes, just as I thought." The Doctor said. "There never was any weapon was there? *You two* are the weapon."

"Very astute, Doctor." His doppelganger replied. "How long have you known?"

"Well, I suspected right from the beginning as I found it was odd that I should run into Jamie so soon after I had just been thinking about him. I suspect there's some sort of telepathy involved? The performance was remarkable. You were able to extrapolate everything that was quintessentially Jamie just from reading my subconscious memories. It's remarkable." The Doctor answered.

The two doppelgangers seemed to almost glow with pride at the Doctor's compliment.

"The Rutans have engineered shapeshifting into their soldiers for scouting and espionage missions, but the Sontaran Strategic Research Council has perfected chameleonic clones that are not only able to mimic the physical appearance of an enemy, but the personality as well, making them virtually indistinguishable from the original article." The Jo clone informed them.

"But whereas the Rutan shapeshifters were designed merely for scouting and espionage, we have been engineered for a much greater purpose... infiltration and subjugation." The Doctor clone continued.

"Let me guess," the Doctor ventured. "You're planning on using our forms to infiltrate and subjugate Gallifrey itself."

"Correct, Doctor." The Jo clone confirmed with a malicious grin. "When your bomb goes off and destroys our 'weapon' your lifeless corpses will be destroyed with it and we will use your TARDIS to travel back to your home world. Once we are there we will lower Gallifrey's defences so that our invasion fleet can land and conquer your people. By the time the Time Lords realise what is going on it will be too late and Gallifrey will belong to the Sontaran empire!"

"And how do you plan on getting into my TARDIS without my key?" the Doctor wondered.

The Doctor clone pointed his weapon at the Doctor meaningfully.

"It will be a simple matter to take it from you once you are dead."

The Doctor looked at Jo and smiled and she returned the smile.

"Shall we, Jo?" the Doctor asked.

Jo nodded.

"I think we should." She agreed.

"What are you talking about?" the Jo clone frowned.

"Before we left on our mission the CIA gave Jo and I a little one use only gift." The Doctor smiled smugly. "Transmat implants in the palms of our hands that will take us straight back to the TARDIS. Good bye!"

He and Jo squeezed their fingers into the palms of their right hands and promptly dematerialised in front of their doppelgangers.

The two clone-shifters fired their weapons into the shimmering forms as they disappeared, but it was already too late.

"Blast them!" the Doctor clone cursed.

"Never mind them," the Jo clone said. "We should deactivate the Doctor's bomb before it goes off."

"Yes, you're right." The Doctor clone agreed. "Fortunately, with the Doctor's memories disarming the device should be quite simple."

He crossed to the bomb and looked at the display. His expression turned to one of despair as he noticed one piece of information that the Doctor had managed to conceal from him.

The bomb had not been set for fifteen minutes after all.

The clone turned to his companion.

"Oh dear." He said.

And then everything exploded.

The End

UP TO SCRATCH

TOM BAKER RELATES THE TALE BEHIND HIS NEW NOVEL

SCRATCHMAN...

Just when you thought there wasn't anything from *Doctor Who's* rich past that could surprise you, along comes a new novel written by no less a person than the Fourth Doctor himself, Tom Baker—based on a *Doctor Who* film script he wrote with this friend and co-star Ian Marter over forty years ago!

Doctor Who Meets Scratchman arose out of boredom somewhere in the 1970s; an idea for a story formed by Tom Baker and Ian Marter (who played companion Harry Sullivan) between set takes and pauses in filming during the early episodes of the Fourth Doctor's episodes in 1974/75.

Despite great enthusiasm and valiant attempts, funding *Scratchman* proved difficult (Baker accidentally made a newspaper appeal to the British public for help, and found himself deluged with children's pocket money - which he had to return.) Although there was interest from certain studios, it wasn't sufficient to see *Scratchman* being green-lit. *Doctor Who* had a good public profile in the UK in the early 70s, but it was a long way from becoming the global phenomenon that it is today.

For a long time, *Scratchman* was forgotten, until a script was found in 2006. It was donated to the British Film Institute by former *Doctor Who* producer John Nathan-Turner before his death in 2002.

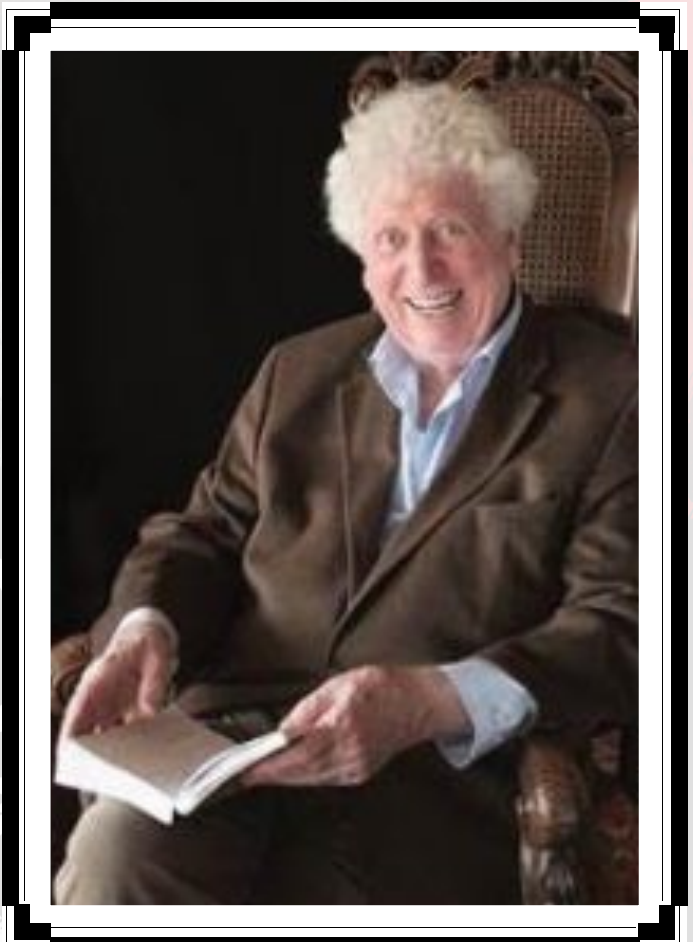
January 2019 saw the publication of *Scratchman*, co-authored with Baker by prolific *Who* writer James Goss. It proved to be a runaway success, with an audio book version narrated by Mr Baker himself due to follow.

Here, Tom Baker—who turned 85 the same month—answers questions in an interview with BBC Books about his missing masterpiece...

Where did the idea for the character of Scratchman – having the Doctor go up against the Devil – come from?

TOM BAKER: I don't know how I came up with *Scratchman*.

It must have been because I've been interested in the Devil all my life because of my religious background – I was brought up with great drama and very conscious of Sin. When you're very ordinary in Liverpool in 1940 and you're Working Class and have got nothing, you suddenly find an outlet – and in those days there was no other outlet than the Great Drama of religion.





I loved the Roman Catholic religion because I have a sense of melodrama and it made me feel important. I loved it because I was dressing up all the time in women's clothes, really – cassocks and surplices and so on. I loved it because, although I couldn't do grammar and so on at school, I could learn Latin phrases. I loved the drama, the lies and the anxiety of confession – that dramatised my life. All that has never got away from me.

What were the sides of the Doctor that you most wanted to bring out in Scratchman?

TB: I had a sort of effortless identification with the character – it was self-love really. This kind of nonsense appealed to me, this kind of magic – I gave it my twist of being wry, preposterous, idiotic – which I am – all these little traits of mine which really should disqualify me from reality came together in that part.

The directors seemed amused by me, and the other actors seemed amused by me, and when the ratings went “whoosh!” on the first transmission [producer] Philip Hinchcliffe rang me up and said “Tom, you're going to be a star!” And he was right, Ha.Ha.

The Doctor as I perceive him is not a jolly scoutmaster. There must be anxiety and tension. You remember Steed in *The Avengers*? Benevolent and charm itself and fabulous technique *but* no danger, it was all a lark. Patrick Macnee who played Steed was so marvellous, supported by those wonderful actresses. They had these adventures but never for a moment was there anything squalid or any bloodshed or anything cruel – in other words it was all a lark. If only life could be like that.

But in *Scratchman* the Doctor reveals anxieties which have never been expressed before – we'll see that he's ashamed that he's failed people. With the character of Scratchman we have the idea of him

looking for my weakness. He's trying to identify with what I'm afraid of to use it against me. Scratchman has an absolute passionate appetite for weakness.

How does it feel being a living legend?

TB: To be a children's hero gave me such pleasure. The fact that they were inspired by my nonsense and heroism enchanted me. Those children who were 7 or 8 in 1974 are now grandparents. “This man was grandad's Doctor Who!” It's very sweet.

A fellow came in the paper shop, 7 o'clock in the morning he looked at me and he said “Christ, are you Tom Baker?” and I said “Yes, I am.” He was a man of about 40 or 50 and when I said “Yes I am” for a split second he was a child again. He said “Man, you were amazing,” and then he went rather quiet. The fans are like that.

Of course these days I feel rather wry about it. But it's absolutely true that whenever I'm in Waitrose (I'm very well known in Waitrose), it is very real. I'm touched by it – touched by people saying kind things, and recalling watching me when they were children.

I used to watch Donald Sinden, when he was in the same Waitrose as me – Donald Sinden, Joanna Lumley, Anna Calder-Marshall, there are a few well known actors round Tenterton – I used to watch Donald doing his reactions when people remembered him. He used to get kissed by one or two of the confident women. I used to watch him getting kissed, and think “why isn't that me?” – that's a confession. But when Donald got kissed he used to roll his eye to see who was watching him get kissed and I used to think “Donald, that is an imperfection. You're on the look-out for approval.” I thought if I ever get kissed, I'm not going to do that. So now, if I get kissed in Waitrose, I always concentrate on who's kissing me.

Waitrose

The story for Scratchman is a bit legendary in Who circles. Coming back to it after so many years must feel like a bit of vindication.

TB: It felt nice to come back to it. The fans thrive on novelty and are insatiable – they always are, whether they're religious maniacs or support Liverpool or whatever. And this old story – which has been hanging around for donkey's years and is about to be revealed – will thrill them. It's nice to be part of something that thrills the fans. I love the fans. The fans created me. The fans sustain me. And I'm grateful.



Was it fun to revisit Sarah and Harry, your original companions? (Played by Elisabeth Sladen and Ian Marter)? Sadly both actors are no longer with us...

TB: Yes it was fun and very poignant. It was marvellous to be with them again, and it was marvellous to be with them in real life.

I thought Elisabeth was wonderful. She didn't stay around, which was a terrible pity. She felt that when a new producer came in (Phillip Hinchcliffe, who was very successful), she thought "A producer likes to have power over people, especially over beautiful girls and when my contract is up, he'll want to choose his own girl". She resigned and she was absolutely mistaken. She was such a lovely woman, she didn't want to be rejected, and so she made this terrible error of resigning. And we couldn't believe it – Phillip was very shocked. He had no intention of changing her. But we gave her a lovely party.

I missed her terribly – she was legendary, wasn't she? I loved her and she loved me and there was a wonderful relationship, a confident relationship which comes out in *Scratchman*, I hope. ...The tenderness that I feel for her, and she for me, and her for Harry.

The character of Harry Sullivan – Ian would have adored to see how he's been realised at last. Rather silly but lovable and adorable.

After many years away, you've come back to the Doctor in a big way in the last decade: TV, audio. Now a book. Are there things you'd still like to do?

TB: I must be at the end of my life, I suppose. As AC Grayling says "I've had my thousand months, I've had my four thousand weeks, I've had my 29,000 days, I've had my 2.4 billion heartbeats..."

The one thing that is left to me now, that I'm filled with hope for – is that this project, *Doctor Who And Scratchman* will be the success that I used to dream about and now makes my old heart jump. The story is a good story and is worth telling, and I think they'll love it.

Scratchman is being published by Ebury Publishing, originally based in London's Ebury Street. When you got the part of the Doctor you were working as a builder in Ebury Street. Does the circularity of this please you?

Yes! I was working on a building site on Ebury Street. They used to call me Sir Lawrence. [after the great actor Sir Lawrence Olivier—Ed]. It was incredible that I was picked off a building site to be Doctor Who. I was no good on a building site – but I made good tea.

When I got *Doctor Who*, there's always a chilling "But.." So I went back to work and I wasn't allowed to tell them I'd got the part for weeks.

The day came for [the announcement] and I went off early "for an audition" I told them, and the first edition of the *Standard* came out. And I was on the front of it. And one of these guys must have crossed Ebury Street and picked it up and saw BAM! that Sir Lawrence was the new *Doctor Who*.

They never expected to see me again, but I turned in the next morning. I loved them; they'd been kind to me. I came back, I made the tea for them, and I brought some liquor and we had a little knees up. But they kept looking at me – baffled. They couldn't get over it. Then the *Daily Express* wanted to take a photograph of me on site, so these lovely men got to share in my glory – there's a photo of them, with their hats and their shovels and me in a line. They were so pleased to do that for me. I imagine years later they said; "Do you know that Tom Baker? He worked on a building site with me..."

And I was happy on that building site, not very useful, but I was happy there.

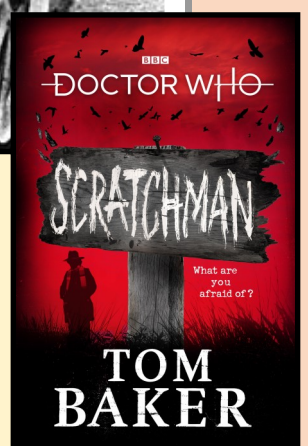




Tom Baker, Elisabeth Sladen and Ian Marter in a publicity shot for Season 12 of *Doctor Who*, 1975

Doctor Who:
Scratchman

by Tom Baker &
James Goss,
published by BBC
Books 2019, RRP:
£16.99



DOCTOR WHO

SEASON 11 REVIEW

BY
ANNIE WORRALL

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...

Oh my Giddy Aunt! Has there ever been anything that has so divided the nation of *Doctor Who* fans than the recently aired season 11 with Jodie Whittaker? The opposing reactions to Chris Chibnall's time at the helm and the incarnation of the Doctor as a woman are so extreme that it's possible that no one will want to take on the role when they retire. It's all become as contentious as Brexit and poses much the same dilemma: Will there be a nation left when this comes to an end?

My personal views of Jodie's run to date are mixed. I have no issue with her being female but I miss the subtlety and range of Capaldi's Doctor and the better dialogue he and his companions were given. Not much of that in this series. The stories are okay but not always distinctive: many of their elements seem borrowed from other Sci Fi shows. They demonstrate an over-reliance on the sonic screwdriver to get the protagonists out of trouble...in fact it seems to be the writers' default 'get out of jail' device.



Jodie's Doctor is a bit lightweight for my tastes. I get irritated by her gurning and manic energy and would like more moments of stillness. She is given far too much exposition, so she sometimes comes over as rather dull. But she is nice to look at, and has authority- a sort of amalgam of Peter Davidson and David Tennant without the former's petulance and the latter's in-your-face delivery; so that's okay. The companions are very watchable, each bringing a distinctive contribution to the stories.

For me, the biggest problem has been that, presumably in an attempt to redefine the Doctor as a traveller passing through and stopping to help out rather than a God-like saviour, she has failed to react strongly enough to some abusive situations she has encountered while taking a preachy, PC line about other, less clear cut problems. Or perhaps it's that I'm concerned that these elements have been introduced into the stories and then brushed under the carpet as if they're not really important or haven't been disturbing to watch.

On a design note, I dislike the new TARDIS interior. It doesn't give any sense that these people could *live* there unless they enjoy dimly lit, cave-like structures. I do like the new theme tune and accompanying graphics and that we start with the title sequence and then cut to the action rather than that following on from a teaser sequence. The sound of the theme music alone has always been sufficient to whet my appetite.

What follows are my purely personal opinions about each of the episodes. They are not always complimentary but I have found each one just sufficiently involving for me to tune in next week with some hope of being entertained if not wowed.

Despite my misgivings, the ratings for the series as a whole are high and my ten-year-old niece has completely fallen in love with this Doctor and her companions.



The Woman Who Fell to Earth

Hmmm. The problem with an opening episode is how to mesh a good story with the need to resolve outstanding plot issues, establish the new Doctor's character and introduce her companions.

Did it work?

Not really. Too many convenient contrivances such as the Doctor crashing through the roof of a train without sustaining a bruise. A plot device in the form of a DNA bomb, necessary to keep the Doctor and her companions together but why would an alien bother with it if it wasn't going to detonate it at the first sign of trouble? Moments when the Doctor was forced to explain things at length, during which I found myself switching off. A ho-hum, stereotyped Alien, looking good but not representing any menace we haven't encountered many times before. And why did Grace have to die, except for the fact she was clear competition for the Doctor and her death would release Ryan and Graham to travel in the TARDIS? I didn't find it plausible that such a level-headed woman would insist on intervening in such an unconsidered manner.

On the plus side the episode looked good, it didn't take itself too seriously, and 'Tim Shaw' was a funny joke. It told a straightforward story; welcome given the recent tendency for over-complicated *Nu-Who* narratives. But there wasn't enough spark in the (many) dialogues. It relied on tell not show. And we still don't know why the TARDIS ejected the Doctor in the first place.



The Ghost Monument

Style over substance. Bags of clever design. It was well acted. The Remnants were truly creepy. The reunion of the Doctor with the TARDIS, touching.

But...

The alien subplot was underdeveloped to the point that it seemed implausible. Here was Art Malik, wielding God-like Powers of matter conversion and amusing himself by setting Steve Austin *Broken Skull* challenges, yet so alarmed by the Doctor's threat to seek him out if he didn't change the rules of his game, that he immediately acquiesced: something which makes no sense unless he knows who the Doctor is and that the Ghost Monument is her TARDIS which will shortly materialise and rescue her.

With hindsight it is just possible to rationalise that the Remnants (who read the Doctor's mind) were also mentally linked to the Malik character so he became aware of her powers AND that he knew that the Monument was about to appear, but at the time of watching my reaction was a sceptical, "Oh yeh?"

Nor, while I'm happy to concede the Doctor a good deal of compelling authority, was I convinced that she could have so easily persuaded Epzo to agree to share the prize, given the way his character had been written up to that point.

Then there was Ryan's teen outburst, attempting to gun down the robot guards and the Doctor's preachy condemnation of it – a stance somewhat undermined by her willingness to wipe out all the apparently sentient Remnants without a blink. I am just not comfortable with this lazy assumption that the Doctor is the undisputed holder of the moral high ground.



Rosa

My favourite episode to date. Focusing on a pivotal moment in the struggle for civil liberation by black Americans, the casual racism of the era was tellingly established; although it's always tricky to do justice to historical events that have occurred within living memory without misrepresenting or trivialising them, so American viewers might feel differently.



Perhaps in an attempt to avoid a “highlighting the splinter in their eye while underplaying the beam in ours” situation, the guest alien was a British man from the future: a ‘limited’ murderer attempting to change history, presumably so his racist actions would be then be legal. Nothing special about him – just a bloke in the Tommy Robinson mould. I thought it an effective way of demonstrating that even today, racism has not been defeated, merely curtailed. That, the brief conversation between Ryan and Yaz about their experiences as people of colour and the finale, meant that for me, the episode packed quite an emotional punch.

I thought it was beautifully acted, relevant given current attitudes to immigrants in both the USA and UK and I was grateful that there was no attempt to make the Doctor, rather than Rosa Parks, the heroine of the piece.

Arachnids in the U.K.

An episode that attempted to give Yaz a back story, give the companions a reason to travel

with the Doctor and take a side swipe at polluting businesses and genetic manipulation, spiced up with that staple of horror shows, giant spiders. Making all this cohere meant that we had to swallow a lot of coincidences. There was a loose unifying theme, examining various riffs on the concept of family, but by attempting to cover so much ground, everything got painted with a big brush.

Chris Noth clearly enjoyed the opportunity to play an ersatz Trump business man but the clichéd way the character was written meant that it was not the kind of bravura performance that might have lifted the episode. Nor was his story arc given sufficient screen time to develop into more than a glancing broad shot at Trump values.

I did, however, find it refreshing that the spiders, far from being aggressive, were shown to be simply trying to survive; although the ending of their narrative thread was abrupt and unsatisfying.

On the plus side, the production values were again good. The lighting throughout this series has been exceptional. And it was crystal clear why Yaz would choose to turn her back on her intrusive family and travel with the Doctor.



The Tsuranga Conundrum

There was just too much going on in this episode to make a gripping, integrated story: the Pting strand, the pregnant man strand, the dying pilot strand; none of them with any thematic connection. In fact the pregnant man strand seems to have been included simply to give Graham and Ryan something to do.

The death of the space Doctor was underwhelming: he stupidly ignored the

Doctor's commonsense warnings and his death was quickly forgotten - odd as he was foregrounded for the opening ten minutes or so of the episode. The Pting was reminiscent of a gremlin, and as such marketable but not especially inventive.



Demons of the Punjab

The universe must be getting crowded with aliens competing to capture the last moments of the dying...Missie...the Glass Aliens in *Twice Upon a Time*...and now the Thijarians. Perhaps a future story will depict a Benny Hill type fracas as each attempts to be the race to wrest those memories from us as we take our last breath.

That said, I liked the fact that the narrative wrong footed us, revealing the villain to be a sectarian bigot, not the alien race of assassins as we were led to expect.

If some of the guest acting wasn't quite good enough to convince, at least the story grappled with some interesting and pertinent issues and it all looked lovely.

I also welcomed the fact that the Doctor could not avert the looming tragedy and I found the Thijarians' reactions to it rather moving.



Kerblam!

Well the Doctor likes Amazon as much as the rest of us! Never mind that the workers sustaining its business are tagged and watched during their shifts - it's brought her a fez.

This might have been a really interesting episode if the story had focussed on presenting a clear explanation of the economic reasons for Kerblam's existence or the advantages and disadvantages the business brought to that underwritten



society.

It didn't and so this watcher was left with the impression that the Doctor endorses a system that creates wage slaves from the have nots in order to satisfy the consumer dreams of its wealthier citizens, provided that more humans are employed in the soulless work and the ankle tags are removed.

I found this rather offensive.

The Witchfinders

Oh Alan Cumming...what a bravura performance! You carried the episode and because of the energy you brought to it, I was able to forgive its many implausibilities and thoroughly enjoy it.

The addition to the number of alien armies trapped under parts of the UK alarmed me. It's a small island with a mining history. I struggled to accept that the appointed King would be wandering around Lancashire with only one attendant, or that Becca Savage had, unaided, cut down a substantial tree with a hand axe. But these doubts didn't spoil my enjoyment.



The resurrected dead were suitably frightening. Ryan's unruffled, gracious composure in the face of the scarcely veiled importuning of James 1st was pleasing. And Jodie displayed an ease as the Doctor which she hadn't shown before, perhaps because she was actually given some action.

It Takes You Away

Such a shame that the Father strand of the plot was underwritten. His abuse of his blind daughter was difficult for the viewer to forgive and yet was glossed over by the Doctor, who didn't even get to question whether he was a suitable parent for such a vulnerable adolescent.

That aside, the story was an inventive and fascinating attempt to look at the sickness of grief and the need to move on from the sadness; a theme shown to be as relevant to the Doctor and her companions as it was to the guest characters. All the elements of the narrative were integrated. The flesh moths, for example, ate away at living bodies as the sense of loss had eaten away at the minds of the grief stricken. This gave the episode a layered cohesiveness which I appreciated.

All the Companions shone (cheese and pickle sarnies, Graham, bless!) Ryan had a particularly strong episode, and the importance of companions to the Doctor was shown simply and perhaps more clearly than in any other episode I've seen. The positioning of the Solitrac as the alter ego of the Doctor made her rejection of it as much about her potential isolation as its own; a rejection only possible because she had those companions to return to.

I found the corridor between the portals suitably scary. We may have encountered Ribbons in other guises in both *Dr Who* (Razor) and *Babylon 5* (Zathras), and a lot of the plot seemed to have been borrowed from

Shyamalan's *The Village*, but the elements were mixed in a sufficiently new way for me to forgive that. I particularly enjoyed (shades of Terry Pratchett) that the governing intelligence of the alternative universe was a frog, especially as the reason for it adopting that form was embedded in the narrative.

But why, oh why was the Solitrac's existence linked so clumsily to the Doctor's past history condemning her to yet another unnecessary, and lengthy, tension-deflating exposition?



The Battle of Ranskoor Av Kolos

What a load of tosh. It's okay to kill robots but nothing else...um Doctor what about the Remnants? How is shooting an alien in the foot and incarcerating it for eternity morally better than killing it? What are you expecting your companions to do when faced with irredeemably hostile enemies? Surrender and die? Let's hope you don't meet the Daleks any time soon.

Other issues:

An opening sequence involving a religious fanatic with awesome powers who was about to create something awesome with a young male with awesome powers....goodness knows what but it involved rocks....when they were interrupted by...

Yet another tension-deflater; this time a reveal of the returning villain behind the mystery in the first ten minutes.

A familiar narrative (mad alien gets the chance to destroy Earth and has to be thwarted).

A group of people in a room or walking through a battered landscape, remembering or explaining stuff for large portions of the episode.

The Doctor at her most manically wordy, perhaps in a forlorn attempt to inject some energy into it all.

A “will he, won’t he?” sub plot involving Graham and Ryan. Since the Doctor had made it clear that Graham wouldn’t be welcome in the Tardis if he went ahead and took revenge on Tim Shaw for killing Grace, I can’t imagine that anyone was surprised when he decided not to!

It was amusing to discover that Chris Chibnall and/or Graham is a *Blakes 7* fan. We’ve already had a limiter as a punitive device. The opening to this episode seemed to be recycling both *Duel* and *Deliverance*. Graham used the “Avon ducked and the Federation Troopers shot each other” method to escape the security robots (Kaston Iago in *Magic Bullet’s Metafiction*). The neural stabilisers were reminiscent of the sensors used in *Death Watch*. If only the dialogue had equalled Chris Boucher’s we might have had an acceptable 50 minutes of entertainment.



On the plus side, Mark Addy injected some welcome gravitas into the mix and Tim Shaw was nicely acted and suitably gruesome. The episode looked good.

But I am so fed up with this Doctor’s dodgy moralising, changing her own rules apparently on a whim, without any critical analysis of the stance she takes. And I want a story that is unique, surprising and engaging, not one that relies on ideas that we’ve seen many times before, clichéd dialogue and metres of exposition.

Resolution

The New Year’s Day special which was more like a proper season finale. Well that was pleasant enough in parts but even watching it with the will to like it, it didn’t hang together

as a story. It’s true that just when I was beginning to think the two main plot lines (Doc versus Dalek: Ryan versus Dad) would remain forever separate, the microwave/oven became a ‘vital’ if incomprehensible gizmo in the eventual destruction of the Dalek and its demise allowed for a resolution of Ryan’s dad angst. I suppose you could also postulate a thematic link here...the unification of the sundered Dalek representing hate- filled alien menace; the unification of the father/ son relationship a symbol of the strength of the human spirit. Or something. But even allowing for that degree of plot integration, implausibilities still abounded.

The cheesy, soap opera opening seemed introduced principally to add human interest (though the romantic dialogue was more *Crossroads* than *Eastenders*) and it felt like too much emotional icing when we were faced with the Ryan/Dad trouble as well. Nor, as a devotee of *Time Team*, did I find the loving couple plausible archaeologists. In the end, as so often has happened during the series, this foregrounded pair were simply dropped from the main narrative and ended up as a couple of spare parts making up the numbers.

The Ryan/Dad scenes added nothing new to the countless similar scenes I have witnessed in soaps and children’s shows such as *The Dumping Ground* and the resolution of their disunion was predictable.

I enjoyed the Dalek’s metal working scene but where the heck did those torpedos come from? And what was the point of dividing the Dalek into three pieces if it could so easily reassemble itself from one? (I concede may have missed something plot wise here – but I **was** concentrating and it all got pretty confusing.) Or for that matter, why didn’t the warriors kill the mutant inside as they dissembled it? Or, if it could escape so easily from it’s detonated shell, why didn’t it do so back in the 9th Century?



The Doctor seemed quite ineffective in this episode, though as manic as she comes. Her solutions to problems didn't seem to work well and her returning to pick up Graham at the height of the crisis was necessary to the plot but reflected badly on her ability to focus on the problem in hand. She was given a bravado confrontation with the Dalek but it left me emotionally blank and there just isn't enough light and shade in her performance for me to warm to her.

And the episode further increased my concern about the number of alien species that have been buried under this green and pleasant land. Let's hope the sites for undiscovered ones are all in green belt areas.

Plus side...it looked good.



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VEERLE KIK: VEERING OFF ABOUT...

...SUPERHEROES' UNDERWEAR

Who doesn't love the idea of superheroes with concealed identities? Though I didn't precisely grow up with them, I was aware of Superman and Batman and may even have seen the occasional Sunday morning show about them. Batman had his Robin, and Superman had Lois. Oh and then there was something about turtles, but they were always fighting and doing something underground. *Transformers* were scary, because one afternoon late March, my cousin was showing me the robot he got for his birthday, and he convinced me the red lights in his eyes were lasers and they would kill me. I had no idea what a 'laysuh' was, but it made me hide in the next room with his sister and her dozens of *My Little Ponies* for the rest of the day, and that was that when it came to superheroes.

Mainly for this reason, I never really went through that phase where you ask all those questions only children have the imagination to ask. Like 'doesn't a phone booth have windows all around so people could just see him changing?' and 'If he's always wearing the suit, isn't he hot all the time?'

It's a curious thing how losing your imagination as you grow up keeps you from asking the relevant questions. You just don't really think about stuff anymore, you no longer see it in your mind and you just accept what is given to you and without that inquisitiveness you never see the flaws in the structure of humanity and... ahem, trailing off...

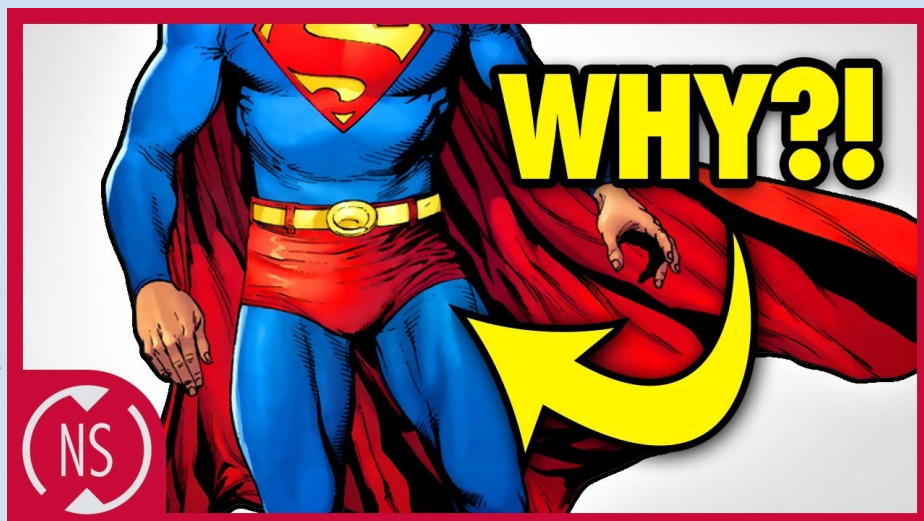
The biggest question however, is one even I with my limited access to superheroes couldn't get around: 'What is the deal with wearing your knickers over your pants??'

Maybe for some kids (*boys*, I bet, they are *gross* like that) it was a sign of rebellion which was to be celebrated, but for me it always seemed icky and impractical. Not to mention very silly. How would that even work? Did they still have to change them everyday? Because that's what you do with underwear, right? But if so, then why? Because it wasn't touching any of the special bits, so how did it get dirty? Or did they have to change their suit every day instead? Did they have multiple suits then? Or was the whole thing just one big scam? Did we only have to change our underwear because the adults said so and *there was no actual reason*? That alone was enough to keep me up for hours during the night.

Of course, back then the internet wasn't introduced in my world yet, and by the time it had, I had very different matters to research and so the matter remained unresolved....

... That is, until very recently. Because I ran in to an old mate from university, and we started to reminisce all the parties we'd organised for the student association, which I was even president of at some point. We had a laugh about one party in particular: Each February there is '*karnaval*' in the Netherlands. Though it sounds like carnival, it is actually something very different, originating in Catholic tradition. For a week, mainly in the southern parts of the country, people take to the streets in fancy dress and listen to ridiculous music, dancing and drinking and having flings. They crown a Prince Karnaval and they have parades of floats and dancers in the streets. You can't run a bar and not be a part of it, so that year we decided the student bar crew had to dress up too. One of our sturdier built comrades ended up picking last and got stuck with a Spiderman suit. He could have refused of course, but he didn't want to spoil the party, so he decided that instead of just the VERY tight (and thus revealing) suit, he would wear short trunks underneath. To be honest, this was not his brightest idea ever. He looked like he was wearing a diaper. Poor bloke. I imagine him counting down the hours 'til he could go home and change. The rest of us on the other hand had tons of fun with it. We joked around that usually superheroes would wear their underwear on the outside, maybe he should try that instead? Couldn't really get any worse after all... If this had been a comic book, this would clearly have been the point where his origin story as supervillain started.

It was this spidery memory that got me back to my original question: Why does underwear become overwear in super powered saviours?



Like with all conundrums in life, I took to the internet. I didn't even have to type the full sentence before Google guessed what I wanted to know. And just as quickly it provided me with an answer: 'The original superhero costumes were based on the outfits worn by circus performers like acrobats and strongmen. They wore trunks over their outfits in case their tights split in which case their underwear would be visible.'⁽¹⁾

Bit anticlimactic really, but I wasn't completely done just yet.

In fact, the underwear question hadn't really been solved, but only changed. If the trunks they wore over their suits are to hide the underwear, then there must be extra underwear under the suit. Way more hygienic, of course. Still, it raises another matter. The reason for the trunks was that, like circus folk, superheroes tend to undertake all kinds of acrobatic shenanigans so split pants are an actual risk. They don't want to be limited in their movements, so trunks it is!

Except, when you have to wear underwear, a super suit, trunks, and day to day clothes, wouldn't you be distinctly cramped in your movements? And, like my friend long ago, wouldn't it look just like you were wearing a diaper? And I haven't even factored in the full cape you'd have to hide under your cheap office outfit. (Although Google answered that one too: In the early comics he just tucked everything in. In the 60s the Kent suit was compressible and had a secret pocket in the cape.⁽²⁾)

The thing is, even if superheroes go through life looking scruffy and stuffed like the Pillsbury doughboy, well, they're *men*, so they can get away with it. Superheroines, now, that's a whole different story. Whether or not they are hiding their identity, they WILL be judged for what they wear.

Think about it. If I go to the office and the outline of my undies is visible through my pants or skirt, I can be sure of what 'they' will be talking about as soon as I leave the room, and it won't be what colour socks I'm wearing. And if my underwear was *gasp* *showing*, even just the edge, I'd likely be sent home to think about my life's choices. So how does the superheroine do it? No baggy suits to hide a pair of trunks without anyone noticing. Office attire mainly consists of sleek skirts and high heels, or a slim cut power suit and glasses, and everybody knows we don't even get *regular* pockets, let alone secret ones big enough to hide an entire cape.

The times I've seen super women portrayed in movies up until now, they weren't hiding their identities, not really. Mostly they are immediately shown to be very powerful, but volatile, because they got ripped out of their natural environment by some terrible thing and are now very confused and see everyone as a threat. (Looking at you here Medusa!) Until they decide to trust someone and get betrayed. And then they turn bitter. Or just learn their lesson and fade into the background as a secretary of a librarian or maybe if they are really good, a historian (hello there Wonderwoman!). And after that people just forget about them. In any case they do not have time to worry about their underwear. And so you don't often see it on them. Not even Captain Marvel, she just has a sash around her hips. Is she supposed to just move that around a bit in case of a suit malfunction after evil warding acrobatics? How about Supergirl then? Nope, because her suit's a tiny dress, which magically stays in place, so for all we know she could be going commando underneath that!



L to R:

1 Supergirl in the comic: short skirt, but no underwear.

2 Supergirl in the TV show: still a skirt

3 Captain Marvel just gets a sash

And I think that's the thing. Supers are supposed to be a fantasy, something to dream about being to escape your life. They embody everything we want to be. Men want to be strong and smart and tall and save the day, wearing something practical; women want to be thin but with the right curves and sexy looks. That's why men can imagine being a Hulk, who's big, ugly and dumb, and smashes things, and women can imagine being a Black Widow, who's not letting anyone mess with her anymore and kicking the behind of everyone who tries.

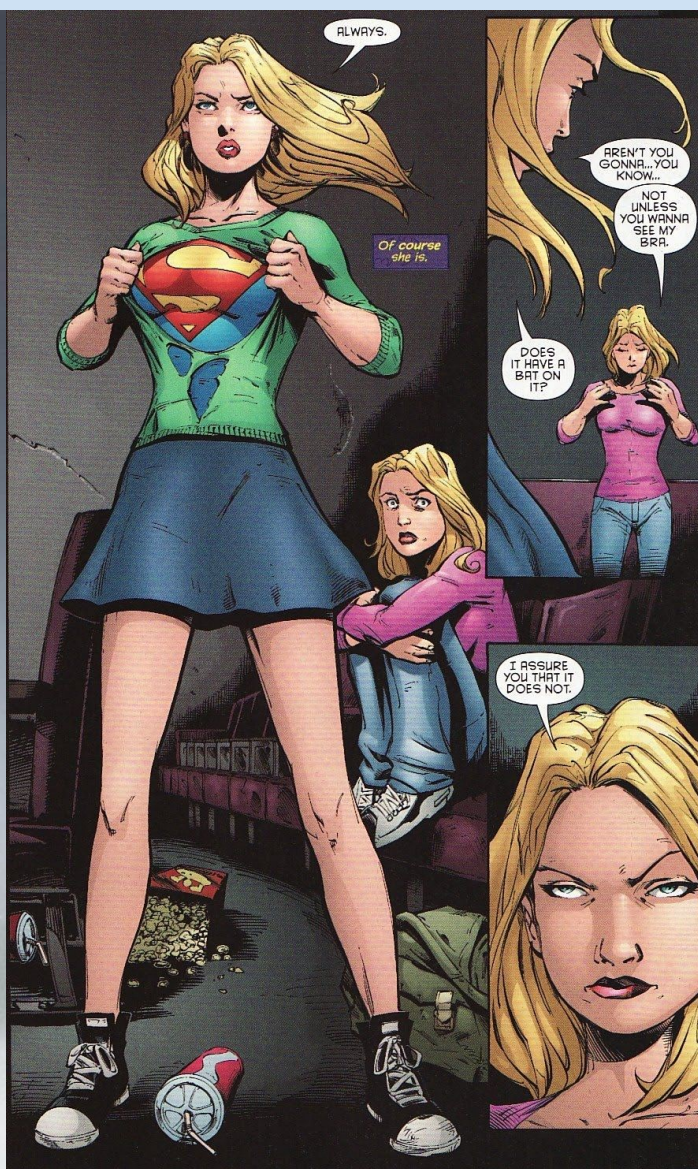
And whether this is natural instinct or society wanting us to be this way doesn't really matter. We gasp at women's underwear, we laugh at that of a man. Just like it's ok for boys to 'pants' each other, preferably showing the embarrassing underwear

with tiny hearts on it, but you'd get expelled or arrested for doing that to a girl. Indeed, we are so cramped about underwear, that no matter how much flesh a comic book (or game) character is showing, you will STILL only see breastplates or belts designed to look like armour and nothing at all that even resembles the stuff lying around in our washing baskets at home.

As it is with using the toilet or blowing your nose, your 'intimate fashion' has no place in comics unless it aides the plot of the story. The verdict is clear: male supers need trunks that look like underwear to hide their actual underwear in case of tearing, females are just going to have to show that they are limber and elegant and wouldn't ever rip their suits in inappropriate places.



Batman: Though technically not 'super', just a loaded vigilante ('What's your superpower?' 'I'm really rich.'). trunks on the outside for acrobatic convenience.



A difference of approach: Supergirl is always ready to rip her civvies off to reveal her costume underneath; Batgirl is somewhat more reserved...

Reaching this conclusion, imagine my delight when I found out that *Agent Provocateur*, the rule breaking lingerie company, released a comic based line in 2009. Not only do the heroines wear underwear, but it's the ONLY thing they wear. And their catalogue is an actual comic book. Ha! Take that, establishment! Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got some shopping to do! ;)

Sources:

- (1) <https://www.quora.com/Why-does-Superman-wear-his-underwear-on-the-outside>
- (2) <https://www.quora.com/Where-does-Superman-conceal-his-cape>
- (3) <https://www.bleedingcool.com/2009/09/15/agent-provocateur-comic-book-superheroines-who-wear-their-underwear-on-the-outside/>



Hawkgirl sometimes gets her costume ripped in battle... but she always makes sure she wears nice underwear, just in case...

Page of comic book / catalogue of Agent Provocateur's line, created by Marvel/DC artist Staz Johnson ⁽³⁾

Veerle has a very active mind that sometimes thinks strange things. Prone to act like her name she veers off in any old direction and you never know where it will bring you. Neither does she.

In this series she shares some of that strangeness on random subjects. Have a suggestion? Do submit it, maybe next time you get to follow her mind's wanderings along the paths of your chosen idea.

Drop us a line at the usual e-mail address and write "Veering Off About..." in the subject line.



JUMANJI NEEDS YOU!

More than twenty years is a long time to wait for a second instalment but, in the case of the *Jumanji* film franchise, it was definitely a rewarding one. Both films have many points worthy of analysis and debate, so this review will aim merely to observe just a few of those points of interest and comparison. So too, since both films are equally worthy of merit and have their own loyal fans, the object of this comment feature will not be to raise or praise one over the other but rather to celebrate both. There are also minor spoilers ahead, but none plot related.

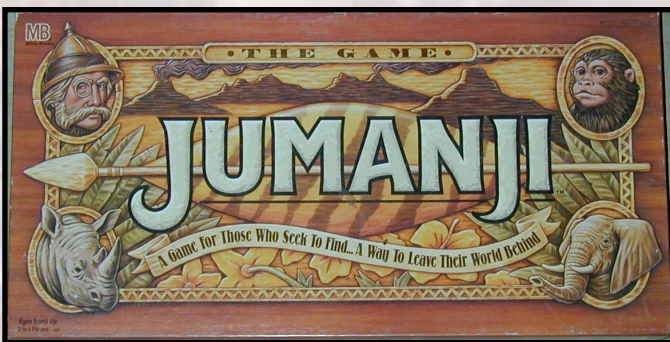
The most obvious switch between the two features is the format reversal, a twist that enabled the sequel to stay both fresh and filled with new ideas but respectful to the original at the same time by not re-treading old ground. While the perils of *Jumanji* involve the fantastical and dangerous hazards of the board game spilling out into the real world, the characters of *Welcome to the Jungle* find they are instead drawn into the game and face those dangers within it. What makes this move so brilliant is that, in choosing a different and opposite approach to the original scenario, it is also a reference to the original storyline in that Alan, the 1995 classic's protagonist, was trapped inside the game for many years in a backstory element that was explained but never seen. *Welcome to the Jungle* takes a part of Alan's experience and makes it the focus of the second movie for the new characters.

Jumanji, with the game partially buried by the sand of a beach; recreating the iconic rhinoceros charge; and the appearance and name check in the dialogue of Alan's name within the game world.



**The cast of the original 1995
Jumanji movie:
L to R: Bonnie Hunt; Bradley Pierce;
Kirsten Dunst; Robin Williams**

Jumanji was of course part of a 1980s and early 1990s sub-genre of family adventure blockbuster that has fallen out of fashion in subsequent decades. Whether you look at *E.T.* or the original *Jurassic Park* or any number of similar films, the juvenile leads are usually joined by mature actors who bond early in the story into a traditional family unit albeit, with the formula normally demanding that the actual parents or guardians being off the scene somewhere, with a degree of irresponsibility the facilitates the adventure by allowing the children to take risks and have a full share. The inevitable thrills occur in the real world, invariably the modern day United States of whatever decade the film was made, and involve a lot of physical stunts with just a few computer or video generated effects. There are plenty of car related stunts resulting in heavy damage to the same, and few such films would be complete without the ubiquitous comedy cop. Finally, the happy ending also evokes traditional American family values by taking place at the equally ubiquitous Christmas party. What probably would not get into a family film in the 2010s is the lengthy sequence set within the well-stocked (pun intended) gun store!



**The original *Jumanji* board game—play it at
your own risk!**

Other neat homage to the past, linking the two films while allowing a spirit of change and creativity, include the opening scene of the sequel almost re-enacting the final one of

Welcome to the Jungle is similarly a product of its age and proudly so. This time, the setting is a fantasy one that uses the familiar world merely to bookend the adventure. And that modern day setting is a high school one, the framing narrative being a post-*Buffy* teen drama. The humour of the whole movie is clearly aimed a Young Adult audience, hence the comment at the outset of this paragraph, with the actors of both younger and older generations revelling in the self-parodic aspects of playing modern dialect and obsessions, such as Instagram, straight and for laughs at the same time. Yes, the sequel is very modern in style and substance, but it knows that it is a comedy of the moment and bound to be dated within a couple of years, but has immense fun in celebrating its status as a mid-2010s movie as much as *Jumanji* self-identified as a mid-90s one.

One positive characteristic of current cinematic narrative is the way that action and humour are mixed in a very even tone, with lots of fast and fun moments maintaining the pace throughout the fantasy section of the film. Either side of this, normality for the teens is just that. The original movie, again in the style of the time, bursts onto the screen before settling into almost tediously slow exposition time-out before becoming a pretty non-stop thrill ride to the finish. That is not a criticism of *Jumanji*, but pretty much how most such films were structured at the time. Another difference in storytelling terms between the two films is again related to the

era of production. In the original *Jumanji*, the structure is based upon surviving the challenges one at a time as the game throws them at the protagonists. In the latter story, the quest element is more prominent and, by means of the computer gaming device of each character having a certain number of lives, there is a holistic approach to how characters give up their lives by sacrificing themselves (or each other) in strategically pursuing the 'long game'; more complex a story to tell and therefore a bigger risk creatively but it works. However, by contrast, there is a strength in the narrative approach of the original film in that, by placing the dangers in the 'real' world, there is a greater social responsibility placed upon the characters to save the day. *Welcome to the Jungle* presents our heroes with a more self-motivated goal of surviving individually or as a group but with no wider consequences beyond the implied grief of their disappearance that would be felt by their own direct families and friends; those peripheral characters are not themselves in danger.

Difference in production era again shows through with both films clearly of their time in the approach to casting. *Jumanji* stars Robin Williams and is an example of the kind of 'star vehicle' that has slipped out of fashion in this genre along with needing family films to feature a kind of family. This again is not a criticism of the fashion, merely recognising that such is what it was. Blockbusters in the modern era carry an expectation of multiple



The cast of Welcome To The Jungle.: L to R: Kevin Hart; Dwayne Johnson; Karen Gillan; Jack Black

star names, and *Welcome to the Jungle* benefits from an impressive quartet. What makes the sequel special though is not this alone, but the fact that the script and the self-referential and self-deprecating humour therein was written specifically for these four actors and all of them agreed to join in. Occasionally, a film comes along that allows famous and even type-cast actors to let their hair down and play fan-pleasing larger than life versions of themselves, overlaid with the character specific to the film obviously. This is one of those films. Everyone just has fun and gets on really well with other, and it shows. In real life, Dwayne Johnson is much more like the caring and funny person that he plays here than the rough, tough persona he is associated with in front of the camera and, while most of her characters are exaggerations of herself to some extent, there is slightly more Karen Gillen than usual in *Ruby Roundhouse*. Jack Black and Kevin Hart also expressed how easy their characters were to become. This extended perfect moment shows through in the rapport and comic timing that characterises the whole part of the film set within the game.

you been watching *Back to the Future* by mistake?'. But the fact that it is, though not remembered as the great conceptual piece of time travel fantasy that it should be, is interesting in itself, because both films refuse to jump up and down proclaiming themselves as such. Time is linear within the game, which is to say that it passes at the same pace within and outside its confines, or at least it appears to. But the game also sends players who complete it back to their original time and place of entry, even if the game has moved its physical location, including the power to rejuvenate the player back to their original age. But this is after allowing the player to interact directly with the future in the case of Alan leaving the game entirely and living however briefly in the future in the first film and with Alex interacting with people from his own future within the game in the sequel. So, we ask, is the game in whatever form it takes actually a portal into an alternate dimension, with its own space and time, where all of these wonders can exist and phenomena, such as finding yourself in the body of an avatar, can actually happen? Now, *that* sounds like potential for another sequel...

Finally, returning to the narrative of the films and examining them together, mention has to be made of the fascinating treatment of time travel in both movies. 'No, wait!' I hear you cry, '*Jumanji* is not about time travel! Have



Welcome to the Jungle...



Karen Gillan as Ruby Roundhouse. Original artwork © Andrew Skilleter

ZATHURA

A SPACE ADVENTURE

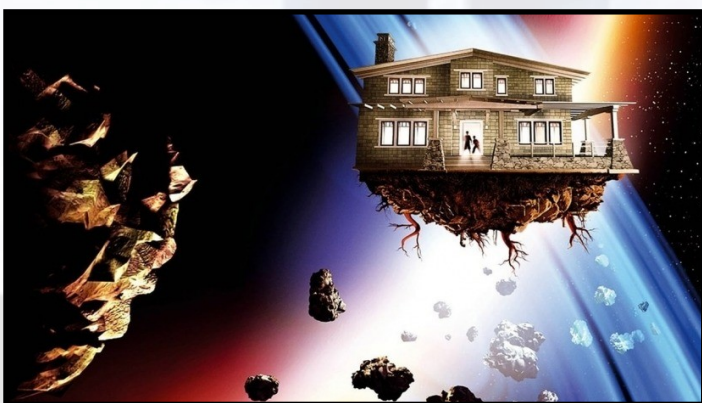
Reviewed by Colin Davies

Before Marvel even thought about its cinematic universe, many a shared space had already come before; Alien and Blade Runner, Star Wars and ET, Abbott & Costello, all the Universal monsters. What I'm trying to say is well, basically, Marvel/Disney were not first out of the traps.

Sometimes these wider universes can go unnoticed, like in the case of *Jumanji*. 2017 saw the release of *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, billed as being the sequel to the 1995 classic starring Robin Williams, though I beg to differ.

The true spiritual successor is *Zathura: A space adventure* (2005). The illustrated book from Chris Van Allsburg, published in 2002, was a direct sequel to his previous title *Jumanji*. Granted the book contains many more references to the jungle based game. Not difficult when you consider the film version of *Zathura* contains none. However, mechanisms are well and truly established to show this film takes place in the same universe as its predecessor.

If you haven't seen it, WHY? It's another special effects led fantasy romp that starts with children that have issues with their current life, finding and playing a board game. This time a clockwork tin 1950s looking Space Game. Things that happen in the game, let's say a random meteor shower, then actually happen in real life. You know the drill.



Where it differs from *Jumanji*, and actually has more in common with *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, is that the house and the occupants are transported to the game environment. They are literally playing in space.

There is a lost boy who got stuck in the game known as the *Astronaut*, but with a lovely twist. The brothers Danny and Walter, who first find the game must complete all the tasks set for them in order to win and return home. They do have an older sister, who isn't part of the game, she just happens to be caught up in all the danger [A pre-Twilight Kristen Stewart – Ed.]

It's a high octane adventure full of peril. Defective robot, flying too close to suns, and a very aggressive alien race called the *Zorgons*. Big explosions, heart thumping action sequences, and plenty of heart.

Like *Jumanji* the story is more about overcoming personal issues. It's about coming together and helping each other. It's about understanding how important other people are to us.

It's a film for all ages that pushes a lot of the right buttons. Tickling your sci-fi itchy and scratching your adventure funny bone... strike that, reverse it. With a mixture of practical and CGI effects it deserves to have better recognition. I wish the producers hadn't tried to separate it so much from its shared universe. If they had told everyone that it was connected, then maybe it would have fared better at the box office.

But I for one want to see this film restored to its true place, its cultural home, as the middle film in a quite frankly, wonderful fantasy trilogy.



Out of the Vortex

News, Reviews and Previews from the Sci-Fi and Fantasy Multiverse

RATINGS SUCCESS

ANY fears that the BBC or fans of *Doctor Who* may have harboured about the casting of Jodie Whittaker as the long-running sci-fi series' first female incarnation of the TARDIS-travelling Time Lord soon proved groundless when consistently high ratings showed that both Whittaker and the revamped series itself was a big hit with viewers. *Doctor Who* fans were sent into a frenzy during the first episode of the series, titled *The Woman Who Fell to Earth*, which was screened on Sunday 7th October 2018. Many took to social media whilst the episode was still on air, singing the praises of the 13th Doctor.

Speaking to Chris Evans on BBC Radio 2's breakfast show, Jodie explained how she had been "building up" to Sunday's series 11 premiere for 18 months. She also told how the excitement from fans and positive reaction has allowed her to breathe a sigh of relief.

Whittaker commented: "It's been really exciting, just because of the whole thing of the show and me finding out I'd got it before anyone else knew. There's been probably an 18 month period building up to it being seen by the fans. From the amount of people that have seen it, it has potentially brought on new fans as well.

"When you spend nine months grafting on something with the most extraordinary ensemble of cast and crew, and you put all this hard work in, you do really want it to be seen."

The BBC said an average of 8.2 million viewers tuned in to the premiere episode on the Sunday night. Later consolidated viewing figures which take into account viewers who watched the programme on Catch Up and online streaming brought the total to 10.54. According to the BBC this is the highest figure

for a *Doctor Who* episode in 10 years and the second highest total for a Doctor's debut episode. (Christopher Eccleston's Ninth Doctor debut story *Rose* in March 2005, which heralded the return of the series, garnered ratings of 10.86).

Although ratings dipped slightly throughout the series' 10-episode run, they remained consistently high, averaging a viewership of 7.7 million, taking into account both live numbers and streams over the seven day period following the episode airing on TV. This puts Whittaker's first season fifth overall in average ratings since *Doctor Who* returned in 2005.

Needless to say, some episodes were better received than others, with Episode 3, *Rosa*, being cited as a firm favourite.

The new companion dynamic proved a successful combination and Bradley Walsh's Graham was arguably the surprise highlight of the entire season. Season 11 wasn't without fault however, and many fans didn't enjoy the distinct lack of villains or the fact that the Thirteenth Doctor failed to encounter any returning enemies, monsters or characters from the show's history.

This deficiency was addressed in the New Year's Day Special *Resolution* screened on January 1st 2019 when the Doctor, Yaz, Graham and Ryan faced off against a lone Dalek with a handy line in metalwork skills and a mean line in extermination.

Doctor Who is not due to return to TV screens until early 2020, which many long-time fans hope will give Chibnall and the production team the necessary time to iron out any kinks and enable Jodie Whittaker plenty of scope to take her Doctor further and gain even more fans.

PINCER MOVEMENT!

Although *Doctor Who* boasts an impressive number of extant serials and episodes from its original 26-year run (1963 to 1989), it is a sad fact that there are still many episodes missing from the 1960s. Thankfully however, we have been able to enjoy these old adventures thanks to CD releases of the complete soundtracks (many of which were re-created from fans' own off-air recordings) and fan created 'recons'. A few years back the BBC authorised the release of DVDs of some incomplete stories with animation replacing those episodes which were missing, such as *The Reign of Terror* (1964), *The Tenth Planet* (1966), *The Ice Warriors* (1967) and *The Invasion* (1968). This was followed by the bold move in 2016 to animate a completely missing story, in this case *The Power of Daleks*, Patrick Troughton's debut episode as the Second Doctor from 1966.

Following the commercial success of *Power of the Daleks*' animated release, another missing story has been given the animation treatment, in this case Troughton's fourth story *The Macra Terror*. Originally broadcast in four 25-minute weekly parts from 11th March to 1st April 1967, and starring Patrick Troughton, Anneke Wills, Michael Craze and Frazer Hines, no full episodes of this serial are known to have survived on film. with only short clips and off-air telesnaps surviving. This atmospheric story will be released on DVD, Blu-ray, special edition Steelbook and digital download in both the original black and white and new colour formats.

Anneke Wills, who played companion Polly in the series commented: "Back in 1967 the cry was: *"There's no such thing as Macra!"* and for many years after there was no such thing as *"The Macra Terror"*. Now, thanks to the magic of animation, we can see the story come to life again. I can't wait to see this adventure and how gratifying to have a little more of Ben and Polly's time with the Doctor available to be seen by new generations."

In the story, the Second Doctor (Patrick

Troughton) and his companions arrive on a human colony in the far-flung future. The colony appears to be a giant recreational complex - a holiday camp for rest and relaxation. Everyone looks happy and carefree but all is not as it seems. The colony has been infiltrated and brainwashed by a race of giant parasitic crab creatures called the Macra.

SHED THE DALEK, MUSEUM TOLD

The owner of a Museum of Science Fiction in Allendale, Northumbria has launched a campaign to 'Save Our Dalek', after Northumberland County Council issued him with a notice ordering him to remove a shed from his drive, which houses a full-size replica of Doctor Who's arch enemy.

As reported by Georgia Matthews in the *Hexham Courant* newspaper The council has taken action against owner of the museum Neil Cole, after it received a complaint from a local parish councillor about the shed, which was built without planning permission in a conservation area outside Neil's Grade II listed townhouse.

Neil, who has been told to remove the Dalek by February 5, said: "In only a few months, the museum has brought great revenue to the village, with over 900 visitors already and guests travelling from over seas just to visit the attraction. It adds a bit of magic into the area, and it would be a giant loss to the town to see that taken away.

"A small minority of the parish council have always opposed the museum, and this complaint is the latest in a string of attempts to get the attraction closed, or dampen its popularity. The shed was purpose-built to remain inoffensive and discreet, and not distract from the character of the historic house and village. Removing the shed for the Dalek will severely impact my fledgling business."

A spokeswoman for Northumberland County Council said: "We wish to work with the property owner to resolve this, and we have written to him to advise that this would require planning permission and due to the listed status of the property an application is unlikely to be supported." [See *The Back of Beyond*, page 82—Ed]



BOOK REVIEWS

Doctor Who – The Women Who Lived
BY Christel Dee and Simon Guerrier
Published by BBC Books 2018 RRP: £16.99

An interesting and entertaining read

For new fans of the show, it is a very nicely presented look into the Doctor's long history and the female characters of all ages that have played a part in it. Each character is introduced with a name, occupation and introductory story title. A role-encapsulating sentence is followed by a brief summary of how she met the Doctor and their adventure(s) together, an insight into her personality, and where her life was headed when they parted – if she survived. Apart from a short section at the end, each character is given a beautiful full-page illustration – some in portrait style, others in a graphic novel style.

For established fans of the show, it is a pleasant wander down memory lane, revisiting many of the female characters that have encountered the Doctor through the years. Apart from the companions, there are many women and girls who we remember as playing a major part in one story or another, and then there are those that we do not remember as being so pivotal as this book suggests.

There is a very nice tribute at the end to the woman we all have to thank for this wonderful series – VERITY ANN LAMBERT

The Energy and Spirit of the Women shines out from the pages

A celebration of the brave, sparky women who have accompanied, or challenged the Doctor on his adventures? Got to be a good thing. This book is a timely reminder that the *Doctor Who* universe is not simply the province of the males of our species.

Each woman is described in detail and their relationship to the Doctor and their role in his/her stories, carefully delineated. True, there is not a great deal of critical evaluation of their contributions but that's acceptable in a book

whose purpose is to recognise their importance to the success of the show. It

achieves that purpose very well: these women's spirit and energy shines out from the pages.

The female artists tasked with illustrating each description have given their art freely and it's great to see so many offered an exclusive opportunity to showcase their work. So it might seem a bit churlish that I have a slight reservation about some of it. I have to admit, however, that, as much as I was wowed by a lot of the art, I did find the differences in style a little jarring. Some of the visual interpretations of a character differed markedly from my own, and in such cases I felt that the portraits did not do the women justice. But that's a matter of personal taste. There are so many to look at that everyone is bound to find some that please them.

Should you buy a copy? Yes.

The Women Who Lived could inspire new, young fans to seek out early adventures of the Doctor (to read about, even if the episodes are not available to watch) and girls would find excellent role models amongst the women described and the artists who have represented them.

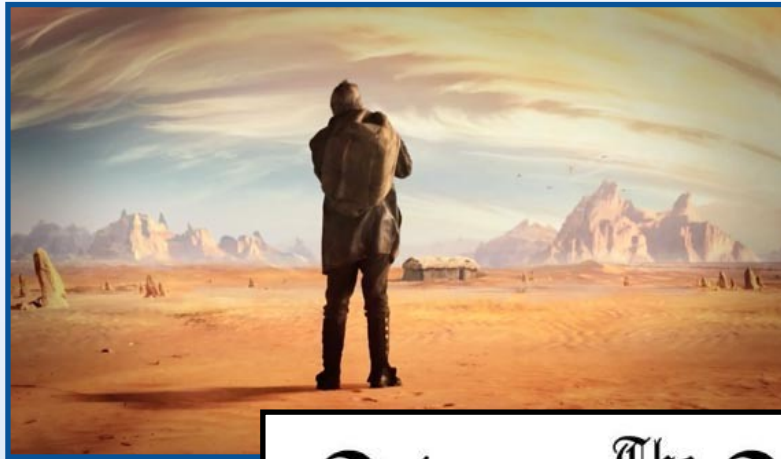
For established fans, it provides a useful and easily accessible reference guide with every significant female appearance in *Dr Who* lovingly detailed.

The book looks good and its contents are written to appeal to a variety of ages and reading abilities. It's something that any young fan, girls in particular, would love to own and their parents could have a lot of fun sharing it with them and broadening their experience of watching the show.

I can foresee in the distant future, grown up fans of, say, the 26th incarnation of the Doctor, citing receiving this book as the moment for them when casually liking the programme turned into a life-time passion.

All lovers of *Dr. Who* should rejoice at that.
AW

Gallifrey,
the long way round



THE BACK OF BEYOND

The Skaro Spectator

ESTABLISHED 2150 A.D.

BRUTALLY ENSLAVED ON EARTH!!!!

With many thanks to Andrew Allen for permission to reproduce this Skarosian exclusive!

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See the more down-to-Earth report in *Out of the Vortex*, page 80...



An unidentified Mark III Travel Machine has been located in Allendale, in the North of England. It is being held in a small cell, which we believe the Earth creatures call a 'shed', outside a museum mainly dedicated to the many races cruelly subjugated throughout the

multiverse by the Time Lord we know as The Doctor.

The enslaved unit (here pictured in its holding unit, whilst one of its captors gloats over its incarceration) was detected by one of our undercover Robomen and reported to a Governmental organisation which rules over the Earthlings. We

OUR DALEK INFILTRATORS ON THE PLANET EARTH HAVE DISCOVERED ONE OF OUR BRETHREN CAPTURED AND DISPLAYED FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES IN A SMALL TOWN IN THE NORTH OF THE DOMAIN THE EARTH CREATURES CALL ENGLAND.

are glad to report that the Council involved is engaged in legal bureaucracy to free our valiant brother by the enforcement of

petty regulations designed to subjugate the Earth creatures, a tactic of which we heartily approve and wish to learn more about.

SPORTS NEWS
KALEDS 400 - THALS

WEATHER
ONCOMING STORM
FORECAST

Coming soon! Issue #4 (Spring 2019):

Loads of great features ! Maybe even something written by YOU? See You Soon!