



ULTIMATE REGENERATION
THE INCREDIBLE RESURRECTION OF DOCTOR WHO

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christian Cawley is a freelance writer and author from the north east of England who has been the driving force behind www.kasterborous.com since its launch in 2005.

Christian's passion for Doctor Who and all things Time Lordly began when he was but an infant; memories of *The Pirate Planet* and *Destiny of the Daleks* still haunt him, but his clearest classic Doctor Who memory remains the moment the Fourth Doctor fell from a radio telescope...

When the announcement was made in 2003 that Doctor Who would be returning to TV, Christian was nowhere to be seen – in fact he was enjoying himself at the Munich Oktoberfest. Desperate to make amends for this Kasterborous.com was launched, with the help of illustrator and designer Anthony Dry and prop fanatic Brian A. Terranova.

While he isn't bemoaning the end of the Philip Hinchcliffe era of Doctor Who, Christian enjoys meals with his wife, listening to a wide range of music (particularly Led Zeppelin) and playing guitar.

AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Primarily, this book is for all of the fantastic readers of www.kasterborous.com whose support made this possible.

Massive thanks must also go to our contributors, notably those whose work doesn't appear in Ultimate Regeneration but whose efforts have made it possible. Andrew Reynolds, Meredith Burdett, Patrick Riley and James Whittington in particular have played a massive part in the last few months, while Elton Townend Jones, Paul Cavanagh, Peter Ould, Thomas Shelton, Justin Abbot, Colin Brockhurst, Rick Lundeen, Neil Clarke, Matt Nida, Mark Watson, Laredo Lowtide, Jonathan Barlow, Joe Siegler and Helen Calder have all made vital individual contributions to Kasterborous over the years.

Particular thanks also go to my online colleagues Anthony Dry (he of the wonderful Doctor Who DVD boxset illustrations and the stunning cover gracing this volume) and Brian A. Terranova, as well as Gareth Kavanagh. These gentlemen have each been of vital assistance in formulating and publishing Ultimate Regeneration.

Finally, a brief dedication to Ceri, for your unending patience.

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INTRODUCTION

Opinions are like a**holes – everybody has one

Since Doctor Who's return to television in 2005, online magazine and fansite www.kasterborous.com has offered critical analysis of the series on a daily basis.

Over the course of 5 years, Kasterborous reviewed 60 episodes of Doctor Who plus a couple of shorter specials as well as profiling the actors, characters and writers who contributed to the new series.

The book you hold in your hands right now is a distillation of these articles and reviews, a real-time appraisal of each episode of the Russell T Davies era of Doctor Who.

As is the case within Doctor Who fandom, there is contentious material here. You might disagree with the review of *Love & Monsters*, for instance, or think that *The Long Game* is one of the best episodes of the Ninth Doctor's adventures.

Of course, opinions can change – some episodes can improve through repeated viewings for a number of reasons. This book is also a diary of what the Kasterborous team felt about particular episodes when they were first broadcast, and therefore acts as an interesting barometer of changing opinions.

(Also please note that our international band of contributors has resulted in a book that adopts both US and UK English; this information might seem superfluous but I am keen to retain their individual voices on the printed page, so if the spelling of "color" particularly grates with you, I left it in on purpose).

However, this isn't some website that's been printed out, bound and sold to loyal Doctor Who fans at a horribly inflated price. In addition to the 60 reviews and 30 articles, this book also features 50% original written content that cannot be found online. As a team of twenty-something classic series fans when the new era of Doctor Who was ushered in, Ultimate Regeneration also acts as an account of how we all learned how to stop fretting and love the "new series".

So, prepare to travel through time, and enjoy the ultimate regeneration of Doctor Who from its surprisingly successful revival in 2005 to *The End of Time* itself in early 2010!

THE REBIRTH OF DOCTOR WHO

It all seems such a blur now – the announcement, the casting, the launch – yet the return of Doctor Who took place over an 18 month period, beginning in September 2003.

Amusingly after years of endless hoping that the series would one day return, I was completely unaware of the BBC announcement on September 26th, 2003, on account of being on a coach through France on the way to the Munich Oktoberfest. In fact it was a whole week later before I discovered the good news!

As with most fans, I was thrilled that the writer of such successful dramas as **Queer as Folk** and **The Second Coming**, Russell T Davies, was going to be the main creative driving force behind the new series.

To be honest, it was a Whovian's wet dream.

In those days, Kasterborous was just a constellation in Doctor Who – it would be another 12 months before our first articles and artwork were published online, and in the preceding time a lot of casting had taken place, not least the announcement of the highly regarded Mancunian character actor Christopher Eccleston as the Doctor.

Press attention on this casting was huge, with The Daily Mail famously and erroneously declaring Bill Nighy (**Love Actually**, and Series 5's museum curator Dr Black in "the one with Van Gogh") as the new star of Doctor Who. Elsewhere, two popular (but sadly now defunct) websites simultaneously announced Christopher Eccleston as the new Doctor, leading to a small amount of acrimony¹.

Eccleston – best known to most TV viewers as the murdered DCI Bilborough in Cracker several years earlier – was a surprise choice, but his casting immediately set the stall for the BBC's new production of Doctor Who, overseen by Davies, Julie Gardner, Mal Young and Phil Collinson.

It wasn't long before respected actors were lining up to appear in the new Doctor Who. Zoe Wanamaker (**My Family, Love Hurts**), Simon Callow (**Four Weddings and a Funeral**), Annette Badland (**Little Voice, The Queen's Nose**), Rupert Vansitart (**Four Weddings and a Funeral**,

¹ The sites concerned were www.gallifreyonline.com and www.outpostgallifrey.com – both now defunct, the former apparently beat the latter to the punch by reading the news on their unrivalled forum.

HeartBeat), Shaun Dingwall (**Soldier, Soldier**), Simon Pegg (**Spaced, Shaun of the Dead**), Penelope Wilton (**Calendar Girls, Shaun of the Dead**), Richard Wilson (**One Foot in the Grave**) and Paterson Joseph (**Neverwhere, Peep Show**) were among the big names to appear throughout the series, which even threw in cameos from quiz show queen Anne Robinson, **Big Brother**'s Davina McCall and TV fashion "experts" Trinny and Susannah.

The fact that it was Doctor Who was enough of a pull for most of these actors – with Christopher Eccleston involved, starring in scripts written and overseen by Russell T Davies, the new Doctor Who had a veneer of quality the like of which had never been seen in the original, classic series.

However, a new Doctor Who in a new era required a new approach – with an actor of Eccleston's stature starring as the Time Lord, a new spin was needed on the old formula, from the role of the companion and her grounding in real life to stripping down the sartorial eccentricities of the Doctor...

THE DOCTOR'S UNDERCOAT

Christian Cawley

Doctor Who is back. In just a few weeks we'll see new adventures of the Time Lord, earth's protector, as he battles foes from other planets. We'll gasp as he whips out his sonic screwdriver to solve problems like locked doors and smile in admiration as Christopher Eccleston runs, leather jacket flapping in the wind. Ah yes - the "leather jacket".

Or as it will forever be known in Doctor Who fandom, "The Leather Jacket" (that's *with* capitals).

Clogs might have been quite a fashion statement, but no doubt would have required a Brian May-like perm. Similarly a stovepipe hat would have appeared archaic and frankly silly, whereas a loud, multicoloured shell suit would have given the wrong impression totally.

My own preferences were either a futuristic suit of armour (yes, I know it is Doctor Who, and that our hero is rarely violent; but it would look kind of cool!) or a slightly dishevelled wedding suit, giving the Doctor a post-Lazenby Bond back-story. Anything, really, to stop the public thinking about that bloody scarf!

To the British public - and probably most of the world – Doctor Who is a mad wide-eyed bohemian in a long scarf and brown coat.

He pops up in **The Simpsons** from time to time, and Tom Baker's portrayal of the Time Lord is renowned across the globe. It was these seven years of episodes, plus the Pertwee era, that endeared the show to its many millions of fans from the 1970s onwards, depending where on earth you lived. But the bohemian look of the Fourth Doctor was common in the 1970s, an era when hippies were growing up and either changing the world through business, or just wandering. Similarly, many a dashing wave could be cut in a smart velvet suit of the type favoured by the Third Doctor. London fashion spots were full of velvet-clad dandies and musketeers in the late 1960s and early 1970s – just look at Jimi Hendrix.

On the other hand, perhaps a smartly-cut, velvet two piece would have worked in 2005? Not in a post-Lawrence Llewellyn-Bowen world it wouldn't. It was old hat when he adopted the style – can you imagine how odd Christopher Eccleston would look? Meanwhile, how would the new Doctor shape up in a beige or brown trouser and jacket two piece? Simply hideous – the Seventh Doctor couldn't make it work!

So what about a sporting motif? Anyone for tennis? A Formula One driver's jumpsuit? Somehow Peter Davison got away with that the cricket themed attire although it would have been interesting to see some variation in his appearance – it was of course at the beginning of the Fifth Doctor's era that the clothes of the Doctor became his "costume".

While the term "costume" is of course perfectly sensible in the realm of a drama production, within the confines of the narrative the audience considers the actor's clothes to be the character's own. So why did the Fifth Doctor wander around for 3 years in that ridiculous cricketing outfit when it was:

- a) Obviously not suitable for playing cricket in, and
- b) easily soiled?

Perhaps the giant figure that Christopher Eccleston cuts would look more appropriate in a Dickensian costume? Stooping around like Bob Cratchit? The First, Second and Eighth Doctors all pulled off the 19th century look – possibly too well. That leaves us with little to work with as an alternative really, although I doubt the production team looked at it that way when Eccleston's "geography teacher" look was decided.

If we take the Doctor's attire during his heyday (the velvet dandy or the bohemian) we see two iconic looks inspired by the attire of the mid-twenties male in the sixties and seventies. Perhaps not the typical twenty-something - who no doubt was covered in post-puberty spots and greasy hair - but certainly the student or young teacher of the time, regardless of their reading. What we have in Christopher Eccleston's costume is the look of a teacher - casually dressed, brown Leather Jacket.

If a link can be made to the character of the Ninth Doctor from his costume (and attempts have been successfully made to marry previous Doctors with their attire in ways such as this) we should perhaps expect the Doctor to act as Rose's teacher and guide as he takes her on a fantastic voyage through the history of the human race. If no link can be made however, at least Christopher Eccleston looks damn fine in that jacket...

A WELL DRESSED MAN... MEN?

Brian A Terranova

With the announcement of Christopher Eccleston as the Doctor, every fan had visions in their heads of what this incarnation might look like, but no one expected to see the pictures of the leather jacket, tee-shirt, and Doc Martens.

Few things in this world have set fans of Doctor Who into a rage more than the innocent kiss of the TV Movie, the revelation of the Doctor's human mother and now to that list, the Leather Jacket.

Most of us have gotten over the kiss, and the half human element didn't change anything that has happened in the past of the show, so why should it change things going forward?

Ok then, now we are left with the leather jacket and the ill feeling people have placed on it. But is the leather jacket so out of character? Should what the Doctor wears really affect how he saves the universe?

From day one of the series the Doctor has always expressed an interest in the planet Earth. From head to toe he was decked out in Earth style clothes and he was always well versed in our history. He even thought enough of Earth to have his granddaughter schooled on our little blue planet.

He enjoyed the company of humans throughout all of his lives.

For the most part the Doctor has always dressed in a suit with a tie, but “for the most part” is not always. To say that the Doctor’s traditional style of clothes was Victorian outfits is also a bit unfair. While he did seem to favor the look of a Victorian gentleman during some of his lives, “some of his lives” is not “all of his lives”.

The Third Doctor favored frills and velvet smoking jackets and has taken flak from some fans for this choice of dress sense as well.

The Fourth was rooted in the 1970’s before he donned his Victorian style only to drop it again for a mixture of both the Victorian and modern day Earth.

The Seventh Doctor was very much a sign of the modern day man, looking like he just stepped out of a shopping mall in 1987. Did this make him any less the Doctor? No? He still had a tie right?

But then the Fifth Doctor never wore a tie. In fact this Doctor could be more closely related to Christopher Eccleston than any other, he wore tennis shoes and a cricket outfit; very much a leisure suit designed for comfort rather than the best social affair.

The Sixth Doctor’s suit was a totally new creation supposedly not even from Earth. In fact, not to single out Colin Baker as it has been done to death, but his Doctor could arguably be the one Doctor who breaks the mould, as he didn’t even wear a suit from Earth. Earth style maybe, but not from Earth.

We all have a standard in our heads that the production team must meet in order for us to enjoy the Doctor and his adventures to their best potential. But then when you think about it every time a new actor came in to play the new Doctor, half of the fans thought that the new guy didn’t have what it took based on one thing or another.

Then, when given the chance, a big chunk of them around and realized that things weren’t so bad.

There will always be a few who don’t approve of the new look or other new ideas brought into the show. But to say that it is out of character isn’t quite fair, when everything that we have seen of the character in the past shows us that his tastes clearly change just as much as his face.

Again looking back on the series as a whole, even taking into account the Sixth Doctor’s alien suit, the Doctor has always dressed in the style of man from Earth so what’s so wrong with the leather jacket after all? It’s still in the tradition of his favorite place.

No matter what fashion sense or what face the Doctor wears the most important part is that the man underneath them is the same old hero that captivated us as he saved the little people.

Personally I'm glad they had enough sense to let the pictures of the new outfit get leaked to the fan world. Now, no matter what everyone thinks of the new look, when we see the first episode of the new series our heads won't be filled with thoughts about something as minor as a leather jacket.

In the pre-new season void, it wasn't just the Doctor's use of a leather jacket that caused a fuss. Any scrap of information was leapt upon and dissected – Mal Young's departure from the role of Executive Producer formed one of Kasterborous' early news headlines, while speculation about the new Doctor Who theme tune was tempered when the BBC's Official Doctor Who website launched their Radiophon-a-Tron.²

Of course, the other big item of interest (other than the redesign of the TARDIS, Daleks and inclusion of many guest stars, not to mention the expectation of scripts by writers such as Mark Gatiss, Paul Cornell and Steven Moffat) was that of the new companion – Rose Tyler.

NEW ROSE

Christian Cawley

Petite, pouty, bottle-blond shop girl, GSOH, seeks tall, distinguished leather-jacketed time-traveller for fun adventures. Must answer to the name Doctor; no gingers.

Ahh - singles ads. Never the realm of your average single person, usually made up of sad obsessives or those already married (err... a friend told me so....). The above ad - however much we would like to see it pop up (and then be reprinted in **Private Eye**) – is nothing more than me being a bit fanciful and pretentious (I'm gunning for a job at **Doctor Who Magazine** when the next opportunity arises). However we

2

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/doctorwho/news/cult/news/drwho/2004/12/20/16164.shtml>)

should all be very wary that the beautiful young actress known as Billie Piper is going to get a lot of media attention over the coming few years; she might think she's used to it having being married to one of the UK's flashiest media personalities, but being a Who girl is the televisual equivalent of being a Bond girl. And there's no Bond film being made at the moment.

Initially, this was to have been an article about the more interesting aspects of Ms Piper's figure, comparing her shapely assets with those of other Who girls before declaring her the winner. I've heard however that a popular tabloid wants that particular article, so after a rethink I opted to talk about how much Billie Piper - and how much Doctor Who - we'll be getting over the next 4 months. That's only if we get stuck with the one series as well.

Now 22, Billie Piper has a long successful career ahead of her. However as a young woman she was married to the DJ Chris Evans and likely to forever be a target of the tabloid media. Think back to other high profile girlfriends and wives such as Patsy Kensit, or Yoko Ono. Even now, almost 40 years after she met John Lennon, Yoko Ono is mentioned in the press. The same could be possible for Billie Piper - it was likely following her marriage to Evans; now as the new companion in Doctor Who it is almost a certainty.

Over the next few months we'll see more photos of Billie Piper than we saw in her days as a pop star. Magazine covers, DWM previews and features, SFX previews and features, images at the BBC's Official Site - all providing a massive photographic library for any obsessives out there. But there is another side to it. As a role model, Billie Piper has already disappointed. Despite her obvious good looks and womanly figure, as Mrs Chris Evans she enjoyed a long period of partying, day and night which was often photographed by the press whenever the couple were seen in public. As a young (albeit retired) pop star, this behaviour was of course looked upon by the press in a bad light.

In a way, a recovery has taken place. I've known plenty of girls in Billie's age group go for a long party, regardless of how much money they had to spend on it. It's what teenagers and a lot of twenty-somethings do. Most are fortunate not to have their less savoury moments plastered across the newspapers. But as Billie's acting career has slowly developed, attention has shifted away slowly from her personal life. No doubt the interviews with the woman herself over the next month or two will mention her broken marriage; but this is as

much a part of her as her pop career. Since the split she appears to be very comfortable with herself and not prone to any late night boozing *faux pas*.

To be honest, she has completely reinvented herself, and succeeded in challenging the Press - and the publics – perception of her. No longer is she the dirty-stop-out booze monkey wife of The Ginger Whinger. Now she is a sophisticated young actress, so far faultlessly slipping into the characters of the girls she is portraying. Once known as a popette, then a young married woman, she will now always be identified as a Who-girl. This is a chalice that has long been poisoned for most of the Doctor's female companions (as for most Bond girls) – only time will tell if Billie Piper will become typecast, and whether she will be able to escape the shadow of one of Britain's most loved television shows.

With heightened exposure comes heightened responsibility. I have full faith however that Ms Piper has the wherewithal to conduct herself responsibly in the public eye. As far as Doctor Who companions go, she will probably be considered the archetype for many a year to come.

Throwing a pop-star divorcee who had previously been raking in column inches by being regularly inebriated with ex-husband Chris Evans into the mix for nuWho was a step that took many conservative, hardcore Doctor Who fans by complete surprise.

A considerable amount of controversy was generated within the major online Doctor Who communities, such as (the now-defunct) Outpost Gallifrey and the IMDb boards; yet the one thing that could have upset these die-hard fans with little regard for "talentless celebrities" (which is how Billie Piper was wrongly portrayed by the media at this point) even more was an interview in which Christopher Eccleston spoke about the Doctor's potential for love...

KING OF HEARTS

Brian A Terranova

I have to admit that when I read the article where Christopher Eccleston stated that the Doctor "has two hearts and both of them can be broken" I was a bit confused.

Don't get me wrong I am not arguing with him, in fact I completely agree, but to say this as if it was some sort new revelation just didn't seem right to me.

Looking back on the Doctor's past we have seen such heartache and although we have only seen one that directly linked itself to a love interest, the rest should not be dismissed as anything but a broken heart.

We will now be travelling back through time to explore many of these sad moments in, if nothing else, an attempt to show that Mr Eccleston's interest in portraying a more emotional Doctor in the new series is in fact what he should be doing, just as the Doctor has always been.

One of the first moments that come to mind is Susan's departure from the series (*Dalek Invasion of Earth*, 1965). We see that although the Doctor had the strength to let go, he did so with great pain to himself. Susan was his world in the beginning, she was his granddaughter, and although the true nature of their familial relationship was never explored in the series, we have no reason to believe her to be anything but his real kin.

His broken heart can even be felt carrying over into the next story until he feels the need to take Vicki under his wing and have back a bit of that family relation that he has just recently lost.

Moving on to his next incarnation would be the heart-felt goodbye between the Second Doctor, Zoe and his long-time companion Jamie (*The War Games*, 1969). In this scene - which demonstrates how sad the Doctor is that his days of haphazardly travelling the universe are now over - it shows us that he is torn apart by losing his best friends; a situation that the Doctor would find himself in many more times in the future.

As emotional as the last two examples might have been we truly get a dose of the teary eye when Jo Grant has to tell the Third Doctor that she has decided it is time to move on with her life. She has found the man she wants to marry and the Doctor looks as if it's taking all his might to keep himself standing on his own two feet when he hears the news.

Although he puts a brave front on the goodbye, he is once again crushed by the situation and drives off into the sunset alone.

Sarah Jane Smith was in fact the Fourth Doctor's best friend. So it should come as no surprise that he can barely even look at her when he tells her she must leave his company, as she cannot go where he is headed.

As much of a tear jerker as Jo's departure was, Sarah's is all that much more effective as she does not want to leave, nor does the Doctor want her to go. A forced separation, one that is out of your own hands to control, is always the hardest thing to have to live with.

When it comes to the fifth incarnation of the Doctor his emotional stress was a bit more complicated. Not only did he have to deal with his friends wanting to move on with their lives, he had to deal with the death of a friend knowing full well that he had the power to change history if only he could allow himself to break the rules of time (*Earthshock*, 1982)

No matter what your opinion of Adric, we are meant to believe that he and the rest of the TARDIS team were good friends and that his death was a great impact on all of their lives. The Doctor certainly carried this loss on his hearts throughout the rest of his fifth life, and beyond.

He had his fair share of companions leaving him, but never before did he have a situation like Tegan's exit from the show.

When Tegan entered the Doctor's life she already had the death of her aunt on her mind, and adding to that the death of Adric, as well as the stress of meeting new friends throughout time only to see them killed before her very eyes. Tegan was an emotional wreck.

The strain on her soul was equally carried by the Doctor, and when she left him he not only felt the loss of a friend, yet again, he felt as if it was his entire fault and knew that nothing in the universe could fix the pain that they both shared.

While we have not truly seen the Sixth Doctor ever part company with a companion, we did see him possibly have to deal with the death of another friend. When the truth was revealed that Peri was not dead you could almost see the weight removed from the Doctor's shoulders.

The Sixth Doctor would not stay that lucky, however, as he had to deal with the death of his old friend and fellow Time Lord, Azrael (*The Twin Dilemma*, 1984).

During his seventh life we see that he feels hurt and lost when Mel suddenly decides it time to leave. He deliberately acts as if it's ok and tries to rush her out of the TARDIS before she can say her peace. As they have their final hug goodbye it is easy to see that the Doctor is tired of having his hearts crushed and so he tries not to have to deal with the situation.

While all of the above examples of a broken heart exist in the shows history none have had the time to linger or explore the long-term effect of the heartache. The Doctor was always thrown into a new adventure immediately, never allowing him time to grieve, which could be why most people never noticed his emotional side.

As time marched on we saw the Eighth Doctor actually explore a relationship in every sense of the word. He has found an equal in Dr. Grace Holloway and in a very “boy talking to his first crush” sort of way; he offers to show her the universe (*Doctor Who*, 1996).

In one of the biggest twists for a companion we actually see that Grace would much rather stay rooted to the Earth that she grew up on and asks the Doctor to stay with her. Instantly, in a return to the “boy talking to his first crush” moment, he feels the “boy loses his first crush” feeling and once again has to leave with his hearts in his hands.

All of that was just on our TV screens.

Taking a close look at the further adventures of the Eighth Doctor in the Big Finish plays, we see a totally new relationship between the Doctor and his latest companion Charley.

You would have to be blind not to notice that the Doctor has a new best friend, but you may have been surprised to see that the Doctor and Charley are in love.

While they never develop a relationship, the two did express their love for each other, as well as having to deal with the fact that they could not be together. Life in the TARDIS must be very hard for them, being unable to act on their feelings for each other - yet they still manage to carry out their duties as best friends.

So there we have it, a look back in time at our favorite Time Lords saddest moments. Not the most up lifting piece, but nonetheless it gets the point across.

Christopher Eccleston may feel that he is exploring a side of the Doctor that has never been seen before, but to all those in the know he is really just continuing on where the others left off.

Of course, our favourite show would be non-existent without those other, iconic elements. Doctor Who at its most pure is about the Doctor, his companion, the TARDIS – and the Daleks.

The story of the 2005 series (known as Series 1 or Season 27) cannot be told without reference to the legal wrangling between the BBC and the estate of Dalek creator Terry Nation, and the rewrites that *Dalek*

scriptwriter Rob Shearman had to go through in order to remove the alien menace, replace it with a suitable alternative, and then reinstate the “last” Dalek.

Given the behind the scenes problems, it is remarkable that we got an episode at all, let alone one free of the aliens that would later be named as the Toclafane and used in 2007’s *Last of the Time Lords/The Sound of Drums*.

More on that later – in the meantime, let’s remind ourselves of the excitement that surrounded the unveiling of the new Dalek design!

WE ARE THE MASTERS OF EARTH!

Christian Cawley

“Little green blobs in bonded polycarbide armour”

The Doctor, *Remembrance of the Daleks* (1989)

“I know that although the Daleks will create havoc and destruction for millions of years. I know also, that out of their evil, must come something good.”

The Doctor, *Genesis of the Daleks* (1975)

“We are the Masters of Earth!”

The Daleks, *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* (1964)

For a comedy writer, Terry Nation always seemed to me a bit...humourless. So it’s probably just as well that he did the decent thing and started writing science fiction. However, I shall point out that Mr Nation’s estate has an extremely good lawyer, and as a disclaimer I’m honoured to point out that Mr Nation was a comedy genius who felt duty-bound to ensure the early years of an exciting children’s show called Doctor Who. His creation the Daleks are, as we all know, synonymous with Doctor Who. Like the Klingons to Kirk, Storm Troopers to Han Solo and on another level, like the Nazis were to the British, Daleks are a representation of everything that is evil, everything that should be stopped, and everything that we could all become.

Devastated by their own hand, forced to mutate and travel in these mini tanks, Daleks are completely xenophobic. Daleks will kill anyone or anything they don’t understand, and convert any being they can find into their likeness. Entire planets have been subjugated for strategic reasons, and in the 22nd Century even the Earth will be another part of the vast galactic empire of the Daleks.

It has been written many times that Nation intended the Daleks as an allegory to Nazi Germany, a point reinforced in 1975's *Genesis of the Daleks*. What is unusual in this is that the rest of the Western world at the time was making films with villains, often aliens, who were illustrations of Communism. In 1960s Britain, the fear of the Red Army and the Bomb were all very real; it would seem that so too was a terror which had been quashed a generation before. Could it be that "terror" is making a comeback?

Throughout Doctor Who's televised history, the threat of the Daleks became increasingly impotent, as focus shifted from the terror themselves to their creator, Davros. They were, however, always more devious and cunning without their creator, setting traps across time for the Doctor and his companions on several occasions.

The Dalek fear factor has been developed within the Virgin novels and Big Finish plays. Particular to the Virgin Doctor Who adventures is the development of a coherent future timeline within which the Doctor and his companions have adventures upon a background of galactic war between Earths' Empire and the Daleks. While this timeline is drawn from previously shown events such as *Frontier in Space*, there is more than enough universe to play in while keeping the threat of the Daleks playing at the back of the Doctor's mind. There is probably a part of the Doctor that expects to find a Dalek at every turn - what if the Dalek he finds isn't a Dalek...?

Raymond Cusick is the BBC staff designer who created the look of the Daleks from Terry Nations' description. Would it be fair to say that Terry Nation couldn't have designed such an iconic image? I think so. From a description of gliding ballerinas, Cusick gave us shuttlecocks with guns, lethal time and space travelling alien monsters, whose only weakness is an inability to climb staircases. Even when you look at that fact in-depth, it's an irrelevant weakness. If a Dalek can destroy cities with one shot, then it's not going to chase you upstairs, it'll just leave the building and demolish it. But what now for the original Dalek design?

Rumour has it that two types of Dalek will appear in the new series, the traditional and a new, modern Dalek. Will we see the much fabled spider-Dalek? To me it seems a bit of an obvious creation, based on arachnid fear and a bit too derivative. To get the young viewers scared of Daleks once more, we may see an increase in the height of the Dalek and a new design based on that of the original, brought up-to-date.

At this stage, talk of merchandise was little more than dreams. Few had seen the Doctor Who toy range, and the modern day Dalekmania that was set to sweep the Christmas market later that year wasn't even dreamed of.

Doctor Who was a risk. Whether for the BBC, for their primary toy manufacturer Character, or for Panini with their **Doctor Who Magazine** redesign and increased print runs, the returned series was largely an unknown quantity. In terms of manufacturing toy merchandise – something that the Daleks had already come to exemplify 40 years earlier, while there was a hope of something massive and a potential market, until *Dalek* went on air in May 2005, there was no way of knowing just how the new Daleks and would be received.

Yet as the series went on, the buzz got even bigger. Leaked shots of the new Dalek were followed by approved photoshoots of the new design – and it looked pretty impressive.

DALEKS: REBIRTH

Brian A Terranova

Daleks. When you think about it they really are ridiculous. For instance, they can't pick things up, they need slaves to do that. They talk about their superior technology yet one has to wonder how they build it. Do they get a bunch of humans; tell them what to do, then kill them so no one knows how to work it but the Daleks?

Yeah, okay - in later years they have been able to walk, or float, upstairs whereas before they would have only been able to conquer the first floor of the White House or Buckingham Palace. The Fourth Doctor put it best in *Destiny of the Daleks* (1979) when he said:

"If you're supposed to be the superior race of the universe, why don't you try climbing after us?"

Actually they really are very child-like as well. They are easily frightened of the dark and start to scream and freak out when you cover their eyestalk with a towel or a jacket. They also have a fear of being alone, as the last Dalek on Earth in *Remembrance of the Daleks* is proof of. Realizing that it was the last Dalek it had such a massive panic attack that it self-destructed, or self-disintegrated.

Perhaps they would have been better suited as intergalactic janitors. The only race with built-in plungers and yet they have no bathrooms.

But then we love them don't we. I for one wouldn't miss an episode with the word Dalek in the title. Funny, we love the most evil race in the entire universe and they can't even give us a hug in thanks.

Let's look at the other side of things now.

If you were in the street and saw what appeared to be a one man tank coming at you yelling "exterminate!" in today's world you would most likely run for the high heavens screaming for your Mommy.

They don't care about compassion or sympathy so you couldn't plead for your life. That is unless you could offer up some juicy secret information that will screw over your fellow man to save your own butt.

Not to mention that voice. For prolonged periods of time they could sound very annoying. On the other hand if you were in a prison being interrogated by one of them, that voice would be bone chilling.

Also their weapons are very scary. They can paralyze your legs temporarily or permanently. They could scramble your insides with a laser beam. This shocked the heck out of me the first time I heard them say that's what happens when they kill someone. Sounds awful - but then so are the Daleks. They have bombs, laser cutters, different setting for their laser arms ranging from "stun" to "blow things up", and they even have Special Weapons Daleks for all those formal black tie battles.

Interestingly enough Doctor Who might not have survived so long had it not been for the Daleks. A creation that almost didn't make it to our TV sets because someone thought they were a bad idea. But then fate stepped in and a legend was born. Had they not been aired as they had, Doctor Who may have been no different than any other nameless one season TV show.

As ridiculous as the Daleks could be, when you look at them and break them down, they are still important to the success of Doctor Who. So much so that for all of the team behind the new series' efforts to make the new show "a new show" they still had enough sense to get the Daleks back for its re-launch.

Interesting, that...

The new series will be the same old Doctor from Hartnell up to and including McGann. But is that all that will remain the same?

With all the rumors that were floating about the place over the new design of the Daleks and all the fan criticism, before seeing anything concrete, it's hard to keep an open mind.

We have come to expect certain things from the Daleks over the years. One thing for sure would be their voice. I can tell all reading this that at least one episode of the new series will have the voice exactly as we remember it. This is due to the fact that actor/writer Nicholas Briggs is voicing them, something he has done for Big Finish Productions since they began creating new adventures for the Doctor and crew back in 1999.

As I said before the Daleks are childlike but more so, in a way, they are like our children. It's hard for us to accept that they want to leave home and start a name for themselves without us standing behind them saying how proud we are.

Every fan by now has seen the shot of the new "Bronze Dalek", but we have seen recolored Daleks before. We have seen the big head lamps before. So where is the change to make things "new"? Personally I think that we have grander things coming our way. The picture of the Bronze Dalek looks more like it was taken by someone standing on the set then by a lucky fan. So was this picture leaked to us on purpose so that we wouldn't get suspicious about the "new" look? Or is this it, have the Daleks been updated to look just as we remember them? A little sleeker, a bit more metallic perhaps, but otherwise still how we know them.

Of course the speculation of the "Spider Daleks" is once again running around everyone's minds, but for a show with all new ideas could this really be it? Only time will tell.

The fact remains that for all the efforts of the new show to branch out and stand on its own two legs, there were three elements they could not abandon.

The Doctor, the TARDIS, and of course the Daleks. So really, what's changed?

As time progressed, more and more press attention was lavished on the new series of Doctor Who. Trailers ("Do you wanna come with me?"/"I've got a choice"), beautiful advert hoardings, and an immense volume of column inches were dedicated to the program. Some speculated a spectacular failure; others built up the anticipation. SFX magazine got right behind the new series like the supporters of UK sci-fi and cult that they are, while **Doctor Who Magazine** was given a long-overdue increase in page count, as well as a new logo.

The reality at this point was that after 16 years, a full series of Doctor Who was about to be screened. This was the television equivalent of a full cast sequel to Return of the Jedi, or seeing Led Zeppelin reform – longed for, doubted, but in this case, actually happening.

DOCTOR WHO - NEW SERIES PREVIEW

Christian Cawley

And so here we are... the pinnacle of the last 18 months. In just a few days, the new series of Doctor Who will be here. If I may say that again, "NEW SERIES OF DOCTOR WHO"

Now I'm not going to go into whys, wherefores and whatever's regarding cancellation – that's for other less well-written websites to deal with. No, I'm going to ramble on deliriously about the fact that the new Doctor Who is almost upon us, and what I'm looking forward to most. Now there are a handful of things below that might be considered spoilers. But if I'm willing to read them, you should be fine as I'm very allergic to Doctor Who spoilers. I didn't even know the show was ending in 1989...

As we all know, Christopher Eccleston is the Ninth Doctor. He looks superb, and that's just from watching the trailers. I've been told by those that have seen the first episode that he is excellent; funny and at the same time commanding. This sounds similar to Eccleston's performance as Stephen Baxter, the Son of God in Russell T Davies' **The Second Coming**. I think he has the ability to make an impact in the role on a par with Tom Baker; bearing in mind what this would mean for Eccleston's own eventual successor...

Over the course of the next 13 Saturdays, we're going to see the Doctor and Rose visit the far future, the near future, the recent past, the mid-twentieth century and the late 19th century. They'll battle Autons and Daleks and new creatures such as the Gelth and the Slitheen. Earth will be invaded by aliens from outer space and the ramifications of time travel will be explored.

Rose, played by Billie Piper, should become the Doctor's new best friend. With her help, the new younger audience will see what most of us older fans saw as children – the wonder and excitement and awe of time travel, the Universe and alien beings of both a benevolent nature and a fiercely destructive one. The Doctor, meanwhile, will become **our** best friend as he saves Earth every week from hordes of alien invaders. Just like the old days!

So, as the new series is just DAYS away (wow, DAYS!) let's have a brief look at each episode...

Episode 1: *Rose*

A shop girl named Rose encounters a mysterious stranger called "the Doctor". He, meanwhile, is on Earth to fight the Nestene Consciousness.

This episode introduces Rose, played by Billie Piper and reintroduces the TARDIS and the Doctor and the Autons... and the Sonic Screwdriver.

Episode 2: *The End of the World*

The Doctor takes Rose on her first trip in the TARDIS, to watch as the Sun expands and destroys Earth in the distant future.

On board Platform One an assortment of aliens can be found, Mos Eisley-style. It is believed that the "Moxx of Balhoon" appears in this story, as referred to by Russell T Davies in his DWM column. The "spider-creatures" are also said to appear in this episode. Zoe Wanamaker also features as (what is left of...) the last human.

Episode 3: *The Unquiet Dead*

The Doctor and Rose visit 19th century Cardiff and encounter Charles Dickens. The Doctor discovers ghost-like aliens called the Gelth who require physical forms...

Simon Callow stars as Charles Dickens in this episode.

Episode 4 & 5: *The Aliens of London* & Unconfirmed

An alien spacecraft crash-lands in the Thames, finally revealing that mankind has neighbours... The Slitheen take over the British government in order to start World War 3 and take Earth for their own.

Penelope Wilton, Annette Badland, Rupert Vansittart and BBC Political Editor Andrew Marr all feature in this episode, shots of which feature prominently in the main Doctor Who trailers.

Episode 6: Unconfirmed

The Doctor and Rose land at a mysterious underground museum, full of alien artefacts. Its owner is particularly proud of the "Metaltron"...

This episode features the Dalek photographed by the UK Press last year. Nicholas Briggs (known for his Big Finish work) provides the voice of the Dalek.

Episode 7: *The Long Game*

In the year 200,000, one news agency broadcasts to the entire Human Empire.

Simon Pegg features in this episode, which features fantastic futuristic design.

Episode 8: Unconfirmed

The Doctor and Rose visit the late 1980s to meet her late father. This causes the premature end of the world.

This episode is written by Paul Cornell.

Episode 9 & 10: *The Empty Child & The Doctor Dances*

During the Blitz, a spacecraft crashes in London. The Doctor meets Captain Jack Harkness, played by John Barrowman.

Richard Wilson also features in this episode, written by Steven Moffat.

Episode 11: Unconfirmed

The Doctor discovers that someone he thought long-dead is still alive...

This is the episode Russell T Davies wrote to show off modern Cardiff

Episode 12 & 13: *The Parting of the Ways*

The Doctor and Rose encounter the Daleks. New, improved Daleks...

Very little is known about this story, but there are certain to be some shocks in store!

So as the series comes to an end in 13 weeks' time, what will we be talking about? What will be the high point? The best thing will no doubt be the exciting news that there will be a second series. This of course hasn't been announced yet, and will depend on audience reaction and figures. Audience figures can of course be drastically affected by the Press - reaction from that quarter has to be positive.

Meanwhile, the portrayal of the Doctor and his relationship with Rose (a mention of "love"...) are two other aspects that we'll be talking about, as well as the success level of any new aliens and recurring characters. And no doubt at the end of the series we'll talk more about the Daleks...

If you're still not excited by the new series, go dig out your season 7 videos and DVDs and lock yourself away from three months. This is going to be the best-looking, best-acted and best-scripted series of Doctor Who so far - FACT.

The build up to Doctor Who's remarkable return to television after 16 years was given a welcome boost by the actions of a Canadian TV employee leaking *Rose* onto the internet 10 days before it was due to air in the UK.

Back in 2004, the BBC had entered into a co-production deal with the Canadian Broadcasting Company, and as a result CBC had a copy of the episode to spare. While the new theme tune (the Tom Baker era arrangement was used instead) and some incidental music was missing from this version, it mattered little – eager fans around the world were desperate to watch the first episode of the new series, and thanks to the growing use of the BitTorrent network, *Rose* could be seen a week before broadcast.

Despite the ethical problems surrounding the leak and its subsequent viewing around the world (one Doctor Who forum banned users from even discussing the leak), this event crystallised the buzz around the new Doctor Who. Some even later speculated that the leak had been intentional; such was the positive reaction to the first new TV episode in years.

With TV listings magazine covers, interviews with Russell T Davies, Christopher Eccleston and Billie Piper on television and radio, a series of TV teaser trailers, billboard campaigns, newspaper columns and the obligatory sci-fi magazine coverage, the leak added to the excellent commercial synergy that surrounded the launch of the new series.

Rose aired on Saturday, March 26th, 2005 at 7pm. A TV legend was reborn.

ROSE

Christian Cawley

Now it may be that I'm preaching to the converted, but I avoided considerable spoilerage in the last few weeks (very difficult when running a website of this nature) in order to watch Doctor Who's triumphant comeback untainted. Week after week has gone by, hearing of friends and even family who have fallen by the wayside, and downloaded that infernal leak. "Shhh!" I would say to them – and it was even worse in the Forums. I had to read certain posts with one eye.

But – you'll all be very glad to know that my effort was worth it. Which is just as well as until just a few minutes ago I was watching the first episode of a brand new series of Doctor Who. Back in 1996 when the TVM aired, deep down I kind of half knew that that was it for that Doctor, no matter how optimistic other fans were. When the end of *Survival* aired 16 years ago, never did I think we would wait so long for a new series.

It may be that some of you out there disagree with me, that to you Doctor Who's golden age is well and truly gone, that the goat is cooked. I tell you "you are wrong". Doctor Who is back. Not for 90 minutes. For 13x45 minutes. And I just watched it. I saw the TARDIS spinning through the vortex. I heard the music, bassy and scary, screeching and grandiose. I'll say it again.

DOCTOR WHO IS BACK!

Billie Piper is beautiful. She is fantastic. She is Rose. Billie portrays a shop girl living a humdrum life - the type many of us would like to escape from - who is swept away by the wayward Time Lord. Everything about Billie Piper's performance in *Rose* tells me she is perfect. She can act, she can move, she can look, she can express. Billie is Rose.

Christopher Eccleston. The man. He is happening. What has he got - a leather jacket, and pullover, a new sonic screwdriver? Yet he is able to convey amazing gravity. None of this is new - Eccleston is well known for his serious roles. Doctor Who is an opportunity to display more depth and range. Within 5 seconds Eccleston's Doctor changes from grinning wildly to describing in total wonder how he can feel the world turning and orbiting the Sun.

The character of the Doctor has been described in the past as "actor proof". Obviously there is some degree of truth in this. Christopher Eccleston is totally different to anyone who has gone before him. If you taped the show, go back and watch it again NOW. He is subtle, he is heroic, and he is alien. He hasn't got a scarf or crap question marks all over, nor does he wear a Jimi Hendrix outfit or play the recorder. He doesn't need any of these. Christopher Eccleston tonight shifted as effortlessly into the character of the Doctor as effortlessly as his predecessor, Paul McGann. He was brilliant, a revelation - I'd always thought he was inspired casting, and tonight I was deemed correct. And he's got another 12 weeks to improve!

As for the story, well it has all the elements that made *Spearhead from Space* a success - Nestene invasion, (unnamed) Autons smashing through shop windows, the introduction of a strong female character. Comparisons to a 35 year old story are unfair however. This new series takes back some of Doctor Who's lost mystery and power, without even hinting that it ever lost it. The CGI representation of the Nestene Consciousness is inspired, as is the inclusion of a character that runs a website about a mysterious character known only as "the Doctor".

Mark Benton is as ever untouchable, so very natural in this small role; it is a shame that Clive died, it would have been good to see him once more. Then again, this is a show about time travel...

But what about Noel Clarke? Usually he's quite watchable, but there was something about his performance I didn't quite take to. Once he was playing the Auton Mickey he was fine – I wouldn't say it was his acting, possibly the character. Giving Rose something to choose between – staying with Mickey or going with the Doctor – he had to be a bit of an unsympathetic character.

It's more than that though isn't it? If ever we doubted, Doctor Who is about an alien and a human friend, fighting monsters around the galaxy and through time. The relationship between the Doctor and Rose is almost instantaneous – there is a spark right away, and this is due to the skills of both actors. It seems that they are going to become very good friends over the next 3 months, possibly even closer than the Doctor and Sarah Jane...

I have to say something about the TARDIS interior. Wonderful. Beautiful POV and crane shot as Rose enters for the second time, the detail in the wall, the floor, the struts, the rotor! So much has been taken from the previous console rooms, and it all comes together as wonderfully alien to us in the 21st Century as Hartnell's TARDIS must have in 1963. Forty two years ago.

So we get a good opener, wonderful leads, and an amazing TARDIS. There is so much to talk about *Rose*, we'll be talking about it when this series is long finished. Camille Coduri is wonderful as Rose's mother, completing the picture of the everyday life Rose is plodding through. Her flirtatious attempt to seduce the Doctor is perfectly underplayed, and is not out of place in what is essentially a children's program.

I don't have any kids yet, but if I had we would have been watching Doctor Who together, just like I did with my own father 20-odd years ago. Will kids find the belching bin funny? If the series is aimed at 8-12 year olds, then why shouldn't they? Will they be scared by shop dummies coming alive? As a child I was fascinated by shop dummies, and I didn't even see *Spearhead from Space* until 1995. They are as mundane and everyday as Rose's life, and like Rose those shop dummies undergo a transformation.

As important as the resolution to the story is, I'll ignore it here – it's only a footnote in history compared to the return of Doctor Who. Rose turning down the Doctor's first offer to travel with him (although his

reaction to her rejection is so wonderfully played) is again a footnote, soon forgotten as she wanders the Universe with him. The Doctor's references to a "war" that he "fought in" are fast enough to miss, yet no doubt relevant to the overall shape of this series.

What is important is how Rose decides to leave Mickey and travel with the Doctor. It isn't because the TARDIS travels through space ("It's not just for London hops"), and it isn't because Mickey is an ignorant loafer. Rose wants time-travel. Perhaps next week we'll find out why...

With *Rose* came the return of the Nestene Consciousness and the Autons. Created by Robert Holmes for the 1970 Third Doctor introduction story *Spearhead from Space* (and the parallels here are clear) the plastic-manipulating aliens were the perfect villains for the episode.

They had been photographed by Doctor Who's ever-growing band of groupies several months earlier – their return wasn't a surprise. However the way in which they were expertly slotted into the infant Time War backstory was yet another example of how intricately Russell T Davies was guiding his first series in charge.

In the opinion of Kasterborous.com, the Autons (other than their appearance in *Terror of the Autons* in 1971) had been woefully underused; their return in *Rose*, culminating in an attack on a shopping mall, was very welcome indeed.

PLASTIC FANTASTIQUE

Christian Cawley

Evil. Vast, clawed, fire breathing, winged beasts. Traditionally the evil that scares, that gives nightmares, that haunts, is the ugly, behemoth, and dragon.

Occasionally, of course, it's a plain, nondescript, animated mannequin... calmly walking toward its prey, dressed in contemporary fashion, it's hand outstretched and pointed at its victim, flipping down to reveal a gun...but there is no emotion, no grin, no bloodthirsty cackle, just a bare, featureless face.

More than enough to give a nation of pre-teens nightmares back in 1970! A lot has been written about Robert Holmes' ability to create excellent settings and interesting "duo" characters. He could create some good monsters too. The Mummies in *Pyramid of Mars*, the Wirrn, Sontarans, the Peking Homunculus and the Androgums were all

ghastly, monstrous cadaverous beings. The Autons are none of these, yet are far more memorable.

Always trendy in their high street fashions, when the Autons are in town, death stalks the real world. Department Stores, toyshops, funfairs; grinning heads in straw boaters; Daleks don't bother trying to blend in and Silurians are obviously scary – they're reptiles! The everyday is turned on its head when the Nestene consciousness takes hold of your plastic. Trust goes out of the window when you don't know what is safe.

Robert Holmes' two Auton stories - *Spearhead from Space* and *Terror of the Autons* - are both written to instil fear. It has been pointed out before that to really scare the threat has to be contemporary. Modern examples of this can be seen in **Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines** and **The Day After Tomorrow**. They reflect the same terror, the known and everyday becoming The Unknown and Alien.

In *Spearhead from Space*, the Autons' main unit Channing is the acceptable "face" of his race. A bit more plastic has gone into him to make him appear human, although that doesn't stop him shining a little. The menace which these creatures hold cannot be denied – Hibbert is obviously under strong mental control, and tries to warn Ransome away when he comes looking for answers. The fear on Hibbert's face is disturbing on both occasions he is rounded on a mannequin.

The Master, meanwhile, debuts in *Terror of the Autons* and fills a similar role to Channing – however, his devious charm is cleverly offset by his faceless allies. In this instalment, the "terror" is at the forefront; murderous telephone wire; dastardly daffodils; terrifying trolls; suffocating sofas; the aforementioned Master introduced as the Doctor's equal – something virtually unheard of up to this point. How can the Doctor possibly survive these kinds of odds?

This too is the story where children of the 70s suddenly became inexplicably afraid of Troll dolls, sofas, plastic flowers, telephones and clowns. I still know people of the 35-45 age group who refuse to talk on the phone for too long, and I suspect this is the reason.

So what have we learned? That the Nestene Consciousness are bent on the destruction of humankind and probably any other flesh-based life-form; that plastic is everywhere and can be deadly; that Autons require a leader with a human appearance; and that clowns really are that scary.

Wielding an iron bar to smash your opponent's brain is obvious; manipulation of those everyday plastic consumables to achieve your aim of world domination is genius.

Not bad for dummies.

The new series saw a revolution in one of the banes of any TV drama – spoilers. When Doctor Who had last aired as an ongoing series, there was no World Wide Web, the Internet was mainly a collection of bulletin boards; things were very different.

By leaking *Rose* onto the web, it could be argued that the Canadian TV employee identified as being responsible (and allegedly sacked) saved the new series debut episode from slipping into a media-lead apathy prompted by too much hype. Fans around the world that took the chance to illegally download the episode in advance of its broadcast discovered that *Rose* was actually a pretty good episode. There was a reassurance that everything was going to be alright – and certainly in the UK a need to evangelise about the new show.

It was an important step in the rehabilitation of Doctor Who from the barely watched, slightly worn-out monster fest of 1989 into a dynamic and popular prime time show.

Of course, not all Doctor Who fans outside of the UK downloaded the rogue *Rose*, despite being unable to watch it at all. In the USA, there wasn't even the prospect of a scheduled run in a few weeks' time as with Canada. Kasterborous' own Brian A Terranova spent Saturday, March 26th 2005 staring wistfully across the Atlantic, wishing he could watch *Rose*; until he got bored after five minutes and decided to write about it instead.

DOCTOR WHO? WHERE? WHEN?

Brian A Terranova

Today is March 26th 2005. Soon the time will be 2:01pm US EST time. That means that it's 7:01pm in England - and that means that Doctor Who fans (and hopefully non Who fans) have just started watching the first episode of the new series.

Rose promises to be something spectacular in the Doctor Who world as well as the sci-fi and drama realm, or so says Russell T Davies. But then I wouldn't know. I'm in America, and the new series doesn't even have an official TV station that will carry the show let alone a release date or time.

I have counted myself as a Doctor Who fan for many years now, and with the tease of a new series from the TV movie long gone, I felt that the new series, starring Christopher Eccleston, was a reward to us fans. A reward for our support of the show throughout various means over the past 9 or 16 years, depending on how you look at it.

But do we American fans get to feel the enjoyment of a job well done by watching the first new episode in 9 years? No. Will we? Who knows? Other countries have a chance, some even have a release date, but the US is at a standstill.

My personal feeling is that most of America saw the lack of success that the 1996 Doctor Who TV Movie had here and with that in mind no one wants to give the new series a chance. That's the way things work here. The powers that be don't care about what people want, they just care about not "wasting their money" when that's all they have the money for in the first place.

Tonight at 7pm US EST time I will most likely be disgusted by reality TV, any one of the cop dramas that are all the same just with different actors, or some sort of sitcom that uses the same jokes that every sitcom known to man has ever used.

That's the way American TV is today, it wasn't always this way and if you look hard enough you can still find something good, but I myself never watch anything new regularly. Few shows seem to be worth the trouble.

I thought Doctor Who would break the mould. I thought I could sit down and be entertained for an hour with something that was really worth the money spent on it, but no luck I'm afraid. So far the Sci Fi Channel has passed on the new series, who will be next? Maybe it will make a triumphant return to public-access TV where I, like most American fans, first discovered it. At least then it would be aired here in the USA.

As I continue to type this other people are getting to see the Doctor in action. They have heard the new theme song, met Rose, possibly seen the inside of the TARDIS, but most of all they are getting a taste of the new feel of the new series.

Some will love it, and some will hate it. Some will turn it off without a thought of love or hate, and others will keep it on as background noise. Either choice those viewers have made, they still at least had the choice.

So again I like many other fans around the world not living in the UK, sit here wondering what joys the new series will bring. We sit here with visions in our heads and jealousy in our hearts.

Soon *Rose* will be over and the Internet will be a dangerous place for those of us not in the know. Not only is there nothing of interest on my TV screen, but now I will need to stay clear of about half of my favourite websites.

Well, I hope all of you in the UK are enjoying the show and likewise I hope you all continue to watch, because as long as you do there is hope for a second series, and the more interest that is generated for the show means that one day I and many others, will also be able to join in on the fun.

Good luck to you Doctor Who and may you soon materialize on American TV screens.

The plaudits just kept on coming, from newspapers, TV shows, radio shows – and of course, the main target of Russell T Davies’ reimagined Doctor Who, the playground. Children loved the first episode of this slightly barmy new series, just as they had 30 or 40 years ago.

When you look at it, little had changed, really. We still had the alien threat, the human companion to identify with and the mysterious older man travelling through time and space in a police box.

Even the theme tune had stayed the same – although it wasn’t as mysterious as some had hoped, the new arrangement had a lot of fans...

THEMING A TUNE

Brian A Terranova

Back in the swinging sixties a TV show about a man from space captured the attention of millions of viewers, but the first thing they heard of this show was a theme tune.

Not having been alive in the sixties I can only assume, based on others observations, that the world had never heard an opening theme such as this before. In all fairness I feel it can be said that some were captivated while others were asking what the noise was all about in the next room.

For another 26 years the same question would continue, and again with a brief punctuation in 1996; now a new generation is experiencing the wonder of the Doctor Who theme tune for the first time.

But how different were the experiences of everyone's first time listening?

Today I would like to welcome you all to Who Themes 101.

Look to the left of you... look to the right of you... some of the people you just looked at will not be here on graduation day... moving along.

1963 - Skirts were short, hair was big, and music was changing the world forever.

The original tune was created by Delia Derbyshire but was remixed by Ron Grainer, and does not contain one classic instrument.

What an impression this song must have made on the first few who heard it, from the pounding synthetic bass sounds to the spacey effects and the... what would you call it? The "Woo Wo Ooo" Sounds. Where ever they got the idea for this theme I don't know, but I wish more people would have used the same thinking cap.

1967 – Wow. The BBC pulled it off, they gave the man a new face for the first time ever and it worked, so what else was there to do but update the theme just one year later.

How different could it be? Well there is much more echo to the bass beat, in effect making it more powerful, and it now sounds more like a cross between the good old fashion bass effect mixed with a heavy tubular bell.

The "Woo" sounds were jazzed up, as well as an addition of a shimmering wave of sound to add to the otherworldly feel of the character.

More powerful than before but still in the same family, things are going well.

1970 – Times are changing and so is Doctor Who, it is now in color for the first time, stars Jon Pertwee for the first time and for the third time gets a new version of its opening theme.

Once again the bass has been changed, but this time it seems as if they dulled it down again. With additional notes in the bass line, the famous tune now staggers in rather than the usual pounding introduction.

The shimmering effect stays the same, but once again there is a contrast with the second theme, despite the obvious similarities. A nice addition would be the ringing notes at the end of the theme that will take us to the action of the episode.

While not as good as the 1967 theme it is still welcome in my home.

1972 – One theme just wouldn't do, they had to go and create another, but it never really made it to our TV screens until the video release of *Carnival of Monsters*.

This one was known as the "Delaware Theme" by Brian Hodgson and I felt that it deserved a special mention as it is part of the history and for me it was the only proper way to view this story. That is until it made its DVD release and the Delaware theme, and a bit of my Doctor Who experience, was sadly removed.

I can understand why people are not fans of this tune, instead of the bass being a powerful beat pounding its way into our heads; it has been replaced by what I can only describe as a man playing a rubber band. And while the others before it started off with spacey effects and bass, this one starts with an electronic equivalent of a slide whistle.

Nonetheless it held meaning for me so I am sad to see it go. But as far as Doctor Who is concerned, it was best left out of the running.

1974 – There is just one year to go before I am born and Tom Baker arrives on the telly, and wouldn't you know it we get another new theme.

Gone are the dulled down sounds and staggered intros as we welcome the return of the 1967 powerful pounding bass beats, and all around feel of a tune more intense than the last version.

The only remnants of the previous theme would be the rewritten bass line and the wonderful ringing notes at the end.

It is a fact, and blame it on Tom Baker if you like, that this theme is the one that is locked into most fans heads as the definitive Doctor Who theme and one listen is easy to see why.

1980 – Clothing styles have taken a turn for the worse, as do haircuts, but Doctor Who introduces its theme in to the world of rock and roll and suddenly the 80's aren't so bad.

No longer does the theme start with the bass beat, instead it sounds as if the Doctor is playing the electric guitar and has just run his fingers down the fret board with the distortion on max.

Peter Howell give us an explosive tune with rock guitar, crunchy bass, and what sounds like a harpsichord hooked up to a distortion pedal. To top it all off we get a real explosion at the end of the episode, nicely done.

I have to admit that I was lost from the world of Doctor Who for a while, either it stopped getting aired on my local PBS station or I was busy doing other things. When I found the show again this was the

tune that I remembered most and I still associated it with Tom Baker, although he only had it a year. Soon after more Who found its way into my heart and the real “Baker Theme” quickly became the tune of choice, however this one will always have a place by its side.

1986 – Not much happens in the real world but Doctor Who returns from an 18-month “hiatus” and once again gets an updated theme.

The rock days are soon gone and Doctor Who is introduced to modern Synth.

Dominic Glynn gives us his version of the classic tune, and this time the bass line is dulled down even more than the original, the “Woo Wo Ooos” have been softened and overall it sounds like it was made on a toy keyboard.

While not the best of the themes by any means, in my opinion, I still wouldn’t change it for the world. When I hear that tune I know what Doctor I am watching and that is a good feeling.

1987 - What could have happened in a year that they decided to change it again? Who knows? Who cares? Who wants me to stop making “Who” jokes?

Keff McCulloch is the man behind this latest version and from the start it is, once again, a totally new take on an old theme.

Starting things off right with a glass shattering explosion, we soon get “Woo Wo Ooos” that sound like a cross between a guitar and electronic kazoo, and a bass that perhaps only the Cybermen themselves would dance to. This theme became known as the “McCoy Theme” and is just another one that immediately lets you know which Doctor you are set to watch.

It is a welcome improvement over the last version, but still lacking the power of the original or the 1974 theme.

1993 – Techno seems all the rage as a charity episode of Doctor Who makes another new theme for a day.

Created for the 20 minute Children in Need event this tune needed to be quick. The theme that was used sounded very much like a rave party version with its drum beats, synth keyboards for the “woo” bits and its robotic sounds at the end that can easily get stuck in one’s head after just one listen.

While I could never really see this attached to the show permanently I do have to admit that I quite enjoyed this version.

1996 – The real world seems slow, but in the Who world the BBC, Fox Television and Universal Studios team up for the very first time. I

myself have gotten back into Doctor Who for only one year now and as a treat the BBC reward me with a brand new America broadcast of Doctor Who, complete with a new theme, yet again.

Horns and drums replace the original bass beat while another set of Horns replace the “Woo” effects in quite a moving piece of history. I can just imagine all the smiling faces that it must have created.

John Debney is the mastermind behind this particular version and a job well done I must say, however, as nice as it is, it just seems a bit off for Doctor Who. One of the shows major selling points was that it was so spacey but now it has been brought down to earth and seems a bit out of place. Sad really, because it was a great theme and I would have gladly listened to it every week for a continuing series.

2000 – Y2K seems to have been nothing but a cruel joke by Nostradamus, the world did, in fact, not end, but Big Finish have gotten the rights to produce brand new Eighth Doctor audio plays, and as a nice treat they get to create a new theme all of their own.

While not a TV theme, this one gets a mention here as David Arnold has given us, perhaps for the first time since 1980, a theme that has captured what the magic of the original must have been like.

A crunchy, rumbling bass beat, synthetic “sound in a tunnel” effects that formulate the “Woo” themes and a wave of explosive beats that echo their way through the tune like waves splashing down on the shoreline.

Shame this could not have been part of the continuing series starring Paul McGann on our TV Screens.

2003 – Fans are split about the news that there is now a Ninth Doctor that will be a cartoon; they are unsure whether they like the idea or hate it.

Whatever your opinion is, or was, it still means one more theme.

This one seems like a blending of the 1980 and 1974 themes, with a twist. It starts off with the screeching sounds of the 80’s but then appears to have taken inspiration from 1974 for the rest, however the bass beat sounds like it is a blend between the 1974 and the Delaware rubber band beat.

They have also added a drum track that sounds like a drum machine.

Personally, if they would just remove the drums, this would be a nice version, if nothing else, in the same way the Delaware theme was.

2005 – The styles of yesteryear are back, new ideas are just old ones with a twist and the only good thing to have been on our TV screens

for quite some time is Doctor Who. Back again, and this time to stay. Needless to say the theme is also back.

This time the theme was rearranged by Murray Gold; it harkens back to what was known as the (Tom) "Baker Theme" as well as boasting some new sounds and instruments. I must say that I wasn't sure you could ever make the Baker theme more attractive or make it so much easier to get stuck in your head, but here lies the proof.

It would seem that for the new series a new remixed, remastered, version of the "Baker Theme" would not be enough to keep them happy. So what were they to do, but create a theme within a theme?

It now has a string section creating quite an atmosphere, what sounds like a didgeridoo to me, and bass or kettledrums tossing in a very tribal feel to the mix. They also seem to have kept the horns from the 1996 version for the intro at least. Never before would I have believed that you could add a tune within a tune like this, but here it is and who could ask for more?

There we have it class - 42 years of one song, one show and many opinions as to what should or shouldn't be. We all have our favorites and we all have the ones that hold the most memories for us, and now that same chance has been given to a whole new generation.

So go on then, have a listen to your favorite theme today in celebration of Doctor Who.

CRITICAL AND POPULAR SUCCESS

The reaction to *Rose* was pretty awe inspiring for any long-term Doctor Who fan. TV critics and the press at large loved it, 9 million viewers tuned in (in the days before BBC iPlayer) and it seemed that for the short term at least, Doctor Who's future was assured.

A new series! A successful run on TV with the hope of a second series at the end! A great new lead!

If plaudits were water, Christopher Eccleston and Billie Piper would have drowned. There might have been some hardcore fans who didn't like the new Ninth Doctor, or still struggled to come to terms with a former pop star/wife of "marmite" DJ Chris Evans as the companion; some fans weren't too convinced by the tone – the infamous "belching wheelie bin" scene remains notorious – but on the whole, this looked like a brave new era for Doctor Who.

Then it all went... weird.

Doctor Who fans are used to having the rug pulled from the under them – but the series of BBC announcements that followed *Rose* were more like the well-known "tablecloth trick"...

...in reverse.

A treble whammy of Whoniverse-shattering proportions followed in the wake of *Rose*, a bizarre series of events that made the remarkable press reaction to the return of the show seem positively sober in comparison.

First came the announcement of a second new series of Doctor Who, seemingly based purely on the success of the first episode (of course at that stage the scripts for a 2006 series had already been commissioned) – *Rose* took a massive 9.94 million viewers, amounting to a 43.20% share of the audience, so in hindsight it wasn't that much of a surprise. At the time, of course, it was seen as a major announcement, and vindication of the BBC's assertion that they could breathe life back into family drama and Saturday evening TV.

That news alone would have done, to be honest – many fans, Russell T Davies himself included, had prepared for the eventuality that Doctor Who would end for good after 13 episodes, with BBC Two its new home for the second half of the series.

Yet the Doctor Who production team had more – in the shape of a typically BBC-shaped cock-up that not only revealed the end of the 2005 series of Doctor Who but also managed to right royally annoy the leading man!

Following the sniffing out of a story by one of the tabloid newspapers, the BBC issued a denial that there was a story there at all, whilst at the same time confirming that Christopher Eccleston would be departing! Unable to withdraw the press release – the first of two issued without clearance from Russell T Davies – the BBC then intimated that Eccleston had been unhappy on set.

The ensuing fan and press uproar saw the BBC press team working hard to minimise the damage which saw a third press release clarifying facts. Of course by this point, the damage had been done.

Even now, the real reasons for Eccleston's departure from the TARDIS after just 13 episodes remain unclear, but any claims that he was embarrassed by being a part of the show should be put to rest with this excerpt from his original statement:

"The audience's response for the new Doctor Who has been incredible and I am really proud to be part of it and I hope viewers continue to enjoy the series."

With the cliffhanger to the last episode of the series effectively ruined by the broadcaster days after the first episode went out, fans were understandably baffled - not to mention confused and angry. The Outpost Gallifrey forum was closed for several hours as emotions ran high and opinions got out of hand, while behind the scenes lifelong Doctor Who fan David Tennant was being touted as the Tenth Doctor Who...

THE TENTH TENURE....

Christian Cawley & Anthony Dry

So the lanky Manc chav regenerates into a camp cheeky Scots bohemian? In an astonishing turn of events, the Ninth Doctor - wonderfully played so far by Christopher Eccleston – has quit the show after his first season. Why on Earth would he want to do such a thing? And how certain are the BBC of hiring David Tennant?

Much has been written over the past two days about the commissioning of the second series and the sudden departure of Christopher Eccleston. But how sudden is it, exactly? I'm still waiting for Russell T Davies to come out and thank Eccleston for his hard work and that he respects and understands his decision and wishes he could change his mind. I'm waiting for Billie to declare that she too is leaving, as Eccleston was the only Doctor as far as she is concerned and she couldn't bear to join anyone else in the TARDIS. But neither is forthcoming, for one simple, obvious reason. Christopher Eccleston

made his decision months ago, and no doubt Russell T Davies and Billie Piper were aware of this. Thankfully Billie Piper is believed to be staying for the second series.

It would be unfair to criticise Christopher Eccleston for leaving fans in the lurch. We're all adults; we're used to change in Doctor Who. However I'm more concerned about the NEW fans, the young boys and girls who are going to be looking up to the Doctor over the remaining 12 weeks. While regeneration is part of Doctor Who, building trust with the audience is part of ANY television show.

Meanwhile, the BBC has made a move to sign Big Finish favourite David Tennant into the role. Just like that? Surely he's working on something? He can't be expected to drop everything all of a sudden to work on Doctor Who for nine months can he? Of course, if the production team had a few months' notice on this then they've been planning a replacement for Eccleston for some time now. It's even possible that Tennant has said "Yes" already and all they're doing now is ironing out contracts!

Now what about this Christmas Special? Will Eccleston appear in this? Or is that a bit much to ask? We are of course nearing the realm of treating Mr Eccleston as a bit of an acting snob, who wanted a new challenge, became Doctor Who and then decided he'd overcome the challenge. Whatever his reasons for not carrying on, we all expect him to appear in the Christmas Special (if it is to be broadcast Christmas 2005 as expected) at least in order to hand over to David Tennant and allow his young Doctor Who fans to witness their first proper regeneration.

(Alternatively, there's a very tightly-shrouded scene at the end of this series that we don't know about...)

Now one thing is for sure – unlike the stories we've heard about Eccleston's casting, David Tennant hasn't rang Russell T Davies and said "I want to be Doctor Who!" He probably hasn't got an urge to change how people see him as an actor, and is more interested in securing work for himself for the next three years. So as a tenth Doctor Who, what have we got?

David Tennant is best known for his roles in **Bright Young Things** (2003), **Blackpool** (2004) and currently stars as **Casanova** in the eponymous BBC show. He's also appeared in the first episode of the re-imagined **Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased)** in 2000. He's approaching his 34th birthday and appeared in the BBCi Ninth Doctor webcast *The*

Scream of the Shalka which starred Richard E Grant, and has appeared in several Big Finish audio productions.

However he approaches the role, there is bound to be a level of innocence and sensitivity about his Doctor – these are both aspects of Tennant’s character that are betrayed by his looks. What we can expect from his time as the Doctor, only Russell T Davies can tell us.

MY TEN PENNETH

Anthony Dry

Awaking this morning to find Christopher Eccleston quitting the series was a little surprising and – sorry to say – a little disappointing. Of course all's fair in love and war and he has every right to the way he feels, I just thought it was so premature in the life of the new Doctor Who, it made it that more disappointing.

Surely he could have given another season to flesh out his character and a bit of stability? Surely it was worth one more shot? But then of course I am not an actor, and in this day and age with lots of upcoming projects it can be tough for an actor not to be stuck in the mainstay of one role. I think also, the fact that Christopher himself was not an avid fan about Doctor Who in the beginning may have made his decision a little easier. We will never know.

What I am sure about is that for the rest of this season we will see a great Christopher Eccleston Doctor; of course he is a fine actor and has already provided a lot of joy to fandom with his portrayal and I wish him all the luck in his future career and thank him for rekindling the fire: nice one Chris!

Replacements? Well David Tennant seems a good choice and of course is a self-confessed fan, but I can't say I have seen much of his work so would have to hold fire. Personally I think Alan Rickman, Richard E Grant or Anthony Head would be ideal choices - especially Alan Rickman, who would bring a wealth of diversity to the role. I would be apprehensive over the likes of Alan Davies whom I think people only connect him with the role because of his Tom Baker locks.

It's certainly going to be interesting...

As members of the public, all of this seemed quite strange, especially as hardly anyone had heard of Tennant.

As a community of confused and bewildered Doctor Who fans, we were still reeling from the reaction to *Rose* and the premature news of

Eccleston's departure when *The End of the World* aired the following week.

With the Doctor whisking Rose into the future, and the last days of Earth, the Russell T Davies-lead Doctor Who suddenly started writing its own, new, mythology...

THE END OF THE WORLD

Christian Cawley

"There was a war...and we lost."

Following the high-energy, typical alien-invasion story of *Rose* comes the claustrophobic, character-piece *The End of the World*. Having just watched it - and naturally in light of what has happened in the last few days I was a little cynical – I can honestly say that episode 2 is better than the first. There is more structure and reason – but there is also the development of Rose as a living, breathing, human girl torn from real life and the Doctor's own recent past slowly coming back to haunt him...

A simple tool – the recap – brings us into the story via a pre-titles sequence and deposits the Doctor and Rose into the year 5 billion. On board a space platform chartered to observe the expanding Sun destroy the Earth (now empty), Rose experiences her first friendly aliens. In particular is the Moxx of Balhoon, the Forest of Cheem (its leader Jabe is descended from the Amazonian Rainforests) the Adherents of the Repeated Meme and the last "pure" human, the Lady Cassandra (voiced wonderfully by Zoe Wanamaker). Within 45 minutes, the Earth is about to end. This time the Doctor isn't there to save the planet. But instead the space platform is going to need a helping hand...

The episode proceeds at a perfect pace, developing the relationship between the Doctor and Rose. Of particular note is the moment when Rose realizes she is so far from home, surrounded by aliens. Thankfully the Doctor is at hand with a clever mobile phone accessory to enable her to call Earth, 2005. Elsewhere, small 4 legged-droids are investigating the platforms infrastructure – there can only be a sinister purpose for them.

The CGI in this episode works so much better than in *Rose*. Why? Probably the context – we admire the alien characters' costumes and makeup as we watch the Sun slowly expanding behind them. The CGI fits perfectly with the otherworldly and naturally the Lady Cassandra

character is the main beneficiary of this. For a two-dimensional being, she appears completely three-dimensional and real, not in no small part to the talents of the actress behind her; Testament to the Production Team's policy of hiring capable character actors. Appreciation too should be given to the destruction of Earth. The best non-Lucas planet explosion you'll see for a long time.

It's fair to say that Russell T Davies has a very distinctive writing style, which focuses on one area – dialogue, which can only enhance plot and character. Hence a lovely exchange between Rose and the Lady Cassandra, where they discuss the latter's 700 operations into what Rose describes "a bitchy trampoline". Meanwhile, the Doctor is investigating the worsening condition of the platform with Jabe, the Queen of the Forest of Cheem. The relationship between the two is warm and respectful. There is a suggestion of attraction, especially as the Doctor (surprisingly empty-pocketed) offers a gift of the air from his lungs during an etiquette exchange.

In the service duct, looking for the cause of the platforms decaying orbit (and the death of the administrator), Jabe reveals to the Doctor that she knows where he has come from. For the first time we see the Doctor cry. Now that completely astonished me and I wasn't ready for what was about to come; Jabe offered her sympathies.

Meanwhile, Rose is trapped in an observation room as the heat shields of the platform are disabled. The Doctor and Jabe have discovered the 4 legged droids and retrieved one in order to reveal that someone or something is attempting to destroy the station as the Sun expands.

The revelation that the Lady Cassandra is the perpetrator of the situation developing on the platform is not entirely surprising. Her motive – hold the very rich guests hostage – is perfect. How else is she to pay for the endless operations?

Again, I shall shy away from presenting any major clues to the resolution of the story – although the Doctor's new talent for moving faster than time (I was thinking "Jedi Speed" in the game "Star Wars Jedi Knight 2") is astonishing. Rose's compassion is astonishing, but the real interest is the developing plot of the series. Last week we had mention of a war during the Doctor's face-off with the Nestene Consciousness: "I couldn't save your planet; I couldn't save any of them". This week the Doctor again cannot hide from the past. Jabe believes it "remarkable" that he even exists.

“My planet’s gone. It’s dead. It burned, like the Earth. It’s just rocks and dust – before its time...I’m a Time Lord; I’m the last of the Time Lords. They’re all gone – I’m the only survivor.”

The Doctor reveals to Rose his heritage, and his tragedy. Gallifrey’s demise appears to be directly related to the War, now mentioned in consecutive episodes.

Whatever has happened in the World of Doctor Who Fandom in the last 7 days, from high audience figures to departures and opinions thereof, remember this – Doctor Who is back, and it is TOTALLY addictive.

And it comes without added Graham Norton!

Even by 2010 standards, *The End of the World* is an unusual story, and one which gives us the first clear reference to Bad Wolf. There is so much more to it than the introduction of that loose arc that it is no surprise that most missed it until later in the series. The word, I think, to aptly describe *The End of the World*, is “powerful”. In the space of 45 minutes, Doctor Who had transformed itself from the fondly remembered, often confusing little show of the late 1970s with bright colours and before-it’s-time fast editing to something far grander. Planets could be destroyed, time travel was frightening and as we would soon find out, wars took place in the heavens beyond the comprehension of man.

The Unquiet Dead carried on some of the themes from *Rose* and *The End of the World* – notably mentions of Bad Wolf and aliens seeking sanctuary on Earth without the knowledge of mankind...

THE UNQUIET DEAD

Christian Cawley

“The Time War raged invisible to smaller species, but devastating to higher forms. Our bodies wasted away... we’re trapped in this gaseous state...”

Doctor Who is littered with classic stories set in the most wonderful eras of Earth history – just look at *The Curse of Fenric* and *Black Orchid* – but if there is one period which gets the typical Doctor Who fan goosebumped-a-plenty, it’s the Victorian age. *The Talons of Weng Chiang* has traditionally been the archetypal “Doctor Who meets alien in historic setting” story but is that about to change following tonight’s episode?

Mark Gatiss' episode on the face of things is beautifully crafted, both in terms of plotting and in the success of the production design team and director Euros Lyn in creating the Victorian-era Cardiff (although the Doctor intended Naples in 1860). The snowbound Victoriana, horse-drawn carts and Billie Piper dressed in a beautiful period costume work perfectly, and the atmosphere, suitably for a story set at Christmas, is chilling. Add to that the wonderful Simon Callow in his most austere performance as Charles Dickens to date, plus the mysterious Gelth, and you've got a fantastic "romp"...

Mr Sneed, an undertaker and his maid Gwyneth have for some while been experiencing the loss of corpses due to reanimation. We see such as occasion in the pre-credits sequence, and it is quite reasonably the best pre-credit sequence of any show ever (and to be fair, **Star Trek: The Next Generation** had a good share of those). Eventually it becomes apparent that the dead walk due to the possession of entities known as the Gelth, who are travelling through a space-time rift to Cardiff in 1869. They require bodies to exist corporeally – and it seems Gwyneth has a major part to play...

It would be best to mention at this point the key part that the character of Gwyneth (superbly played by Eve Myles) plays in this story. Her importance is best referred to in her relationship with Rose, who develops a liking for the servant as the girl reveals her ability to read minds and communicate with the ethereal Gelth. It would also be an opportune time to confirm that Billie Piper continues to impress as Rose, able to be sparky and commanding in one moment and sensitive and moving in the next.

Simon Callow is perfect as Charles Dickens, a part he has been deemed "born to play" by many. While that may be a small slight on his talents, it is by no means unfair to suggest that he by far and away the best character actor to appear in a guesting role in Doctor Who. Many may claim he is a perfect Doctor – I would say he is the perfect actor, so utterly convincing in every part he portrays. Tonight, he portrayed to us the sad later years of Dickens' life and there wasn't a single scene he appeared in that he did not command. Of particular note is the first scene in the coach with the Doctor, and the departure scene where the Doctor and Rose bid Dickens farewell; the Doctor tells the great writer that his books will go on "forever"...

Victorian Cardiff may on the face of it be more difficult to evoke than Victorian Naples – a quick visit to Port Merion could surely solve that

quandary – but thankfully the Doctor Who production team found a wonderful part of Swansea to double as Victorian Cardiff (the location being the butt of many jokes – who would want to die in Cardiff after all that travelling anyway?) As reported in the Press some months ago, a vast amount of work has gone into creating a perfect Christmas atmosphere – snow, low lights, street-side urchins – and we as viewers get the opportunity to travel to Cardiff in 1869. The transportation is instant and amazing.

As the Doctor, Rose, Sneed, Gwyneth and Dickens gather in a Séance, we learn more about the War which the Doctor has spoken about in the previous two episodes. The Gelth are effectively refugees from the destruction caused – but are their intentions good? And what of the Doctor? What war has happened that is so terrible it could destroy the Time Lords themselves? Christopher Eccleston’s Ninth Doctor is giving nothing away... I suggest we won’t get any more real clues until we meet the Dalek in three weeks’ time...

On the whole, Mark Gatiss has written the best episode yet of Doctor Who 2005 – and we’re only three episodes into it! As mentioned earlier, Gatiss describes the story as a “romp”. That is the greatest tragedy about this episode; massively understated by its author, it beautifully characterizes the latter life of Charles Dickens, questions the possibility of dying before your own birth and is the closest Doctor Who can ever get to repeating the wonder of *The Talons of Weng Chiang* without actually copying it.

This dizzied review of *The Unquiet Dead* came at an interesting moment in the series – the formation of a “template” that would serve the later series well by kicking off with a series of similarly themed episodes. The intro, the trip to the future, the trip to the past and the thrilling two-parter have all been seen over the years since 2005, testament to Russell T Davies’ remarkable work in paring back Doctor Who to its key elements, and letting it run in a new direction.

However, there were hiccups.

Aside from the burping bin of *Rose* and possibly the spitting Moxx of *Balhoon*, Russell T Davies’ stewardship of Doctor Who will be forever recalled alongside some of his most notorious creations, the Slitheen.

These fatuous, flatulent aliens – disguised as humans thanks to a fart-inducing compression device and a zip across the forehead of the skin “suit” of their victims – were first introduced to the Whoniverse in *Aliens*

of *London*, and have gone on to become regular foes in Doctor Who spinoff **The Sarah Jane Adventures**.

Following their fun, thrilling and slightly sinister first appearance in *Aliens of London*, the Slitheen – a family of criminals from the planet Raxacoricofallapatorius – were never seen again beyond this series of Doctor Who until *The End of Time*, Part 2 in 2010 (although as we'll see, their presence would still be felt from time to time...).

Despite a reasonable, if overly derivative design, the Slitheen were brought to life with rubber suits and CGI – yet there was something not quite right about them that fans new and old couldn't get to grips with. Of course, with all of the breaking wind gags and the fun the actors were obviously having with their characters, the Slitheen were well received by the younger audience.

But for a show trying to shed its old, perceived image of foolish campery and men in rubber suits, the Slitheen were just a bit too silly.

ALIENS OF LONDON

Christian Cawley

"Don't think I've been sat on my backside for 12 months Doctor - I read up on you! Look deep enough on the Internet or the history books and there's his name, followed by a list of the dead."

Aliens of London brings the last 2 weeks of time-travel back to earth with a First Contact bang! With a cast including the quality of Navin Chowdry, Rupert Vansittart, Annette Badland, Naoko Mori and Penelope Wilton, this first instalment of a two-part story was always going to be memorable. Add to that Russell T Davies' quality and his insistence in making his stories BIG (full-blown Auton invasion, witnessing *The End of the World*) and references to the past (UNIT) that don't require prior audience knowledge and we've got a gem on our hands.

And I didn't even mention the crashing spaceship hitting Big Ben.

So what was it like? Well there is an air of domesticity about the story, despite the Doctor's protests to Rose. But what is more domestic than the human way of dealing with big events – stay home and watch it on the telly? But after a few hours of this the Doctor becomes bored and nips via the TARDIS into the heart of the action. The occupant of the crashing UFO was a pig in a spacesuit. Not an alien pig, but an augmented Earth pig.

Which brings us nicely into a quick look at symbolism in Doctor Who and one of the recurring themes of the series – “Bad Wolf”. Sprayed onto the TARDIS by a small boy on a bike (played by the amusingly named Corey Doabe), it follows on from repetitions and plays on the phrase (Moxx of Balhoon & Gwyneth) over the past few weeks. That’s on top of references to the War and the off-screen/online background plot. The BBC is really spoiling us...

So what do you get for 45 minutes committed viewing? Navin Chowdry (**Teachers**) as a conscientious and efficient civil servant, the man who alerts the third-rate MPs left in charge of the country that the Doctor is among us (thanks to telephone monitoring software); Naoko Mori (**Absolutely Fabulous**) appears briefly as a scientist who examines the pig creature; Penelope Wilton as Harriet Jones who hides in a cupboard and witnesses the whole conspiracy; and the three aliens – Annette Badland, Rupert Vansittart and David Verrey.

It is wholly obvious from first seeing them that these characters are aliens – even if you weren’t forewarned about the farting (no message from the BBC to those of a nervous disposition – “Those of a sensitive constitution may like to know that the following program contains excessive farting” – there will be complaints...). In truth however, the whole concept of aliens masquerading as humans via a zip and “gaseous exchange” is as chilling as re-animating the dead (*The Unquiet Dead*).

It was in this episode that the consequence of travelling with the Doctor in his already unreliable machine was explored further. Rose has been gone twelve months, not twelve hours. Posters cover the estate where she lives with her mother. Mickey has been questioned again and again by the police, suspected of her murder. Yet just half a day has passed for Rose since she left central London with the Doctor, travelled to the year 5 billion and the 1860s. Jackie Tyler, Rose’s mum (a welcome return from Camille Coduri) has been sickeningly frantic with worry. Mickey hasn’t met another girl because everyone thought he had murdered Rose, thanks to Jackie; but as he said, he’s been busy on the Internet.

So what more do you get for 45 minutes of committed viewing? Well you get a cliffhanger...

YOU GET A CLIFFHANGER!

And if the phrase “pile it on” were ever used, it was with this cliffhanger, the first since 1989. As the Slitheen reveal themselves,

(following the Doctor's assertion that he and the other extra-terrestrial experts have been gathered in one place for a reason) we see Rose and Harriet Jones backing away from one, Jackie trapped in her kitchen by another and the Doctor and the other experts being slowly killed by the other two. Just when you think the theme tune is going to begin, it doesn't come... more shots of fear and torture grip the viewer until one Slitheen looks directly at the camera, and its eyes blink horizontally...

TO BE CONTINUED...

WORLD WAR THREE

Christian Cawley

...Last week, we saw how the Slitheen had infiltrated positions of power in Britain, faked an alien crash-landing and revealed their true form to alien experts, the Doctor, Rose and Jackie, Rose's mother. All were in imminent danger at the hands of the 10 foot tall Slitheen. And then the show ended...

Thankfully, we see a brilliant example of the Doctor's ingenuity and resourcefulness. Snatching from his neck the electrified ID card, he sticks it on the compression unit around one of the Slitheen's necks. Due to some mysterious link between the creatures, they are all affected by the electrical field weapon...

World War Three successfully ties up the plot information revealed in *Aliens of London* - the elaborately faked UFO crash, something under the North Sea, and the nature of the Slitheen. With no disrespect at all to Mark Gatiss - writer of the last story *The Unquiet Dead* - the Gelth might be sinister in the ethereality, but the Slitheen are fully formed alien characters, the first new aliens in the new Doctor Who to have captured the imagination of the nation's children (who refer to them as "Zipheads"!).

If you thought Sixth Doctor foe Sil was ruthless in his pursuit of profit, you haven't seen anything - the Slitheen's plans for Earth involve cashing in on its destruction. I shall shy away from revealing anymore about their fiendish plan, but it is in the tone of the rest of the story. The Slitheen themselves however succeed in being sinister and funny, cracking their own fart gags last week, this week getting excited over the colour of the red hotline from the UN.

One strong aspect of the episodes is the Slitheen's invasion into the everyday domesticity of Jackie and Mickey. This is an area in which the original run of the series failed in its later years as it carried on under

the misapprehension that it was “Star Trek in Time” - it's also an area of Doctor Who that Russell T Davies has exploited to the full, first in Rose and again here.

The Doctor's relationship with Jackie and Mickey is developed in *World War Three* - Jackie doesn't trust the Doctor, and demands he tell her that Rose will be safe with him. Elsewhere, the Doctor and Mickey work together via cellphone to defeat the Slitheen via the UNIT website (password: “buffalo”). This leads to an increase in respect between the Doctor and Mickey, and a moment at the end of the episode where the Doctor suggests Mickey travels with them, only for Rose's boyfriend to confess that he's afraid. Still, Mickey did manage to take a photo of the Slitheen with his camera phone before Jackie threw a jar of pickled eggs over it - and they had the dry remains of the alien stuck to their skin and clothes 20 minutes later...

The story certainly improves the perception of Mickey as a character, and Noel Clarke's ability as an actor... one interesting point to note is that the Doctor gives Mickey a disc containing a virus that will erase all records of the Doctor from the Internet, in the belief that it is safer if there is no record of him. I wonder if Mickey will do this...?

Finally, a word about the Slitheen actors, Annette Badland, Rupert Vansittart and David Verrey. All of them were excellent, playing their characters with obvious fun and relish, and most importantly without pulling faces or playing the part for laughs, instead letting the humour come from the dialogue. They've understood their roles perfectly, and continued the new habit of casting quality, capable actors seen in the previous stories (casting actors such as Simon Callow and Zoe Wanamaker). I should also include Penelope Wilton in this, another guest actor who although not a Slitheen, was very good as Harriet Jones MP, a future Prime Minister (according to the Doctor). All of these guests have played a part in making the tale of the Slitheen invasion fun and thrilling for those who watched it.

Well done to all concerned!

As we would find out later on, this story became central to the unfolding narrative of the Davies-era Whoniverse. I mentioned above that the planet of Raxacoricofallapatorius would receive several mentions in future episodes (not to mention in **The Sarah Jane Adventures**), but by a quirk of casting *Aliens of London* also featured Naoko Mori as Dr Toshiko Sato. Mori would later be cast as a member of Torchwood, the Doctor Who

spin-off show starring John Barrowman, and this very adventure would be referenced in her final appearance.

By now, the new series of Doctor Who had been defined. The Doctor and Rose would travel through time and space, returning home occasionally to interact with Mickey and Jackie. An urge by long-term fans to see alien planets was repeatedly denied by sending the time travellers back in time, into the future, or onto space ships – and given the mooted budgetary requirements for alien planets to be realised, this made sense.

However in fairness, what Russell T Davies had conceived here was the 21st century equivalent to the UNIT family of the 1970s – instead of the Brigadier, there was Jackie Tyler; instead of Sergeant Benton, there was Mickey Smith.

In fact, with the Doctor, the TARDIS, a companion and a domestic background for the stories to play out against, there was really only one key element of classic Doctor Who remaining...

THE RETURN OF THE DALEKS

The importance of the Daleks to Doctor Who cannot be overstated – yet they are at their best and most effective when used intelligently and sparingly. I'll leave it to you to decide upon what I mean by that.

What cannot be argued is that Doctor Who and the Daleks go hand in hand. In fact I was once friendly with a girl who was surprised to find when she first watched an episode (*The Ark in Space*, episode one, forced upon her by me) that there were no Daleks in the story. She, like many others, believed that every episode of Doctor Who was about the Doctor battling Daleks...

In 2005, after what seemed like months of contractual wrangling (as portrayed by the press), the Daleks returned to the new series of Doctor Who in what seemed to be a single, solitary and certainly stand-alone episode, *Dalek*. This was the sixth episode of the series and saw the Doctor and Rose encounter the last Dalek. Based in some ways on the Big Finish audio *Jubilee*, the same writer, Rob Shearman, was contracted to write the episode.

Contractual problems with the estate of (Dalek character creator) Terry Nation lead to much toing and froing with the script, if reports from the time are accurate. When I spoke to Rob Shearman in 2010, he revealed that at one point a script was delivered that featured no Daleks and an unusual death for one of the characters – losing the classic alien menace in fact helped Shearman cut the flab and present what he felt was a much better episode, and a more suitable starting point when the rights to use the Daleks were cleared up.

As with much of the reformatted Doctor Who, a precedent was set with the sixth episode, which ever since has been seen as a mid-season opportunity to relaunch the series.

With a mid-series relaunch came another opportunity for the BBC PR machine to get back into first gear. And with the Daleks returning to Doctor Who slap bang in the middle of a general election, what better time to recreate the iconic image of a group of Daleks gliding across Westminster Bridge in London, in front of the Houses of Parliament?

According to Adam Pasco, then editor of *Gardener's World* who also nominated the Radio Times cover, the image of the Doctor's arch enemy captured "the essence of the mood of the nation in a brilliant and original way." However this didn't lead to any sort of surprising result at the 2005 General Election...

The Radio Times knew that they were onto a winner with their Doctor Who content – a fact pushed home when they issued a limited edition Dalek poster available to readers by collecting tokens.

Such was the popularity of this recreation that in 2008 it was voted the “best magazine cover of all time” in a poll organised by the Periodical Publishers Association.

Dalek was the first and probably the best of these “mid-season openers” to date.

DALEK

Christian Cawley

Writing for Kasterborous is an interesting process. Like an offline magazine, we have articles ready several weeks in advance yet due to the nature of the Internet and the concept of richness in quality of content, it is necessary to frantically type out reviews on Saturday nights or Sunday mornings when the subject for review is an episode of Doctor Who. With that in mind, let’s look at last night’s episode, which for the sake of balance and truth I have watched two times (something I’ve not done with any story yet this series).

Rose was a frantically paced reintroduction to Doctor Who. *The End of the World* enforced the notion of being able to travel anywhere in time and space. *The Unquiet Dead* reintroduced the Hinchcliffe-era Gothic atmosphere to Doctor Who and *Aliens of London/World War Three* was a typical alien invasion by deception story. Bearing in mind how much I liked each of these, please tell me: exactly what was *Dalek* about?

Now I know the basics – lone Dalek somehow fell to Earth, ends up being displayed in a private collection under the Utah desert. Doctor and Rose drop in, Dalek frees itself, the Doctor defeats it. Obviously things didn’t go quite as planned, and the Doctor has to improvise. My problem is, I don’t think I liked it.

Of course there are massive plus points – a new Dalek for one, the passion of Christopher Eccleston’s performance in his scene with “Metaltron”, and of course Nick Brigg’s voicing of the Dalek. The revelation that the Doctor destroyed the Daleks and possibly by accident the Time Lords and Gallifrey is well played, again confirming Eccleston’s quality as an actor and talent for gravitas; enjoyable too was the Doctor’s torture by Henry van Statten (Agent Clay in the movie **Hellboy**). There isn’t a single thing wrong with any of the

performances, and visually the episode was striking, not least the superb design update of the Dalek and the assorted alien paraphernalia. At times the incidental music was slightly overwhelming, but that has been a problem throughout the series. The special FX too were seamless, particularly the new use of the Dalek's sink plunger (more fearsome than the death ray?), its regeneration and of course the iconic moment that everyone will remember when the Dalek flies. You can guarantee the flying Dalek of 2005 won't be forgotten like the flying Dalek of 1988...

The dialogue is realistic, the sense of claustrophobia is well played, so what the hell is wrong with me? What was wrong with *Dalek* that I was left wanting, expecting more, demanding an ending with meaning, an ending that reintroduced hordes of Daleks hidden somewhere or the escape of the last Dalek through time to instigate the creation of a new Dalek race?

Regeneration in Doctor Who is nothing new, and the moment that the Dalek reached a power supply and downloaded the entire Internet and enough energy to self-repair was very exciting. But how exactly did the Dalek absorb Rose's DNA?

"Extrapolating the biomass of a time-traveller regenerated me"

I'm not a big fan of **Star Trek**, so you'll understand me when I say that I don't believe this sort of technobabble works in Doctor Who. Oh I understand it, but how many 8 year olds know what "biomass" is? Has the national curriculum advanced so much in the 13 years since I left school?!

Restoring the iconic classic Doctor Who monster was a fantastic move for the new series, putting the Dalek in a quality script and making it truly fearsome was something no one had done before (except of course writer Robert Shearman himself in a Big Finish Audio adventure). The Dalek's quick destruction of Henry van Statten's entire security team was astonishing, and I love the Dalek point-of-view (POV) camera shots. Rose and Adam Mitchell (Bruno Langley of **Coronation Street** fame) were put together for much of the episode and worked well together. His addition to the TARDIS crew should be interesting, but that's for next week. The fact is there is so much to like about *Dalek* and a major key to the story was the relationship between Rose and the Dalek. The slow change to the Dalek as a result of it becoming "contaminated" by Rose's DNA was excellent, it's questioning of its true purpose and its desire for freedom equally so.

Dalek is a fantastic story and a worthy addition to the new series. Dalek tugged at my heartstrings in a way a Dalek story shouldn't. Dalek will be considered a classic; I appreciate that, and see its inherent beauty, but like many films or albums or books that are considered "classic" I cannot bring myself to like it.

As mentioned above, I had the chance to interview Rob Shearman in 2010 at a small Doctor Who event in Manchester, where a clip from *Dalek* was shown to the audience.

I recalled my dislike of the episode upon first viewing, at which Shearman expressed mock indignation (I *think* it was mock...) – until I explained it along these lines:

"Looking back, Dalek is an unqualified success – yet for some reason I just couldn't get my head around it. Why did the Doctor behave that way when he had the chance to kill the last Dalek?"

The reason of course, was due to a wider plot arc, concerning the Doctor, the fallout from the Time War and the final stages of *The Parting of the Ways* – something we would not know about for a further 7 weeks. What Rob Shearman had successfully done with *Dalek* was to pre-empt a surprising element of the Ninth Doctor's character, something we had only previously had a minor glimpse at in *The Unquiet Dead*.

He's a coward.

Evidently the effects of the Time War on the last Time Lord had been as devastating as one would expect – and it also brings up all sorts of theories about how this particular Doctor might have come into being.

One thing is certain, however – this Doctor gains strength and confidence from those around him, as demonstrated over the following episodes that plunged him and Rose into a succession of diverse and dangerous situations, not to mention companions.

It was the role of the companion that became the focus of *The Long Game*, as well as how the Doctor prompts those that he encounters to look beyond what they think they know about the world. Cathica is a great example of a journalist working hard to meet deadlines and report the news – yet failing to do the research to find the truth behind the news.

Critics of Doctor Who should take note – here the series is addressing a modern day issue of the perceived lack of journalistic integrity and ability just as the classic show would provide commentary on ecological issues (*The Green Death*) and limb transplant (*The Tenth Planet*)

As casting decisions went the announcement that former **Coronation Street** actor Bruno Langley (gay Todd Grimshaw in the soap) would appear in *Dalek* was another of those decisions that lead to some consternation among a certain section of fans, not least for his apparent lack of charisma. There were more noises too when it seemed that the actor would be travelling in the TARDIS as a new companion – however this was a very clever subplot by Russell T Davies to demonstrate the importance of Rose Tyler to the Doctor.

When interviewed, Davies described Adam as “the companion that can’t” and it soon becomes obvious as *The Long Game* proceeds that the boy genius is out of his league.

THE LONG GAME

Christian Cawley

“This technology it’s... it’s amazing!”

“This technology is wrong.”

After the heavy intensity of the Doctor facing off with a *Dalek*, the tone lightens considerably with new companion Adam Mitchell’s first foray into the future. How will he handle the future? How will he contain his excitement?

By fainting.

But that needn’t be the end of your journeys into space... *The Long Game* is a spacestation-set “aliens are manipulating humanity” story, complete with a giant piles-monster manipulating alien, better “ice” than *Iceworld* and a sublime performance from an underused Simon Pegg.

As the Editor, Pegg’s character filters and controls the news, aided by a whole Satellite 5 of journalists. This control of the news is halting humanity’s development in the year 200,000. This isn’t too bad because historically it’s the height of the Fourth Great and Bountiful Human Empire. Of course, behind the scenes things are different...

This week, Christopher Eccleston’s Doctor has evolved slightly. He’s not the revenge-mad super-gun toting Dalek killer of last week. I’m not saying the Dalek’s shouldn’t bring out the worst in the Doctor, but that was possibly overstepping the mark... Anyway, this week he’s clever, charming, slightly potty and also manages not to grin too much. There

is a website called “Tom Baker or Normal”³ which details a game between two or more players; basically your competitor conceals his face behind a piece of card and you guess whether he or she is pulling a “Tom Baker” wide-eyed frown or a “normal”. In years to come, I’m sure we’ll be playing “Ecclesgrin or Normal” or even “Tom Baker, Ecclesgrin or Normal”...

Simon Pegg manages to be perfect. As the principle villain he could have been way over the top, but he is spot on as a character who controls news and has access to all knowledge. His delight at discovering that the Doctor and Rose are time travellers is superb, as is disappointment at not getting a philosophical debate out of the Doctor. His albino-like makeup is a little disturbing, but appropriate for a character that appears to have spent quite some time in the low lights of the mysterious floor 500. A few questions remain however about his true nature... a consortium of banks?

The other supporting cast in this week’s episode such as Anna Maxwell-Martin (Suki) and Christine Adams (Cathica) were from two total opposite ends of the Doctor Who spectrum. Possibly for the first time this series, we see some bad acting. Anna Maxwell-Martin, come on down for possibly the weakest portrayal of an undercover freedom fighter in Doctor Who ever. The time travelling humans from *Day of the Daleks* wouldn’t have touched you, frankly.

Conversely, Christine Adams is excellent as Cathica – ignorant and dismissive at first of the Doctor’s claims that things are wrong, yet wonderfully calm and controlled when she releases the information she has just heard from the Editor himself. She’s also very good looking which doesn’t hurt either.

Of course, a mention of the supporting cast would be incomplete without a mention of the lovely Tamsin Grieg as the Nurse. With the sinister goings on and the strange technology she installs in Adam, she manages to bring a nice level of dry humour to the episode. She also manages to be slightly sinister as well...

Information is the key to this story. The Mighty Jagrafess of the Holy Hadrojassic Maxarodenfoe has held back human development through restricting the flow of pertinent information. In the year 200,000, information can be transferred from peer-to-peer through a chip in the

³ Found at <http://www.freewebs.com/tombakerornormal/>

skull. Alternatively a fully functional brain access port can be installed and on the command “Spike” a stream of information is transmitted directly into the human brain.

The Mighty Jagrafess of the Holy Hadrojassic Maxarodenfoe is an interesting character, on paper. Nicknamed “Max” - no doubt in reference to Robert Maxwell - it controls the entire human empire by means of the Editor controlling the news. But why? It doesn't seem to be feeding on anything. It needs to be kept a low temperature which is why the satellite is so warm. But just what is the point of Max?

Adam, who has so far been wandering through this week's episode mostly alone (after claiming to be feeling ill and “returning to the TARDIS”) takes it upon himself to have the most extreme of these two forms of surgery. His actions put the Doctor and Rose in jeopardy – more to the point he defaults on his relationship with the two travellers...

The Long Game succeeds on several levels as described above. It also succeeds in being an original and interesting tale that wouldn't have been out of place in a **Doctor Who Magazine** comic strip, or one of the Virgin Books New Adventures featuring the Seventh Doctor. It raises the possibility of a return to some of the subjects touched upon, includes a mention of “Bad Wolf” (a monitor early on in the episode) and of course has the legacy of Adam's surgery to deal with. At the end of the day though, it's FUN. Although just why it's called *The Long Game* is something I suspect we'll find out before the end of the series...

Looking back, this remains a terribly underrated episode. Drawing influences from the **Doctor Who Magazine** comic strip (Kronkburgers!), 24 hour news channels and the banking strategy known as “the long game” used to reap long term rewards, the first of the Doctor and Rose's adventures on Satellite 5 (to which they would return in *Bad Wolf*) is a pivotal moment in the series, leading as it does to the events of the series finale, and the Doctor's regeneration.

As for Adam - well he was always intended to be a short-term character and not a permanent addition to the TARDIS. His own motivation – attempting to discover Earth's future for personal profit – is an interesting mirror of the machinations of the Jagrafess and the Editor's reference to “a consortium of banks”. Getting the “upgrade” seems to have been an ill-judged investment.

So long as he doesn't get a job as a waiter, he should be fine back on 21st century Earth.

However Adam's presence in the TARDIS underlined the fact that the Doctor and Rose were perhaps missing an extra element. The dynamic of Doctor + companion had been used extensively over classic series, however, with only the late 1960s and early 1980s offering any real depth of choice in companions.

Before viewers in 2005 would get the chance to see just how the Doctor and Rose would get on with a third traveller, however, there was time for an urgent visit to 1986 in an attempt to prevent the death of her father...

FATHER'S DAY

Christian Cawley

"Time's been damaged, and they've come to sterilise the wound..."

"Watson, come here - I need you!"

Tell a tale that is fantastic in concept, revolutionary in the genre and modernistic in sensibility and you're open to criticism, hoisted by your own desire to enhance the level of storytelling in that genre, and open to all kinds of attacks (such as those from IT technicians posing as writers...). However, tell a tale that is firmly within the perceived boundaries and notions of the genre, give the main characters some sensible dialogue and interaction and take away the desire to be revolutionary and replace it with the desire to tell a good, appropriate and fitting story, and you open yourself to nothing more than gushing compliments.

So far in this series we've had stories by Russell T Davies which all hit the same mark with satirical comment, social comment, and his particular tone of humour. We've had Mark Gatiss and his deliciously dark overtones in a thrilling tale in the 19th century, and we've had Robert Shearman attempt to repeat the audio adventure success of *Jubilee* on television. For all the latter's vaunted emotional energy, it pales in significance with the episode *Father's Day* shown on BBC1 last night. Paul Cornell's script had me on the edge of my seat. It had me caring for two bystanders, it had me close to tears when Rose's father Pete (a superbly cast Shaun Dingwall) realised he should no longer be alive, and it had my heart pounding when the Doctor was swallowed up by the time monsters.

Totally gripping stuff, but I have a little confession to make.

I'm a massive fan of Paul Cornell's Doctor Who novels – *Human Nature*, *Timewyrm: Revelation*, *Love and War* – all fantastic tales with excellent characters. Even Cornell's admitted least favourite of his novels, *No Future*, I consider to be far superior to those of some of his contemporaries. Set in the late 1970s, Cornell superbly evokes the period within the first two pages. Last night we were in the 1980s the moment we saw Rose and the Doctor watching her parents marry.

The story is full of nice touches – the interior of the TARDIS vanishing, the voice of Alexander Graham Bell on every telephone, the Doctor's attempt to get the TARDIS back and the shock that the little boy who ran into the church was Mickey...

So obviously I've made it clear what I think of Cornell as a writer of books – why do I then assume you're all coming with me on the quality of this episode? Paul Cornell has been doing television drama writing for several years, in particular **Casualty**. He can do characters, he can make you care. That's why the incidental characters Stuart Hoskins and Sarah Clark worked so well – the Doctor spoke to them for two minutes tops and at the end we learned what kind of couple they are as well as that the Doctor "never had that kind of life". There was envy in his voice, an unfulfilled desire to settle down...

There were however a couple of downsides to the plotting - it is possible that the purpose of the repeated appearance of the car that killed Pete could have been verbally explained rather than implied... and while the "wound" in time was healed by the eventual death of Pete Tyler, time has still been altered by Rose's presence...

The creatures themselves, although unnamed on-screen were nevertheless fearsome and uncompromising. They were also well-designed and succeeded in not looking anything like a hospital case (a big hello to The Mighty Jagraffess of the Holy Hadrojassic Maxarodenfoe from last week's *The Long Game*). Also a delight to behold was the general *mise-en-scene*; Camille Coduri's makeup for one. The team took literally 18 years off her, and she looked better as a young Jackie than she did in **Nuns on the Run**. The use of the cars too – the three door gold Vauxhall Chevette and the green three door escort – were perfectly picked for the time.

As for the ongoing tone of the series, we escaped direct mention of the Time War and there was no mention of Bad Wolf – until I checked back this morning and found it on a poster 3 minutes into the episode...

Billie Piper has with this episode silenced her critics once and for all with a performance full of emotion and hurt and loss; if anyone required further proof that the girl can act, this is it. Meanwhile, our hero the Doctor was again superb. Was there an unspoken bridge between *Dalek* and *The Long Game*? Something has happened to Eccleston's performances since the halfway point of the series. He's gone from being known as a very capable actor playing everyone's favourite Time Lord into being everyone's favourite Time Lord. And I loved the simmering anger he fought to keep down when Rose saved her father's life...

If any episode of Doctor Who deserves to be nominated for a BAFTA at next year's awards, you watched it at 7pm Saturday 14th May...

...and just a reminder to you all. We have five weeks left of Doctor Who.

Following Rose Tyler's amateur history-manipulation in *Father's Day*, the series took an interesting new shape in the form of the second two parter, *The Empty Child/The Doctor Dances*.

Written by Steven Moffat, the adventure saw the Doctor and Rose visiting war-torn London in the 1940s, and features the iconic scene of Billie Piper hanging from a barrage balloon wearing a Union Flag t-shirt. With the added threat of an air-raid taking place across the British capital city, the eye candy was manifold.

Of considerable interest in *The Empty Child* was the arrival of John Barrowman as the second TARDIS companion, Captain Jack Harkness. Not only was the character a handsome omniseual from the future (see below) but he was also a Time Agent.

First referred to in 1976's *The Talons of Weng Chiang* (which starred Tom Baker and Louise Jameson), Time Agents originate in the 26th century, and were used to track criminals such as Magnus Greel, a war criminal who fled the 26th century to hide in 19th century London. While Jack Harkness' **Torchwood** introduced us to fellow Time Agent Captain John Hart a couple of years later, they have only occasionally been referred to since – yet are typical of the way *Talons* scriptwriter Robert Holmes continues to influence Doctor Who, years after his death.

Back to *The Empty Child* now, an episode that introduced Doctor Who fans to the dark corners of Steven Moffat's mind, and his skill for sinister catchphrases...

THE EMPTY CHILD

Christian Cawley

“Are you my mummy?”

Into the past with a BANG – Doctor Who this week carried on with the strong drama instigated in *Father’s Day* with a superb Steven Moffat script. For a writer most commonly associated with comedy (**Joking Apart, Coupling**), it could have been considered by some on first glance to be a bit of a diversion from the high standards already set by Mark Gatiss, and Paul Cornell.

Yet just minutes into the episode the cries of a young boy wearing a gasmask crying for his mummy have set the story in stone and sent a chill through the watching children and adults alike.

Classic Who elements abound in *The Empty Child* - the companion and the Doctor getting separated; the creeping sinister atmosphere; the Doctor himself arriving for one reason only to discover something disturbing is taking place; the anachronistic presence of alien technology in Earth’s past; and the introduction of a character who is not what he seems...

Captain Jack Harkness – galactic conman, time traveller with dashing looks and a playful eye for, it seems, anyone. John Barrowman’s confident interpretation of the character coupled with his “Hollywood Idol” looks lend Captain Jack the air of a space bound Errol Flynn (or perhaps **Blackadder’s** Lord Flashheart – time will tell...).

The Doctor this week wasn’t the only character with a professional title – there was also “the doctor”... Richard Wilson with absolutely no effort at all shed his celebrated Victor Meldrew persona in order to lend further horror to the story. Dr Constantine is of course the character at the centre of much media attention this week as it emerged that a “bone-splintering” sound effect would be exorcised from the shot of the gasmask morphing out of his head...

The horror aspect of *The Empty Child* is one which creeps around, stalking in the shadows and words of the afflicted. There is no gore, no shocks, more of an unsettling air which is excellently counterpointed by the more human but equally terrifying threat from the Nazi war machine in the skies above the London setting. On screen evidence for the time and place of the setting is superb, utilising posters, costumes and the atmosphere of desolation during the blackout to the full. Add to this fantastic direction and camerawork (a crane shot of the Doctor entering “Albion Hospital”, the approach of the eponymous child’s

silhouette against the front door of the house and of course the ringing phone...) and Moffat's script succeeds in sending a chill right down the back.

Typically for someone used to writing comedy (and providing some of the tightest plotting since **Fawlty Towers**), Moffat employs humour throughout the episode. Mostly this is in the scenes with Rose and Captain Jack, and the scenes between the Doctor and the orphan girl Nancy. There is also an excellent scene early in the episode as the Doctor mounts the stage in a smoky club - a scene-type used by Moffat before in his superb comedy **Joking Apart** in the early 1990s.

Christopher Eccleston is again at his confident best, taking command of the dining table scene with the children superbly. Meanwhile, Ms Piper is at her very loveliest, swooning and flirting with Rose's new hero, Captain Jack. The scenes focusing on their meeting are superbly conceived, succeeding in being both romantic and dangerous – but the killer is watching Rose hang from a barrage balloon during a full-scale Nazi bombing raid.

The End of the World takes credit as being the most effects-laden television programme ever, and swallowed a fifth of the visual FX of this series of Doctor Who. But while CGI can succeed in creating a fantastic space station and wafer-thin enemy, its use can only be truly confirmed when it succeeds in reproducing what we know and recognise, and fooling us completely. As such legions of German bombers flying past the dangling Rose Tyler, flak guns detonating their charge in the night skies and fires raging across the London skyline were executed immaculately, and give further credit to the special effects powerhouse that is The Mill.

Next week we will find out the story behind Nancy, what happened to the poor child to make him empty and the true power contained within the "Chula ambulance". And I confess, I switched off before the preview so I have NO IDEA!

To call this a classic story would be one week premature; but it is undoubtedly a gripping episode which hopefully is the first instalment of what will turn out to be the best Doctor Who story EVER...

The casting of John Barrowman raised a few eyebrows among fans who recalled his wooden presenting on the BBC One Saturday morning show **Live & Kicking**, but his character, Captain Jack Harkness turned out to be a

revelation, bringing a welcome new dimension to proceedings in *The Empty Child*.

Eyebrows were also raised when the character was described as an “omnisexual con-artist” – Harkness really was a gift of a role, something that Barrowman appears eternally grateful for.

CAPTAIN JACK HARKNESS

Brian Terranova

What? No really, What? Jack died and then was saved, brought back to life by the Time Vortex/Rose and yet the Doctor just leaves him behind. Why? I mean he was only a companion for a short time. I miss the two-companion combination very much so it was nice to have him around.

Now what? Rose and the Doctor travel all alone again? We already saw that. What we need is a change and a second companion provided that change. Certainly it can enhance the story telling.

In (what we are now supposed to be calling) the Classic Series, the setup of multiple companions allowed the story to develop a bit more interestingly. Each person or team of characters could be divided and either learn important bits of information or be instrumental in taking the steps necessary to help save the day. More than that, it would allow the characters to grow, to show us what they to offer and how strong they were as an individual.

Rose was able to give us a taste of her worth as a companion again and again while the Doctor took a back seat, let's be honest, Rose was the star here. But Just as Jack was getting into his stride as a companion, he was taken from us.

Thing is, he was a very different character to any of the male companions in the past; actually to any companion in the past. He had skills and experience that might just have rivalled the Doctor's in many situations. But even with this he wasn't exactly the Doctor's equal. In many respects, he was an opposite.

Rather than blustering into a situation without a plan and baffling the people in the room into listening to him, Jack can use his skills as a smooth talker to charm the socks off of anyone. This is an aspect of the character that could prove to be just as useful as the psychic paper has been in saving time and keeping the Doctor out of jail.

Not to mention the fact that the character of Captain Jack Harkness hit the ground running in his first story, Steven Moffatt's *The Empty*

Child. From the off he was suave, cunning and certainly very flirtatious. With his playfully devilish side he could make anyone feel like they were the most important person in the room, or certainly the only person in the room to him. It's this cheeky nature that could provide massive amounts of entertainment in future stories. There is no denying that when John Barrowman was on screen the BBC got what they paid for and more.

Throughout this first series it was made very clear that Rose provided the heart of the team. This was shown in many ways, but none so important as the fact that she helped bring the Doctor back out of his shell. However, the Doctor wasn't the only character in need of help. Jack was a lost man. Two years of his life were gone and he was basically on the warpath to get them back in any way that he could. Turning to a life of cons and learning not to trust anyone, he was going nowhere fast. With the help of Rose, the Doctor was able to help Jack see that this was not the best use of his talents or even true to his nature as a man. Which is very puzzling when, just as we start to see Jack make this life change and become the man that we know he can be, the Doctor leaves him behind.

Here is where my main issue lies. The future story potential for a character like this alongside our other heroes is massive, but that element has now been lost. Almost as if Jack wasn't really meant to have much of a life in the show. It's been said by show runner, Russell T Davies, that Jack was there to hold the guns the Doctor could not in the final. If that was all that was required of the man, then why even bother to create him? Why give his character such life and history just to drop it as suddenly as he came in? It would have been way wiser to have added a simple character on Satellite Five to befriend the time travellers and fulfil this need, such as has been done in the show's long history, rather than make a new companion who so easily captured the hearts of fans, cast him away so poorly.

But then I guess we should have seen it coming. The Doctor, THIS Doctor, doesn't like anyone getting in between him and Rose. Perhaps this was just one more flaw Mr Davies wanted to add to our beloved character. It's a shame it was at the expense of one of the best male companions the show has ever produced.

In contrast to the "romp" sensibilities of the earlier two-parter *Aliens of London/World War III*, the Doctor and Rose's trip to the 1940s was a far

more serious, involving and atmospheric adventure brought to a close confidently, ingeniously and satisfactorily in *The Doctor Dances*, an episode in which “everybody lives”.

THE DOCTOR DANCES

Christian Cawley

“Look at you, beaming away like you’re Father Christmas!”

“Who says I’m not red bicycle when you were 12..?”

One of the most difficult things a writer faces when creating a sinister and dangerous situation for the hero and heroine is usually “how do I get them out of this?” Cliffhangers work best when the threat is very genuine and no realistic escape can be guessed by the audience. Bad examples of cliffhangers in Doctor Who include Episode Three of *The Mysterious Planet* (aka Trial of a Time Lord part 3, where Murdeen fires his crossbow at the Doctor – or does he? Well, no, actually) and the notorious Episode One of *Dragonfire* (the Doctor hangs from an icy ledge by his umbrella... to this day no really knows why). So it was with a big cheer that I greeted the inspired resolution this week, as the Doctor commanded the approaching gasmask-wearing zombies to “Go to your ROOM!”

To be fair to Mr Moffat following my serious “bigging-up” of his writing credentials last week, I expected nothing short of a suitable resolution to the cliffhanger. But the scenes that followed soon after – the child returning to his room in the hospital, followed by the infected, were superb, and we even got a corridor chase scene!

The Empty Child/The Doctor Dances story has been a flawless production, combining superb set dressing, costumes and lighting, sound effects and of course the acclaimed visual effects. It’s also further evidence that as this series of Doctor Who has proceeded; the whole thing has got tighter, better acted and more exciting. Christopher Eccleston IS Doctor Who. Regardless of what the occasional naysayer in the fascist clique forums might say, he’s the same guy from Gallifrey who is half human and used to wear a long scarf.

While I’m on the subject, Mr George Murphy is another of these reality-dodging, self-absorbed “fans” of Doctor Who – and I had the utter misfortune to stumble upon his unnecessary comments about

the new series at www.cultv.co.uk. (Should you want to visit, type it in your browser. It truly isn't worth it⁴.)

Murphy apparently has become known for “controversial predictions regarding forthcoming remakes of classic British shows and movie franchises”. Household name there, eh? Furthermore, according to this oracle, “only 4 actors have managed to put in a performance to reach a “Great” level” of performance as the Doctor. Although he of course omits to mention which four, because of course, all of them have been great (scripts aside).

What I'm getting at here is this: Series One, or Season 27, whichever you want to call it is a continuation of the world's longest running science fiction adventure serial. I know people who wouldn't watch Doctor Who all through the Pertwee era because it wholesale discarded with the traditional format of Doctor Who and for all intents and purposes was a different show. Astonishingly, people still have this terribly blinkered attitude and their own idea of what Doctor Who should be. I have one too. They're all right and wrong at the same time.

Mr Murphy may or may not have enjoyed *The Doctor Dances* - I couldn't give a damn. What I do care about is this. We're currently enjoying the best TV series in the world at the moment. This is nothing new – even at its worst, Doctor Who was true fantasy escapism. In the 21st century however, Doctor Who is slowly becoming a mirror on the world. Key plot aspects throughout the series have succeeded in drawing attention to real world issues – this week it was Nano technology – in a way that traditional science fiction often succeeded. While no other shows can lay a claim like this, no other show has the unrivalled depth of talent involved that Doctor Who has.

For all intents and purposes on Saturday evening we were in war-torn London. In another time (thirty-odd years ago) a script and some brown clothes would have sufficed. We would have been restricted to interior shots and unrealistic railway sidings constructed in a studio. In 2005, we have the result of a cross-section of the finest talent available to Hollywood, let alone the BBC.

This brings us to the new American companion, Jack Harkness. Skilfully rescued by the Doctor from an interestingly-labelled bomb

⁴ Years later, that website is still online. Funny old world.

(anyone require a translation of “schlechter wolf”?), John Barrowman’s presence as an omni-sexual time agent with memory-loss is as interesting as it is controversial. No doubt his presence in the final 3 episodes will be integral to the unfolding plot, whatever horrors are lurking just out of sight...

So top marks all round – James Hawes’ direction, the oft-ignored Ernest Vincze, every actor appearing in Saturday’ instalment, and of course Steven Moffat for telling a wonderful story and for giving us an “interesting” reason as to why the house chosen by Nancy to feed the children from had a bigger joint of pork than the others.

Oh, and thank you Steven Moffat for what I can only describe as a perfect resolution to a wonderful story. Warm, heartfelt, touching and truly joyous; one moment humanity was at risk from the Chula nanogenes, the next – “EVERYBODY LIVES!”

You cannot fake good television.

And do you know what? Even watching *The Empty Child* back in June 2005 in a sunny chalet rather than a dark wintry evening felt as if we were watching something momentous. It was as if Steven Moffat really “got” how to do modern Doctor Who – and that perhaps someday he could be in charge...

What was also good about *The Empty Child/The Doctor Dances* was John Barrowman arriving in the TARDIS as Jack Harkness. We didn’t know it at the time, but this was a character that would run and run – even in his own show. While we were chucking at the double entendres, behind the scenes Russell T Davies was already planning Torchwood, the Earth-bound alien hunting show in which Barrowman would star with *The Unquiet Dead*’s Eve Myles, *Aliens of London*’s Naoko Mori, Burn Gorman and Gareth David-Lloyd.

As an audience, we knew little or nothing of this – the word Torchwood was yet to be uttered, yet to leave its indelible mark in the world of the Doctor.

Instead, we were still focussing on Bad Wolf – and as the weeks had passed, the meaning of this most bizarre conundrum had been heavily speculated upon. Yet curiously, the Doctor and Rose hadn’t seemed to have noticed.

That changed in *Boom Town*.

BOOM TOWN

Christian Cawley

Ah, the calm before the storm...

“What can be said about Boom Town,” I lay awake last night wondering, “What can I, Christian Cawley, amateur writer and Led Zeppelin fan possibly write about an episode of Doctor Who that could possibly, on one hand, be considered the dullest ever with a tacked on resolution, while on the other be considered a triumph of storytelling in a series about a man who rights wrongs and legs it before he can view the consequences of his actions?”

And then it sunk in. Russell T Davies has described this piece along the lines of the Doctor being faced with the consequences of his actions. On reflection, this is the case. But it is nothing new – ever since he failed to destroy them outright in *Genesis of the Daleks* (1975), the Doctor has been cursed with their periodic return. Jon Pertwee’s Doctor often gave the Master a second chance, only to find himself fooled, and the Sixth Doctor was put on trial for his recklessness.

Boom Town represents, however, a good opportunity to calm things down pace-wise. The return of Blon Fel-Fotch Passameer-Day Slitheen (Annette Badland) is a chance to flesh out the character of one of these bizarre monsters from the planet with the long name. It is also an opportunity to reconcile the pieces of the jigsaw that is BAD WOLF.

In amongst all of the special effects and characterisation in the latest episode, the most significant moment was the Doctor and Rose realising that the phrase was following them around through all of their adventures. (I’d previously assumed that they’d been oblivious, but it’s good to know otherwise.) This moment was of course cleverly defused until next week, with the Doctor’s declaration of coincidence.

So, what did we get for 45 minutes of Doctor Who?

A slight aspect of panto in the attempted teleportation of Margaret Slitheen, flashing lights, less-than-convincing CGI earthquake cracks in central Cardiff and a smashing time-rift opening below the TARDIS. We also got some excellent dialogue (witness the Christopher Eccleston/Annette Badland scene in the restaurant), Noel Clarke as Mickey as well used as he was in the last Slitheen story, and at last some focus on the real star of the show, the Doctor’s best friend - the TARDIS.

Jack Harkness was pretty much underused, unsurprising in the presence of Mickey, but Billie Piper again shone as she reflected the frustrations of her character’s boyfriend. I can’t think of any character in fiction or reality that has the weight that Mickey carries. Dare we say

we would be any bigger a man than him under those circumstances? Would we let the ones we love leave Earth and travel time and space with a “thing” in a rickety police box?

The resolution to *Boom Town* was frankly tacked-on. However, I've been more than happy with the varying tone of the series, and Mr Davies' work will be forever remembered. Let's face it; EVERYONE is talking about Bad Wolf...

NATION OF THE BAD WOLF

The final story of the 2005 season of Doctor Who was intended to tie up the “Bad Wolf” strand that had been running all the way through since *The End of the World* (and possibly *Rose*).

However *Bad Wolf* kicked off the story that few Doctor Who fans really wanted to see. The time had come so quickly; there was just 90 minutes of the Ninth Doctor left to go.

In the end, it was a double whammy – one that had fans and the general viewing public alike chattering like mad about what “Bad Wolf” could possibly mean, as well as wondering what the next Doctor Who would be like.

Dissecting all of the references to Bad Wolf proved an interesting task – along with the obvious, visual labels, there were other, slightly more oblique references to the mysterious meme...

ADHERENTS OF THE BAD WOLF

Christian Cawley

Story arcs, themes, linking stories, it’s all been done before. Doctor Who, **The X Files**, **Babylon 5**, the list goes on. Pretty much everything we have seen in the new Doctor Who has however been drawn on a clean slate. New monsters, new threats – and when the Autons and the Daleks have been used, there has been none of the old “oh yes I defeated them while I was in my third body – oh didn’t I tell you I can change my appearance?!” exposition that plagued Doctor Who during the 1980s, the 1990s (via the New Adventures books) and of course the Paul McGann TVM.

But one aspect has linked the stories of the new series – other than the two stars, the TARDIS and the sonic screwdriver of course – and that is the simple phrase: Bad Wolf...

It’s all been building up to this one. Graffiti, dialogue, signs, idents, labels – all communicating the phrase “Bad Wolf”. Repeated use of the phrase throughout the last 11 weeks has brought us to this – a mix up of varying theories and beliefs as to what and who Bad Wolf is, how it affects the Doctor and Rose and how/if it will be instrumental in the conclusion to the series.

“Bad Wolf” is a meme – that is, its use has been propagated by repeat usage in different contexts in the series and passed on to us

(the audience). The term was first coined by Richard Dawkins in his 1976 book "The Selfish Gene", where he defined "meme" as "a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation". Another meme that you may be aware of might be a familiar catchphrase such as Tommy Cooper's "just like that", or James Cagney's "You dirty rat". Basically, a meme must have existed in one mind and travelled to another - as the Doctor himself said of The Adherents of the Repeated Meme in ***The End of the World***: "A repeated meme is just an idea..."

So here we are, 11 weeks of references to what is at least an episode title – one that wasn't revealed until Bad Wolf was being discussed on all available Who forums. The BBC's own Bad Wolf website⁵ gives a list of occurrences of its use in the last 3 months – here's ours, along with their possible meanings:

Rose - The Nestene Consciousness allegedly says "Bad Wolf" when the TARDIS is captured (this isn't an entirely clear instance).

If Bad Wolf is an object, then it can only be the TARDIS (or the Sonic Screwdriver...). If Bad Wolf is a "someone", then it could well be the Doctor – although Mickey was also present.

The End of the World - While speaking with the Face of Boe, the Moxx of Balhoon states that they are in the 'classic "Bad wolf" scenario'.

The relevance of the Face of Boe, who appears later in the series has been speculated upon – as has the meaning of "scenario". The Moxx's comment suggests a known game (chess?) stratagem or historical event...

The Unquiet Dead - Gwyneth (the maid girl) tells Rose what she can see in Rose's future – "The big bad wolf!"

It's important to decide what context this is taken in – some discussions on the Internet have speculated that what Gwyneth saw could be related to events in Rose's past – see ***Father's Day*** - whether immediate or long term. Again, Mickey could be instrumental, as could the TARDIS. The Doctor is ruled out, as Gwyneth shows no fear of him. Alternatively, it is something Rose is yet to see...

Aliens of London & World War Three - A small boy spray paints "BAD WOLF" on the side of the TARDIS.

⁵ Still found at www.badwolf.org.uk

The Doctor chasing a spacesuit-wearing pig is evocative of the story of the three little pigs and the big bad wolf. The small boy spray painting the TARDIS again suggests that either the TARDIS is Bad Wolf, it contains Bad Wolf, or is being watched by Bad Wolf...

Dalek - Millionaire collector Henry van Statten's call sign is "Bad Wolf One."

Following the introduction of Adam, and his prompt departure, it has been speculated that he is Bad Wolf...

The Long Game - A channel called "Bad Wolf TV" displays footage of a sandstorm on NVA:27 (presumably a planet).

This is the first time that the theory of Bad Wolf being related to a reality television channel was considered. There is little else to surmise from this example, other than it is following the travellers around. However in this story Adam is left on early 21st century Earth with a cybernetic hole in his skull...

Father's Day - A poster for a rave has been scrawled over in black marker with the words "Bad Wolf".

This is seen at the very beginning when the Doctor and Rose leave the TARDIS. It is an era where Mickey exists as a small boy.

The Empty Child & The Doctor Dances - Captain Jack rides a German bomb labelled "Schlechter Wolf".

"Schlechter Wolf" is of course a German translation of Bad Wolf. Could the Bad Wolf be a weapon? There are of course the wolf references made by Nancy to the Doctor regarding his ears and nose.

Boom Town - As the Doctor points out, the name of the Nuclear power station planned for building on the Time Rift is "Bad Wolf".

"Blaidd Drwg" is the Welsh for Bad Wolf. The most significant thing about this reference is that the Doctor actually notices it, as does Rose. The clues are there for them as well as us....

Varying theories and claims of the actual answer have swept the Internet over the last few weeks. Some have (Dalek-creator) Davros returning – others have Adam as (as Simon Pegg once put it) "a young Davros". Others put their money on the Doctor being Bad Wolf – Rose often wears a red hooded top, evoking "Little Red Riding Hood". Many have chosen the TARDIS is the Bad Wolf, believing the Nestene creature identified the TARDIS not only as superior technology, but as a dangerous weapon (probably used in the Time War).

Yet more theories identify Bad Wolf as a reality TV show that the Doctor and Rose have been the unwitting stars of, and one theory even

claims that the Doctor is the Master! Could Jack Harkness be deeply involved in it, with his “missing” two years of history? Is the TARDIS sending signals to the Doctor, warning him? And just how could Adam get to be in the year 200,100?

Of course, what we do know about the episode is that there is a reality game show - “Big Brother”-style, a “Weakest Link”-type game and a “What Not to Wear”-alike, all featuring a member of the TARDIS crew. The episode is set 100 years after *The Long Game*, and is believed to feature Bruno Langley as the returning Adam Mitchell... and the Daleks!

The beauty of this is that no one really knows for sure. Okay, we’re hours away from possibly finding out – but until then, we can’t really say. This is of course the beauty of this meme. **Twin Peaks**, an American TV series from the late 1980s (conceived by Mark Frost and David Lynch) could be said to have introduced this hook into the narrative of a television show. Within the overall story - based around a murder investigation - were references to death and oft-repeated lines, such as “The owls are not what they seem”.

Much was not as it was seen in **Twin Peaks**. Could it be that the same is true of this current series of Doctor Who?

addendum: This article could not have been written without the help of many blogs, rec.arts.drwho on Usenet, and the forums here on Kasterborous and at Digital Spy. If you’ve seen any theory above that you recognise as your own, thank you for inspiring me to write this, and I hope the surprise is as good for you...

It may also be worth mentioning that Professor Richard Dawkins was a close friend of the late Douglas Adams (once a Doctor Who scriptwriter) and is the husband of Lalla Ward, ex-wife of Tom Baker and the actress who played Time Lady Romana. Funny old world...

Further to the Bad Wolf mystery, there were also rumours of a returning Davros played by **Red Dwarf**’s Norman Lovett!

With the spoiler of the departure of the Ninth Doctor leaked so far in advance, the Doctor Who production team at BBC Wales were letting nothing out.

The only way we would find out just what was about to happen next was to watch...

BAD WOLF

Christian Cawley

"I moisturise"

Ok... I normally start these reviews off with what I consider to be dialogue triumphs from the episode. However should I do that, then anyone who hasn't seen *Bad Wolf* is going to get a bit of a spoiler. Which is something that I don't want. Suffice to say, there was very little in the way of dialogue failures in this episode, and those lines which could have been better came from the guest television personalities (remember that phrase? We had it before the word "celebrity" got bandied about everyday...), so we'll let them off.

Bad Wolf is of course – according to fan lore at the moment – the episode in the series when all of the loose ends are tied up. The identity of Bad Wolf will be revealed and the Doctor will no doubt be put in a situation which leads to his regeneration next week. This though is all conjecture, as few people actually know what will happen next week. What we do know is what a fantastic roller coaster we all experienced watching *Bad Wolf*.

The whole invasion of reality television as part of Doctor Who is on the whole well handled. This isn't Doctor Who up for eviction, the Doctor becoming a real part of our lives; it isn't a dumbing-down of Doctor Who. Embracing these reality formats is Doctor Who telling us that there are other things going on. Things that are hiding in shadows, always out of sight, pulling strings and shaping events. Reality television here is interpreted as a diversion, sleight of hand, while the real power establishes itself.

From the arrival on the Game Station (previously Platform 5 in *The Long Game*), the travellers are put to the ultimate test – compete, play to win, or die. While they all realise they are out of place, only the Doctor recalls how they came to be taken from the TARDIS. Encountering "Lynda with a Y", he takes her with him as he sweeps out of the **Big Brother** house – one of 60 – in order to search for Rose. Captain Jack isn't on the Doctor's list of people to rescue...

The Controller of the Game Station is a pitiful cadaver of human existence. She has been bred in order to control the games, which all run through her. Her role seems important – surely she is behind the mystery, perhaps even behind the whole BAD WOLF meme? But no, she is dispatched of by the Doctor's hidden enemies who fear him...

Of course, this episode is a parallel of the whole series – something has been planned, hinted at, of which neither we nor the Doctor and Rose have been aware of or able to fathom out.

One shock is followed quickly by another; while Rose might appear to be dead, we soon discover that while Rose may not be dead, she is in mortal danger – from the Daleks!

The Daleks have survived the Time War, and only the Doctor can save humanity from almost half a million Daleks. The realisation, the moment of truth in this episode, leads the viewer in to a false sense – here are the Daleks, here comes the theme tune. But no. Instead we get a defiant Doctor, a true hero promising to rescue Rose from the Dalek fleet, save the Earth and destroy every last Dalek.

Christopher Eccleston's acting ability has never been in question. However, while some questioned his choice of roles in the past, many were baffled by his accepting the lead role in Doctor Who. He has been nothing short of brilliant as the series built momentum, and is the template for future Doctors. His impact on the role has been remarkable, and David Tennant truly has a job as large as Pat Troughton's in 1966 in taking over the lead part. The Doctor's reaction to the apparent death of Rose was the saddest moment on television this year.

Billie Piper was not the focal point of the episode this week – the Doctor's discovery of the games and the Controller's purpose for bringing him to the Game Station was far too important. However her performance on **The Weakest Link** was what you would expect from a 19 year old from 2005 lost in 200,100. The Anne Droid, meanwhile, was pretty fearsome. Trinny and Susannah of **What Not To Wear**, meanwhile, appeared to have been superseded by digital versions from the PlayMobil factory. Again, Captain Jack is used for comic effect – but can he be hiding a deeper secret?

The supporting cast did their jobs – support. The Doctor, Rose, Jack and the Daleks were the stars of this episode. While perhaps overplaying their parts (Fitch in "The Weakest Link", the entire "Big Brother" house), the guests served their purpose in ensuring the emotional focus lies entirely on the TARDIS crew.

When next we meet the Ninth Doctor, it may be for the last time. I said some weeks ago how *The Doctor Dances* had to match *The Empty Child* and have a good resolution to the cliffhanger. The same goes

here. I don't think I'm going to be disappointed by *The Parting of the Ways* - just very sorry to see a wonderful series come to an end.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

Christian Cawley

"Purify the Earth with fire...The planet shall become MY temple and we shall rise...This will be our paradise!"

When we began the "Trip of a Lifetime" in *Rose*, little did any of us think it would end this way - Autons, Daleks, Slitheen and Gelth have all been encountered by the Doctor and Rose. Captain Jack has joined the team, and knowledge and equipment has been gained along the way. None of us knew, or could foresee, the magnitude of the threat facing Earth that the Doctor would stumble upon.

Before we go any further – and apologies to any foreign readers – let's deal with Bad Wolf. The ongoing thread, hidden in places throughout the series (spot the reference in the takeaway this week – didn't see that one did you?), has taken on a life of its own, demanding media attention and setting Doctor Who discussion forums from one side of the Internet to the other ablaze with opinion, theory and ridicule.

So what actually happened? Was *Rose* Bad Wolf? Or was the TARDIS Bad Wolf? Or was it a *Rose*-TARDIS amalgam/gestalt? Whichever it was (probably the latter) that caused the phrase to follow *Rose* and the Doctor around, it has succeeded in keeping us hooked for 13 weeks and allowed the Doctor's ninth incarnation to develop away from the one-time destroyer of millions to a true hero. Thanks to *Rose*-TARDIS, once again "everybody lives".

The realisation of the Emperor Dalek was frankly breath-taking, and again massive big up credit to the fantastic team at The Mill responsible for the remarkable sense of scale and depth achieved in their depiction of the Dalek mothership. No doubt debate will rage for some time whether or not the Emperor was a future incarnation of Davros, whether it was the same Emperor as seen in *Power of the Daleks*, or even if it was the Dalek seen in the episode *Dalek...* Whoever it was, it was truly fearsome, and the added ingredient to the Dalek repertoire of insanity – religion – was a welcome addition. Not only had the Emperor shrouded the eyes of Humanity and controlled them with the diversion of televised games on the Game Station, he used religion as a tool to divert his human-derived Daleks; a not-too-

shrouded dig by Russell T Davies at other methods of controlling mankind.

In this series we've had allegories of corrupt government and war (*Aliens of London*), allusions to Roswell (*Dalek*) and digs at the media in *The Long Game* and *Bad Wolf*. Whether Russell T Davies wrote any or none of these is irrelevant. He is writing in a voice that has long been missing from television. In these supposedly more enlightened times, how often do we step back and think about what is happening, what those who represent us (both democratically and autocratically) are actually doing in our name, and in the name of a god that people like them created. Russell T Davies – and this is by no means to ignore the talents of other contributors to the series - succeeds in writing on two key levels. One is aimed at the populist, soap opera watching viewer tuning in for a glimpse of Billie Piper. The other is one that pulls mirrors out, points them at real life and the world at large, and demands that we question our position both in this world and the Universe. Davies succeeds here in the same way that the much missed Robert Holmes often did in classic Doctor Who.

The departure of Captain Jack is one that was half expected, and to be fair his contribution to this final tale was again one of a redeemed man. Hopefully we will see him again – possibly during the missing two years of his life – but his character served its purpose as a foil for the characters of the Doctor and Rose. But now there is a new character in the TARDIS...

Rose's transformation into sexy vortex-goddess was outstanding, and touching. The Doctor's departure (he was so good he got to say goodbye twice!) was breath-taking. I was convinced regeneration could not be achieved on a higher quality than the seventh one that gave us Paul McGann. I had myself believing we wouldn't see a change, that Rose would leave in the TARDIS and come back to find a man claiming to be the Doctor. I was totally and utterly gobsmacked – having stayed away from the Internet since Wednesday – to see the stunning transformation. As for the first words of Doctor number ten? I'd like to think they're a hint as to how David Tennant will play the part. But I know we won't get any hints until filming begins next month.

We've got six months until the next episode of Doctor Who. But let's face it – does that trailer on New Year's Day seem that long ago, really?

After just 13 weeks of watching Doctor Who, the Ninth Doctor was gone. As we've seen already, Christopher Eccleston got a really bad deal from the press and fans for his decision to only do the one year – yet the decision had been finalised some months before. In truth, the leak of his departure after a single series and the subsequent announcement by the BBC confirming this was a PR disaster, only mitigated slightly with the premature announcement of David Tennant's casting as Eccleston's replacement.

If only it *had* been kept a secret! The Doctor, Rose and Jack on Satellite Five, facing off with the Daleks, the Doctor and Rose escaping, a shock regeneration – it really could have been so different!

In the end of course, Christopher Eccleston gave a year of his life to Doctor Who, was the focal point of the series return to television and his presence made the series' resurrection must-see TV.

He really was...

FANTASTIC!

Christian Cawley

"The Ninth Doctor". Just a few years ago they were words we would never hear, we thought; and then we got two! Seriously though, the return of Doctor Who has been analysed immensely, with all sorts of opinions based on fact, fancy and fish written across the media and Internet. But one thing is constant throughout the discourse and readings of the first 13 episodes of 21st century Who: Christopher Eccleston made the character cool again.

While it was Russell T Davies who was credited with bringing the show back and making it a success, it simply wouldn't have worked with a lead character locked into the traditional "period costume and eccentric traits" pattern that had developed throughout the show's history only to be soundly abused in the 1980s.

It took an actor of considerable reputation to be able to come to the new Doctor Who, adding his own interpretation of otherworldly detachment to the back-story of being the sole survivor of the Last Great Time War. Much of the performance was grounded in Eccleston's previous work with Davies, ITV's **The Second Coming** which was a big drama success in 2003. The parallels are obvious – he has to persuade his friends that he is something fantastic, plan how to save the world and then sacrifice himself to save the world. (You could also

point out the verisimilitude of the title and Eccleston's role as the Doctor, but that really would be twee.)

Eccleston's Ninth Doctor was a man of pain, a man who had been through the greatest trials of all of his lives – watching Gallifrey burn. While he comments upon his appearance in front of the mirror in *Rose*, it is generally considered that this incarnation had been around for a while before this adventure. Eccleston's natural ability as an actor allowed the Ninth Doctor to be a truly commanding figure, taking charge of situations throughout time but most notably in 10 Downing Street in *Aliens of London* and *World War Three*. Upon hearing screams, he quickly takes charge of the soldiers posted there who accept him immediately, even though moments before he was their prisoner.

He is the same man underneath, however. This is all made clear early on – he faces the Nestene Consciousness in *Rose*, and knows all about them. It was Russell T Davies who made it clear that he was the same man who faced the Master in San Francisco in 1999. While some groups of fans decided that he couldn't possibly be the Doctor in that costume, with that accent, that he had stolen the TARDIS and was the Master posing as the Doctor, the public took to this incarnation of the Doctor like no other since 1974.

The Ninth Doctor doesn't get into his stride until *The Long Game*. This is a strange point to make, but one which stands up through repeat viewing of the series. It is hard to tell, however whether it actually is Eccleston coming to terms with the character, or the Doctor finally feeling at home in this ninth incarnation. One thing is for sure, however, the whole series seems tighter in the second half, and this is in no small part to Eccleston.

And yes, he did have his own quirks – but they weren't covered in question mark motifs. His revelation of a love of Charles Dickens was another sign that this man still had hidden depths after 40 years. His choice of jumpers was occasional and almost non-existent, but there was much more to him. His steely resolve, refusal to be beaten, and his hitherto unseen utter contempt for the Daleks painted a picture of not a whimsical wanderer in time and space but a man who had lost everything that he held as sacred. We're yet to see if the Doctor is truly the last of the Time Lords, but surely enough of them died for us to worry about that too much?

When we first met the Ninth Doctor, he is alone. He's been wandering; he catches sight of the Nestene Consciousness operating in London, and intervenes. Why? The same reason that he intervenes when he believes he has a chance to save the Gelth. He is responsible. Not only as a Time Lord, not only because he is the Doctor, but because he feels a large amount of responsibility. The Time War affected both of these alien entities. Their presence on Earth isn't however met with immediate defiance – he gives both of them a chance, just as he gives Margaret Slitheen a chance. Thanks to Rose, he even gives the "last Dalek" a chance...

Unlike any previous incarnation, the Ninth Doctor is remembered for his reliance on his companion. You always got the feeling that previous Doctors were taking companions to educate them – but this Doctor was also lonely. Much of his character was shaped by the Time War, including the need for a companion like Rose. His second companion, Jack, could never have worked at the beginning of the series, when the Doctor was in need of a companion to basically show him what it meant to be human.

The Ninth Doctor may well turn out to be the most significant incarnation of the Doctor yet. His impact had to be massive in order for the show to make an impression; the BBC publicity machine looked after that. All of a sudden, children across the country were once more scared of mannequins, Daleks and monsters, just as they were in the 1960s and 1970s. They knew that the Doctor was the hero, that he could stop the monsters, and that he and Rose would travel together.

You're 8 years old. You know other actors have played the Doctor. But you don't know how this is important. Someone tells you that the actor playing the Doctor is leaving the show. You guess that your new favourite show is about to come to an end...

There were a number of moments in *The Parting of the Ways* in which the Doctor could have been killed. But what is significant is that despite the fact that we sadly all knew what was coming – and imagine the shock if we hadn't known that the Ninth Doctor's time was up! – the Doctor really only cares for Rose. He doesn't hate or ignore or respect any less Captain Jack or his new friends on Satellite 5, such as "Lynda with a Y". But he sends Rose home. Having thought her dead twice in the previous 13 weeks, he isn't going to let it be third time lucky for the grim reaper. But with the departure of Rose, we see the

departure of the Doctor's resolve. Sending her back in time, back home, doesn't only save her – it condemns him.

The Ninth Doctor cannot deal with an army of Daleks without the knowledge that the Time Lords are lurking in the background, watching and waiting to step in should he fail. His only way of defeating the Daleks is via an all-consuming delta-wave.

Whether or not the Doctor should have sacrificed himself for all of humanity or just Rose Tyler is another matter entirely. If we measure this in terms of comprehension, however, saving the woman you love – and it seems the Ninth Doctor does love Rose Tyler – seems to be dramatically superior to laying down your life to save everyone on Earth.

No previous Doctor – with the exception of the Eighth – could have made the sacrifice for a human that the Ninth Doctor made. No previous Doctor would have made the “have a good life speech”. But most importantly, no previous Doctor was made to feel so alive by his companion. Rose saved the Doctor from the Daleks in an intimate way, looking into the heart of the TARDIS. In turn, he saved her with a kiss.

The Ninth Doctor was with us for 10 stories, 6 novels and 3 DWM strips. Yet there is still so much more to say about him. He was cool, he was hard, and he was ruthless and had that irresponsible streak where he courted danger. He was also a hero, a new interpretation of a classic character, and he most certainly will not be forgotten.

He really was “Fantastic”...

With the birth of the Tenth Doctor came the end of the first new series of Doctor Who in 16 years. It was an emotional moment; in fact it was like a dream. In the space of 13 weeks fans had been introduced to two new Doctors, 2 new companions, an amazing new TARDIS interior, new Daleks, a new format, and been greeted with the news not only of a second series but of a spinoff series as well!

Looking back it was an amazing time to be a Doctor Who fan – the amazing thing is, things just kept getting better.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

With a gap of five months between *The Parting of the Ways* and the first dedicated Christmas episode of Doctor Who, *The Christmas Invasion*, you would expect things to quieten down in the Whoniverse – not least because of everything that happened to keep the show in the public eye over the past few months.

However it wasn't to be. Doctor Who was now big news; it sold newspapers, magazines and soon it would be selling other TV shows.

In October 2005, the BBC's Official Doctor Who site displayed the cryptic message: "A NEW WORD ORDER."

On October 17th, the BBC announced the new drama, Torchwood, explained as a sort of British X-Files, and starring John Barrowman as Captain Jack Harkness.

"It's a renegade bunch of investigators who investigate real-life, normal crimes. They also look into alien happenings. They have been charged by the British government to find alien technology that has fallen to Earth and they need to do it without the FBI and UN knowing."

"Enticing" is the word that springs to mind about the BBC's announcement, and with Barrowman appearing as Captain Jack Harkness – a character last seen stranded on the Gamestation *The Parting of the Ways* – in a show set on 21st century Earth, there was obviously a mystery to be unravelled.

However creator Russell T Davies' explanation was probably closer to the truth.

"It's dark, wild and sexy, it's the X Files meets This Life. It's a stand-alone series for adult audiences which will have its own unique identity."

Which might have begged the question in some minds: "why is the BBC using the family-friendly Doctor Who website to promote an adult show?"

"Torchwood" had of course already been mentioned in Doctor Who – the word, an anagram of its parent show, had been uttered by Paterson Joseph's Roderick as an answer in **The Weakest Link** game during the previous episode. It was an impressive piece of synergy that would be continued throughout the next series of Doctor Who.

Popular names were already signing up to appear as the second series entered production in mid-2005, with 1960s guest star Pauline Collins announced as playing Queen Victoria in one episode. A respected actress, she had appeared in *The Faceless Ones* in 1966 and gained popularity as the lead in the British movie **Shirley Valentine**. Collins was one of many big

names to sign up as Doctor Who became as vital as the old **Morecambe & Wise** show for any actor, actress, comedian or TV presenter looking for a role that could break the curse of typecasting.

To get a handle on just how much of a success the new Doctor Who was, consider the reaction to the series of one Michael Grade, the man generally remembered by long term fans as the man who cancelled Doctor Who (although that was actually his successor, Jonathan Powell). What Grade was responsible for however was publicly criticising the series while he was Controller of BBC One, sacking Sixth Doctor Colin Baker and basically making the show look even more ridiculous by means of his poor management of the situation.

How times change. Twenty years later, the following words appeared in The Guardian:

“This is not easy to write – as you will readily understand. But here goes – congratulations to all involved in Doctor Who: to whoever commissioned it, those who executed it, the writers, the cast, the publicity folk, the schedulers and of course the late Sydney Newman who invented the whole thing.”

Of course, if the Doctor Who series of 2005 had been a test of the show’s strength as a concept and Russell T Davies’ development of its format, *The Christmas Invasion* would be seen as the ultimate test. David Tennant would star for the first time as the Doctor, as Davies and Tennant attempted to do what Letts and Pertwee and Hinchcliffe and Baker had done so successfully in 1970 and 1974 – somehow persuade the public to forget the other fella in the space of around 60 minutes of television.

It wasn’t going to be easy – but thanks to Davies and Tennant having already worked together in the 2004 series **Casanova**, they already had an understanding that went towards the creation of the incarnation of the Doctor that has been arguably the most popular since Tom Baker’s Fourth Doctor.

Praising the Tenth Doctor in retrospect is one thing – but what was he like on the day?

The Christmas Invasion seemed to come around rather quickly, and no sooner had the summer holidays ended and children across the UK had gone back to school it seemed everything was gearing up not for Christmas Day but for “Doctor Who Day.”

Official press images of the new Doctor and his companion’s makeover were released by the BBC, where fans got to see the Tenth Doctor’s attire

for the first time. Casting off his predecessor's leather jacket, this was a dynamic new look for the Time Lord.

As the months progressed, we would get interesting casting announcements, official new images of the redesigned Cybermen and even a special episode of Doctor Who for Children in Need!

Known unofficially as "TARDIS Cutaway" the additional scene takes place between the closing moments of *The Parting of the Ways* and the first moments of *The Christmas Invasion*; although in all honesty, without this episode (broadcast during the BBC's annual telethon in November 2005) the first appearance of the Doctor in the Christmas special make little sense.

Reaction to the episode was good, however, with Tennant remarkably encapsulating the character of the Doctor in just a few minutes, from post-regenerative chatter to recognising the possibility that his rebirth has gone wrong.

It was just a few weeks later that the official press launch event occurred, and with it came the steady deluge of images, hints and press releases from the BBC, the regular material that feeds tabloids and makes Doctor Who websites a target for those looking for the latest news on their favourite show.

What we didn't really know back at Christmas 2005 is that we were about to embark on the beginning of a new annual tradition. Doctor Who would be aired on Christmas Day on BBC One for at least five consecutive years, bringing a variety of adventure and monsters to the Christmas tea of families around the UK.

More on that later – let's first remind ourselves of David Tennant's first full episode as the new star of Doctor Who...

THE CHRISTMAS INVASION

Christian Cawley

Enough has been said in the last few weeks to trumpet this episode of Doctor Who as one of the best ever. Hype does have an unfortunate habit of biting us in the back when we least expect it, but thankfully this isn't what happened with *The Christmas Invasion*.

Russell T Davies has expertly built upon the superb culmination of the Ninth Doctor's adventures in *The Parting of the Ways*; while the Christmas tree and evil Santas at first appeared to be nothing more than set pieces, they turned out to be texture, giving us as viewers some clever distraction away from the main threat - the alien Sycorax!

The performances, too, were developed further. Camille Coduri was particularly good to watch as Rose's mum Jackie, given some of her best lines and a performance to match them; Penelope Wilton as Harriet Jones PM was also well developed from a very lucky backbencher into a fully-fledged stateswoman. Meanwhile Noel Clarke's Mickey appears to have finally accepted that Rose is going to come and go whether he likes it or not.

Billie Piper's Rose meanwhile had just lost the man she loved. The first 40 minutes of *The Christmas Invasion* was devoted to dealing with Rose's reaction to the Doctor's regeneration. Regeneration might be a means of avoiding death, but as we've seen before the Doctor returns as another man. Humans use voice, character and facial characteristics to identify people – with regeneration this is all thrown up in the air. It was expertly handled.

But really, how could it all have gone wrong? The show opened with a blistering TARDIS crash-land scene as the police box bounced off the walls of the Powell Estate. Special FX throughout the episode were largely top notch, putting every single US series to shame with their subtlety. Of particular note were the Sycorax spaceship and the "special weapon" at the end of the story...

As a message for peace, the episode was unsurpassed by the rest of Christmas' dramatic programming (**Jesus of Nazareth** aside). Allusions to the seemingly endless war in Iraq and questionable decisions by Prime Ministers are all very well, but sadly don't give us the full story. Only by knowing the truth can we avert war in the future. As powerful a message it was, in this world of violent crime and wars fought by propaganda and illegal tactics it will fall on mostly deaf ears; an entire series of that message, however...

And who better to carry a message of peace than the Doctor himself? He's stopped wars throughout history on all sorts of planets, and of course saved the Earth from alien aggression on countless occasions. This time however was a bit different as he only managed to turn up at the last minute, and in typically Doctorish manner he managed to stave off the Sycorax while dressed for bed – "very Arthur Dent", as he said himself.

David Tennant always had a difficult task in stepping into Eccleston's shoes. However the performance was certainly deserving of the media attention the actor has been receiving in recent weeks. "Cool aplomb" is Kasterborous' own verdict; astonishingly, Christopher Eccleston with

his book covers and walkie-talkie doll will soon be a distant memory to the new breed of Doctor Who fans.

It has been said that Christmas will never be the same again. We have another 13 episodes of Doctor Who to come in the Spring and then another Christmas special. On a per-minute basis, we've never had so much Who, although of course there is the best part of 16 years to catch up on.

So thank you RTD and your team, thank you David Tennant and Billie Piper (who successfully looked like she needed a big hug throughout) and thank you BBC for a great Christmas present.

Despite the affection that Doctor Who now held in the public consciousness, there was still a feeling that the old show (now rebranded "Classic" by the BBC's official website) was somehow separate from the modern series.

This was something that worked in its favour during the first 13 episodes, which focussed largely on new foes and restricted any chance of there being direct links with the old series to the Daleks and the concept of regeneration.

Thankfully, this was about to change, as Doctor Who began to embrace its own past in a completely new way. Rather than companions recognising their predecessors (a la *Time Lash*) they would be taking offence at their existence!

One particularly fantastic casting announcement for Series 2 was the news that Elisabeth Sladen, who played companion Sarah Jane Smith from 1974-1976, would be reprising the character in a new episode of Doctor Who. Sladen is one of those rare examples of former stars who have been associated with the show long after leaving it behind on screen who are also fondly recalled. Another might be Frazer Hines, although to date he hasn't returned as Jamie McCrimmon.

Bringing Sarah Jane Smith (and K-9!) back into the Doctor's life was a masterstroke by Russell T Davies that allowed seasoned fans to plot a course directly from *The Hand of Fear* through to *School Reunion* and beyond.

More importantly for Doctor Who, however, was the return of the Cybermen. Ever since their caged cameo in *Dalek*, fans had been clamouring for the return of the monsters from Mondas. While the creatures that turned up had no link to that planet, the archaic sci-fi concept of Earth having a twin planet was done away with in favour of

parallel world. This lent the writers the chance to bring the Cybermen back as a brand new threat, just as the Time War had allowed the Daleks to return with none of their Davros-shaped baggage.

Following lessons learned in 2004 and expecting a similar flurry of camera phone photos, rather than let the Cybermen be leaked in the tabloids as had happened with the new Daleks, the BBC issued a big press release of the new Cyberman design – something that was initially met with mixed views. In particular the “flared trousers” and the “C” logo on the chest panel were criticised. It would be several months before fans would see the powerful new design in action

Releasing details of the upcoming main series villain online was just a demonstration of how far the BBC had come since the days of old Doctor Who. Indeed, the corporation saw the series as a great way to get families watching TV together. While this led to Doctor Who’s home at 7pm on a Saturday evening as the centrepiece of scheduling, it also saw the BBC take things further, utilising the title as a means to try out some interesting cross-media projects.

The first of these was *Attack of the Graske*, a superb little interactive adventure launched on the BBC “red button” channel after *The Christmas Invasion* had aired. Various choices were open to the player via their remote control as they helped David Tennant (addressing the camera directly as the Doctor) to defeat the mischievous Graske (Jimmy Vee). The adventure was a hit around the country with families taking it in turns to make decisions at certain points in Gareth Roberts’ script and *Attack of the Graske* eventually ended up online on the BBC’s official Doctor Who website.

Spurred on by this, the team at the BBC website went one further with Series 2. Rather than simply profiling each episode, they created TARDISodes, small prologues that provided some context to each episode of the run without resorting to using any of the cast members that appeared in the episodes themselves

With Cybermen, rumours of Daleks, lots of cross-media promotion and even the launch of Russell T Davies’ new show *Torchwood* tied in with the second new series of Doctor Who, there was a suggestion that everything was geared to not only make a big end of season finale, but one that viewers would remember.

One particularly popular storyline – even before it started! – was that of Mickey Smith, and the revelation that Noel Clarke wouldn’t just be appearing in Earth-bound stories. Mickey would at last be joining Rose in

the TARDIS for the second series of Doctor Who, as part of the plot strand that would coincide with Billie Piper moving on.

Famously self-critical of his work in *Rose*, Clarke had by this time already developed the screenplay for and appeared in the movie **Kidulthood**, and was considered to be something of a rising star. His character was also popular, especially after becoming so sympathetic during *Boom Town*, and having Mickey Smith travelling through time and space with the Doctor and Rose was an enticing possibility.

It would also allow viewers to learn more about Mickey Smith.

THE THIRD WHEEL: MICKEY SMITH

Brian Terranova

Doctor Who is no stranger to regular cast members who are not the Doctor or Companion. Although, this was really only done in one era of the shows life. UNIT - the once upon a time United Nations Intelligence Taskforce – formed a regular group of cast members who were in nearly every Jon Pertwee story in his early days.

So the idea of Jackie Tyler and Mickey Smith making regular appearances isn't a foreign idea to the show. Sure it may get taxing from time to time to keep seeing Earth in the New Series as the Doctor is bound to the planet the way he once was in this third life, but at least the characters are interesting.

While Jackie provides some useful drama to really let the viewer see how hard this haphazard lifestyle the Doctor leads can affect our loved ones we leave behind, Mickey shows us another angle. Still worried for Rose's safety in her travels, Mickey's love is not unconditional. While at times Mickey can seem like a lost puppy waiting for his best friend to come home, he is very much aware that she may never return to be his lover. And here is the big difference. Jackie will wait her entire life to see Rose again. That is a mother's love. Mickey's love can be spurned or rejected.

This is what helps Mickey to grow during this first series of Doctor Who, something unique to his character only. Mickey has to go from a perfectly content individual to having his world turned upside down over night. Which can lead him down one of two paths. He can either pack it in and give up on Rose as she found a "better man" and he is not cut out for the life style that they lead fighting the evils of the universe, or he can grow up, step up to the plate and take control of his life in the only way that he can.

Which is what we actually see Mickey do. In *Aliens of London*, upon catching sight of the Doctor's TARDIS Mickey flies head strong into action to confront the man who is the main reason Mickey is under suspicion of murder. Later in the same story we see him jump into action to save Jackie's life. The number one person accusing him of that same murder. Not only that, he saved her from a cold-blooded alien killer, not just some psycho boyfriend.

At the climax of the very same story Mickey is faced with a choice. Potentially kill the woman you love to save the world or coward out and do nothing. He makes the right call because the maturing character that he is, knows what needs to be done. But when we get to the end of this two-parter Mickey is faced with a difficult decision. Go with Rose and the Doctor on their travels through space and time, or stay behind. For all the growing up that Mickey has done over the first series, he can't bring himself to go.

But why? Surely the face value and his own words suggest that he can't handle the alien busting lifestyle. But I feel there is more to it. I mean, how would you feel being asked by your girlfriend's new "boyfriend" to come along with them? To be their third wheel?

I don't blame Mickey for not going. He would much rather she stayed with him.

Still, in those moments, the Doctor shows us that Mickey has developed into a much stronger character than when we first met him. Not only did he invite him along, but he trusted him to plant a virus on the net that will destroy all knowledge of him. Mickey has another choice now, and never really did find out which one he chose. Perhaps with his enhanced role in series two we'll find out if he put that disc to good use.

In the end of Series 1, Mickey once again showed how different he was to the man we met in Rose. Once again he plays the hero and helps Rose save the universe, but more so, he let his love go. He showed us that he loved her so much that he did what was best for her; a very selfless act.

In just the short time that we have known him Mickey has proved that he is companion material. As it stands he is the companion that wasn't to be, but perhaps, if we are lucky, in Series 2 we can watch him develop some more into the strong companion he is ready to be.

Watching Mickey grow up and move away from Rose Tyler was an interesting prospect - but there was more to come.

The possibility was there early on production for Series 2 that Rose Tyler might not make it through to the third series. Rumours had been drifting around since the previous year that Rose Tyler would die, and when Series 2 came along there was a reluctant expectation among hardcore fans that the former pop star who had been so successful in the role of companion would have to be replaced.

So with Series 2 – the 28th season of Doctor Who – about to get underway, it was time for a comprehensive preview of the forthcoming series.

Remarkably, despite a strong turn in *The Christmas Invasion*, David Tennant was yet to win over some fans – and that wasn't the only threat facing the fresh-faced actor, the youngest star of the series since Peter Davison in 1981. Doctor Who in 2006 would be up against the FIFA World Cup...

THRILLS, SPILLS & CYBERMEN

Christian Cawley

Oh to be in Britain this spring! New shows on all channels including a new **Sharpe** feature starring Sean Bean means that there is plenty to look forward to. And as anticipated as the return of Bernard Cornwell's swashbuckling soldier is, no return is going to be as hot as the 2006 series of Doctor Who.

Back in the saddle following his Christmas adventure will be David Tennant. While it's argued by many that he has already suitably filled Christopher Eccleston's shoes, Tennant has yet to impress a number of watchers. But if they're still spoiling for a fight at the end of the thirteen episodes then it's pretty likely that they weren't paying attention anyway.

The prospect of a return for Sarah Jane Smith is exciting in itself. Lis Sladen was fortunate enough to appear in Doctor Who at a time when it was considered unmissable, and comes from a list of successful companions from the 1970s - indeed for me she tops that list. I'm fascinated by how she will react to the new Doctor and his current companion Rose...

There's much more to look forward to in Doctor Who this year, however, such as the threat of werewolves, the Krillitane, cat people and the return of Lady Cassandra O'Brien. But grand as these

creature's appearances will no doubt be, there is one return that can be considered to be this year's most anticipated - the return of the Cybermen!

Most of us are dying to find out more about the mysterious John Lumic as played by Roger Lloyd Pack; and I want to know just how the Cybermen come back – is this really set in an alternate universe?? Who else is looking forward to the return of Shaun Dingwall as Rose's father? To top it all I want to see those Cybermen move, I want to see the light glimmer and glint off them like the cover of the upcoming *Aliens and Enemies* book!

The silver giants of Mondas, later Telos, will it seems (if early reports are to be believed) become the silver giants of Earth! Any more detail than this is the realm of spoilers, but as the Cybermen are easily Doctor Who's most popular monster on two legs much of the series publicity will no doubt focus on their episodes.

As if one robot menace in the shape of the Cybermen wasn't bad enough, there's also a return for K-9 - or more appropriately K-9 Mark 3. The additional casting of John Leeson adds to the texture of the character's return, and it will indeed be fun to watch the tin dog go spinning around once more.

As we saw last year however, thirteen weeks doesn't last long. Not only that but the Doctor will be competing for column inches against the likes of David Beckham and Michael Owen as most of the world gears up for the 2006 World Cup football tournament in Germany.

This takes place during the final half of this year's series and if the shows profile is affected by the tournament in the press, there shouldn't need to be any schedule juggling to disrupt things due to the times football matches are played in Germany.

Those thirteen weeks will go very quickly, rest assured; while we will no doubt enjoy yet another thirteen episodes of our favourite show, it won't be long until we're waiting for a new Christmas adventure and Series 3/Season 30...

So to conclude, here's the rundown of all 13 episode titles from the recent "Radio Times":

- 1.New Earth**
- 2.Tooth and Claw**
- 3.School Reunion**
- 4.The Girl in the Fireplace**
- 5.Rise of the Cybermen [part one]**

- 6.The Age of Steel [part two]
 - 7.The Idiot's Lantern
 - 8.The Impossible Planet [part one]
 - 9.The Satan Pit [part two]
 - 10.Love & Monsters
 - 11.Fear Her
 - 12.Army of Ghosts [part one]
 - 13.Doomsday [part two]
- Enjoy...

So with the new series ready to go, amidst rumours that Billie Piper would be leaving at some point during the run, and with anticipation over the return of the Cybermen, Elisabeth Sladen, John Leeson and Graeme Harper, Doctor Who fans across the UK were glued to their TVs on Saturday, 15th April 2006 for a trip to *New Earth*...

NEW EARTH

Christian Cawley

Last night I witnessed – on two occasions – what happens when talent fails to be properly reined in. What happens when an otherwise good idea is taken too far...

On the second of the two occasions, a fat, white blonde girl from Newcastle was performing on stage at the local club I attend and suddenly, without warning, broke into a rendition of what is probably the last great protest song – Labi Siffre’s “Something Inside So Strong”. This lady sang it with such complete – and misplaced – conviction that I was sure she was going to follow it with “Biko”.

The point is she thought she was doing it for the right reasons, despite the fact that it was performed in a smoke-filled club, not the Ghettos of Soweto. Because of this it sounded awful; which brings us to *New Earth*...

“Disappointing” isn’t a word I’ve associated with Doctor Who since Season 24 back in 1987 where we were treated to Sylvester McCoy’s debut, the risible *Time and the Rani*. I had believed things have moved on. There are several similarities with *New Earth*. Both opened new series, were the last of consecutive stories penned by the same hand (Pip and Jane Baker had previously completed the final instalment of *The Trial of a Time Lord*) and both are definitively disappointing and badly produced excuses for Doctor Who.

Just to take stock, any failings we saw last year were due to something more or less “new” being created. The Doctor Who team now has approaching 2 years’ experience of making the show, so if I feel any disappointment as a Doctor Who fan in an episode that was written as an opener in the modern-day television sense of the word, then something is seriously wrong.

You may or may not know the term *mise-en-scene* - briefly it encompasses everything in the frame of the camera or theatre stage that the audience sees. It covers things such as costume, set design, visual effects, lighting, and movement of the actors. With the exception of a couple of bad CGI flying cars, in *New Earth* this aspect was perfect. Billie and David Tennant were also spot on – but I’m anxious to see what happens when someone else gets the opportunity to play with them. This Doctor has only had one writer so far, and he isn’t serving him well...

Not only has Russell T Davies written the closing episodes of Series 1 *Bad Wolf* and *The Parting of the Ways*, he preceded them with the slow-paced and thought-provoking *Boom Town* and has since followed them with *The Christmas Invasion* as well as that **Children in Need** cutaway. Again, for a season opener, you would expect a writer of Davies’ repute to give us something better than the mishmash of ideas we were subjected to in *New Earth*, his fifth (sixth if you count the cutaway) Doctor Who script on the trot. There is a strong argument for him not writing as much next year if last night’s episode was anything to go by.

I’m not so much concerned by the reappearance of Cassandra and the Face of Boe – the latter evidently reminding us who he is to seed his final appearance and the “revelation” that he opted not to give us last night – as they are incidental to what is wrong with *New Earth*. The sci-fi concepts too are fine, performing what a perfect sci-fi story should – questioning the path that we are taking with medical technology and research. The sight of the “lab rats” covered in plague has come very close to the real-life incident in north-west London⁶ where six volunteers showed severe adverse reactions to the drugs that were being tested on them. This is what science fiction is all about,

⁶ You might recall this – if not visit <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/4808836.stm> for details.

this is what makes us imagine what can be or what might be, and in the end gives us hope.

Yes, Davies has – as ever - given us some very meaty topics to go away and consider. But they were skated over. The concept of the Sisters of Plenitude was great. But we barely saw them. The fantastic moment when we witnessed the extent of their Plague Farm coupled the wonder of seeing humans frozen in *Ark in Space* with the shock of observing reanimation in *Tomb of the Cybermen* could have been the catalyst for something fantastic. Instead we get “**Shaun of the Dead** in Hospital”.

And we get body-swapping. That oh-so-funny concept that if it hadn't been on its knees by the early 1990s (thanks to Hollywood endlessly producing versions of **Freaky Friday** and **Big**) has well and truly been stabbed through both hearts and cremated by the time the credits rolled on *New Earth*. While we're on the subject of “done to death” – three episodes on the trot have featured “ethereal gob” drifting to and from the Doctor and his erstwhile companions. Despite the fact that the body swapping isn't fun and devalues the character of the Doctor, the idea that Cassandra can “gob” herself into anybody she pleases is visually and morally disgusting.

I haven't enjoyed writing this. I recently received an email asking if I would critique the episodes more strongly in my reviews for Season 2. It's more than a little bit ironic that with the first episode of the new series I feel 100% compelled to do that. However, it also raises the bar for the reviews for the rest of the series, in much the same way that RTD raised the bar with Series 1 and has failed to match it with the shows 2006 return.

Russell T Davies' sixth Doctor Who episode on the trot *Tooth and Claw* is next week. There isn't much it has to do to be better than *New Earth*...

Oh dear.

New Earth is an episode which I've yet to enjoy; I've sat through it a couple of times since and found little reason to disagree with anything in the 2006 review above.

By refocusing the way in which we presented reviews on Kasterborous during 2006, the website started to make a name for itself as a home of honest critical opinion of Doctor Who. Remember that “critical” doesn't equate to “negative” – from 2006 to date, this Doctor Who blog has been

reviewing episodes compared against the ideal of how good they could have been, as opposed to how good they were.

An excellent opportunity arose the following week with the first screening of *Tooth and Claw*, in which the Doctor and Rose would travel to 19th century Scotland, encounter Queen Victoria, a sect of bizarre monks, a werewolf – and also sow the seeds of Rose Tyler’s exit from this universe at the end of the series.

A lavish and visually impressive production, *Tooth and Claw* was to be the second “celebrity historical” as Russell T Davies and Julie Gardner kept Doctor Who pretty close to the series format from the previous year. This was set to be a thrilling episode with a gothic sensibility that recalled the best periods of Philip Hinchcliffe’s stewardship of the show in the mid-1970s.

Sadly, *New Earth* hadn’t left your reviewer with much confidence as he sat down to watch *Tooth and Claw*.

TOOTH AND CLAW

Christian Cawley

Seeding the royal conspiracy theories, investigating the nature of a mythical evil and challenging received perception of historical times while placing the Doctor and his companion against a legendary foe, its athletic devotees and relying on the protagonist’s hunger to lead it to its death.

No, I’m not talking about the *Talons of Weng Chiang*, but Episode 2 of the 2006 series of Doctor Who. *Tooth and Claw* was a remarkable about turn following the appalling debut that was *New Earth*. Where the previous story failed, this one paraded Doctor Who’s multitude of aspects that are unmistakably Who, picked them up and waved them around in a very Russell T Davies way before being safely reined in and placed in an orderly manner for the story to proceed.

Furthermore, this was Doctor Who, not Rose Who. RTD’s scripts often focus on the companion – and despite my own personal affection for Billie Piper, this can become tedious, and perhaps already has in general story terms. *Tooth and Claw* was on the whole a success, showing us that Doctor Who does not need Billie Piper to survive (sidelined as she was to running down corridors and attempting to mine a legendary catchphrase from Queen Victoria) any more than it needed Elisabeth Sladen, Wendy Padbury or Carole Ann Ford.

Top-notch special effects and the generation of tension coupled with atmospheric lighting and the interior design of the Torchwood Estate make *Tooth and Claw* one to remember. Pauline Collins was convincing as the grieving Queen Victoria while the Torchwood household were spot on too. As for David Tennant...

“Doctorly”. Given a quality script he oozes quality, from the opening moments to the banishing, David Tennant was 101% the Doctor. Having shown glimpses in his brief appearance in *The Christmas Invasion* the jury had to nip out for another quick deliberation following the new series opener. But he has got it all – the sense of danger, the humour, and the gravitas to introduce further dark tidings into an already desperate situation. But what’s better is the fact that while I may have just described some aspects of Tom Baker’s Doctor, Tennant hasn’t ripped these off. It’s as though he has a perfect handle on the character, and these traits have occurred naturally.

It’s very hard to find anything wrong with *Tooth and Claw*, but while exciting and thrilling and very obviously a prime example of Doctor Who in the 21st century following in the footsteps of *Talons of Weng Chiang* and latterly last years *The Unquiet Dead*, there is still a feeling of discomfort. I can ignore the sudden disappearance of the monks guarding the Torchwood Estate and put it down to the off-screen recovery of the soldiers and their subsequent disposal of the intruders, the Queen’s soldiers earlier ignoring of a big blue box on the Scottish moorland just as I can forgive the blatant and unnecessary visual reference to **An American Werewolf in London**. What I’m really uncomfortable with is the continuing level of puerility in Davies’ work that seems to find its way into everything he outputs. On this occasion it was less of a character trait (Mickey in *Rose*, The Slitheen, most of Captain Jack) and more of an attitude to the storytelling.

What am I talking about? Why, the way in which Rose Tyler felt it necessary to mock an historical figure. For a bet. This not only devalues the episode, it turns Rose Tyler from a pleasant shop girl into a bit of a cocky cow – it devalues the character.

Tooth and Claw is not 100% perfect, but is nevertheless a perfect example of what Doctor Who should be under Russell T Davies.

With Queen Victoria chewing on her little fingernail in true Dr Evil style, the Doctor and Rose had unwittingly sown the seeds of their own separation. Still, the “Next Week” trailer soon put an end to the sniggering

as we saw that not only was Elisabeth Sladen back in Doctor Who as Sarah Jane Smith, but so was everyone's favourite robot dog, K-9!

When I was a small boy, K-9 was a huge star. In my early 20s I even came to own a wooden replica powered by an old Big Trak, although this sadly never worked. The prospect of seeing K-9 Mark III on screen for the first time in 25 years was a tasty one. For those unaware of just how Sarah Jane came to be in possession of a version of the robot dog, he was sent to Sarah by the Fourth Doctor just in time for the dog to help her defeat a coven of witches in the baffling **K-9 and Company** pilot in 1981.

School Reunion was highly anticipated by many fans, and not those with long memories or extensive DVD collections. Genre TV star Anthony Stewart Head was also cast in the episode as the villain, Mr Finch.

Years later, the scene between Head and Tennant at the school swimming pool is one that stands out from the entire era – and the rest of the adventure isn't bad either!

SCHOOL REUNION

Christian Cawley

I'm crying. I've just watched an episode of Doctor Who where the Doctor and Sarah Jane investigated strange goings on at a comprehensive school, aided by robot dog K9. There were a couple of younger companions fleeing about, a heroic, if over-weight school boy who was skipping classes and a blonde girl who seemed familiar and another guy. I've just watched K9 save the day!

I've just watched the Doctor say "goodbye" to Sarah Jane Smith.

School Reunion was the Doctor's *Father's Day*. We've suspected for some time now that the Doctor has strong feelings for Rose, and while I always suspected he was very fond of Sarah Jane Smith back in the 1970s, now we know for sure. It's interesting that Elisabeth Sladen's departure from the show was front page news in 1976 – while not as big a name as Billie Piper is now to the tabloid press, her importance to the series at that time was obvious, so much so that the Doctor was companionless in the story following her surely PMT-induced departure.

Russell T Davies and Phil Collinson pulled off a master-stroke coaxing Ms Sladen back for a final (?) appearance in Doctor Who in a story that while flimsy on plot, was certainly strong on character and emotion and featured winged alien creatures engulfing children. There's the *Father's Day* similarity again...

David Tennant, just a wee laddee when Sarah Jane Smith complained of wanting to have her hair done, seemed once more to take it all in his stride and truly convince that he isn't some skinny tall Scot playing a body-changing Time Lord with a London accent who used to be played by some other blokes, BUT that he **is** a skinny tall Time Lord called the Doctor who used to have curly long hair, a scarf and a wonderful best friend called Sarah Jane. The moments between the Doctor and Sarah, and Sarah's moments with the TARDIS, were some of the best of the show's new incarnation. We were given life, love, death and the eternal quest for godliness in a show about a man who used to have a robot dog. Brilliant!

Other than a bit of Powell Estate attitude, we didn't get much of Rose Tyler for the second week running. But then surely her story is mostly told? Welcome, then, (finally) to the TARDIS Mickey Smith - and about time too! He's certainly overdue, and I'm looking forward to seeing exactly how he copes over the next few weeks with trips to pre-revolution France and parallel Earth...

So the reintroduction for one week only of classic companions Sarah Jane and K9 – who never appeared together with the Doctor – was bound to attract cries of derision from those wanting to avoid steeping the show in ladles of soupy continuity. Fortunately Toby Whithouse's script hit the mark. References to the Loch Ness Monster during Sarah Jane and Rose's "little chat", and the moment when Sarah revealed that the Doctor had overshot South Croydon by a few miles to leave her in Aberdeen were just short of gratuitous, and rather funny. And they didn't intrude on the younger/newer audiences' enjoyment either.

If there is anything wrong with *School Reunion* it is the woeful under-use of the superb Anthony Head. His Headmaster character, Mr Hector Finch was truly chilling right down to the measured manner in which he walked, talked and picked bones from his teeth after lunch. We should have seen so much more of him and the Krillitane and their lack of real characterization was sadly due to nothing more than the timeslot. I find myself agreeing with those who are beginning to find that the 45 minute slot is just too short. This story, as well as *Tooth and Claw*, are in desperate need of a minimum of 60 minutes...

John Leeson's voicing of K9 was a joy, particularly his repeated observation to Mickey looking for some way to get into the locked school that "We are in a car." There were a couple of things that could

have been taken out of context to contradict established continuity, but on the whole the script and the acting made *School Reunion* a pleasure to watch.

Lots of nice moments, good performances and plenty of emotion and nostalgia win the day against flimsy plotting and insufficient time. Oh and the David Tennant's Doctor seems to be noticeably more watchable when someone who isn't called Russell T Davies gets a chance to write for him.

Told you so.

In retrospect, the alien invasion element of *School Reunion* probably isn't as weak as I had feared back in 2006, although I think we can all agree that former **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** co-star Anthony Head was marvellously sinister as Mr Finch. He'd make a great returning villain, wouldn't he, perhaps one who could change his body and travel through the vortex, just like the Doctor...

Or at least as a guest character who discovers his neighbour has been possessed by sentient alien coffee.

Still, I'm clearly straying from the point here, which is: wasn't *School Reunion* great? Even now, years later, it's effects are still felt in the shape of both the rather wizard **The Sarah Jane Adventures** starring Lis Sladen and the rather pony **K-9**.

After rejecting the chance to travel with the Doctor and Rose back at the end of *World War III*, Mickey Smith finally joined the TARDIS team at the end of *School Reunion*. The time he had spent alone on Earth had seen Rose's former boyfriend researching aliens on the Internet – not to mention the Doctor himself.

Impressed with his resolve, Mickey shoehorned his way into the TARDIS as the travellers wished Sarah Jane Smith and K-9 Mark IV goodbye. Clearly Rose wasn't too pleased about this, but then, the Doctor clearly never had eyes for just her, as we found out when they encountered Madame de Pompadour.

Sophia Myles – up to this point best known as the live version of Lady Penelope in the **Thunderbirds** movie of 2004 – was cast as the French aristocrat, artist and poet. This was a piece of casting that the press would later pay particular interest in, as Tennant and Myles began to be regularly snapped stepping out together, and it seems that they were an item between 2005 and 2007.

This is something that adds a pleasant level of intensity to some of the scenes in the wonderful next episode.

THE GIRL IN THE FIREPLACE

Brian A. Terranova

What a trip this week: we were given all the best bits of drama all in one 45 minute adventure, and yet there is still more to come.

Steven Moffat has done it again, easily giving all the other writers of the show a run for their money, without rehashing his previous success. That isn't to say he didn't reuse an idea or two.

Dancing, one gets the impression that Mr Moffat really enjoys dancing. And bananas. Still if they are the only two reused ideas then who are we to complain.

Usually you can find a plot hole or two in a script, not due to poor writing, but more so due to rewrite after rewrite, however I did not find a single one this time, even down to the last second of the story tying the entire adventure up and making the use of Madame de Pompadour completely understandable.

Back on the subject of "dancing" for a moment, it was brilliant to see that the Doctor could fall in love with a woman other than Rose, somehow it makes their relationship a bit more normal for the Doctor. And being one who stays away from spoilers, it was an idea that took me completely off guard, and in the end moved me nearly to tears.

While we're at the end, we might as well talk about it. Unlike last year's previous success of *The Empty Child / The Doctor Dances*, *The Girl in the Fireplace* leaves us with a not so happy feeling. Sort of like *Father's Day* all over again. Many have suggested that the Doctor meeting Sarah Jane Smith again was his *Father's Day* but I would beg to differ.

Last year Rose was presented with the impossible - the chance to see her father alive and well, but in the end she lost him all over. Here the Doctor may not have found an old friend, or relative, but he is still left with the same feeling of the unexpected joy and then the return of the terrible loss that he has been all too familiar with.

So not an uplifting ending but I suspect the Doctor will pull through with a little help from some friends.

Did I say "friends"? Yes, yes I did; Mickey Smith is now among his traveling team of do-gooders and I have to say a job well done; for once he was treated with proper respect in a story. There were no

moments of the bumbling Mickey of previous stories; instead we got to see another side of him and one that I hope we get to see a lot more of. This may be the first time since the new series began that I got the feeling of a proper TARDIS team. No disrespect to Captain Jack.

This week the 45 minutes seemed to be enough, the story didn't feel rushed or padded. Instead it was a brilliantly timed and maximized script. Steven Moffat could teach a class on how to write a script to fit the timeslot.

Aside from being an extremely beautiful and talented actress, Sophia Myles seemed the perfect person to cast as Madame de Pompadour, the woman to capture the Tenth Doctor's heart. The onscreen chemistry was so strong you could almost see the sparks.

Now to give a nod to the Doctor Who design team, with particular mention of the Clockwork Men, who were absolutely flawless in their conception. With their impressive clockworks set beneath a protective glass dome, one could almost believe these creatures really could work.

Like 2005's *The Empty Child/The Doctor Dances*, *The Girl in the Fireplace* was a total success, and I hope Moffat will be listed as a writer for series three.

If the 2005 series achieved a "mid-season relaunch" with the episode *Dalek*, then the 2006 run managed the same sort of press intensity with the two part adventure that threw the Doctor, Rose and Mickey onto a parallel Earth where a new breed of Cybermen were being born.

As with many of the stylistic updates in the new Doctor Who, this was an adventure that saw a few raised eyebrows amongst the long-term fans (and excited gasps among almost everybody else).

The original Cybermen had been born on Earth's twin planet of Mondas, so we were informed in *The Tenth Planet*. After colonising various parts of the galaxy (*Tomb of the Cybermen*) they were eventually defeated in their attempts to subjugate mankind, a race from which they themselves had evolved, to wander the cosmos in a run-down old spaceship (*Revenge of the Cybermen*).

Of these "facts" very little was retained – the new Cybermen were borne of a desire to cheat death and were programmed to convert every suitable creature they could find.

Like the Daleks before them, the baggage had been dropped – and their storming return to BBC One in May 2006 once again proved that Russell T

Davies had successfully reimagined an iconic, classic Doctor Who villain by retaining the core elements that made it popular in the first place.

RISE OF THE CYBERMEN

Christian Cawley

Doctor Who is at its best when it plays on the fears of a world full of uncertainty. When the Cybermen were first introduced, there were fears over the ethics – and consequences of – replacement part surgery. In the modern world, we all know an elderly relative or neighbour with a replacement hip or a kid on a kidney dialysis machine, or someone with a mechanical limb. On the whole we've surpassed these fears and integrated them into our lives.

But all this that you see in front of you now – a monitor displaying a representation of 1s and 0s – this is where the current fears lie. And it's quite a minefield, stretching from identity theft to copyright theft and hanging around the issue of cybernetics quite a bit; because it is a serious question.

Parallel worlds within the Doctor Who universe have often been extreme versions of ours. 1970s *Inferno* features an England under fascist rule, and similarly Terrance Dicks' Seventh Doctor novel *Timewyrm: Exodus* portrays a Britain under Nazi occupation.

Of course, the choices we make in life don't usually branch off into extremes like that. Instead we can easily imagine what might have happened if we stayed at university longer than six weeks, or avoided a particular pub on a particular night.

Rise of the Cybermen succeeds in revamping the Cyberman legend. It has life again, and reason, and is capped off by astonishing new Cybermen. These creatures look hard. They don't look like they're in cheap flight suits, and they don't have silly voices. They look hard, they sound hard – they are hard. And there is an army of them!

The story – the first two-parter of 2006 – gives us several strands in the first 20 minutes. The TARDIS has, for some unexplained reason, fallen out of the vortex and landed in an alternative London, one where everyone with money owns a Zeppelin. This fad isn't remains so far unexplained. Mickey goes to visit his grandmother who is sadly departed in the original universe, while Rose and the Doctor visit a still-alive Pete and Jackie Tyler. Elsewhere, the slightly unsettling John Lumic is stealing homeless people from London's wastelands to build into Cybermen.

While I suspect that *Rise of the Cybermen/The Age of Steel* will be remembered for two things – the Cybermen and Mickey – I can't help but feel that the re-introduction of Pete Tyler and his horrible wife Jackie is something and nothing. Why exactly? Shaun Dingwall is a perfectly good actor, and his portrayal of the tragic Pete Tyler in last year's *Father's Day* was excellent. Bringing him back is a great idea, and it makes sense to use him once more as Rose's dad. But why bother with Jackie, exactly? I've had no problem with Camille Coduri since *Rose*, but in *Rise* she really was awful.

Meanwhile, Billie Piper herself continues to play a withdrawn role in this series. While she and the Doctor explore London and visit the Tyler's mansion, Mickey is discovering that he has an alternative self, amusingly named Ricky. With two Smiths, Rose Tyler is again pushed aside in favour of the Doctor – this simply wouldn't have happened 12 months ago, and the series is better for it.

Roger Lloyd-Pack's John Lumic meanwhile seems to carry the same blinkered conviction that Dalek-creator Davros had. He's enhancing his species right to survive, using his massive intellect for the good of his people, yet testing on unfortunates who no-one will miss. The parallels are there – but they're good concepts to re-use. Don Warrington's President is also worth mentioning – he seems to be a politician with an understanding of morals and typically for such a character meets an unjustified end... although his title explains much more about this alternative Earth than a few zeppelins.

The Age of Steel has many questions to answer. And thanks to the Doctor Who production team, we haven't a clue about any of the answers because there was no "Next Week" trailer; a masterstroke. We've been spoon fed on seven-day spoilers and having them taken away is a bit of a culture shock at first – but we will thank them for it!

One last observation: I pointed out during the week that this series of Doctor Who hasn't been nearly dark enough. Last season we had *Aliens of London* and it was **still** darker on an episode-by-episode comparison! *Rise of the Cybermen* is 100% a step in the right direction, posing questions about our reliance on digital technology as well as our expectations to live forever. This is what Doctor Who does when the show is at its best, and it is yet again another example of how good the series is when Russell T Davies isn't writing the scripts...

...I really hate to point this out each week, but the show is just so much stronger utilising Davies' storylines executed by other writers.

It's only fair to praise Tom MacRae at this point. The script was punchy, sinister, and fun - all at the same time, and it fitted the 45 minute timeslot without seeming rushed. Of course that might be because the episode over-ran slightly...

There are many positives in *Rise of the Cybermen* - not least the terrific Cyberman design. I cannot speak highly enough of how good they look. If you had misgivings following the press release at the end of last year, fear not – wait until you see them move, wait until you hear the “dunch-dunch-dunch” of their march. The Cybermen are back again...

Of course, the return of the Cybermen would have consequences, not least by those that disliked the new monsters, their design and most importantly their creation.

John Lusic's Cybermen were less victims of replacement-part surgery gone wrong and more “brains in cans”. However by creating a parallel Earth as opposed to remaking Marc Platt's “Genesis of the Cybermen” Big Finish adventure *Spare Parts* (which nevertheless received a credit) Russell T Davies – as showrunner, lead writer and scriptwriter of the series finale – was able to tie the whole season up...

Rose's time was soon to come, and it would be thanks to an invasion of the Cybermen from the parallel Earth to our world. While that might not occur for a few weeks, for some of us, it couldn't come soon enough.

What had happened to the beautiful blonde shop girl we met in *Rose*?

MY ROSE HAS LEFT ME

Christian Cawley

My Rose has left me, I'm in a mood, she went to Kenya.

We couldn't have children, that didn't stop us from trying, we were turned down for adoption, because of her bizarre appearance.

Oh, Rose how we loved you, but where are you now?

Alone with your salesman, you adulterous cow.

Well, that's how Vic Reeve's and Bob Mortimer might have put it. Their Dermot Mulligan and Dermot O'Hare song tells the tale of a man (O'Hare – played by Bob Mortimer) besotted with a girl from a faraway place who in the end left him for a completely ordinary sort.

What exactly has this got to do with our favourite chav companion then? Or even the Doctor?

Twelve months ago Rose was a fresh, interesting, lively, perky, feisty - and dare I say it, sexy – character. She helped the Doctor defeat Autons, the Slitheen, the Dalek, The Mighty Jagraff of the Holy Hadrojassic Maxarodenfoe and of course a whole fleet of Daleks. Yet some time between the Doctor regenerating and the pair of them visiting *New Earth*, she's metamorphosed into a wholly self-serving, stupid neurotic cow that seems to hit the reset button at the end of each adventure. One week she's jealous of Sarah Jane, the next Madame de Pompadour, and a week later an unseen waitress called Lucy.

This wasn't the same Rose that we saw even as recently as *The Christmas Invasion*. There, the girl took charge, believing the Doctor dead or changed for the worst. She confronted the Sycorax as best as she could, my mimicking the Ninth Doctor. Before that she had forced the TARDIS to open to save the Doctor. So what happened to her?

If there is one thing about this show that has remained constant, it's that Doctor Who has always been about change. Occasionally it changes for the worst, such as in the Colin Baker years, or the TV Movie. Usually it changes for the better. Let me assure you that I'm writing this because I have concerns about the show's current direction as well as the direction of a once fantastic companion. Last year's Doctor Who was wonderful because of Christopher Eccleston and Billie Piper. This year's Doctor Who has so far been good because of David Tennant, Sophia Myles, Elisabeth Sladen, Noel Clarke and Anthony Head.

Billie Piper has proved herself as a perfectly good actress, and her portrayal of Rose has been on the whole an unmitigated success. But she is being wasted this season. Her character has been side-lined and hardened. Why?

Do we at this point get into a long exploration on the meaning of grief and its consequences? Should I be treating Doctor Who not as the Greatest Show in the Galaxy but as a kids' TV show starring a Dick van Dyke impersonator and Chris Evans' popstar wife?

I think the answer to both of these is a resounding "no".

Billie Piper is being woefully misused this year, the character of Rose undermined. Initially I saw this to be a good thing. After all, we want Doctor Who, not Rose Who. I suppose the inspiration for this apparent outburst that I have subjected you to is the selfish behaviour of Rose in *Rise of the Cybermen*. It's like *Father's Day* never happened.

This isn't character development; it's character regression. We've got big name writers, big name actors and beautiful special effects. We've got a weekly addition to the magical tapestry that is the Doctor Who universe. We have a great Doctor and a great TARDIS – but what happened to the once-lovely companion?

Is this all to prepare us for her departure? Is it just a ruse to lull us into a false sense of security? Is it because the Doctor has other women in his life? Or has Rose just got PMT?

The companion is – it has long been stated – the most important element in Doctor Who in terms of introducing the action and the strangeness of the Doctor's world to the audience. We are asked to view the Doctor through the companion's eyes. There's less question-asking and screaming in the 21st century, but the aim is the same.

By demonizing Rose the writers risk the series popularity. The companion has to be popular or else the show suffers. Unless there is a major sea-change in store for Rose before she departs the TARDIS – if indeed that is imminent – then she needs bringing back into the action, her character softening again and lots more flattering clothes! And don't forget - more Rose doesn't necessarily mean more Jackie and more Pete. It just means more fun with the Doctor.

However, if Rose is left untouched then we can look upon Doctor Who 2006 as a very different beast to Doctor Who 2005. There's a distinct difference – after all the show changes – but somehow after six episodes it isn't quite in its stride. Perhaps I'm missing the bigger picture, and I hope so – I really would like to see the payoff – but at the moment all I'm seeing is a sorry excuse for a companion clinging desperately to a unique man who she just doesn't seem to care for anymore.

While my crush on Billie Piper was in tatters, the thrilling cliffhanger to *Rise of the Cybermen* was soon to be resolved. Trapped in the grounds of parallel Pete Tyler's mansion with Rose, Mickey and a few others by the encircling Cyberman hordes, this can be remembered as one of the most memorable cliffhangers of Doctor Who's long life.

If David Tennant hadn't earlier been compared to Peter Davison in his demeanour as the Doctor then he certainly was with the famous, desperate exclamation of "But this is a surrender! We surrender!"

THE AGE OF STEEL

Thomas Willam Spychalski

Throughout the years Doctor Who has had the distinction of bringing us on a wide variety of adventures. We've seen comedy, even slapstick humor, and even various send ups of the show itself. This week we were exposed to the show bringing out an old and familiar psychological terror that lies somewhat in us all.

The Age of Steel was the best episode so far of series two, and shows what good scripting and great actors can do for the series.

The script was especially poignant, drawing on our technological desires and exposing our underlying fears as a species about how far and how smart our ever growing dependence on machines and technology really is. It gives the show a chance to dip into an ethics play, and also draws on the same terror of uniformity that the Daleks are capable of.

The acting too, was geared just right for my tastes. David Tennant's confrontation scene with Lumic as the Cyber-Controller was brilliant and as he settles in, he makes a case for being the most humorously eccentric Doctor since Tom Baker - he's like Tom, but with more heart to go with the detached alien behavior. Noel Clarke did a brilliant job in both instalments, bringing the alter Mickey to life and having a great scene near the end where he stops being the "tin dog" and starts to grow rapidly away from the character we've known since series one last year. My only gripe is that as soon as Mickey's more than just comedy relief, he is sent packing.

On the Cyber front, not only do they look better than they ever have, they're also back to doing what they do best; converting people into becoming just as they are now. Lumic was still a kind of backwards Davros, but once he was the Cybercontroller, he was scary and convincing in pleading the cause to eliminate pain and emotion.

The scene that also made the episode great was the scene where the Cyberman's emotional inhibitor is broken and it becomes aware. I sadly admit that *The Girl in the Fireplace* just almost made me sad at the end, but that scene was a real dramatic moment. It was frightening and added to the scene of danger the Cybermen presented, and it also showed the Doctor questioning his right to turn off the inhibitor chip of the converted people - underlying that key facet of the Doctor's character in yet another incarnation - morality.

The departure scenes were also nice, giving Mickey's staying on the parallel Earth real closure to the relationships he's had with the Doctor and Rose. Peter Tyler's reaction to Rose being his daughter in another dimension was also nice, a lighter version of some of the darker dramatic elements used in Series One.

For me, this was the best episode to date from the second series. It shows what can be done with a little more time for the show to build to an exciting conclusion, and even though I'm biased by being a fan of anything Cybermen, I think this is the episode that will stand out among the entire thirteen episodes, and for more than just returning a classic monster from the past. In short, more like this please.

The Rise of the Cybermen had been a great success, and a story that would continue to have ramifications until the very end of the Tenth Doctor's lifespan.

It has its failings of course – notably the removal of Mickey Smith from the TARDIS team. His presence had seen a particularly effective change in the dynamic between the Doctor and Rose, something that would revert to type as they carried on their journey together, never to see Mickey again (of course, that wasn't strictly true...).

CAUSE AND EFFECT

If anything was true about the 2006 series of Doctor Who, it was the demonstration of cause and effect.

By the midway point, we'd had a couple of mentions of "Torchwood", both in the main Doctor Who universe and in "Pete's World". While behind the scenes a series of **Torchwood** was in production, we had little of way knowing how the apparent weekly advertisement for a new show to start in late 2006 would affect the Doctor and Rose. Only that their actions and attitude had caused Queen Victoria to bring the organisation into being in the closing moments of *Tooth and Claw*.

The references to Torchwood in Doctor Who's second revamped series were cleverly included by Russell T Davies to give fans something to look for in each episode – but they also acted as free advertising for the sister series.

Given the vast amount of merchandising that was associated with Doctor Who in 2006, this shouldn't have been a surprise. Kids of the 1960s, 70s and 80s had nothing like the armies of figures, lunch boxes and dress up kits that were made up the majority of Christmas presents in 2006. Whether they wanted 12" dolls of the Tenth Doctor, 12" walkie talkies of series producer Phil Collinson (thanks to particularly bad casts) or an army of Cybermen in the smaller 5" figures, Santa Claus was going to be busy delivering TARDIS-tastic toys to Doctor Who loving children on Christmas Eve.

RISE OF THE MERCHANDISE

Brian A. Terranova

So the new Doctor Who series has not only captured our imaginations for forty-five minutes per week, but it has also found a way to capture them at home, while not watching.

You've seen them on the Internet sites, Magazine ads, TV ads, and most of all the Toy Stores. While this may not be the first time Doctor Who has made it to the toy world, this may be the biggest boom the show has ever made within this world of fun since the Dalek heyday of the sixties.

First, there are the Radio Controlled (RC) Daleks but what else does the toy world of Doctor Who have to offer aside from this most obvious of options? Well one biggie of course is the Sonic Screwdriver.

Depending on the one of three versions you have it is pretty darn accurate, with its lightning blue tip and extending emitter head and its sound chip with two different sound effects, this may be one of the most useful toys ever created. Mind you I still can't get it to open any doors, but maybe I'm just not using it right. Practice makes perfect.

We don't yet have a fully functional and life size TARDIS, but we can get pretty close with the TARDIS Playset. Looking at the design of the play set I feel it important to note that "set" seems to be the operative word. It looks just like the pictures of the console room TV set itself. It has the domed console walls and pillars, as well as the mock Police Box doors. So all you amateur film makers out there break out your David Tennant, K9, Billie Piper, John Barrowman as Captain Jack and even your Phil Collinson... er I mean Christopher Eccleston action figures and the old home video recorders and start making some Doctor Who adventures of your very own with your handy dandy TARDIS set.

Probably one of the most fantastic additions to the toy range was the 10" Radio Control K9 and his trusty nose gun! I don't know a single Doctor Who fan over 30 who hasn't wished he had his own robot dog – and we can all have one!

As most of you know, this year saw the return of the Cybermen, and I have to tell you I can't wait for these toys to come out. There are of course the regular 6" figures but there is also the much anticipated 12" David Tennant and Cyberman. This is just the tip of the iceberg of Cyber-goodness however – after all, who could turn down a Cyberman voice changing helmet? Accurate in every way down to the 1:1 scale, the only thing missing (that would make my fan life complete) is the back plate. Oh well beggars can't be choosers.

All of this Time Lord merchandise that is now available has gotten my thinking about life before the 2005 series of Doctor who.

Dapol toys, hard to find Mego Tom Bakers, Leelas, and K-9's and ... uh... is that it? How have we survived so long on the lack of toys?

This can only have been down to our good old imaginations, I guess, a place where a fork can be the trusty sonic, a closet can be the TARDIS, and anyone with a plunger can be a Dalek. But no more! The world in our imaginative little heads and the world of the toys were going to collide and take us for another trip of a lifetime.

Following the success of Mark Gatiss' *The Unquiet Dead* in 2005, many commentators looked forward with anticipation to his second Doctor Who

script, *The Idiot's Lantern*. Gatiss would probably be more familiar to TV viewers as one of **The League of Gentlemen**, a bizarre but hilarious comedy trio whose self-titled sitcom was one of BBC Two's most successful shows around the turn of the century.

Mark Gatiss was of course no stranger to hardcore Doctor Who fans – like Paul Cornell and Russell T Davies he had previously written for the Virgin New Adventures series during the 1990s. Gatiss' work had also been produced by Big Finish – in fact, *Invaders from Mars* starring Paul McGann had debuted on BBC 7 in October 2005, a few months after *The Unquiet Dead* had aired.

Set during the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, *The Idiot's Lantern* took place largely on Florizel Street – so named in honour of ITV soap opera **Coronation Street**; "Florizel Street" was one of the names suggested for the soap when it began in 1960.

Notable in this episode is the appearance of Maureen Lipman as The Wire, an alien entity that exists as energy and attempting to feed on the faces of everyone in London during the historic broadcast. References to World War II are plentiful too, right down to the Swastika TV aerials.

THE IDIOT'S LANTERN

Christian Cawley

Cybernetic high-jinks became a thing of the past this week as body horror took a more macabre turn. Sleepless nights abound once more as a Mark Gatiss script is presented to Britain's children, replete with talking television sets, swastika aerials and Rose dressed as a teddy girl.

Parents – if you didn't see the scares coming when you saw Gatiss' name on the opening credits then you only have yourselves to blame. Last year Doctor Who had settled into being a nice show about a man, a girl, a curiously-proportioned time machine and visits to meet funny aliens when *The Unquiet Dead* made the tills at Tesco ring until midnight with anxious parents stocking up on nappies. Dead people just don't get out of their coffins and scream like that unless there's something very spooky going on.

Similarly, faces just don't go missing.

There has to be a serious case for Gatiss being a permanent writer on Doctor Who – at best the man in charge – when in successive seasons he is the only one to return and produce a script of the same high standard as his original effort. Both Stephen Moffatt and Russell T Davies have produced good works (*Tooth and Claw*, *The Girl in the*

Fireplace) but neither are quite as good as their first series pieces. Mark Gatiss meanwhile is the one slipping into a modern day Robert Holmes role. You knew you were getting a good tale as soon as Holmes' name appeared on screen, and the same can definitely be said for Gatiss.

Landing in 1953, the Doctor and Rose soon discover that people are being taken away by the police in big black cars. The only similarity in each case is a brand new television, and the trail leads to a Mr Magpie...

Gatiss' pre-credits sequence this time wasn't quite as urine-inducing as the late grandmother wailing in *The Unquiet Dead*. Instead, it concerned televisions coming to life, addressing the viewer and then sucking off the viewer's face. Totally innocent...

An attempt by the Doctor and Rose to see pre-draft Elvis on the "Ed Sullivan Show" sees them land instead in Muswell Hill, London, 1953. Along with some faultless props (cars, street decoration, furniture), there's some excellent design work, most tellingly with the television sets themselves. The magic of these old TV sets is further enhanced by the visual effect of looking from inside the television to observe who the alien intelligence is talking to.

The alien intelligence – "The Wire" – has manifested itself in Magpie's televisions, which he sells for £5. That was quite cheap even in 1953. Faultlessly played by Maureen Lipman, The Wire has taken the visual form of a well-known television presenter, and is hungry. Feeding off personalities and brain-prints, The Wire plans to take advantage of Muswell Hill's proximity to the Alexandra Palace transmitter and the mass audience planning to watch the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

As alien plans go, The Wire's becomes obvious quite soon. What is more interesting however is the relationship between the Doctor and Rose and the young boy Tommy Connolly, who lives with his mother under the jackboot of an oppressive father. The interaction with Tommy and his family proves a perfect excuse for David Tennant to further stamp his authority on the Doctor, in fact, as he embarrasses and shuts down the pig-like Mr Connolly.

Mr Magpie himself has a sad story, becoming nothing more than a tool for The Wire to propagate itself across London. He's well represented by Ron Cook, and continues to be a tortured, tragic figure until he meets his expected end.

The Idiot's Lantern is also another strike against the concept of “Rose Who” – the companion gets cruelly side-lined leaving the Doctor to defeat The Wire with the help of a policeman and Tommy Connolly. Billie Piper is much better this week, however, but we’re getting very close to the time where Rose Tyler becomes tired...

Punchy direction by Euros Lynn, a dramatic resolution to the story and a strong villain in a somewhat restricted role make *The Idiot's Lantern* one to remember. The time has come for Gatiss to be given a key story however, either a series opener or returning villain for next series. His stories have so far been responsible for furthering the adventures of the Doctor and meeting new, chilling villains. Time to let Gatiss play with the older toys...

Doctor Who in 2006 coincided with the FIFA World Cup tournament held in Germany. While many fans had expected the episodes to be shoved around the schedules to accommodate games, this didn't in fact happen; Germany is an hour ahead of the UK during the summer months, perfect for schedulers!

What did occur around this time was a slow decrease in viewing figures – something that had also occurred around the same time the previous year. The reason had nothing to do with the show or the episodes. Doctor Who was on TV in the summer!

This was in sharp contrast to the peak era of the classic series; up until the mid-1980s, Doctor Who was always on TV during the winter months. Could this be why adventures like *The Pyramids of Mars* or *The Talons of Weng Chiang* work so well? Viewing *The Empty Child/The Doctor Dances* or 2006's *The Impossible Planet* and *The Satan Pit* without sunlight streaming through gaps in the curtain would certainly have helped.

Interestingly, *The Impossible Planet* and *The Satan Pit* shared a common cast member with 1975 classic *The Pyramids of Mars*. Actor Gabriel Woolf – Sutekh the Destroyer in the Robert Holmes classic – was contracted to provide the Voice of the Beast in the new episode. As casting triumphs go this was a good one, welcomed by veteran fans and interestingly Woolf was the first actor to appear in both the classic and new series of Doctor Who.

THE IMPOSSIBLE PLANET

Brian A Terranova

If nothing else *The Impossible Planet* shows us, once again, that 45 minutes is not long enough for a Doctor Who story, unless it is a two-parter. The pacing was near perfect, allowing time for character development, set up, and planet history, something the single stories don't get to achieve very often.

Did I say "planet history"? Yes I did. The new series of Doctor Who has finally touched down on an alien planet. Excluding of course *New Earth* as it was, well, full of humans and called "New Earth", not very "alien," now was it?

And this planet even has an alien name "Kroptor" which translates into "The Bitter Pill." Oh dear me the excitement just gets better as this planet even has a history, it is said that the Black Hole is a Mighty Demon tricked into devouring the Planet only to spit it out because it was poison. Brilliant.

So here we are on an alien world and what's the first thing to happen, the TARDIS gets lost, how old school is that? How wonderful.

I suppose if I had one complaint so far it would be the acting on Rose's part in the beginning, before the loss of the TARDIS, she seems as if she was high on something, laughing a lot, making jokes in bad situations, and then laughing again, how Ood... er, odd.

Speaking of the Odd, er... Ood, they really did look fantastic, with all the range of movement in their faces, and they do look scary. Which is ood, I mean, odd as they are meant to be our friends, but then they aren't really themselves – or are they?

Not too long ago I was commenting that nothing in the past of Doctor Who really scared me, and while I wasn't terrified today, I can say that it was a bit freaking the way Gabriel Woolf, (as the Voice of the Beast) spoke to Toby and through the Ood. However, the eerie feeling soon left me in the end of that scene when this happened:

"Toby, don't look at me, don't turn around or you will..."

...be covered in Magic Marker. Oh yes... very scary. Still a small gripe as the rest of the adventure went on without a hitch.

Before I get too far we need to mention Gabriel Woolf again, better known to many Who fans as "Sutekh the Destroyer" from, original series Tom Baker serial, *Pyramids of Mars*. So far series two seems to be bringing back the past of the show very nicely. And what a great

choice of an actor to bring back, his portrayal of Sutekh was one of the best villains in all of Who history and it seems that he is at it again, no doubt part two will show his talent shine through in all its glory.

Another hope for part two would have to be more shots of the planet itself, so far, as nice as it is to see an alien world, this one seems just like the space stations from series one so far. Sure we get a glimpse of something when the Doctor and Ida are in the heart of the planet itself, but I want to see more, more creatures, more history, and more alien things. Not too much to ask for is it?

All in all, this story was immensely enjoyable and a perfect use of the two part format, something the new production team seems to have a good handle on these days. If *The Satan Pit* is half as good as part one then we are in for one heck of a ride!

One area in which the new series of Doctor Who seemed to be lacking in strength was the in the creation of a new and enduring alien civilization that had enough in its initial concept to warrant a revisit. Clearly the Slitheen from Raxacoricofallapatorius were unsuitable, whereas the excellent Sycorax have yet to make a return. The Krillitane also showed promise, especially with their ability to appear different on subsequent outings after assimilating yet another species, but it seems that only two new era Doctor Who monsters have warranted a revisit.

Throughout Series 2 the odd images of the Ood appeared in magazines and on TV. No one knew what they were, other than that they appeared to the shaved cats vomiting raw mincemeat.

At this stage their link with the Tenth Doctor was of course in its infancy, but despite the summer nights leading people to abandon Doctor Who, watch it later or wait for the DVD, the Ood have become an enduring icon of the Russell T Davies era.

This should be in no small part to their design, realised magnificently by Neill Gorton's Millennium FX team. Let's face it – all they are really is rubber heads placed on boiler-suit wearing actors holding washing liquid dispenser balls. There is something about this simplicity however that harks back to the design of the Daleks in 1963.

Anyone can wander around with their arm bent at the elbow in front of them barking "EXTERMINATE!" in a raspy voice – and similarly, any child can grab some string and a plastic ball and chant "And you will worship him!"

Well, maybe not that last bit...

THE SATAN PIT

Christian Cawley

*"...The Lost Girl so far away from home,
The valiant child who will die in battle so very soon"*

Is *The Satan Pit* a commentary on the current state of world events, with the accidental unleashing of an ancient evil on mankind through common human activities such as exploration a parallel to the surrender of rights to a bloodthirsty cabal hell-bent on colonial and cultural superiority?

Or is it just a damn good episode of Doctor Who, providing a conclusion to the events that were set in motion in *The Impossible Planet* while posing one or two new questions?

You can discuss the real-life reflection of this particular fiction in the Kasterborous Forum should you wish, along with the real meaning of "Torchwood" – an increasingly tired reference that really needs to be giving us a good payoff to be relevant. Meanwhile, let's look at the conclusion of what will probably be voted "Best Story" in **Doctor Who Magazine's** Poll of the Year.

The timing of this episode with the real-world date (6/6/06) has been mentioned elsewhere, and ties in with other events, such as *The Christmas Invasion* and the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation tying in with *The Idiot's Lantern*. It also serves to add to the tension of the story, underlining the legendary horror of the villain of the piece.

While the adventure's conclusion has parallels with the last time the Doctor encountered "Satan" – even down to the use of the same actors' voice – this is nothing more than cosmetic. Possession and subversion are common themes in devil fiction, but where *The Satan Pit* excels is in two key areas. Firstly and most obvious are the astounding visual effects, from the black hole to the expeditions' rocket and the Ood to the magnificent spectacle of the Beast and its prison. Secondly and most vitally are the pacing and plotting and scripting of the piece. Matthew Jones has succeeded only where Steven Moffat has this season in providing us with forty-five minutes of perfectly paced Doctor Who – of course the difference being he's done it twice.

Effectively hitting the reset button at the conclusion to the cliffhanger allows the tension to be relieved for a short time before the thrills start again. Excellent shows from actors Danny Webb and Will

Thorp along with an understated performance from David Tennant allowed the tension to be prolonged, not extinguished as it first seems, and it's not long before the Ood are on the move again.

There are plenty of future uses for the Ood in my mind, not least one which involves the repercussions of their possession by Satan. Such a perfect design cannot be discarded and I hope to see them in Doctor Who again someday – perhaps next year?

Of course guessing what happens in the next episode of Doctor Who would be quite a trick, and next year more so; spare a thought for poor Rose, who is told by the Beast the circumstances of her death. Whether or not this is just poppycock will remain to be seen. There's no way we can know the circumstances of her departure from the TARDIS – good or bad – but it certainly puts her departure on more of a knife edge. I suspect that there will be several moments in the coming episodes that will see us suspecting the impending death of Rose only to be cleverly misdirected... It could of course be nothing more than misdirection itself – however as this series has at last got into its stride after a couple of false starts, that is by no means a bad thing.

The Impossible Planet/The Satan Pit can only be declared a success. It entertains on several levels, features the best assembled cast of the series so far, Murray Gold's score is demonically striking and the atmosphere is perfect. While I feel there was some mileage in the Doctor and Rose being stranded on a future Earth without the TARDIS, I can at last triumphantly announce that Doctor Who 2006 has got off to a start with a bang in episodes 8 and 9.

Better late than never, eh Doctor?

Clearly, *The Impossible Planet/The Satan Pit* was a big hit on Kasterborous, and while viewing figures around the 6 million stood up well in the face of the short British summer, this classic-style “base under siege” adventure was soon forgotten as the prospect of Britain's biggest comic appearing in Britain's biggest drama series reared its slightly bizarre head.

Love & Monsters – bigged up in DWM by Russell T Davies as the first Doctor Who story to have an ampersand in its title – represented the first real collaboration between Doctor Who and **Blue Peter** since the TARDIS returned in 2005. The relationship between the two shows is well known and has been charted in several DVD documentaries; they've shared personnel (most notably Blue Peter presenter Peter Purves who had

previously been Steven Taylor, companion to William Hartnell's First Doctor) and the enduring children's magazine show has regularly featured Daleks, monsters, K-9, Whomobiles and various Doctors.

On this occasion, the special relationship would yield a new Doctor Who monster – this would appear in the 2006 series in an episode written by Davies.

There were some amazing images, but the winner – judged by Russell T Davies, Blue Peter editor Richard Marson, presenter (and part-time Cyberman) Gethin Jones and Tenth Doctor David Tennant – announced in August 2005, was the giant Abzorbaloff, designed by young William Grantham of Essex.

Peter Kay would be starring as the bus-sized Abzorbaloff – albeit scaled down to more manageable, human proportions – with a great cast that featured Marc Warren (Hustle) as the hapless Elton Pope.

LOVE & MONSTERS

Anthony Dry

"You've got me shaking got me running away....you got me crawling up to you every day... don't bring me down"

Those words in the Electric Light Orchestra song couldn't be more appropriate. They completely relate to the current state of division among fans of the show at the moment concerning RTD and his stewardship of the show. Ever since details have been slowly dribbling out about *Love & Monsters* I'm not afraid to say I'd feared the worst. Indeed I was sure I could hear screams of division go out during the broadcast last night, or maybe that was due to the Abzorbaloff absorbing.

Strangely enough, I enjoyed this much more than say, *New Earth*.

In *Love & Monsters* We get to meet a lonely geezer called Elton Pope, who has an obsession with the Doctor after meeting him when he was a child. We learn that his obsession has been fuelled from strange encounters, including Autons and the Sycorax invasion among other things, and he finally finds a group with the same interests as him.

"I'll tell you once more before I get off the floor... Don't bring me down"

I'm still not quite sure whether the episode was a parody of the fans; seeing the group meet in a basement regularly reminded me of a meet I'm involved in Liverpool (thankfully minus the singing) and the

references to fan sites and information on the web is akin to those get heavily involved online and like to constantly blab on about theories within the series (which confirms it: I'm an anorak).

So we get a group of social misadjusts converging and getting along, all with a common interest in the Doctor. As time goes by we see the small community grow in friendship and before long they are whipping out the flans and bouncing along to Electric Light Orchestra ditties in their own band. Which brings me to the cast of this episode, I don't know much about Shirley Henderson, but they got the cast spot on – Mr Skinner, ably played by Simon Greenall of *I'm Alan Partridge* fame (my girlfriend couldn't believe he was the same bloke as he didn't sound like a Geordie - it's called "acting" love...), Kathryn Drysdale from BBC Three's **Two Pints of Lager** and Moya Brady, from long running ITV police series **The Bill** are topped off with the excellent Marc Warren.

They all play their nerd like parts with ease especially Warren who is known for playing a rather tougher type of character. It's at the midway point we are joined by comedian Peter Kay as Victor Kennedy, and while not his best performance he turns in a decent tongue-in-cheek baddie, as he gets them to shrug off their fun meetings and get down to some serious tracking down of the Doctor for his own dastardly ends.

Interestingly, at this point I wasn't even missing the lack of appearance from the Doctor and was really taken in by Marc Warren's character; being a one-off it was an interesting take on a person on the fringes of the Doctors life. Suffice to say if this had been shown earlier in the season, my review might have been a lot harsher, but this series of Who is a different beast nowadays and I've learnt it will never be like the classic series and have just come to accept what it is, although a few more interplanetary stories wouldn't go amiss.

"I turn to stone - when you have gone, I turn to stone"

So we finally discover, after several members 'disappear' - that Victor Kennedy is an alien. He's absorbed members of the group and now wants to taste the Doctor and has in fact been using the group to do all the dirty work for him, including Elton's mini relationship with Jackie (who I must confess looked tasty in this episode) to get closer to the Doctor. With his cover blown he absorbs Ursula and goes after Elton. The Doctor appears in probably the let-down scene of the entire episode, when Rose marches out to give Elton an earful about giving

her mum trouble, which really was just laughable. I mean how do they know where he is for a start?

With the Doctor's intervention the Abzorbaloff is defeated, melting away along with the people he absorbed, although the Doctor manages to save the head of Ursula in a paving stone, "Elton...get a spade!" which really made me laugh aloud.

After finding out that the Doctor saved Elton many years ago when his mother was killed in their home by an elemental shade, we then sign off with Elton's warning that knowing the Doctor is dangerous and that he fears for Rose and Jackie.

What that means I'm sure we will find out!

So an enjoyable romp, but one I know will divide the fans the length and breadth. Its understandable something quite light hearted and comedic was put in at this stage, presumably to give some relief before the next few hair raising adventures that we just know will throw up some revelations. However I think Russell just got away with it. Just.

It's a story you may only get to tell once, but I'd like to see some more traditional off-world Who adventures as yet again we are back on Earth next week.

However it looks as though that's a Series 3 away for the time being.

Splits in Doctor Who fandom occur more often than the Doctor defeats the Daleks, if truth be told, and it wasn't long before the quite astonishing sight of Peter Kay in green prosthetics prancing along an alley way in high speed in pursuit of Marc Warren – like some nightmarish edition of **The Benny Hill Show** – would be forgotten for a short while in the shadow of *Fear Her*.

In 2009, **Doctor Who Magazine's** "Mighty 200" poll would place *Fear Her* in the lower reaches at 192, making Matthew (**Life on Mars**) Graham's adventure either hugely misunderstood or just damn dull. It was certainly voted the least popular of all episodes between 2005 and 2008, with *The Long Game* closest, showing up at 165.

FEAR HER

Brian A. Terranova

I have to confess something; *Love & Monsters* did very little for me, coming after such a brilliant two-parter as *The Impossible Planet/The Satan Pit* it was, to say the least, a big let-down. So when I saw the trailer for *Fear Her* I thought we were in for the same sort of let down

again, and while I do feel that this week's episode was much better than the last, I still have to admit to being only half entertained.

Throughout the history of Doctor Who, the Doctor and his friends have come up against many alien threats, and many terrible times, but they usually made you feel as though the world was really in great danger.

Fear Her seemed as if it was another "out of the norm" story for Doctor Who, while it was not a bad story, it seemed as if it would have made a better comic book adventure for DWM than it would have for TV. The threat just wasn't enough to get the blood pumping and to make you really feel the rush of the adventure. In fact it sort of seemed as if the rush was set at the pace of normal life, as if this was a normal earth problem. Sure the whole world was in danger of disappearing into a kids drawing, but really - they did this on **The X-Files** and at least made it scary (a Season 9 **X-Files** story, by which time it's generally agreed that the good ideas had been used up.)

This isn't to say that this story was bad, because I really felt you could enjoy this story for what it was, just a quick stop off adventure before the big life-altering adventure of the next two weeks.

While I didn't sit there this week saying to myself "when will it end?" I did find myself saying "where's the proper monsters?" The last time I saw a proper monster in Doctor Who would have to be this year's Cybermen story; at least they were a real threat. *Fear Her* didn't really strike me with fear. All I saw was a little girl doing a fine exorcist impression and drawing some lovely pictures.

What has happened to this series? Everything was going off with a big bang, fans new and old were swept off their feet, then two weeks in a row we got episodes that should have happened in series nine after all the ideas have run dry. Would Stephen Fry's originally-scheduled story have been a more exciting and entertaining piece to watch? You know that the powers that be need to realize that when you have a hit show, spending a few extra dollars to make it even better is usually a good idea.

I don't want to sound like I am bashing this show or even this story, I really have been impressed this season and I love David Tennant who easily made me forget Christopher Eccleston - but in a good way, now Christopher is among the greats to have left the part. My point is that as the series draws closer to the end I would have expected a build-up in the tension, or the threats. Each week should test the Doctor and

Rose's expertise in saving the world, or dare I say alien worlds as well. Maybe it's simply that the Earth is starting to become the boring place that we live on, where before it used to hold so much promise.

One of the beautiful and very attractive things about this show was the idea behind it. You have an extraordinary man, with an extraordinary ship who can take you anywhere in the universe that you can imagine. He had brilliant friends and they would always have the most entertaining and scary adventures. With an idea like that, one that could make you forget the budget of the show, your imagination was endless. Now the kids watching this show seem to be stuck with an Earth bound imagination, and stories that seem to have scrapped the bottom of the barrel.

As I write this I feel terrible. I am a huge fan of this show and these words are not easy. I don't wish to bash the ideas and the team who work so hard to bring us this show, as I have been very pleased, but somehow things are standing still. Next week looks like a much-needed improvement, and I hope that it makes us all hide behind the sofa. But this review was meant to be about *Fear Her*, so with that I'll give my final words on the matter.

Fear Her may not have been of the quality we were spoiled with earlier in the season, but nonetheless there is still something to enjoy here. This adventure may have put the entire world in danger, but it doesn't feel as powerful as when the life of a single woman was in danger in *Tooth and Claw*. That said this story feels like just another day in the life of the TARDIS crew, perhaps it is akin to a day at the mall for us ordinary folk, a day when the real threats are sleeping.

In truth, the series was gearing up for a big change with the departure of Billie Piper in the following story; but there was a lack of pace that makes *Fear Her* seem pedestrian in comparison to later "third episode from the end" episodes such as 2007's *Utopia*. *Fear Her* is more low-key, like its 2005 predecessor *Boom Town*, but without the interesting conceit.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is probably fair to say that Russell T Davies and Julie Gardner hadn't quite clicked on to how important the pre-finale episode could be.

Still, this time around it wouldn't matter that much; the national press were full of stories about doyen Billie Piper leaving the TARDIS, with claims of death by Dalek and Cyberman banded around.

Yet the truth was far more dramatic.

TORCHWOOD UNVEILED

As we've already seen, the word "Torchwood" appeared several times throughout the 2006 series of Doctor Who.

Whether this was entirely necessary or if it was just a big subliminal advert for Davies first Doctor Who spin-off will probably never be known; however like 2005's "Bad Wolf" the idea was to give regular viewers something to look out for, to hang on to – and to stimulate "water cooler" conversation the following Monday morning.

Demonstrating his ability once again as a master storyteller, Russell T Davies – whatever you might think of him – successfully orchestrated a second series of Doctor Who from the planning and storylining stage, approving or vetoing actors and designs and also managed to weave a familiar word into almost every episode in order to bring us to the series conclusion with anticipating.

Did you catch all of the references the first time around? Can you still remember them now?

Let me help you out...

BURNING BRIDGES

Christian Cawley

It's a word, it's a TV show, it's an organisation, and it's a nice house in Scotland. Doctor Who has been invaded by "Torchwood" – another show, another meme. But what is its true relevance to Doctor Who 2006?

We know that it was first mentioned on-screen in *Bad Wolf* during "The Weakest Link", as the answer to a question. Since then, however it has taken on a life of its own and has become more prominent than *Bad Wolf*. There is less of an air of mystery about "Torchwood", thanks to Queen Victoria's "Dr Evil" rant to camera that she will be creating the Torchwood Institute.

After first hearing about Torchwood in *The Christmas Invasion*, I suspected some sort of agency with connections to alien activity. Since *Tooth and Claw*, we've learned that the organisation is well-known in certain circles. The rich, successful guests of Pete and Jackie Tyler's party knew of Torchwood in *Rise of the Cybermen*, as did the 1950s police officers in *The Idiot's Lantern*. In *School Reunion*, Mickey's access to government files is restricted, heralded by the "TORCHWOOD

ACCESS DENIED” screen. And again, Torchwood’s undercover nature is underlined in *Love & Monsters* as Victor Kennedy has files on the Doctor taken from the organisation.

Finally, we’re back in the future, where Zack declares that he represents “The Torchwood Archive” in *The Satan Pit*. That’s eight blatant references. But references to what – an organisation or another TV show? With *Bad Wolf* we didn’t know what was going on, there were no suggestions offered. But with Torchwood, it’s so in your face, prominent and still carries an air of mystery... surely it’s more than an “I’ve just seen the Doctor” call sign?

We know – via the papers – that Captain Jack will be working for Torchwood, and perhaps in his show there will be mentions of the Doctor, or of UNIT. On that score we will have to wait and see – but what of UNIT? The presence of Torchwood raises several issues. If they are concerned with the unusual, alien or paranormal, then what exactly did they spend their time doing between 1969 and 1976, when the Doctor was stranded on Earth working with UNIT? Wallpapering the Tower of London? Did the Brigadier have to fend off demands from this cloak and dagger government department for access to the Doctor, its apparent sworn enemy?

And what of *Aliens of London*? The Acting Prime Minister summons UNIT to kill them all – why not Torchwood? Where was Torchwood during *Remembrance of the Daleks*?

Retro-revisionism is one thing, but when the very body that Torchwood seems to be the antithesis of – UNIT – is mentioned within a year of Torchwood, this is an interesting aspect to the Torchwood mystery.

Of course, all Torchwood might be is a low-profile body established to protect mankind from the alien or paranormal. It might not have any wish to harm the Doctor, or even know that much about him. Torchwood might be unaware that the Doctor is the same man who helped UNIT in the 1970s. Or it might all be an elaborate trap to eradicate the Doctor who a) possibly allowed Queen Victoria to get bitten by the werewolf in *Tooth and Claw* and so have a reason to have his experience with the alien and unusual under lock and key, and b) allowed his flighty young companion to be quite cheeky to the Empress of India.

How does Rose fit into the Torchwood situation? Is she bait? Is she perhaps a target? While the word has been uttered or seen in

conjunction with the Doctor, it could just as easily apply to the Bad Wolf...

And when we thought we had heard the end of Bad Wolf, it pops up again in this series – references of course in *Tooth and Claw* as well as mention of a “Bad Wolf Virus” in *Love & Monsters*. Back in Series 1 Gwyneth saw into Rose’s future in *The Unquiet Dead* - could “the big bad wolf” not have been Rose, or the Daleks, but the werewolf itself or even Satan?

Or could it have been Torchwood?

We know that Torchwood and Rose are at some level inextricably linked. Her departure from the TARDIS comes as a consequence of her and the Doctor’s contact with the agency in the next episode. I dare say we’ll see that Torchwood isn’t as clever as it likes to think

***addendum:** Like the previous “Bad Wolf” article, I could not have written this without the help of many blogs, rec.arts.drwho on Usenet⁷, and the forums here on Kasterborous. If you’ve seen any theory above that you recognise as your own, thank you for inspiring me to write this – let’s hope the payoff is a good one!*

With the arrival of Torchwood to Doctor Who came the departure of Rose Tyler.

We didn’t know it at the time, and neither did the Doctor and Rose, but the formation of Torchwood – as a result of their actions – sealed Rose’s fate in this universe.

Billie Piper had been a revelation as Rose Tyler. Her transformation from teeny bopper pop starlet into sexy actress had been completed in Doctor Who, and allowed her to move on to a series of costume dramas on ITV and BBC as well as the raunchy **Secret Diary of a Call Girl**.

Her departure from Doctor Who had been hinted at in newspaper rumours since mid-2005, but still came as a surprise to many who had come to see Doctor Who not only as Piper’s show but as something that couldn’t possibly survive without her; such was the strength of her portrayal of Rose Tyler.

⁷ Once popular on the old, pre-World Wide Web days of the Internet, Usenet is a sort of hybrid between email and the web where conversations are held in newsgroups rather than discussion forums.

As for Rose and Torchwood, they would remain inextricably linked – perhaps for all time...

ARMY OF GHOSTS

Christian Cawley

With the final tale of the series come some interesting surprises, casting and sci-fi concepts from the pen of Russell T Davies. But as the next seven days will no doubt belong to Billie Piper, let us take a few moments to talk about the star of Doctor Who, David Tennant.

I'll be honest – when I first saw the new face of the Doctor utter the words “Now where was I? Oh that's right – Barcelona!” I wasn't totally convinced. It wasn't what the tabloids call Tennant's “Dick Van Dyke-like cock-er-ney” accent but more a visual thing. He just didn't look like a Doctor to me.

Over the months we've seen him sword-fighting in his pyjamas, channelling Zoe Wanamaker, exploring alien ruins, confronting shape-shifting aliens whose name escapes me, dealing with horses on spaceships that link to 17th century France and coming face-to-face with werewolves and Cybermen. He's effortlessly walked into the role of the Doctor, and continued to redefine the role.

While Christopher Eccleston's Doctor was northern, casually-dressed, abrupt, passionate and intense, Tennant's Time Lord has showed an equally impressive range and does intensity without actually getting intense. It's all in the eyes, you know...

Tennant has made a massive impression this season, and while Eccleston will be remembered, I suspect that within the next couple of years his rein will be largely overlooked. So it was nice to get a quick glimpse of him in flashback at the beginning of *Army of Ghosts*, a thrilling, non-stop adventure on modern-day Earth concerning the appearance of ghosts, the Torchwood Institute, Cybermen and another famous Doctor Who alien as told by Rose Tyler.

It's the last story she'll ever tell.

There has been a lot of criticism from this very website over Russell T Davies scripts this season, in particular *New Earth* and *Love & Monsters*. With the talent of the man concerned, he can only illicit debate about his work, although whether he was planning on upsetting Doctor Who fans in such a way is another matter. The pitching of the show as a family drama is all well and good; but it seems to me that

Doctor Who 2006 is aimed more squarely at children than Doctor Who 2005, or indeed Doctor Who 1963-1989.

That said, despite a few wobbles (Barbara Windsor, “Ghostbusters”...) the first 45 minutes of the *Army of Ghosts/Doomsday* pairing is both intriguing and thrilling. The odds are fantastically mounting up against the Doctor as we enter the final stages of the episode, with the identity of the Ghosts revealed, the return of an old companion as well as two classic monsters to deal with.

I’m not giving anything away when I say that the tabloid-anointed new companion Freema Agyeman appears in the adventure, playing a key role – but as for her companion credentials I’m not so sure...

Dialogue-wise, the episode carries a few gems such as the Doctor’s opinion on carrying guns as well as his explanation of what is happening to the Earth. Incidental music-wise, merry old Murray Gold is referencing Hollywood classics left, right and centre this series and continues to do so with aplomb – depending on your television’s sound system...

The fate of Rose will be revealed next week – and not before time. The episode sees her story come full circle, back on Earth, Jackie flirting with the Doctor, and while not perfectly served this series she has been the most well-defined companion in the show’s history.

And she was, wasn’t she? The Ninth Doctor put it best when he told her she had been “absolutely fantastic”. Thanks to Piper and Russell T Davies’ strong vision for the Doctor’s first new companion Rose Tyler is the reference point for all future companions; she’s the archetype.

But facing the twin threat of Cybermen and the surprise Dalek cliffhanger was only part of the Rose Tyler story. The threat remained that she might be wiped out by one of these classic Doctor Who villains – but the pre-credits sequence to *Army of Ghosts* had teased something more...

We would find out exactly what seven days later in the series finale.

DOOMSDAY

Christian Cawley

With the relevance of the intrusive Torchwood references finally resolved and the surprise appearance of the Daleks, *Doomsday* promised to be 45 minutes of top quality Doctor Who. Of the same

quality of *The Parting of the Ways* this was not, however. Where last year we had undercurrents of political and religious allegory, the 2006 series has been one long advert for another show.

In last week's review I made clear how happy I was with the main man David Tennant, and I was similarly happy with the contributions in this final episode of Coduri, Clarke, Dingwall and the multi-voiced Briggs. It was also satisfying to see the relevance of Jackie Tyler of the alt.universe being Cybernised, as well as the family story being finally wound up.

The two most moving moments of *The Parting of the Ways* was how the Doctor said goodbye to Rose twice. Davies has gone for the jugular in *Doomsday*, repeating last year's successes in both hordes of flying Daleks and two departures for Rose, just as last year the Christopher Eccleston Doctor got two chances to say goodbye. This is heartstring pulling of the most crass and obvious kind, and seems to be for the simple purpose of covering up the episodes shortfalls.

It effectively ends after 33 minutes. The Doctor requires little time to expel the Daleks and Cybermen to the nether-realm of the Void, their war about to escalate and engulf the Earth. Countless dialogue triumphs aside the only truly wonderful Who moment was the discovery that the "Genesis Ark" was a Time Lord prison ship carrying millions of Daleks. Possibly the best moment of the entire series and definitely up there with the moment Lumic was first seen as Cybercontroller and most of *The Girl in the Fireplace*.

But the Doctor's resolution to the problem is too quick. The faceoff with the Daleks is fun and adds to their folklore. Rose's reaction at the resolution of the cliffhanger was brave and a quick profile as to how she has changed from the girl we saw in *Dalek*. The hop to the parallel Earth is a useful plot device to force Rose's departure, and it all goes along swimmingly well until we meet Rose, wandering around alt.universe with her family and finding a beach in Norway whose name translates as "Bad Wolf Bay". This is when *Doomsday* begins to fail.

A few minutes of Dalek and Cybermen war engulfing the Earth, taking in the destruction of various landmarks in the way the Slitheen's pig ship and the Sycorax vessel so successfully managed would have been a massive bonus to underline the threat. Instead slightly dodgy CGI Daleks (what else could they be, computer enhanced images dancing around on real world backgrounds?) cascading across the

London skyline were vacuumed into the reality breach along with the Cybermen (tellingly not the Black Dalek, however) who should no longer be seen with a “Cybus” logo on their chest.

Rose’s story from shop girl to Earth Defender has been an interesting one, and proof that the lives that the Doctor touches can be both enhanced and destroyed, pretty much depending on whether he saves you or not. Perhaps that’s the real message – or perhaps the message is that yes, there are heroes out there, but only the chosen ones shall know them. Whatever the truth is, Billie Piper has been slap bang in the middle of it, and as former pop star turned actress, she has grown in stature since *Rose* to become one of the biggest “names” in British showbusiness. I’m one of the few who was encouraged by her casting, feeling that it was as promising as the casting of Eccleston whom I had admired as an actor for over 10 years and as confidence-inspiring as the appointment of RTD as Executive Producer, storyliner and chief scriptwriter.

There’s a jury in a hotel somewhere still discussing that last point, however...

The impact that these two episodes had cannot be overlooked; both were nominated for the 2007 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form, (incidentally won by Steven Moffat’s *The Girl in the Fireplace*) and represented the first instance in the resurrected series of a primary companion leaving.

In these terms, her departure was as significant – and potentially disrupting – as that of Christopher Eccleston twelve months earlier. Like its hero, Doctor Who would be changing again, and it would begin just a few months down the line as the Tenth Doctor attempted to work out just how a bride had appeared in his TARDIS.

Before that though, you want to know what a group of randomly selected Doctor Who fans thought of Series 2, don’t you?

THE 2006 KASTERBOROUS ROUND TABLE

Christian Cawley

Take six Doctor Who fans with nothing to talk about but the 2006 series. Put them in a room, and watch as they deconstruct (break?) Series 2. This is the 2006 Kasterborous Round Table, introduced last year as a way to fill the gap between Series 1 and *The Christmas Invasion*; so successful was it, we had to do it again.

Joining us are: Brian Terranova – Kasterborous Associate Editor and US-based fan; Simon Mills – the man behind the Doctor Who News Service⁸; Barnaby Eaton-Jones – creative wunderkind best known as one of the OFFSTAGE Theatre Group; Gareth Kavanagh and Steve Preston of the legendarily rare Black Scrolls Doctor Who fanzine; Anthony Dry, artistic director of Kasterborous.com and all-round Scouser.

So, sit back and relax, compare your own opinions to theirs; there was a lot to talk about in Series 2, so let's get on with it and start with a very leading question... was Russell T Davies right to bring back Sarah Jane Smith and K9 in *School Reunion*?

Anthony – a man by his own admission “not enamoured” with the Fourth Doctor’s era – is straight in there: “Elisabeth did a very good job, and I thought Tennant worked well, he was believable the way you could see him and the Fourth Doctor being the same man all those years ago. As for K-9, the kids would have loved him and I’m glad they brought back Leeson for the voice.”

Barnaby is in agreement on this last point: “K-9 is K-9. For some reason, and I'm sure this is true of even his most ardent detractors, you can't help loving the little tin doggie. Perhaps it's John Leeson that gives some genuine character to what should just be a walking, emotionless computer, but K-9 is a clever concept that appeals across the board.”

“This was an all-time high,” insists Brian, “Putting an end to all the naysayers who said that the 2005 series was not the same show as the classic series. The characters were handled with great respect instead of being treated as a joke, or even an in-joke as some other shows would do.”

What about the age gap between David Tennant and Lis Sladen? “Elizabeth Sladen slipped back into a role she's never really left behind with consummate ease,” according to Barnaby... “Mind you, however young she still looks, it was still an interesting concept to have the genuine love between a younger man and an older woman. Yes, yes, I know the Doctor's a Time Lord and has lived longer than Bruce Forsyth, but on face value he's a 30-year old man and she's a 50-year old woman. It made it all the more touching, with the whole 'age-gap' idea

⁸ Find it and sign up at <http://drwhonews.blogspot.com>

being turned on its head in dialogue but playing out differently in the visuals.”

It seems that Simon harbours his own love for Sarah Jane... “Of all the companions to bring back, the only one that really could have worked was Sarah. I was over the moon - is it coincidence that my daughter shares the same name?” He laughs, “I think her comeback alongside Rose and the Doctor made for some of the most watchable character interaction this season. The story itself was so-so, but the interplay was superb.”

Gareth Kavanagh agrees... almost. “The ‘ex and the missus’ is a good dramatic concept, but it just lacks gravitas and believability for me - especially with Lis Sladen's polished RP tones. The haughty Romana and urchin Rose would have made a much more spiky and credible pairing for me. That said, the jealous surge from Rose at the end of the episode towards Mickey as she realises it's the three of them from now on was far more effective.”

In terms of character development, Season 28/Series 2 took Doctor Who into new territory. In the past, only the principle companion had been even vaguely moved by their experiences with the Doctor, with only occasional exceptions such as Jo Grant, Turlough and Ace. How then, were Rose and Mickey treated by the writers, in 2006?

Anthony Dry: “The writers just seemed to want to make her a pain in the backside for the Doctor, whether it is being jealous, smart-assed, shoved to the sidelines or bossy.” Simon Mills thinks similarly, noting that “Such promise from the first series, frittered needlessly away in the second. She just turned into this gormless youth - surely by now she should have learnt to show respect for authority figures? And why was she winding up Queen Victoria? That's just downright rude and disrespectful and didn't sit well with me.”

Was there a missed opportunity? Steve Preston: “Series 2 promised much for Rose with new man David Tennant but it never seemed to work quite as well as Eccleston. The claustrophobic, clingy relationship that proved more tiresome than tantalizing did little to entertain.”

Smiling, Brian Terranova adds that he feels Rose was better used in Series 2, adding “Instead of being the star of the show, overshadowing the Doctor himself, she took the side-line role while still remaining enough in the spot light to show off her talent and popularity.”

Could it be love? “Well,” begins Gareth, “the smugness and general smart-arsedness of the character at times really grated in the same

way as Ace all those years ago. I guess they were aiming to portray a transition from teenage crush on your favourite teacher to a far more possessive, sub-relationship complete with saccharine “we’re so in love...” dreamy moments.”

So, were Rose’s simultaneous development and regression down to the various writers? Steve Preston doesn’t go so far as to say this, however... “Billie Piper provided us with a well-performed companion but with the feeling that Series 2 was more than enough for character ‘closure’.”

What, then, of Noel Clarke as Mickey? He was definitely no longer “Mickey the Idiot” – but was he “Mickey Smith Defending the Earth”? Barnaby Eaton-Jones: “Using the ‘parking ticket’ joke after establishing Mickey as a wanted terrorist was a pretty pointless exercise in making both Mickey’s virtually identical. The point of it being a parallel world would have worked better if the alternative Mickey actually WAS a tough-talking, hard-hitting terrorist.”

Barnaby continues: “Absolutely! The pivotal moment for me was his return in the last two episodes of the series - that was the point where he really showed how he’d matured and changed. Elsewhere it was just silly business as usual. Noel Clarke’s acting was certainly up to the challenge, but playing the idiot foil for nearly two series makes it less believable when he suddenly goes all macho and tough.”

Meanwhile, Simon Mills appreciated that particular character development, and is full of praise for the “Mickey plan” – “I really loved what they did with Mickey this year. From ‘zero to hero’, indeed! I’d have loved to see more stories with Mickey as full time companion - maybe without Rose tagging along and getting in the way with her doe eyes and pouty lips.”

As character development goes, Steve seems happier with Mickey than Rose. “To begin with, I thought the character was awful - but as the stories progressed, so did the character. The moment when I realized Mickey was finally vindicated of his early series 1 feebleness was the scene in *Rise of the Cybermen* when the Doctor had to choose to follow Mickey or Rose, and Mickey’s honest response to the situation gave him gravitas whereas Rose’s selfish pursuit of her own interests further devalued her position.”

Anthony concludes the matter of Rose and Mickey... “I think it’s good when a companion gets more development but they pulled her in so many directions you actually couldn’t wait for her to leave which was a

shame after series one. I think the main benefit from all this is the fact we don't have to put up with the Tylers anymore..."

Classic monsters the Daleks and the Cybermen were both made use of in the 2006 season. The big comeback of the Cybermen went down well with kids and toy shops – but what about the panel?

"It's difficult to rate the effectiveness of monsters in Doctor Who from an adult perspective", starts Steve Preston, "because their *raison d'être* of scaring the bloody daylight out of you are long gone. The Cybermen seem less fearsome as a robotic troop army because they were always at their best when lurking singularly in sewers under 1960s London."

Barnaby Eaton-Jones: "The Cybermen were a given for bringing back, in that they are nearly as iconic as the Daleks in the public consciousness. However, the story they were brought back in wasn't exactly top-notch."

Simon Mills interjects with thoughts on the (over-?) reliance of the Daleks (surely a story title?)... "It's nice to bring back the favourites, but let's not get hung up on the "Monster of the Year" ideas, eh? Let's give them both a year or two away. Of the two, I'd much prefer to see the Daleks again and some more revelations about the Time War."

Dalek-wise, Anthony Dry certainly agrees: "I'm a bit bored of them already."

"My main problem," says Barnaby, "was that I'd heard [Big Finish 'Genesis of the Cybermen' story] *Spare Parts*. The amount of emotion wrung from similar scenes on audio, without the aid of pictures, was very much higher than what was achieved in the new series episodes. And that wasn't the acting; that was the writing."

Brian has also heard *Spare Parts*, but feels that the Cyberman stories worked. "I would have preferred the original Cybermen from our universe. I do feel that it was great to see the Daleks back as a "surprise" but wonder if it would have worked better if the alternative universe-Cybermen had met our Cybermen and merged to become one race?"

"I could have lived without the 'delete' catchphrase though."

From a design point of view, what did the Cybermen do for Anthony Dry? "When first revealed their design didn't appeal; it wasn't until I saw them in action that they looked good. I like the alternative universe idea of them - however I think we could do with seeing the normal universe version of them - the one of a slowly dying race."

We haven't heard from Gareth Kavanagh on this matter yet – so we'll pose a slightly different question to him. Did the Cyberman-Dalek battle work? "Some merit I suppose in using them all together as a sort of food chain analogy. Cybermen defeat man. Daleks defeat Cybermen. Doctor defeats all.

"But overall, it just felt a bit hollow and wasted. I mean, the Cybermen looked great on the street marching in formation and the Daleks had some choice lines – especially Dalek Fred or whatever his name was (the Black Dalek). But this whole bullets/lasers/water pistols can't stop them for the Daleks is getting a bit tedious."

"The use of the Daleks this year may have been spot on to me," argues Brian, "If they had a full blown story it would have been too much too soon, but here I felt like we were getting a taste of things to come with the introduction of the Cult of Skaro."

Also with lots of Dalek-centred positives was Steve, pointing out that "RTD scores bonus points for actually making them quite funny. The line "No, this is pest control" was one of the few laugh-out loud moments this year. Also the continuation and extension of the myth by presenting to us the Cult of Skaro took away the boring aspect of them not being just another group of escapees from the Time War.

"The Ark containing the millions of imprisoned Daleks was terrific and worth waiting for too. Never having being that much of a Dalek fan, I've been enjoying their resurgence in the new series."

Barnaby sees the Daleks as guaranteed crowd-pleasers noting that "They're like the Stormtroopers of the Star Wars universe. I'm looking forward to seeing Davros, their Darth Vader, return at some point! Give me a half-human, half-Dalek with a rasping maniacal tone any day!!"

Imagine the kids getting freaked out seeing a half man half Dalek stroll on to the screen...

Guest stars have been employed in Doctor Who since the 1960s, and the tactic works to entice fans of the actor or actress in question into watching. It's one that Gareth appreciates.

"Some were perfection itself - especially Tony Head's wonderfully urbane, Delgado-ish turn in *School Reunion* and Maureen Lipman's note-perfect Wire, Pauline Collins was solid as Queen Victoria whilst the majority - especially all the ("look its 'im/'er from") **EastEnders** turns - did more or less, exactly what you expected and were good for chalking up the column inches."

Classic Who guest casting seems to cause Simon Mills with something of a fear factor... "Aaaaaaggghhhhh! I just keep dreading the return of novelty casting like Ken Dodd, Hale and Pace, Richard Briers, et al – by the way, I like Richard Briers and he is a superb actor, but I think he really hammed it up when cast in the classic series." Oh. Does this mean an introduction into the conversation of the words "Lloyd Pack" and "Roger"? Anthony Dry...

"Damp squibs this series consisted of Roger Lloyd Pack and Andrew Hayden-Smith, the latter in particular grates; I mean he tried hard but he just can't act. Sorry, but he just isn't believable." Actor Barnaby Jones sadly wasn't enamoured with poor Andrew either. "How unconvincing was he?! As wooden as a plank and about as interesting to watch. His expression never got beyond 'constipated' with his furrowed brows and intense stares. He just seemed out of place and miscast."

Oh dear. Hayden-Smith – was he really that bad? Gareth thinks so too... "The only steaming pile of am-dram poo being that CBBC fella who played Jake - the oh-so believable hairdresser with a Kalashnikov..."

Back to Barnaby: "I don't like criticising actors, as they sometimes are only as good as the directions they are given, but in this case I feel justified as an experienced director such as Graeme Harper in the last two-parter still got no more character out of him than had been on show previously. Admittedly, it's a one-dimensional part but he never nailed it once."

What does Brian Terranova think – do the guest actors make any difference? "Being American I don't always know the guest actor, so their inclusion in the episodes often doesn't mean too much to me. That said I do have my opinions as to who was right for the role, and in this case Peter Kay was a bad choice for the Abzorbaloff." Ah. An episode that will forever divide Doctor Who fandom - *Love & Monsters* does seem to get a lot of attention for different reasons. I wonder could this be wholly down to the fantasy casting of Britain's most popular comedian (based on ticket and DVD sales, at least) Peter Kay? Simon Mills: "Peter Kay, while a competent actor, really stood out as just being a bit silly. Still, at the end of the day, I suppose it is supposed to be a family show with the emphasis on the kids. In that respect it works a treat with all the fart jokes, silly monsters, body humour etc and my daughter loves it."

“The only other name I knew was Sophia Miles,” dreams Brian, “And I can honestly say that I was heartbroken when she didn’t become a companion. As for any other well-knowns that I didn’t know they must be good as I couldn’t complain about anyone else really.”

What about the other great return of Series 2? Anthony Dry was well chuffed with the voice of Sutekh, “Masterstrokes this series came from Gabriel Woolf as Satan. However I don’t think there’s anything overly stand-outish about any of these characters who don’t stick like the old villains, and maybe lack development and screen time. Although I quite liked Lumic’s henchman Mr Crane...”

Running out of time for this subject, I pose one last question. Who do we expect for guest casting in Series 3 - Gareth Kavanagh?

“Gotta be worth betting on any of the following; Anthony Cotton (as Shakespeare’s camp-as-Christmas theatre manager), French and Saunders (as bitchy rival magazine editors on *New Earth*), Johnny Vegas (as an evil soul-snatching bedsit landlord), Joanna Lumley (as Florence Nightingale) and Nigel Havers (as some other suave villain all the fans will swear IS the Master right up until the end credits roll).”

To conclude the 2006 Round Table discussion, we move on to the new Doctor himself, David Tennant...

A few of the guys have been itching to get onto this subject, so let’s get right into it with Brian who enthusiastic, noting “He has easily found his way into my favorites.”

Steve Preston says “I’ve found Tennant’s Doctor to be on the whole very good. He has enlivened the stories of Series 2 no end and his popularity with the wider general audience has allowed the show to retain a strong following and attain excellent viewing figures. It will be interesting to see how much of that success was due to Piper when Series 3 returns without her.”

So it’s all plusses! Or is it?

What does Gareth think? “Less assured, more obviously a performance than Eccleston’s if I had to sum it up. Where the material is top notch though, he shines - *Girl in the Fireplace* has the lot allowing him to demonstrate his range.”

Anthony has concerns about the material, rather than the performance. “I think he has been served some poor fare in Series 2. For instance, *The Christmas Invasion* he was missing for the most part of the episode and the less said about his ‘proper’ debut in *New Earth* the better. He shines better when he’s the focal point; although

thought of as comparatively weak, *The Idiot's Lantern* showed him off best along with *The Satan Pit* two-parter."

It's unfortunately not just Ant who is thinking along these lines. Simon Mills: "I loved the serious 'no second chances' attitude underlining his manic gurning [in *The Christmas Invasion*]; a nice contrast that reminded you exactly what the Doctor is all about. But *New Earth* ruined it all with a mildly entertaining story, too weak to properly introduce a new Doctor to the world. A more fitting start would have been *Tooth and Claw*."

So, David Tennant is good, some of his stories have been a little weak? Barnaby knows a thing or two about writing and acting. "However, his one downfall - and it's not the most major one - is his lack of real anger. When Eccleston was annoyed or angry, he really looked like he meant business. Unfortunately, when Tennant displayed his righteous indignation at something, he looked like a teenager stamping his feet."

Gareth Kavanagh is quick to agree here, commenting that "He's less good at switching between the full on piss-take of villains and acknowledging the seriousness of the situation - *Age of Steel's* end sequence being the worst example of this. Oh and the less said about the whole 'Humaaans! Amazing! I've got all their records etc. etc.' outbursts, the better."

Brian has a confession of Pythia-like knowledge to make: "I remember saying to a friend when Christopher Eccleston got the role that I had hoped he would only stick around for one." I can't help thinking that knowledge would have been more useful around 18 months ago, but still. "With David Tennant - from his first words - he just **was** the Doctor."

Christopher Eccleston eh? Surely we've forgotten about him by now? What do you think, Simon? "Looking back at Christopher Eccleston 's Doctor now, I realise what an excellent actor he is and the quality he brought to the part with the guilt-laden gravitas of the last Time Lord. David Tennant lacks the gravitas, but can show steel when needed.

"Besides, he wears a long coat - and the Doctor should ALWAYS have a long coat!"

Barnaby: "I love Tennant. I genuinely love his take on the Doctor. He's a whirling dervish of eccentricities grounded in enough realism to make him appeal to every age group."

Well, the conversation has finally died off. Attractive nurses have come to remove us from the recreation room, and poor Steve is mumbling something about monarchs. Before we're all given our medication and sent back to our rooms to watch **Countdown**, however, I leave it to Anthony Dry to sum up David Tennant's impact.

"I like him. Sure he's not yet up there with Davison or Pertwee for me but he's close. He sounds like Dick Van Dyke on speed and does some really odd things but it's not until you watch some of the older serials that you realise most of the Doctors did do odd things. I think in Series 3 if they make him the focal point and set him off in new situations, - i.e. not Earth - he might be able to mould his character more."

And with that, we were off...

And then, it all went quiet.

For what seemed like about two days. It was a nice weekend, during which time Doctor Who fans the length and breadth of the UK were able to stand up, get fresh air, catch up on the news and enjoy a hearty meal before it started getting intense again.

Hours later, photos were across the newspapers and the web of David Tennant and Catherine Tate shooting location scenes for the 2006 Christmas special, *The Runaway Bride*. Of particular interest were reports of an early scene from the episode, in which currency was ejected from a "hole in the wall" ATM. Apparently, the fake notes read:

*"I promise to pay the bearer on demand the sum of 10 Satsuma's.
No second chances – I'm that sort of man."*

In some of the more hardcore locations online, however, grainy camera phone long shots "revealed" that Billie Piper would be returning to Doctor Who very soon. Clearly a lot of people were going to have difficulty getting over Rose Tyler; the images showed someone of similar build to Piper observing the filming of a rooftop scene between Tennant and Tate, and this was instantly misinterpreted.

I mean, they could hardly bring Rose Tyler back from a parallel universe could they? Or do another emotional farewell...?!

As it turned out, this was only the tip of the iceberg for Billie Piper/Rose Tyler flavoured insanity.

And "insanity" was definitely the right word for it.

It was revealed in **Doctor Who Magazine** #373 that a spin-off series, "Rose Tyler: Earth Defender" had come very close to production – in fact,

it had been commissioned. Russell T Davies had in fact changed his mind about making what would surely have been a “spin-off too far”.

“It was going to be fantastic. Rose Tyler: Earth Defence. But then I just thought, ‘no’. It spoils Doctor Who if we can see Rose and the Doctor can’t.”

But surely with Torchwood already aimed at the late teen and adult audience, Doctor Who was crying out for another spin-off?

Seemingly so – and the answer came in the shape of Lis Sladen, who had already returned to Doctor Who in Series 2’s *School Reunion*. Twenty-five years after **K9 and Company**, Sarah Jane Smith would finally get her own show, beginning with a special one-off “pilot” on New Year’s Day 2007.

Elsewhere, press rumours pointed to the Doctor’s son being used as a plot device for the series to continue beyond the Time Lord’s “default” 13 lives. Seemingly deriving from an interview with former Doctor Who star Peter Davison and the Daily Express, this oddball tale soon died off when everyone realised which newspaper was reporting it.

By this point, the Doctor’s next companion had been named as Martha Jones, and over the coming months we would learn more and more about her as shooting of the main series commenced. Freema Agyeman had seemingly made an impression on Russell T Davies and David Tennant during the filming of *Army of Ghosts*, and the actress was invited back to audition for the role of the companion.

The press loved the fact that Freema was not only part Iranian, but that she had been a part of the failed resurrection of an ITV cult classic, the wobbly soap **Crossroads**. Endless material like this kept Doctor Who in the papers on at least a weekly basis between *Doomsday* and *The Runaway Bride*. And when it wasn’t Doctor Who, it was the announcement for the intended BBC Three scheduling of the first spin-off series, **Torchwood**.

Starring John Barrowman as Jack Harkness, Eve Myles (*The Unquiet Dead*), Burn Gorman, Naoko Mori (*Aliens of London*), Gareth David-Lloyd and (initially) Indira Varma, Torchwood was scheduled to air in the last few weeks of 2006 – leading to a very Whoniverse-themed Christmas with both the **Torchwood** season finale and *The Runaway Bride* airing over the same 3 day period.

It was with the second Doctor Who Christmas special that the festive season became very closely linked with our favourite Time Lord in a way that only **Morecambe and Wise**, The Queen’s Speech, James Bond movies and **Only Fools and Horses** had previously managed.

A CHRISTMAS TRADITION

Christian Cawley

“What are you doing for Christmas?” I was asked down the pub the other night. “We’re all going round the mother-in-laws to have dinner so the kids can watch Doctor Who!”

I hadn’t had a chance to answer when he told me that. It seems the entire world has gone Doctor Who mad these days, when even the hardest nut on the block is planning is Christmas roast around Russell T Davies’ latest televisual gift.

Ten years ago I was excitedly opening VHS copies of *Silver Nemesis* and my first DVD in the shape of the Paul McGann TV Movie and like a social outcast told my friends that it was for “research” for my TV and video production course. In truth, of course, I hid away for hours rewatching both adventures while my mum toiled in the kitchen.

It seems funny how much can change in such a short space of time.

Back in early 2005 when Doctor Who’s return was imminent, a work colleague swore blind to me that the ultimate regeneration of the most fondly remembered British adventure series would be a terrible failure that would end up on BBC Two in a couple of weeks. I was certain that the show would be a big success, that the people in charge like Russell T Davies had as much faith in Doctor Who as a concept as I did, but to be honest, back then I wouldn’t have minded too much if it had been a comparative failure.

At least then no one would have been asking me if I was planning to tune in for Christmas!

Doctor Who has become stylish and culturally relevant, thanks in no small part to the excellent lead casting and the top level management of Russell T Davies and Julie Gardner. To even suggest an hour-long Christmas special to a fan just five years ago would have resulted in a furrowed brow and a quick change of subject, yet here we are, with the second Christmas special set to air in a few days and everyone is lapping it up!

Now this has got me thinking about Christmas and television and how many of us organize our lives around the old haunted fish tank at this time of year.

My dad is a regular highlighter of the Radio Times – meaning he takes a pen to it to circle his intended televisual and radio broadcasts – and this often takes precedence to what anyone else wants to watch. Not a problem, my parents have a DVD recorder, but how did we get to

building our lives around television in this way, particularly at Christmas?

I think we have to lay the blame, as it were, at the feet of two legends of British comedy, Morecambe & Wise. Before their popular Christmas shows started in the 1970s, Christmas was a time when television didn't really mean that much; after all, TV channels didn't begin until 9am on any day of the week in those days. **The Morecambe & Wise Show Christmas** specials were the early days of event television, where the quality of guests and Eddie Braben's scripts contributed hugely to the special day itself. There are even accounts of people recalling their enjoyment of Christmas based on how much they laughed at Eric and Ernie.

Which I fear is where we are now, via occasional **Only Fools and Horses** Christmas episodes. If the Doctor Who seasonal episode isn't very good, will people head back to work a few days later bemoaning this fact? Or will other Christmas specials cast a shadow over it?

After all, these days everyone has a Christmas special, from **The Simpsons** to **EastEnders** to shows that even on air anymore like **Top of the Pops!**

The one thing I do worry about though is the pressure. Morecambe and Wise's Eddie Braben regularly made himself ill with the stress of producing funny scripts (as did the stars, come to that point) and it would be terrible if Russell T Davies or anyone else associated with a Christmas episode overworked themselves.

Such is the pressure of consistently producing quality TV.

Still, that's enough of dwelling on the downsides. *The Runaway Bride* is on TV in just a few days, a great way for many families to round off their Christmas Day before mum and dad decide to polish off the last drops of Santa's brandy. I'll be tuning in, and I hope you will too.

Incidentally, I told the chap in the pub that I would be playing Guitar Hero on my new Xbox, just to maintain the "weirdo nerd" image...

Arguably the biggest element of Doctor Who's Christmas presence was the press launch. In fact this had been true of the two 21st century series to date, and all of these events seemed to be exercises in sub-West End movie premieres with added sycophancy from the press and endless sound-bite platitudes from the various stars and production team members.

As show runner, Russell T Davies was guiltier of this than anyone. After all, the series was his baby now, and if anything went wrong for whatever reason, it would be on Davies' head.

It was around the time of Series 2 and particularly *The Runaway Bride* that Kasterborous developed a reputation of being "anti-RTD". Sadly this was a pretty simplistic way of viewing the opinions expressed in the reviews, largely those of Editor Christian Cawley.

Kasterborous.com was never against Russell T Davies; it is first and foremost a Doctor Who fansite, the first to adopt the modern idea of the blog format, and therefore a home for opinions about how this long-running series for which we all hold so much affection should or shouldn't be done.

At the end of the day they are purely opinions, and in this context those opinions cannot be as enduring as the material they're judging.

If Kasterborous was ever anti-Russell T Davies, then it would also have been also anti-Doctor Who.

Mind you, this next review certainly sales close to the wind...

THE RUNAWAY BRIDE

Christian Cawley

I'm not scared of spiders. The larger, poisonous ones give me the creeps, but I could comfortably hold one for a few seconds – I'm not going to wrestle with one Steve Irwin style or anything! Smaller spiders however seem to me to be nothing more than little eight-legged guys with great suspension and survival skills – to who even getting flushed away isn't a major barrier...

As it is Christmas, I'm going to just underline a couple of key facts. I watched *The Runaway Bride* after 3 lagers and a glass of red wine, lamb, chicken, stuffing, gravy, roast veg and various snacks throughout the day. Christmas to me is about a nice old feast, games by the fire and new socks. I don't usually spend long in front of the TV at Christmas, and organising people to be quiet for an hour can prove to be rather difficult.

Not, however (one would suspect) as difficult as stitching together a cohesive, interesting, accessible story as the one seen in this year's Doctor Who Christmas special. Russell T Davies – much vaunted the nation over as a messiah of the writing world - flapped about with established conventions and produced something which translated to screen as hammy, contrived, dated and embarrassing while still

allowing for some whizzo TARDIS action and for David Tennant to further perfect his portrayal of the Doctor.

I spent most of Series 2 wondering whether or not I actually liked the Tenth Doctor as much as his earlier, more abrasive incarnation. Watching Tennant in action on Christmas Day however was excellent, with some of the excessive face pulling and over exaggeration of words and phrases toned down. In fact I would even go as far as to say it was similar to watching one of Peter Davison's more assured performances – a very good sign for Series 3.

It was of course quite a coup, keeping Catherine Tate's presence in the TARDIS quiet for the run up to *Doomsday*. It was a nice move too, keeping the Doctor on his feet and not giving him time to relax following Rose's departure. Without Donna, we wouldn't have had the TARDIS car chase, astonishing revelations that she missed the events of both *The Christmas Invasion* and *Army of Ghosts/Doomsday* as she was too busy getting on with her life, or of course the terrible plot of the ancient Empress of Racnoss...

Which really is where *The Runaway Bride* turns into a big ball of fluff; visually an inspired creation, Racnoss is played way OTT by Sarah Parish. David Tennant had earlier commented that the performance was a scenery-chewing one, and this is possibly one of the greatest understatements in Doctor Who's history since the BBC announced that they were putting the show "on hiatus". This is unfortunate, as Parish is a talented actress, and as much as I would like to take the performance in the context of a fun adventure for all the family, I can't – and this is side-stepping such issues as the actual purpose of the robot Santas. What exactly, is the relevance of "Pilot Fish" now?

This wasn't a "fun adventure for all the family". It had all of the worst excesses of Russell T Davies' take on Doctor Who sliced up, repackaged as something new and different and frankly empty. Without a strong lead, Doctor Who would be dead in the water. That's worth thinking about. He shouldn't really have to put up with nonsense like this.

Why is it that the Executive Producer, the man attached to Doctor Who by the BBC and the biggest provider of scripts for the series consistently contributes the worst episodes? Going back to Series 1 – consistently better than Series 2 – Davies provided us with half of the stories, and only came close to matching Gatiss, Moffat and Cornell with *The End of the World* and the *Bad Wolf/Parting of the Ways* two-parter. *The Christmas Invasion* was comparatively weak, but it had a lot

to do to present us with a new Doctor. *Tooth and Claw* was pretty strong although suffered from annoying characterisation of the leads, whereas *New Earth* and *Love & Monsters* took Doctor Who to new levels of high campery, the like of which hadn't been seen since the mid-1980s. The *Army of Ghosts/Doomsday* story meanwhile was too easily resolved by the Doctor pulling a lever, and was spoiled by an unnecessarily long "goodbye to Rose" sequence which pulled at the emotional strings a bit too much for my liking.

Yes, I know, I'm complaining about Russell T Davies again. And no, I don't like doing this. I respect Russell for all of the hard work he's done on Doctor Who, and I've enjoyed lots of his earlier work, such as **Bob & Rose** and especially **The Second Coming**. I missed **Queer as Folk** as I was too busy going out and I missed **Springhill** because I was in bed. I was however a big fan of **Children's Ward** back in the day, although I wasn't so keen on **Chucklevision**... but I digress.

My point is, and apologies to anyone who disagrees violently with me here, Doctor Who needs to move on, and for me the time has come for RTD to hand over the reins to someone else. Doctor Who should be more than Christmas teatime fluff. It shouldn't insult the viewers' intelligence (a four thousand mile deep hole? Flushed with water from the Thames that then emptied? Did the sea go down there too?!?) and it most certainly shouldn't throw third rate scripts at a leading man like Tennant.

While I – like many – hope that Series 3 is darker than Series 2, more than anything I hope it is better. The first utterance of "Gallifrey" in 17 years is hugely significant (can he say "Kasterborous" next?) and may well herald the discovery of some Time Lords somewhere out there...

WHO DO YOU LOVE?

Although we didn't know it, Series 3 began not with *Smith and Jones*, but with reference to a "Mr Saxon" in *The Runaway Bride*. No one knew who he was at this stage, but his stratospheric rise in British politics would be addressed in the second half of the 2007 series.

In the first half of what would turn out to be potentially the most consistent series of episodes in Doctor Who since the mid-1970s, we would instead find ourselves focussing on Daleks, The Face of Boe, William Shakespeare, mad scientists and storm-trooping rhinos.

Not to mention a gorgeous new companion for the Doctor – Martha Jones.

Introduced as a medical student, Martha was quite unlike any Doctor Who companion before or since. While Rose Tyler could be argued to be a modern-day Sarah Jane Smith with regards to the closeness of her relationship to the Time Lord, Martha Jones was something else entirely.

If the Doctor and Rose Tyler were in love, you couldn't say the same for the Doctor and Martha; he barely noticed her despite travelling around all of time and space with her.

The Seventh Doctor once observed in *Ghost Light* that he disliked unrequited love. His Tenth incarnation seemed to be pretty ignorant of its very existence, something that would both weld Martha Jones to his side throughout the 2007 run of episodes, and be a cause for her departure.

Coming so soon after Billie Piper, Freema Agyeman had a tough act to follow in anyone's book. Some may say she pulled it off; others were extremely uncomplimentary, and even the tabloid press got their fingers dirty by slating an actress who was clearly competent and would shine with good scripts and good direction. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that Rose Tyler was the first companion that the Doctor fell in love with (which therefore made her more "important" than the others) – but anyone with the first idea of what Doctor Who is about will know that the time travelling old dog has been wooing the ladies throughout all of time and space since the 1960s!

I LOVE WHO BABY

Christian Cawley

"Oh the Doctor never gets involved with women, oh no, his relationship with Rose Tyler was completely out of character! I mean

when else has he had relations with females, other than that dreadful American woman!?”

This is just one of those clichéd, old-school fandom observations that really hold very little water.

We all love Doctor Who – and as it is St Valentine’s Day, what better time than for me to talk about my love for the new series, the old series, the books, audios, DWM strips and any fiction set around the travels of the Doctor.

Falling in love with any television show or fictional fabric is very much like falling in love with a beautiful woman. There’s the instant pull, the first meeting which is often electric, sometimes tentative, but always magnetic; there’s the wondering where it’s going, is it going to last; and there is of course the marvellous first time – that sharing of intimate feelings and passions which in televisual terms might be the arrival of classic aliens, or the establishing of new classic aliens.

Loving a show like Doctor Who of course means wearing your heart on your sleeve, and making sure everybody knows. Why? Because it is a show that in its 43 and a bit years has been loved and hated in equal amounts – currently on the cusp of a wave, the show is popular with old, young, rich, poor. As a Doctor Who fan I feel as though I was right all along, and they were all damn wrong, welcome as they are to share the fun.

That’s very me, that is, the “knowing all along”, the telling people what’s good and bad as if I have some sort of “cultural taste weather vane”. Truth is I’m quite often nothing more than a supremely arrogant-know-it-all (usually after a few ales) and it makes me wonder in more sedate moments how anyone puts up with me. I mean, how on earth does my wife listen to me rant on about the workings of the TARDIS, web development or the wonder of Led Zeppelin?

Yet it’s just as baffling in Doctor Who. How on earth did Jo Grant, Sarah Jane Smith, the obviously-brighter-than-the-Doctor Romana II and Rose put up with a man who quite often could be a terrible know-all, moral guardian and universal busy body? An obvious example would be the Tenth Doctor’s belief that as he is the last Time Lord, and the Time Lord’s knew everything about the universe, then he is – as a wise man said recently – the last word on everything.

Although most of us grew up with the patrician Third Doctor, the bohemian Fourth Doctor or even the enigmatic and powerful Seventh

Doctor, there was never the impression that the Doctor knew everything until he woke up on Christmas Day 2005 (our time).

And still the girls flock to the Doctor. Martha is next on his list of conquests, and while it remains to be seen how she does with the old devil, let's have a few words about some of the other loves of the Doctor's life...

- The First Doctor pulled the Aztec Cameca over a cuppa - now that's what I call style!

- Jo Grant was quite a flighty piece – the Third Doctor was very upset to lose her, and frankly who can blame him?

- Sarah Jane Smith waited 30 years for the Doctor to come back and resume their travels, and their relationship was very close – but not the closest.

- The closest relationship the Doctor would have in the original series was with Romana II. You could almost see them married, couldn't you?

- Somehow it was years before the Doctor would pull again – ironic that she too would be a Doctor who knew him both as a short Scotsman (who she didn't fancy) to a romantic velvet wearing poet (who she most certainly did fancy – and they say beauty is only skin deep...).

- Most fellas with a couple of brain cells to rub together would bend over backwards to accommodate a lady such as Madame de Pompadour – Reinette! The Doctor risked his TARDIS, Rose and his complexion leaping through a mirror on a horse.

- Finally, there is Rose, who the Doctor can realistically never see again. She saved him from solitude; she saved him and Earth from the Daleks. Yet she wasn't the Doctor's type – rude, brash, arrogant and selfish, it still isn't obvious exactly why they stayed together for so long in what was an intense relationship.

The only way these women would ever fall for a man like the Doctor would be the promise of adventure – a promise seen most recently in *Rose* and failing so magnificently in *The Runaway Bride*. We've seen the Doctor over the years with a multitude of top totty companions, but not all of them have fallen for his Time Lord charms, which leads me to wonder if he really is that different to us after all.

Men love the Doctor, women love the Doctor, and women who love men who love the Doctor are hard to find. While I can happily say that I have such a lady, I can't help but wonder about that last paragraph.

Surely the Doctor has more to offer than adventure? How shallow are these women? Could Romana have been his one true love?
And what's the Doctor's favourite television programme?

This potential of Martha to cause this unusual sort of hiccup in the Doctor's life was there from the word go, and in the still huge shadow of Rose Tyler, fans did wonder just how the new TARDIS pairing would get along.

As we would see later on, in the face of an almost insurmountable threat to humanity, the Doctor and Martha were first and foremost friends; any other feelings that were there would have to be put to one side.

Which was just as well, as throughout the run up to the 2007 series of Doctor Who, we had been hearing whisperings both on the web and in person that the Doctor was not the last Time Lord.

Even the tabloids had picked up on it, with one hilariously claiming that **Footballers Wives** actress Zoe Lucker (an actress that has cornered the "soap bitch" niche) had been cast as the Rani!

They had the right idea, but the wrong Time Lord. And anyway, weren't they all dead?

Interestingly, the Time Lords themselves had featured in few classic Doctor Who stories. Those in which they did appear tended to range from classic status to embarrassing, and it could be fairly argued that the denizens of the Gallifreyan utopia had been both mis- and over-used, particularly during the 1980s.

Russell T Davies' decision to destroy the Time Lords – as revealed in the closing moments of 2005's *End of the World* – came as a massive shock to Doctor Who fans. Yet it was a key decision that allowed the new series to shed the baggage that had so impeded the 1996 co-production with Fox and Universal.

Bringing the Time Lords back, therefore, even if it was just one, would be a massively important element not just of Series 3, but of the entire ongoing Doctor Who narrative.

It was this very narrative that had made the stuffy and boring Time Lords of the TV series appear as a far more fascinating and layered race throughout all of the Doctor Who spin-off media of comic strips, books and audio dramas...

THE TIME LORDS OF GALLIFREY

Christian Cawley

They existed in the background unnamed for over five years, commencing life only as a reference – “my people”. But the Time Lords’ influence on Doctor Who grew and grew until one day in April 2005 we discovered that bar the Doctor, the Time Lords and their planet Gallifrey were gone.

For the uninitiated, the Time Lords were a race of super-intelligent, almost omnipotent men and women whose technology allowed them to observe the Universe from their planet of Gallifrey. Despite their power, that is all they did – observe – and this is why the Doctor and a select group of other renegades were frowned upon by both their contemporaries and their elders. Early in Doctor Who, we met the Monk – later christened “Mortimus” in Paul Cornell’s novel *No Future* - in the First Doctor adventure *The Time Meddler* and again in the Dalek epic *The Dalek’s Master Plan*. Later in the 1960s we encountered the War Chief (*The War Games*) who left Gallifrey at around the same time as the Doctor, but the most illustrious of the Doctor’s rival Time Lords was the Master.

The Time Lords themselves harnessed the almost infinite energy of a Black Hole in order to build their immense power. The founder of their society was Rassilon, later revered as a god, while Omega was the Gallifreyan charged with the task of harnessing the Black Hole. He succeeded, but was lost in an anti-matter universe. The Black Hole was encased in force fields of vast power and taken back to Gallifrey where it was rechristened “The Eye of Harmony” and buried beneath the vast Panopticon, the centre of all Time Lord activity. It is believed that TARDISes possess a link to the Eye, from which they get the energy to sustain themselves. There was also another who worked with Omega and Rassilon, who more than likely designed the first TARDISes, although his identity was lost as history was written.

It isn’t clear whether Time Lords were genetically engineered or reproduced naturally. It is known of course that they all had the power to regenerate. The number 13 has been hinted at as a limit for this process, but it is likely that this depended on a number of factors. Not all Gallifreyans were Time Lords, and according to some accounts, not all Time Lords were Gallifreyan. Other inhabitants of the planet were known as “Outsiders” or Shobogans, and lived on the vast “Outlands”

of Gallifrey, while the Time Lords kept themselves locked in their vast Capitol or in their houses scattered across the planet.

For a society stretching back to the dawn of time, the Time Lord's days were spent on relatively trivial matters of state, as well as science and learning. There were one or two other activities that they partook but these were on the whole looked upon as barbaric and largely ignored. It should be noted too that many Time Lords were – for all their learning – notoriously xenophobic and guarded their technology jealously. A cabal of Time Lords populated the secret group known as the Celestial Intervention Agency or CIA. Their main concern was that the power of time travel should not fall into the hands of other races – they had many methods, and many agents, including on occasions the Doctor...

Several races attempted to destroy the Time Lords. A race of Giant Vampires crossed from another Universe into our own when the Eye of Harmony was captured, and nearly destroyed Rassilon's fledgling society. They were destroyed by a Time Lord weapon, the Bowships, vast space craft that fired arrows of silver. Later, the cloned race of Sontarans and the Vardans - beings who inhabited energy waves – attacked Gallifrey and would have succeeded if it were not for the Doctor. Other elements of the Time Lords' own creation caused terrible problems, including the planets' disappearance at one point, as well as the return of Omega (*The Three Doctors*). Ultimately, the War between the Daleks and the Time Lords lead to the massive destruction of both races. It is likely that the Daleks gained a significant advantage over the Time Lords and had probably already conquered most of Gallifrey.

Perhaps the Doctor had no choice other than to destroy his world and people and the Daleks that overran them, rather than see them subverted and time surrendered...

As the casting details of the 2007 series were slowly revealed (we would see turns by wonderful actors and actresses like Anne Reid, Dean Lennox Kelly, Hugh Quarshie, and um, Michelle Collins) the identity of the actor playing the Master was kept under-wraps for as long as possible.

But it wasn't long before this would be leaked – and the name of the actor taking on the burden of following Roger Delgado and Anthony Ainley (among others) was John Simm, fresh from the second, final series of the hugely successful time travelling police drama *Life on Mars*.

Even with the suggestion that Mr Saxon and the Master might be one and the same, Doctor Who fans were left with much more to get their teeth into in 2007. Not only was their the return of the Doctor's Time Lord nemesis, there was also the prospect of Paul Cornell's adaptation of his popular 1993 novel *Human Nature*, some superb casting and a series of episodes that while stylistically similar to what had gone before seemed to have developed a new maturity beyond those of 2005 and 2006.

Of course, before getting too excited, we had to meet the family.

It was an interesting line-up that featured two actors that had previously appeared in Doctor Who, an ex-DJ and a very pretty lady indeed. Somehow though, the collection of supporting family members for Martha became less an effective grounding in the day to day reality of Earth and more a bad pastiche of a very bad soap opera.

As Martha Jones' mother Francine was Adjoa Andoh, who had previously appeared as Sister Jatt in 2006's *New Earth*. Andoh's Doctor Who connection also spread to a Big Finish audio *Year of the Pig* in 2006, opposite Colin Baker.

Trevor Laird, meanwhile, was Martha's dad Clive, who was estranged from her mother. His former appearance in Doctor Who was also opposite Colin Baker in the 1986 serial *Mindwarp*, in which he played the smug guard commander Frax.

Meanwhile the beautiful Gugu Mbatha-Raw played Martha's sister Tish, who would play a key role in the development of the Mr Saxon sub-plot throughout 2007; Radio 1 DJ Reggie Yates was surprisingly cast as Martha's brother Leo. Arguably his brief appearances were superior to those of Laird.

There were two other members in Martha's family that would be known to Doctor Who viewers. Adeola Oshodi, previously played by Agyeman in *Army of Ghosts/Doomsday* was revealed to be Martha's cousin in the 2007 series opener *Smith and Jones*, while Clive had a much younger girlfriend, Annalise (Kimmi Richards).

Build up to the third series of Doctor Who since the show's return was comparatively muted. Although still appearing in the papers whenever there was a story (and often when there wasn't) the departure of Billie Piper had given the chattering press less to focus on. The series trailer, too, seemed more restrained than those of the previous two years. This lead some fans to suspect that not very much was set to happen over the coming 13 episodes, while others praised the fact that the trailer didn't feature almost all of the money shots as they had in 2006.

Released in the Radio Times a few days before the series began at 7pm on Saturday, March 31st 2007, the full list of episode titles saw some new writers to Doctor Who on TV, notably Gareth Roberts, another Virgin books alumni, and Chris Chibnall. Until the announcement that he would be contributing a script for the first series of **Torchwood** (*Cyberwoman*), Chibnall's previous claim to Doctor Who fame had been his scathing criticism on the state of the series in an appearance on a BBC phone-in show in the late 1980s.

Those episode titles in full:

1. *Smith and Jones* – by **Russell T Davies**
2. *The Shakespeare Code* – **Gareth Roberts**
3. *Gridlock* – Russell T Davies
- 4 & 5 *Daleks in Manhattan & Evolution of the Daleks* – **Helen Raynor**
6. *The Lazarus Experiment* – **Stephen Greenhorn**
7. *42* – **Chris Chibnall**
- 8 & 9 *Human Nature & The Family of Blood* – **Paul Cornell**
10. *Blink* – **Steven Moffatt**
11. *Utopia* – **Russell T Davies**
- 12 & 11 *The Sound of Drums & The Last of the Time Lords* – **Russell T Davies**

Helen Raynor was one of the series script editors; this was a very different role to the one done by Terrance Dicks, Bob Holmes and others during production of the classic series. Comparatively speaking, Russell T Davies was the modern day Dicks or Holmes, while Julie Gardner and Phil Collinson could be considered to be filling similar roles to Barry Letts or Philip Hinchcliffe. Modern production of Doctor Who (and indeed any other TV show) is considerably different to that of the 1963-1989 run, however.

Throughout the new Doctor Who series, the BBC's official website had been providing fascinating additional content, from desktop screensavers and backgrounds to the revolutionary TARDISodes for Series 2 (downloadable episode prologues requiring no principal cast).

On a weekly basis, the sturdy team looking after the site would update images, preview the upcoming episode and offer what news they could. Usually this would be in the shape of exclusive interviews and links to other related BBC pages and events. Sadly, the BBC's official Doctor Who site seems to have its hands very tightly restrained, and unless the

material originates with them they have almost no remit to report news in the world of Doctor Who, Torchwood and **The Sarah Jane Adventures**.

Remarkably, this doesn't prevent them from delivering on a weekly basis evocative and entertaining "extras" to the main program. During 2007 this content was delivered with a little more polish than it had been in previous years, and the site was also the online home for *Infinite Quest*, the new Doctor Who cartoon that would star David Tennant and Freema Agyeman as the Doctor and Martha, with Anthony Head (previously seen as Mr Finch in *School Reunion*) voicing the villain, Baltazar.

In fact, aside from a few false starts in the past (most notably the late 1990s) *Infinite Quest* would be the first official and complete Doctor Who cartoon, and would air at the same time as the third series in a late afternoon midweek slot on BBC One.

Keeping David Tennant busy seemed to be the order of the day, with radio broadcasts and interviews almost everywhere in the lead up to Series 3. Yet there was still a feeling following the (some felt) premature departure of Christopher Eccleston that Tennant might be on his way soon, such was his popularity.

This might explain why the star of the show gave this response when he was asked about his future:

"Do you know how many times I have been asked that question? Do you know how many times I have answered it?"

While Tennant might have responded here with all of his well-known natural charm, you can't help but feel that he was a bit teed off by this – after all, surely the big story of Series 3 (certainly as far as the launch night was concerned) was that Freema Agyeman was the new companion. Despite Catherine Tate's Christmas turn, Billie Piper was still casting a shadow over the series, and Freema had big shoes to fill. Yet she was seemingly ready to see what the fans thought about here.

Certainly Freema Agyeman's life was about to change as on Saturday, 31st March, 2007, Series 3 kicked off with *Smith and Jones*.

SMITH AND JONES

Christian Cawley

Well that was 45 minutes of stomping space rhino fun, wasn't it? Well-toned visual FX, the first really fearsome alien creatures of 21st century Doctor Who and a new companion into the mix, Series 3 launched with a lunar-tinged upwards rainstorm, rather than a bang.

I could sit and compare *Smith and Jones* to previous openers *Rose* and last season's woeful *New Earth*. However it comes off so strongly in comparison that I won't. The introduction to Martha Jones is much stronger than the introduction of Rose Tyler – but what of the differences between the characters? Is Doctor Who – or more importantly the viewer – ready for a brave “Who” world?

Regular readers will know that over the course of Series 2 I bemoaned the direction the relationship between the Tenth Doctor and Rose Tyler had taken. Strangely obsessive about each other, their cliquy behaviour was far worse than the Ninth Doctor-Rose-Captain Jack gang of *Boom Town*. A case in point would be the visit to Torchwood House and the mocking of the incumbent monarch. While many fans have defended their tone and actions in front of Queen Victoria, the point remains – how many of us would travel through time to take the piss out of historical figures?

“Oi Gandhi, try these – Nike Air, bound to be better than those awful flip flops you're wearing!”

“Excuse me, Mr Churchill? Could you do an impersonation of Derrick Gulyer saying ‘Oh Yes!’?”

It wouldn't happen.

So let's hope for some maturity in Series 3, and less of the capriciousness. A good place to start in this hope would be the Jones family, a rag tag bunch of optimism and **Hollyoaks**. Mum is a neurotic mess, brothers and sisters complain to Martha about the pros and cons of the upcoming party and of course, Papa's got a brand new bag, by the name of Annalise. It's a car-crash of a mid-life crisis and it is very, very familiar. Perhaps it's time to leave these family-orientated storylines to real soaps, Russell, and avoid insulting otherwise intelligent viewers with these disgusting stereotypes?

Thankfully, the involvement of the Jones' was at the fringes of an enjoyable yarn about a shapeshifting space vampire (the incomparable Anne Reid) who killed a princess being tracked by the seemingly unstoppable force of the Judoon. Impressive work on their spacecraft, I thought; I'm still unable to tell if they were models, CGI, or both. As for the name – galactic coppers dispensing justice in a slightly Judge Dredd manner – “Judoon” is a little too close to “Aridius” for my liking, but they are effective, imposing and I wouldn't say no to a repeat performance from them.

So, what about the new element, Martha Jones? Well actress Freema Agyeman seems quite competent, but it's a little difficult to see anything other than a different lady speaking Billie Piper's lines at the moment – and while I wasn't that taken by Donna, I was more than happy to see the back of Rose Tyler. I could postulate that Russell T Davies can only write three types of women – teenage girls, mothers and aliens posing as humans – but that might be a bit strong, and it's early days yet for medical student Martha Jones.

An interesting facet of Martha's character is her steadfast belief in the events of *Army of Ghosts* and some of the other very public invasions seen in Doctor Who since 2005. This all ties in nicely with the statements of politician Mr Saxon who receives at least two mentions in *Smith and Jones*, and is, I daresay, likely to pop up throughout Series 3.

If Mr Saxon is what we think he is, then that will present us with a very interesting adversary for the Tenth Doctor, who continued to be the “toned down” version we saw in *The Runaway Bride*. The casting for Series 3 seems to be of a generally higher standard than that of Series 2, and I reckon we're going to get the best out of David Tennant at least once this year – why not start next week, opposite Dean Lennox Kelly's William Shakespeare...?

With a strong fan reaction and a fun opening story, Doctor Who was once more back on our screens. Martha Jones, however, remained a contentious point. My personal feeling is that she was a great character, perfectly played by Freema Agyeman who pretty much had the scariest job in television.

Even now, years later, we can see the effect that Billie Piper and Rose Tyler had on a season of Doctor Who in which she didn't appear. Agyeman clearly worked very hard to make Martha interesting, pleasant and pretty much the complete opposite to Rose. To most fans she did the job, but there remained (indeed, remains) a hardcore of Doctor Who fans that just couldn't come to terms with a new girl in the TARDIS.

This could hardly have been helped by the undercurrent of unrequited love between Martha and the Doctor throughout the 2007 run of Doctor Who. Although apparent at several junctures (notable *Human Nature* and *The Sound of Drums*) fans first became aware of it during “celebrity historical” *The Shakespeare Code*.

Written by Gareth Roberts, another former Virgin and BBC Books Doctor Who novelist (*The Highest Science*, *Zamper* to name a few) who had already contributed the tricky *Attack of the Graske* interactive episode for the BBC Red Button in 2005, *The Shakespeare Code* tuned into the popularity of the Dan Brown book and subsequent movie **The Da Vinci Code**⁹. Both stories imply there is something lost or unknown about the ancient works of each visionary – in **the Da Vinci Code** it is the continuing bloodline of Christ; in *The Shakespeare Code*, it is the existence of witches (alien Carrionites) and their reliance on word-based science, also known as magic.

THE SHAKESPEARE CODE

Brian A Terranova

Well look at that. After months of online fans complaining about the over-use of the sonic screwdriver, the Doctor gets through an episode without using it once!

No Sir, he stuck to his wits and in the end saved the day without once even mentioning it. He did however mention Rose again... why?

You have Martha with you, you're in the Globe Theatre with William Shakespeare and there could be witches about. For anyone else you would think you have enough on your mind, but sadly the Doctor is still thinking of Rose. A good companion, yes, but surely not one who deserves that much attention.

Over the years there were far better companions and stronger relationships held by the Doctor and yet he didn't drone on about them every chance that he got. A friend of mine suggested that maybe Martha would have enough of the Rose comments and put her foot down to the Doctor explaining that she is here now and would appreciate it if he didn't treat her like dirt. In effect putting an end to the Doctor's whining about Rose.

If that's the case, then please God let it happen soon. Say in, oh I don't know, *Gridlock*?

But to be honest if this is my chief complaint about *The Shakespeare Code* then it would seem that we are in good shape.

⁹ The title of **The Da Vinci Code** itself was of course a play on the so-called "Bible Code" of alleged predictions from the Old Testament...

In the past two series the 45-minute time frame seemed to not be enough. The stories felt rushed and the resolution was far, far too quick. But in these last two episodes alone it would seem that they writers have found their footing and learned how to make the single episode work.

During the course of one episode we met William Shakespeare, had Martha's first trip through time, learned of a new alien race, a forgotten play by the Bard, and still had enough time to have the aliens hatching an evil plot with enough time for the Doctor to stop them.

I can truly say that this is the first time that I thought the 45 minutes seemed long. Twice during this episode I thought the story was going to go into the "five second resolution" time, but instead the pace kept up. It was wonderful to feel three quarters of an hour seem like 2 hours, in a good way.

Not only was the writing of the story top notch but so to was the back ground CGI effects. The establishing shot had my friend and I so impressed that we each let out a "wow" under our breath. I am a tough one to please with CGI, to be honest, I usually think it's ok, or very poor. I generally feel that it has no place on anything that is meant to be alive, but very good for backgrounds and solid structures and special effects as long as it is done well. This is the first episode that knocked my socks off. With the exception of the first CGI witch creature that the two actors conjured up anyway.

So there we have it, script, CGI, Rose/not Rose... OH! Right, the actors.

Even though the witch's makeup may have been a bit OTT or standard, it is very safe to say that their performances were very enjoyable. Namely the head witch. She never once stepped in to the panto realm and often made you feel uneasy to be around her, which is good and you would think you should be around a witch.

Next we have the man himself: William Shakespeare. I bought it. I've heard for years how brilliant the man was and you only could take historians and literary majors' words for that, but to see a man portray that brilliance with such class and style really makes you believe. I'm not sure it that's a compliment to Shakespeare, Dean Lennox Kelly, or both, but either way it was a joy to watch.

From the nameless characters in the street to the Doctor himself this story was spot on. David Tennant was darker than usual while still portraying his wild and happy go lucky self. If this is what the rest of

the series has in store for us then it seems Doctor Who has got its groove back.

An interesting turn of phrase there by Brian A Terranova: “Doctor Who has got its groove back.” I’d like to qualify this by telling you that Brian is in fact an aged 1960s hipster with a liking for Belgian jazz and hemp, but he’s not. He’s just a Doctor Who fan with too many Character Options figures and replica outfits and props.

Yet he encapsulated the feeling at the so-called “Kasterborous Towers” with those words. It’s difficult to explain exactly why some of us older, long-term fans felt uncomfortable with Doctor Who in 2006, but just a few months later the show seemed back on track. As Series 3 progressed, I developed the “Theory of Odd Seasons” which basically declares that the odd-numbered series of episodes since 2005 are a better run of episodes than those of the even-numbered series.

It’s just a theory, and possibly a divisive one, but as it went on, Series 3 was feeling stronger than Series 2 even just three episodes in. Perhaps that was down to the fact that The Face of Boe was finally ready to impart his secret to the Doctor.

Indeed, it was time for another trip to the unfathomably far future (a stone’s throw compared to what we would see later in the series, however) and a return trip to New Earth.

Notable for several interesting scenes, *Gridlock* nevertheless remains pivotal not just to Series 3 but to Doctor Who as a whole. Foreknowledge is demonstrated by Boe, non-memorable classic villains are employed, and a remarkable demonstration of the power of faith and celebration is played out – particularly interesting given Davies’ previous statements on religion in 2005’s *The Parting of the Ways* and earlier in **The Second Coming**.

Gridlock also gives us a couple of interesting cameos, first by Ardal O’Hanlon who will forever be known only as Father Dougal McGuire from the classic 1990s sitcom **Father Ted**, and Lenora Critchlow who would later become a main character in the supernatural comedy drama **Being Human**. However it seems that there was little to recommend her based on the initial viewing of this very episode which like many of Davies’ more modest affairs could have come straight from the **Doctor Who Magazine** comic strip.

GRIDLOCK

Christian Cawley

With an enclosed motorway teeming with Macra, Martha kidnapped so that a desperate young couple can get into the fast lane and the Doctor seemingly trapped in a car with a talking cat and his wife, poisonous gases and no sign of sunlight, you might be forgiven for thinking that Doctor Who has finally gone all Blade Runner.

Of course, things aren't quite as they seem, and while the rain, futuristic urban degeneration and flying cars were visually thrilling, they lacked substance. Thankfully however, the characters made up for it.

This New Earth setting saw the Doctor lose Martha to kidnappers, encounter crablike foes the Macra, go car-hopping and encounter for the final time the Face of Boe (at least in Boe's timeline...). However while the return of Boe - and his dying message - has been hinted at for quite some time, and was thus the subject of intense speculation (would it be the message we expected or another...?) the main meat of *Gridlock* was about the new dynamic of the TARDIS team, about the Doctor and Martha Jones.

So is this a missed opportunity? Could *Gridlock* have said something valid about pollution and environmentalism? Could *Gridlock* have made a more explicit - or at least pointed - comment about the fast lane/fast track analogy that I'm sure was hinted at but wasn't quite there? Could Russell T Davies have actually managed to tie up a couple of plot points in *Gridlock* rather than ignore them (how did the street stalls close, exactly? How did no one for the previous twenty-five-odd years fail to realise that something was terribly, terribly wrong?)

In many respects the Macra were almost token, used it seems because they already existed and it was therefore quicker than creating another gas guzzling crab. They were well-realised, if completely two-dimensional, and who knows what happened to them next...

As I've already said however, this was a piece about the Doctor and Martha, and how they managed to get through the adventure separately. As such, each was given the opportunity to shine, with David Tennant superb as he dropped in on a selection of New New York citizens each with their own bizarre personality (superbly realised by a nice bit of make-up and set dressing) while Freema Agyeman

outshone her drivers who both refused to accept what was going on in the motorway and what was going on in the plot.

These two - so dull I can barely recall their names (so dull in fact that no one has bothered to update IMDb with their particulars) - receive a special mention in the annals of Kasterborous. They are quite simply the worst performers in Doctor Who since *Silver Nemesis* in 1988, but the reputations of these individuals will no doubt be saved by the performances of Agyeman and Tennant, as well as O'Hanlon.

CGI-wise New Earth looks better basking in golden sunlight than it does in the dark, and while the architecture may be a bit shiny future, it nevertheless looks magnificent. Set dressing too, deserves a mention, as David Tennant and Freema Agyeman occupy several different cars throughout the episode, each one the same set dressed in different ways, as well as the senate building where the Face of Boe resides, which recalls the interior of the space platform in *The End of the World* where we first met Boe.

Concluding the episode, and this review, was an amazing, sparkling description by the Doctor of Gallifrey, finally opening up to Martha whose distress at being lost in the future was alleviated by the Doctor's relentless search for her. We never saw the Doctor talk to Rose like this, and once we get past the obligatory weekly references to her I imagine we might forget her completely. Despite some plot misgivings, there is much to appreciate in *Gridlock*.

Gallifrey, the Time War and the Daleks – key elements of Russell T Davies' Doctor Who and indeed aspects of the series that have shaped spin-off media. When we discovered in *The End of the World* that Gallifrey was gone, and that there had been a war, we knew that the Daleks would be seen again – after all, there had been plenty in the papers about the BBC agreeing a deal with the estate of Dalek creator Terry Nation.

As the new girl in the TARDIS, the Doctor opted to let Martha in on a few facts at the end of *Gridlock* that would prove useful. Subtly done, the young student Doctor quickly found out about the Time War, the Daleks and the fact that the other Time Lords were all gone.

Very useful information to set her in good stead for moments later in the series when Martha might, for example, get separated from the Doctor in some tunnels under 1930s New York...

That's right – the Daleks were back. Just five episodes after the Cult of Skaro had activated an emergency temporal shift to escape from the

Doctor's big lever reversal of the ghost shift at Torchwood, he encountered them once again during the Great Depression, where they were playing around with architecture and genetics in an attempt to instil the Dalek factor into humans.

For hardcore fans of the classic series, there were quite a few re-treaded elements in *Daleks in Manhattan/Evolution of the Daleks*, enough to cause a bit of a fuss online and in letters pages under normal circumstances. There are also some unusual moments during both episodes and certainly Helen Raynor's script does feel as though it needs a bit of tightening up in places, but on the whole this is a pair of episodes considered by many to be the weakest in Series 3.

They are, of course, pretty good episodes and would have stood out among the previous run. But what makes *Daleks in Manhattan/Evolution of the Daleks* so memorable is the fact that for five days before it aired, the world knew what the cliffhanger would be, thanks to an ill-judged Radio Times cover that nevertheless pulled in plenty of viewers.

Featuring Eric Loren as Mr Diagoras/Dalek Sec and Hugh Quarshie (**Holby City, Star Wars: The Phantom Menace**) as Solomon as guest stars, the lovely Miranda Raison and Ryan Carnes nevertheless make the biggest impact as showgirl Tallulah and pig-faced boyfriend Laszlo. However as time progresses, it is worth also noting that Andrew Garfield – farm boy Frank – is also in *Daleks in Manhattan* and *Evolution of the Daleks*, some 4 years before he was cast as **Spider-Man**.

DALEKS IN MANHATTAN

Brian A Terranova

Now I don't want to jinx myself, but did you notice that they didn't mention Rose? And why not? I mean the show worked for 26 years without her, so why can't it now?

But let's not dwell there, there's so much more in this episode worth talking about.

For one, Daleks, practically on my door step.

The Doctor actually setting foot somewhere I have been. I mean practically standing exactly where I did.

A companion who, when you watch her, doesn't make you think "When's she leaving? I'm getting bored."

And then there is the return of the Cult of Skaro.

For years in Doctor Who the Daleks always talked about their massive army, but more often than not, we only saw 3 or 4 Daleks at a

time. Well now there is a reason for it. Sure they are the last surviving Daleks, but more to the point they are Special Forces team of sorts. The Cult of Skaro was formed by the Emperor as a sort of think tank. This doesn't make them less fierce; it just means that seeing four of them as compared to an army seems right.

In the new series most of the Daleks have been drones. All they could say was "I obey" or other one or two word commands. Where now we have a return to form of the good old days when the Daleks could hold conversations. Their words may still be slim, but they hold more impact.

Did I mention they were in New York?

I bet you knew that. But what's impressive about it, is that it looks like they were really there. The Production teams traveling to the US paid off. Between their establishing shots and the CGI effects by the Mill you can actually believe that the Doctor and Martha are in New York. It's just the accents that let you know that you are not.

Seriously though, about 95% of the accents were very good, 5% of them were a bit dodgy, so I won't really complain it. In fact I should praise the actors who got it right as well as the casting director.

This whole series so far has been head and shoulders above the last two, let's just hope they can keep it up for the rest of the year.

I do have to wonder though if Russell T Davies has a fixation with pigs. I mean I know they are close to us genetically so it makes sense to have the Daleks perform experiments on them, but this is the second time a mutated pig has appeared in the series. The jokes about "Pigs in Space" are flying everywhere and make you wonder when a mutated frog will enter the scene. I'm holding out for Sweetums though.

Back to Doctor Who.

David Tennant is really pulling all the stops as his Doctor. He's found his footing and he's making those who he didn't captivate last year hope that he will still be here next year.

Even though he did make me think he was the Doctor from day one, it's nice to see that he can still top himself and make me think that he is even better than before. If he continues like this, his name will be as strongly linked to Doctor Who Tom Baker is 30 years on.

Freema is also a joy to watch. Never once over doing her performance, or acting like she has the most sought after job in the entire world. She is Martha Jones when you see her on screen, not

Freema Agyeman. Let's just hope she doesn't get to comfortable with the role and start laughing in the face of danger.

The only two complaints that I can find with this episode are the name of the story, and the cliffhanger.

The name is fine enough, but as many on the internet have pointed out, this story feels like a classic Doctor Who story, so to me the name of the second part works much better as a blanket title for the story. *Evolution of the Daleks* is so much more "classic".

As for the cliffhanger, Russell T Davies and the Radio Times have a lot to answer for. Did they learn nothing from Series 1? Does anyone recall how upset the fans were when there was a trailer for *World War Three* after the cliffhanger to *Aliens of London* - and how this ruined the cliffhanger?

Now, they have stuck to the practice of keeping the trailer after the credits for those who don't wish to watch it, which is fine by me, but why then, why would you go and release a picture of the Human/Dalek Sec on the cover of the Radio Time one week before the story airs? I mean that was the cliffhanger! It's almost as if the new series team bought and read the book "How to Improve the New Series of your Favorite Show (While at the Same Time Still Ruin the Cliffhangers)" as their bible for this series.

I shouldn't complain too much though, as I can't help but watch the next week trailers, but I would have loved to have sat there watching the cliffhanger saying "oh my... What?! You mean I have to wait till next week?!" rather than "Oh come on, that was the cliffhanger? What were they thinking with the Radio Times cover?"

Returning to upbeat mode...

Still if that is my chief complaint, then I really shouldn't worry. The story was clearly one of the best of the new series and hopefully next week's will continue the trend. The next seven days can't go fast enough.

EVOLUTION OF THE DALEKS

Christian Cawley

With a reverse-Davros cliffhanger (that's half-man half-Dalek, but the other way around) and a super New York Depression-era setting, *Daleks in Manhattan* promised to be the fantastic first part of a fantastic two parter. So did *Evolution of the Daleks* deliver?

Kids up and down the country were thrilled (or filled with fear) by the immortal words “I am the first Human Dalek!” in an almost Zygon-like voice as Dalek Sec crawled from his old Dalekanium travel machine, and I was certainly thrilled by *Daleks in Manhattan*. Yet I can’t help feeling that *Evolution of the Daleks* missed the boat somehow.

Don’t get me wrong, there were some great moments – the Daleks attack on Hooverville, for instance, and the reaction of Sec to the death of Solomon (more on that later). While top marks must go however to Miranda Raison as Tallulah who pushed all the right buttons this episode and painted a character that was definitely archetypal (while sailing very close to the wind of stereotypical), my favourite moment in the episode was the conversation between the two Daleks in the sewers, and the thread that this sewed in the overall narrative (one which we older fans saw coming from ooh, the moment we saw the Radio Times cover).

It did make me wonder what else the Daleks chat about, and whether their classic series conspiracies to over-rule Davros occurred in such circumstances. And it was Davros, mentioned for the third time in this review alone who very nearly got a name check as the Doctor challenged the Daleks over their plans, referring to him as “your creator”. Which was pretty warming, and perhaps we’ll even get to see him back one day (bearing in mind he was last seen lost in 1963), restoring the Daleks to their former glory one more time.

Hugh Quarshie – best known as **Holby City**’s Ric Griffin – played a blinder in *Daleks in Manhattan* as the compelling Solomon. Yet somehow he was dead within minutes of *Evolution* starting, sacrificed to the long list of heroes who died alongside the Doctor. Conversely, the grotesque Laszlo (Ryan Carnes, that guy from **Desperate Housewives**) was equally compelling and deserved a brave death – instead he was (cruelly?) kept alive by the Doctor. Bearing in mind that the spectre of fascism was hanging over the entire world and the terrible treatment German and Japanese expatriates would receive during World War Two this seems a strange choice for the Doctor to make, paving slabs notwithstanding.

One of the reviews or comments I saw of *Evolution of the Daleks* paid attention to the Daleks **AutoCAD** skills to demonstrate their plan to use the Empire State Building as a giant lightning conductor. I’m loathe to imagine the two sewer-dwelling chatterbox Daleks taking a trip to the

local nickelodeon to watch *Frankenstein* then nip back and let Dalek Sec think that he thought of it, but it is a nice picture. Sec was of course the brains of the outfit, and made the ultimate sacrifice for any Dalek – yet this was of course to be his downfall. His reaction at the death of Solomon was a massive giveaway to his hate-filled Cult of Skaro comrades that the experiment was not what they in the end were all about, and in many ways it's a shame Sec didn't somehow escape, set to roam eternity shunned by everyone he encountered much as DWM's Kroton the Cyberman did.

So what did go wrong with *Evolution of the Daleks*? Not much really, in the end it was quite watchable, Eric Loren was superb as Dalek Sec's On Legs, it made sense (more or less) and featured the almost death of the bloody Sonic Screwdriver. I guarantee that Sarah Jane Smith was less sick of it in *Hand of Fear* than I am now. The sight of it tumbling out of the Doctor's hand atop the Empire State Building cheered me up no end after the death of Solomon, as did the sight of Tallulah, Martha, pig-boy and the guy with the Interesting Accent (Professor Higgins would have had a field day with Frank) cobbling together a scaffold-based lightning conductor to have an *ad hoc* barbeque.

With Dalek Sec's plan to convert lots of blank slate humans into Nice Daleks demanding a great deal of energy, it was obvious that the energy was going to come in the form of lightning. So how come the Doctor – a genius, according to Sec – didn't cotton on? Perhaps he a psychological block on RKO horror picture plots following a previous near-death experience a couple of bodies back?

Aye, there are holes in *Evolution of the Daleks*, but Helen Raynor's script on the whole did the job, furthering the theme of the meaning of humanity and giving us a suitably absurd conclusion.

Last season's *Age of Steel* collapsed under the weight of its finale, the Doctor versus the new Cyber Controller, and if there is anything wrong with *Evolution of the Daleks* it is a similar face-off between the Doctor and the two Daleks in the theatre. Tennant obviously wins hands-down, and his toned-down performance this series continues into this episode, even though he is dragged over the top in his demands to be shot by the Dalek Humans. Possibly just a bit too contrived, signposting the imminent sacrifice of Dalek Sec.

Helen Raynor should be given another chance next series, however, and it would be good to have a return to 1930s New York someday...

And with that, it was over. The Doctor took Martha Jones home, her trip in the TARDIS at an end after the thrills and spills of New York, New New York, 16th century London and her trip to the Moon. Back to Earth with a bump, she would be left to pick up the pieces of a few days of insanity while studying for exams.

Or not, as things turned out. Cleverly scheduling Martha's return to Earth with a big (read cathedral-sized) clue that someone was keeping a close eye on the Doctor, the traditional mid-season press relaunch brought us the rather traditional *The Lazarus Experiment*, in which a rich scientist (writer and actor Mark Gatiss) experimented on himself with **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**-style consequences.

Anyone who was uncertain that Doctor writer Mark Gatiss was the same guy from **The League of Gentlemen** before the week leading up to *The Lazarus Experiment* would have been in no doubt afterwards, with coverage of the episode stepped up in the usual **Newsround** and daytime television slots.

It might seem a little bit traditional (it is after all a variation on the "base under siege" plot of many classic Doctor Who adventures) and features some CGI that could have done with some work, but *The Lazarus Experiment* is a fantastic episode that foreshadows the series cliffhanger as well as *Dalek* did in 2005 and *Rise of the Cybermen/ Age of Steel* did in 2006.

THE LAZARUS EXPERIMENT

Christian Cawley

Returning to Earth to drop off Martha at the end of the allotted "one trip", the Doctor find himself at the live demonstration and launch of Professor Lazarus' rejuvenation machine, an event that you just know is going to lead to trouble...

With Martha firmly entrenched and accepted as a companion, it's a good opportunity to re-introduce her family, and writer Stephen Greenhorn thankfully makes good use of the fact that Mr Jones is co-habiting with a poor stereotype and leaves them both out of the story. Which is nice, as it gives us a reason to empathise with the poor chap as the stuck-up Mrs Jones manages to be verbally and physically abusive to the Doctor before name dropping "Harold Saxon" on Martha's voicemail as a source of information as to why the Doctor is dangerous.

Series 3 has been described as being about humanity, and what it means to be human. What better way to raise the question of humanity in a Doctor Who universe where Time Lords no longer govern technology than to extrapolate mankind's twin desires of survival and beauty than to have the mysterious politician Mr Saxon sponsoring an experiment into human rejuvenation?

The event takes place in front of television cameras, and is put together by Tish Jones, Martha's older sister. Coincidence? I think not.

She's quite an attractive lady too; a sentiment shared by the 76 year old Professor Lazarus who tries it on in both his original physical state of old codger and in his reborn guise. Mark Gatiss is expectedly superb as Lazarus, mixing a patrician arrogance as the rejuvenated Lazarus with a sadness that could only be borne of a long life devoted to the success of his dream of ending old age.

Ignoring the tax issues, writer Greenhorn instead raises the subject of loneliness, which nicely takes us back to the theme of the Doctor as a lonely angel. With all of these themes running through Doctor Who at the moment, it makes you wonder just how a new production team will approach the series when the time comes for Russell T Davies, Phil Collinson and Julie Gardner to move on. And will the next team issue dolls of themselves?

Seriously though, I feel *The Lazarus Experiment* will be looked back on fondly in later years. We see the official start of the "Saxon Conspiracy", the introduction of Tish as a viable alternative to Martha, the Doctor literally sparring with Mrs Jones (use your fighting hand, Doctor!) and a CGI monster that has divided Doctor Who fans unlike no monster since the Slitheen.

Even among the Kasterborous team, opinion is divided. Brian A Terranova felt the Mill's construct was poor, with the Lazarus monster failing to convince, whereas my own opinion was that it was quite a success, with its interaction with the set raising it above the Krillitane and into the realm of the werewolf from *Tooth and Claw*. There have been many comments about the face of the monster being a poorly mapped image of Mark Gatiss' face, and while I'm not completely happy about this aspect of the creature, I see it as the only fault. I should add I've watched the episode several times, both on a 4:3 ratio TV and a widescreen TV, and neither of these resolutions disappointed.

With faultless direction from another Doctor Who newcomer, and good guest performance from Thelma Barlow as Lazarus' life-time

partner Lady Thaw. Gatiss showed his class in the scenes with Barlow, as both old and young Lazarus, and I look forward to more from Gatiss as both a guest actor and scriptwriter in future.

So, 612 words later, what have we learned from *The Lazarus Experiment*? David Tennant continues to impress, and again Mark Gatiss was excellent in their scenes together. Tish and Martha would make a good pair of companions for the Doctor, while Mrs Jones is clearly a miserable old sow. Mr Saxon has fingers in pies all over, as well as at least one shady associate whose job it is to spread lies and deceit about the Doctor. CGI can be quite divisive, and mid-season episodes in which nothing really happens much can be hugely important...

42 is next, but in the meantime I'm off to Finland with a Tissue Compression Eliminator to deal with Eurovision once and for all.

Ah yes, Eurovision. Not only did Doctor Who get its traditional mid-season relaunch in 2007, it also had to take the next week off to let Terry Wogan ramble with incoherence and bewilderment live from the **Eurovision Song Contest**. Despite succeeding in not being disrupted by the world's largest sports tournament just twelve months earlier, Doctor Who was put on hold for a week for a pan-European music and glam fest.

With two weeks to kill between episodes of Doctor Who, fans had time to expand on their theories about Mister Saxon (the clue is in the name), and his part in Professor Lazarus' experiments into cellular regeneration and holding back death. The clues were there for all to see – and with the earlier confirmation that John Simm was set to appear in certain episodes as Harold Saxon, it seemed that the Shadow of Saxon would be cast across the whole series...

We knew who we thought he was and like most fans, we were intrigued at how the Master had escaped the Time War...

MASTER OF SURVIVAL

Christian Cawley

Time Lord History is littered with renegades, outcasts of society whose contribution to the annals of Universe's oldest civilization was to embarrass, to challenge and to attempt to overthrow. None of these individuals were as notorious as the Master.

Little is known of the Master's early life. It is thought that he and the Doctor were once friends, and although there have been rumours of a

family tie between them, this has never been established. It is also strongly rumoured that the Master was earlier known as Koschei, and later by his title the Magistrate, and was just another Time Lord until events conspired against him, leaving him trapped in a black hole until he was able to escape at the cost of his remaining regenerations.

Believing the Master dead for many years, the Time Lords eventually discovered that he was still alive, and planning revenge against his former friend the Doctor; an amusing diversion for the urbane sociopath while he completed his main ambition – the reshaping of all matter, all of creation, to his plan.

Almost permanently equipped with a Tissue Compression Eliminator – used to mortally shrink the target and thus banned by most universal conventions – and his intense mental strength (handy for hypnotizing lesser forms) probably developed during his time in the black hole, the Master and the Doctor would lock horns on countless occasions both on Earth, Gallifrey, and in deep space.

While on Earth, the Doctor was able to provide resistance to the Master's malevolent machinations with the assistance of his friends at UNIT, and some assistance from the Time Lords of Gallifrey. The Master and the Doctor were for a time evenly matched, as contemporaries they were similarly educated and similarly ingenious.

A case in point would be the resourcefulness displayed by the Master while imprisoned at sea following his attempts to summon the Daemon Azal. Trapped on a sea fort with UNIT-trained personnel equipped with knowledge of psychic training to avoid hypnosis, the Master nevertheless managed to affect an escape, utilizing the hitherto unknown Earth sea reptiles as an army, thus restoring him again to a position of strength.

Following several events which involved the Master locating and utilizing an alien race or alien technology hidden on Earth, a key alliance with the Daleks to ferment war against the Humans and Draconians in the 25th century would lead to what we thought was his ultimate destruction. The plot was exposed by the Doctor, thus restoring the powerful alliance between the Humans and Draconians and preventing the planned Dalek conquest of our galaxy. Sensing betrayal, however, the Daleks made the Master top of their "Most Wanted" list, and as a result the Master vanished...

Former Celestial Intervention Agency member Chancellor Goth had aspirations to stand for president of the High Council of Time Lords at

the time of the only recorded assassination of a Time Lord council member in history. While initially framing the Doctor for this heinous crime, it transpired that Goth – who had some years earlier voted to banish the Doctor to Earth – was in league with the Master...

Now a tragic, pitiful figure, devoid of his legendary charm and sophistication, the Master was emaciated, almost crippled, shrouded in a hood that was as decayed as he was. It has been rumoured that the Master was taken by surprise following an attempted kidnap of the Doctor's granddaughter Susan; it seems more likely however that the Master was simply holding on to life for as long as possible, his artron energy sustaining him in the absence of regenerations until a new body was available. With designs on the Eye of Harmony – the sacred Time Lord power source – the Master was intent on reclaiming his former glory, and disposing of the Doctor at the same time.

Encountering the Doctor many years later, it was now apparent that the Master had finally taken leave of his senses. His ultimately successful attempt to pervert the ancient energy of the Traken Union – the Source – resulted in his acquiring a new body. His subsequent meddling on the planet Logopolis led to the destruction of a sizeable portion of the universe, including Traken. With the Doctor's intervention, the Master was prevented from holding the universe to ransom with imminent heat decay – but he was yet to be beaten.

Displaying a flagrant disregard for his own safety in a universe that was witness to a growing Dalek presence, the Master continued with his insane plot to destroy the Doctor at the cost of all else. Creating Castrovalva, a seemingly tranquil retreat that was in fact an elaborate space-time trap, the Master intended to trap the newly regenerated Doctor and companions yet his prey escaped at the last minute, leaving the Master stranded.

This was the first of several occasions in which the Master escaped from almost certain death. Later escapes would include Earth's prehistoric era, the Middle Ages and the numismaton flame on Sarn, at the mercy of a rapidly growing tyrannosaurus rex in the Rani's TARDIS, frozen by a limbo atrophier in his own TARDIS and escaping from the immediately imminent destruction of the planet of the Cheetah People.

Yet these were small fry compared to the Master's final galactic Houdini routine. As hostilities between the Time Lords and Daleks began to reach cataclysmic proportions, the Master was handed over

to them to buy time for the Time Lords and pay for his earlier transgression against the Daleks. Requesting that the Doctor collect his remains, the Master was revealed to have survived destruction by the Daleks, existing as a morphant creature. Taking another innocent body, the Master planned to take the Doctor's remaining regenerations, but instead found himself lost in the vortex, falling through the Doctor's TARDIS' link to Eye of Harmony.

Which brings us to the case of survival once more; rumours abound that the Master is alive, having somehow survived the Time War. Truth, or tittle-tattle, one thing is certain – as the ultimate survivor, one day the Master will return.

AN ARC IN SPACE

When Doctor Who returned to the airwaves two weeks after *The Lazarus Experiment*, theories and ideas about how the Time Lords would meet were plentiful. Tuning into 42 – an adventure set in the far future on a solar mining vessel – viewers would have expected little of the “big brother” tactics being employed by Saxon’s people.

All it took was a small break in the furious pace of 42 for Martha Jones to use her “superphone” to call the by-now-irritating Francine Jones for a quick chat (as she drifted helplessly in an escape pod towards a hungry sun) for us to feel his presence, as it were.

There was a certain insidious quality about it too; the feeling of being watched yourself while shouting on the Doctor.

Somehow, Russell T Davies had created an atmosphere of oppression as we watched these episodes; Harold Saxon was clearly becoming a threat, he was probably the Master, and here he was sending people into Martha’s mother’s home to trace her phonecalls. Knowing all we know about the Master, this was pretty scary stuff.

It was a clever moment that offered a breather from the threat of a sentient sun wanting its arm back while reminding us that the Doctor and Martha were going to have to face Saxon at some point.

42

Brian A Terranova

The idea of Doctor Who doing a “real time” story really appealed to me from the word go and while it was an extremely good story, I feel the real time element was not really necessary.

A ship hurtles towards a sun and the Doctor must stop it before they die as well as stop the alien threat that has invaded the ship. It’s an age old Doctor Who story and while the ticking clock served to let you know when things would get really bad, the story would have worked just as well without it.

Maybe I am being a bit harsh, I know they were trying to emulate shows like **24** but to me the best kind of real time stories are those that utilize the one long fluid camera moment.

The X-Files pulled this off with their episode “Triangle” which was filmed in four eleven minute takes. But the best example has to be the Alfred Hitchcock film **Rope** starring Jimmy Stewart where the movie

was filmed in two fluid camera takes with only one cut in the entire film which was hidden so the audience didn't know there was even the one cut.

To me the episode would have been much more effective and "edge of your seat" exciting had they done it this way. But that would have to be a personal gripe, for the feel they were going for they did a very nice job and the episode certainly didn't suffer where the story was concerned. Write Chris Chibnall certainly knows how to churn out a great script for the good Doctor.

Doctor Who has always been home to the absurd, so the thought of a living sun is right at home in the show. In fact this story has many touches of the original series with its representation of crewmembers being possessed and having the ability to possess other crewmembers to help in the aliens fight harkens back to the Tom Baker story *The Invisible Enemy* where minimal crew were being possessed by a space nucleus.

The two stories even share the fact that the Doctor has been possessed and needs to be saved by his companion.

While we're on the subject of companions, why not talk about Freema and her alter ego Martha? She really is developing into a thoroughly modern companion. She holds many of the same traits of the original companions such as fear, bravery, a likeable personality, the slight sense of space travel become not a fun situation once you run into an evil alien race. And yet she has been nicely updated to show how strong she can be when left without the Doctor, as well as showing us that when the chips are down you can still see the worry she is trying to suppress by throwing herself full force into the cause to stop the danger.

This is something that Rose was lacking. While she was a fun character she could at time be a little too happy about being in a bad situation. Even the Doctor knows when to show how serious the situation has become. A superb example of this occurred in 42 when we saw for first time in the shows history just how scared the Doctor can get. When faced with a threat he can't control - or worse a threat that can control him, he finally found the courage to confess how scared he really was. It took every ounce of who he was to hold himself together enough to tell Martha and the crew just what needed to be done in order to survive, not just the threat of falling into the sun, but the threat of the Doctor killing them all off first.

David Tennant has had many opportunities this series to show off the God-given talents he has as an actor, but none as compelling as this story. I feel there is a good possibility that we may have to hand over that complement to the next story in line *Human Nature* after it airs, but it would in no way dull the effects of this story.

Even the supporting casts this year have been top notch; no one hamming it up on screen or changing the tone of the story by not capturing the overall feel of the story. Each and every character in this episode had genuine fear and emotion in their eyes. Even the character whose eyes we could not see. And that says a lot. That could also be the magic of Director Graeme Harper who, it can arguably be said, directed the most emotionally moving screen in all of Doctor Who when the Doctor and Rose became separated in the end of *Doomsday*.

It seems that the third time would be the charm as the new series has really found its feet. All the elements that needed polishing on the last two series seem to have been nicely sorted out. If the rest of the series is as good as this story then I for one will be a very happy Doctor Who fan.

Returning to the series for the first time since 2005's *Father's Day* (and largely overlooking his own reboot of the series with the online adventure *Scream of the Shalka*) was Paul Cornell, delivering an adaptation of his popular 1995 Virgin novel *Human Nature*. While the original story saw the Seventh Doctor and Bernice Summerfield visiting 1914 as the Doctor lives as a human and falls in love with a fellow teacher, the updated version would see the Tenth Doctor land in 1913, and fall in love with the school nurse while living as a human.

Many of the characters have the same names, and a race of hunters attempting to steal the Doctor's powers exists in both versions of the story – the Aubertides in the book, and of course the Family of Blood on TV.

Obviously, there would be other changes; Martha is black, so would be playing the part of a servant in 1913, while the whole story was yet another piece of the "Who is Mr Saxon?" puzzle.

Yet adapting a novel from 1995 that had previously been accepted as canon by the BBC (and let's face it, there is no higher authority) into a TV episode opens up a can of worms. Could two versions of the Doctor have fallen in love with two women called Joan? Or even the same woman twice?

Other episodes of Doctor Who since 2005 had relied on some of the highlights of the various spin-off media, notably *Dalek* and its similarities with the Sixth Doctor adventure *Jubilee* from Big Finish (both were written by Rob Shearman) and 2006's *Rise of the Cybermen*, which owed a little to Marc Platt's *Spare Parts*, again a Big Finish production, this time featuring the Fifth Doctor.

While the events of these adventures could conceivably occur to the same chap – particularly one who has lived for many, many years, there remains the question of *Human Nature*.

What do we do with it – accept one over the other? Pretend that the novel didn't happen because it was “just a book”?

Or do we do what Paul Cornell has since done – declare that there is “no canon” and just get one with life?

Whichever decision we make, the fact remains that *Human Nature/The Family of Blood* is one of the most memorable and superb (and indeed, HUGO award nominated) Doctor Who serials in its entire lifetime.

HUMAN NATURE

Christian Cawley

Back in the 1990s, I was an avid reader of the Virgin New Adventures range of Doctor Who novels. Yet somehow, *Human Nature* passed me by. I'm a big fan of Paul Cornell's earlier *No Future* - a novel that isn't as half as popular, so work that one out.

So I came to the television version of *Human Nature* almost completely unaware of what the story entailed, its setting, and how it pans out. All I knew about it was it involved the Doctor believing he was a human teacher...

From an action packed opening sequence through a gentle, serene rendition of 1913 - *Human Nature* singlehandedly rewrote what nuWho actually is. Never mind that it managed to tease fans with glimpses of a journal that included the Eighth Doctor's second television appearance; the Doctor's favourite moniker of Dr John Smith also played up to fans, and no doubt brought a smile to regular newer viewers faces; and of course who can forget that pocket watch...?

Writing these reviews as often as we do on Kasterborous does leave the writer open to self-parody; phrases such as “sublime performance”, “excellent supporting cast” and “Tennant is wonderful as ever” begin to roll off the tongue with astonishing ease. But the thing is, Series 3 has been that good. Even when it hasn't quite hit the mark,

it has still had an advantage of Series 2 in the shape of Freema Agyeman. Throw your copy of *The Sun* in the bin, organise mass burnings, or use it as the toilet paper that it is – Freema has been great throughout this series, and in *Human Nature* was thrust to the fore of the narrative on the very same day that aforementioned gutter newspaper heavily implied that the BBC weren't impressed with Freema's ability.

The acting did the talking however, and despite the heavy responsibility of David Tennant playing a completely different character it was Freema who shone, carrying the action, leading the narrative and wearing a maid's outfit.

As for the "excellent supporting cast" – well how about young Harry Lloyd, turning in a nostril-flaring performance far superior to anything he managed in **Robin Hood**? Or Jessica Hynes (previously Stevenson) as the lovely Matron Joan Redfern? Her rapport with John Smith was excellent, a wonderful touch that finished off the painting of the 1913 public school in Paul Cornell's lavish story.

There are plenty of questions left unanswered (who exactly are the Family? How does the Doctor get all of his memories in that fob watch? And how are they going to get out of that cliffhanger?) but most of all, I want to know who is that young boy, and what is his purpose to the story? Latimer was played by Thomas Sangster, veteran of playing widower Liam Neeson's stepson in **Love Actually**. Playing a psychic who pockets teachers' watches in Doctor Who is a far cry from playing a lovesick teenager running through an airport, however, and like the other cast members (the girl who played Martha's maid friend was also good) he fitted in seamlessly.

Minimal CGI too, enhanced the story rather than overwhelmed it, and it was also good to see something new in the TARDIS for the first time in literally ages.

The Family of Blood is the concluding part of this adventure, one that I fancy we will remember for years to come. Personally I can't wait, and if the rest of Series 3 is going to be as good as *Human Nature* then Series 4 will have a lot to live up to.

It's really easy to enthuse and gush about new episodes of Doctor Who, but *Human Nature* has so much to commend it. It sits alongside Series 1's *The Empty Child/The Doctor Dances*, Cornell's own *Father's Day* and Steven Moffat's other effort to date, *The Girl in the Fireplace*.

If you missed it, catch up before Saturday.

If you've got this far through the book (well done!) you'll have noticed that every two-part Doctor Who story features consecutive reviews with nothing (or little) in between. However, we couldn't go from *Human Nature* to *The Family of Blood* without paying tribute to the massive part that Freema Agyeman plays in them both.

In order to do this, however, we will need to mention an inexplicably popular daily newspaper and the various claims made against Agyeman during the 2007 run of Doctor Who (as referred to in the review) – namely that she wouldn't be returning for another series, and that she just wasn't very good.

Anyone who has seen *Human Nature* should be quite willing to attest that she actually is pretty good, and while later appearances (see later on) might not have been up to scratch this sort of newspaper article was poorly timed and pretty nasty.

As a man with a soft spot for Ms Agyeman, between the two episodes I was compelled to write something as a response...

MARTHA'S MEDICINE

Christian Cawley

As the Doctor and Martha are mired in 1913, one year from the Great War and with the Doctor not quite himself, what better time than to take stock of our new companion, medical student Martha Jones?

You might want to harp on all day about Rose Tyler and her and the Doctor's "special relationship", but for me Martha Jones is the Real Deal. She has drive, ambition, a real desire to make a difference – and that's before she's even met the Doctor. Furthermore her introduction in *Smith and Jones* showed us that she has a brain that will accept the unknown. She mentions Mr Saxon's claims of life "out there", refers to the Battle of Canary Wharf and doesn't lose it when the hospital is transported to the moon.

Martha's relationship with her family is of course very different. She has a brother and older sister, both seen to best effect in *The Lazarus Experiment*, as well as a father experiencing a midlife-crisis (or a reaction to his horrible wife...?) and of course Martha's mother, who seems to be imprinting herself on Series 3 as much as Martha herself – and we've only seen her three times!

There is of course the expected aspect of suspicion directed at the Doctor, seen previously with Jackie Tyler's concern for her daughter. But Martha's mother seems to have taken this to an almost psychopathic level, colluding with the dark forces of Mr Saxon...

Martha is also, I have to point out, very attractive. Actress Freema Agyeman is a popular actress with girls and boys, men and women alike, and while she isn't photographed drunk or looking ill in the less respectable magazines and newspapers, this doesn't mean that she is unpopular. Her predecessor Billie Piper has a long experience of appearing in magazines and newspapers, either to promote her work or on the arm of her ex-husband. It stands to reason that a different actress is going to require the press to follow different rules...

Which brings us neatly on to The Sun. This "newspaper" recently stated that Freema Agyeman would be leaving Doctor Who, implying that she basically isn't very good. This absolute rubbish should of course be treated with a pinch of salt, coming after a **Friday Night with Jonathan Ross** interview in which Series 4 was mentioned, and just hours before another superb, gutsy performance as Martha.

So far we have seen this beautiful, wide-eyed companion tackle a Plasmavore, meet and leave a distinct impression on William Shakespeare, encounter the Daleks and formulate a way of killing their Pig Slaves with conducted lightning, and of course deal with the Lazarus monster, a sentient sun and an amnesiac Doctor.

Freema Agyeman is a very different actress to Billie Piper, and this naturally gives us a very different companion. She isn't filling the screen with her face, or ACTING – she is acting, delivering her lines in an understated, being-a-part-of-the-action manner. Billie Piper never once gave an understated performance in Doctor Who, and often overwhelmed stories, and her co-star. Martha Jones is designed for the Tenth Doctor, and they make a much better pairing than the Tenth Doctor and Rose combo.

With just 5 weeks left of Series 3, Martha and the Doctor are going to see some changes. For instance, how will they deal galactic tart Captain Jack Harkness? What will happen when they return to London, and encounter Mr Saxon, and worse, Martha's mother?

However Series 3 ends, whether Martha remains a traveller on board the TARDIS or not, some things are irrefutable. She has been a marvellous companion, she looks pretty hot, she has been a part of (up to now) the best series of Doctor Who yet, and she compliments her

leading man perfectly. Furthermore, whether she lasts one series, two series or more, Martha Jones is and forever will be remembered as a companion of the Doctor.

And you can't say Freema than that.

So with the world put to rights, we return to our normal programming: the Doctor – as John Smith – looks on as the Family of Blood hold school matron Joan Redfern and maid Martha Jones hostage, demanding that the unknowing Smith reveals his Time Lord self...

THE FAMILY OF BLOOD

Christian Cawley

Baines! How wonderful was this portrayal of malevolent alien evil sir? Harry Lloyd surpassed his “part one” performance with scary eyes and nose, and a mocking disregard for the pointless authority of a school headmaster. Brilliant!

So as Dr John Smith struggled to come to terms with the insanity around him, and the realisation that he was a fictional character, Doctor Who entered a brave new era with this adaptation of Paul Cornell's own book from 1995.

In *Dalek* in 2005, the Ninth Doctor and his companion encountered a lone Dalek in much the same way as his Sixth self once did in *Jubilee*, and audio production from Big Finish. Until now, this is where the mining of non-television adventures ended, again adapted by its originator, Rob Shearman. However the *Human Nature/Family of Blood* adventure plays with the format of Doctor Who without causing the viewer to bat an eyelid, raised questions for hardcore fans over the actual place of the interim years novels, challenged our perceptions about the Doctor, allowed a real romantic relationship to take place (as opposed to the meeting of minds of *The Girl in the Fireplace* **and** played on the closeness of the 1913 setting to the impending war of 1914-1918, and the part that the school system and social hierarchy played in damning Britain's young men in the name of a remote, related-to-the-enemy King.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, this is Doctor Who. It is writers like Cornell, Shearman and Gatiss who seem to understand the nature of modern Doctor Who better than their peers; after all, as contributors to the Virgin, BBC Books and Big Finish range of continuing adventures, they've all played their own part in forging various templates for

modern Doctor Who. Russell T Davies' vision of Doctor Who isn't so far removed from *Survival*, and these names (and dozens upon dozens of others) have all played their part in developing, furthering - pushing, even - the format in the intervening years.

It comes as no surprise then that with a suitably strong lead pairing and the right stories that Series 3 stands upon the shoulders of 1 and 2. There is a certain quiet confidence in the show which is so removed from the self-indulgent, look-at-me-act, aren't-we-great of Series 2 that it's almost perfect. Charles Palmer's direction in *The Family of Blood* continued to be superb, with beautiful wide frames cutting to eerie close-ups, in the dark, with explosions, and somehow surpassed his work on *The Shakespeare Code*. More from him in Series 3 please.

The fiction within fiction aspect of the *Human Nature* tale is never given too much focus, not dwelled upon; instead John Smith is horrified that he is not who he is, that he is someone's idea of a human that has fallen in love. Something that the Doctor didn't imagine would happen.

John Smith is also – surprisingly in many ways – much nicer than the Doctor. He might not be “fire and ice”, but he is real, and David Tennant seemed to play this man, this fragment of his usual character with such modest brilliance that an award has to be forthcoming for the actor on the strength of this story alone. In particular was the tender scene between John Smith and Joan, allowing a glimpse of their possible future together, with marriage, children, and ultimately a quiet, unheroic death for the unassuming teacher (a perfectly-aged David Tennant).

The *Human Nature/The Family of Blood* two-hander has been the highlight of Series 3 so far, and very possibly of Doctor Who since its 2005 return. It is up there with *The Empty Child/The Doctor Dances*, just as hoped for in last week's review – in fact, it might even be better. It might even be the Best Doctor Who.

Ever.

Of course, the thing about Doctor Who is that things are never what they seem. You can be sat enjoying the series putting out its best episodes in years and then a few weeks later it gets cancelled, or you can be busy working on a 30th anniversary special only to be told that some suits from the USA have bounded in and taken over the show for one night only in four years' time, but you aren't needed any more.

Such was the utter bewilderment of fans in 2007 when we discovered that *Human Nature* and *The Family of Blood* weren't the only great (and future HUGO nominated) episodes of Doctor Who that year. The reference in the last paragraph of that last review was strangely prescient. It would be Steven Moffat's *Blink* that somehow stole the thunder of Paul Cornell's amazing two-parter – something he would do without even bothering to include the Doctor or Martha in most of the story!

Following claims that Christopher Eccleston had been exhausted by work on Doctor Who, the concept of the "Doctor-lite" episode was introduced in 2006 with *Love & Monsters*. This idea was followed through in 2007 with *Blink*, a low-budget affair featuring statues that can-but-can't move, enforced time travel and a talking DVD extra.

It sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? And yet...

BLINK

Christian Cawley

Stranded TARDIS-less in 1969, the Doctor communicates via DVD (and notes under wallpaper) with Sally Sparrow, a twenty-something living in London, 2007.

If the concept alone doesn't get the juices of Doctor Who fans the world over running, this next bit should. The Doctor and Martha – and others – have been thrown out of time by "Weeping Angels" statues that aren't statues at all, but quantum-locked aliens. This ingeniously means that once seen by any living creature (themselves included) the "statues" are frozen, but when you look away, or blink...

Now let's just stop it there, now, right now. Stop. Oi! You at the back – I said STOP!

Just what the hell is going on? This is NuWho, conceived by Russell T Davies and executed by his crack team of emo freaks, dredging storylines from soap operas and giving us Peter Kay as a fat alien. It isn't supposed to be this good, is it? I mean, I haven't given any of the episodes a bad review yet, not even *Evolution of the Daleks*!

So who the hell does Russell T Davies think he is, producing a series this good? There are supposed to be weak links like *Boom Town* and *New Earth*, reasons for me to be disappointed, and the only think I've been disappointed with in Series 3 was the Radio Times cover with Dalek Sec out mono-staring me.

If things carry on being this good, I'll have nothing to talk about in the summer, and we'll have to run one of our features on a NuWho

Doctor Who story instead of a classic story. In fact, if I can't get Carey Mulligan out of my head between now and next Saturday, there's going to be trouble in the Kasterborous Towers master bedroom...

So let's just summarise: a Steven Moffat-penned Doctor Who story has for the third series on the trot set itself in stone as the best single episode adventure of the run (so far...), and placing itself a very, very, very close second to Paul Cornell's *Human Nature*. This is the Doctor Who season I have been waiting for since I came back from the Munich Beer Festival in 2003 and discovered a new series had been commissioned.

There's darkness, shadows, the over-arching feeling of a net closing in on the Doctor courtesy of Mr Saxon (who wasn't even mentioned in *Blink* - lessons obviously learnt from last year's disastrous "Torchwood" theme/meme), a suitably toned performance from David Tennant and a fun, likeable, attractive companion.

Blink complements the previous (and more than likely subsequent) episodes perfectly, with **High Fidelity**-style in jokes, a convincing, real threat and an agreeable, attractive and effortless guest lead. There's emotion, fear, love, "timey-wimey" stuff and the idea of the Doctor and Martha living in 1969 for a few weeks.

All the usual stuff that Doctor Who has given us this year was there – expert direction, strong performances, tight script and excellent FX work – but high on my list of favourites EVER in the history of everything is the slow Hitchcock-esque zoom on the eyes of those about to *Blink*. Sublime.

Blink is picture perfect, so thank you Steven Moffat and all concerned for producing a Doctor Who adventure without much of the Doctor in that finally wipes away the ghost of *Love & Monsters*.

Not only did *Blink* introduce the lovely Carey Mulligan to households across Britain, it suddenly struck a chord with casual viewers who were starting to realise that Doctor Who wasn't just about long scarfs and umbrellas. It might have taken the general viewing public a good three years to get to this point, but as we've always known, we Whovians have exquisite taste and foresight.

Within days of *Blink* going out on BBC One, a new monster had been embraced by kids and adults across the UK. The idea of a threatening statue of an angel – one that can't move while being observed – was one

of absolute, budget-driven genius by Steven Moffat, and brought a whole new dimension to playground games!

But there was more to it than that. While office colleagues generally mentioned Doctor Who as part of their Monday morning catch up, *Blink* had really made an impact. Suddenly, despite nearly two years of David Tennant, an earlier year of Christopher Eccleston and plenty of time to take in the fact that former pop star Billie Piper had been and gone, Doctor Who wasn't just popular – it was cool.

And by extension, **we** were cool. It's something that one of our guest contributors Nick Brown certainly noticed.

NO JACKET REQUIRED (OR ANORAK...)

Nick Brown

"So what's your favourite television programme, then?"

"Doctor Who."

"Ah yeah, that's great, isn't it? I watch it with my son, he loves it. Those statue things scared the life out of him, though..."

Ok, into your TARDISes and set the co-ordinates for 20 years in the past to 1987...

"So what's your favourite television programme, then?"

"Doctor Who."

"Really? Ok, see ya..."

It used to be that if you admitted to somebody that Doctor Who was your favourite programme you'd be looked at in the same light as a train spotter. You'd no doubt be spending your weekends up in your bedroom – a dark and dingy place lit only by a flickering desk lamp – writing up reams and reams of notes that were barely decipherable to others. When you did venture out of the house you'd be toggged up in your anorak, maybe a bobble hat, and you'd only go to places where you would meet fellow sad cases who you'd greet with some bizarre handshake and converse with in strange codes that no-one else would understand. Of course, you'd all be speaking in pseudo John Major type voices, occasionally reaching such levels of enthusiasm that you'd have to take three or four quick-fire deep breaths to stop you from fainting.

Oh yes, it was a brave man who admitted that Doctor Who was his actual top show. Generally it was considered good form, when asked the dreaded 'favourite television programme' question to answer:

“Well, I like things like **LA Law**, **Moonlighting**, **Miami Vice**... **Doctor Who** ...**Cheers** is quite funny, and the **Cosby Show**...”

So what’s changed? Why is Doctor Who suddenly in vogue? Why is it now British television’s flagship programme?

Whilst watching **I’m A Celebrity – Get Me Out Of Here** last night (stop it now! I like it, ok!?), during the advert break it suddenly struck me just how popular Doctor Who has become. Yes, of course I already realised that is in now essential viewing for many people and is one of the only things a family can sit and enjoy together, but there was an advert for a certain famous supermarket (so famous that I actually can’t recall which one it was) and as well as their great bargains and offers, they mentioned their Doctor Who aisle.

Now just think about that for a moment. A Doctor Who aisle. Time was that if you wanted to buy a three-inch plastic Cyberman, you’d have to trawl round Toys R Us and dig deep in the **Star Wars** and **Transformers** figures bin to see if there were any Doctor Who toys. And usually the answer was no. Now supermarkets – not toy shops or science fiction emporiums, **supermarkets** – have Doctor Who aisles. These days, instead of buying the aforementioned diminutive Cyberman or dog-eared cigarette cards portraying a mad looking Tom Baker, you can now spend your hard earned cash on books, magazines, action figures of virtually every character there’s ever been in ‘New’ Who, voice changing Cyber helmets, sonic screwdrivers, a build-your-own TARDIS, lunch boxes, mugs, remote control Daleks, card games, money boxes, bubble bath, jigsaw puzzles, sticker albums, etc., etc. And they’re not even embarrassing anymore!

Of course, if the programme itself wasn’t as good as it is none of this would be possible. When news broke that the BBC were bringing Doctor Who back, opinion was split. There were those that said “about time” but there were also those who thought it might be better to let it be and watched the first episode with fear and trepidation. So how did it go...?

From the moment *Rose* finished and we had seen the Doctor thwart the Autons, the nation was hooked.

But why? Because new wave Who was the same but different. Much faster paced, more ‘street’, characters that we could identify with and, of course, scripts that an awful lot of ‘classic’ Who couldn’t hold a candle to. It’s top-notch drama now, not pantomime. How many people have sat through all three series so far and never shed a tear?

Now, being macho, I'm on dangerous ground here. I am also, however, fairly convinced that there weren't too many dry eyes throughout the country when Pete Tyler finally realised that Rose was his daughter and he had to die to save her future. Or the 'mourning' scenes following Rose being sucked into the alternative universe, tearing her and the Doctor apart. Or when the Doctor realised that he could no longer live as John Smith and settle down with Joan in *Human Nature*. Or when he read his farewell letter from Reinette in *The Girl In The Fireplace*. I'll stop there as I'm starting to fill up...

Doctor Who now wins all the drama awards, the actors win the best actor awards, respected actors are queuing up to appear – can you really have imagined people like Simon Callow and Derek Jacobi being in 'old' Who? – and it is constantly top of the ratings.

A big, big, big "thank-you" is due to Russell T Davies, Steven Moffat, Phil Collinson, Christopher Eccleston, Billie Piper, David Tennant, Freema Agyeman and the dozens of people that I can't possibly name here, the famous names and those unsung heroes behind the scenes.

This is a golden age for Doctor Who. I hope the new viewers who weren't old enough to see the 'classic' series realise that.

So let's sit back, enjoy the ride and hold our heads up high when asked "so what's your favourite television programme, then...?"

Sir Derek Jacobi was probably the biggest named actor attached to Doctor Who in its entire history when casting for Series 3 was announced. Rumoured to be playing an aging professor on some distant world, this wasn't the famous and much-loved thespian's first brush with time travel...

Four years earlier, Jacobi had appeared opposite Richard E Grant in Paul Cornell's failed online reboot of Doctor Who. Animated by Cosgrove Hall and co-starring Sophie Okonedo, *Scream of the Shalka* also featured a brief cameo by one David Tennant. With Grant as the first version (now de-canonised) of the Ninth Doctor and Jacobi as the android-housed Master, unable to leave the TARDIS, *Shalka* – not quite a full animation – was reasonably well received but quickly forgotten when in September 2003 BBC One announced they had commissioned a new 13 episode series.

However Jacobi's 2003 involvement with Doctor Who was two-fold – he also appeared as the Doctor and his real world alter ego Martin Bannister in Big Finish's *Deadline*, by Robert Shearman. Part of their "Unbound" series of alternate Doctors, this is a fascinating drama that investigates

mental illness and senility, as well as co-starring Jacqueline King, more popularly recognised years later as companion Donna Noble's mother Sylvia.

So with his chops more than a little suited to Doctor Who, Sir Derek Jacobi was one of the main draws of *Utopia*. The other was time travelling and immortal playboy Captain Jack Harkness, once again refreshingly played by John Barrowman.

(If you haven't seen Torchwood, you'll just have to bear with me on this next bit. It's all true.) The final scenes of Torchwood Series 1 had seen Jack disturbed by his "Time Lord in a jar" and the sound of the TARDIS above the secret organization's base The Hub, buried beneath Cardiff Bay. Managing to leave his base fully equipped for a journey to the future – including packing the Doctor's hand – Jack fled from his position of command and made it up 100 feet of stairs to get to the TARDIS before it left again. During the brief "pitstop" for the Doctor and Martha, Harkness was even able to leap onto the side of the TARDIS as it entered the vortex.

It sounds pretty fantastic, doesn't it? And slightly unlikely. Not the bit about clinging to the TARDIS, the bit where he makes it out of The Hub in time.

Still, any excuse to get Captain Jack Harkness back in the TARDIS with his double (and often single) *entendres* and action man attitude, he would be just the man for the Doctor to have alongside him as the clock counted down and the encounter with Mr Saxon neared.

UTOPIA

Christian Cawley

Well... I'm not sure if there is any point to watching Doctor Who any more – after all how can it get better than an episode that saw Sir Derek Jacobi playing a kindly old scientist who is really the Master who steals the TARDIS and then regenerates into Mr Saxon who is played by Life on Mars' John Simm, leaving the Doctor, Martha and of course the returning Captain Jack Harkness stranded at the end of the universe.

That's pretty exciting stuff, and I have to say that I sat spellbound for the full 45 minutes as the plot developed. Alright, it wasn't **The Usual Suspects**, but it was still different, despite the trademark half-sci-fi ideas of sharp-toothed degenerate "futurekind" humans running around a quarry chasing humans for food, an alien with an odd turn of speech and the bonkers dating (5 trillion?! It makes New Earth look like

tomorrow!), a genial scientist and a race of humans looking for “utopia”.

As per usual with a Russell T Davies script, it was the dialogue and the performances that made the adventure. Graeme Harper’s direction, too, minimised the use of the quarry and enhanced the quality of the turns, with Sir Derek Jacobi’s Professor Jana taking sharing centre stage with the returning John Barrowman as Captain Jack Harkness.

With a story that builds in tempo as the plot progresses, culminating in one of the most iconic moments in Doctor Who ever (up there with the Daleks in the Void Ship at the end of *Army of Ghosts*), you have to step back and congratulate the director, Graeme Harper for his marvellous work on the episode (particularly the lighting in the “I. Am. The Master!” moment) and Murray Gold’s tribe-rock soundtrack. At one point I thought it was going to break into Iron Maiden’s “The Number of the Beast” with the muted power chords and reveal of the Master.

The presence of Derek Jacobi meanwhile rose (if that is possible) the performance of David Tennant. He has been absolutely tip-top all season, displaying toned down, darker performance years away from the “Who ya gonna call!?” moment of *Army of Ghosts*. In fact I would go so far as to compare the difference in his performance with the difference between Tom Baker’s in *The Ark in Space* and *The Ribos Operation*. So there I go again, comparing the Tenth Doctor with the Fourth. Just give me a reason to favour you over him, David – another 5 years?

Speaking of giving more time to the role – I would have gratefully taken hours more of Jacobi as the Master. Wonderful, effortless, sublime – superlatives, each and every one of them, but he possesses such presence and grace; I’ve never looked forward to a performance and been so happily rewarded in many a year.

Tying up the mystery of “You Are Not Alone” was inspired; Professor Yana (I spent most of the episode thinking it was spelt “Yarner”, and I was probably not alone in that) being the answer to The Face of Boe’s riddle, however, is another matter entirely. After all, if you cast your mind back to the two adventures on New Earth, Boe seemed to know the Doctor of old...

chan-What did you think of the wonderful alien creature, Chantho? Personally I found her quite lovely, and I hadn’t felt so fond of an

alien since the female Eldrad in *The Hand of Fear*. Her interaction with Martha was reminiscent of that between Rose and Gwyneth in *The Unquiet Dead*, too, very watchable.

Ah. Rose. There she is again. Now I fully expected mention of the blonde bombshell in an episode featuring the return of Jack, but I didn't expect the Doctor and Jack to go beyond the "She's fine!" moment. Was it too much? Is it necessary to the plot? I don't know, only the production team in Wales know, but right now it feels too much. Then again, this is Series 3, currently the finest we've even seen in Doctor Who's long history, and there is very little to complain about so far...

While it was good to see John Barrowman back doing what he does best as Captain Jack, erasing memories of the miserable version from **Torchwood**, the explanation for the Doctor leaving him in *The Parting of the Ways* seemed a little – I don't know – wrong? I suspect, however, that there is more to learn about old Jacky-boy, just as there is with the Master...

A self-indulgent, yet completely validated nod-to-the-past took place as Professor Yana opened his Gallifreyan watch, and long-term Doctor Who fans the world over were rewarded with the evil chuckle of Anthony Ainley and a snippet of Roger Delgado from *The Daemons*. It was a joy to behold, and I suspect that even at this point casual viewers were still watching as this unassuming man became the embodiment of eternal evil as opposed to switching off in their droves because they felt excluded. This wasn't "Look it's the Master, this is for the fans, we don't care what you think" – instead it was "Look – the Doctor isn't the last Time Lord. There's another, and he is BAD!"

Climaxing on THAT cliffhanger, with an omnisequal, 200 year old Time Agent trying to stop a tribe of Futurekind heroes from ripping the TARDIS team to shreds as the old girl departed, was a Master-stroke, and having watched the last 12 minutes 7 times, I suspect Series 3 is going to get even better.

Yes. Better.

Wow - it just got hot in here! Re-watching those scenes a few years' later leaves you with the same feeling of... well I suppose you would call it a "fangasm". Jacobi's transformation from Yana to Master is truly a marvellous moment, one that potentially caps the entire 2007 series and is

certainly one of the standout moments of Doctor Who thanks to the sterling work of director Graeme Harper.

Curiously, however, a lot of fans were concerned that the appearance of the Master would alienate viewers. In some corners of the Doctor Who fandom, *Utopia* was considered naff.

For instance The Stage reckoned the episode

“...contains some sublimely cack-handed sequences of the variety that used to get the series sniggered at with alarming regularity”

Before wondering:

“Is the pay-off brilliant for that pesky regular audience of real people?”

The problem here is that **they weren't the only ones**. So this makes me wonder – as the author of the review you just read – is it just me? Was I the only one who liked *Utopia*?

Obviously I'm not. I recently discovered that *Full Circle* writer Andrew Smith re-watched the final 10 minutes several times the next day, just as I did, and while respected Doctor Who historian David J Howe might have wondered if regular viewers cared:

“All avid fans know who the Master is. We know the history and everything. But new viewers don't. He's just a bad guy. Another Time Lord admittedly, but that's about all we know. Put it like this, if it wasn't the Master, and was someone called Askwith, would it have made any difference. Nope.”

...it didn't stop them watching. Over 8 million viewers watched *Utopia*, an episode that combined classic series and Time War era mythology to resurrect a classic villain.

The Doctor's legendary nemesis – played over the years by Roger Delgado, Peter Pratt, Geoffrey Beevers, Anthony Ainley and Eric Roberts – was finally back, now with a face resembling **Life on Mars** star John Simm.

In 2007 Simm was a big name on TV following two series of the time travelling police drama co-starring Philip Glenister as the incomparable Gene Hunt. As Sam Tyler, Simm was sent into a 1970s style coma following a car accident in the modern day, and discovered a whole new audience of fans – many of whom follow him to this day and certainly will have tuned in to *The Sound of Drums* in June 2007 to see Simm appear in the opening moments of the episode as Harold Saxon, Prime Minister of Great Britain...

THE SOUND OF DRUMS

Christian Cawley

Where does one start with a story like *The Sound of Drums*? As a build up to a now-traditional massive end of season finale, it ticks all of the boxes, putting the Doctor in dire peril, overrunning the Earth with an alien threat and no plausible way out of it.

All of this is of course down to the Master, who in the guise of the Blair-esque Harold Saxon has been manipulating events for some time, hidden from the Doctor behind a pulse sent out by the Archangel network of satellites. As the newly elected Prime Minister, Saxon has taken Martha's family hostage, sent Jack's Torchwood team off to the Himalayas and generally made things very difficult for the Doctor.

David Tennant is the star of *Doctor Who*, but *The Sound of Drums* belongs to John Simm as the new Master. With a performance that riffs Jack Nicholson's Joker, Simon Pegg and the previous incarnations of the character, what we have in Master No Six is a bonkers, psychotic match for the Doctor's own intellect, a Master who seems worthy of the title, who has hoodwinked the British public into accepting him as leader while pulling the wool over the eyes of mankind and plunging it headlong into Armageddon.

That's what I call an evil plot. What's more, there's obviously more to it, with the Master refusing to reveal the true nature of the probe droid-like Toclafane.

Highlights of *The Sound of Drums* include the telephone conversation between the Master and the Doctor, Nicola McAuliffe's Torchwood agent being savagely dealt with in Saxon's Number 10 lounge, the discovery of a bomb behind Martha's television (shades of *Terror of the Autons*) and the jaw-dropping conclusion which saw the Doctor aged 1000 years (I know the script said 100 but he is a Time Lord; the First Doctor was nearly 700 at his youngest and looked younger. 100 extra years on the Doctor should have made him look perhaps 70 at most...) as the Toclafane descended from a tear in the fabric of space above the Earth. This tear was created by the Master, presumably using the cannibalized TARDIS console onto which the old rogue has built a Paradox Machine.

The nature of this Paradox Machine suggests something terrible. It looks messy for starters, while its name suggests the ability to do something that the Doctor has been unable to do – change time itself.

The only logical outcome for this would be for the Master to attempt to restore the Time Lords, or create a new Time Lord order – both of these outcomes of course could only be in his own image...

I have to say it was particularly satisfying to see Martha's mother Francine (Adjoa Andoh) finally realize what a stupid cow she has been as her attempted betrayal of Martha lead to Martha's father Clive spilling the beans and the pair of them carted off at Saxon's pleasure. It was nice to see Tish back as well, although she sadly had very little to do – although my earlier theory that Saxon had put her in place at Lazarus' experiment was proved correct.

With the Master and the Doctor taking up most of the screen time, Freema Agyeman remained ever watchable, with Martha making good her escape and declaring that she would be coming back. Martha is set to somehow rescue the Doctor and Jack next week after escaping from the cloud base into a field via Jacks vortex manipulator. With Captain Scarlet - I mean Harkness - on board the Cloudbase – I mean the Valiant - as an indestructible prisoner, I can see a couple of opportunities for escape.

But will it be too late?

And just who are the Toclafane?

Who indeed?

SEASON CLIMAX ANAGRAMS

Nick Brown

Russell T Davies... Say what you like about him – and a lot of us do – but the man is a genius.

"Eh?" I hear you cry. Yes, I know some say that he's not as good a writer as people like Steven Moffat (and, let's face it, not many are), but, let's not forget, he's the man behind the Doctor Who revival. He's turned it from pantomime to drama. He's turned it into the BBC's award winning flag-ship programme. And not only that, but he manages to weave a story ark into each series that, if we're honest, not many of us can second guess. Who worked out that Rose was the Bad Wolf, then? Come on, hands up...

No, I thought not.

But this series, this series, he has excelled himself. We know he's got a liking for winding us up with his acronyms (Yana – You Are Not Alone)

and anagrams (Mister Saxon – Master no. six), but I think I've cracked it this time and, oh yes siree, it is the work of genius!

Right then, you ready? Then cop some of this...

It all starts at the beginning of the series. 'Martha Jones' is an anagram of 'John, a Master' pointing forward to John Simm playing the evil Time Lord. And how did we see him re-introduced? With the fob watch. Now, both David Tennant and Russell have said on Confidential that the Face of Boe's story isn't finished yet and it might surprise us. Well, how about this, then? Re-arrange 'Face of Boe' and you get 'Ace fob foe'. Yes, somehow the Face of Boe will turn out to be the Master!

So, the next thing we know, the Master has got back to Earth and is now Mister Saxon (anagram of Master no. six). He now has a wife called Lucy by his side. He also has funny little metal sphere things called Toclafane. 'Toclafane' is an anagram of 'a fat clone'. And which race do we know are fat clones? The Sontarans. To back this up, re-arrange the letters of 'Harold and Lucy Saxon' and you get 'Lynx hounds a carload'. Lynx, as we know, was the Sontaran in the Jon Pertwee story 'The Time Warrior'. And, cleverly, 'Harold and Lucy Saxon' is also an anagram of 'Unholy x-road scandal.' Put those two together and we get Lynx, carload and crossroads. So, somehow the Sontarans will carjack someone at a crossroads.

Next up is 'Captain Jack Harkness'. Change the letters around and we get 'thank carjack pansies'. So it seems that Jack will thwart the Sontarans' carjacking at the crossroads and all will be saved.

'End of season teaser', incidentally, becomes 'see seed of Sontaran'.

So there you have it. Proof that the teasers and anagrams in Dr Who have gone mad!

Even Russell himself is at it. Mix up 'Russell T Davies' and you get 'Lusterless diva'.

(Sorry about that one, Russell, I love you really ...!)

So then, for the climax of series three expect Sontarans, carjacking and the Doctor realising that there was something about that big old face he didn't trust...

Can't wait for Series 4 of 'hotrod cow', 'crowd hoot' or, if you prefer, 'Doctor Who'...

...this seems a great point to return to the main feature – the Kasterborous review of the Series 3 finale, *Last of the Time Lords*, in which the Doctor's companion Martha Jones is now Earth's last hope.

LAST OF THE TIME LORDS

Christian Cawley

Opening without a suitable resolution to the previous week's cliffhanger, *Last of the Time Lords* starts as it means to go on – insulting the regular viewer's intelligence while dressed as fanboy frivolity.

Martha has wandered the Earth for a year, ostensibly to find a special gun that can kill Time Lords. With this, she apparently intends to kill Mr Saxon, who has now revealed himself to the people of Earth to be the Master. As Martha evades the Master's forces, she eventually returns back to England, where the story picks up.

The Doctor meanwhile is kept as an animal by the Master, his dignity erased. Martha's family too are enslaved (except for her brother) and Captain Jack is left to do nothing for the entire 51 minutes by spending most of it tied up. A breakout attempt in the first 15 minutes of the episode leads to nothing, and only serves to further demean the lead character.

Aging the Doctor wasn't something I was happy with in *The Sound of Drums*, but I got over it, expecting a resounding resolution to the series with the last episode. What I got however was the second Doctor-lite episode of Series 3, as the action focussed around the Master, Martha, Jack and Clive Jones - basically anyone who wasn't the Doctor. I guess the idea was to allow the Doctor to make a *Christmas Invasion*-style comeback in the nick of time, but things were far too gone for that. Russell T Davies stacked the odds heavily in favour of the Master in such a way that the Doctor had to be even further aged until his body, unable to regenerate, withered into a Gollum-esque parody of his former self.

It was at this point that I realised the thrilling Judoon, the meeting with Shakespeare, the meeting with the Face of Bo, the sentient sun, the Daleks, the Family of Blood, the Weeping Angels and even the previous incarnation of the Master were by far and away the highlights of Series 3, a series of unrivalled quality in the annals of Doctor Who, and one which I would agree is the best ever if it were not for this one episode.

Hokey elements abound in Russell T Davies scripts, and this one continued the trend, with Martha gaining entry back on to the cloudbase by tricking a known informant. Once there, she revealed that the gun, now destroyed by the Master, was in fact a dupe; her real

mission had been a Christ-like tour of the masses, to “spread the word”.

It’s nonsense, isn’t it? It doesn’t make sense. Where had Martha Jones (Freema Agyeman was the one true highlight of this episode) got this plan from, I hear you ask? Well, apparently the wizened Doctor had ample chance to spell out his plan in full in the closing moments of *The Sound of Drums*. Re-watched it yet? Well I have, and no he didn’t, Russell.

Last of the Time Lords was – it anguishes me to say – a terrible catastrophe when viewed alongside the rest of the otherwise triumphant 2007 series. It made *The Runaway Bride* look like **Hamlet**. It made *New Earth* look like *Father’s Day*, and I’d rather watch *Love & Monsters* than sit through it again. It bastardised a perfectly good previous 12 episodes. Words failed me for the next two days, until I discovered that 9.4 million viewers tuned in, and the non-fans enjoyed it thoroughly.

Which left me in a quandary for a couple of days; review it as I saw it, or how it was received? I suspect that were it not for the Gollum and Captain Jack’s absence, I would have gone with the public. Both were woeful, but together it just wasn’t on. John Barrowman’s name was in the opening titles, **yet he did nothing**. I love Captain Jack Harkness, particularly the Doctor Who version of the character, but this was unforgiveable and a waste of Barrowman’s undoubted talents.

While well realised, meanwhile, the CGI Doctor was without context.

Gripes aside, the cast put in the required performances, with Freema Agyeman and John Simm in particular doing well. The special FX were excellent, and use of music – both popular and in house – was effective. The Toclafane in particular were well-realised.

Bringing us nicely there to the Master’s plan, that didn’t work for me either. I didn’t understand the point of his wife (other than to shoot/save him, why was she there?), the point of a new Time Lord empire, the dislike the Toclafane had for humans or the Master’s apparent to-ing and fro-ing to Utopia.

Reset switches are pretty hokey, although in this case it was forgivable to turn back time (in a manner that made less sense than in the TVM...) in order to give the companion and her family experiences that they cannot share. I cannot, however, forgive the Doctor’s resurrection.

It makes sense, don't get me wrong, but it is attached to an elaborate plan that the Doctor couldn't possibly have had time to divulge to Martha in the previous episode. It's grounded in spirituality, faith, and group emotion – the sensation that we feel at football matches or sad state occasions – and there is no reason why it shouldn't work.

However, the subsequent flying by the Doctor was reminiscent of the TV version of the Arthur Smith play **An Evening with Gary Lineker**. Short-lived Force-powers and a vanishing cage can also go down as Bad Ideas.

It was then a surprise to see such a good ending, with Jack revealing that his nickname was once "The Face of Bo", although whether or not Jack *is* The Face of Bo is another matter entirely. Martha's departure from the TARDIS, too, was a surprise and a nice one, a suitable development for a character who spent a year on her own. I won't miss her too much, thankfully, as she is set to return partway through Series 4

So that was Series 3. On the one hand genius, on the other utter nonsense. A definite step up from Series 2, an improvement on Series 1, but a thoroughly unsatisfactory closing episode for hardcore, long-time fans – but then that's the Russell T Davies era in microcosm.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF EVIL

In the summer of 2007 rumours were, shall we say, common, that David Tennant would be leaving Doctor Who the following year. This was compounded by the RSC website reporting that Tennant had been cast as the lead in their new production of Hamlet scheduled for late 2008 – slap bang in what would be production for an expected "Series 5".

Furthermore, Russell T Davies and Julie Gardner were both rumoured to be leaving the show, with the 2008 run being their last. One of these rumours would be bad enough – but two was pretty galling, and the chatter just refused to die down.

Their hand eventually forced by the RSC announcement, the BBC released a poorly worded press release; they must have had weeks if not months to draft what came across as a rather arrogant proclamation of "wow, aren't you lucky!?"

This is how the BBC¹⁰ put it:

David Tennant's appearance in the fifth series of Doctor Who looks uncertain after it was revealed there will be no new series in 2009.

The fourth series, starring Tennant, is due to hit TV screens next year, but the fifth will not be seen until 2010.

Instead, Tennant, will star in three Doctor Who specials, written by Russell T Davies, on BBC One in 2009.

A spokeswoman for Doctor Who said she was unable to comment whether Tennant would return for the 2010 series.

BBC Fiction controller Jane Tranter said: "Doctor Who is one of the BBC's best loved and most successful dramas.

"Its journey over the past three series has been one of the most ambitious and exciting that we have had, and I'm delighted to be able to confirm not only three exciting specials for 2009, but a fifth series in 2010.
"

Menna Richards, controller of BBC Wales, said: "This announcement is marvellous news for all involved, and more importantly for the programme's amazing fan base and audience."

To this day, I'm still bewildered by what Menna Richards thought she was talking about.

As we all now know, things turned out OK-ish; as fans, we got a series of Doctor Who in 2008, three specials in 2009, a fourth special on New Year's Day 2010 – and then a new series in 2010. Sure, there would be appearances in **The Sarah Jane Adventures** for Tennant's Doctor and an animated serial off the back of the success of *The Infinite Quest* – but there would be no series. There is no way that three or four episodes can ever be as important as 13.

One positive of the "gap year" was that the whole Doctor Who machine could take a breather. Since 2005 there had been a huge amount of focus on TV and in the press; there was a feeling in some quarters this was becoming too much. You can have too much of a good thing, and it was just possible that we were getting too much Doctor Who. Less is more, after all. Certainly the enduring comic strip in **Doctor Who Magazine**

¹⁰ You can still read the full, deluded press release at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/6976178.stm> or our edited, angry highlights at <http://www.kasterborous.com/2007/09/03/what-what/>

would benefit with the Doctor free to roam into the sort of epic adventures that his eighth incarnation was regularly embarking on.

Putting all of this into sharp contrast, however, was the sad death of Verity Lambert, the woman whose hard work in 1963 had led to Doctor Who making it to production (and thanks to rife, institutionalised sexism, against the odds) and onto the airwaves in the way that it did – unlike anything that had ever been seen before.

The first producer of Doctor Who sadly passed away on November 22nd 2007, one day shy of the show's 44th anniversary. Following her success in the series early years, Lambert would later go on and have success with a variety of series such as **Budgie** (1970–72) before going on to eventually form her own production company, Cinema Verity. This would become successful for producing some of the most notable television of the late 1980s and 1990s, such as the Channel 4 series **G.B.H.** (1991) by Alan Bleasdale which starred Robert Lindsay and Michael Palin.

Just as the 2007 adventure *Human Nature/Family of Blood* saw John Smith refer to his parents as Sydney (Newman) and Verity, so the Christmas episode that year was dedicated to the memory of this remarkable woman.

It was around this time that we decided as a group that Kasterborous could stop being the Doctor Who sounding board of one Christian Cawley (with occasional input from Brian A. Terranova) and be a place where any fan who could string a sentence together could offer their thoughts on the series, new or classic.

Following the success of the 2006 Round Table, in which a group of Kasterborous contributors and friends from other Doctor Who websites discussed the episodes from *The Christmas Invasion* through to *Doomsday*, in 2007 we decided to repeat the concept. This time around, Simon R. Mills of Kopic's Doctor Who and Torchwood News service (a clever website that collects relevant news items from around the web) would be the "chair".

Creating an article such as this is a labour of love in many ways. Whereas interviewing a single person is a case of asking questions and either publishing the whole thing Q&A style or writing up into some sort of readable article, interviewing 5 or so people is a much different kettle of fish. Simply pasting their thoughts onto the web in Q&A fashion might have been a better method, in hindsight, but this would have led to a loss of context.

As such, Simon followed my model of bringing each of the interview subjects into a virtual room, sat around a table (you can see where we got the name from...) and discussing the various elements of Doctor Who in 2007.

ROUNDTABLE 2007

Simon Mills

I am sat here in a cupboard in Kasterborous Towers, surrounded by coffee and what passes for a computer and a steam driven internet connection. Gathered around me on virtual cardboard boxes and packing crates, huddled around the single candle for warmth and light are the following notables:

- Brian "Terra" Terranova (associate editor of Kasterborous.com);
- Christian Cawley (master and chief writer for the same esteemed organ);
- Nick Brown (a vocal member of the Kasterborous forum and article contributor to Kasterborous.com);
- Anthony Howard (known to many as "captainjackharkness" from the Torchwood.tv and SJA.tv blogs);
- Steve Preston (one half of the dynamic duo behind The Black Scrolls fanzine).

So, now that we have introductions out of the way, the coffee poured out and the candle re-ignited after it's gone out for the fifth time... Welcome to the Kasterborous Round Table 2007!

We kicked off discussions by arguing the merits of Series 3. Most people agreed that this was the best series of "NuWho" so far, with some outstanding stories and performances. One dissenter, though, was Nick who thought Series 1 was better, "That honour I still reserve for the first season with Christopher Eccleston. Having read comments by others on Kasterborous and various other places though, it appears that I am in the minority." David Tennant is well and truly worn in now (and worn out) according to Steve, "Tennant really hit his stride here, with magnificent performances throughout. Just how he managed to sustain that through an entire year is an amazing feat. But he was looking bloody tired by the time he got to the last few episodes. "

Everyone agreed that *Human Nature* and *Blink* were the highlights, with Christian adding, "if those two don't get nominated in next year's Hugos, there's something wrong, and if they do, I demand to see a

punch up between the two heavyweights Moffat and Cornell to determine who takes the prize... both stories were note perfect.”

Steve thought the series finale got a bit too messianic: “things really started to go pear-shaped in the final two episodes, with a throw-everything-into-the-mix *Sound of Drums* and the rollercoaster *Last of the Time Lords*, rollercoaster as it had some terrific highs but bloody hell, some almighty lows. The Toclafane, quite simply, are rubbish, and held no interest what so ever. The Doctor as Smeagol went on for far too long, although I'm sure it gave poor old David a well-earned nap. But the bizarre 'DOCTOR!' finale with the resurrected Jesus Doctor, lending ever more incredulity to Russell T Davies claim to a godless life just brought a wry smile rather than a 'phew! The Doctor's saved them all'.”

Nick goes on to confirm what we all thought about *Last of the Time Lords*, “I was waiting for a big Doctor-Master face off a la Pertwee-Delgado which was never forthcoming.” Terra agreed with this sentiment and went on to say, “The low point for me was when the Doctor and the Master go face to face and the Doctor is a CGI pigmy. It felt like a waste to me to have two brilliant actors to play off of each other and they then make them work apart for most for the time.”

With a new companion in 2007, we start to compare Martha and Rose. Christian is a Martha Jones fan. Can you tell...? “Martha, by far. You couldn't have had her without a Rose beforehand, or anything like that, but I maintain that Rose suffered in S2 as a character; like you would laugh in a Dalek's face - doubly unlikely knowing that your temporary power 'destroyed' the remaining Daleks and you can't do anything about these new three. Martha on the other hand was down to earth, direct and straightforward; she had no agenda other than to see the universe. Her family and situation offered more interesting possibilities, plus Freema has a better figure than La Piper, and of course that wonderful sister who would have made such a good companion...”

Terra, on the other hand, sits firmly on the fence, “I can't say if Martha or Rose were better than each other, I mean they had different parts to play and they both did a great job at them. However,” and here he agrees with Christian, “Rose's character went downhill for me in Series 2 with her flippant attitude to danger and laughing off any situation.”

Steve liked Martha, too, and describes her as “a very much needed breath of fresh air after the all-consuming Rose and her Doc-obsession. It was all getting to be a bit of a private joke in Series 2 so Martha, despite her crush on the big man, seemed to maintain a stronger connection with the viewer and thus provide a bridge to the mysterious ramblings of the Doc. And of course with Rose you get her bleedin' entourage, all of whom can take a running jump for all I care.” Steady on, Steve! Have a valium... “But with *Smith and Jones* I was shouting at the TV, ‘Davies not again you bloody fool!’ as he introduced an equally stereotyped set of parents and siblings that could have walked straight out of the book ‘100 Character Devices to Avoid in Soap Opera.’”

We take a short break there while I mop Steve’s fevered brow and hand around some yummy looking cookies I find in a box labelled “Evidence”...

I mention the Jones family again and Steve re-launches his tirade, “Things improved, with pretty much a no-show for the family through Series 3, thankfully, but when they did re-appear, there was less of the stupid bickering and dodgy bird-on-the-side plotline for the Dad that so clearly failed to work. So with all that in place, I was looking forward to seeing which way Martha was going to go, as she pretty much had a very good run throughout Series 3.”

Anthony is definitely in the Martha camp, “It took a while to establish herself and to earn her keep in this fan's heart, as at times the character of Martha felt a little on the underwhelming side. But that's no fault of Agyeman (who consistently gives a confident performance) but the writing of Russell T Davies. Never mind the Doctor, I honestly believe it took Davies the better half of the series to get over Rose Tyler's departure, a companion he helped to create - and one that established his era of the show. With her gone, Davies lost his voice a little - and Martha suffered as a result.

So – what’s next? Monsters and villains - the Daleks and the Master, especially, and I wonder, should the Daleks be rested? Should the Master return?

Starting with the Daleks it seems that opinion is divided amongst our group, Terra can’t get enough of them while Anthony feels that they HAVE to return each year to keep the viewing figures up, “For a good portion of the general public, who don't watch Doctor Who on a weekly basis, the Daleks and the Doctor sit side by side.” On the other

hand, Christian and Nick both think they've been overused, with Nick summing it up nicely, "The Daleks I think we can do without in the next series or even in the specials. I want to be scared and shocked when the Daleks appear and not to think 'oh it's the Daleks again.' And I'm afraid the Human Dalek Sec thing just looked silly."

Steve, meanwhile, touches on what a lone Dalek might have to do to perpetuate its kind, "Daleks I can live without if all they are going to do is build skyscrapers in New York. With only one left and their dialogue getting a bit stale, the last remaining tin can is probably going to have to look up the Daddy to take care of them. I think you know who I'm talking about."

That's the Daleks. What of the Master? "The Master had to come back sooner or later," says Christian. "Having Jacobi portray him (again) was delightful, and one of the greatest moments of Doctor Who's history played out in front of our eyes as Martha recalled the Face of Boe's last words - so good in fact that I'm about to watch it again right now." The sentiment is echoed by Nick, "When Yana was looking at the fob watch I was shouting 'go on - open it, open it...' and when he did and said 'I am the Master' I literally jumped off the settee and punched the air and shouted 'Yeeesss!!'".

Nick loves the Master, but is "glad he's not returned to the 'new' show before now. His absence has created a very lonely, closed Doctor - who feels more responsible now that he's the 'last of the Time Lords'. The time of his return was perfection; after losing Rose, surely the Doctor wouldn't want to lose somebody else from his past?" With the Master supposedly gone again, Nick reckons that "it's all the better for Tennant's Doctor - for now he must go forward knowing that he not only blew up his own planet and people, but when given a second chance to redeem 'the one that got away' he ultimately failed. The Time Lords are gone because of the Doctor's failings; and now there's one more casualty to add to that list. I wonder how this will affect Tennant's performance next year and beyond...?" Steve isn't sure about John Simm as the Master, "he's quite funny in the part, and has many a decent line, but is this really what I want from the Master? Would I write him this way? No, not really. So entertaining, I'll give him that. But like being given your favourite dinner but ten times too much, then being told you have to eat it all in one sitting."

Everyone loved the Weeping Angels from *Blink* with most of us agreeing with Christian when he says that Series 3 stands "head and

shoulders above 1 and 2 (in that order) and contribute to it being the best series of Doctor Who since Season 14 - that's 30 years".

Conversely, the Toclafane were almost universally despised, with Terra putting it succinctly, "The Toclafane would have to go down as the worst this season. They were just a bad Dalek rip off and didn't work to threaten or wow me."

He'll get over it. Anywaaay... Now that Terra's calmed down and his life support machine is making satisfying "ping!" noises again and his face is no longer blue, we resume our discussions and ponder what lies in store for Series 4 and beyond.

Wheezing just a little from his recent ordeal, Terra is first off the blocks and is glad that David Tennant is on board for the whole of S4, "He's really engaging to watch and two years with him would not have been enough. I'm a bit let down by the fact that it will not continue the "dark path" that Series 3 took as I felt it suited the series and the characters well. Still, if their idea of lighter is anything like Series 1, then we may be ok." Christian seems to agree with this, "I don't feel, on the evidence of Series 1 darkness vs. Series 2 silliness that this is necessarily a bad thing."

That final exclamation by Christian wakes Nick up and he launches into a speech worthy of the wheelchair bound mutant scientist himself. "If the rumours are true and Davros does appear next series I hope that it is a bit of a back story into how he became who he is and we get to know more of his pre-mutant character before the nuclear war with the Thals mutated him. I'm hoping we see him as a scientist who realises that the Kaleds are endangered and his experiments are at least at first with good intentions before he realises the power the Daleks could give him."

Nick wants to see more old foes, though, "such as Ice Warriors (they could be made so good now with the quality writing and CGI effects. I'd go right into their history and culture - Russell, if you're reading this drop me a line...), the Sontarans, Sea Devils, etc." Hmmmm... something tells me that Nick will get his Sontaran wish fulfilled this year! He doesn't think we'll get to see the Zygons anytime soon, though, because "they are virtually the same as the Slitheen but without the flatulence."

Anthony moves on to look at what we know is coming up, "Agatha Christie should be fun, especially as it's written by Gareth Roberts," but he sounds a note of caution, "one feels that we're fast running out of

historic 'celebrities' to meet! Who next? The Beatles in 60's Liverpool? Churchill?" What could be worse than meeting Churchill, we wonder? "The Krankies?!" he cries, and in a freakishly accurate impression of the diminutive Scottish 'funny' lady, he yells "Fandabidozi!"

Anthony soldiers bravely on, "The Ood return should feel both epic and alien if it's going to work half as well as *The Satan Pit* did. Lucky thing they've got Graeme Harper on board then, I guess... Oh, and if I don't see at least one Sensorite on the Ood Sphere, then I really will be disappointed! Let's start the 'Bring back the Sensorites!' campaign now!"

Anthony finishes off the speculation on Series 4, hoping that, "we get more episodes directed by Euros Lyn, who's shown over the past three years that he can tackle just about every type of story. It's time somebody gave him the big end of series shoot-out that he no doubt wants to helm! Oh, and James Hawes too - but one gets the feeling that he's already moved onto pastures new!"

I think Christian was a bit incensed by the press release that announced the 'gap year' of 2009... "Hopefully, first and foremost, the BBC has sacked the mock-Campbell amateur who composed that utter ball of shite that went under the guise of a press release. This Labour Government have an awful lot to answer for, not least intelligence-insulting spin, but for the BBC to treat the fans in a manner that echoes the days of the hiatus is frankly gasp-inducing. Surely the show runner was involved here to some degree? What was he thinking?!"

Nick, on the other hand, thinks that, "with less of a rush to complete an entire series of scripts this time, perhaps the writers will have more time to really polish their scripts and come up with some real top-class writing in Series 5. So no, I'm not as up in arms as some are."

Christian thinks that some good may come out of this great evil, though, "The only saving grace - if there is one - is that it took the current team around 6 months to mount Series 1, and I suspect that what is happening here is a new production team will be put together during 2009, plus hopefully a shift in time slot from spring and summer to winter for the 2010 series."

Talk of a new production team starts Terra speculating that he feels that "the BBC are scared that they can't do anything without RTD. They should be pursuing Steven Moffatt or any number of people to helm the show without Russell, if nothing else just to have a change of pace and see what that could be. Ideally they could give Davies a year off to

other things and then bring him back in for Series 5 if they like. This way we still get a full 13 episodes and they got to see if it would work or not.”

There are some divided opinions on the gap year subject, with Nick thinking, “It might be a good thing in the long run... David Tennant actually wants to be the Doctor so that can only be a good thing. He could easily have said ‘Right, I’m off doing Hamlet - thanks very much for everything’ but he didn’t. He appears to care about the role.”

And in the other corner, we have Anthony, who is “angry about the 2009 ‘gap’ year”, but goes on to say, “but if it means a better 2010 series then I’m all for it. As long as the BBC don’t turn the rest period into another Colin Baker style cancellation farce. But there is no reason for them to do that as Doctor Who is now the most popular show on TV, it pulls in award after award and is a massive money spinner.”

Anthony has his own ideas for the specials, and that is for “Russell T Davies to write just one of 2009’s specials. The man’s episodes are fine and dandy, but I much prefer the more adult oriented Moffatt/Cornell scripts. Can we just have one special by Davies, maybe one by Moffatt and one by somebody like Mark Gatiss or Gareth Roberts?” He feels, though, that they will encompass “the return of Rose Tyler (one last time before Tennant leaves), a Dalek story (pretty much guaranteed!) and some sort of crossover with **‘The Sarah Jane Adventures’**... this could be the Doctor’s final farewell to Sarah Jane Smith - sort of like how **The X Files** wrapped up the **Millennium** storyline.”

Steve doesn’t care about the 2009 “quiet period” because he hardly has “enough time to watch the ten thousand episodes of Doctor Who, Torchwood, Sarah Jane... K9... animated series... Declassified... Confidential...as it is!” He also seems to think that “the less episodes the better” when it comes to Donna... and Rose. Rather enigmatically, he also says, “I did actually hear the truth behind the show getting reduced numbers of episodes, but I couldn’t possibly comment on that. There would be an uprising.”

That’s it for this year, folks! Kopic hopes that you’ve enjoyed reading this series of articles as much as he’s enjoyed writing them and that some of the wild ideas discussed have whetted your appetites for the upcoming new series.

I think we’ll let Anthony have the last word for this year’s Round Table...

“Let’s just hope that the episodes are popular enough that come 2010, the good Doctor will still be every bit a hit as it is today. With Moffatt on board as Head Writer/Executive Producer.”

THE BRIDE OF DAVROS

With his solitary departure in the TARDIS at the end of *Last of the Time Lords*, we saw the beginnings of the pattern that would arise in the 2009 “gap year” – the Tenth Doctor, travelling alone, meeting a one-off companion that wouldn’t travel with him.

For the first time in the show’s history fans got two episodes on the trot with no regular companion – the **Children in Need** special episode *Time Crash*, written by Steven Moffat and co-starring Peter Davison returning to the role of the Fifth Doctor, and then the 2007 Christmas special, *Voyage of the Damned*, by Russell T Davies.

Sandwiched in between the final moments of *Last of the Time Lords* and the beginning of *Voyage of the Damned*, *Time Crash* offered a very fanboy tribute to the former Doctor whose era both David Tennant and Steven Moffat were fans of.

It also marked the first time in over twenty years in which different incarnations of the Doctor had interacted with each other, the last been 1985’s *The Two Doctors*

We’re not here to discuss issues of canonicity, of course; instead, let Brian Terranova remind you what a great mini episode it was.

TIME CRASH

Brian A. Terranova

Time Crash seems like the title of a classic-era Doctor Who adventure, but it is in fact a special minisode made for the BBC **Children in Need** event for 2007.

I have to admit that I was really excited to see another mini episode, having been captivated by the first one in 2005. But how did it stack up?

Peter Davison returns, albeit for a brief moment, to TV Doctor Who and while his physical appearance has changed a bit, he’s still the Doctor as ever he was. From the first moment we saw him on screen to the last, he was a joy to watch, and acting alongside his older, yet younger looking self, really brought the two eras of the show together.

Steven Moffat once again shows his excellent skills as a writer by presenting us with a story that not only introduces a whole new generation of fans to Peter Davison, but also explains the age discrepancy, the new look of the TARDIS console room, the reason for

their meeting, and how it came to be that the Titanic could have crashed into the interior of the TARDIS itself.

The 7 or so minutes was very well used--they didn't try to rush more than they should have into the time they had and didn't try to make the story into something it was not. It was simply something to entertain and help raise money for Children in Need.

I'm impressed with Doctor Who for a number of reasons, but in this case, because there are not many TV shows where you can insert a story within another. The cuts were almost seamless and were it not for a slight lighting change, you could have thought this was filmed at the same time as *Last of the Time Lords* (the story during which it takes place).

If it had one disappointing area it would have to be the speech from Tennant to Davison about "You were my Doctor." While it was a beautiful speech, it felt more like a fan speaking to the actor than it did one Doctor to the other. It made me step out of the scene and into a private chat. Still, if that is my chief complaint I can live with that. I mean, new Who was just a dream 3 years ago, so now to get even 7 minutes of a worthwhile story is an absolute treat.

That said, this story--much like 2005's post-regeneration scene--does sort of feel like a set up for missed information. 2005's episode bridging the gap and explaining why the TARDIS spins out of control on Christmas Eve and now, *Time Crash*, telling us how the Titanic came to be in the Doctor's doorstep. If this is the case, it does seem like an afterthought by the writers to feed the fans the explanations they forgot to give, or thought not important at the time, but as I said before, I can live with that, so long as it is engaging and interesting.

Last year's 45-minute long concert of Murray Gold's original scores was very nice to have and I certainly enjoyed it. Still, I could not help but feel a bit of a loss by not having another mini episode like the year before, so I hope that the trend for Doctor Who's participation with Children in Need becomes a staple mini story.

Special thanks must go out to all of those who donated their time and efforts into making this story not only for us, the fans, but for a worthy cause.

It certainly was a fun episode, one which pleased new and old Doctor Who fans alike. *Time Crash* even had the effect of prompting some fans to wish for Peter Davison as the Eleventh Doctor!

While there was nothing concrete, the events of September 2007 had caused many Doctor Who fans to assume 2010 would see a new Doctor. While nothing had been announced, and wouldn't be for many months, the set of events that would see the end of the Tenth Doctor would begin in the 2008 series.

Before that came along, though, there was the small question of a Christmas special guest-starring Kylie Minogue.

I'M IN LOVE WITH KYLIE

Christian Cawley

I don't think it is any secret among my family and friends that I harbour a bit of a soft spot for the Antipodean pop princess Kylie Minogue, the diminutive blond who first shot to stardom in the UK and Australia in the late 1980s as a cast member in the seemingly endless daily soap opera **Neighbours** before being remodelled as a pop star, first by Stock, Aitken and Waterman and later, mainly, by herself.

It's also no secret that once upon a time, if offered the chance to meet and then sail away with Kylie, I wouldn't have said "no".

So when I first heard that there was a possibility she would be guest starring in Doctor Who I was naturally incredulous. Why would she?

It's a question I'm still pondering on an answer to. I'm sure we'll find our way there eventually...

Don't get me wrong, I'm very happy indeed at the prospect of seeing Kylie appear as Astrid in the 2007 Christmas episode of Doctor Who. I'm just baffled by it all. You know, like it's a cruel trick, or I'm trapped in the matrix or something and Chancellor Goth is winning. (Am I the only one who wonders that I'm in a simulation in which Doctor Who episodes are in fact my own past or future adventures?)

Seeing the promotional images of Kylie with David Tennant, he in his tux and she in her maids outfit, I can't help but wonder how we got to this stage. Being a Doctor Who fan in the 21st century seems to be a constant case of "pinch me I'm dreaming!" wonder, and Kylie's appearance in the Christmas special isn't going to change any of that.

I've been covertly following her career ever since she left Neighbours, had a few hit singles and then "went off the radar" for a while; although I happen to know where she was at that point (having a sort of post-manufactured, anti-Pete Waterman "indie phase" with fellow Australian Nick Cave and others). For most people, Kylie had a

long holiday and then came back with “Can't Get You Out of My Head” in 2001.

These reinventions aren't uncommon in pop music or entertainment as a whole, but Kylie seems to occupy that hard to find space of being accepted at everything she does, even if it doesn't necessarily work.

Although this hasn't always been the case - witness (I dare you) the 1994 **Street Fighter** movie with Jean-Claude Van Damme. It isn't even one of his best, let alone one of Kylie's!

Indeed, while she has made one hell of a lot of hit records all around the world, Kylie hasn't exactly made a lot of decent movies, which might be just the reason why she fancies a stab at Doctor Who.

After all, a one-off guest appearance in an episode in which she is effectively the companion gives Kylie the chance to appear in an hour-long Doctor Who episode with a script by its modern overlord; this is the TV equivalent of preaching to a huge, converted captive audience.

Mixed metaphors aside, however, the beauty of having Kylie involved at all is that we can sit marvelling at how this woman is nearly 40! She's a cracking good looking lass, amazing talented and smart enough to have fashion and perfume labels chunking along in the background making her money should the hits ever dry up.

And of course, there is the fantasy element. Just in case I really am the Doctor and I'm currently in a matrix simulation commandeered by Chancellor Goth and the Master, then the prospect of watching TV and finding that I've already met a girl that looks like Kylie is quite pleasant.

Let's face it, that's a lot more likely than me ever meeting Ms Minogue...

Voyage of the Damned featured more than just Kylie, however. In the same way that *The Runaway Bride* gave us what turned out to be a sneaky glimpse of a future Doctor Who companion, *Voyage of the Damned* saw a wonderful cameo performance from the great Bernard Cribbins that would soon become a serendipitous legend.

Cribbins is well known in the UK mainly as a good all round actor, with memorable appearances in **The Railway Children**, a record-breaking number of appearances on children's storybook show **Jackanory** and an episode of **Fawlty Towers** topped off by his voicing of **The Wombles**. However he had also appeared in the 1966 film **Daleks - Invasion Earth 2150 AD** which starred Peter Cushing as “Dr Who”; Cribbins played

companion Tom Campbell in the all colour movie remake of *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*.

As things stood, this was a one-off appearance among other famous faces like **Coronation Street**'s Gray O'Brien, George Costigan, **Keeping Up Appearances** star Clive Swift, Russell Tovey, Geoffrey Palmer (who had previously appeared in 1970 serial *The Silurians* and 1972's *The Mutants*) and Doctor Who regular Jimmy Vee.

Trumpeted by Russell T Davies as typical Christmas Day fare that pits the Doctor with the events of a disaster movie (find me a Doctor Who that doesn't!), *Voyage of the Damned* was the series third Christmas special and the third to star David Tennant, once again wearing a tuxedo just to give the full Christmas Day movie effect!

VOYAGE OF THE DAMNED

Brian A. Terranova

Christmas time brings us another Christmas Special set at Christmas...in chronological order...

The Doctor is a time traveling alien who can go anywhere in space and time, yet somehow for the last 3 years he has ended up at Christmas in sequential order. I know it's a holiday special and would be fitting to have it themed as such, but the chances are astronomical that this would really happen for the Doctor. But then it is a TV show in which anything can happen. Suspension of disbelief is key for science fiction shows.

That said, it was very nice to have a bit of a change in placement for this year's story. Sure, this story was still set on Earth, well orbiting Earth, on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, but this time the characters were not running about in the streets with Robot Santas and Deadly Christmas Trees. Not that those things were bad, it's just that you can do that only so many times.

This year we got aliens, and they were in just as much danger as our beloved Earth. The vacationers from the planet Stow were the first race of aliens to feature in the new series of Doctor Who that had no human affiliation whatsoever to be saved by the Doctor. Sure, they were partying on an Earth-themed cruise, and they even looked human, but this story had no human involvement otherwise (ignoring the Queen and the newsstand man, as they weren't part of the trip nor were they main characters).

So there you have it: we had a ship full of aliens, mostly from the planet Stow, who look like humans, being attacked by Max Capricorn (ting!) - a member of their own race - who was controlling humanoid looking robots that were meant to be service and information robots onboard the ship. Where have we seen that before? Oh yes, *The Robots of Death*, from way back in Season 14. I guess if you are going to steal an idea you should steal from the best.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining; I quite enjoyed *Voyage of the Damned*. In fact, it was the best of the three specials so far despite *The Runaway Bride* boasting the best TARDIS chase scene ever! I just couldn't help but notice the similarities.

I mentioned that the best scene was in *The Runaway Bride* but *The Christmas Invasion* holds the title for the best villain--the Sycorax. Although this year's Host Angels were quite scary, they are not the main villains of the story. Max Capricorn, the businessman behind the attack on the Titanic, was far less threatening than anything I've ever seen in Doctor Who. He could easily have escaped from a bad Saturday morning cartoon. Capricorn served his purpose in the story but that's about all he did. The glimmering tooth joke couldn't have worked without him! (Ting!)

The Sycorax were more threatening and fiercer than the Empress of Racnoss or Max Capricorn but when it comes to Christmas robots of death, the Hosts take the cake.

But what about the other side of the coin? The good guys? Foon and Morvin Van Hoff? MrCooper? Rickston Slade? Midshipman Frame? Bannakaffalatta? Astrid Peth?

So many new characters my head is spinning around... oh my... I'm seasick... moving on.

Let's look at them as quickly as we can one by one (or two in the first case):

Foon and Morvin Van Hoff:

The underdogs, the ones who are always picked on and who are never given a fair chance because of something as shallow as looks. Sadly, it seems that even aliens have bullies. Nonetheless, they proved to be just what they were, strong and heroic to the last.

Mr Copper:

A bit quirky, misinformed, and all-around likeable guy. In the end he was given the true gift of Christmas - happiness and goodwill toward Man.

Rickston Slade:

Not a hero, but on their side no matter how you cut it. We'll call him "Scrooge who didn't learn his lesson."

Midshipman Frame:

Here we have what we hope every man or woman who enters the service will be: a good, honest soul who is dedicated to protecting those who are in need of help no matter what the cost. Add to that the fantastic cap-off joke to the Doctor's hunt for a companion with the name Alonzo and you have a recipe for success.

Bannakaffalatta:

Wish I could be as kind to him as I was to Midshipman Frame, but sadly he became rather annoying by repeating his name every 5 seconds, talking in the third person and with that chipmunk voice of his. His death was the only one (aside from Max Capricorn) that actually made me feel nothing. Sorry Russell, you get high points for this story, but not for this character.

Astrid Peth:

Everything a companion should be. Someone who wants to see the universe just as much as the Doctor, someone whose eyes get as wide as a child's who is opening the perfect gift on Christmas morning, and someone who is capable of jumping in to save the day in a crisis.

I have to admit that I thought the whole TARDIS/Astrid anagram was really part of this story and not just fan theory, but then nothing happened. Could Russell T Davies have actually fooled us? Did he know that the fans would pick up on his love for anagrams and let our imaginations fly? Or is her story not over? The way she ended up in this special does sort of lend itself to future story lines...we shall see what the future brings.

Kylie Minogue deserves praise for her performance here. I'd never seen her in anything before and had no expectations for her acting abilities, but now I can say without a doubt that it is a sad loss that she will not be the continuing companion for Series 4.

David Tennant is also deserving of the usual praise that flies his way. He is not so much the time traveler who can't find love; he is more the man who has lost more friends than anyone else can claim. A man who has felt more loss than we may ever know. David shows us a man who is faced with so much devastation in his life and yet who still finds a way to get back into enjoying it rather than hiding from it. 2009 will be

tough, getting to see him save the day only four times, but it is nice to know that we get to spend at least one more Christmas with him.

Over all *Voyage of the Damned* can claim the title of “Best Christmas Special Ever”. Not once did it feel as though it had taken a wrong turn and never did my attention stray. Well done to all involved and let this be a sign of good things to come.

A popular adventure, *Voyage of the Damned* nevertheless featured many excesses that had been seen throughout the Russell T Davies era of Doctor Who – big name, “stunt” casting in the (petite) shape of Kylie Minogue, over the top CGI and the old “everyone knows about aliens” routine that had become more of a schtick by this point.

Clearly Davies was aware of this particular element and its chances of being taken less seriously than he would have liked – and so who better than to join the Doctor on a journey of discovery in Series 4 than Donna Noble, the invasion-missing, shouty bride who just kept coming back?

THE BOOMERANG BRIDE

Thomas Willam Spychalski

Variety has always been a strength of Doctor Who, it is one of the factors that has allowed the show to survive and endure for almost fifty years, a testament to its staying power in our entertainment culture. Besides the constantly changing locations and times the Doctor travels to and his ever changing appearance over the decades, the companion has also been an outlet to open a window and let out some of the stuffy air that may have been inhabiting the TARDIS by bringing in a whole new dynamic and giving the ever analyzing rabid Doctor Who fan something new to ponder and debate.

It was just those sorts of debates that arose when Catherine Tate was announced as the temporary companion of the Doctor in the second Christmas special *The Runaway Bride*, with some arguing that Tate’s comedic background would not take to the more serious tones Doctor Who adopted at times, fearing a comedy approach that might fail horribly.

Donna Noble was very much an original sort of companion, especially in the wake of former traveler Rose Tyler, who had been at the epicenter of the events of the show since it came back in 2005. Donna was the first new female companion in the new era, and the first in a long time to challenge the Doctor and yell at him for his

behavior and his lifestyle, standing not in awe of him but in annoyance, the ultimate unwilling partner to his adventurous ways.

She was bossy and loud and whiny and great fun to watch, you could almost swear that you knew a Donna Noble, or at least someone who might react to alien abduction in the way Donna reacted to the Doctor after appearing in the TARDIS seemingly without reason at the end of series two.

And perhaps the comedy was turned up a notch from the other recent variations of the Doctor's sidekicks when she returned at Christmas, but Catherine Tate's resume of comedy acting actually meant that any humorous material was very well performed and did not seem as tacky or out of place as some might have feared.

The Runaway Bride proved that Tate was quite good at even the heavy stuff, as when we saw towards the end how her fiancée Lance had been betraying her all along and she is forced to face up to the fact that what was the happiest thing in her life was a sham. But sadly enough when the Racnoss was defeated, Donna Noble was left behind.

When it was announced that Donna would return for the entirety of Series 4 it seemed that it was all about opportunity's lost for both the Doctor and Donna and one would think that their former meeting would mean a direct change to the "love story" formula that was used with both Rose Tyler and recent companion Martha Jones, who loved the Doctor but knew the Doctor just longed for his former friend and that she was no substitute.

It does seem hard to imagine Donna Noble standing on the cliffs of some alien world or becoming belligerent with a Dalek from what we have seen so far of her personality, but the fact that so many diverse people have traveled in the TARDIS since 1963 means that Donna will most likely adjust, as we will adjust to her, although her disposition, straight forwardness and razor sharp tongue and wit may mean make her stand out a bit from the rest of the pack, but that is just what the companion aspect needs right now, a drastic new approach for a brand new series.

Also in play is the factor that during her initial appearance in the 2006 Christmas special we were very much seeing a woman uprooted in the middle of one of the most important days in her life, not a person willingly going into these kinds of dangerous situations of her own free will, something that will certainly make a difference if Donna is anything like you or me, a creature partial defined by how he or she

perceives an idea or a situation and of course the attitude we apply to the events happening around us.

Either way it would seem we are in for an interesting and entertaining series ahead, one that will lead us deeper into the mind and soul and motivations of Donna Noble and at the risk of making an overused joke, if you ask me if I think she is companion material, all I have to ask is: “do I look bothered?”

Tate’s return to Doctor Who was met with some interesting reactions in fandom and the press. To see the “shouty bride” again would have been horrific – but what no one realised was that Russell T Davies knew this, and that the Donna we would see in Series 4 was a quite different character, although still recognisable.

The very fact that the popular comedy actress – whose own show had been a phenomenal success for the BBC and gave birth to memorable catchphrases and characters – was even considering returning to Doctor Who was quite remarkable. As we would see as the series progressed, Tate was much more than “am I bovvered?” schoolgirl Lauren or “what a f***ing liberty” Gran. She is in fact a *bona fide* actress who took the character of Donna Noble and brought us one of the Doctor’s most popular companions yet.

DOCTOR WHO SERIES 4 PREVIEW

Christian Cawley

Doctor Who kicks off this week with *Partners in Crime*, which will see the Doctor reunited with Donna Noble, and up against Miss Foster (Sarah Lancashire) as “an enigmatic and powerful businesswoman.” Alien foes are the Adipose, computer generated characters whose name suggests... nah, I’ll let you find out for yourselves.

Episode 2 of Season 30 is *The Fires of Pompeii* by James Moran. I can’t wait for the trailer for this one, which co-stars Phil Davis and Peter Capaldi. The Doctor and Donna find themselves in Pompeii, and knowing what date it is expect some conflict as Donna tries to change history.

Alien Planets Ahoy! *Planet of the Ood* sees the TARDIS deliver the Doctor and Donna to the home planet of the red eyes squid faced Ood, in an episode that also features Tim McInnerny (best known as Captain Darling/Lord Percy of **Blackadder**). Expect humanity painted in a bad light, and a subservient race getting annoyed...

The Sontaran Stratagem/The Poison Sky sees the long, long-awaited return of one of the finest science fiction races ever – the Sontarans! The war-driven clones are on Earth, with Christopher Ryan (**The Young Ones**, *Trial of a Time Lord*) appearing as the lead Sontaran. We also welcome back Freema Agyeman as Martha Jones, returning as a member of UNIT (now renamed “Unified Nations Intelligence Taskforce”, according to some sources...)

Stephen Greenhorn brings us the improbably titles *The Doctor’s Daughter*, which features Georgia Moffett (real-life daughter of Fifth Doctor Peter Davison). Not much is known about this episode, and frankly I think that’s a good thing. I doubt we’ll forget this one!

The Unicorn and the Wasp is the “Agatha Christie one” and co-stars Fenella Woolgar and Felicity Kendall. One description calls it “a classic murder mystery with a country house, vintage cars, a flapper, a vicar, a body in the library – and the disappearance of Agatha Christie”, and is brought to us by the Gareth Roberts. Who is next for the historical adventure? My money is on another writer...

Steven Moffatt this year brings us the much anticipated *Silence In The Library/River’s Run*, which co-stars the gorgeous Alex Kingston and the superb Colin Salmon. The Doctor and Donna encounter an abandoned library, moving shadows, the gruesome Nodes and the horrifying Data Ghost.

Midnight features the return of David Troughton to Doctor Who; Troughton is the son of Second Doctor Patrick, as well as King Peladon from the Third Doctor adventure *The Curse of Peladon*. Also co-starring is former **EastEnders** Lindsey Coulson and Lesley Sharp. Apparently *Midnight* is a planet leisure world with golden spas, diamond landscapes and anti-gravity restaurants. Russell T Davies writes this and the remaining episodes.

Some bird called **Billie Piper** appears in *Turn Left*, which is believed to be the “Doctor lite” episode (although the previous episode might be “lite” in some way.)

Episode 12/Journey’s End sees the show reach a massive climax that can only surpass the return of and subsequent defeat of the Master in 2007. We don’t know who is in it, how it ends or in what order things happen, as we haven’t seen any of it in any shape or form. We also don’t know who is in it, who isn’t in it, when they’re in it or what ancient enemy is resurrected, thus throwing the whole universe into danger.

| Honest.

Of course, we knew. Somehow, everybody knew – although this might have had something to do with people involved on the merchandise side of things passing round designs of “Dave Ross”. Thankfully we didn’t know about anything else from those final episodes – something that resulted in Series 4 being one of the most interesting yet.

Doctor Who returned for its fourth run on Saturday, 5th April 2008 with *Partners in Crime*, an episode that reunited the Doctor with Catherine Tate’s Donna Noble and saw the return of Bernard Cribbins following his previous short outing in *Voyage of the Damned* a few months earlier.

Although welcomed and set to become a very memorable character as Donna’s grandfather, Wilfred Mott, Cribbins was in fact cast as a replacement for Howard Attfield who had sadly died after filming scenes for *Partners in Crime*. Attfield had earlier played Geoff Noble in *The Runaway Bride*; he had apparently passed away in the intervening time.

PARTNERS IN CRIME

Christian Cawley

“So the Doctor has been on his own for a bit – he’s talking to himself in the TARDIS, and that Donna bird wot he saved at Christmas (one before? Next Christmas? I dunno!) came crashing into the action and then like they both got captured for a minute by Raquel off of Corrie before they had a sonic vibrator duel, and these squidgy things came out of fat people on a diet and Raquel was their supernanny and the Doctor stopped them coming and then flew off with Donna.”

Oh look.

The full plot (as it is) in 5 lines.

89 words.

These series openers literally write themselves, don’t they?

Yep – I was disappointed; but then on the basis of *New Earth*, I shouldn’t be. *Smith and Jones* last year was a distinct improvement on “The Cat Nuns and Cassandra”, but I really shouldn’t have got my hopes up.

Thankfully though, there was a couple of saving graces – number one is the much-maligned-before-she-does-anything-Catherine-Tate returning as Donna. Long term readers may recall that the Kasterborous junta was less than impressed to hear of her casting for the 2008 series, and spat their dummies out. Compared with the tissue

thin plot and annoyingly cute and completely innocent (for the 45 minutes when it mattered) Adipose, Tate was a winner, and the best thing about the adventure – after David Tennant, Bernard Cribbins and Billie Piper.

So with the Adipose returned home in what can only have been a Steven Spielberg UFO (well done Russell for securing those rights...), and the Doctor agreeing to take Donna (with a pre-packed suite of luggage) with him through time and space, you would think that everything was sorted.

But you know Russell T Davies – he knows how shock. He knows how to pull the rug out from under you. He writes wonderful dialogue that imparts the personality of the character in moments. He can't write cohesive plots (not in Doctor Who, anyway) but at least he doesn't try, leaving that sort of thing to Steven Moffat.

And shock he did. This review has been written and published to leave enough time for anyone who hasn't seen *Partners in Crime* to avoid being spoiled by what I'm about to write.

Of course, if you know anyone outside of your house, you may already know that ROSE TYLER IS BACK.

Yeh – how did that happen? Well, it is of course too early to say, but something is obviously causing a breach between the two universes in order for Rose to pop into our world, look wistfully up at Miss Foster's headquarters before turning away to wander aimlessly away, fading (presumably) back to her own world.

Perhaps the Master's tinkering with the TARDIS, creating the paradox that admitted the Toclafane's invasion caused far more damage than intended – or perhaps someone has been working very hard to push the two worlds back together...

This is of course pure conjecture – we've got another 12 episodes to enjoy, so let's enjoy the ride. *Partners in Crime* is pure and simply an event. It's a bit of sub-**Sarah Jane Adventures** kiddievision, which with the simple addition of Billie Piper (looking rather tasty, I have to say) has become a space-time event.

So – not one but two previous companions appearing in *Partners in Crime*. Keeping Billie Piper's presence in the episode a secret was a masterstroke by Davies and his team; while it was impossible to keep quiet her appearances in the later episodes in which she would play a greater

part, her cameos here and in places throughout the series were brilliantly done.

A few days later and the Doctor and Donna would be arriving in ancient Pompeii, on the eve of “Volcano day”. A sumptuous production full of costumes and scenery, much of the episode was filmed at in Rome’s Cinecittà studios where the HBO drama *Rome* had previously been filmed. *The Fires of Pompeii* reused some of those sets – at least the ones that survived the publicised fire at the facility.

Guest starring the superb trio of Peter Capaldi, Phil Davis and Tracy Childs (not to mention a small part for future companion Karen Gillan), the episode featured a strong moral theme – can the Doctor stop the disaster we know as Pompeii?

Clearly he cannot, despite the wishes of Donna. He’s even reluctant to save Caecilius (Capaldi) and his family, yet thanks to Donna’s role as companion and the humanising effect this has on the Time Lord, he eventually concedes...

THE FIRES OF POMPEII

Brian A. Terranova

The Fires of Pompeii had potential to become first purely historical episode in the new series. It would have been fantastic. But sadly, either the new production team has no faith in their abilities to do historical episodes, or they are just not yet ready to make that leap.

With that said I couldn’t say that this story was in any way bad. It was just as good as any other to come before it, but is that good enough?

The Doctor’s new companion seems to be worth a strong match for the Doctor. She’s got the heart that the Doctor needs to reconnect with sometimes, and she seems to be only thinking of others-- so far. Who knows what the future will bring for Donna? Maybe we’ll see another *Father’s Day* soon enough, to show that everyone is a flawed character.

From the first moment that we saw the CGI monster I thought the episode was going to go downhill, but to my surprise it did not. The monster was used sparingly, and it was done pretty well. It looked just like a CGI monster and not something that was in the room with them while filming, but it was OK. It was better than Professor Lazarus (*The Lazarus Experiment*) so I can live with that.

Pompeii was brilliant though, wasn't it? Especially when the volcano erupted and the ash and rocks rained down on the city. It felt hot and you felt for the people. More so, you felt for one man specifically. How could the Doctor feel any more guilt in his life? Take a natural disaster, one of the biggest in the history of the world, and make him realize that it was all because of him and one gigantic choice that he and he alone, always has to make.

It must be hard for the writing team to find new ways to tell new audiences and the new companions all the information that they need to know every year, such as the Doctor's survival status as a Time Lord, the destruction of his home world, the fact that his real name is hidden, and the list goes on. With that said, I feel that the writing team got it just right in this episode. It felt as if the information came out naturally and within context.

Now as I said I feel that Donna will be good for the Doctor, seemingly not a love interest and all, and with her wanting to do the right thing to save people and not her own skin or to serve her own agenda. But I am quite happy to see that she is not the same character that we saw in *The Runaway Bride*. Although I did like her character in that story, she did seem a bit over the top. Not only has she been toned down, but her humor is a nice addition to the story telling. However, I do feel that the running gag of the Doctor and Donna having to explain that they are not married will get old very fast.

I've said before that the first episode is usually a bit of a non-event and to wait until episode number two to see the series really kick off. This year was no exception. Although *The Fires of Pompeii* had a lot of potential to be something else, it certainly showed us that Doctor Who has not lost its footing. It is still very much the show that made me fall in love with it all those years ago.

The Fires of Pompeii is a rather smashing episode of Doctor Who; while not a pure historical it features some marvellous, memorable scenes, not least the "sooth-off" between Lucius Petrus Dextrus (Phil Davis) and Caecilius' daughter Evelina (Francesca Fowler).

While many of us didn't realise it at the time, a pattern was already forming in this series of Doctor Who. Donna had already mentioned the missing bees in *Partners in Crime*; meanwhile, two planets had apparently vanished.

Where had they gone? There was no chance of finding out just yet; while this theme didn't carry the same weight as "Bad Wolf", "Torchwood" or "Mr Saxon" it arguably had a more powerful pay-off – something we would have to look forward to.

In the meantime, fans would see the much-anticipated return of the Ood, the bizarre creatures first seen in *The Impossible Planet/The Satan Pit* in 2006. Again featuring an excellent guest star turn, this time from former *Blackadder* star Tim McInnerny, *Planet of the Ood* told the story of how the creatures came to be enslaved as well as why they carried translator balls in an apparently cybernetic manner.

Most importantly, *Planet of the Ood* would come to represent an extremely important moment for both the Doctor and Donna, the effects of which wouldn't be fully felt for over two years...

PLANET OF THE OOD

Brian A. Terranova

Once upon a time the Ood walked the hallways of Doctor Who. They were a peaceful race of aliens who wanted to serve our every need. It made them happy. They first walked with the hearts of happy servants, then things changed and they walked with the heart of darkness as they began to kill all in their path.

But they couldn't help themselves, they were not in control of their minds. Happy slaves or controlled murderers, either way you look at it the Ood were just as much the victim as those that they executed.

That much seemed obvious even from their first outing in Doctor Who (*The Impossible Planet*) where we heard the first mention of Ood rights activists (Friends of the Ood) wanting to see them be free from their servitude, or more so, their slavery.

They needed help. They needed to be free. They needed to be saved. At the very end of the story fans everywhere cried out in disgust as the Doctor used the TARDIS to go back and save Ida Scott, one person, one human, over a group of dozens of helpless Ood. The Doctor abandoned them. Maybe there wasn't time for the Doctor to go back for two trips the way he claimed, or maybe the writer never considered the fact that the Ood were just as much in need of a rescue; whatever the reason the events of that day have weighed heavily on the Doctor's hearts.

Which brings us to the events of *Planet of the Ood*.

By chance the Doctor is given a second chance to help the Ood and in some small way make up for his inability to save them when they

first met. As the title would suggest we are on the Ood's strange home planet, the world where they evolved - another alien planet for new Who and another one dominated by humans and their structures and technology.

I applaud the new series for getting out in the universe a bit more, but I do find it sad that we can't see what these planets would be like without a huge human influence. Still it was nice to see it snow, I like snow and a planet full of it seems like a fun trip in the TARDIS.

Sadly I can't say that the Ood were enjoying their human-occupied world very much, nor would it seem was Donna. Catherine Tate continues to impress as the Doctor's new best friend, showing a range of emotion in this episode that would rival any of the series' previous stars.

When Donna first met the Doctor she knew she didn't want to travel with him. She felt she was not up to the task and it took her some time before she realized what she was missing. However, when she found out what was happening to the Ood all those years she suddenly decided that the universe was not the place of wonder that she thought it was. She didn't want to be out in it anymore.

Maybe Donna is prone to these moments of snap decisions, or maybe she has the biggest heart we've seen in a new companion this series so far. I feel we may be in for a very good run this year.

The nods to the past series of Doctor Who (stemming all the way back to the first great man himself, William Hartnell) are moments that make this old-time fan smile. The two series are one and it is clear that the team behind Doctor Who 2008 know this and are telling us so – simply by using the term “Sense-Sphere”. It's times like this that make me sad to know that next year they'll be packing all of that happiness into just 3 specials.

Enough of that, back to the story at hand.

Planet of the Ood was another analysis of humanity's dark side. Try as we might it seems that we can never get rid greedy side of humanity that will do anything, no matter what the cost to others lives, just make a buck.

David Tennant as the Doctor came to the defense of the Ood just as he has done for countless other humans and alien races before. He did this with the same energetic and flawless performance that he has always graced out screens with, and still, despite all his good doings, I fear that the Doctor will never find peace. The lives of the Ood lost on

the Sanctuary Base 5 will always be a black mark on his soul and they can only add to all the sorrows that drive the Doctor to do what he does.

While the Doctor may never recover I'm sure the Ood and the fans will applaud both him and the production team for giving us this adventure.

The Ood are a quite interesting case – aliens related to classic series monsters. In one of those soapy Russell T Davies moments (also seen when Clom was declared the twin of Raxacoricofallapatorius in *Love & Monsters*) decided that the look he had described for them was close enough to that of the creatures of *The Sensorites* in the eponymous 1964 serial, that he made them “relatives”.

An interesting choice from the writer who had already given the Cybermen a brand new backstory and introduced the canon-breaking “sound of drums” in the Master’s head – but with the next monsters, there was much less to work with.

Despite appearing in four previous serials, the Sontarans were nevertheless a hugely popular race of monsters that many fans simply felt hadn’t been properly used. Certainly their sporadic appearances seemed to point to a race whose potential hadn’t been fully realised as a genuine threat, even after they invaded Gallifrey in 1978’s *The Invasion of Time*.

A marvellous race of clones, the Sontarans were locked in an unending battle with the shape shifting Rutans; bred for war and unafraid to open up new fronts, the creatures were first seen in the same episode as Sarah Jane Smith, 1974’s *The Time Warrior*, starring Jon Pertwee. Also present in that adventure – briefly – was Nicholas Courtney as Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart. While the character wouldn’t be appearing here, he would nonetheless be mentioned by one of his successors, Colonel Mace.

Also returning to the show in this episode – with returns very much the order of the day throughout the series one way or another – was Martha Jones, once again played by Freema Agyeman. Even now, her appearance in this and the subsequent episodes doesn’t make perfect sense, but it is good to see how this particular companion has moved on from her unfulfilled time in the TARDIS.

THE SONTARAN STRATAGEM

Christian Cawley

In the pantheon of Doctor Who monsters, the Sontarans probably sit third behind the Daleks and Cybermen. Appearing similarly uniform as the more “senior” monsters, the Sontarans appearance as clones is easily explained by their endless war against the shape shifting Rutans that has waged across space for millennia.

Their return to Doctor Who has been long-overdue, but this should be considered part of Russell T Davies’ slow restoration of the key elements of the classic series. Perhaps next year we’ll see more Time Lords!

So with the opening of *The Sontaran Stratagem* I was pretty thrilled that we would get to see the new updated clone monsters (whose existence as a fighting force predates **Star Wars** by 3 years) attempt to invade Earth.

Seeing the episode was written by Helen Raynor had given me cause for concern given some of my misgivings about *Daleks in Manhattan/Evolution of the Daleks*, but the trailer footage of the episode had restored my faith.

Even Freema Agyeman’s soon to be infamous “I’m bringing you back to Earth!” delivery wasn’t enough to sway my enthusiasm – after all, here was a legendary Doctor Who monster created by the series’ greatest ever writer, Robert Holmes. *The Sontaran Stratagem* was bound to be good.

It wasn’t long, however, before my enthusiasm was tempered by the appearance of Yorkshire-born Ryan Sampson as a rather mature child genius with an American accent, Luke Rattigan. The welcome appearance of UNIT meanwhile gave the episode a classic feel, especially with Rattigan’s money and his conspiracy with the Sontarans; this isn’t a million miles away from *Robot*. Certainly the idea of the academy is similar to *Robot*’s Think Tank – lots of very interesting inventions (in this case for terraforming Earth 2.0, promised to Rattigan by the Sontarans) made by some very clever, elite people.

This isn’t necessarily a bad thing though, and certainly it moves along at a fair old pace, taking in the ATMOS factory where Luke Rattigan’s SatNav/anti-car pollution combi invention is being investigated by UNIT (still UNified), the Rattigan Academy and the Noble household where

we are once again treated to the national treasure that is Bernard Cribbins as Donna's gramps, Wilf.

Is it fair to blame the wonky performances on series newcomer Douglas Mackinnon? Certainly the special effects scenes are good (such as the superb cliffhanger) but Sampson really grates and I'm sorry to say that something horrible has happened to Martha Jones. Perhaps it's the realignment of her character following her departure from the TARDIS (and subsequent engagement to *Last of the Time Lord's* Dr Milligan) and employment by UNIT, or perhaps it's the fact that Agyeman believes this character development as much as I do, but I miss the old Martha.

Third string support by Clive Standen and Wesley Theobald as a couple of UNIT grunts controlled or cloned by the Sontarans is also disappointing, while Christian Cooke's Ross is a little bland.

Confession time: despite the nostalgia, I'm of the school of thought that UNIT should remain in the classic series, and former double take brother (**Harry Enfield's Television Program**) Rupert Holliday-Evans' Colonel Mace was a bit of a damp squib compared to the man he replaced – more a Colonel Crichton than a Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart, sadly.

Of course, many people watch Doctor Who for the monsters, not to play "spot the character actor" and it is a massive honour for the show to welcome the return of Christopher Ryan (previously Mentor Lord Kiv in 1986's *Mindwarp*) as General Staal "the undefeated" as the lead Sontaran. Apparently suitable actors of his build are in short supply to play the squat, troll-like aliens, and Ryan really is one of those great British actors who can turn his hand to anything; who would have thought the guy in the padded suit was the same guy who played Mike "The Cool Person" in classic BBC comedy **The Young Ones**?

As we race along to the cliffhanger, the true purpose of ATMOS becomes clear; more than being a sinister SatNav system that is good for the environment, the car exhaust pollutants it cleans up can be released! The Sontaran Stratagem features one of those cliffhangers where it appears the Doctor has arrived far too late – the release of the pollutants isn't just a means of killing people, it is a terraforming tool to turn Earth into a Sontaran birthing world!

Although just how long is it going to take the Doctor to smash that window?

THE POISON SKY

Nick Brown

Those Sontarans, eh?

If they're not fighting the Rutans, they're colonising planets to use the inhabitants as target practice to help in their fight against the Rutans. And if they're not fighting the Rutans or colonising planets to use the inhabitants as target practice in their fight against the Rutans, they're turning planets into cloning worlds to breed billions more Sontarans for their fight with the Rutans.

And that was their stratagem this time. The Sontarans tricked young genius Luke Rattigan (not actually a difficult thing, given his completely insular outlook on life) into developing ATMOS - an in-car satellite navigation system which also reduced carbon dioxide emissions. However, this is where the double-cross comes in... those very same ATMOS devices let out doses of Sesophane Concentrate or, for those of us not blessed with a BSc from the University of Sontar, clone feed.

After the Doctor is called back to Earth to investigate by Martha Jones, now working for UNIT, things become complicated when she herself is cloned and "Clone Martha" attempts to halt all attempts to stop the Sontarans. She even helps them capture the TARDIS, with Donna trapped inside.

With Donna unwittingly aboard the Sontaran ship, the Doctor instructs her on how to activate the teleport devices, rescuing both her and the TARDIS.

Meanwhile, on Earth, the Sontarans have taken the ATMOS factory and UNIT's attempts at stopping them are proving futile. That is until Colonel Mace lets loose their secret weapon - the Valiant. The Valiant clears the gas and allows UNIT troops to put the Sontarans on the defensive. This gives the Doctor time enough to manoeuvre the clone Martha down to the cloning room to rescue the real Martha.

With the teleport now working again, the Doctor constructs an atmospheric converter in order to finally stop the Sontarans. He teleports back to their ship to give them the choice of surrender or death. He knows they will never surrender and is prepared to sacrifice himself but, at the last moment, Rattigan, finally realising the idiocy of his ways, uses his genius one last time to rig up the teleport into a matter exchange, putting himself in the Sontaran ship and bringing the Doctor back to Earth. He blows the Sontarans into oblivion to finally put an end to their stratagem.

Having watched both episodes back to back, it did have a feature film feel about it. Lots of action, lots of effects, lots of fast dialog. There were also many references to **Who** stories of the past, with mentions of the Brigadier, the Rutans, the appearance of the Valiant and the Doctor, when given a gas mask, asking Colonel Mace “Are you my mummy?” And who was that blond girl who briefly flickered onto the TARDIS scanner screen...?

All in all, a good tale. A “thumbs up” to writer Helen Raynor. And, the more we see of Catherine Tate, despite the outrage that greeted the news that she would be back full-time, we become convinced that it was, in fact, a master stroke...

Yes, it certainly seemed so by now. While Catherine Tate will always have her detractors (like any comedian) she had somehow become an integral part of the series. I still stand by the comments made in defence of Martha Jones actress Freema Agyman during the third series, but over the course of her Series 4 episodes Agyman seemed increasingly out of her depth – something that can only have been down to the presence and comparative experience of Tate.

Certainly in the next episode, *The Doctor’s Daughter*, we witness one particularly bad scene between Martha and one of the Hath, although this was little more than a sideshow in an episode that (as the title suggests) raised the possibility of the Doctor having a family somewhere.

Scant mentions of family beyond Susan Foreman have been made by the Doctor. The most recent one was telling Rose in *Fear Her* that he had once been a father, although there are more significant mentions. His second incarnation remarked once that he can see them, when he wants to...

“And that’s the point, really. I have to really want to, to bring them back in front of my eyes. The rest of the time they... they sleep in my mind and I forget.”

To many fans, that quote suggests that he and Susan were the last members of the Doctor’s family. Of course, she was left on 22nd century Earth many years ago, never to be seen again (except when she was time scooped by bonkers Borusa in *The Five Doctors*) – which makes *The Doctor’s Daughter* an interesting new spin on the whole aspect of the Doctor having a family.

Furthermore, the “daughter” of the title featured some remarkable casting; Georgia Moffett, real-life daughter of Fifth Doctor Peter Davison who just a few months earlier had appeared on screen with David

Tennant. To put things even more into the family context, Tennant began “stepping out” with the younger actress around this time.

While there was a tabloid sting in the title – the suggestion of the Doctor having had relations with some girl on another planet was bound to draw attention from the red-tops the story itself teased throughout that the Time Lord might have a new companion, one of his own to travel with.

After all, that’s how it all started...

DOCTOR'S DAUGHTER

Thomas Willam Spsychalski

Conflicts are very much a part of our daily lives and also can come from a variety of sources, from a full scale war to the more private and at times more devastating turmoil that can exist inside a person. It is both coming to terms with and fighting these moments that who we are as people are laid out before us as we live every day, with the internal skirmishes shaping who we will become and allowing us at times to leave who we were before in the past, for better or for worse.

The Doctor's Daughter is full of different variants of this theme from a war that has spanned “generations” to examples of how unwilling soldiers such as the Doctor himself deal with the wars within and the ones in the outside world. It also features the Doctor's actual daughter, a clone made from the Doctor's DNA that struggles mildly between the Doctor's peaceful ways and the soldier culture she was created to fight for.

Meanwhile, most of the cloned residents of the colony planet are also waging a battle between never ending war and the peace they believe will come with gaining the source, a mystical object that divides the planet between Human and Hath.

Moral directions and themes can either lift up or virtually scar a plot or story, but in this case it works as it should, buried in the goings on in a way that is both subtle and strong enough to get it's point across without losing any of its bite and realism along the way.

As far as plots go, this is Doctor Who's Doctor Who, and you could quite easily replace the Doctor and Donna Noble with any Doctor/companion combination, but this is more of a strong point than a let-down, a testament to the strength of Stephen Greenhorn's script and to the fact that even in the midst of Doctor Who's fourth series since it's return to television, certain things remain the same. This is evident as we are thrown straight into a hostile alien planet's affairs,

split from at least one of the TARDIS crew and lots and lots of running down corridors getting chased by the enemy.

Donna Noble keeps showing that she was indeed the right choice for a full time companion, she uses what talents she has to her advantage, surprising even the Doctor in the process.

Jenny, the Doctor's previously mentioned cloned daughter (derived from the word "gene") also has many talents and virtues that make you wish she could have stayed on as a third member of the regular time traveling cast. Her departure for adventures unknown makes me think we have not seen the last of her, although I'm praying not in a spin-off of her own.

At the end of the day I think this story will gain more respect as time passes and be considered one of the better episodes of the fourth series, if not the new run all together. It is a mix of classic Doctor Who themes and the modern era's emotional nature, proving that both can co-exist with the right script and the right kind of pacing. Now, speaking of pacing, if you'll excuse me, I have lots of running to do.

By now, there seemed to be a distinct theme running through the fourth series of Doctor Who – and this one had nothing to do with missing planets. For two stories on the trot we had been exposed to the ideas of cloning, first with the Sontarans, and again with Jenny and the Messanine (and possibly the Hath). Looking back, one might point out where all of this was heading, but at the time it seemed to most viewers as nothing more than a coincidence.

Interestingly, Georgia Moffett had originally auditioned for a part in *The Unicorn and the Wasp* – presumably that of The Unicorn, Robina Redmond who was in the event played by Felicity Jones.

The episode itself starred another Felicity, Kendall, who remarkably had never appeared in Doctor Who previously. She played Lady Clemency Eddison, married to Colonel Hugh – played by one of the great character actors from Doctor Who's past, the superb Christopher Benjamin. While the honour of being the first classic-era actor to appear in the new series had already been taken by *The Pyramid of Mars'* Gabriel Woolf in *The Impossible Planet/The Satan Pit*, Benjamin remains a guest star in two of the most memorable Doctor Who adventures from the 1970s, *Inferno* and *The Talons of Weng Chiang*.

Like 2007's *The Shakespeare Code* and 2005's *The Unquiet Dead*, the conceit of *The Unicorn and the Wasp* was that the Doctor and his

companion would uncover the truth about a strange or little-known period in a particularly famous writer's life. In this case, it was Agatha Christie and her amnesiac appearance at a hotel in 1926. Christie was played here by Fenella Woolgar, an actress of interesting looks who had previously appeared with Doctor Who star David Tennant in 2004's BBC drama **He Knew He Was Right**.

THE UNICORN AND THE WASP

Nick Brown

What do you get if you cross a time traveller, a crime writer and a giant insect?

The Unicorn and the Wasp, of course.

The Doctor and Donna arrive at a dinner party hosted by Lady Eddison. Among the other guests is Agatha Christie. The date, though, is 8th December, 1926, the day of Christie's famous mysterious disappearance.

It is soon discovered that one of the other guests, Professor Pietzsch, has been murdered in the library and it isn't long before Miss Chandrakala, Lady Eddison's friend and companion, is also found dead.

During investigations by the Doctor, Donna and Agatha, the Doctor finds some morphiic residue, leading him to deduce that one of the guests is not human. Donna is meanwhile attacked by a giant wasp – a Vespiform – which she manages to fend off using the rays through a magnifying glass.

At dinner, it is the Doctor's turn to be attacked, this time by cyanide poisoning. However, the effects on his Gallifreyan constitution are different to that of humans and he is able to detox himself. The Doctor then goes on to 'poison' the other guests by putting pepper in their soup. This is, of course, completely harmless to humans but acts as an insecticide to wasps. Sure enough, a buzzing sound is heard but, before the alien can be identified, a freak wind blows out the candles and the room is pitched into darkness. Upon restoration of light, it is discovered that Lady Eddison's son is lying face down in his soup with a knife in his back.

True to one of her **Poirot** novels, Agatha and the Doctor gather the guests in the sitting room and, one by one, reveal secrets about them that might lead to them being the guilty party. It is discovered that Robina Redmond is in fact the jewel thief known as 'The Unicorn' who coveted the Firestone, a jewel worn on Lady Eddison's necklace.

It is further revealed that Lady Eddison, when in India, fell in love with a man who was, in fact, a Vespiform in its human guise. She fell pregnant and was given the Firestone by the Vespiform. The Firestone is physically linked to her child, whom she gave up for adoption.

The final revelation is that Reverend Golightly, another guest at the party, was that child. Unable to control his rage at being found out, he reverts back to his Vespiform. Agatha snatches the Firestone and the wasp pursues her as she is now linked to it. Agatha escapes in a car down to the river where the Firestone is thrown into the water. The Vespiform goes in after it and is drowned. As its last act, it releases Agatha from the Firestone's clutches and she collapses. The trauma causes her to suffer amnesia which, it turns out, is the reason for her famous disappearance.

The Unicorn and the Wasp was a very watchable episode of 'New' Who. The Tennant-Tate partnership gets ever stronger and there were good performances from Fenella Woolgar as Agatha Christie and Felicity Kendal as Lady Eddison.

Written by Gareth Roberts, author of *The Shakespeare Code*, the Tenth Doctor has now met Shakespeare, Christie and Dickens. Who's next?

All in all, another enjoyable episode as Series 4 shapes up to be the best of Tennant's reign.

Just where do Kasterborous reviewers get off, declaring a particular series to be better than another?

The truth is, we were becoming quite a popular destination for Doctor Who news and reviews – and something had to give as the workload continued to increase. Whereas when the site began it had one big daily news roundup, by 2008 there were at least three new updates each day.

A result of this was that we opened up contributions to new reviewers, a practice that we continue to this day. With new blood coming through Kasterborous, we can keep the site relevant and interesting – not to mention fresh. No one wants to listen to editor Christian Cawley mouthing off on a weekly basis about Doctor Who not being as good as it was in 1975, do they?

(Then again, you've stuck with me this far...)

So when Nick declared Series 4 in such a manner, this was less an opinion of the Kasterborous and more an opinion of that particular reviewer, given the opportunity to tell the world what he thought.

Of course, what he didn't know is that Series 4 had definitely taken a turn for the better. While my own personal feeling is that *The Unicorn and the Wasp* is a little too "knowing", *Silence in the Library* was just around the corner.

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

However, before we got to *Silence in the Library*, there was quite a lot of noise to deal with.

As we had found out following the 2007 series, Doctor Who would be returning in 2009 for a series of specials and then a regular full series in 2010. At this point, few people knew that Russell T Davies was planning to move on – but when the announcement came it also revealed the identity of his successor...

Anyone who has read Russell T Davies emails to DWM's Benjamin Cook in *The Writer's Tale* will know that the big Welshman was getting a little jaded by certain aspects of running Doctor Who (notably the press launches). Given that he had been working on the job to a certain extent since 2003 and was a lifelong fan, it is only sensible to imagine that he might get a bit tired of it all. I think any of us would.

Yet Russell T Davies had almost single handedly made Doctor Who “cool” – so who could the BBC possibly find to replace him?

Thankfully they had a ready-made replacement in the shape of **Jekyll** Executive Producer and occasionally award winning Doctor Who script writer, Steven “The Grand Moff” Moffat.

In fact the day the announcement was made – and it appeared in the Guardian before it reached the BBC website – was just a few days before Moffat's Series 4 story. The press release featured this brilliant quote from the future producer:

“My entire career has been a secret plan to get this job. I applied before but I got knocked back because the BBC wanted someone else. Also I was seven.”

Interestingly, the words of the man who was relinquishing control of the Good Ship Doctor Who was giving us a very big hint about what he would be doing next. Russell T Davies almost gave the game away completely about his later move to the US by refusing to speculate on what he would do after Doctor Who.

“But to be honest, every other job in British TV feels so small, after this job,” he concluded in his e-mail last night. “I might try running ICI instead. Or KFC. I love KFC.”

Most fans agreed that there could not have been a better choice than the man that brought us *The Empty Child/The Doctor Dances*, *The Girl in the Fireplace* and *Blink*, and won awards doing so; fans around the world

drooled in anticipation at the thought of a series of darker adventures starring David Tennant...

Already there were rumours of Neil Gaiman and other writers being approached to write under Moffat – for a series that wouldn't be seen for two years!

Before that could happen, though, the man of the moment's latest episode was about to air.

Again featuring some of Moffat's trademark "fear from the mundane", *Silence in the Library* is an episode that would have reverberations beyond David Tennant's and Russell T Davies' time on the series. We didn't know it at the time, but the timey-wimey hijinks of River Song's topsy-turvy relationship with the Tenth Doctor were the prologue to the Eleventh Doctor's adventures, which Moffat would oversee.

Starring Alex Kingston as River Song, Colin Salmon as Dr Moon and Steve Pemberton as Strackman Lux, the story centres around a library world managed by an artificial intelligence call CAL which was also the home of the library's creator's deceased daughter, Charlotte Abigail Lux. Slightly macabre in places, the story nevertheless features some interesting concepts, not least a race of "shadow piranhas" and the haunting "data ghosts"...

SILENCE IN THE LIBRARY

Christian Cawley

Wow!

Hot-footing it up the stairs to write this review, I couldn't help but give the book shelf a second glance as I passed it – and then realised that perhaps Steven Moffat has perhaps irresponsibly instilled a fear of paperbacks in Britain's youngsters.

Would they be throwing their books back teachers on Monday morning – or worse still, using them as Vashta Nerada silos to launch at their classmates?

Or are children simply too intelligent to get fooled by something like that and only enjoy the thrills of Doctor Who to stop their parents getting scared?

I tend to lean towards the latter, and it seems so does the majority of the Doctor Who production team – and rightly so, because *Silence in the Library* is a pretty smashing first episode of the type we've come to expect from the man we call The Grand Moff.

If you had never seen the episode and I was to tell you that it has got everything from intrigue and potential time travelling mystery (more on that later) to strange children who might be living in a virtual world, a character called Dr Moon played by Colin Salmon and something called a data ghost – not to mention shadow-dwelling flesh eaters, then you wouldn't believe me.

But that isn't even the tip of the iceberg for an episode that sees the Tenth Doctor addressed as "Sweetie", a library world bereft of life, a guest turn from **The League of Gentlemen** and **Benidorm** star Steve Pemberton and the introduction of a character that seems to know an awful lot about our hero.

Played by Alex Kingston (**ER**, **Moll Flanders**), Professor River Song seems to have that air of authority and confidence that the Doctor himself possesses, and she certainly seems to know him, even if he has no idea who she is. It's a sort of **Time Traveller's Wife** scenario, and while Moffat is seemingly hinting that River is the Doctor's wife, anything is possible.

Despite the presence of River Song, the bizarre data ghosts (a truly chilling prospect that will have had mums and dads across Britain being consoled by their brave children) and the gasmask-kid-like shuffling skeletons, the really intriguing thing about this episode is just how does the little girl fit in?

When we first meet her at the beginning of the episode, she seems to be inhabiting the library – then she discovers the Doctor and Donna and we later discover that they saw not a little girl, but some sort of robot. Is the girl a self-aware but somehow unaware synthetic life form? Or is there more to it than that? And just how real is the world she lives in?

A word too about the CGI in the episode – the grand vista of the library world is absolutely superb and really gives a sense of immense scale to the adventure. I also loved the way Catherine Tate's head seemed to have been squeezed into the node!

Concluding with a drawn out cliffhanger that again recalls *The Empty Child*, this episode of Doctor Who sees Moffat tapping into his main reserve of dry wit and every day thrills. There's little of the time-hopping suspense of *Blink* here – instead we've got something that is visually as thrilling as *The Empty Child* and as confident and complex as *The Girl in the Fireplace*. However these are unsuitable comparisons – this episode stands on its own and meets the standards set by Steven

Moffat's previous contributions to nuWho. Plus we even get another potential companion thrown in.

Would it be unfair to describe *Silence in the Library* as River Song's episode? Probably – we haven't seen *Forest of the Dead* yet...

FOREST OF THE DEAD

Christian Cawley

As with all great cliffhangers, the pieces were marshalled into place last week; the Vashta Nerada – controlled spacesuits chasing the Doctor and River, only for the time lord to discover that his new best friend, Donna Noble, has been “saved” – and her face appears on a node in order to appear pleasing to the Doctor. Meanwhile we still don't fully understand the behaviour of the girl or Dr Moon, and the origin of the invisible flesh eating monsters is yet to be revealed.

So it is a bit disappointing to learn that River Song seems to have Captain Jack's “squareness gun” and uses that to drag her and the Doctor to safety from the approaching cadavers – but far more interesting to discover that *Forest of the Dead* largely revolves around Donna, trapped in what turns out to be a literal virtual world, if you can have such a thing.

Like the tragic Miss Evangelista, Donna Noble has indeed been “saved” – somehow her entire essence was digitised (from within the TARDIS, no less) and stored somewhere in the library. This gives us a great opportunity to see Donna as she might be as a happily married mother of two – as well as to try and understand the importance of Dr Moon.

He's an interesting character, given interesting depth and a slightly uncomfortable edge by Colin Salmon, so it is fascinating to find that he is in fact an anti-virus routine!

Dr Moon is the key that unlocks the mystery in the mind of the viewer, too, as he offers a way into the whole setup of a little girl who has died and been saved to the library's core to enjoy all of the books stored digitally. The little girl is a relative of Strackman Lux – his grandfather built the Library for CAL, known at the time as Charlotte Abigail Lux – and she has also saved Donna and the survivors of the Vashta Nerada's initial devouring of the Library's patrons.

Despite the strong visuals that *Forest of the Dead* gives us (notably the face of the once attractive and dim but now intelligent and disfigured Miss Evangelista) the one thing that will stay with us from

this story (whether we ever see her again or not) is River Song, with her police box-style journal containing “spoilers!” and her bizarre “future” sonic screwdriver.

There is a moment of distinct joy in the way the Doctor discovers the hidden neural relay in River’s device and quickly determines that while she might be physically dead there is still a chance that she might be saved.

So, just who is River Song, other than a feisty and attractive professor with one of Captain Jack’s weapons and a sonic screwdriver of her own? Could she be a future Doctor (heaven forbid!) his future wife (a bit obvious that one) or perhaps something else entirely?

I think this one is going to run and run, and if it is something that we can find out under the future golden age of The Grand Moff then I for one am looking forward to it!

Silence in the Library and *Forest of the Dead* have sealed this scriptwriter’s reputation for being able to single-handedly rewrite what Doctor Who means each time he picks up a pen. With nanogenes rebuilding wounded soldiers in *The Empty Child/The Doctor Dances* in 2005, robots patching up a spacecraft with human parts in *The Girl in the Fireplace* in 2006, quantum-locked “statues” in *Blink* and now the prospect of an eternal life stored in digital form, Steven Moffat takes complex scientific ideas and represents them in slightly horrific ways. In fact I would contend that Moffat’s four Doctor Who scripts include more hard science in them than the whole of Season 18, which was overseen by Christopher H. Bidmead in 1980-81.

Silence in the Library and *Forest of the Dead* really did feel like a glimpse into the future, the kind you used to get when a James Bond movie would end with “James Bond will return in...” as opposed to the latter-day “James Bond will return”.

With Moffat secured as the future replacement for Russell T Davies and playing a blinder with the Vashta Nerada and River Song, any reasonable person would expect the current overlord of Doctor Who (one of the Three Who Rule along with Julie Gardner and producer Phil Collinson) to just keep plodding along dispatching such divisive scripts as *New Earth* or *Love & Monsters*.

But this is Doctor Who. Rather than prepare to wind down and keep his best work for the 2009 specials, Russell T Davies instead turned on the style, delivering several excellent consecutive episodes which began with

the claustrophobic *Midnight*, which saw the series Executive Producer “out-Moff the Moff.”

Featuring guest appearances from former **EastEnder** Lindsay Coulson, **Holby City**’s Raki Ayola and *The Curse of Peladon* guest star and son of the Second Doctor, David Troughton, *Midnight* is best remembered for the remarkable mimicking and simultaneous dialogue scene between David Tennant and Lesley Sharp, much of which was done in a single take.

MIDNIGHT

Christian Cawley

Doctor Who is at its best when it completely takes you by surprise and delivers an episode that has, on the face of it, all the hallmarks of low-budget “filler”. Five minutes in and the rug gets completely pulled from under you as you realise that for all the grandiose Hollywood sci-fi trappings of episodes like *The Poison Earth* and *The Parting of the Ways*, it’s the smaller low budget instalments that are the most memorable.

Midnight is such an episode; more than any nuWho adventure it could have appeared at any point in the classic era and pits the Doctor against a faceless alien entity who repeats things.

That’s right – repeats things, like a terminally cheeky child. Repetition is an everyday occurrence of course, something that is used to teach as much as it is to annoy (BBC schedulers please take note) but here it is used by the mystery creature on the planet *Midnight* to thrill the audience and steal the Doctor’s voice.

Now the cynical among you might think that Russell T Davies has been hanging around Chez Moffat and rummaging through his bins for discarded ideas – but I would say that this is the episode I have been waiting for from Russell T Davies since that fateful day in 2003 when “the announcement” was made.

Like *Horror of Fang Rock*, *Midnight* presents the idea of a malevolent alien entity loose outside while a group of humans try and pass the time awaiting rescue, only for the alien to end up inside and passing itself off as one of the humans. Where Davies’ script differs Dicks’, however is in the characterization.

We all know that Russell T Davies writes great dialogue, and this is an area in which *Midnight* particularly shines. Within minutes, thanks to dialogue and costume we know who each of the passengers are – there is the prissy, under-valued stewardess, the respected but fallible

professor, his young assistant who isn't given the credit she deserves, the family of over-bearing mother, hen-pecked husband and shy son, and the recently-single lesbian woman who is about to lose her identity completely.

And of course there is the Doctor, sans-TARDIS and Donna; she's decided to get some beauty therapy or something inconsequential to the plot. Following the events in the virtual world in *Forest of the Dead*, she's due a rest anyway.

While there are similarities between *Midnight* and any one of Steven Moffat's Doctor Who classics – namely the turning of something innocent into something sinister – this isn't solely Moffat's trademark. Doctor Who has been delivering horror in the form of everyday items for at least 40 years, notably in the classic series with the Autons and their control of plastic.

For me, the first half of this series of Doctor Who was missing some impetus, and really just featured the Doctor and Donna stumbling from one adventure to the next until *The Unicorn and the Wasp*. But the just as the past few weeks have shown us that the series has an interesting future ahead of it, so they have also seen the current run take a memorable direction as we see the effect of what happens when the Doctor isn't in charge, when no one will trust him – and when humans become afraid.

If there was any episode of Doctor Who that you could describe as psychological, this is the one – David Tennant is in top form, David Troughton is notable more for just his appearance but it is Lesley Sharp, one of Davies' favourite female leads (she co-starred in **The Second Coming** with Christopher Eccleston in 2003) who steals the show with her twin performance as Skye and the entity.

Mark my words, this episode is a modern classic – in 40 years' time we'll be watching holo-vid compilations of the best of Doctor Who and that moment when David Tennant and Lesley Sharp are face-to-face, speaking exactly the same words, will be one of the highlights.

Midnight is a work of genius.

The 2007 series of Doctor Who had received particular praise from fans for the way in which *Utopia* cleverly segued into the finale *The Sounds of Drums/Last of the Time Lords* – and so Russell T Davies used the same tactic once again in 2008, with the "Doctor lite" episode *Turn Left*.

Billie Piper's return to Doctor Who had been well publicised, however the real stars of the episode were Bernard Cribbins and Jacqueline King who took centre stage at last as the tale of an Earth without the Doctor unfolded in spectacularly apocalyptic fashion.

TURN LEFT

Thomas Willam Spychalski

Day to day we are faced with choices that might affect our near and in some cases distant future. Whether we talk to that member of the opposite sex we have seen a few times on the commute to work or if we take the risk to send out that book proposal we have had stashed deep in the desk drawer, the littlest decisions affect us in ways untold, to do or not to do, turn right or turn left.

The big story here is of course the return of Rose Tyler from a parallel universe; it has been the teaser of the story arc of the current series since *Partners in Crime*. While undecided till the two part finale plays out if bringing back Rose was a good idea, Russell T Davies script was strong enough to not even give it a second thought, even if you do not like her return she is mostly a character that could have been any stand in actor or actress, the real meat of the story is out of the almost Twilight Zone like story, a terrible, misplaced and incorrect world where history was changed by the simplest of means and the Doctor is dead.

The universe Donna creates is one that is directly affected by some of the events we have seen in Doctor Who since the start of *The Runaway Bride*, with the Doctor killing himself along with the Racnoss by mistake without Donna there to tell him to stop, Sarah Jane Smith dying saving the hospital in *Smith and Jones* that was sent to the moon along with Martha Jones and destroying London when the Titanic crashes into Buckingham palace, something just barely averted in *Voyage of the Damned*.

Ideas like this are the hooks of the episode and are for the most part entertaining, especially if you are a sucker for a "what if" kind of tale.

Conclusions are usually the biggest nit-pick I have had with Davies' scriptwriting, either the ending is brilliant and original as anything I've ever seen or it is a real let down, almost as if he paints himself in a corner at times and then bashes his way out of it, each time with a good or bad result. This one is a mixture, with me not quite convinced by the all-knowing Rose Tyler who was forced to play the Doctor role in

this one, but loving the weight of Donna's mission to set things right and the sacrifice she accepts to get the job done so the universe can be repaired.

The cliffhanger is sheer genius in how exciting it becomes very, very quickly and this combined with a trailer that shows you just about every Doctor Who guest star you ever want to see in one place makes sure you are glued to the screen next week guaranteed.

Turn Left was an adventure that although it did not live up to half the hype about Rose Tyler's return, it was still a solid tale that had more positives than negatives and made for a nice companion driven story to lead us into the end of the current series.

Of course, it said Billie Piper on the cast list at the beginning and end of the episode – but who was the blonde girl that looked like Rose Tyler but sounded **nothing** like her? Piper came in for some criticism after the episode, and could only put her strange reprisal of Rose Tyler down to the cold weather while shooting on location.

This was a minor downer on the episode however, which ended in superb fashion with the words Bad Wolf appearing everywhere – even on the TARDIS itself – thanks to the warning Rose left Donna in the alternative time line.

Turn Left brought us to *The Stolen Earth*, the first part of the 2008 season finale. It was a bittersweet time when fans realised that this would be the last Doctor Who series for two years.

Two years.

Even now with the benefit and hindsight, able to look back at how the events unfolded, it still seems quite surreal. No one in their right mind could have possibly demanded that Russell T Davies should stay with the series forever, and yet...

The future of Doctor Who was about to unfold before our eyes, with the fearsome return of a once destroyed race, some bloke called Dave Ross and every single Doctor Who companion since 2005. Plus some chaps from other shows.

THE STOLEN EARTH

Christian Cawley

Christian Cawley returns to the review pages to tell of a Doctor Who series greatly transformed since the events of *Partners in Crime*...

Doctor Who season 30 has been a strange beast; a weak opening (*Partners in Crime*), a woefully used returning Sontaran force (*The Sontaran Stragem/The Poison Sky*) and an odd episode of the Reeves & Mortimer version of **Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased)** (*The Unicorn and the Wasp*) had conspired to derail the series before it got going.

Since *Forest of the Dead/Silence in the Library* however, the early promise shown in *The Fires of Pompeii* revealed that Russell T Davies' final series in charge of Doctor Who was back on track, with Catherine Tate a revelation in the face of much negative expectation.

Which, via the events of *Midnight* and *Turn Left*, brings us to *The Stolen Earth* and the jamboree of returning companions (Jack, Sarah Jane, Martha, an unseen Rose), planets (Clom), parallel universes (bear with me on that one) and of course the Daleks. The real Daleks.

Not the ham fisted tactics of the Cult of Skaro, mincing around New York sewers and having a chat at the water cooler and photocopying their bottoms. No the real Daleks, the ones with insanely ambitious plans of galactic subjugation, conquest and genocide, the Daleks with space ships, armies, planet-moving machinations and **TV 21** style vistas.

A Supreme Dalek leading the snatching of Earth, and placing it in carefully aligned position with 26 other planets (I thought they might go for 30 in all to represent the total series of Doctor Who) around an item known as "The Crucible".

And behind him; Davros.

The creator of the Daleks, first seen in 1975, his chest cavity visible where he gave birth, cell-by-cell, to the new Dalek army; taunting, triumphant and planning something even greater than the "destruction of reality" that he exclaims in the trailer for *Journey's End*.

So with all of this, plus the addition of Donna's mother and grandfather, the remainder of Torchwood, as well as Mr Smith and Luke, how could the episode hope to rise above the tag of "blatant continuity fest and fanboy love-in" and actually succeed?

I'm still trying to get my head around it. Keeping the Doctor and Donna out of things until late on certainly helped, with a trip to meet some Judoon and a suspicious lady at a place called The Shadow Proclamation – that's right, a place, not a galactic agreement – as well as using Harriet Jones, ex-Prime Minister, to link the various companions of the Doctor together. Her death appears to have been a

marvellous directorial slight-of-hand courtesy of Graeme Harper, but time will tell.

We're also given references to "Project Indigo" and the Osterhagen Key that Martha is carrying. Plus Dalek Caan babbling drunkenly about death, "threefold-somethings" and other batty nonsense.

Caan has been seriously damaged since we last met him, somehow breaking through the temporal lock on the Time War and rescuing Davros. If you thought Davros was a bit batty, Caan is another kettle of fish. Unless he's faking it in order to return to the Void Sphere...

Which brings us to Rose. The real Rose, with moving mouth, visible teeth and that selfish, chavvy demeanour. Thanks to timey-wimey stuff, the Rose in *Turn Left* never happens now, and it is my contention that it wasn't even Rose in the first place, but instead a manifestation of the TARDIS. There may even be something else going on with Donna – perhaps the TARDIS wasn't helping her through the guise of Rose; perhaps it was another entity, that identified by one of the Shadow Proclamation.

Tying everything up for an ultimate cliffhanger, the Doctor's regeneration, Sarah's impending death at the hands of two Daleks and Ianto and Gwen up against a Dalek insurgency into Torchwood all feel like the same story, as the various threads come together in a way that Davies hasn't managed to achieve in the previous three series under his stewardship.

With no "Next Time" trailer, we can't possibly foresee what will happen next. From what we've seen in what is so far the best series finale since *Bad Wolf/Parting of the Ways* (and that will be pushed into second place come Saturday evening), *Journey's End* is going to take us to even more uncharted territory, and I can't see a way in which any possible disappointments might arise.

Anyone who disagrees, come and fight me – but beware, this is a fightin' hand!

Hang on – "the Doctor's regeneration"? In 2008, not 2010? That's right; *The Stolen Earth* brought Doctor Who fans the ultimate Doctor Who cliffhanger, a surprise regeneration of the kind the conclusion of *The Parting of the Ways* was supposed to deliver.

The Doctor had been killed by a Dalek; he was regenerating.

And the World Wide Web went wild. Forums shut down to prevent overloading their servers; Kasterborous saw a ten-fold increase in visitors

and on Monday morning everyone was asking “who is the next Doctor going to be?”

No one had a clue. For the first time in three years, we were baffled about what was going to happen next. The only clue was that as there had been no rumours, the Doctor wasn't regenerating; and yet he evidently was. It was one of those bizarrely Doctor Who moments that would play one the minds of fans for the next seven days: how is he going to get out of that one?!

Of course, keeping some spare DNA in a handy jar might have helped...

JOURNEY'S END

Christian Cawley

What a difference a week makes.

The not quite regeneration of the Doctor saw the reality-threatening events of *The Stolen Earth* taken seriously for a few moments before being pushed into the background in what I can only describe as a let-down of career-defining proportions for Russell T Davies.

It appears to have become a scientific fact that Russell cannot resolve any of his setups in a satisfactory manner. Compare *Journey's End* to *Last of the Time Lords*, for instance. Both had superb first parts and an excellent setup to each story in *Utopia* and *Turn Left*.

Before I go on, let's get Donna out of the way. I'm throwing around statements about RTD and tying things up properly, but one thing he did do so superbly was bring us the “death” of Donna, in a touching and moving manner that once more left the Doctor travelling on his own. The performances in these closing scenes were marvellous, and showed what a great asset to British television Bernard Cribbins is with his effortless characterization.

Also, the return of Davros, although later undermined, was superb and Julian Bleach gave the character and added menace long since lost. Similarly the quiet man of Doctor Who, Nicholas Briggs, gave us another great selection of Dalek voices. Sadly, I can't help but feel that the deconstruction of the Doctor's lifestyle by Davros, illustrating the effect that he has on people was set up to be taken – well, nowhere. Surely if you're going to take this route, the Doctor needs to be made to suffer, and any tension arising from this was quickly lost as Donna flicked some switches and the Daleks fell apart.

So – a formidable, classic series foe, and a returning mad man. A universe-threatening master plan, a hackneyed resolution and the

departure of a regular cast member. Assistance from a recurring supporting cast member, and a theme running throughout the whole series.

Guess which series conclusion I'm talking about, if you can?

Is it Series 1, when the Doctor, Rose and Jack uncovered a Dalek plot to destroy the earth and from there move on to the rest of the universe leaving Rose with no choice but to swallow the time vortex and easily remove the Dalek threat with the twofold result that the words "Bad Wolf" were spread throughout time and space and the Doctor was regenerated, giving us two Doctors in the same episode and allowing Christopher Eccleston to move on?

Or is it Series 2, as the Doctor, Rose and Mickey fought the Cybermen AND the Daleks while held captive by Torchwood, resulting in Rose being lost in the same parallel universe that Mickey had earlier been left in to live with her mother Jackie and alt-universe father Pete after a pair of levers easily removed the threat of Cybermen and a thousand Daleks into the void?

It could be Series 3, wherein the Master posed as politician Mr Saxon and gave a few hints to his presence while the Doctor, Martha and Jack visited the end of the universe and found a previous incarnation of the Master believing he was an elderly human scientist, before regenerating, thieving the TARDIS and returning to the 21st century and using the Toclafane to impose his dominion over the Earth, with the resulting defeat (a humans praying through a psychic network to reinvigorate a Gollum-esque Doctor) leading to a year being added to the lives of those that survived, and causing Martha to leave the Doctor?

Or do you think it is the conclusion to Series 4, which saw returning companion Rose locked in a parallel universe, current companion Donna having her mind wiped, Mickey and Martha joining Captain Jack in Torchwood, Sarah Jane saying goodbye and the Daleks dispatched by a cross-genetic meta-crisis that gave us two Doctors in the same episode and a part-Time Lord Donna that easily dispatched the Dalek threat?

I mean I know Doctor Who has been formulaic over the years, and I know that there are only so many stories you can tell – but this is ridiculous.

Effectively, Russell T Davies – in taking responsibility on his shoulders as show runner to top and tail each series with his own stories – has

short-changed Doctor Who fans and the viewing public at large by going for glory. The question really, should not be “Why has Russell given us the same story 4 times?” but “Why didn’t Russell let someone else write the series conclusions?”

I was under the impression that he was in charge – therefore he should be working to the greater good of the show, and by rewriting - in a Five Doctors way, no less – the greatest hits of his Doctor Who era into a season closer that really only missed the Master and the Slitheen he has undermined the ground that Doctor Who has made since its return in 2005.

We’ll look back at this era of wonderful special effects, wonderful visuals and lighting, sound effects and direction, on the whole excellent casting and new mythology as one of remarkable contrasts.

Of course if you made it this far you might think that I didn’t enjoy *Journey’s End*.

Well I did, I loved it. It didn’t have the same shock value as *The Stolen Earth*, and it made a mockery of the presence of Rose throughout the series (she could really have been Martha, Jo Grant or Adric for all the difference she made to the plot) although did better in giving Jack something to do this time. The appearances by Lis Sladen, Freema Agyeman, Noel Clarke and Camille Coduri gave proceedings a slightly panto feeling, with Jackie Tyler’s presence in particular surely only in order for the audience to laugh at her in the TARDIS.

Ultimately, it was an enjoyable but heavily, heavily flawed end to Russell T Davies’ final Doctor Who series.

The fans will have enjoyed it, but they deserved better.

Another harsh review topped off what was an otherwise thrilling episode. Remember that these reviews are all “of the time”, written days or even hours after broadcast; upon rewatching *Journey’s End*, the only aspect I remain unhappy about really is the “switch-flicking-Dalek-killing” which in technobabbly style turns the impending destroyers of creation into spinning tops, immediately undermining all the strength and authority they had been restored to following *The Stolen Earth*.

This is a minor complaint given the length of the episode; Series 4 had turned out to be a great run of episodes with a companion that had defied all negative expectations to turn out to be, put simply, the best nuWho companion of them all. Catherine Tate and Russell T Davies were both vindicated, with Tate no longer reasonably accused of being a “shouty”

comedienne and Davies congratulated for making a superb decision and giving the Doctor a companion who was grown up and less likely to bow to his “Time Lord” status, as seen most notably in *Fires of Pompeii*.

So, that was it – Russell T Davies’ time on Doctor Who had entered countdown mode, with just five special episodes remaining over the course of late 2008, 2009 and early 2010. The man who had revitalised the long running series had announced his decision to move on, the “gap year” had been confirmed and thanks to this, Doctor Who would never be the same again.

TIME TO CHANGE

With the conclusion of Series 4, fans reasonably thought that things would move on at the usual pace; over the next few weeks, the 2008 Christmas special was filmed, and David Tennant would soon begin rehearsals for his lead role as **Hamlet**.

As far as fans were aware, this would continue through to early 2009, at which point four more special episodes would be recorded, before Steven Moffat's first series in charge began in 2010.

What we didn't know was... well, what we didn't know wouldn't hurt us.

Sadly, we would soon know that whoever the star of Moffat's Doctor Who would be, he wasn't called David Tennant.

In October 2008, the National Television Awards had Tennant nominated¹¹ for the Outstanding Drama Performance award, and on the evening of the ceremony – at which he was of course invited but unable to attend due to a performance of **Hamlet** – Tennant accepted his award via a video link, during which he informed the world of his departure from Doctor Who.

“When Dr Who returns in 2010 it won't be with me.

“The 2009 shows will be my last playing the Doctor. I love this show and if I don't take a deep breath and move on now I never will and you will be wheeling me out of the TARDIS in my bath chair.

“It's been the most brilliant, mad, life-changing time over the last three and a half years – but I am not going yet. Thank you for watching it, for loving it and for being so enthusiastic about the show.”

As sad as it was, David Tennant's departure made sense. His Doctor was strongly associated with Russell T Davies' resurrection of the show, and

¹¹ Something we have skirted around in Ultimate Regeneration is the number of awards that Doctor Who has won since 2005. There are too many to list here, with BAFTA, RTS, Hugo, NTA and Constellation all nominating or awarding gongs to Russell T Davies, Christopher Eccleston, Billie Piper, David Tennant, Steven Moffat, Paul Cornell and others associated with the series. Well done all!

with a new man coming in, a new Doctor was required. Interestingly, however, it seems that Steven Moffat had tried to persuade Tennant to stay for at least one series and even went to the lengths of mapping out two sets of storylines, one for the Tenth Doctor and another for the eventual Eleventh Doctor.

And like it or not, an Eleventh Doctor was what we were going to get. The BBC initially claimed a new Doctor would not be named until “well into” 2009 – but this wouldn’t stop the bookies who were already taking bets on a range of names, such as Paterson Joseph (*Bad Wolf*), James McAvoy and even Sean Pertwee, whose father (Jon Pertwee) had starred as the Doctor from 1970-1974.

It later transpired that Tennant’s announcement had been timed to coincide with the secret casting sessions for a new Doctor as well as to dovetail nicely with the title of the first of the five specials: *The Next Doctor*.

The 2008 Christmas special had been shooting as the previous series had drawn to a close, and would see the Tenth Doctor teaming up with another one of companion – something that would be trademark of his final episodes. This time around it would be David Morrissey (resulting in him being another name on the bookies list) whom Tennant had once starred alongside in the BBC drama musical **Blackpool**. With the title cleverly building into the buzz of “who will be the next Doctor Who?” generated by David Tennant’s announcement, it soon transpired that David Morrissey’s character would believe that he himself was the Doctor.

Also starring in this festive episode was Velile Tschabala as Rosina (a clever play on “the Doctor and Rose”) as well as popular Irish actress Dervla Kirwan as Miss Hartigan. Key to the episode, however, was the presence of Cybermen in the Victorian London setting...

THE NEXT DOCTOR

Christian Cawley

I’ve been dreading writing this review. On broadcast, I loved *The Next Doctor*, from its interesting explanation for Jackson Lake’s belief that he really was the Doctor to the big stomping CyberKing.

Stuffed on turkey, stuffing and booze, I was a satisfied customer, just like most of the other 11 million viewers.

That’s not to say *The Next Doctor* isn’t any good – it just isn’t the best of the Christmas specials (it isn’t even as good as *Voyage of the*

Damned) and certainly isn't better than *The Christmas Invasion*. It seems I got a little carried away.

In the intervening days I've since learned (courtesy of Russell T Davies/Benjamin Cook's *Doctor Who: The Writer's Tale*) that the King of Doctor Who has a rather odd method of writing. For instance, he doesn't write treatments or synopses unless Kylie Minogue's agent wants one. RTD also isn't a believer in planning a plot or story on paper, leaving it all to crystallise in his head. Not so astonishing is the fact that Russell T Davies always has a clear image in his head of final scenes – those interpersonal, emotional scenes that take place in the aftermath of the action.

All of this means something of course. But none of it means as much as recreating the Cybermen in 2006 and turning them into a bunch of stomping henchmen. Who then make deals with an earth woman, in order to make said earth woman into their King.

That's perversion, bastardisation and just plain wrong, in anyone's book.

The Next Doctor featured superb turns from David Morrissey and Dervla Kirwan, the latter of whom underplayed Miss Hartigan to perfection, lest we recall the panto-naffness of Sarah Parrish in *The Runaway Bride* back in 2006. Morrissey was sadly underused, however, left to be the Doctor's cheerleader at the end. As for Velili Tschabalala – well she looks great, but she was all a bit "stagey **Oliver!**" for me.

The identity of David Morrissey's Doctor was well discussed across the MingMongSphere for months before *The Next Doctor* aired – but after seeing the marching graveside Cybermen shots back in Spring 2008, who would have thought that Russell T Davies could have got them so wrong?

It's not like the Cybermen are difficult to portray. Similarly, it's not like the idea that they would nick anything off the Daleks is so bad, or against established fact – the Fourth Doctor famously dismissed them as "scavengers" back in *Revenge of the Cybermen*.

As a race dictated by logic, the Cybermen (Cybusmen?) curiously and illogically opted to use their resources to build a big marching, stomping Cyberfactory for conversion which required the kidnapping of children and a (very deep) secret underground base rather than quietly and patiently converting Londoners in 1851.

Why not set up a standing wave beacon to attract a passing TARDIS and ask the Doctor – either of them – to stop them?

The bizarre, emotional portrayal of the 1980s Cybermen that many fans derided throughout the 1990s is light years ahead of the current bunch, whose ability to be impervious to almost anything is matched only by their ability to be susceptible to their own technology.

In the same way in which the Cybermen seek to subvert humanity, Russell T Davies – in writing a Doctor Who Christmas special with a cynical, newspaper-baiting title and pressing the Cybermen along an illogical plot – has subverted the Cybermen.

I don't understand what they're for anymore – neither the Cybermen nor Russell T Davies.

Oh dear. This is a problem with publishing a book – a compendium, if you like, of reviews when the content is written so close to the transmission. You would be forgiven for thinking I don't "get" Christmas Doctor Who episodes, or even Russell T Davies himself, and based on this review I think I would be forced to agree with you.

For the record, this is by no means my least favourite Doctor Who episode, and while it poses all sorts of questions about why there is no mention of a giant robot trampling around London in any of the 21st century episodes (which we won't go into...) it's pretty good fun, isn't it? As for the "cynical, newspaper-baiting title", well Russell T Davies' job was to make sure as many people as possible watched Doctor Who.

This is a problem with being a fan. You find yourself becoming so wound up by the politics of things like promotion and episode titles as if they are in some way evil, or indeed relevant to the actual plot of the episode. Neither is true, something it took me a long time to realise.

I'm sure I'm not the only one, just as I wasn't the only one dying to see the Doctor travelling on his own, properly. Not just for one Christmas episode, but for an entire series. While the latter, hinted at when Tom Baker made such a good job of the concept in 1976's *Deadly Assassin*, is never likely to happen, the closest thing to it was made possible by the "series" of specials that would make up the 2009 "gap year" (which as we will see later was anything but).

With this now confirmed as being the shape of David Tennant's remaining episodes, Madame de Pompadour's observation of a "lonely god" finally became true...

THE LONE DOCTOR

Thomas Willam Spsychalski

It is an image that is as famous as the tales in which the myth was borne; the white hatted cowboy leaving town on his horse at sunset after defeating the bad guys; the lone soldier walking away from the battlefield weighed down with blood and mental anguish, the brave knight holding his honor above all wealth and prizes as he returns to the castle after the demise of the dragon.

The Doctor has always been a bit different in many regards, yet in this there is a similarity. He's the loner hero who cannot stand to travel on his own for long, the heaviness in knowing the universe all too well countered by his friendly nature and fascination in the company he keeps. These things make him seem as distant as he is close, yet the Doctor can fix his friends as he fixes planets.

His presence alone can make them change; but they also change him as well.

The First Doctor was discovered by teachers Ian Chesterton and Barbara Wright living with his granddaughter Susan on board the TARDIS and although we could debate till the end of the Earth what Susan's true origins might be, it is known that the Doctor did indeed once have a family. This means that when we first encounter the Doctor on our screens that he has never been without companionship since he began his self-imposed exile and that when Susan left the ship at the end of *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* the Doctor was faced with a new lifestyle with new challenges for the first time.

As time moved on companions came and went, each exposed to a more broad definition of life as the Doctor looked on as the one constant element, the lost soul that may never find the sense of peace, love and stability a majority of his friends found at the end of their journey. He is never truly alone until the Time Lords catch up with him at conclusion to *The War Games* and sentence him to exile on Earth while returning his companions to where they came from.

The solitude is short-lived, however as the Doctor soon teams up with Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart and UNIT, marking the dawn of a new era and a period where the Doctor was never stranded but never alone, surrounded as he was by friends in the UNIT organization. Even when Liz Shaw was replaced by Jo Grant and later by Sarah Jane Smith,

he was never far from people that cared for him and that he had pledged to protect.

Regeneration would come eventually for the Third Doctor and with it an instant desire to return to wandering time and space. It was in his fourth incarnation that the first stepped from the TARDIS on his own. At first following a summons to return to his home planet of Gallifrey and again later when savagery awaited the Doctor in the form of new companion Leela when next we saw him in *Face of Evil*.

This adventure quickly ended his lone time on screen, but the gap in between could be filled by any number of wonderful stories yet to be told.

Years later, there would be a more confusing gap surrounding the end of the Trial of a Time Lord season. When the Doctor leaves the trial with new companion Melanie Bush he technically has not even really met her yet, so here is another instance where this Doctor may have traveled on his own for a brief or extended period before meeting up with Mel in the village of Pease Pottage some time later. The Seventh Doctor is also seen traveling alone in the 1996 TV Movie, with no explanation as to what happened to the last companion we saw him with, Ace, but he also looks much older so it would seem that a great deal of time has passed on the Doctor's personal time line since the events of *Survival*.

Today we are faced with another Doctor who must face the dangers of the universe alone. Whereas in the past he might have wandered alone out of annoyance, this time the Doctor has seen friends lost, friends hurt and friends destroyed. What we see now is the Doctor truly running from aspects of his own nature as well as trying to prevent him doing any harm to any innocents that get too close to him. The Tenth Doctor is a Time Lord filled with sadness and remorse at the things that we cannot change, choosing stagnation of the social animal over causing harm again.

You wonder if this Doctor will be the same as the one who defeated Davros and the Daleks, if the events concerning Rose Tyler, Martha Jones and Donna Noble had a more prominent effect than was originally thought.

Looking from the outside, this gap in a steady second member of the TARDIS crew leads to great opportunity for both completely new adventures for the Tenth Doctor in various forms of media as well as the chance for David Tennant to return to the role he clearly holds dear

and dreamed of playing since he was a child. It is a design that hopefully leads to some great storytelling and creativity from every home spun fanzine's fan fiction to audio plays that allow us to re-visit David's Doctor at some time in the future.

But for right now the Doctor plays the part of the lone hero well, striding through the doors of the TARDIS on some alien world out in the stars, riding off on his blue wooden steed to times unknown, his pain trailing like tears across the universe. He is expecting to face his immediate future alone, without friends, leaving him a slightly different man in the process. We all have things we must face on our own in our own way and the Doctor seems no different.

Ride on.

So that was Christmas 2008. All done and dusted, with a new adventure, a new premise for the remaining episodes and the prospect of a new Doctor announced mid-way through 2009.

Yeah, right. Nothing is ever as it seems in Doctor Who fandom.

In the run up to *The Next Doctor*, we had heard a variety of interesting casting "claims". While Sean Pertwee was my own particular preference, the case for casting of a black actor as the Doctor seemed to be growing, with Chiwetel Ejiofor and Paterson Joseph both mentioned, as well as Colin Salmon (*Silence in the Library/Forest of the Dead*).

Given the information that an announcement was imminent in mid-December, when nothing arrived we decided to act upon the information we had been given. This turned out to be a mistake – Paterson Joseph was NOT the Doctor – and we moved on, expecting nothing for weeks.

So imagine our surprise when the BBC announced a special edition of Doctor Who Confidential to be aired on New Year's Day, looking at each of the different Doctors and their regenerations. It could mean only one thing – an announcement was very much imminent, riding on the back of *The Next Doctor*.

Anyone waking up with a hangover on January 3rd, 2009 (following the long weekend that was New Year's Day) could be forgiven for thinking the world had changed while they were asleep. The bookies lists had flipped; while there was still a lot of support for Pertwee, David Morrissey, Joseph and Ejiofor as well as Hugh Grant and Robert Carlyle, a new name had shot up the list.

Matt Smith had previously been seen on BBC TV as a political researcher in **Party Animals** and was pretty young – while David Tennant had been

the youngest Doctor since Peter Davison was cast in 1981, Matt Smith would be the youngest Doctor ever..

Few people really knew who Smith was –he was the archetypal unknown. So the announcement that the 26 year old was taking over from David Tennant came as some considerable surprise at the end of the special Doctor Who Confidential.

Not to everyone though – throughout the day, various bookies stopped taking bets as it became apparent that someone had made a few quid out of this bit of casting.

Which is fair enough, and ties in nicely with that fact that Smith had once been a talented young footballer whose aim of turning professional had been cut short following injury. A result of this was that he focussed his attention elsewhere – to acting.

...AND IT'S SMITHY ON THE BALL...

Nick Brown

So the waiting is over. The speculation can cease. The wish lists can stop being drawn up. Matt Smith will be the 11th Doctor.

So who is Matt Smith? A quick flick through his cv (that's curriculum vitae meaning 'course of life' for those of us posh and clever enough to have studied Latin; or 'resumé' for American readers) tells us that he has appeared on BBC television in **Ruby In The Smoke** and **The Shadow In The North** alongside our very own ('our very own' indeed...huh, listen to me...!) Billie Piper. Not only that, but he also teamed up with her in **Secret Diary Of A Call Girl**.

His theatre work includes **Swimming With Sharks**, **Murder In The Cathedral** and **The History Boys**.

Most exciting of all, though, is that Matt Smith used to be a footballer! (Again, for our American readers, that's 'footballer' in the proper sense, as in one who uses his feet and a ball rather than that American pseudo-ruby game that pretends to be football.) He played in the youth team of his local club Northampton and also had spells at Nottingham Forest and Leicester City (pronounced 'Lester City' and not 'Lie-sester City', you across-the-pond types).

(At this point, I must underline that I have nothing against Americans as it may have thus far appeared. I think you are great, especially if you are Mickey Mouse, Oliver Hardy or work in Hooters! Also, it is official that The Golden Corral is the best restaurant in the entire world!)

(I also promise not to use any more brackets as I seem to have gone into bracket overload.)

I digress.

Unfortunately for poor old Matt, he was forced to give up football due to injury. So, acting it was. Which got me thinking. Which other sportsmen could have been cast as the Doctor? Wouldn't it be great to see David Beckham at the TARDIS controls? Or Tiger Woods? Or Andy Murray? We could make a case for each...

Firstly, David Beckham. With his celebrity friends we could have some fabulous guest appearances...Emma Bunton as one of the Adipose, Tom Hanks could be Sabalom Glitz, Michael Douglas would make a great Davros, Tom Cruise as Sil and not forgetting Victoria Beckham as the Doctor's faithful companion. Plus, of course, he and his posh wife could start naming their children after where they were conceived again as they did with Brooklyn. I can't wait for the announcement that Skaro Beckham had been born. Or Zero-Room Beckham. Or, my personal favourite, Raxacoricofallapatorius Beckham.

Next, Tiger Woods. He'd certainly be able to take David Tennant's grin to the next level. Have you ever seen such white teeth? When he flashes that smile I do tend to turn to the sunglasses. Aside from the gnasher flashing, Woodsy would no doubt stick around for a fair while. Doggedly after Jack Nicklaus' record of 18 major titles and not resting until he passes the great man, Tiger would deem it a failure if anybody were to play the title role longer than he, so he'd stay for at least the 7 years of Tom Baker. So the show's longevity would be in safe hands.

(I'm about to break my bracket promise...I do apologise...)

And what about Andy Murray? He's a mixture of all his predecessors. What do I mean? Well, he's Scottish (McCoy and Tennant); he's got a reputation for being a bit grumpy (Hartnell); he has a shock of curly hair (both Bakers); he has a brother in the same line of work (McGann); the aforementioned brother is called Jamie and they play doubles together so it is often just him and Jamie left to sort things out (Troughton); he's a bit of an action man (Pertwee); at Wimbledon last year he was desperately unlucky to go out at the wrong time as was the 5th Doctor who regenerated just as Peri joined the TARDIS crew (Davison); after a row in a restaurant in Wales once he stopped talking to the head waiter, causing a rift in Cardiff (Eccleston).

But it's none of those. Matt Smith it is. I'm sure he'll do a great job. I'm just looking forward to the time he plays 'keepy-uppy' in the

console room, which with Executive Producer Piers “Arsene” Wenger overseeing things, is bound to happen.

And so a strange Doctor Who twilight world was born, with one actor waiting to take over from another actor who was still busily treading the boards (until he experienced back problems) in **Hamlet**.

A few weeks later shooting of the final Doctor Who episodes to star David Tennant would begin, kicking off with what seemed to be a very badly conceived and managed location shoot in Dubai.

Acres of sand were required to represent the arid *Planet of the Dead*, so a decision was made to forget about shooting in Devon or somewhere else in the UK where acres of sand can be found and instead go to the middle eastern nation of the United Arab Emirates, a country known for its poor human rights records and a very poor attitude to homosexuality.

The fact that the man that brought the world **Queer as Folk** was intending to send Doctor Who to shoot online in this particular country came out of the blue.

Reporting on this online, it did seem that the BBC were maybe spending a bit too much money on the trip, which involved shipping a red London double decker bus through the Mediterranean to appear on the Emirates’ sand. These days the BBC is regularly challenged about the amount of money they spend and securing value for money to justify the cost of the licence fee. My personal preference is that money is spent on programming, not on managers who can quite easily make the wrong decisions; too many cooks, and all that.

Whichever way you look at it, *Planet of the Dead* does seem to have been a production that could have been mounted entirely in the UK, save perhaps for some establishing shots (such as those recorded of the New York skyline for 2007’s *Daleks in Manhattan/Evolution of the Daleks*).

The fact is, not only was the bus damaged when unloaded from the ship it was transported over on (easily written into the script about a universe-hopping bus by Davies) but footage was also lost; the majority of scenes filmed on the bus while the Doctor and his fellow passengers are stranded on the alien planet were in fact remounted in Cardiff.

What *Planet of the Dead* did have going for it, however, was a memorable cast that saw former **EastEnders** star Michelle Ryan as the “companion” Lady Christina, a sub-**Pink Panther**, stereotypical posh bird cat burglar. The episode was co-written by Davies and Gareth Roberts,

whose previous episode *The Unicorn and the Wasp* had also featured a female cat burglar.

Also appearing was funny man Lee Evans, best known to international audiences for his role as Tucker/Norman Phipps in **There's Something About Mary**. Evans played UNIT scientist Malcolm Taylor in the episode; interestingly, Lee Evans' early stand-up routines centred on an unusual character called "Malcolm".

Finally, *Planet of the Dead* saw a return for UNIT's Captain Erisa Magambo (Noma Dumezweni) who was previously seen in *Turn Left*.

Most importantly, let us not forget Ellen Thomas as Carmen, a character whose warning cast a shadow over the Tenth Doctor's final days...

"You be careful, because your song is ending, sir. It is returning, it is returning through the dark. And then Doctor... oh, but then... he will knock four times."

Carmen, *Planet of the Dead*

PLANET OF THE DEAD

Christian Cawley

Planet of the Dead has landed in "Who Lite" year, in which everyone currently associated with the series is looking around for something else to do when they move on. Thankfully though they love the fans enough to at least look interested in what they're up to and not leave us with some substandard sugary Easter Bunny fluff in pink with shiny bits on... don't they?

Let's get one thing straight right now. If there are just 4 episodes of Doctor Who on TV in 2009, then they should be the very best that Doctor Who can give us; four episodes of the stature and standard of *The Empty Child*, *Human Nature*, *The Girl in the Fireplace*, *Midnight*, *The Shakespeare Code*.

Production on Doctor Who was effectively on hiatus from May last through to January this year, giving plenty of time for definitions and statements of intent, sorting out budgets, making a decision as to whether HD and BBC-style CGI is possible and lest we forget writing a decent script. (Incidentally there's no more mention of dodgy CGI in this review. It looked bad on normal TV, apparently woeful on HD and it seems there is much work to be done in that department.)

Geared up for viewing of the first new Who in four months and the last until at least October, I was virtually wetting myself with

excitement at the prospect of some fresh Doctor Who. Sadly as the opening Mission Impossible balderdash unfolded, I quickly realized that Russell T Davies and Gareth Roberts had conspired not to give the “faithful viewers” an amazing tale cut from the cloth of *The Shakespeare Code* and *Midnight* but instead some sub-par Bank Holiday underwhelming **Close Encounters/Pitch Black/Harry Potter** riffing, a wooden sidekick and some forced tension in the last 5 minutes.

If this was a school report I would wholeheartedly be scrawling in green or red biro “must do better” on both culprits, before sending Davies and Roberts off to see the headmistress. Taking a Gareth Roberts Doctor Who novel from the mi-1990s as a starting point seems like a good idea, but I’m afraid that the various flaws in logic and the unoriginal Lady Christina de Souza mean it’s detention for the RTD and a letter home for Roberts.

Enough about production failings, though – we could be here all night. Whatabout the players?

I’m going to come in for some stick with this, but I really feel as if David Tennant should have already gone by now. It’s not simply the fact that we know Matt Smith is waiting in the wings, either. He looked a bit bored to me, spouting the same “I’ll get you home” guff that his Doctor seems obsessed with once the bus had (effectively and without any notable SFX) fallen through a swarm-induced wormhole.

Whether he was on the bus at the start of the adventure, marching through the sand of the alien planet, finding a stricken vessel in the dunes or flying the bus out of trouble, there was more than a hint of “been there, done that” to proceedings. We’ll see my argument as to why that is a little bit later.

Michelle Ryan meanwhile... well what can you say? She looks lovely doesn’t she, but there isn’t much in the way of a realistic rapport between her slightly pushed-up Lady Christina and the Lord of Time. I’ve never seen **Merlin** properly so I’m not fully blessed with exposure to Ryan’s acting range and ability –however I have seen every episode of her **Bionic Woman** and can honestly say that I was expecting her to give us more Zoe Slater (**EastEnders**) than Jaime Sommers. Lacked punch.

The real surprise of *Planet of the Dead* was Lee Evans as a character who was a “loving” portrayal of Doctor Who fans. I was literally dreading the appearance of Evans as UNIT’s modern day Sgt Osgood,

Professor Malcolm Taylor but he stole every scene he was in despite entering into a universe-spanning gurning competition with the Tenth Doctor. Evans was certainly worth watching and made his inclusion in the casting something to behold rather than something to dread, so a little triumph for the production there.

Director James Strong has helmed a number of nuWho's, including *Voyage of the Damned* and *The Satan Pit*, to adventures with considerable – but differing – scale. He's pretty much got off scot-free with any lacking moments because of this, but the story is different this time around. As director, Strong is responsible for the allocation of effects shots to The Mill, not to mention coaxing the best out of his cast. Sure, there's some smashing framing of shots but Strong also has a cinematographer on hand to assist with that stuff. I contend here that Strong was punching above his weight with *The Satan Pit*, got lucky with most of *Voyage of the Damned* and is now, post **Bonekickers**, trying to carry on the charade.

Regardless of the quality of the script and cast, Strong's performance as director in *Planet of the Dead* is the real weak link. Some marvelous films are made with otherwise mediocre actors based on average scripts and for all I've pointed out concerning the various failings of both cast, script and special effects, the same could have been true here.

Planet of the Dead wasn't quite as disappointing as *The Next Doctor*, but it was no *Christmas Invasion*, feeling more like an early season adventure than something special, something rare in 2009 and by definition something that should have been fantastic.

So now we knew. Thanks to the ramblings of a mad old woman on a bus, the Doctor discovered that his end was coming – and that “he” would “knock four times.”

How many of us looked at our friends and family and said “The Master!?” How many of us paused for a moment and thought “Naahhh!?” And how many of us welled up as the impending departure of David Tennant – and by consequence Russell T Davies – became ever more real?

The Tenth Doctor is quite a complex character. With his long coat and interest in investigating strange occurrences, the Tenth Doctor could easily have spent some time in the seedy criminal underworld of Raymond Chandler's detective Philip Marlowe.

While Marlowe might have stuck to dodgy insurance scams and murder, our Doctor sticks to an unwavering belief in the spirit of mankind. Last of the Time Lords he might be, but this Doctor is more enthused by the strengths of Earth's dominant species than its weaknesses.

In fact, he's probably the most human of them all.

THE LONG GOODBYE

Christian Cawley

Born out of salvation, the Tenth Doctor was a considerable contrast to his predecessor. With a rediscovered liking for cups of tea and becoming more accessible to his companions' families, this Doctor was for many more recognisable as "the Doctor".

To chart the life of this particular incarnation of the Time Lord is an interesting proposition. There's the whole situation with Rose, to begin with, and the question of whether he could ever really have been able to love her, knowing that one day he would die. Similarly his interest in Madame de Pompadour, and as John Smith Joan Redfern, would suggest that the answer was no.

So while they went flying through time and space together, occasionally with Mickey, was the Doctor just looking for someone he could show off to? Or was the Tenth Doctor looking for a mind as sharp as his? This would certainly explain the way in which he discarded Rose in *The Girl in the Fireplace* and how later on he was prepared to take the Master with him in the TARDIS, away from Earth.

Imagine the look on Rose's face if she'd still been around!

The truth is the Tenth Doctor is probably the most multi-faceted and complex version since the Fourth Doctor. While Tom Baker's varying portrayals were the result of a succession of production teams, each with different ideas on the types of adventures the Doctor should be having, in David Tennant's case it is through a series of fantastic concepts and superb writers. You can also add to that a need to resurrect certain key elements of the series past such as the Cybermen, Davros, the Sontarans and the Master.

Clearly Russell T Davies is a supremely talented writer, but the success of Doctor Who over the past three and a bit years has been down to the viewing public's acceptance of David Tennant as the show's star and his willingness to be associated with the role off screen as well as on.

As has been written a thousand times, David Tennant is a Doctor Who fan, a man who grew up with the show, declared that he wanted to play the part as a child and worked his way into position by chance by working on various Big Finish productions before being cast by Russell T Davies in his production of **Casanova** in 2004.

Given the coming changes and the stewardship of Steven Moffat as Davies' replacement, it does seem a bit of a shame that we won't get to see his vision of Doctor Who played out by the much loved Tennant.

Wouldn't it have been great to see the Tenth Doctor reshaped under multiple producers, just as the Fourth had been?

But now, things are different. Now we know, thanks to that announcement in 2008, that the Doctor is going. By the time David Tennant leaves, he will have been the Doctor for just over five years. Children will recognise only him as the face of Doctor Who, and Matt Smith will have quite a job to undo that remarkable association with the role that Tennant has fostered.

Ever since *The Next Doctor* (or even *The Stolen Earth/Journey's End*) this Doctor has been living on borrowed time. His habit of scraping through adventures with ad hoc companions isn't going to do him any good – while the Doctor thinks he won't lose friends like Rose or Donna, or hurt anyone like Martha or Jack, the only thing his current lifestyle can lead to is the end.

If the Fourth Doctor had been allowed to wander alone through time and space for any reasonable length of time, you could quite imagine him sampling ginger beer across a succession of planets and periods, regaling mad old ladies about his exploits.

For the Tenth Doctor (and it is amazing how often they are compared) I would like to imagine him dropping into science lessons as a supply teacher, or perhaps turning up unannounced at Sarah Jane's for tea.

In truth, the series of specials that we're now half way through afford considerable off-screen character development in the shape of the books and comics (particularly the IDW series) and no one need ever worry about how these fit into the series continuity.

But with the "four knocks" approaching, and everyone and his dog thinking it means that our favourite Doctor will die with the impending return of the Master, travelling alone is all the Doctor has. He has no one to hold him back – and whatever happens on Mars just might seal his fate.

As we saw at the end of *Planet of the Dead*, Doctor Who would return later in the year with the fan-baiting title of *The Water of Mars*. Despite the planet's setting, however, there would be scant mention of the proud race of warriors that once terrorised young Doctor Who viewers in the 1960s and 1970s – instead, the terror was far more primal.

Before that, however, the Doctor would have time to pay a visit to *Dreamland*, the top secret location within Area 51 that is central to so much of America's UFO conspiracy theories. David Tennant would once again voice an animated version of the Doctor as the so-called "gap year" of 2009 offered yet another adventure on top of the various specials, appearances on the radio with Catherine Tate, audiobooks and a series of Tenth Doctor comics from IDW.

Not much of a gap year, really.

With books and extended comic strip adventures in **Doctor Who Magazine** you could be forgiven for thinking that television adventures had been forgotten; but given the strength of the trailer for *The Waters of Mars*, this was never going to happen.

Broadcast on Sunday, 15th November 2009, *The Waters of Mars* was the first of two new Doctor Who adventures to be broadcast that month. Starring David Tennant with another temporary cast, the episode took the "base under siege" theme from classic Doctor Who and delivered a modern twist.

Guest starring Lindsay Duncan as Adelaide Brooke and Peter O'Brien as Ed Gold, the adventure was notable in its dark tone that saw the Doctor desperately trying to save a team of human pioneers that he knew were doomed to die on that very day...

THE WATERS OF MARS

Christian Cawley

And so it begins. Landing on Mars. Failing to check the date. Cries of anguish. The rash, defiant decision.

The Time Lord Victorious.

The end is nigh.

With *The Waters of Mars*, Doctor Who stepped up a gear into the now-recognisable *Utopia/Turn Left* "third episode from the end of the series", a marked change from the heinous heist fluff of *Planet of the Dead*.

A far cry from pointless romps in the desert, *The Waters of Mars* thrust the Doctor into an unwinnable situation, a real “volcano day” set 50 years in the future on the first human base on Mars (the wonderfully named Bowie Base One) on the very day the base would be destroyed by a nuclear explosion.

Trying to get away from the base from the moment he realised who the crew were, the Doctor instead found himself on a quest to find out more about the infection, the Water Zombies and generally help as much as he could.

It’s rare that compassion should cause anyone to be forced to stare into the barrel of a gun – the Doctor has been threatened in this way countless times, but by monsters, Cybermen, Daleks, the master even.

Never by fate itself.

This is only one of the differences between *The Waters of Mars* and other Doctor Who adventures since 2005 – key differences that mark this as event television despite a raft of familiar elements, notably the base under siege. It’s heavy stuff though – just the ticket for fans and commentators alike slightly perturbed by the lack of weight to the previous two specials and the hotch-potch finale to *The Stolen Earth* in 2008.

Somehow I’ve got half-way through this review without mentioning David Tennant’s superbly measured performance throughout – but I have to stop first at the triumph of the Water Zombies. As **Doctor Who Confidential** revealed, design for these creatures went through several iterations, and unlike some other creatures over the past 5 years (notably the Jagraffess, the Slitheen and the Cybermen) these slightly lumbering but nevertheless sprightly zombies were note-perfect. There was no way to stop them, no antidote and no replacement water filter – everyone had to die, again down to the compassion that the crew members showed to their infected comrades.

It was compassion that sent the Doctor on a dark journey and ultimately compassion that destroyed the Mars base.

Superb writing by Phil Ford and Russell T Davies, and half of the internet would seem to agree – except they did the easy bit. It’s a tough job writing television this good, but very easy to let it go to waste.

Step forward then The Guv’nor. Ladies and gentlemen, give Graeme Harper a round of applause for bringing us a cohesive, well-acted Doctor Who episode with good visual effects and a good dose of dark

and moody camera angles that really soaked up the emotions of the desperate situation on the Mars base. It's all too easy to praise and criticise writers when things go well but the end product can only be as good as the director. Harper was clearly the best man for the job.

Watching *The Waters of Mars* was the rare experience of engaging with an hour of top quality television starring two actors at the top of their game. Lindsay Duncan was marvellous as Adelaide Brooke – fearsome, dictatorial, determined, single-minded – everything a female pioneer should be, and not a million miles from Margaret Thatcher. Her reaction at having being saved by the Doctor, thus existing when her death should shape the future of mankind was a superb mix of anger and disdain – we've seen nothing like this in Doctor Who before! As for the heroic suicide that saves the future – well, I'll let you decide if it was necessary, but it certainly brought home to the Doctor the harm he had done.

David Tennant meanwhile... well what can you say? Whenever the story requires it he can turn on the darkness, the depths to the Doctor that we rarely see – years of loss, frustration, loneliness were etched into his face as the Doctor walked away from the Mars base, bringing home the clear fact that this one actor has been able to display the greatest range of any of his predecessors. In terms of acting ability Tennant is up there with Patrick Troughton – how he and Peter Davison in particular could have shined brighter still with material such as this!

With just over 2 hours of the Tenth Doctor left, Russell T Davies has turned on the quality with *The Waters of Mars*, leaving the Doctor in a desperate situation – has his realisation that in saving the doomed Adelaide he has gone too far had any lasting effect?

Bigging-up Russell T Davies for this episode probably doesn't do any favours to writer Phil Ford who shared a credit with the Executive Producer. However the task of writing the story was mixed, both men did a superb job of cranking up the tension and delivering an astonishing new take on the Doctor, that of the power-mad Time Lord Victorious who eventually ran away from the impending four knocks to go travelling through time... and ended up in 1940s America.

Most notable of the non-television Doctor Who was *Dreamland*, a CGI animated adventure that saw the Tenth Doctor combatting the alien Viperox alongside a young American waitress named Cassie Rice – played

by *The Doctor's Daughter* actress and girlfriend of David Tennant, Georgia Moffett. Sadly not returning as Jenny, the actress nevertheless gave a good account of herself, her American accent no doubt influenced by that of her mother, actress Sandra Dickinson (Trillian in the original **Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy**). She was part of a great cast that included David Warner as Lord Azlok of the Viperox, and Lisa Bowerman (*Survival*, Big Finish's Bernice Summerfield) as Saruba Velak, the wife of scientist Rivesh Mantilax.

Also in the adventure – broadcast in several parts as well as a one-hour feature – was Jonathan Creek regular Stuart Milligan as Colonel Stark, while the whole affair was directed by Gary Russell. Opinion remains split on this animated adventure; *The Infinite Quest* seems to have a better reputation, however. Both are available to purchase on DVD.

As November went on, Doctor Who fans were greeted with two trailers to the adventure that would herald the death of the Tenth Doctor, first at the end of *The Waters of Mars*, and again on the 2010 **Children in Need** fundraiser show. *The End of Time, Part One* and *Part Two* would be broadcast on Christmas Day 2009 and New Year's Day 2010, the episodes separated by a week – and lots of David Tennant.

Early in 2009, Russell T Davies had promised Doctor Who fans some surprises throughout the year. The first of these was what would turn out to be Tennant's last scenes as the Doctor in a couple of episodes of **The Sarah Jane Adventures** (*The Wedding of Sarah Jane Smith* by Gareth Roberts, broadcast 29-30th October, 2009), while another was *Dreamland*. A third and final "bonus" was what would turn out to be one of the most memorable (and for many, nauseating) series of BBC One "idents" (the fillers between shows and trailers that tell the weak-minded what channel they're watching). David Tennant, some reindeer and a police box would entertain children between shows throughout the Christmas period on BBC One, until such a point following *The End of Time, Part Two* when many were glad to see the back of him.

Tennant's appearances weren't limited to frolicking in the snow with Rudolph, however. Over the Christmas period he was booked to appear on many shows on TV and radio, appeared in magazine and newspaper articles and basically made the most of his last month as TV's biggest star. One particularly interesting broadcast took place on December 29th as Tennant, Catherine Tate and Russell T Davies gathered in a radio studio and discussed David Tennant's time on Doctor Who.

Like Tennant, Tate would return to Doctor Who for two more episodes as Donna Noble – but as the events of *Journey's End* proved, she could no longer travel with the Doctor.

Instead, the Tenth Doctor would travel to Earth in *The End of Time, Part One* to seek the resurrected Master and be assisted not by Donna Noble, but by her granddad, Wilf Mott.

Step forward television legend Bernard Cribbins, who for some reason still hasn't been knighted...

NATIONAL TREASURE

Thomas Willam Spsychalski

These kinds of articles are supposed to write themselves. You take an actor and the character they play, make a few well-crafted witty remarks and fill in the blanks as you go. I find that trying write such a piece about Bernard Cribbins as Wilfred Mott that I am stumped into standing mute, pen down, word processor off. It is not a cheat as much as a feeling of being breathless, stunned into silence. It is pretty rare to see a role filled so well by the actor that you really have not a word to say about the matter.

Wilfred Mott is such a pure creation both by design and by brilliant performance, a member of the cast that you swear lives just down the street from you, a real breathing person. Cribbins really shows you that he can indeed perform still and does so with flair. A mixture is created that has both a humorous and serious side, a realistic design that really makes you hold a fondness for the actor's skills and the imagination used for the creation of the character itself.

His fictional alias is a man of honor and virtue that we seldom see in modern times. He has taken on Daleks with a paint gun, encouraged his granddaughter, Donna Noble, to explore and have adventure in her life, even when this exploration comes with danger or a price. This wide-eyed view, full of wonder and adventurous spirit, made Wilfred Mott an original for a Doctor Who supporting character. He is not ignorant to the fact that there is a high possibility of alien life and most likely a million other worlds in the stars that light up the night sky. He is the believer, the fighter and the moral hero, an open mind that is worth its weight.

Up until this point however, Wilf has been in the background to a certain degree, relegated to the scenes where it was necessary to show Donna Noble's family. But soon he will take the main stage, second to

only the Doctor himself. He will be the last companion to accompany the Tenth Doctor in the TARDIS, the last friend perhaps to be witness to his fast coming demise and possibly give him comfort in his time of greatest need.

Maybe the overly present human quality in Wilfred Mott will be the catalyst to drive the Doctor back from the madness of the ending of *The Waters of Mars*. His spirit helping the Doctor reclaim himself from what seems to be a downward spiral and calm the 'Time Lord Victorious' behavior that seemed to replace the Doctor's usual heroic nature as we head into ten's final flight.

It would seem that the Doctor needs help in finding solid moral ground again, a fight that might be hard to win without help of some sort, perhaps an example of the virtues he so recently abandoned. Wilf's personality and combination of bravery, honesty and witty candour seem a perfect fit for this purpose. We might see a Wilfred Mott who has always seemed to have known and vocalized how special the Doctor was and now sees fit to help the man who has helped so many others.

We are all holding our collective breaths as fans now; the day is coming that is dusk and dawn, death and re-birth. It seems fitting that the Doctor should at least have one friend by his side, especially one so human.

There is no conflict like the ones we have within and sometimes a friend is required to heal the breach in our hearts and souls.

Blimey, I'm welling up.

As Christmas morning 2009 arrived, Doctor Who fans knew – in fact, everyone with a TV knew – that David Tennant was embarking on his final adventure as the Doctor. A new actor, Matt Smith, had been filming scenes for several weeks and Tennant's departure was heavily promoted.

To see the Tenth Doctor on his way, Russell T Davies assembled a superb cast, which included **Robin Hood's** David Harewood in the key role of Joshua Naismith, June Whitfield as the cheeky pensioner Minnie Hooper, Hollywood legend Claire Bloom as the mysterious woman in white, former **Hi-De-Hi** star Barry Howard as another of Wilf's pensioner friends, regular Hollywood bad guy Brian Cox as the Elder Ood and even Timothy Dalton as Rassillon, founder of the Time Lords.

Throw into the mix the return of Alexandra Moen and John Simm as Lucy Saxon and the Master, Catherine Tate as Donna Noble and Jacqueline

King as Sylvia Noble, plus a return of every former Tenth Doctor companion (yes, Rose included) and you've got an epic two-part adventure that swings from comedy to tragedy as the Master takes control of alien technology to temporarily destroy humanity and reawaken the formerly time-locked Time Lords!

THE END OF TIME, PART ONE

Christian Cawley

"The End of Time is... huge and epic, but also intimate."

So said Russell T Davies back at Easter as the world prepared for the Doctor Who special *Planet of the Dead* – a huge let down of ridiculous, flimsy storytelling.

"I knew I'd write David's last episode one day, so I've had this tucked away. You do think: 'How can the stakes get bigger?' And they do. They really do. I don't mean just in terms of spectacle, but in terms of how personal it gets for him."

That was Russell T Davies around the same time – once again bigging up the Christmas special *The End of Time* with more of the same spin and hype. Note the words: "epic", "intimate", "spectacle" and "personal".

Would someone then explain to me why we what we have seen so far was a series of "setpieces" poorly linked together with little or no dialogue?

Why *The End of Time, Part One* jumped from confrontation to a chat in a cafe back to confrontation with no reason or explanation? Why characters with little ultimate relevance were given such intense – and dare I say it smug – scenes?

How could the resurrection of the Master have been so mishandled? Who welded David Tennant's teeth together?

And why didn't we get more Catherine Tate?

How did the Master get crazy monkey/**Heroes** style powers?

And just how does The Narrator mop up all his spittle?

You know, with the benefit of hindsight, it could have been easy to guess – Russell T Davies' scripts have a habit of letting you down. *Planet of the Dead* (co-written with Gareth Roberts), *Journey's End*, *Last of the Time Lords* – all highly anticipated episodes that ultimately let down both the series, the writer himself and the fans.

Christmas specials can generally be excused – although *The Next Doctor* was a big cynical exercise in misnaming an adventure in the

wake of David Tennant's announcement, the story was well directed and featured excellent guest turns from David Morrissey and Dervla Kirwan.

That was then – this is now. David Tennant's final adventure has been anticipated since the announcement in October 2008 and viewers both regular and casual tuned in on Christmas Day to see how his time as the star of Doctor Who would come to an end.

On the evidence produced in *The End of Time, Part One*, it's tricky to say whether they'll bother tuning in next time.

So what was wrong with *The End of Time, Part One*?

With Davies writing and Euros Lyn directing, the 2009 Doctor Who Christmas special should have been a joy to behold; while the director got some superb performances from the three main players (Tennant, John Simm and Bernard Cribbins) and gave us some fast-paced drama, little of it holds together on second viewing.

Given the gravity of the storyline, one would hope that the episode could have been more cohesive.

The End of Time, Part One is nuWho, let's not forget. Usually subtexts can be found through subsequent views, and while there is plenty to admire here (not least the mystery behind Claire Bloom's "Woman in White" and the question over the true identity of Wilfred Mott) there is a lack of the intensity found in episodes such as *Human Nature*, *Blink* or *Midnight*.

Instead of being able to compare *The End of Time, Part One* to those esteemed episodes (one of which was written by Davies himself) I'm instead finding myself comparing this most vital of modern Doctor Who adventures with 1981's *Logopolis*.

Don't get me wrong – I love the story. I was 5 when it first went out, and the sight of the legendary Fourth Doctor hanging from a power cable and falling to his death stayed with me for months until the Fifth Doctor was able to get into his stride the following year.

Logopolis isn't perfect classic Who by any means, though – not least with stagey direction, acting and so much ham from Master actor Anthony Ainley you could have eaten it through the TV screen.

Fast forward 28 years and we haven't got ham – but we have got turkey. As a fan of John Simm from *Life on Mars* and earlier roles, I've always been happy with his bonkers incarnation of the Master. His resurrection following a pretty cut and dried death in *Last of the Time Lords* was always going to happen – but somehow *The End of Time*,

Part One managed to spend an inordinate amount of time devoted to a pointless Harry Potter-esque magic ceremony bringing him back from the dead, complete with a bizarre “Cult of Harold Saxon”.

Evidently a reference to the whole “cult of personality” that surrounded the Saxon template, Tony Blair, this cult about 4 years too late to have any real meaning to the average viewer or indeed anyone without at least a passing interest in politics. As such the whole scene seems more ropey than an eBay auction and is barely saved by John Simm; Alexandra Moen meanwhile is positively bland, in sharp contrast to the underplayed Lucy Saxon of *The Sound of Drums/Last of the Time Lords*.

Two scenes with Tennant and Simm in the London wasteland are pretty pointless, only serving to let the Doctor witness the Master’s bizarre new powers and his kidnapping by the pointless Joshua Naismith and his unnaturally close daughter. It’s a waste of both actors’ talents, and quite possibly doesn’t actually feature John Simm himself in many cases.

The only real meat in *The End of Time, Part One* are the scenes between Tennant and Cribbins – an element of the episode that hasn’t been over-hyped. From the scene in the cafe to the concluding moments of the episode, the Doctor and Wilf are like an instant team. There is obvious comfort in seeing the legend that is Bernard Cribbins on the TV at all, moreso watching him inside the TARDIS and declaring “I thought it would be cleaner!” as he travels to the home of billionaire Joshua Naismith, his private army and two spiky headed aliens.

Which brings this review to the closing gambit – the Master in total command of alien device The Immortality Gate (with which Joshua Naismith intends to keep his daughter alive for ever) and the Doctor and Wilf and the Vinocci standing helpless as the deranged Time Lord creates a brand new race on Earth.

This is what Russell T Davies meant by “spectacle” – but did it have to take so long to get to? Could the Master’s resurrection not have been done in flashback? Did we really need a hokey Disney-esque commentary from the Narrator?

With Timothy Dalton revealed at the end as the member of an ancient and grand race, *The End of Time, Part Two* is set up as a direct follow on from the cataclysmic closing moments of *Part One*. The final episode of David Tennant’s time on Doctor Who will be worth watching, mark my words – but it could have been so much better

served with an opening episode of quality instead of one seeming designed to get to the fantastic final scenes in as long a period of time as possible.

THE END OF TIME, PART TWO

Christian Cawley

Hand on heart – over the past 5 years I’ve not been Russell T Davies’ biggest fan.

As showrunner of Doctor Who, when he wants to go all big, epic and bombastic, he can. The results are often the cause for much debate as spectacle can be seen to draw attention to the sparsity of the plot.

These are general terms – *The Waters of Mars*, *Midnight*, *Turn Left*, *The Parting of the Ways* and several others don’t suffer in this way. But over the course of 4 full series and 5 specials, the man who breathed a new life into our favourite TV show seemed to be outputting a lot of work that wasn’t being script edited.

“But he’s the showrunner,” you might well interject, “why should he be edited?”

The writers with the unenviable task of adapting **Harry Potter** and **The Lord of the Rings** books are all script edited – for all of the love the UK press has for Russell T Davies, you can’t seriously expect him to be above that?

Instead, ever since the big *Doomsday* finale of 2006, RTD has been throwing characters around, having them appear in the positions he needs them to be in for a series of set pieces, visual orgies of CGI and action and a few quiet chats and then let things slowly dissipate for the remaining 20-30 minutes – a well-worn template that you could see being repeated for *The End of Time, Part Two*.

Except... this time he actually seems to have pulled it off!

With a world full of Masters, mysterious women in white who might be Susan/Romana/Leela/the Doctor’s mother, rabid Time Lords and a pair of aliens who wouldn’t seem out of place in *Meglos*, the world’s most bonkers cliffhanger in the history of ever left viewers hanging on for something on Christmas Day – only for Russell T Davies to pull out of the furnace some of the best moments in his entire 5 years in charge of Doctor Who.

Elements might have been derivative – the 64 missiles being gunned down by Wilf and a cactus in turrets stolen from a Corellian freighter to

name but one (you can keep your **Matrix** rip off theories – the **Matrix** itself rips off *The Deadly Assassin*, end of story) – but there was no escaping the wonderful moments between David Tennant and Bernard Cribbins as the Doctor and Wilf. Chucking in the superb John Simm (whose less insane moments really give his Master some moments of clarity rarely seen in the classic series) for his share of some of RTD’s best dialogue yet brought out the best in everyone concerned (except the played for laughs cacti. There has to be a reason why those two were mugging throughout, but I’ve yet to find it.)

It would be easy to sit waxing lyrical about the vast scale of the Time Lord’s plot, whether Timothy Dalton’s Lord President was in fact Time Lord founder Rassilon himself, resurrected to lead Gallifrey into way or simply named after the legend and how a small QVC diamond could have escaped the Time War and made it to Earth.

The thing is, I don’t want to. Whatever its faults (not as many as *Part One*) *The End of Time, Part Two* is one of the most important Doctor Who stories ever. Even if there were no regeneration at the end of it, the scale and nature of the story, “he will knock four times”, war-crazed and evil Time Lords wielding evil gauntlets of power, the potential for Donna (Catherine Tate) being killed by brain overheat and so many billion versions of the Master being used as an escape path by returning Time Lords are reason enough to spend hours poring over the various new elements added to Doctor Who lore in the space of 75 minutes.

In fact, the very sort of thing this very website was set up to praise.

When they came – and we had known for a long time that the “four knocks” wouldn’t necessarily be the tapping in the Master’s head – the end for the Doctor after apparently surviving so much was suddenly there, staring us in the face.

Saving Wilf’s life was the single most important thing the Tenth Doctor did in *The End of Time, Part Two*. Anyone could have fired that revolver into the Master’s Time Lord reception device. Preventing the destruction of time itself in order that the Time Lords could evolve into a higher species to escape the Time War had already been done by the Doctor when he used the Moment and brought about the destruction of Gallifrey, the Time Lords and (most of) the Daleks.

Only the Doctor could have saved Wilf that day. At the cost of his own life.

Of course, the similarities between saving Wilf and saving Rose in *The Parting of the Ways* – absorbing lethal radiation – are extremely clear. Three regenerations caused by radiation would seem to suggest the Doctor needs to start thinking about carrying some sort of hazard suit in the TARDIS in future.

It was at the point of the aftermath that the previously self-indulgent season finales were overshadowed by 20 minutes of the Doctor visiting his friends and loved ones before the onset of the slowest regeneration since *The Caves of Androzani* – appearances by John Barrowman, Billie Piper, Camille Coduri, Noel Clarke, Freema Agyeman, Lis Sladen, Tommy Knight, Russell Tovey and Jessica Hynes (and a return to Wilf and Donna) all served to underline the importance of the Doctor being able to get some sort of reward for losing everything, allowing him to either save or change the lives of those that travelled with him.

Unlike *Doomsday*, *Last of the Time Lords*, *The Stolen Earth* and this review, *The End of Time, Part Two* didn't seem to go on too long. When it came, the pent up, destructive force of the Doctors tenth regeneration was a release that everyone emotionally involved, not just the Doctor, wanted to put off for as long as possible.

A crazy, non- ginger turn from Matt Smith at the helm of a dying TARDIS is the only reference I'm making to the Eleventh Doctor here.

The End of Time was truly David Tennant's story and possibly his finest and most layered performance as the Doctor yet.

We'll miss him.

I confess that even now I can't watch the final ten minutes of *The End of Time, Part Two* without getting at least a tear in my eye. The superb Murray Gold soundtrack is partially to blame for this, as is the whole emotion of the episode that truly brings five years of Doctor Who (from the teaser trailer on New Year's Day 2005 to the end of the Tenth Doctor on New Year's Day 2010) to full closure.

That, I guess, is the true beauty of Doctor Who. It can be anything it wants to be, and over the course of those five years it has been, generally speaking, brilliant.

So there you have it. A transition from terminally worried old school Doctor Who fans who just couldn't get their heads around some of the more interesting selections and choices made by Russell T Davies during

his tenure into a state of complete respect for a new way of making Doctor Who.

What is particularly strange is that back when I started Kasterborous with Anthony Dry, and later got Brian A Terranova on board, I was convinced Russell T Davies' vision for Doctor Who would be something that I would key into. I knew his work, enjoyed some of it, missed others, but felt sure that I would be with him from the start.

I suppose in some ways I was – *Rose* is still a great episode that does everything it needs to, and does it well – but the whole Russell T Davies era has, for me and many other fans been a strange journey, taking in resurrection, farce and disappointment, before finally ending with an epic tale that can sit alongside the greatest and most legendary adventures from the classic era of Doctor Who.

In writing and compiling *Ultimate Resurrection* I have been reminded of one very important thing about Doctor Who.

The classic era isn't just *The Caves of Androzani*, or *Talons of Weng-Chiang*, or *Pyramids of Mars* or *Inferno*, *The War Games* or *The War Machines*, it isn't just *The Curse of Fenric* or *The Ribos Operation*, *Earthshock* or *Vengeance on Varos*. For each of these hugely respected adventures, there's a *Timelash*, a *Twin Dilemma*, a *Stones of Blood* or a *Planet of Evil*, a *Time Flight* or *The Chase* or even, to recall one of the most outspoken reviews in this book, a *Time and the Rani*.

There is more to Doctor Who than gothic horror, "double act" criminals and the Brigadier in an eye patch. We have had almost 50 years of fantastic adventures throughout time and space, on earth and elsewhere, and the stories that are less well respected, that are possibly more often derided than others or are pretty much ignored are still part of Doctor Who, and always will be.

From 2005 to the very first day of 2010, Russell T Davies oversaw an amazing addition to the patchwork quilt of time travelling action adventure that has been thrilling children in 1963, and in doing so ensured that kids in 2063 might enjoy Doctor Who in the same way.

That's a level of success that you just can't buy.