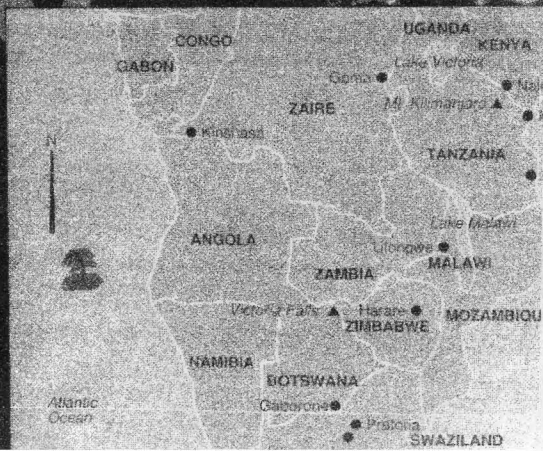


C L U B



TROPICANA



# EDITORIAL

"It's the end, but the moment has been prepared for..."

Hmm. Just as I was beginning to plan this issue, way back in October, I was made redundant - thus forcing me to either give up Club Tropicana or pass the reins over to a new editor.

Thankfully, the title will continue - under the charge of Daniel O'Mahony, who has contributed quite a bit to this second issue. All contributions for further issues should be sent to him at the new editorial address below. Anybody requiring back issues (1 and 2) should send a cheque (£2 each) to John Pettigrew at the other address below.

It's a shame, but I reckon Daniel will make a good job of it. For myself, I'm still willing to write for anybody's zine - drop me a line any time you feel. It would be helpful if you had an idea in mind as opposed to "oh, just write anything on WHO," because you're liable to get a blank stare. Music tastes and other interests available on request...

Thanks to all the contributors who helped on this issue; PAUL DUMONT, CRAIG FOULKES & SIMON ROUSE, CURT SHORT, DOUG PHILIPS & TONY NEWMAN, LESLIE P. HOLLIS, GARY LEIGH, DAVID GIBBS, KEITH TOPPING and JOHN CONNORS.

Thanks also to JOHN AINSWORTH, MARK DUNCAN and MICHAEL MCCOLL.

I would also like to dedicate this issue to the young and unemployed who cannot get work despite having skills, abilities and intelligence. Don't give up and keep going.

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#### RECOMMENDED:

Issues 1 and 2 of Top available from JOHN CONNORS, 8 Henley Road, Allerton, LIVERPOOL, L18 2OW. Something really good.

Send an SAE for further details.

#### COPYRIGHTS:

BBC, the respective authors, Sunny Jim's Travel Agency, Kim Basinger, Demi Moore, Pizza Hut, does anybody read these bits anyway?, DWM, DWB, DWCC, DWIBBLE, DUANE DIBBLY, 2000AD, 1989AD, 1812AD, EMI Ltd, Castle Rock Entertainments, The Klingons, The Lillies, Femmedoms (I still don't see how they work...), "they're coming at me, at angles that I never knew existed. But they ain't goinna get me. I'm building up my colours of resistance." Bet nobody gets that quote!, the name 'John Pettigrew' is a real name and NOT a pseudonym for Anthony Brown and don't you forget it. and The Claws of Axos is superb, Tanita Tikaram really lost it after her second album. is The Big Breakfast crap or what?. thirty years of WHO, eh? etc, etc...

Bye,

*John*

# THUNDERTHIGNS!

Mini-skirts were big business back in the swinging 60's when WHO was young. Girls took their skirts up and up and played Russian roulette with fashion to see how much they could show, and the mini-skirt boom only ended when hemlines touched bottoms. Female legs were an everyday sight, in the street, at work, at home and in WHO.

Jackie Lane told TV ZONE that: "My claim to fame is that I was one of the first people to wear a mini-skirt on television. It seemed to be bright and appropriate." Isn't it disappointing to see Dodo in the actual episode of *The Celestial Toymaker* and *The War Machines* and find out it was only a couple of inches above the knee? Even Vicki had worn shorter skirts when she started in *The Rescue* and *The Web Planet!* The real history of mini-skirts in WHO begins with Polly, the first of the swinging 'dolly bird' companions.

No Gerry Davis novelisation would be complete without several mentions of Polly's long slender legs, and in some there are scenes where men take the chance to look as she bends down or climbs up ladders. Sadly the reality never matched up to Mr. Davis' fevered imagination. Polly wore her skirts higher than Dodo, but only the red dress she wore with black tights in *The Tenth Planet* and *Power of the Daleks* got up to truly mini level, and showed that her legs really were as long and slender as Mr. Davis tells us. From time to time there were even flashes of black briefs under the tights. For the rest of the time we had to content ourselves with skirts that came down to mid-thigh, but even these didn't conceal her pants when she crouched down in *The Highlanders*, as DWB's photographs show!

Things seemed to be going from bad to worse when it was announced that the new companion would be a Victorian girl and go around dressed in a long crinoline. After that bombshell the girls in mini-kilts who were in Part One of *Evil of the Daleks* were small consolation. Things began to look up in *Tomb of the Cybermen* when Victoria was forced to show off her legs in a shorter dress, but even that was longer than Jamie's kilt! There is an amusing scene where she complains that her skirt is too short, and *The Ice Warriors* gave us shorter than ever female costumes for the girl technicians at the Base, and another scene where Jamie teases Victoria about them and asks if she sees herself wearing something similar. Victoria is still in her ugly breeches from *The Abominable Snowmen* and thinks the whole idea is disgusting, but in *Enemy of the World* she has got used to the idea and appears in a mini-kilt herself, graduating to shorter and shorter outfits in the next two stories. The mini-skirt hey-day of WHO had started.

Debbly Watling has vivid memories of the mini-skirt era: "It was the days of the mini-skirt when I was in it. I remember the second episode which was the Cyberman one. I had a skirt which came to just above the knee. The last time you'd seen Victoria she was dressed in this huge frock and I remember I said, "Doctor, don't you think this is a little short?" and through the stories they got shorter and shorter. There was a green mini-dress, and a sort of Indian type mini-skirt in *Web of Fear*. I remember one take when I was in a mini-skirt and Jamie, the Doctor and I were rushing up to an arch in the studio, and when I saw it on the screen, we dashed up to the archway, my back was to the camera and you could see me discreetly tugging away at the back of my skirt in case I was showing something I shouldn't! I told myself, "Debbly, don't you ever do that on camera! Ever!" And I've never done it again."

Victoria's skirts did not have far to go before revealing all, but at first when Zoe took over it looked like her sex appeal was going to lie in Wendy Padbury's pert bottom, which was to be seen to such good effect in those early jumpsuits in *The Wheel in Space* and *The Mind Robber*. Jamie even threatens to put her across his knee and spank her in her first appearance in *The Wheel in Space* Part Two! But it was not long before Zoe too ventured into mini-skirt territory in *The Dominators*, which showed she had the best legs yet in WHO. Viewers



were spoiled for choice here, as she wears a little transparent number that shows off not just her bare thighs but her bottom in high waisted red pants too!

Red was also the colour of Zoe's next mini in *The Invasion*. She wears it to model for the camera-clicking Isobel whose own legs are nicely on show as she rolls around on the floor taking photos. Zoe shows more than Victoria ever did as she is jumped on by guards in Part Three and climbs down a ladder into the sewer in Part Five. It is such a pity that the BBC lost Part Four and its ground-level views of both girls climbing up into the helicopter. That must have been a high point of the mini-skirt years.

Wendy has special memories of the rather nice mini-skirt she wore in *The Krotons* and *The Seeds of Death*: "I had one wonderful costume in black and red. It was a short skirt with a sort of waistcoat and was made out of a kind of PVC paper, which looked stunning. It had a sort of sheen to it and looked wonderful, but the minute I bent down in it, it tore. So they were forever running up these paper skirts for me, because they didn't last five minutes." It's true, if you watch Part Four of *The Krotons*, her waistcoat has a tear right round the shoulder exposing lots of bare flesh and a cheeky white bra strap! The skirt with its boldly patterned hem is the shortest ever seen in WHO, and you can see how self-conscious Wendy is in it, she is always twitching the front down in case it rides up just that bit too far! The viewers are treated to many views of these stunning thighs, plus the obligatory flashes of Padbury panties when she rushes around or crouches down. Sadly Zoe abandoned mini-skirts after this, but at least her hot pants in *The Space Pirates* gave those great legs another airing.

Luckily the leggy companions didn't end with Zoe, and Liz wore her skirts shorter than the average scientist. Caroline John even said once that she wasn't allowed trousers and it was silly to wear a mini-skirt to go potholing. Funny that, because when you watch *The Silurians*, Liz goes into the caves wearing... trousers! But apart from that it was minis all the way, even when she fell over the weir in *Ambassadors of Death*. The one that Caroline remembers best was her fascist gear in *Inferno*: "The costume was very kinky indeed, what with its boots and mini-skirt, but no-one seemed to think of this until after it went out and I got some rather peculiar letters!" Tastes differ but personally I thought we saw better legs on Petra Williams, who wears a floral skirt that certainly wasn't meant to bend down in!

After Liz came the companion whose mini-skirts are the most celebrated of all, Jo Grant. Actually Jo only wore minis in four stories, a purple one in *Claws of Axos*, a blue denim one in *Day of the Daleks*, a brown woolen one in *The Time Monster*, and a similar light blue version in *The Three Doctors*. Also it is not generally known that production photographs exist from *The Mutants* showing Katy on the studio set in a mini-dress and white boots instead of the trouser suit she wore when the story was shown. Katy's legs are what mini-skirts were invented for. What a shame they were not seen in more of her stories, and were hidden beneath blue tights in *The Three Doctors*!

Katy recalls *The Three Doctors* as the story where her mini-skirt got out of control and made an embarrassing revelation: "Concerning the mini-skirt I wore in that, there's one scene where you can see my knickers! Now that's hardly proper for children's viewing time, is it?"

But perhaps Katy had not seen her other mini-skirted stories so recently, because her knickers make appearances in all of them, red ones edged with white lace are visible in *Day of the Daleks* as she clammers over the furniture in the Controller's suite, and in *The Time Monster* white ones peep out from under her dress when she rolls around the floor of the TARDIS in Parts Four and Five. Her pants (white again) are harder to spot in *The Claws of Axos*, because the director has overlaid a video effect on the picture at the moment when they're at their most obvious, when Jo and the Doctor escape from Axos at the end of Part Three.

All things must pass, and the mini-skirt era of WHO was no exception. With the coming of Elizabeth Sladen the centre of the companion's sex appeal shifted



from Jo's legs to Sarah's bottom. Tight trousers were the order of the day, and the mini-skirt was banished from WHO. "Trousers were a good idea," says spoilsport Liz. "You were always falling over and tripping up. You usually had to climb and I wear trousers a lot anyway." Still, even without a mini-skirt to help she did manage to flash a pair of white knickers at the viewers in *Ark in Space* Part One.

Sarah Jane did actually wear a mini-skirt for the few moments at the end of *The Seeds of Doom*, but it was never seen on screen because the shots were all above the waist. It was a red spotted affair and can be seen on the photographs of Sarah and Tom Baker emerging from the TARDIS in Antarctica. Sadly all it showed was that Liz Sladen's thighs are not much to write home about. Incidentally, this mini-skirt came from the BBC stock and had already made appearances in other programmes, such as being sported by Michelle Dotrice in an early episode of the sitcom *SOME MOTHERS DO HAVE 'EM*.

Leg-lovers did better with the next companion, Louise Jameson's Leela, but her leather leotards were not exactly mini-skirts. Mary Tamm and Lalla ward kept their nether parts well covered and it was not until Peter Davison took over that the mini-skirt made its triumphant return to WHO, as Sarah Sutton recalls: "Apparently there'd been a lot of complaints from WHO viewers that Nyssa kept herself so covered up all the time! Hence the new look, although for filming purposes mini-skirts are somewhat less practical than velvet trousers."

Nyssa moved into a blue suede mini in *Mawdryn Undead*, and later Tegan changed her long shorts for a short skirt, and once she started she never wore anything else, multi-coloured versions at first in *The King's Demons* and *The Five Doctors* and then a black leather one in *Frontios*. The good work continued with Peri's green mini-skirt in *The Twin Dilemma*. There were more mini-skirts in WHO than ever before, but a funny thing is that the directors were always more careful with their camera angles. Zoe and Jo flashed their thighs and panties quite often, and even Nyssa showed off her frilly knickers in *Terminus* Part Four, but with Tegan, the director always cuts away just before we get an interesting view of Janet's mini-skirted lower half, such as in *Warriors of the Deep*, where we are denied the sight of Tegan climbing into the vent that would have made an otherwise dire story worthwhile.

Since *The Twin Dilemma*, no companion has worn a mini-skirt, unless you count Ace's games skirt. (Not that I would have wanted to have seen Bonnie Langford in one, anyway). But the tradition continued with Janet, the girl with the wiggle in *Terror of the Vervoids*, and *The Happiness Patrol* with their shortie uniforms and pink panties. Hopefully whoever gets to produce the new WHO of the future will bring back this essential part of its appeal... pretty, leggy, girl companions wearing mini-skirts!

CURT SHORT

(I can't believe "Curt" forgot to mention Ace's stockings and suspenders in *The Curse of Fenric!* - John)

## THE CALL OF CTMULMI

A Zenith review

Don't ever believe the hype that comes out of the comics industry. From the news reports that have proliferated since *The Dark Knight Returns*, the outsider might be led to believe that the world of graphic novels is now dominated by intelligent, literate works moulding perspective, sophisticated scripts with attractive artwork. This is simply not true. There are a great many such comics around, and a handful which deserve to be considered as great literature of the late 20th century (e.g. *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright*, *The Ballad of Halo Jones*, *Cerebus*, *The Sandman*, *V for Vendetta*). But 80% of comics today are crap - superhero/vigilante/costumed hero antics with laboured soap opera-like plot lines, whose idea of "adult" extends no further than lots of gore and woman in

ultra-revealing costumes.

Britain's premier comics title, 2000AD, reflects this. It has always had problems defining its audience, but with the rise of the adults comic culture the problem has intensified. On the one hand, it churns out uninspired, juvenile garbage like Harlem Heroes. On the other, it has given the British comics world some of its finest moments. *Nemesis the Warlock*, the aforementioned *Halo Jones*, *Slaine*, *Killing Time*, the first *Bad Company*... and *Zenith*.

*Zenith* is everything that adult comics shouldn't be. In the course of four stories, 80 instalments and five years, it unfolded a complex and devious superhero soap opera - an "everyday tale of Nietzschean folk". It is steeped in the mythology of the superhero, drawing on a multiplicity of comics sources to create what has been described as a "scratch 'n' mix" superhero strip, instantly accessible and familiar to anyone who has come into contact with superheroes in the past. But *Zenith* manages to turn the superhero cliches on their heads, carrying off the familiar plot with style, wit and flair. It also relies heavily on the traditional strengths of good writing, strong plotting and fine characterisation. What really raises *Zenith* to the, er, zenith of the comics world is the sheer quality of the writing. The series' strongest asset is its author, Grant Morrison.

Morrison openly admits that *Zenith* is nothing if not plagiaristic. This is probably an exaggeration, but it must be admitted that certain parts of the four stories (or phases) recall other comics of comics cliches. Doctor Payne, the well-meaning scientist who dreams of a superhero utopia clearly recalls Professor X of the unspeakably ghastly *X-Men*. Maximian, the result of an Allied experiment to help them win the Second World War, recalls Captain *America*, and the whole atmosphere of the Maximian chapters is reminiscent of the boys war comics that seem to have died out of late. In Phase III, Morrison goes the whole hog and ropes in a huge cast of superheroes on which Fleetway owns the copyright (then spends the rest of the story blowing them to bits) - most notably the entertaining new version of Robot Archie. More subtly, Morrison creates an entire alternative universe (Alternative 666) populated with characters clearly inspired by heroes from other British comics companies - half the fun is spotting the connections. Tiger Tom and Tammy are based on Billy the Cat and Katie, Prince Mamba is King Cobra, a nameless General Jumbo lookalike turns up in a couple of scenes while Jimmy Quick is, of all people, Billy Whizz (as for the others...). Morrison messes around with superhero tradition. Since supervillains have a wholly implausible habit of surviving certain death, Masterman manages to make a rather destructive appearance in London 43 years after being blown up by an atomic bomb (the whole devastation-of-London scene is reminiscent of Miracleman). Since the concept of the superhero is seen to be vaguely fascist in tone (a key theme of *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen*), Morrison plays around with political allegiances - we have an anarchist superhero team, Black Flag, a Communist superhero; Big Ben, a Christian Fundamentalist superhero (Hotspur) and a Conservative MP superhero, Peter St. John. Elsewhere, the names and concepts of the Lloigor derive from HP "Public Domain" Lovecraft, their visualisations are pinched lock, stock and barrel from Pete Carroll, but they also owe much to Doctor Strange, the Lloigor-controlled Earth recalls the benevolent superhero dictatorship of Miracleman while the alternative universe theme draws heavily on *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright*. This is probably the only piece of plagiarism that doesn't come off - with *Arkwright*, Morrison bites off more than he can chew and the rather obvious use of alternative universes in *Zenith* doesn't hold a candle to Bryan Talbot's masterpiece. Nevertheless, there are some interesting ideas at work here - the Einstein-Rosen bridges are inspired.

*Zenith* doesn't just reference the world of superheroes. It also draws on the "real world", calling on the fashions, music, literature, music, TV, buzzwords and sub-culture of the late 80's to create a genuine impression of the consumer decade. Real events are wound into the plots - the general elections of 1987 and

1992, the depositing of Margaret Thatcher, Red Nose day, etc. This is where the word "postmodern" puts in an appearance. but as I've mentioned *Zenith* deals with parallel universes, and *Zenith's* world is clearly not our own. Ok, there are no superheroes or Many-Angled Ones in "our" world, but other details are different. These range from the small (e.g. *The South Bank Show* runs on BBC1) to the large and historically important (e.g. Dan Quayle becomes President of the US in April 1992, and the world suffers for it - or not as the case may be). This is very clearly set up in the first episode of Phase I, which details the end of the Second World War in Europe in this world, and sets the historical foundations for the rest of the series.

The episode opens with one of those unintentionally hilarious 40's newsreels of the kind which Harry Enfield spoofs so well;

**NEWSREEL:** And it's one in the eye for Adolf as Allied Forces advance across Europe towards a beleaguered Berlin! Leading the way to victory is Great Britain's own physical marvel, Maximian, who's sure to be more than a match for the German super-soldier Masterman! Anyone in there? Maximian picks up a tank and gives it a shake, just to find out! As for the bullets, they're simply water off a duck's back! But this is one duck who's all set to cook the Nazi goose! So look out Fritz! Maximian's on his way! And by the look of things it could all be all over by Christmas...

At which point the action abruptly shifts to a desolate Berlin landscape on December 21st 1944, where Maximian has been half-beaten to death by the aforementioned Masterman (so much for propaganda). Masterman can't resist a good gloat on the verge of victory, introduces us to one of the key concepts of the series;

**MASTERMAN:** No power on Earth can stop us now. Your little planet belongs to us, the Many-Angled Ones.

However, Masterman fails to realise that on the verge of victory is a dangerous pursuit in his line of business, as it is at this point that the Americans decide to drop an atomic bomb on the pair of them. In a couple of panels that are later repeated in almost exact detail during Masterman's fight with Zenith in London, the German's attack on Maximian is cut short as the artwork bleaches white and a nuclear mushroom cloud rises up out of the city. This opening episode is a superb hook for the series, heavily atmospheric and very impressive. Steve Yeowell's stark black and white art - while not as effective as it will become in later Phases (both Morrison and Yowell were at early stages of their career when they embarked on *Zenith*) - is impressive. The episode is flawed, though. It should have ended with the mushroom cloud, casting an ominous shadow over the rest of the story. Unfortunately it carries on to give us a more melodramatic ending. The action shifts to the same place in Berlin, almost 43 years later (the atomic bomb memorial on the site is a nice touch). The date proclaims it to be "June 23, 1987" which begins the *Zenith* tradition of giving wildly inaccurate dates for the events of the story (if the date here is accurate then this prologue takes place a month and a half after the rest of the story, which is impossible). Such dates are best ignored.

This page introduces us to the Lloigor-worshipping Cult of the Black Sun (a rather underdeveloped concept, though the black Sun is an enduring symbol through all four phases), fleshes out the concept of the Lloigor a bit more and revives Masterman, or rather to the second of the two Masterman twins, who has kept in suspended animation since the war. It's out of the place in this episode and really could have been tagged onto the end of the next, rather uneventful instalment - a major criticism of the series is that not much seems to happen



from episode to episode.

Phase I is largely a scene-setting exercise, its main plot focus being the battle against the revived Masterman. More importantly, the series introduces us to some of the underlying concepts and leading characters of *Zenith* - Zenith himself, the all-important Peter St. John, Cloud Nine, their plan and their dissolution, the Lloigor, the Omnihedron and Iok Sotot - who has a significant link with Zenith, to be revealed in Phase IV.

Phase II introduces the major character of Doctor Michael Payne, creator of the superhumans and principle source behind their belief that they are the evolutionary successors to mankind. The story is very parochial, digging around in Zenith's past and facing him with some unpleasant home truths. The creation and fate of Cloud Nine is unravelled for us, exploring the past of this universe in greater depth than Phase I.

Phase III is very plot orientated, with a huge cast of superhumans being pressganged by an alternative universe Maximian into battling the Lloigor, who are now planning to take over all of the alternatives.

Finally there is Phase IV in which everything is resolved. The true relationship between the superheroes and the Lloigor is revealed, mankind is razed from the face of the planet, the Black Sun dawns, Zenith, Peter St. John and Archie die horrible and agonising deaths and the Conservative Party win yet another general election.

In addition to these stories, there are four interludes. *Whitlock* - a flashback to World War II, in which we learn a bit about the life of William Whitlock and more details about his death. *Payne* - a history of Cloud Nine from the point of view of Michel Payne, leading into Phase II and also explaining a few points left hanging by Phase I (e.g. if all the members of Cloud Nine - including Zenith's parents - were sterile, where did Zenith come from?). *Maximan* - revealing some of Zenith's home background and leading into Phase III. Finally, *Shadows & Reflections* - a story in many ways reminiscent of parts of Morrison's *Doom Patrol* - is a rather pointless tale about Peter St. John being physically mugged in the late 60's.

Yeowell's artwork development is seen clearly throughout the four phases. In Phase I the art is okay, good in fact - though it tends towards black and white standard art (of the type to be seen in Doctor Who Magazine folks!). The biggest criticism is that some of the characters all appear rather stocky. There are some impressive scenes though, notably the summoning of Sok Sotot in the third instalment. The contrast between the art in this, and later phases is apparent, as Yeowell begins to develop a unique and highly stylised technique of his own (inspired by Japanese Manga if all the speed lines in Phase II are taken into account). One rather disconcerting consequence of this is that characters in Phase I bear little resemblance to the same characters in Phase IV! Meanwhile, in Phase IV, the unthinkable happens. *Zenith* - traditionally an example of strong black and white artwork - was run completely in colour! The colouring, by Gina Hart, isn't bad as such (it certainly doesn't destroy Yeowell's tones, as happened to 1991's *Red Razors*), but it seems to distract from the effectiveness of the art. Previous examples of colour *Zenith* include a couple of pages of Phase I, painted by Yeowell; and the two non-Yeowell interludes. The gothic geography of the Lloigor's "brave new world", for example, would appear much more effective in blacks, whites and greys. As it is, Tharg the Artistically Obtuse seems to have decreed the change because colour art is popular (and more lucrative when the inevitable collected reprint comes about!). It's not all bad, though. Some parts are enhanced by the use of colour - particularly the psychedelic mental battle in parts five and six, and the final page of the epilogue. On the other hand, the colouring of the web-like rays behind the emergent Lloigor is frankly awful.

So what exactly is *Zenith* about? Put simply, it's set in a universe where everyone's least favourite carpet-chewing dictator was a member of the Cult of the Black Sun - an occult group who worship the four dimensional alien intelligences, the Lloigor. During the war, Hitler's scientists use a serum created

by the Lloigor to create superhuman bodies for the Lloigor to inhabit. The result is the blonde, Arnie-esque and humourless Masterman. Fortunately for the Allies, defecting German scientists bring the Masterman serum with them, and the British are able to produce a superman of their own own, William Whitlock - Maximian. However, the British and American authorities (who come across as being extremely paranoid about the subject of superhumans throughout - and justly so, as it turns out) decide to "test" Maximian by dropping the newly developed atomic bomb on him. This act repels the scientist Payne, who sets about injecting pregnant woman with the Maximian serum in the hope that the result will be the birth of a race to take humanities place as the dominant species on the Earth. The actual results are not entirely successful:

PEYNE:

...the Tygers arrived in our midst. The first two, Fox and Ridgeway, were girls. The third, a sexless abomination, was mercifully stillborn. Then came the St. John infant and young Cambridge. I was forced to shoot the sixth baby. It was an appalling skinless creature with a dozen mouths... Rhys, McDowell and Moon arrived in pink and perfect health. And then the final child exploded into the world... it rose up in a storm of shapes, speaking in tongues. God knows, I tried to kill it but it simply would not die. In the end we named it Chimera... For more than a decade, the remaining children showed no indication of any superior abilities. And then puberty arrived. And with it came a dazzling spectrum of unexpected powers...

Despite the British's best efforts to turn the superhumans into a military unit to fight in Vietnam (Task Force UK), the seven embrace sixties culture and pacifism whole heartedly, adopting superhero names and sixties-fashion victim costumes (Peter St. John's hippy clobber has to be seen to be believed!). The impression we get throughout the stories is that this group, Cloud Nine, were a marketed media spectacle.

However, cracks appear in Cloud Nine's ranks when it becomes apparent that the British authorities are sterilising them on the sly. Brought up as they have been on Payne's "next evolutionary step" dogma, they over react and decide to wipe off the face of the planet. Naturally, not everyone is agreed on this (not entirely sensible) course of action. However, the plan swings into action with the disappearance of Ridgeway and McDowell who are actually busy conceiving and giving birth to a superhuman child who will become Zenith, but they later get blown apart by the CIA's psychic "Shadowmen". Cambridge and Moon promptly stage their own deaths and go into hiding in alternative dimensions whilst Peter St. John, Siadwel Rhy (the two objectors to the plan) and Ruby Fox all fall victim to a mysterious disease that robs them of their superpowers, but is in fact, the Americans in action again.

Even in the background detail we can see more superhero cliches turning up by the dozen. The "superhero-military-task-force", the "superhero-as-media-event", the "dangers-of-letting-superheroes-breed" and the "oh-no-the-superheroes-have-lost-their-magic-powers" themes which make up so much of comics literature, here turned on their head and used to good effect. Doctor Payne is, meanwhile, pursuing his own plans and cliches by making illegal superhuman clones of Ruby Fox and Jennifer Ridgeway (another angle to Morrison's obsession with "superheroes-breeding". The theme gets even more contorted and Oedipal when Zenith has a child by Blaze, the clone of his mum!) and turning Zenith's half-dead dad into a massive cybernetic weapon - Warhead.

Zenith grows up - having an uneventful childhood, beyond chucking British secret service men out of the windows in his granny's cottage - before being picked up by the media in the early 80's and turned into a designer pop star with very little talent of his own. And this is where the story really starts...

Zenith is not, as has been noted, a particularly sympathetic character, nor is he particularly heroic. In fact, there are no real heroes at all in the series. The few characters who are set up as having any sort of heroic quality at all, tend to be offed very quickly (William Whitlock, Siadwel Rhys, Mantra, Domino, Hotspur, Big Ben, Tiger Tom, Phaedra Cale, etc). As the story progresses, Zenith becomes increasingly backgrounded, overshadowed by the more prominent Peter St. John, the most fascinating character in the story.

Zenith, by contrast, is a very obvious character (though compared to Archie, he's a complex and multi-faceted personality). A loud-mouthed, rude, self-centred, arrogant and talentless pop star brat who just happens to be the most powerful being on Earth. Zenith, though, is not in his element among other superheroes, his natural territory being the pop scene - either brow-beating his manager, lying through his teeth on *The South Bank Show*, name-dropping or bemoaning the loss of his own fame ("what's it going to be next? Singing carols with the *Blue Peter* dog? Opening the new branch of Tesco in Hartlepool? *Blankety Blank*?"). However, as the superhuman Mantra makes it clear in a potted biography, Zenith's flourishing pop career has been manufactured by corporate managers (do I detect a dig at Stock, Aitken & Waterman here?). His life has been cosmetically re-engineered for effect, even going so far as claiming that he shares the same birth date as Elvis. With the exception of Peter St. John, who he trusts implicitly after a turbulent first meeting, he has open contempt for the majority of the superheroes he encounters;

VERTEX: You're Zenith aren't you? I'm your alternative 300 counterpart. It's marvellous to meet you. Name's Vertex, see? Listen, we must get together over a Perrier sometime and have a chat... see you later, yah?

Unfortunately the concept of Zenith's yuppie identical double gets lost somewhere, as the two spend the rest of the story apart, with the only development being Vertex's constant complaints that people keep mistaking him for Zenith (in the end, Vertex loses his name on the "war" memorial to Zenith). Zenith mellows and matures as the series goes on, but he never loses his natural arrogance. In his favour, he has a well-developed sense of humour:

PEYNE: You are our purest dreams made flesh. Everything that is splendid and noble about our species is refined and embodied in you! You are evolution's perfect child. Now, is there anything you need?

ZENITH Yeah, a TV. I mean, you don't expect me to miss *Neighbours*, do you?

Zenith is little more than an observer, central to the plans of the Lloigor, Payne and David Cambridge's Horus Foundation, but always on the fringes of the events they set into motion. Zenith does not willingly get involved in the action. In Phase I he has to be dragged into the fray by Ruby Fox. In Phase III, it's Robot Archie who shanghaies him (though he's a little more willing and less sceptical this time). In Phase II, his life is turned upside-down (physically, mentally and emotionally) when Warhead smashes its way into his flat, closely pursued by the CIA. In Phase IV he does seem to have involved himself voluntarily, but he lets St. John take the lead. Even when he does get involved he is perfectly prepared to get others to do the dirty work for him e.g. Siadwel Rhys in Phase I, thanks to the rather convenient plot device that is forgotten in the final two phases, and chickens out of the superhero-army's attack on the Axis Mundi entirely. On the other hand, when the odds are a little more even he does get stuck in like in Phase I after Rhys has been fried and in Phase II when he alone is faced with the unenviable task of talking round a headcase who has a couple of nuclear missiles ready to fire at London, and he is genuinely appalled



by some of the pointless deaths around him (e.g. Phaedra).

If Zenith is a straightforward character, Peter St. John is (appropriately enough for a politician) Machiavellian by contrast. We learn much about his life, but very little about his motives. Any assumptions we make turn out to be wrong. Even by the end of the final Phase, we know little about what he is really up to.

We learn much about St. John before he makes his first appearance, as Ruby Fox outlines his history with economy and simplicity.

RUBY FOX: ...he used to be Mandala... he was always so idealistic and forward-looking. I mean, he was the first of us to support CND and the first to protest against Vietnam. When the Beatles discovered transcendental meditation, Mandala was with them. When Timothy Leary told us to "turn on, tune in and drop out", Mandala was already way ahead of him. More than any of us, he represented a whole generation of people who believed that peace and love could save the world. And now he's Mrs Thatcher's golden boy.

Enter Peter St. John (looking very much like the current President of the Board of Trade) dressed in a sensible business suit which is a complete contrast to the hippy fashion-victim we have seen in the previous panels. This obvious lament for the 60's (i.e. how all the hippys of that era were selling insurance and voting Conservative in the 80's), is put in slightly different terms by St. John himself;

ST. JOHN: Quite frankly, Ruby, the thought of returning to an age of spots, sideburns and psychedelic granny glasses fills me with nothing but horror and embarrassment...

and;

ST. JOHN: I wanted to lift humanity up to our level. I really thought that was possible but you have to remember that this was the 60's and I also thought *Sergeant Pepper* contained the greatest music ever made.

Though it seems strange that St. John should grow into an arch-Conservative, the nature of his conservatism becomes apparent as the series goes on, especially compared to the "progressive" fascism (St. John refers to the "plan" in terms of gas ovens and "the final solution") offered by David Cambridge, Ruby Fox and Penelope Moon. In fact, it is totally in keeping with Mandala's character that he should reject the "plan". However, in Phase I, he seems to have become a cold and calculating politician. Unlike Ruby and Siadwel Rhys, he is perfectly aware that he still has his superpowers, and is in fact, using them for political gain, as outlined by a superb exchange in an eerily lit 10 Downing Street.

THATCHER: We make no mention of your telepathic abilities. We strongly emphasise your firm and intelligent handling of the affair. How does that sound to you?

ST. JOHN: It sounds... fine.

THATCHER: And Peter? Ted Heath. He's become a dreadful nuisance and I do so worry about his health. Anything could happen to him.

ST. JOHN: Of course. I understand, Prime Minister.

In an exceptionally strong piece of art, St John's face is seen to be a mixture of subservient loyalty and self-doubt. His powers have been kept a carefully guarded secret, until he intervenes in the fight between Zenith, Ruby Fox and Masterman. Quite why he does this is obscure. He has already planted a

destructive post-hypnotic command in Iok Sotot's mind which he could have used without drawing attention to himself (unless, of course, this has nothing to do with motivation and is nothing more than a hole in the plot). It is strongly hinted that St. John and Ruby Fox had something going back in the 60's and that St. John still holds finer feelings for her. St. John himself denies this;

ST. JOHN: I didn't fight Masterman for you, Ruby. I did it to pick up votes in the election.

Some pointers to his motives are made in an ambiguous scene as St. John watches the fight from his office window;

POLICEMAN: There appear to be two superhumans fighting each other... Could you please come along sir...? We're evacuating the house.  
ST. JOHN: That lightning! That's not Ruby Fox down there, is it...?  
POLICEMAN: I really don't know, sir. Now could you please come along!  
ST. JOHN: I'm perfectly safe, officer. I was a superhuman too, don't you remember? I was Mandaia.  
POLICEMAN: Yes, sir, I remember. I also remember you lost your superpowers, so...  
ST. JOHN: There are... worse things to lose, officer, believe me.

Whatever his motives, it helps the Conservatives to election victory (Tam Dalyell describes the fight as "the most shameful piece of Tory propoganda since the Falklands war"), while St. John is elevated to the post of Defence Secretary. St. John's rise through the series, as eventually he becomes Prime Minister, Thatcher presumably being ousted in a similar way to events of the real world (yet another St. John/Heseltine parallel, as is the nifty combat outfit he wears during much of Phases III and IV!) and leads the Tories to yet another victory. In the process, he develops the ultimate House of Commons put-down;

ST. JOHN: The Right-Honourable gentleman attempts, in his time-honoured fashion to reduce complex issues to the level of schoolyard brawls but I'm afraid I cannot come out to play with him today.

(This to Neil Kinnock, though interestingly enough, the leader of the opposition is shown to be John Smith). How much St. John is prepared to do in the interests of furthering his political career is left unclear, but we're left with the possibility that he may have used his powers to murder a political opponent. The whole of the epilogue of Phase IV is given over to demolishing the heroic image we have of St. John, underlining the mystery behind St. John's motives, and the final page is truly chilling.

Still, St. John has some admirable qualities. His intellect is acknowledged by his creator, Payne, who later refers to him as his favourite of the experimental superhumans. His concern when he believes that his government has abandoned the people of London to die in a nuclear attack is genuine and convincing;

ST. JOHN: Two nuclear warheads. Enough to erase this city from the face of the Earth... evacuation is out of the question, except for the privileged. The Royal family left yesterday... Tomorrow the sky will burn. The animals in the zoo will burn. The children and the bankers. The poets. The criminals. I don't know what to do.

His nightmare of nuclear devastation is wonderfully evocative, and later repeated to greater effect after the Lloigor have destroyed the human world.

ST. JOHN: Things that used to be human drag themselves into the

perpetual shadows, sobbing with shame. A skyful of floating cinders. A child's doll, driven mad by the horrors it has witnessed, stares up at me. I'm too late. What have they done? What have they done to the world? I wish the sun would only rise. And then I realise that the sun has risen. And the sun is black.

The other major characters all work to varying degrees. Ruby Fox is initially set-up as the obvious hero of Phase I, terrorised by Masterman, rediscovering her superpowers and - worst of all - having to convince a sceptical Zenith. As the series progresses, she becomes less sympathetic, perfectly capable of killing other superhumans on a sadistic whim (i.e. her clone Shockwave and later St. John himself). David Cambridge is never a sympathetic character. A cold, calculating figure, we get little insight into his thought processes, but his physical presence is formidable. He lurks on the edge of the panels, a perfect representation of an ex-hippy/Thirtysomething superhero. By contrast, Penelope Moon is a rather vague character, who says little and appears rarely.

Doctor Payne is an utterly convincing character, his utopian dreams outlined in extracts from his unpublished autobiography, *Seizing the Fire*, which are liberally scattered throughout the Phases. His plans for the creation of humanity's evolutionary superiors is nicely underpinned by his inability to recognise a genuinely superior being which isn't human in appearance (Chimera). Once his dreams are realised and he becomes the last man on Earth, little more than a pet of the Lloigor, his self-examination and growing disillusion is equally convincing. As the principle human character in the series, Payne is an intricately delineated character.

Where the characterisation falls down is in Phase III, with the huge cast making detail impossible. Most of the superheroes are reduced to little more than nameless faces in silly costumes, there to be casually blown away by the Lloigor or express disquiet at the rather extreme nature of Maximian's plan. The more interesting - Mantra, Big Ben, Tiger Tom, Domino, the Black Archer (a right "moaning minny", as Thatcher would put it) and the Blue Wizard, Vertex and Maximian himself - are fine, but the rest are little more than cyphers. The biggest exception to this is Hotspur, a Christian fundamentalist fanatic who leads the assault on his Lloigor-dominated homeworld ("At the signs of triumph, Satan's legions flee! Hell's foundations quiver!", "...cast the Lloigor forever back into the fiery gulf of Gehenna!"). He is the only character to have cast off the Lloigor possession, thorough an extreme effort of will;

HOTSPUR: I set a molten cross to my corrupted body and by pain and the wrath of the Almighty, did I expel the unclean spirit!

Also of interest is an attractive superfemale - Metamaid (is her first name Rita?) - whose sole function is to pop up at varying points in the narrative, make some innuendo to Zenith, then disappear again, promising to reappear later. However, she hides a dark secret of her own;

CAPED PRATT: Zenith... I... Well, I thought I ought to tell you. About Metamaid, that is... What I'm trying to say is she's... well, I mean he's a man.

ZENITH: What?

CAPED PRATT: It's all just makeup and hormone treatment. He's saving up for the op. I found out last night. I'm so ashamed...

*Zenith* is, like the character its named after, a flawed piece of work. However, its flaws are nothing like as large as its virtues. *Zenith* isn't an example of Morrison at his best, it lacks the self-indulgent element that can kick-start a Morrison story into the highest realms of excellence (e.g. *The Soul of a New*



*Machine* and the first *Brotherhood of Dada* story in *Doom Patrol*. *The Coyote Gospel* in *Animal Man*), but its absence means that it can't backfire on him either like the appalling Shadowy Mr. Evans two-parter in *Doom Patrol*. Morrison has said that his heart wasn't in it, writing Phase IV. That this part of the series is as good as it is, is a demonstration of Morrison's skill as a writer (something of a shame that he's giving it up, then).

*Zenith* is an epic in the best European comics tradition. Any attempt to review or analyse it will eventually run out of time and space - I haven't even touched on the dual characterisation of Maximan, Brendan McCarthy's input into the look of the series and its characters or the mix of metaphysical and existential subtexts which underlie the series. It's an amalgam of everything that is good about the superhero genre. As such it's also the nail in the coffin of that genre. *Zenith* is a welcome retreat from the juvenile antics of the massed ranks of commercially-orientated "meta-humans", mutants and vigilantes that the major comics industries (particularly Marvel) seem intent on plying us with. It's the superhero comic for people who hate superheroes.

Thankfully Morrison and Yeowell have had the sense to call it a day with Phase IV. This is undoubtedly a good thing. Further *Zenith* would tie up the St. John storyline, but it would also ruin the impetus that has driven the previous four phases forward. Unfortunately, rumblings from *Fleetway* suggest there may be further phases to come. If this is the case then *Zenith* could fall prey to commercial pressures, and become a stale series which simply emulates and identifies with the genre it has so brilliantly spoofed.

ZENITH: Art (except where stated) by Steve Yeowell, script by Grant Morrison-

Phase I	2000AD #535 - #550 (15/08/87 - 28/11/87)
Interlude I: Whitlock	2000AD #558 (23/01/88)
Interlude 2: Payne	2000AD #559 (30/01/88)
Phase II	2000AD #589 - #606 (27/08/88 - 24/12/88)
Interlude 3: Maximan	2000AD Winter Special #1 (1988) Art: M. Carmona
Phase III	2000AD #626 - #634, #650 - #662, #667 - #670 (13/05/89 - 08/07/89, 28/10/89 - 20/01/90, 24/02/90 - 17/03/90)
Interlude: Shadows & Reflections	2000AD Annual 1990 (1989) Art: J. McCarthy
Phase IV	2000AD #791 - #806 (11/07/92 - 24/10/92) Colour: G. Hart

#### TRADE PAPERBACKS (Titan Books)

ZENITH Book One: TYGERS (ISBN 1-85286-030-8)

Reprints Phase I

ZENITH Book Two: THE HOLLOW LAND Part One (ISBN 1-85286-137-1)

Reprints Whitlock, Payne and Phase II (#589 - #596)

ZENITH Book Three: THE HOLLOW LAND Part Two (ISBN 1-85286-172-X)

Reprints Phase II (#597 - #606)

ZENITH Book Four: WAR IN HEAVEN Part One (ISBN 1-85286-262-9)

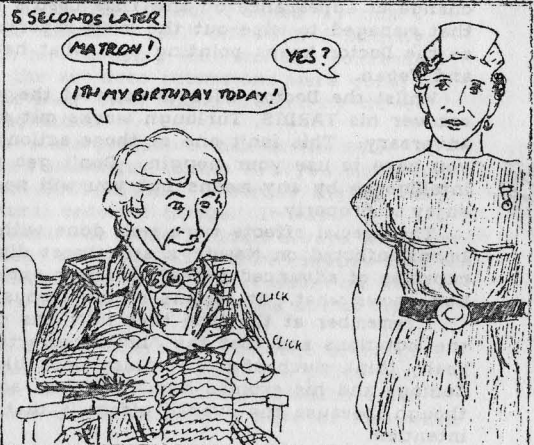
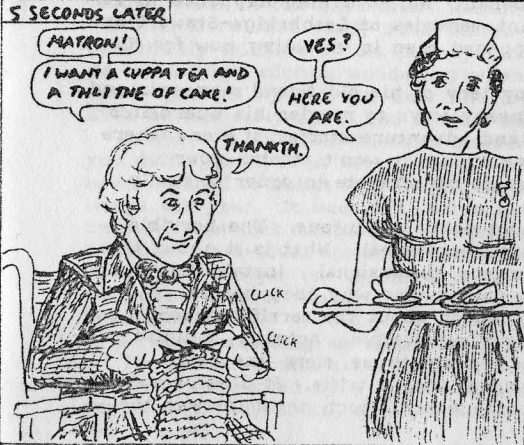
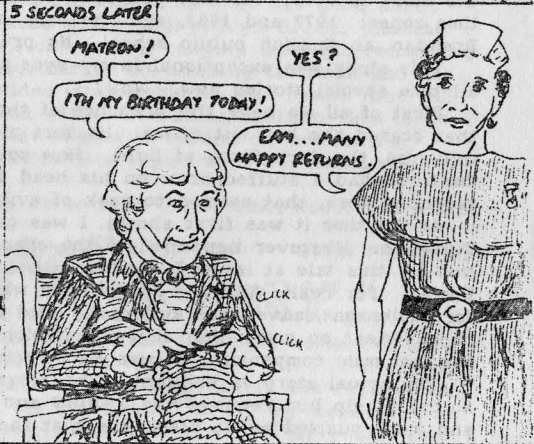
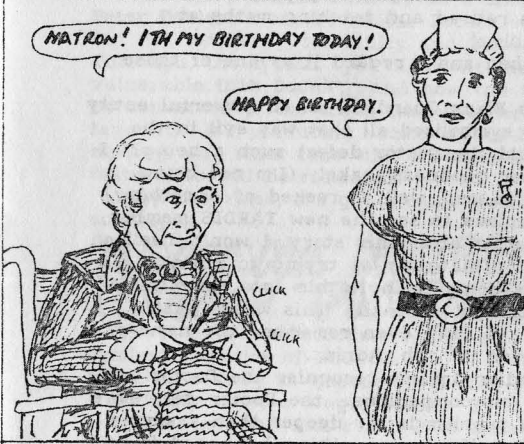
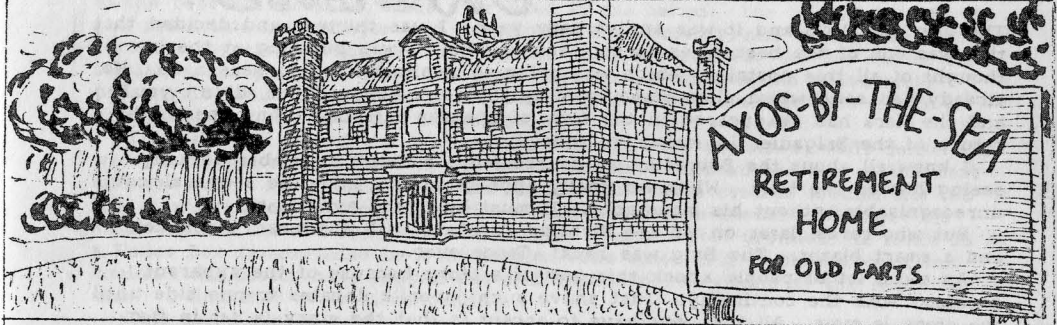
Reprints Phase III (#626 - #634, #650 - #654)

ZENITH Book Five: WAR IN HEAVEN Part Two (ISBN 1-85286-263-7)

Reprints Phase III (#655 - #662, #667 - #670)

DANIEL O'MAHONY

# The Adventures of **TWERPY!**



More crazy adventures with Twerpy next time!

# DOC-WATCH - MAWDRYN UNDEAD

The year was 1983 and it was anniversary year. I was thirteen and decided that this was one of the best times to be a fan of WHO. I was bursting at the thought of all this nostalgia which was going to manifest itself in season 20. We already had some weird alien claiming to be Omega (I believed him, didn't you?) and the Mara had reappeared in the form of a snake this time. And then... the return of the Brigadier in *Mawdryn Undead*.

I knew all about the Brigadier, of course but I couldn't remember actually seeing him on the telly. When he finally appears in this story he seems almost unrecognisable without his moustache. It must be Omega syndrome...

But who cares, later on we see Nicholas Courtney with a mouser, black hair and a smart blazer. The Brig was back! Twice over...

An awful lot of people knock this gem of a story because of the apparent problems with the continuity. Just shove such juvenile debates to one side until the story is over. All that you have to accept is that the story is set in two time zones; 1977 and 1983, and the Brig is retired and teaching maths at Brendan, an English public school. No problem!

This story was exceptional in my eyes then and I regard it as one of those all-time special stories now. Why?

First of all we have the presence of the Black Guardian, an all powerful entity that scared the hell out of me. He sort of symbolised all that was evil in the universe, the dark force of light. How could the Doctor defeat such a being? I mean, he had a stuffed crow on his head for goodness' sake! (I'm not being facetious here, that seemed to reek of evil to me... well, it reeked of *something*).

At the time it was first shown, I was curious to see the new TARDIS member, Turlough. Whatever happened to the character after this story, I won't dwell on but for this tale at least, I was over-awed! This guy was trying to kill the Doctor. For real! And the foolish man was going to invite him into the TARDIS for excitement, adventure and really wild things! Sheesh. This was a vast improvement on companion characterisation. I can't even remember the name of the last male companion. It was Harry wasn't it? Oh, Adric...

The actual story is brilliant. The Brigadier doesn't recognise the Doctor and so can't help him retrieve the TARDIS and his companions. The Doctor gets more and more puzzled as he discovers that the problem is far deeper than a simple change of appearance on the Time Lord's behalf. No, something happened in 1977 that managed to wipe-out the most important memories of Lethbridge-Stewart and, as the Doctor keeps pointing out, what happened then is unfolding *now* for Nyssa and Tegan.

Whilst the Doctor tries to unravel the mystery of his old friend's amnesia and recover his TARDIS, Turlough works out sneaky ways to murder his Guardian's adversary. This isn't one of those action and adventure stories, it's one where you have to use your noggin. Don't get me wrong, it won't stretch your intelligence by any means but you will need to concentrate in order to really enjoy it properly.

The special effects were well done without being gratuitous. The horrible burns inflicted on Mawdryn are almost distressingly real. What is it about time capsules of advanced races? Nuclear explosions, dimensional instabilities and God knows what. It sounds so dangerous, you wonder why they bother.

I remember at the time that DWM was going on about the terrific make-up on the mutations and that the "brain" effect was superlative. Actually, I didn't really think much of it. It didn't look like a brain to me, more like David Collings and his cronies had a careless accident with a trifle. It doesn't matter though, because the overall effect is that of *alienness*, which no-doubt was the intention.

The Doctor is plunged into one of those tricky moral dilemmas - in order to save Nyssas and Tegan he has to sacrifice his future selves by killing eight aliens. This isn't murder however, but euthanasia for the perpetual regenerating



creatures. That the Doctor does the decent thing and decides to give up the chance to be fat and Scottish for the sake of an Australian air-hostess and a pretty alien scientist is typical of the fifth Doctor's humanity and character.

Now this is what I call a time travel story. In episode two, when the Brigadier's eyes mist over and he starts to remember his past life, we are treated to the best flashback sequence ever used in the series. The Brigadier looks up and fades into his younger self (circa *the Three Doctors*) and "see's" legions of tentacles, eye-stalks, nodules and various alien appendages. At the end of the sequence, the younger Brigadier looks up... and melts into his whiskerless present-day self. This is all accompanied by the most haunting Who-theme yet composed, courtesy of Paddy Kingsland.

This was still one of the era's where endings were explained, made sense and weren't rushed at all. More to the point, *Mawdryn Undead* has one of the best endings ever. The resolution of the aliens' death-wish centres around the two Brigadiers meeting. This causes the earlier Lethbridge-Stewart to forget his memories but more sadly, when he recovers in the school grounds, he looks on as a Police Box dematerialise in front of him. The older Brig is okay aboard but couldn't the Doctor have nipped out and explained everything to the befuddled man? I find that quite disconcerting...

This story can be held up as a shining example of all that was good about Peter Davison's tenure as the Doctor. Good story-telling, high drama, pleasing but not too heavy continuity and superb characters, ranging from the refreshing Turlough, the typical (yet different) Brigadier to the amusing Ibbotson and the vulnerable fifth Doctor. And now the video is available so that newer fans will be converted to the truth that the period 1980-1984 was an exciting time to be a fan, with JNT producing some of the best stories to feature in the show's history, and older fans who proclaim that Davison's portrayal was bland and featureless will be ridiculed.

Buy the video, it's got a much better cover than the original novel and it's on one tape.

## ROMANA NAKED AND THE GREAT FRIDGE MYSTERY! JOHN PETTIGREW

Would it be a contradiction in terms to say that I can no longer remember my earliest memories of DOCTOR WHO? Probably, but that doesn't make it any less true. The story in question was *The Robots of Death* (probably the repeat), and I can't remember a single scene. Even the video failed to jog my memory. The only reason I can still recall it is because it terrified me out of my young and tender mind. A few days later, walking home from school, I asked my mum whether there were really such things as robots. "Yes," she replied blithely, presumably thinking of the factory kind, not realising that she had condemned me to sleepless nights, wondering when the art deco automatons were going to crash through my bedroom door and lock their steel talons around my throat. Even at this early age I had a vivid imagination.

In the 70's, DOCTOR WHO was somehow more pervasive than in the 80's. If you didn't watch it in the 80's, you didn't watch it. In the 70's you might not have watched it but it was always there. DOCTOR WHO. Saturday nights. 26 weeks per year. It was part of the natural order of things. It was inconceivable that things could be otherwise. So while I didn't always watch, or remember, individual episodes, I was always aware of it. I didn't realise that the TARDIS was bigger on the inside until about 1980, when a discussion on the imaginative shortcomings of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK shook me out of my ignorance.

I remember seeing an edition of BLUE PETER where the resident bimbo goes off for a scout round a DOCTOR WHO exhibition, pops through the police box doors, is confronted by a Dalek and other monstrosities (none of which I can remember in any detail) emerges safely and dematerialises. I have no idea when

this was but it sticks in the mind, as do certain trailers, including a rather embarrassing one from *The Ribos Operation*, involving a palpably fake rubber monster. In fact, it was during *The Ribos Operation* (during a scene involving a couple of men lurking on a roof) that I came to the conclusion that DOCTOR WHO was the only proper series that was made in Britain, as opposed to America. The first stirrings of fanhood...?

My first memories of the Doctor came a little later in the season. I was happily watching *The Stones of Blood* part 3, a scene in which some character (I didn't really hang on to the plots back in those days) gets absorbed into a wall, then cut to - a strange man in a hat and long scarf, accompanied by a bimbo. Instinctively I knew this was the Doctor!! Anyway, the Doctor and bimbo are in a corridor (surprise, surprise) full of doors. All the doors are the same colour except for one at the end, which they open, and then someone starts shouting about whales. This obsession with animal lifeforms plagued my early WHO encounters. The next scene I can remember was Davros ranting about elephants in *Destiny of the Daleks*. This wasn't, as you might suspect, the final logic scene, but instead a totally misinterpreted part of episode 3 in which the aforementioned Kaled megalomaniac was, in fact, ranting about the Supreme Dalek.

I also remember the scarf-wearing fellow and a lot of actors in silly wigs aboard a spaceship with a huge computer screen in the background. Then there was the tantalising scene in which the Movellans take all Romana's clothes off and put her in a big glass jar. Well, that's how I remember it! I saw this story again recently, imagine my disappointment when...

*City of Death*. The very next story is the first WHO I can remember in any great detail. *City of Death* was like nothing I'd ever seen before. Having the alien spaceship explode at the start was something entirely new to me. Repeating the same scene at the end was a masterstroke. Then there was the cliffhanger to part 1. That really took me by surprise. As the theme screamed away in the background I ran around telling everyone about this marvellous DOCTOR WHO story which was the best I'd ever seen and this monster who gets blown up at the start and then reappears at the end and everything! Wow! Even more effective was the classic end to part 3 which had me writing about it at school. "On Saturday I watched DOCTOR WHO and a man turned into a skeleton." This adorned with a suitable picture of the man turning into a skeleton. *City of Death*. Still one of my favourites.

The next bundle of stories made very little impact on me. I remember running screaming from the room as *Full Circle* was beginning. This was DOCTOR WHO. It was bound to be horribly frightening, so it was best to run away while I still could. For years afterwards I was certain that the next story after *City of Death* was *Warriors' Gate*. The white spaces, the Tharils, the mirrors, the spaceship, the mirrors, the robots, the scarfed-one, the mirrors. I managed to follow the plot in the same way that the Stone Age followed the Renaissance, and it did have Adric in it (for years I believed that this was his first story), but then, nothing's perfect. *The Keeper of Traken* I remember mostly for the cliffhangers. Episode 1 when the statue appears in the doorway and shoots the Keeper with his death-ray eyes (see note after my Lalla Ward fantasy above). Episode 3 when some woman is sitting in the Keeper's chair, then turns into the Master. The end of the story which didn't seem like an ending at all. "Heh heh heh, now I have a new form!" laughs the Master before disappearing in his TARDIS. This was no ending whatsoever! This was sacrilege! The baddy was getting away with it!!! I had similar complaints abouts THUNDERBIRDS which was repeated around the same time.

Then came *Logopolis* and the end of an era. For some reason I already knew that the scarfed one would be departing and this would be the most important event of the year. This story had it all. The watcher, the Master (ah ha! So he was going to get his come-uppance after all), the incredible shrinking TARDIS. And the regeneration. Part 4. Part 4 I missed. Incredible, isn't it, but my parents were prepared to forgo the most important cultural event of the decade

in favour of a lousy shopping expedition to Milton Keynes. Sitting in the back of the car on the way home I knew I'd missed it. It was pushing six o'clock after all. Never mind, I thought, someone at school will tell me how the big change happened.

"Well, the Doctor falls off a cliff and goes into this white thing - like a giant fridge. And when he comes out, he's someone else". I had lousy taste in friends.

During the long break before the first of the Davison stories, there was the Five Faces repeat season. A whole DOCTOR WHO story in one week. Wow. Except, of course, that I was now living in Ireland and we had a choice of five channels. And I decided to forego the first twenty minutes of the first episode of each story in favour of - the FLASH GORDON cartoon showing on RTE2. In late 1981 I had yet to develop critical faculties.

100,000 BC (as we're now all supposed to call it) had no impression on me. DOCTOR WHO without a monster. Unthinkable. And it was in boring black and white too. *The Krotons* was also boring black and white but it had the teaching machine scene, and the cliffhanger where the Krotons try to smother some poor devil in shaving foam. *Carnival of Monsters* stuck in my mind in parts - curiously it was the Drashigs and the SS Bernice scenes rather than the Inter Minor ones which linger in the memory. Why was *the Three Doctors* thus called, I asked myself, when there appeared to be two and the both hated each other. Oh yes, the old man on the screen warbling about bridges was another of them wasn't he? There was also the UNIT building disappearing up the back end of a black hole, the Third Doctor fighting his evil self and the name Omega. Then *Logopolis*. I was certain I'd seen it before.

*Castrovalva* was a confusing story. The Doctor was acting generally weird throughout, the title was utterly meaningless and unpronounceable and there was something really embarrassing about the scenes in which Adric had been strung up by the Master. I realise now that this was the Waterhouse effect, but at the time I couldn't blame Adric - my boyhood hero and inspiration! In 1982 I still hadn't developed critical faculties. Then - DISASTER! Half an hour to part 4 and the whole Eastern coast of Ireland was blacked out in a massive power cut. I went tobogganing instead.

*Four to Doomsday* passed by with nary a ripple, beyond the cliffhangers. However, my family was planning a holiday in England at the time and, having received a copy of the Radio Times which assured me that part 4 was going out on the night the ferry was sailing, I was certain I was going to miss that one as well. As it happened the RT in question was a Welsh edition and the real *Four to Doomsday* part 4 went out a day earlier. I didn't miss it. *Kinda* part 4 almost suffered a similar fate, as this was the day we were heading back to Ireland. Fortunately we stopped off at a friend of the families and - surprise, surprise - they were watching *Kinda*. I remember a lot more of this story than the previous two, particularly since I managed to miss the first five minutes of almost every episode thus leaving me with no idea what the thing was called. There was a number printed on one of the fake Deva Lokan trees, and that really upset me. The snake passed by without comment. As always, I didn't understand the plot at all, but I liked it anyway.

*The Visitation* saw fate dealing me a cruel blow. Having got past the previous two stories without missing a single episode, some higher authority decided that a balance had to be struck, and *The Visitation* part 1 vanished from my screen before the Doctor had even deigned to appear. The rest escaped intact, but it wasn't the same. I was being cheated. And yes, I did know it was the Great Fire of London at the end of the story, but no, I didn't know it contradicted *Pyramids of Mars*. My main memory of *Black Orchid* was wondering when the monsters were going to turn up. They never did. Fate promptly stabbed me in the back again and my television packed up for a period of exactly two weeks. I rejoined the programme with *Time Flight* and Adric was dead.

Adric was dead! They'd slain my childhood inspiration! How dare they! It

couldn't possibly be true! Having gathered that *Earthshock* saw Adric blowing himself to bits aboard a space freighter in prehistoric times, I naturally assumed that the crashed spacecraft in this next story was the wreckage of Adric's flying bomb so he must have survived, musn't he? When the lad himself emerged from hiding in part 2, I applauded my own foresight. Only it wasn't really him. Oh, and I'd never have guessed that Kalid was the Master in disguise. Then the end. "DOCTOR WHO will return with a new series in January..." January! That was centuries away! And when season 20 came round I managed to miss most of it.

*The Five Doctors* and I had the earth-shattering decision of whether to forego part 2 of a two-part A-TEAM serial in favour of this monumental occasion in DOCTOR WHO history. *The Five Doctors* won, so my critical faculties were developing. Except, how could they call it *The Five Doctors* when there was only four of them? And I thought that the actor who played the First Doctor had died, so what was he doing here? The absence of large scenes involving K9 and Daleks was very disappointing. But this story inspired me. It inspired me to sit down and write a proper version of the thing with the Fourth Doctor in it! This, my first piece of fan fiction was something like eight episodes long (not saying much, each episode would have lasted less than a minute) involving all of the Doctor's companions whose names I could remember (Jo particularly; why, I wanted to know, wasn't she in the real thing?) and all the monsters whose names I could remember. The chief villain was, recalling *The Three Doctors*, Omega who is, in the end, shot by K9. A classic climax there, but I really appreciated the problems the writer went to (Terrance Dicks was a name of the future at that stage) in co-ordinating so many characters. From then on, most of my fiction had Daleks in it, stringing out the battle scenes for as long as possible. And it was all thanks to *The Five Doctors*. I never missed an episode since.

*Warriors of the Deep* had me leaping up and down as I realised that the Sea Devils were going to be in it. This was great because the Sea Devils were one of the few DOCTOR WHO monsters of yesteryear which I had actually heard about. As for the Silurians - tch - who are they? The green slime terrified me, as did the Myrka! It's true. *The Awakening* I remember principally for the green slime and the blowing up of the church. By now I was getting impatient. The Daleks were, I knew, forthcoming. They would be appearing in the fourth story and I couldn't wait for them to appear. In fact the non-appearance of any monsters in Part 1 of *Frontios* had me convinced that this was going to be another two-parter and it wouldn't be that long a wait for the Daleks. Then the Tractators turned up. Oh no, another week of *this!* On the sly, much of the *Frontios* imagery was worming its way into my subconscious, and it's now probably the story I remember most from that season. At the time I hated it and loved the next story. I must have been bloody mad.

We have, by now, stumbled on the Age of Awareness. I cannot listen to Ravel's *Bolero* without thinking of *Resurrection of the Daleks*. Similarly, *Frontios* is, in my mind, inextricably wound up with Paul McCartney's *Pipes of Peace*. It's the only thing that ruins the story for me. What about *99 Red Balloons* then?

*Resurrection of the Daleks* had a big impact on me, not because the villain gets away with it (yet again!), nor because our TV which had been so good since 1982 decided to pack up in the middle of the Rodney Bewes suicide scene, but because I was writing again. And this time, I was writing the story with specific actors in mind. In fact, the story was written for the cast of *Resurrection of the Daleks* because I had a copy of the *Radio Times* and had learned all the names. I was rather impressed with some scenes - such as the pushing the Dalek out of the window one, which recurred endlessly in my own masterpieces. Misconceptions abounded. I decided that the nice white, clean, over-lit spaceship was bound to be the goodies spaceship, whilst the horrible, dark, dirty one was the spaceship of the wretched Daleks. So what was the time corridor thingy doing aboard the goodies' ship?

*Planet of Fire* = Peri taking her clothes off. Just to even the balance,



Turlough also took his clothes off, but that was just embarrassing. My fiction now had Peri (sans clothes) and Turlough on Skaro and the Daleks in the league with the Master. The Master was disguised as a Thal. Oh yes.

*The Caves of Androzani* had a rather nifty cliffhanger in which the Doctor and Peri get machine-gunned to bits. I was rather annoyed because a copy of DWM I picked up assured me that the centre piece of the story was going to be a monster called Magma. The story came and went and the Magma creature was on screen for about three minutes in all. Who was this Sharaz Jek character when he was at home? What did he think he was playing at? I remember being impressed with the final episode, though it was in some ways disappointing. I'd got hold of another copy of the *Radio Times* and from the advance cast listing I formed the conclusion that Sharaz Jek was the Master in disguise and he had all of the Doctor's companions imprisoned on Androzani. At the time I had no critical faculties.

*The Twin Dilemma* was two weeks of embarrassment. Maybe I was developing critical faculties after all. A year later I would be mutating into a fan. But there wasn't much of a programme left to be a fan of. From then on I started seeing the programme in the way a fan does - i.e. I remembered it all and didn't like most of it. As such my memories aren't that great and I must bring this unstructured piece of reminiscence to a long-deserved end.

Now, I'm off to revel in nostalgia. Where's my copy of *Destiny of the Daleks*?

DANIEL O'MAHONY

## DOCTOR Q

"Captain's log, stardate 477689.2: We are en route to the Deneb galaxy to investigate the disappearance of several Federation vessels, including our own sister ship, the USS Tomato."

Captain Jean-Luc Picard strode out of his ready room and on to the bridge of the Starship Enterprise, NCC-1701-D. He sat down in his command chair.

No sooner than he had settled, the silence of the bridge was broken by a sudden raucous, wheezing-groaning sound, promptly followed by the appearance of a large blue box.

Picard jumped to his feet as a tall man wearing a floppy-brimmed hat, an extraordinarily long scarf, and a wide-eyed grin emerged from it. "Good morning," announced the stranger calmly, as a young woman in a leather bikini joined him from their mysterious mode of transport. "I'm the Doctor, and this is my friend Leela," he said.

"What are you doing on my ship?" Picard asked dangerously.

"I brought them here," announced a new, though familiar voice.

The bridge crew turned to look at Q as he walked down the side ramp of the bridge. "Along with them," Q continued, pointing at the main viewscreen.

It showed a Borg ship.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Riker.

The viewscreen picture changed, showing one of the nightmarish creatures.

"Oh, yes," it said. "And this time we've brought our allies..." it paused as the scanner panned to reveal a squat metallic form, "...the Daleks!"

The screen flicked back to show the Borg ship again.

"Look," said the Doctor suddenly, pointing at a part of the viewscreen - but his observation had to wait, as two new people arrived on the bridge.

"Hold it right there, Q!" said the male of the pair. "Or should I say Quartz? We're Sapphire and Steel, and we've come to return this reprobate to the Black Lodge!"

"No!" cried Q/Quartz as he flung a ball of pure energy at the mysterious twosome, but they easily put up a forcefield in time and Sapphire fired back.

Meanwhile the Doctor whispered to Leela, while frantically pointing at the Borg/Dalek ship. Leela nodded and ran to the turbolift, her destination the shuttle bay.

Q/Quartz prepared to set up a shield of his own as the blazing ball of pure energy sped towards him, but suddenly he stopped - his eyes opening wide in horror - as he muttered, "Oh boy!"

The shuttle sped towards the Borg/Dalek ship, before banking into the trench that ran around the circumference of the vessel. Leela carefully dodged the patrolling hoverdisc Daleks as she quickly approached her objectives.

It was Sam Beckett's shortest adventure. As Ai explained later, the moment he was to rectify would stop Q/Quartz putting up his shield; so as soon as the pure energy ball hit him, Sam felt the familiar leaping sensation.

"Well," said Picard, "that takes care of one problem, but what about them?" he pointed at the Borg/Dalek ship which at that precise moment suddenly exploded.

"What happened?" asked a bemused Riker.

"I noticed," explained the Doctor, "that the exhaust port on the side of the ship was its only weak spot, so I sent Leela in a shuttle to fire a pure energy bolt straight into it. Obviously, she succeeded..." he pointed at the fireball and the returning shuttle it silhouetted.

The turbolift doors swooshed open, and a burly man with dark curly hair stepped onto the bridge. "Hello everyone!" he smiled.

"Blake!" cried the Doctor and Picard in unison.

"Captain's log, stardate 478689.2: Sapphire and Steel have returned Q/Quartz to the Black Lodge, the Doctor and Leela have departed, as has Blake who stopped by for a natter and a quick cuppa - but I have a feeling all of them, and both the Borg and Daleks, will return..."

# THE FIRST DALEK

DOUG PHILIPS AND TONY NEWMAN

Straven swallowed drily and entered the brightly lit lab. It wasn't often a regular soldier was requested to attend the company of such a highly respected figure as the supreme commander. It was obviously not a social visit, he thought. He'd never met the scientist personally before.

Davros wheeled forward to greet him. "Ah! Straven, isn't it? I think you will be most suitable..."

Straven took this as a compliment although he had no idea what the crippled man meant. The presence of Davros speaking directly to him rendered Straven speechless. Davros's only remaining limb made him appear inhuman, almost alien and Straven felt sympathy for the man's present condition.

Davros came even closer to the overawed soldier. "Yes, most suitable. Nyder!"

A tall, black clad figure came from behind the soldier and Straven felt the coldness of a metal tip at his neck and the following rush of liquid into his bloodstream. He pitched forward, almost colliding with the supreme commander's wheelchair and darkness seeped into his consciousness.

"Excellent," enthused the Kaled scientist, his voice distorting as his excitement grew. "You have the supreme honour of becoming the first of a new race of Kaleds." He raised his remaining fist triumphantly in anticipation of the coming days of surgery and bio-engineering that would realise his vision.

Straven's vision flicked on but all he could see was a red mist with figures and objects swimming in and out of his viewpoint. His head felt fuzzy, numb and he couldn't concentrate on any one coherent thought. He tried to move but he couldn't. He panicked but it was useless. He tried to blink but even this simple action was impossible.

*His wife. God, he loved her. Lana and the kids. Would she still care for him even after this terrible war accident... I shot him. I know he was a Thal and the sworn enemy but I killed him. Dead. In the back... Lana in the crude hospital, giving birth. Touch and go. The crushing grip between them as the spasms continued...*

His sliding thoughts became interspersed with complex formulae and

calculations. He didn't understand them but knew, somehow, that he was absorbing the relevance of them. He became aware of Davros gliding towards him. Davros! If there had been a terrible accident and he was here then everything was alright. Davros was not only the supreme commander but also his people's chief scientist. He was in good hands now.

Although he could hear nothing, he saw the wheelchair moving around the white-coated scientists and assistants. Straven could see the feverish activity with which Davros punctuated his speech with his good arm. The scientists clapped their hands and Davros left the laboratory. Straven calmed down. Everything was going to be alright.

Suddenly there were more calculations. This time they were coupled with directives and planted in computer programs. As each one was assimilated, Straven was aware of his thought patterns being rewritten and it frightened him.

The last flow of data was extensive and it seemed never ending. When it did stop, there was a sudden, searing, white-hot pain that flashed through the fabric of Straven's brain. He was wracked in spasms of agony and he opened his mouth to scream for release. Before he passed out, he realised he no longer had a face.

In the laboratory, the equipment interfaces whirred to a halt. A scientist ran over to his monitor and checked the progress. "Phase four is now complete," he reported to his superior.

Power flowed. Programs were booted and systems came on line. Sensors were activated and Straven saw through heat sensitive vision. There were no irrational thoughts, only analysis and actions. Override on. His sight flickered for an instant and an image of gaunt, bearded figure in combat dress appeared briefly. Abruptly the image vanished.

A flow of information showed that he was moving. He was aware of gliding as a unit across the floor. Left. Left. Right. Stop. Exterminate. All commands executed. Override on. Standby...

The timeless darkness was impossible to measure but it ended sharply. The background had changed and there were more bipeds around. Override on. Left. Halt. Forward. Halt. All commands executed. Standby. His sight blurred again. *A blood-stained man limping towards a corpse.*

Davros's withered fingers brushed a switch in front of him and instantly a large chunk of data was erased from Straven's mind.

Override off. The last vestiges of his memory were wiped, lost forever but the mind that now inhabited the mark III travel machine didn't even register the loss. It was involved in testing its advanced artificial intelligence within the new environment.

The lenses revolved 180 degrees and scanned in infra red. Vision homed in on a tall biped and sensors registered a double heartbeat. The information was processed and analysed. Conclusions resulted in an immediate structured plan of action. Speech synthesis opened. "Alien," it reported. "Exterminate..."

JOHN PETTIGREW

## STARS COME OUT FOR HINDLE CONCERT

"A squidgy monster  
ruining innocent lives  
for its own  
selfish means!"

At the benefit concert for popular deranged Kinda character Hindle yesterday, several stars - including Orion's Belt - could be seen in the night sky.

When asked about the subject, actor David Jackson who played the extremely important gentle giant Gan in Blake's 7 for 18 episodes before being killed off somewhat unspectacularly in the George Spenton-Foster directed story Pressure Point, refused to comment. But Hindle himself was moved to say: "I f\*\*\*ed Regan under the Windchimes!"



DIANA



# UNIT HOTLINE

Attention all UNIT undercover agents!  
Here is this week's code messages hot  
from HQ!

Security Code Green:  
DOCTOR WHO IS A BIG PILE OF SHITE

Security Code Red:  
SREKNAW ETELPMOC ERA SNAF OHW  
ROTCOD LLA

## HOTLINE QUIZ (answers on page 93)

1. In the story *Genesis Of The Daleks*, the evil scientist Davros created which famous adversaries of the Doctor?
2. What is the abbreviation for United Nations Intelligence Taskforce?
3. What was the name of the Doctor's old roadster, Bessie?
4. The names of these stories have been made into anagrams — can you unscramble them?  
FANG ROCK OF HORROR, THE NIMON OF HORNS, ARMAGEDDON FACTOR THE, SHA DA

## KNOW YOUR ENEMY

### Number 638: The Pertwee

Planet of Origin:	Ten-Acre Field
Weaponry:	Terrifying 'clothes', monstrous 'ego', lethal supply of 3 'anecdotes', 'spit'.
Weaknesses:	Everything else, particularly acting 'ability'.
History:	Archæologists believe it to be of a similar age to Stonehenge, though the Pertwee says it was conceived in a Tooting Bec lavatory in 1848.



## BEWARE!

Although virtually identical in appearance, the Pertwee should not be confused with the Mollie Sugden.



# MAWDRYN UNDEAD

## AN OVERVIEW

*Mawdryn Undead* is a curiosity. It's a strange little tale, by WHO standards, and one that seems to have been universally forgotten by fandom. If it's mentioned at all, it's usually in association with a single aspect of its production - a controversy that has grown and grown until it dwarfs the story in which it originated. The standards of writing, production and acting are all forgotten in its wake. It's interesting then, that *Mawdryn* should be resurrected by BBC Video as the first ordinary story to represent the Davison era WHO on tape.

The existing Davison releases are, after all, hardly representative of his era. While it would be nice to think that, in releasing *Castrovalva*, *Earthshock*, *The Five Doctors* and *The Caves of Androzani*, the BBC were motivated by a desire to try and increase the public's exposure to Davison's Who, it is also hopelessly naive. *Caves* and *Castrovalva* were released because they were regeneration stories (I also believe this was part of the reasoning behind the release of *The Twin Dilemma*), *Earthshock* and *The Five Doctors* are nostalgia pieces. *Mawdryn Undead* has no such hook. The Black Guardian is hardly one of the series best remembered villains and even the presence of the Brigadier(s) is likely to disappoint the die-hards, shorn as he is of UNIT. In effect, this is the first Davison tape that has to stand on its own merits - as a Fifth Doctor story. As such I can't help wondering what the man in the street will make of it.

There is no denying that *Mawdryn Undead* is a very strange story. It manages to be both elegantly simple and over-complex simultaneously. On close inspection it is revealed as one of WHO's occasional forays into the hard SF genre - a complex tale of time travel and paradoxes worthy of Christopher Bidmead (compare the concept of the duplicate Brigadiers with the multiple Doctors in the abortive Season 18 story, *Sealed Orders*). It may not require the same sort of mental gymnastics which accompany a viewing of *Warriors' Gate*, but I can't help feeling that it will fly over the heads of the casual audience. On the other hand, the central drama revolves around a simple choice which the Doctor must make. It is a story without any overt action or a central villain. Again, this is likely to alienate Joe Public.

Not, though, that the script is at fault. If the audience doesn't have the imagination to follow the plot (which does hang together and makes sense) then the problem lies with the viewer rather than with Peter Grimwade. *Mawdryn Undead* is, without doubt, the late Mr. Grimwade's best script for the series. It is a cut above the bland and rather pointless *Planet of Fire*, and indefinitely better than the dire *Time Flight*. In fact, there is something quite appealing about the way in which Grimwade is prepared to jettison traditional dramatic concepts. Dennis Spooner's dramatic 'W' is conspicuous by its absence. The plot unfolds smoothly, unbroken and without distraction (apart from the Black Guardian subplot), gradually building up the tension as the scenario unfolds over the first three episodes. Indeed, the villain (for want of a better word) isn't revealed properly until the end of episode two. It's in part four, that things begin to happen in earnest - the resolution of the Doctor's dilemma posed at the end of the previous episode. Under the circumstances, the story could have been an incoherent, plotless mess. It is a tribute to Grimwade's skill that it is as tight as it is. Even the traditional WHO cliché of wandering around lots of corridors is turned into something useful (i.e. the need to keep the Brigadiers apart).

There is a certain amount of contrivance in earlier episodes - it seems very unlikely that the Black Guardian's chosen assassin should be known personally to an old colleague of the proposed victim. It seems equally improbable that the Brigadier should be teaching A-level maths in his old age. In fact, the entire school scenario could have been hopelessly embarrassing, but actually it's quite watchable. I particularly like the scene in which Turrough spills his heart out to the 'Headmaster', who promptly advises him on his cosmic crises of conscience as if it were girlfriend trouble. Apparently some fans hate this scene, but I think

it's saved by the blunt, unimaginative but curiously effective direction.

Peter Moffat's directional style is typically Moffat. Moffat is not highly regarded in WHO circles. It is not unfair to say that his direction is flat, sterile and ugly and that he has no conception of how to make WHO work. *Mawdryn Undead* is pure Moffat in that it is also flat, sterile and ugly, but here it seems to complement the even feel of the narrative. Here the script is the main thing. There is no overt conflict or melodramatic stings. There is no need for a director to innovate or provide an imaginative, stylish framework for the story's ideas, because the script has done all the work beforehand. Give this script to Fiona Cummings or Graeme Harper and I doubt they would shoot it any differently. Some camera angles would be more imaginative, the camera work would be more fluid, and there would be more close-ups but basically it would be the same. Possibly the only director who could have brought an entirely different interpretation to the story was Peter Grimwade himself.

This isn't to say that the direction is perfect. Obviously it isn't. The script isn't entirely without dramatic high points, and these come over as very flat. The meeting of the two Brigadiers is a massive anti-climax, though it works well within the context of this story. Less effective is Turlough and Ibbotson's jaunt at the start. Since the Brigadier's car seems to be going no faster than the average milk float, the crash comes over as very flat and unconvincing indeed. What follows is even worse, in the form of the Black Guardian's garish video effect afterlife. Grimwade himself was very unhappy with this, referring to it as the "*Jackanory* title sequence", and would have preferred something more surreal. Personally, given the Guardian's gothic redesign, I would have preferred something more solid - a darkened throne room perhaps? Moffat's effort is neither one thing nor the other.

There are other visual flaws - the interior of the transmat capsule is gaudy compared to the more restrained designs of the main spacecraft, while the laboratory comes across as bland. Particularly embarrassing are the costumes Mawdryn and his cronies are forced to wear - David Collings would have been better off wearing Tom Baker's coat, as he does in the TARDIS scenes, a costume that comes across as particularly effective.

Direction is, of course, not confined to the visual appearance of a story. There is also the problem of getting the cast to give good performances. In *Mawdryn Undead* this is not really a problem. Minor characters and extras are largely okay. By contrast Sarah Sutton and Janet Fielding come across as rather boring and under-written, but then the established regulars always fare badly when a new companion is being introduced. Janet Fielding suffers in particular, and this is probably one of the worst deals in the entire series. Even worse is the late Valentine Dyal, who goes wildly over the top, his performance rendered even more ludicrous by the new found tendency to say "heh, heh, heh" a lot, suggests that he's been taking 'evil lessons' from the fourteenth Master. That said, he does sound very impressive (what else do you expect?)

On the other hand there are some notably good performances. Nicholas Courtney is on fine form, acting for two. His character is refreshed by the excision of the stale UNIT format, while depth and poignancy has been added to the (1983) character who has clearly been having a difficult six years (his memory trouble provides us with a wonderful piece of undercut-expectations when, despite all the Pertwee references, the Brigadier doesn't know the 'new' Doctor, and also prompts the obligatory annual flashback scene). This Brigadier is far removed from the buffoon of the later Pertwee stories, rendered *Mawdryn Undead* more effective by the fact that, unlike many other "let's bring back the Brig 'cos he was great" stories, he actually has something to do here. Similar sentiments apply to Mark Strickson's Turlough, benefiting from the unusually large 'companion introduction' subplot of this story. Here's someone else who actually has something to do, and the Turlough set up in this story promises to be one of the most interesting companions in the series history. A pity then, that he was to spend the next four episodes stuck in a ventilation shaft (as he

would in many episodes after that). Also brilliant is David Collings making his third appearance in WHO. Hampered only by the fact that he seems to be wearing a blancmange on his head (something which, naturally, reduces Nyssa to a shrinking jelly), his TARDIS scenes could almost convince you, if you didn't know any better, that this really is the Doctor. Any future producers of the series would be foolish to overlook such a possibility...

Best of all is Peter Davison, giving an immaculate performance as always. In many ways *Mawdryn Undead* defines everything which the Fifth Doctor was, everything he actually did. The Doctor has a choice of sacrificing his remaining regenerations or condemning Tegan and Nyssa to spend the rest of their lives on the spacecraft. No other Doctor would have handled this problem in the same way. The Fifth Doctor was forever caught in these dilemmas, forced by his own compassion (as Mawdryn correctly perceives) into bringing suffering on himself ("humiliation" as the Black Guardian refers to it). The symbolic self-sacrifice of *Mawdryn Undead* nicely pre-echoes his impending regeneration in *Caves*. Referring to that story, Keith Topping suggests that the Fifth Doctor "wallowed in pain". Until *Caves* came along, no story better demonstrated that trait than *Mawdryn Undead*.

Recommendations are always difficult to make. *The Caves of Androzani* aside, *Mawdryn Undead* is probably the best Davison so far committed to tape, an infinitely better choice than Seward's mindless Dalek run-around, with which we were originally threatened. Those who would have preferred *Resurrection of the Daleks* may not find this story to their taste. Those who find that following the plot to *Star Wars* makes their brain hurt may also be disappointed. Those who are prepared to watch intelligently scripted, dialogue-based WHO, who want to find out if Davison made any good stories that didn't have Sharaz Jek in them, and who have just discovered that *Earthshock* is mindless pulp, are less likely to be disappointed. Apart from anything, it's good to see an 'ordinary' Davison story on the shelf. If it sells well enough, we might see some more. *Kinda* and *Frontios* even.

As for the so-called continuity error, I happen to think that *Pyramids of Mars* got it wrong...

## DOG-WATCH - THE DEMONS DANIEL O'MAHONY

The stormy, blattery opening sequences are in classic Dracula style. Actually, it's a pity this story is in colour, you get the distinct impression that it would be much more atmospheric in black and white.

Some old geezer leaves the pub with his dog. The dog, being a pretty dumb sort of dog, pulls away from its master and decides it's a smashing night for rummaging about in the cemetery. The owner dies in an unknown way with a look of abject terror across his face. Hopefully the dog has also bought it.

Jo is trying to explain to the Doctor that magic and the occult really exist and that the dawning of the age of aquarius is a good song. The Doctor is an old square and reckons he can explain everything with science. When Yates mentions Devii's End, the synthy parps underline the unease. The Doctor seems concerned about it. If this was a Sylvester McCoy story, no doubt it would be the Doctor himself who buried the cavern centuries ago. The TV documentary is believably BBC. The 70's version of Philip Schofield. But then it all goes Challenge Anneka when the Professor arrives on the scene.

"Devil's Hump" mutters the Doctor. The dark Doctor knows more than he's letting on. The regulars of the local pub have been watching Miss Hawthorn and the Professor. To exaggerate the BBC connection, it would have been better if the pub was the Queen Vic and the action took place in Albert Square. Dot Cotton would have been Miss Hawthorne and Big Ron and Dirty Den could have lead the Danter in the Vic. Meanwhile, Miss Hawthorne has some trouble with wind and almost gets her rocks off with a policeman.

There's certainly something strange going on - a strong wind rotates a sign post to mislead the Doctor and Jo in Bessie. HOW?! Sureiy posts are firmly planted in the ground and are more likely to break or fall over in gales? I suspect black magic...

The previous vicar left the village in mysterious circumstances without saying goodbye to any of his villagers - I suspect a sex scandal, probably involving sheep. The new vicar isn't any more appealing because despite the nerdy specs, he looks a real evil bugger. They all do. Vicars, I mean. Even Reverend Green in Cluedo. They're all creepy...

The Brigadier is having an evening off. He's obviously seeing his tottie, Doris. It's a sort of game. Yates nad Benton know what he's up to but pretend they don't. The Brig knows they know but pretends he doesn't... Benton and Yates - what a pair of moaners. Are they grateful for not having to face aliens, squiddy blobs, radioactive ambassadors or showroom dummies modelling the latest in silk dressing gowns? Are they hell. They're grumbling about being stuck inside, watching telly and eating sarnies.

The Doctor asks for directions in the pub and immediately gets involved in an argument with Arthur and Big Ron. He doesn't really fit in a pub, does the Third Doctor. The Master has obviously joined the masons - donning bizarre regalia, chanting strange chants and burning suspicious herbs. So mote it be...

The Doctor rushes to spoil the Professor's fun, fails and gets buried under the fires of hell itself. Well, not really. Strangely, it's snow and icy cold wind. BBC3 gets blown away as Jo screams and the Master laughs. Jo wipes away the polystyrene pellets from the Doctor whilst the Master makes a big pot of soup.

Ho ho, "The Brig has gone on somewhere after dinner." Back to Doris' house, no doubt. The Doctor, despite doing an impression of a Dalek Death Ray Ice Lolly, survives his deep freeze treatment. Maybe that's what the hot soup's for?

The Master has changed back into his Pervo Vicar garb and contemplates doing something to a goat. Meanwhile PC Stereotype Chirpy Constable faints.

Ho ho! Check out Yates' disgusting jacket - on a par with Huggy bear's sofa, me thinks... The Brig is rudely awakened. Hmm, I notice that on this recent screening, this scene has been edited - the bit where he turns to his naked companion and says "Hmmm. Must dash, Doris. MMuh!" is cut.

Meanwhile, Benton grabs a granny and explores the eerie cavern. He gets embroiled in a fight with a thicco local whilst Hawthorn watches the action. The Master's point of view is well used here, although he appears to be a bit drunk. He obviously materialised in the Queen Vic beforehand.

A blast of heat aids the Doctor to a full recovery. A Daemonic wind. Eureka!

On hearing the magic word "Magister", the Doctor not only reveals the Master but manages to put Jo down again. The Brig appears at the signpost for Devil's End and by using only the powers of his mind, makes his swagger stick explode. Well, okay - they encounter the heat barrier. Just as well he didn't encounter one in Battlefield or his big belly might have burned!

Now you may think I'm overtly sarcastic in reviewing The Daemons but I'm only doing it in the style of the Brig. With a cynical gleam in his eye he says to Yates; "I see, Captain Yates. So the Doctor was frozen stiff at the barrow, then revived by a freak heatwave. Benton was beaten up by invisible forces and the local white witch claims she's seen the devil?" Only Courtney can carry this off - even Angus Deaton would have problems. Bok sticks his tongue out as the Doctor and Jo enter the tunnel. You can tell he's a baddie. The pair encounter one of Julian Vincent's top-notch models and the episode ends when Bok jumps out. Oooh.

The Doctor repels Bok by the cunning old "Venusian-lullaby-plot". The Master terrifies the Squire by calling up a poltergeist. This really is the true essence of the character - terrorising individuals and controlling them. Not bloody shrinking people left, right and centre, claiming universal domination and saying "Heh heh heh" a lot.

Miss Hawthorne is the most unlikely witch (more like somebody from Albert



Square) ever. The Doctor shows his horny pictures in the dark and explains that there are no devils - it's the Daemons from the planet Damos. Yes, well it would be, wouldn't it? I mean the Sontarans come from Sontara, Rutans from Ruta... The Brigadier plans to blast his way through the heat barrier? Is he for real? Thankfully, the Doctor gives him a better option - he's going to build a doohicky.

The Master scares the bok out of the villagers - and here we have an example of a really cheap special effect; a bit spark, a puff of smoke and the Squire disappears. I don't know, this producer seems intent on turning WHO into a pantomime... Meanwhile a local takes on Yates and nicks a UNIT helicopter. This leads into an archaetypal Pertwee glorious action chase scene culminating in the pointless waste of the helicopter. Jo hits her head but doesn't split her head open (they never do, do they? It always ends up being temporary unconsciousness or the famous sprained ankle. I fell off a chute when I was four and had about 22 stitches, it's not fair...)

Azal finally manifests himself, making the world wobble whilst the Doctor insults the weak-minded Perkins. There's classic stuff in this serial, though - the Master's expression when faced with Big Az and his subsequent maniacal laughter in the following chaos. Jo and her incredibly nasty flaired suit enters the secret cavern and finds indescribable horror - it's Yates. The Doctor is cruising about on his bike like the cool dude that he is, when he is shot at. This is the Third Doctor, after all, and he takes a rough tumble. Not for him the comforts of landing on a convenient sofa...

A genuinely creepy scene follows; the villagers dressed up as Morris dancers! Concerned parents pull their innocent children indoors as they start dancing around with bells on their ankles to the strains of The Floral Dance. The one dressed up as a Kraag pulls a gun on the Doctor and the others tie him up to the May Pole. He is rescued by Hawthorne's unlikely ploy, the gullibility of the locals and Bessie's remote control. Azal makes a second appearance - and the episode ends with a close up of his big face. Think of every other cliffhanger of Colin Baker's stories, only with horns to get the general idea.

Five episodes? Er, what's happening here? Did the missing episode of Silver Nemesis get sucked back through time on to Barry's desk? Or was this during the time when if a story needed more than four episodes, it got it, or if their wasn't enough material for six, they didn't pad it out? Nah, surely not.

The Master isn't such a bad chap after all. Okay, he wants to sacrifice fluffy little Jo but he did give her a nice white dress (better than her horrid flairs).

The Brig and his man eventually get through a portal in the heat barrier via Perkins dodgy lash up. Typically, in WHO style, it explodes. The Doctor finally encounters Azal and the Master, and UNIT start firing on Bok. Despite the size and might of the Daemon, the three argue and shout at one another. Now the funny bit - deciding that the Doctor is "not rational", Azal attempts to kill him. However, Jo steps between them and is irrational. So what does the Daemon do? Kill her too? No - he disappears with a hellish headache, taking his spaceship and heat barrier with him.

On instructions from the Doctor, Jo changes out of her "ridiculous garb" and back into her nasty flairs and everybody dances round the May Pole.

**DALE COOPER'S  
DAMN FINE DOGS!**

JOHN PETTIGREW

Hello there, stimulation-seekers! My name is FBI Special Agent Dale Bartholomew Cooper, and I've been asked by the editors of this august journal to provide you with an insight into a subject which I hold very dear to my heart - the British science fiction TV program DOCTOR WHO. Now, you probably aren't aware of how big a fan of this series I am - if you've watched my exploits on the TV show TWIN PEAKS, you probably noticed that I never actually mentioned WHO during my stay in that sleepy little town. This was in fact entirely due to my

professional considerations - I doubt that most of you readers mention the fact that you are Whovians or Trekkers in your professional lives; and let's face it, if Gordon ever found out that I was a closet coveter of the best of British telefantasy, his hearing aids would probably explode. So, these opinions that I am about to pass on to you are supplied on the strict understanding that a copy of this magazine never gets back to the FBI Regional Bureau Office in Seattle. OK?

Now, down to business... Using various meditative, intuitive and philosophical techniques which I have picked up during my time in Tibet and through a particularly fascinating subscription course in elementary psychology, I intend to compile an authoritative guide to the 'best' actors to have portrayed the role of The Doctor on television. I have endeavoured to provide you with an objective and emotion-free evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the seven portrayals of that enigmatic Time Lord from Gallifrey. In order to preserve some sense of mystery, I have decided to present this report in ascending order of achievement...

In seventh place, I'm afraid that I have to nominate the character of the Third Doctor, as portrayed by the late JON PERTWEE. I'm rather sad to say that I would rather spend a fortnight's paid vacation time wandering around the Stygian depths of the Black Lodge than sit down in front of a Twerpy six-parter like *Colony In Space*, *The Time Monster* or *Planet of the Daleks*. I'm not certain if I can actually put my finger on what it is exactly about Jon Pertwee's stories that tend to make you feel as if your soul has become trapped in a drawer-knob (my apologies for a rather bad taste joke there, Josie!) Perhaps it's the complete lack of anything that could remotely be referred to as "acting" on the part of the Great Beak of the Universe himself. Perhaps it's the thpeech impediment that maketh you want to reach for an umbrella and a kagoul whenever you watch one of hith ththorieth. Or perhaps it's just the overwhelming air of naffness and incompetence that seems to pervade the entire Barry Letts era... I really don't know. I have come to the firm conclusion that the question of why such dramatically sound and interesting storylines should finally appear on screen as so much animal detritus is a mystery that shall forever remain on the "Unsolved Crimes" file here in the Seattle Bureau Office.

In sixth place on my ever-ascending ladder of achievement I find it necessary to nominate the first ever portrayal of everybody's favourite Time Lord, as enacted by WILLIAM HARTNELL. Billy (as he was known to all two of his friends) was perhaps not the most perspicacious of senile old fascists. In fact, only the waiter at the Great Northern Hotel has more trouble remembering his lines than Mr. Hartnell did. Whereas the waiter even to this day has the unfortunate habit of mumbling to himself or simply staying silent to cover up the fact of his forgetfulness, Billy was in the habit of giggling merrily to himself, leading many people to suspect that he was in fact suffering from the onset of Alzheimer's disease. I realise that without Billy's initial performance as the Doctor establishing the series in the consciousness of the British public, it is unlikely that WHO would have survived for 26 terrific years of entertainment. Nevertheless, it is such a shame that Billy's performance was so utterly unconvincing. I for one really don't want to end my days "floating around in Spain... in space", and I have to admit I'm not exactly burning with curiosity as to how one would use a "fornicator" or a "mursubmersible". Having said all that, it is more than possible that my own opinions of Mr. Hartnell's portrayal have been colored somewhat by my own previous encounter with The World's Most Decrepid Room Service Waiter - so please feel free to take my opinions with a pinch of salt. Or preferably with a large slice of Norma Jennings' fabulous pecan pie.

PETER DAVISON, unfairly dubbed by some as "the wet vet in space", comes in at number five in my survey, which is rather ironic considering that Mr. Sandra Dickinson in fact played the Fifth Doctor. It's like when life springs these little coincidences on you that I like to take time out and contemplate the enormity of

the universe with a chocolate frosted doughnut in one hand and a steaming hot cup of black coffee in the other. I strongly suggest that you give this method of internal meditation a go yourself - the results can be surprising if combined with a prolonged period of sleep deprivation and a particularly strong cup of coffee. Anyway, back to the survey. I feel rather guilty about placing Peter Davison this low down in the poll - some people might be forgiven for thinking that I don't actually like the Fifth Doctor. Nothing could be further from the truth, let me assure you. The main reason why Puny Pete only gets a perfunctory paragraph is that to me, his era sums up everything about early evening, mid-week BBC Television: in other words, it's bland, inoffensive and quite often rather tedious. In particular, Season Twenty tends to send one off into a particularly deep coma if the caffeine levels in your bloodstream aren't high enough. However, this has very little to do with Peter's performance. He is always very easy to watch, and is a genuinely competent actor - even if he does play exactly the same part in every TV program he has ever appeared in. It is perhaps indicative of the general averageness of his era that I have already run out of things to say about Peter Davison, and so it's ever onwards to the fourth position in my survey...

Fourth place goes to another of the monochrome brigade, cuddly PATRICK TROUGHTON. I feel that I must point out that Mr. Troughton gets such a high position solely on the basis of the charisma of his performance, and definitely *not* on the strength of the storylines which he was presented with. In some ways, I'm quite glad that Pat decided to leave the series when he did - there are only so many ways in which you can possibly retell the exact same story week in, week out without boring the audience senseless. I mean, if I have to sit through another tale set a couple of hundred years in the future at a high-tech research establishment where the Doctor assists a group of baffled and generally hopeless scientists to thwart an alien takeover of said establishment, I'll top myself. It's only in the original and innovative stories that the true class of Pat's Doctor can actually show itself. He is truly brilliant in stories like *The Mind Robber* and despite the tedium of the script itself, he shines in *The War Games*. It is truly a tragedy that so many of Pat's best episodes have gone the way of the Packard Mill. However, we do wait in hope that one day some more missing episodes might see the light of day courtesy of everybody's favourite Chocolate Mr. Whippy delivery man...

In third place comes a Doctor who I know doesn't appeal to many "traditional" WHO fans - COLIN BAKER. I have to admit that I thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Baker's portrayal of the errant Time Lord; indeed, it made a very pleasant change on watching *The Twin Dilemma* for the first time to view a Doctor who actively disliked his nauseating American assistant Perpugilliam Brown. I realise that the actress Nichola Bryant is an extremely talented and beautiful lady, but nevertheless her character held all the appeal of being shot at point blank range and nearly bleeding to death as a senile old fart potters around waiting for his gratuity (many apologies - I seem unable to shake off the spectre of William Hartnell from my mind - cha, cha, cha). For this reason, if for nothing else, Colin's Doctor will always have a place in my heart. Furthermore, I honestly don't believe the criticisms of "bad acting" that have been levelled against Colin are justifiable: it's the character of the Sixth Doctor to be brash, loud, over-bearing, OTT and just a little bit unlikeable. That's why I like him so much - after the blandness of Puny Pete, Colin's aggressive stastic energy came like a breath of fresh air. So, the costume made him look like the amnesiac Nadine Hurley. So, the shock of curly hair bore more than a passing resemblance to Ronald McDonald. So, the scripts for many of his stories were about as complex as an average episode of Santa Barbara. Despite all of these minor points, I still take great pleasure in sitting down with a juicy slice of Washington State Apple and Cherry Pie in front of a copy of *Vengeance On Varos*. I wonder if Windom Earle learned any of his techniques in "persuasive interrogation" from watching this story?

SYLVESTER MCCOY is the runner-up in my in-depth survey. Now I would like to make it clear that I did have many reservations about giving Uncle Sylv such a high placing, because let's face it, he'll never win any awards for "Best Actor", will he? In fact, about the only award he's likely to receive is for Most Gratuitous Gurn Pulled In a Totally Unnecessary Fashion - the only other possible contender for this award being Jon Pertwee. Nevertheless, the Seventh Doctor is without a shadow of a doubt one of the most complex, engaging and challenging characterisations ever to have been seen in the program, rivalled only by that of his companion Ace. It was a brave decision by the production team to change the emphasis of the Doctor's character away from traditional hero-figure to Galactic Avenger; I'm not exactly sure if it worked or not, but it certainly made for three seasons of extremely interesting viewing. Incidentally, I am of the opinion that Sylvester was much, much better in his first season - he fitted the comedic aspect of the Doctor's character much better. Indeed, it's his distressing tendency to gurn horribly and scream something unintelligible at the most dramatic moments of such stories as *Battlefield* and *Ghost Light* that can really put you off his Doctor very, very quickly. This is indeed a shame, because if I had to nominate any one of the Seven Doctors to work with in an FBI Investigation, I'd definitely choose the Seventh. Not only does he have the most affable personality of them all, he would also know the identity of the murderer before we had started the investigation. Furthermore, his companion would probably be related to the fiend in some way or another. Boy, could I have done with his help in the Laura Palmer case...!

I'm sure that even the least astute of you will have worked out by now that the person whom I have nominated as the finest ever portrayal of the Doctor is of course, TOM BAKER. Now I know that sounds like a cliché, but it truly is the case - Tom's portrayal of the Doctor is the most intelligent, mature, immature, infuriating and satisfying that there has ever been. Even during his moments of mediocrity (*Revenge of the Cybermen*, *The Face of Evil*, *The Power of Krill*, *Nightmare of Eden*, etc), Tom is still a joy to watch. Priceless moments like the regeneration aftermath in *Robot*, the encounters with Erato in *The Creature from the Pit*, almost all of *The Horns of Nimon* and such lines as "Oh, look - rocks!" from *Destiny of the Daleks* all show Tom's comic genius. His dramatic skills come to the fore in such tales as *The Deadly Assassin*, *Genesis of the Daleks*, *Full Circle*, *Pyramids of Mars* and *Warriors' Gate*, and when they are allowed to flow, Tom shows his true colors as one of Britain's finest ever actors. Indeed, the entire story of *City of Death* is without a doubt 100 minutes of the most sophisticated and enjoyable entertainment ever produced anywhere in the world. It stands up to repeated viewing time and time again. Indeed, during my time at the FBI Training Academy, I would often be inundated with requests from my fellow agents to show them my video copy of this story. It is WHO's finest hour, and the reason for this consummate achievement lies solely with Tom Baker himself. Graham Williams and Douglas Adams' script is superb, but without the spark of originality and flair from Tom (possibly a by-product of over-indulgence, but who are we to cast aspersions?), it would not be half as good. Tom's portrayal was in fact so strong and so memorable that it has made the task of following him almost impossible for messrs Davison, Baker and McCoy. Full on I have heard these words: "Oh, he's not as good as Tom Baker was". Not only is this unfair, but also very short-sighted. If WHO is ever to survive, the spectre (arbeit an extremely good one) of Tom Baker's Doctor has to be banished from the public consciousness of Britain - a different actor, with a style and manner all of his own must be appointed to take over from Sylvester. It would be folly of the highest order to bring Tom back to the part - it really would be impossible for the public to accept anyone else ever again if Tom was to recreate his role.

My personal vote goes to genial host of the British game show *The Crystal Maze*, Richard O'Brien. If any of you have managed to catch some episodes of the series *Robin of Sherwood* on cable, you might have seen Richard in a "straight" role as the villainous magician Guinar, ample evidence to prove that Richard is as



qualified to take the job NOW as Tom baker was to take the job back in 1974.

Anyway, that's enough of my rambling. I haven't been this obsessed about anything since I first clapped eyes on Annie Blackburn's delectable features... it wa such a shame what happened to her, wasn't it? I hope that my comments have provoked a little bit of debate and discussion. I'll have to sign off now - I invited Garland and Margaret over for dinner tonight to discuss the White Lodge and if it can possibly have any connection with the cryptic way in which the bills at Pizza Hut never seem to add up correctly when there are more than four people at one table. "Table for seventeen, please..."

This is FBI Special Agent Dale Bartholomew Cooper signing off. Keep yourself pure in body and spirit, and don't forget to keep an eye out for low-flying owls.

I'm not sure if they are the evil spirits of people swallowed up into the Black Lodge, but it's a nightmare trying to get owl shit off FBI Regulation Black Suits.

Be Seeing you!

Dale

85090  
□

CRAIG FOULKES & SIMON ROUSE

# PERFORMANCE!

Forget Michael Jackson and his pretty feeble attempt to appear "Dangerous", forget Erasure's flamboyant extravaganza. In 1991, that most unlikely of pop's live performers toured the world in a whirlwind collage of theatrics, surrealism, costumes and stonking good music. The Pet Shop Boys put on a *Performance*.

If you're not a fan of their unique style, this video presentation is unlikely to sway your opinion. The intrinsic choreography, the polish of the direction and the sheer self-indulgence of this show simply builds upon the PSB's image of clever-clever productions and arrogance of forming an attitude around not really having any sort of attitude.

But it all works like magic.

Right from the start of this video, the viewer is given no-doubt that this is a film adaption of an original stage show. The tone of the evening is set when the audience is given a classical overture, before the more familiar of beats thump out. The theatrics begin when a disturbing and surreal death of an oriental carrying a book takes place whilst a strange figure, looking uncannily like Andy Pandy with long hands, captivates with banal movement. Another figure is present - that of a bandaged man in a wheelchair, the bandages being unwound. The emphasis is on art - when we talk about choreography in this show, it's more like ballet than mere dance sequences.

Andy Pandy has glasses. Are these the Pet Shop Boys?

No.

The programme begins proper with an extended mix of *This Must Be The Place I Waited Years To Leave*. The crew are dressed as schoolboys, including Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe, when they finally appear. They place themselves to the bottom left of the stage and let the action centre around the dancers. Only they have the sheer nerve to get away with this. Neil sings and Chris does does nothing but stare at the audience - but he does it so well! Despite the emphasis on their perfectly produced electronic music, JJ Belle provides a superb live dimension with his funky guitar and the presence of the backing singers add to the whole show. Let's face it, Neil tennant would probably be the first to admit that he doesn't have a strong singing voice so credit where it's due that it's as good as this live!

The repressive schoolboy imagery continues in the next song, *It's a Sin*. Despite the nature of the costumes and the (sometimes very blatant) sexual overtones, it's not camp or ironic at all. More like dark and disturbing.

All the songs seem to flow smoothly into the next but the songs do not form a narrative, they do not tell a story. The fact that it all might is the sort of

psuedo-intellectualism that seeps from duo is all that's needed. Liza Minelli's hit song is not, *Losing my Mind* complete with more unsettling imagery... tied up schoolboys in bed, sexual terror, a cripple in a wheelchair. A mention must be made to the black female vocaust, Sylvia Mason-James, who is voluptuous and sexy with her whip!

Easily the best costumes in the show arrive with the next song, *What Have I Done to Deserve This?* Reminiscent of the Thomson Twins (the characters in Tin-Tin, not the group), Tennant and Lowe are decked out in wacky pastel three-piece suits. Surfing. Er... yeah. Pumpkin headed dancers mingle with clowns whilst the main backing singers (Sylvia with Derek Green and Pamela Sheyne) ponce around looking like a pimp with his whores. Oh, and the cripple is now up dancing.

*My October Symphony* is the most literal of interpretations in the show. Full of Russian icons (hammer & sickle, ballet dancer, Stalin's head being split apart), it is and not Tennant who sings this song. He and Chris Lowe are still dressed in their previous costumes. They come in (in slo-mo), witness the crumbling of communism, photograph the scene for the family album and then walk off into the horizon.

A brilliant mime-artist cum dancer feigns being caught up in a high gale. this is the lead in to another lesser known PSB song, *I'm Not Scared*. Now they've got secret agent garb on - trenchcoats and fedoras. The background dancers are also wearing trenchcoats - and yellow balaclavas. Chris Lowe stares at the audience through binoculars, whilst Neil does a few minimalistic pointings. At the end there is a different sort of unsettlement - Neil has left without his partner...

So Chris strips off and dances with some of the most sexy dancers who perform some rather near-the knuckle routines. The song is *We all Feel Better In The Dark* and features Chris on lead vocals! Neil is back, singing a duet of another Liza Minelli single - *So Sorry I Said*. Now without a hat, Tennant looks very old and grey. Who cares? The imagery doesn't give up. Despite being a sad ballad, Neil and Chris are strapped into straight jackets and Neil is hoisted into an electric chair while Chris is shut into a tiny cage.

The menacing introduction of *Suburbia* strikes up as Tennant is electrified. Quite what *Suburbia* has to do with an asylum, I don't know. The dancers are now dressed up as mental nurses with bee hive hair-do's. One particularly madcap figure (probably Katie Puckrik) tears off her knickers, has sex with a male colleague and then kills him by hacking him with an axe. Yeah.

Oh yes, and the clock above the stage explodes signalling the end of the first half of the show.

The second half kicks off with the dynamic song, *So Hard*. The two pop stars are dressed in 50's leather gear and umbrellas. They both have Double-Take Brothers style wigs on and look very strange. Despite the song, this set is quite static and boring. Things liven up when the dancers emerge dressed as fat pig/yuppies and Tennant waltzes about with a rock n' roll quiff. Chris turns up with a mohikhan, a leopard skin suit and a bored expression.

The Brothers In Rhythm mix of *How Can You Expect To Be Taken Seriously* follows on, which is quite mellow. It opens and closes with a live rap and there is a slo-mo scene at the end where our heroes are involved in a fight with the pigs.

On a lonely set, Tennant begins the slow Lisa Minelli version of the song, *Rent*. He is soon joined Sylvia and the other vocalists. She carries the song and Neil disappears. This is to give him and Chris time to change into glitzy gear for the U2 song, *Where the Streets Have No Name*. Either some clever editing and remixing has been done for the video or they've restaged this song especially for it because the *Can't Take My Eyes Off You* has been excluded due to certain publishing difficulties. Let's all laugh at Lowe with his sparkling fez and wee round shades. And yet he still manages to look cool and not like a knob at all.

The trenchcoats are back for *West End Girls* as JJ Belle adds a mellow guitar

line to the familiar opening. Chris is drunk, dances with one of the sleazy but gorgeous west end girls, gets into a ruck, kicks some chairs, collapses and throws up. Different...

This dovetails nicely into *Jealousy*. The stage is empty apart from Lowe and Tennant. Neil looks really sad and angry as Sylvia and the others join him, circling and taunting him. He ends up on the floor and they kick his head in as he writhes in agony. A strange surreal scene is acted out at the orchestral climax - the dancers dressed as upper class masque guests kill the Pet Shop Boys by crushing them with giant Oscars. Well, they're dead now and that's the end - until they reappear for the encore dressed in white and wings. Neil strums a guitar and begins with a more traditional rendering of *Always On My Mind* before breaking into their tour-de-force, throbbing and pulsating version. That red-haired bint from the Word, Katie Putrick, really does look talentless. Anyway, after the name-check, they fall back on the beds that appeared at the beginning of the show and the final song is the rather oddly-chosen B-side, *Your Funny Uncle*. (Yes, it's a real song, to be found on the reverse of the It's Alright single).

And that's it. Show over. Comparisons with 1992's Erasure tour are inevitable but wrong. Erasure's show tended more towards pantomime and fun whereas this was more dark and surreal. The problem is that whereas you could go along and see Andy and Vince bopping about and have a good time, with *Performance* I got the feeling that unless you were quite a fan, you wouldn't enjoy it as much. When I saw them play at the Glasgow SECC, some of their more fanatical followers threw them roses. They're certainly different...

Hmmm. Funnily enough, the video production seems to work better than the actual stage show. And yes, I had a good seat at the front. Just goes to show that the PSB's are in their element when they are in front of the camera. They certainly aren't live performers in the traditional way - if they had taken away the theatrics and extravagance, the show would be flat and lifeless. That's not really a criticism, they obviously recognise their strengths and weaknesses.

Anyway, I enjoyed it.

JOHN PETTIGREW

## AND NOW... BOOK CORNER

### NIGHTSHADE

Eight books into the *New Adventures* and the series looks very healthy, with only one book being utterly awful (*Genesys*) and only one which doesn't stick to the spirit of WHO (*Warhead*). Compared to this we've had a couple of really good novels - *Exodus*, *Revelation*, *Time's Crucible* and now... *Nightshade*. The first thing that struck me about this book was its cover, but, according to the cliché we're not supposed to judge *Nightshade* by that, so I'll move on to the second...

The second thing that struck me about this book was its similarity to *Witch Mark*. Both books are written in a confident, easily-read, universal style which is neither as dense nor as challenging as the styles practised by messrs Cornell, Platt and Cartmel. This might suggest that the easier-read *New Adventures* are beginning to develop their own stylistic groove, but the similarities don't end there. The village settings in both books are very similar, as is the "alien influence rooted in local legends" theme, while the casts of both books could easily have stepped out of a mid-Pertwee tale. *The Daemons* springs to mind... Still *Nightshade* is the better of the two stories. For one thing, it doesn't feature a pair of aggravating and pointless American tourists cluttering up the narrative. Secondly, it's rather effective in evoking the atmosphere of the late 1960's. Thirdly, the concentrated horror of *Nightshade* is more effective than the diffuse fantasy epic of *Witch Mark*. The deaths in the story seemed quite gory and shocking, while as for the scene when the sentience kills the Abbot... hmmm (something demiurgic about this bit, or am I reading too much into it?)

Oddly enough, while the characters are all well-defined (given the nature of

the story, they'd have to be), few of them stick out as really memorable, not even the obligatory love-interest for Ace (no wonder she has emotional problems), perhaps because neither settings nor characters are particularly relevant to the plot. The big exception in the memorial stakes to this is Edmund Trevithick, a very impressive character, the best character to appear in a *New Adventure* since Paul Cornell's Sauu. It's a shame that Gatiss killed him off, as he'd have made a superb companion. The various in-references to *Quatermass* were a pleasure to read, without alienating for the uninformed, as were those alluding to *The Daemons*, *Image of the Fendahl*, *The Awakening* (the Civil War interlude being a high-point) while the nature of the Sentience, the use of "Pack Up Your Troubles", the World War I soldiers and other small touches suggest that any resemblance to the second SAPHIRE AND STEEL story is more than just coincidental.

Like *Witch Mark*, *Nightshade* does not push at the boundaries of DOCTOR WHO, it isn't trying to be "too broad for the small screen". It's not difficult to see this working on TV. They wouldn't even have to worry about making the monsters look convincing... on the other hand, they'd have a problem making Carole Ann Ford looking like a schoolgirl again. The continuity significance of *Nightshade* can't be overlooked; for the first time since, oooh, *The Massacre* at least, we have a WHO story which acknowledges Susan's role in the Doctor's life. A nice touch for continuity buffs, particularly the scene with the school uniform (maybe this explains *City of Death*?)

It's a good thing, though, that we don't have to judge *Nightshade* by its cover. Peter Elson's superb, atmospheric (and Doctor/Ace-less) artwork is the best *New Adventure* cover I've seen to date, far outstripping Andrew Skilleter's weak efforts. Gatiss' text would have a tough job matching this. Fortunately for him, we don't have to apply that test...

DOCTOR WHO ON THE PLANET OF THE HIPPIES FROM HELL or WHAT'S ON THE END OF THE PLOT, PAUL?: LOVE AND WAR

I approached Paul Cornell's second *New Adventure* with a sense of trepidation. While I loved *Revelation*, I still had some misgivings about it. The plot, for one thing, seemed a little too vague, with the Timewyrm's grandiose scheme being brushed under the carpet (and it was also wholly derivative - I won't say exactly where from, but if I was Ming the Merciless, I'd sue), and God help any non-fan who tried to make sense of it all. Despite this, if anyone wants to sell me a complete run of *Queen Bat*, I'm open to offers...

Firstly, we've been pretty lucky that this was a novel and not an example of TV WHO. I have nightmarish visions of what the BBC versions of the Hoothi would look like. As it is, we have our imaginations unimpeded, save for the ridiculous looking example on the cover. I found the Hoothi, the interior of their "silent gas dirigibles" - (c) Robert Holmes, 1976 - and their unique method of possession to be one of the two most effective parts of the book. The other most effective part was Professor Bernice Summerfield, the only *New Adventures* character so far who'd make a better companion than Edmund Trevithick. In addition to this we have yet another devastating character analysis of Dorothy nearly-MacShane, finely drawn characters like Miller and the unfortunate librarian, the first DOCTOR WHO appearance of Vic Reeves (although, since Ace left Earth in 1986/87, how can she - or her friend who died before she left - know who he is?!), the general writing style which was typically hard-hitting Cornell, some set pieces, etc. Oh and the damn thing had a plot this time.

Despite these things, I was very disappointed with *Love and War*. Perhaps it was the plot which seemed overfamiliar and riddled with holes (like how the hell the Doctor knew about "Aradrath"). Perhaps it was the principle supporting characters - the Travellers - who came across as weak and unconvincing. Perhaps it was the reuse of the old plot where Ace falls in love with the first bloke she meets. Perhaps it was just little things like the curious way Operative



Miller's secretary manages to change her name halfway through a scene. I can't honestly say that this is a bad book, but coming from Paul Cornell, it was just too ordinary.

Thumbs down this time. Maybe *Anarchy in the UK* will be better...?

#### COME BACK JOHN PEEL, ALL IS FORGIVEN: TRANSIT

This had to happen eventually. After a dreadful false start in *Genesys*, the New Adventures have had a generally good run - eight books ranging from the average (*Apocalypse*) to the exceptional (*Time's Crucible*). Sooner or later we had to hit another stinker. The Law of Averages dictates that another *Genesys* would have to turn up at some point along the line, and in *Transit* we have reached that point.

The cover is deceptively good. Not one of Peter Elson's better efforts, but still enough to pitch it above the average book cover. Turning to the blurb at the back and the warning bells start to ring. "Ben Aaronovitch," apparently, "wrote *Remembrance of the Daleks* and *Battlefield*, two of the most highly regarded WHO stories of recent years..." A little misleading there. *Remembrance of the Daleks*, awful though it is, is unarguably popular in fandom, but I don't see *Battlefield* getting much critical acclaim. Oh, but it goes on, "(Aaronovitch) lives in North London and is... not half as interesting as he would like to be". And he can't write half as well as he would like us to think.

*Battlefield*, you may remember, was Ben's attempt to prove that a WHO story could work with minimal characterisation, a plot that can be summed up in three words and very little by way of coherence. *Transit* goes further. There is no characterisation, no plot and no coherence. This is a book with no redeeming features whatsoever. It was a relief to finish it. I can honestly say that this is the most bloody awful novel I've read for years. *Genesys* has nothing on this.

So, what exactly is wrong with *Transit*? Many things. There is, for example, nothing resembling a three-dimensional, fleshed-out character in the book. The characters are little more than names, names you are likely to forget if they disappear from the narrative for longer than a couple of pages. The only really memorable character is Kadiatu Lethbridge-Stewart, this only because of her gimmicky background and distinctive name. The Doctor's role is very low-key throughout while Benny is nothing like the wonderful character fleshed out by Paul Cornell. This is probably because she spends the entire length of the narrative possessed by an alien intelligence, which suggests that Aaronovitch had no idea what she was like when he was writing his book. In fact it could almost be Ace there, under alien control, hardly an auspicious follow-up to her debut tale.

*Transit* is set in a massive tunnel system which links the solar system together but resembles the London underground (ah, nostalgia) in more ways than one. This isn't exactly an original idea but it's still one that can work well. Each section of the novel is introduced with a heading that describes which transit station we're currently at, thus saving Aaronovitch from having to write any sort of descriptive material. So far so good... but here's where the plot starts to go awry. The tunnel system, Aaronovitch tells us, is analogous to a computer, despite the lack of AND/OR gates. The alien intelligence which has invaded it is thus analogous to a computer virus. Yes... But then the tunnel system starts to access other computer systems and the Doctor is able to enter the virus' virtual reality world (in a scene which is so unimaginative it defies belief - *Love and War* did this so much better) which makes no sense whatsoever. Does Aaronovitch know what an analogy actually is? Just because the damn thing resembles a computer system doesn't mean that it is...

The alien intelligence raises some interesting points. Like, what is it up to? Why does it need to possess people? Why Benny in particular? Where, basically,

did it come from? What the hell is going on? Just as Morgaine wanted to get her hands on Excalibur because ... well, just for the fun of it apparently, the 'virus' is never explained. For the most part it spends its time creating fake versions of Benny which manage to fool everyone except the Doctor. Motivation is not Aaronovitch's strong point. Indeed, this is best demonstrated by all the various characters who rush around between the transit stations for no readily apparent reason whatsoever. Without any coherent plot worth speaking of, *Transit* is little more than a 262 page runaround on a larger scale than anything seen on TV. Even the corrupt and depressing future - the logical extension of *Warhead* is unconvincing, lacking any of the detail with which Cartmel invested in his novel.

It would be very easy to say that *Transit* has no redeeming features whatsoever. It would also be very true. That said, I rather took to the idea of the Doctor flying over the surface of Mars in a decommissioned UNIT plane, but that's about all. *Transit* is much, much worse than *Genesis* was. Fortunately these two novels are the exception rather than the *New Adventures* rule.

DANIEL O'MAHONY

(Am I the only sad person to actually like *Genesis*? Mind you, I also think *The Claws of Axos* has been much maligned... John).

## LOG, STOCK + BARREL

KEITH TOPPING, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

I really hope there will be a second issue of *Club Tropicana* - fandom needs as many outlets as it can get; especially those which cover a wider range of material than simply rehashing tired old cliches about whether (or not) Pertwee was any good as a Doctor, etc...

Contents; Firstly, my article. I must admit that much of the material therein derives from research done for a forthcoming book that I'm co-authoring with Paul Cornell and Martin Day for Guinness and, therefore, much of it may seem a little out of date. This is especially true of the conclusions which fell flat on their face about three days before publication of CT with the broadcast of *Ghostwatch*. Oh, I see, it's okay to like telefantasy again now, is it?! Pass the valium...

*Twin Dilemma* review - yeah, fair enough, but what's the point? This isn't 1984. I mean, this is the problem for DOCTOR WHO fanzines at the moment - there is no new product and therefore, unless you want to print 24 blank pages, you've either got to paint a vulgar picture within your timeframe or, alternatively, take a different approach. *Purple Haze* and *Star Begotten* did that with excellent results.

I liked Tim's *Prancelot* piece (although I always preferred *Pugwash* - probably due to the longevity rather than any significant difference in style or content), and the fiction (simplistic, but effective - let's see more). The 10 essential compilation albums piece was a very interesting test of technique. The writer's got the Jam all wrong, however. Weller as an 18 year-old Who copyist wrote some of the fiercest and most articulate rants of his era and this was evident from very early on - songs like *I Got By In Time* or *Sounds From The Streets on In The City* show a craft and ability far removed for the rather dismissive one-line put-down of pre-*All Mod Cons* material here. And that anyone in the summer of 1977, with the barriers seemingly drawn for a fight to the death could say something as strangely profound as "What's the point of saying destroy? We want a new life for everyone" (*All Around The World*) from inside the new wave was remarkable. Free your mind and your ass will follow.

They did get better as they went along, climaxing with those golden summers of 79 and 80 when they were the best band in the world (*Setting Sons* is the kind of record you could die for, happily), but it all fell apart a bit when Weller

started to believe the hype and tried to punish the world because he wasn't born black. The later singles are fine but *The Gift* seems a crushingly empty record now.

It's nice to see that the Monkees cop some space here. A seriously underrated band (for they were a band - check out *Headquarters* and *Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn, Jones Ltd*). In many ways the Monkees were the last of the great singles bands - a kind of half-commercial, half-weird outlet for Goffin and King. Nesmith was my kind of guy and anyone who can subvert an entire generation with a song like *Circle Sky* is okay with me.

The New Adventures: bor-ring! Let's talk about the music again...

#### JOHN CONNORS, LIVERPOOL

The Doc-watches were addictive. If I read them too often, I'd never be able to watch those stories again properly! Or at least, not very seriously. Cat's Poo was hilarious, echoing my feelings about the pretentious New Adventures books. Topping's article would have been better in a couple of parts so he could say more about each show; it got a little like a list towards the end and Colin Baker's *Did You Know?* wasn't very funny. Oh, and the DOCTOR WHO logo rather upset the cover.

"The purple Byker Grove," says Tim Munro, clearly off his trolley. BG happens to be the best kids drama series in ages. It's crucial 90's television, filmed in beautiful colours, full of punchy storylines, unusual camera technique and real style. It's acted by a cast lacking the theatre school precociousness inherent in other series. Certainly if DW came back, I'd trust Zenith to have a bash at it; after all Matthew Robinson knows the territory.

*Sir Prancelot* on the other hand is the latest in an increasingly tedious stream of 70's childrens programmes deemed lost gems when in fact many of them are crude fools gold. Why do these people live intelevision's past? Nostalgia should be killed; it's stifling today's talent and is becoming a suffocatingly overbearing presence in fanzines, music and television. Why can't we acknowledge the greatness of Byker Grove now rather than wait till issue #120 of *Club Tropicana* to eulogize it?

#### DANIEL O'MAHONY, HANTS

Gripes first. CT contains no more than two pieces of actual, horrible blasphemy. Firstly *Time's Crucible* is a masterpiece of literature, better than Joyce, so there! Secondly, *Bohemian Rhapsody* is the second greatest piece of music known to man, bettered only by *Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds*. Despite these little quibbles, I would go on record to say that CT is the best, new A5 fanzine I've seen for literally yonks. As Tim Munro rightly points out, the A5 renaissance has recently been fading away (but was it ever there in the first place?) CT is a fine example of the chunky, good read A5 zines that have been a touch thin on the ground of late. Thoughts and highlights, then; *Toby and Marty Are Dead...* - always a good idea to start with a bit of Keith Topping - even something as innocuous as a telefantasy overview. The problem with such articles is that it's difficult to be definitive (there's bound to be someone out there demanding to know why RENTAGHOST wasn't included), and the fact that this isn't trying to be any such thing is in its favour. The concentration on what might be called the "first division" of telefantasy series helps, but there were still some surprises. For example, why were RANDALL & HOPKIRK (DECEASED) and SAPPHIRE AND STEEL relegated to brief mentions while the infinitely more obscure ESCAPE INTO NIGHT and CHANGES were highlighted? Oh, and *Checkmate* isn't that naff. The real PRISONER stinkers are *It's Your Funeral*, *A Change of Mind* and *Do Not Forsake Me Oh My Darling*.

Perhaps someone should tell Paul Cornell about Sophie Aldred's solar eclipse trick? It would certainly have added deeper nuances to *Tymewyrm: Revelation*. I'm sorry but I find any article that discusses the topic of Ms. Aldred's backside to be extremely fascinating (while Nichola Bryant does nothing for me...) Norman

Lamont would blame the recession on the 'Trop if he thought he could get away with it. *Gore!*, well we all have our favourites. *Tin Machine & The Lights of Zetar*. Hmm. How about *Right Said Fred Visit Warrior's Gate* for issue 2? Or *The Police Visit Warrior's Gate*? Or *Shakespeare's Sister...*? Videos are pretty naff at the moment. The Good Stuff of last year; *Caves, Tomb, Shada, Mawdryn and The Aztecs*. Far outwaying the galloping awfulness of dreadful compilation tapes, *Twin Dilemma* and *Claws of Axos*. *Odds Kitikins!* - The world needs more of *Sir Prancelot* and *Crystal Tipps & Alistair* was an abomination, true. *Salvation* adds whole new meaning to the phrase "wanting Adric for his body"...

And this is all good stuff, in places more than a little reminiscent of *Purple Haze* (whatever happened to that, I ask myself? I certainly hope there's going to be an issue 2.

(Which just goes to show that issue 1 really did contain something for everyone! - John)

MADDIE & RENKO ARE ALIVE AND WELL

The Death of Telefantasy in the 1980's: a reply to Keith Topping.

Keith Topping's telefantasy survey in *Club Tropicana* #1 managed to somehow be both comprehensive and yet skate over some of the knottier issues involved. The thesis seemed to be that telefantasy as a genre imploded in the late 70's. Well, yes: but there have been signs of late of a revival. I don't mean *Dark Season*, which I found far too arch, self-knowing, all style rather than substance (and with some dreadful acting on view - sorry Ms. Pearce). I'd put the revival back to *Moondial*, the superb Helen Cresswell/Colin Cant serial (with some superb acting on the show - bravo Ms. Pearce). *Five Children and It*, *The Borrowers*, countless E. Nesbit adaptations - telefantasy has always been an essential part of children's television.

However, in mainstream drama, the goalposts have been moved. Two Big New Ideas came into TV drama production in the 80's, ideas I believe inimical to the telefantasy genre. The New Ideas are best exemplified by the series that initiated them: *Moonlighting* and *Hill Street Blues*.

*Moonlighting* began the trend of suspending an audience's suspension of disbelief. It's TV with the inner and outer workings exposed. *Hill Street Blues* gave us multi-narrative strand drama, with at least three plots whirring away to resolution in each episode, and an overarching storyline running through the episodes of the season. It took them ten years or so, but the BBC finally reaped the rewards of this method of storytelling in *Between The Lines*, the outstanding serial drama of 1992.

So where does this leave telefantasy? The *Moonlighting* approach gave audiences a taste for witty, self-referential drama: programmes which said "It isn't real, it's only make-believe". This is the complete antithesis of the rationale of good telefantasy - "It's make-believe that is real, so watch out".

*Hill Street Blues'* legacy has been ensemble cast performances and intricate plotting (*The Bill*, *Casualty*, even *EastEnders*). But it seems to me the most successful telefantasy series don't concentrate on ensemble acting, but on single or dual lead roles - *The Avengers*, *Doctor Who*, *Randall & Hopkirk*. Furthermore, if the aim of intricate plotting is to reflect the messiness of real life, the addition of a fantasy element can only confuse and bewilder the audience.

I've grossly over-simplified the dominant trends in TV drama in the 80's. I've made no mention of the transition from studio drama to film. Nevertheless, I think the partial death of telefantasy can be explained in these terms.

It is also fascinating to see how, if at all, *Moonlighting* and *Hill Street Blues* affected WHO, the only telefantasy institution continuing from the 70's into their period of influence.

Consider this: *The Trial of a Time Lord* is ludicrously overplotted. The very



title of the season reeks of self-reference to the problems afflicting WHO at the time. Colin Baker, I believe, played the Doctor as a performance of Doctoresque mannerisms, and not as a character in his own right. Bruce Willis's detective only existed as a wise-cracking gumshoe device to entrance Ms. Shepherd, and was played by Willis similiary as a performance rather than as a person.

More recently, Ace has been accused of being "A Doctor Who fan in the TARDIS" or a construct of traits rather than a character with traits. Cartmel has initiated over-arching storylines that will never be completed.

Perhaps then the New Ideas of 80's Television were antithetical to the strengths and traditions of telefantasy. Perhaps the Nathan-Turner era was not merely obsessed with the fannish past but also desperate to keep up with the New Ideas - when the old ideas that gave us *Evil of the Daleks*, *Inferno* and *The Stones of Blood* would have worked much, much better.

## RIGHT LESLIE, WRITE ABOUT WEAPONS IN WHO...

PAUL DUMONT

Weapons in WHO, ey. Waheey... Oh guns n' stuff, I see what you mean now. Right, in my own inimitable way I shall now delve into the history of Doctor Who and investigate and list the most popular used alternative items which have been used as instruments of death, torture, pain, debt collection and cliffhanger creation. By the way, I don't claim to be Andrew Pixley, and if I have missed out bits, you'll just have to look them up for yourselves.

Here you have fifteen of the most popular weapons as used in WHO.

### 1. ROCKS

Popular with cavemen due to their relative abundance and effectiveness, not quite so popular with possessed companions and policemen who have a habit of falling over backwards with the weight.

### 2. GOLD

Coins, dust, bullets, badges for mathematical excellence. Of use when fighting Cybermen - aim for the chest unit. See also radiation, nitro-nine, other Cybermen, weather control stations.

### 3. SILVER

Usually bullets, not to be confused with validium which may well argue about it's use. Of use when confronting evil entities and possibly vampires/Haemovores.

### 4. PLASTICS

Used extensively by the Nestenes in implausible attempts to take over the Earth, applications include cling film spraying daffodils and asphixiating armchairs.

### 5. HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS

These are very popular with a wide range of people, notably Polly who mixed a cocktail that was deadly to Cybermen (amongst a few hundred other things). This also proved useful for removing those awkward rings from around the side of the bath.

### 6. WATER

Kills off Martian Ice Warrior spores as well as being an unpopular substance with certain fans who will remain nameless.

### 7. SULPHURIC ACID

Deadly to Krotons, see also acid baths as used by Colin Baker.

### 8. WASTE DISPOSAL UNITS

Useful for getting rid of unwanted cannibals. NB: do not look into mechanism as not very discerning.

#### 9. SALT

This is a useful substance for the destruction of pseudo mythical beings like Fendahleen, however too much can spoil the soup.

#### 10. WEATHER CONTROL STATIONS

Besides giving the Ice Warriors the hots and giving the Cybermen the brush off, a few quid in the direction of the controller will guarantee a week of unadulterated sunshine in Rhyll.

#### 11. ELECTRICITY

Good one, this. Gives them a buzz every time.

#### 12 THE COMPANION

There are many types and uses are diverse, screaming is good for some applications such as seaweed monsters and Tetraps (Victoria Waterfield and Melanie Bush). More versatile is the warrior with skills ranging from one-to-one open combat to knife-throwing to use of the blow-pipe (see Leels). Of course the explosives expert/trainee terrorist is the ultimate weapon, just as effective on a squad of Daleks as on a stubborn wall (see Ace).

#### 13. SCARVES

Preferably weighted, they can be used for many applications from whipping to tripping, this has proved extremely useful although lengths over sixteen feet may prove cumbersome.

#### 14. RAGING INFERNOS

Another universally useful one here, this one will get them all, especially useful on Terileptils, Krynoids and nasty Roman people. NB: do not try this one at home as it tends to make a bit of a mess.

#### 15. BASEBALL BATS

Terrribly useful items, especially after a session with an alien star controller. Hint, give a good swing and bring to bear with as much force as possible. NB: these may look a little conspicuous in public so a lead-lined umbrella is a good alternative.

There you are, a beginner time-traveller's guide to getting by in life with the Doctor.

## HINDLE IS OFF HIS CAKE!

LESLIE P. HOLLIS

It's official! Popular Kinda character Hindle has come out of the closet and admitted: "I'm off my ~~favorite~~ cake and I don't care who knows it!" As if to prove his insanity, Hindle proceeded to scream "Flootykingplob!" and "Schnappeschnappesireet!" at full volume.

When asked about the subject, actor Michael Ansara who played Kang the Klingon in the Star Trek episode Day Of The Dove, refused to comment.

We asked Roy Castle (OBE) his opinion of the recent TENTH PLANET: 4 disappointment

Cheers, Roy.



# What would YOU take with you if you were stranded on the Island 'Club Tropicana'?

NAME: PAUL DUMONT

THE FIVE BEST WHO STORIES: 1. INFERNO 2. LEISURE HIVE 3. STATE OF 21  
4. GHOST LIGHT 5. SERB OF DOOM.

FAVE LP/CD: "Slyng Down to Monc Valley" THE POPIN'AYS

LAST LP/CD BOUGHT: "Victory Gardens" JOHN & MARY

LAST LP/CD PLAYED: 1992 THE LOVE ALBUM CARTER USM.

FAVE SANDWICH FILLING: HAM → BOWSTON PICKLE

WORST THING ABOUT WHO: 1934 - 1957 when it would cease to be a DRAMA production and become a CHILDREN'S programme.

BEST FANZINE OF ALL TIME: SPECTROX

MOST FAVOURED ACTOR TO PLAY THE DOCTOR: 1. JORGE RINGHAM  
2. CHRIS HARRIS

WILL DOCTOR WHO EVER RETURN?:

I refer you to the opening of "The Five Doctors"

- but ... nah, I don't think so.

NAME: Gary Leigh

THE FIVE BEST WHO STORIES:

The Daleks  
Tomb of the Cybermen  
Pyramids of Mars  
City of Death  
Caves of Androzani

FAVE LP/CD:

Stars Simply Led

LAST LP/CD BOUGHT:

Erotica: Madonna

LAST LP/CD PLAYED:

~~Madonna Erotica~~ The Singles: Pretenders

FAVE SANDWICH FILLING: Chicken Mesquite (M45 - delicious, and low fat!).

WORST THING ABOUT WHO:

John Nathan-Turner (without a doctor)

BEST FANZINE OF ALL TIME:

DWB (honest!)

MOST FAVOURED ACTOR TO PLAY THE DOCTOR:

Robert Hardy (who should have been Doc 5!).

WILL DOCTOR WHO EVER RETURN?:

In what form? On TV as new eps? Nope

# ABANDON SHIP!

New York, London, Paris, Munich... Pop music survives by re-inventing and in some ways re-digesting itself. This has always been so, since a young, white country and western singer, Elvis Presley, used a coffee-break at Sun studio's to sing *That's Alright Mama*, a song he had been taught by a negro, inventing rock and roll in the process, and certainly since a generation of young English rockers playerised four chords and a Chuck Berry riff, and made a career.

When David Quantick in the NME in 1986, wrote a seminal piece on the rise of do-it-yourself indieism, he called his piece 'Pop Will Eat Itself'. The title not only gave a bunch of Black Country grebo's a fantastic band name, it also served to define the self-references of the latest generation of hungry bastard offspring.

When I talk about music that inspires me, it's usually singles that are prevalent. Many of the most important music statements in the history of modern culture were originally designed to inhabit the grooves of seven inches of black vinyl. And it's this outmoded format that still gives rise to many of those moments that you want to live and die for. Unfortunately singles are an uneconomic way to listen to music and so, the entire Motown 45-collection 1961-1970 and the work of noted singles bands such as The Who, The Rolling Stones, The Animals, The Clash, Buzzcocks, New Order, Killing Joke, The Ruts, The Fall and David Bowie will not find a place in those records that I would choose to take with me into exile.

The LP - not, and never "album" - is the purest listening experience. Between 30 and 45 (or, in the case of the Grateful Dead, 240) minutes of one band, one sound. It makes a mockery of the single by exposing all of the glaring possibilities of judging a band by one song only (how many people love *Say Hello, Wave Goodbye* or *Don't Talk To Me About Love*, but hate everything else by Soft Cell or Altered Images?) The LP survives (as the CD!), because it presents a) value for money, b) a collective experience and c) the presentation of images and content under one banner.

I am not, and never have been a great lover of people who pigeon-hole music. I was born in 1963 and grew up listening to what my two older brothers were listening to. Some of this has stuck with me (the Byrds, the Beatles, the Velvet Underground, Bob Dylan), whilst some of the more outrageous excesses of the era (the Doors, mid-period Pink Floyd, ELP), make me appreciate death-by-hippy. When I was 10 I discovered Giam Rock (I'm not ashamed to admit I wore star jumpers and Oxford bags), when I was 14, I became a punk, had my nose broken at a Clash concert, queued for eight hours for tickets to see Buzzcocks and fell in love for the first time listening to *Pretty Vacant* at the John Boste Youth Club in 1978. Yet I still listened to Motown, Stax and Atlantic, was aware of folk-rock and the new industrial-based sounds of Manchester and Sheffield and, when asked, stated that my favourite band was The Jam, a group that straddled the images and sounds of 60's beat and 70's aggression.

The Jam were a band who relied for their impact upon an implicit anger in the socio-political environment of England. From *Sounds From The Streets* and *I Got By In Time* on their debut LP, through their shaky *This Is The Modern World* period, to the triumphant return to form of *All Mod Cons*, Paul Weller's songs raged against a system that simultaneously patronised him, pigeon-holed him (as an 'angry young man' and 'a spokesman for his generation') and yet refused to allow him a lighter, more introspective side (*Fly* on *All Mod Cons* demonstrates the mellow side of Weller). In 1979, fresh from a trio of outstanding singles (*Down In The Tube Station At Midnight*, *Strange Town*, *The Butterfly Collector*, *When You're Young*) to produce *Setting Sons* - the last great LP of the 1970's.

*Setting Sons* has a continuous narrative. Put simply, the LP contains a number of songs written around a single theme; the effect of the passage of time and of changing attitudes on relationships. This was something that Weller had always been interested in (*I Got By In Time*, written as an 18 year old proves



this), but on songs such as *Thick As Thieves*, *The Eton Rifles* and, especially, *Burning Sky*. The singer honed his world-view from out of the straight-jacket of realpolitik and into another field altogether. Other songs like the caustic *Saturday's Kids* ("Saturday's kids live in council houses/wear v-necked snirts and baggy trousers!"), the harrowing *Private Hell* and the bitter *Little Boy Soldiers* (written three years before the Falklands), are fragments, snapshots of life in 1979. Although Weller later expressed some reservations about *Setting Sons*, the LP's elegance under the microscope remains. In many ways it was the culmination of the first part of the band's career. After their next single, *Going Underground*, made number one, they were never quite the same again.

Weller, when he was preparing the Jam's next LP (*Sound Affects*), was quoted as saying that he had been listening a great deal to the Beaties 1966 masterpiece *Revolver* for inspiration and even cheekily pinched the bass riff from George Harrison's *Taxman for Start*. *Revolver* is a remarkable work.

*Revolver* exists in its own, unique, twilight world of evocative memories and kitsch nostalgia. Like watching an episode of *The War Machines* or *The Avengers*, it instantly transports you, without specific references, to another time, a better time, one in which England were the World Cup holders and everybody had long hair and mini-skirts. The songs, wistful and melancholic ballads like *Eleanor Rigby* and *Here, There And Everywhere* battle for prominence alongside some of the fab's most brilliant pop songs (*And You Bird Can Sing*, *She Said, She Said*, McCartney's brilliant quasi-soul *Got To Get You Into My Life*) and, amid the mood trappings and the period charm, the first signs of Lennon's emerging weirdness with the psychedelic flirtations of *I'm Only Sleeping* and *Tomorrow Never Knows*. And just to prove that shouldn't take it all too seriously, there's *Yellow Submarine* as well.

If the 60's were represented, on the one hand, by the growing-up-in-public development of the English rock scene, and on the other by the west coast freedom and experimentation (fuelled by an overdose of happy sugar), that Monterey and Woodstock stand for, then off at some tangent, and completely divorced from the aesthetics of the age was The Velvet Underground, a group of New York art students who, thanks to their attachment to Andy Warhol's Factory gained a huge notoriety in the late 60's. They never played live outside America and never had a hit record worthy of the name, and yet The Velvet Underground would become the biggest single influence of two entirely different youth movements a decade and a half later. Most who seek inspiration (notably the punks) went straight to the band's debut LP (recorded with German singer Nico), but for the purist it is The Velvet Underground, the band's eponymous third LP, and their first without the talent of John Cale, that is the definitive product.

The Velvet Underground is the point at which 24 year-old Lou Reed, suddenly discovered the beauty of love. For The Velvet Underground is an LP of love-songs the like nobody has ever equaled, or probably ever will. *Pale Blue Eyes*, *Jesus. Beginning To See The Light* and the extraordinary early funk experiments of *What Goes On*, breath life into a tired and cynical genre and highlight the darkness and frustration of bondage to convention, and, significantly, offer no solution. In *I'm Set Free*, Reed states "I'm set free to find a new illusion". The Velvet Underground mocks its imitators with its breath-taking scope and verve. It is 15 years ahead of its time and, recently seems to have finally been accepted as the final text on the first band to wear black. Without The Velvet Underground there would have been no Orange Juice, Aztec Camera or Primal Scream, no Jesus and Mary Chain, no Sex Pistols and, possibly, no David Bowie. Think about it...

When The Jesus and Mary Chain arrived like a gang of rabid dogs on the music scene in 1985 they were described as "The Velvet Underground produced by Phil Spector". They were loud and spotty, wore leather, sang songs about drugs and sex and lied hideously about their age. Their first LP, *Psychocandy*, followed a string of extraordinary singles and, like them, was dominated by feedback, wailing siren guitars, droned vocals and lyrics that beggared belief. In

A Hole states, "How can something crawl within/My rubber-holy baked-bean tin?" It's audacious and, at the same time, laughable. At times it sounds like an advert for dental drills and yet, amid the chaos, there are also tunes, *My Little Underground*, *Never Understand* or the curiously beautiful *Just Like Honey*. If you have a reality-disorder then this is the LP for you. It restores your faith in 'Cash From Chaos' and works, largely on the strength of its hype. Don't buy it, steal it.

The mythical link between the Jesus and Mary Chain and the Sex Pistols is tenuous at best. Whilst the brothers Reid hummed and harred about their anti-everythingness, the Pistols meant it (mannn!) Or at least that's what Malcolm McLaren would have everyone believe. The Sex Pistols were pure theatre. In another age, they would have been rabble rousers, stirring up the crowds and then nipping off into the night before the bother started. McLaren's trick was to use the media to create a climate in which four loud-mouthed youths actually could create outrage. This was the 70's, after all, an era when mainstream television was dominated by sex and violence. With *Anarchy In The UK*, Rotten, Matlock, Jones and Cook, basically ripped-off the New York Dolls a great deal. They did it very well, and the song remains what it always was, a piece of classic rock and roll with a cynical sneer on its face. But what they achieved with one "dirty auld fucker" on live television was much, much more important. They became the first band since the Rolling Stones to actually divide an entire nation.

Never Mind The Bollocks is a great LP, although if you're looking for the definitive Pistols product, you'd be better advised to get *Kiss This* which includes all of the 12 songs from Bollocks plus several excellent B-sides and outtakes and Sid doing what only Sid could on *My Way*. All of the good stuff is there; the "bug-off Sambo" line in *New York*, the great Pistols pop single *Pretty Vacant*, the one-note bass solo on *Submission*, the powerhouse intro to *God Save The Queen*, the sick-fuck antics of *Bodies*. This is remarkable music, made all the more remarkable by the means by which it was presented to the public. The medium is the message. Rite on.

If pop music continues by re-inventing itself, then there is no finer example of this than the eponymous debut by Manchester's The Smiths. The Smiths in 1984 took the musical backdrop of the Byrds and the Velvet Underground, with the dextrous guitar work of Johnny Marr, as a backdrop over which Steven Morrissey could paint his images. In *Still Ill*, Marr's jingle-jangle-morning guitar lines run into words that mean nothing and yet everything; highlighting Morrissey's twin obsessions - outrageous existentialism and wistful nostalgia for the loss of innocence. It's all there in one song; "I decree today that life is simply taking/ and not giving/ England is mine!/ and it owes me a living/ but we cannot cling/ to the old dreams anymore..." Yet *Still Ill* represents only the nearest fraction of the sweeping visions on offer on The Smiths. *The Hand That Rocks The Cradle* is a Byron poem with a Rickenbacker soundtrack, *Reel Around The Fountain* a tortured plea for self-fulfillment, *Suffer Little Children* a chilling and angry evocation of abuse and death and *Hand In Glove*, one of the last great love songs in this age of cosmetic emotions ("Hand in glove/ we can go wherever we please/ and everything depends upon/ how near you stand to me").

Retrospectively, after *Meat Is Murder* and *The Queen Is Dead* had cemented the Smiths standing as articulate, intelligent and, above all, funny, readers of the 80's, doubts began to surface about The Smiths. It was badly produced, they said, the piano trills on *Reel Around The Fountain* and *I Don't Owe You Anything* were needless, the singing was flat and emotionless, Marr was having an off day, there's no bass. And so on. Sometimes, to know genius, you have to have it rammed down your throat until you choke on it. Alright, so the American version includes *This Charming Man* as well. Buy that if it makes you happy.

The first great movement post-punk (aside from the somewhat esoteric Sheffield 'industrial' scene) came via third generation Merseybeat. 1980 was the year and Echo and the Bunnymen, Wah!, Heat, Pink Military and the Teardrop

Explodes were the bands. Interestingly, as with many 'scenes', the Liverpool sound of the era was produced in an atmosphere of apparent incest. It was the same twelve or fifteen names that kept cropping up in bands across the next few years. The Teardrops begat the Wild Swans (producers of the best single of 1982, *Revolutionary Spirit*) who begat the Lotus Eaters, who were blood-related to China Crisis, who had founder members of Wah! and the Bunnymen and the Teardrops, blah, blah, blah...

Julian Cope, Ian McCulloch and Peter Dinklage all began in the same band in 1978, the Crucial Three, who later became A Shock of Madness after Dinklage had left to form Wah! and the Teardrop Explodes when McCulloch zoomed off with Will Sergeant to form Echo and the Bunnymen. This left Julian Cope as the sole inheritor of the Teardrops curious mixture of influences ((The Doors, Pink Floyd, the Monkees, the Clash, Pere Ubu, 13th Floor Elevators, 60's bubblegum-pop, the Jam... etc, etc). The Teardrop explodes (named after a line in a 1971 issue of *Daredevil*, fact fans), recorded four stunning singles for the Liverpool label Zoo before being snapped up by Mercury and recording the almost, perfect pop LP, *Kilimanjaro*.

*Kilimanjaro* is how pop music used to sound. How it ought to sound. Utterly joyous, displaying its influences openly, rebellious, irreverent and just a touch crazy. This is the last LP that features such extraordinary lines as "Mirror hopping days are a course relation, ooh it's very hard to fight" (*Treason* (It's Just A Story) and "When I dream, I dream, I dream about you/oh I go up-bup-bup-bup-bup-biddle-iddle-up-bup-bup-bup, wo-oo-o!" (*When I dream*). It is the sound of a young joy at being alive and being pop stars. Once Alan Gill had left to form Dalek I, the Teardrops had a hit, (*Reward* - available on the latest reissues of *Kilimanjaro*), then fell apart under the strain of the tension between Cope and keyboard player David Balfe. The second LP, 'Wilder' is really the work of a different band, and although it's weird brilliance is still beloved by many, the Teardrop Explodes lost their pop audience almost overnight. This is not to suggest that *Kilimanjaro* does not feature moments of extreme (often bizarre) nonsense; Cope's apeing of Syd Barrett on *Went Crazy*, the sly re-working of psychedelia of *Poppies* ("Comics insult you said/ But comics are all I read"), the sheer over-the-top lunacy of *Sleeping Gas*, Cope's first tentative steps towards his Christ obsessions that remain with the writer to this day, on *Bouncing Babies* and the extraordinary love song *Thief of Baghdad* ("You wandered into my dreams last night/ and you took everything that I need") mark out the LP as something to be treasured.

Having split up during the making of their third LP (posthumously released in 1990 as *Everybody Wants To Shag The Teardrop Explodes* - which proves that, amongst their other achievements, Cope, Balfe and drummer Gary Dwyer also invented Acid House 8 years before S-Express), Cope took his "floored genius" off onto an eccentric, often erratic, but usually plain brilliant solo career of remarkable recordings (Fried, Skellington, Saint Julian and the record duo of double LP's, *Peggy Suicide* and *Jehovakill* - the latter even managing to get the singer sacked by Island records). Cope remains a remarkable talent and the world is a better place for having him around.

The link between Cope and the Monkees might, at first, appear to be slim. Both were mocked and derided in their time, only to emerge years later from the madness with their triumphs intact. Both suffered from a plethora of serious doubters who chose to ignore innovation and cry "Emperor's New Clothes".

The Monkees were the Stone Roses of their era. Over hyped, over paid and over here! Everyone knows that they were a manufactured copy of the Beatles, put together by American television, that as a band there are serious questions over whether they should even classify as musicians since they were, in effect, actors who played musicians. All of this is irrelevant. The Monkees produced in three remarkable years (1966-68) some of the most outstanding pop music of that (or indeed any other) era. The fact that their first two LP's had precious little to do with the band, having been put together by musical 'advisor' Don Kirshner

(later responsible for the, even more suspect, Archies) and songwriters like Boyce and Hart, Goffin and King and Neil Diamond. Serious musicians Peter Tork and Mick Nesmith were, obviously, somewhat pissed off by their relegation to roles as dogs who would be occasionally thrown a scrap of meat that hadn't been gobbled up by the Monkees more obvious (and photogenic) 'stars', Jones and Dolenz, and so they rebelled and, after a heated meeting at which Nesmith punched a hole in the wall of Kirshner's office with the comment "that could have been your head!", the band were given sole control of their recordings. And here is where the story really begins.

The Monkees third and fourth LP's Headquarters (April '67) and Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn, Jones Ltd (August '67) are remarkable, quasi-garage-band thrash LP's, not a million miles removed from the early effects of punk rock ten years later. Pisces, especially, offers, housed within it's Revolver influenced cover, much that is remarkable. The hit single *Pleasant Valley Sunday* (a remarkably cheerless Goffin and King song about conformity) should have been told the listener what to expect from the LP but this meanly scratches the surface of the wit and punning social comment on songs like Nesmith's *Salesman*, *The Door into Summer*, the weirdly personal *Don't Call On Me* which mixed with the perfect pop of *She Hangs Out*, *What Am I Doin' Hanging Round* and Harry Neilson's *Cuddly Toy*. But it is for it's extraordinary climax, *Star Collector* that Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn, Jones Ltd will be most remembered. A Goffin and King song about groupies that was a decade ahead of its time and didn't, apparently, wish to hide its misanthropy, *Star Collector* is, quite apart from lyrically shocking ("She's a star collector/ how can I love her?/ when I just don't respect 'er!"), the song was one of the first to use the moog synthesizer (Mike Dolenz owned the third moog ever made). The effects and trickery that producer Chip Douglas had deliberately kept off Headquarters bursts forth here in a flowering of studio technique that puts Sgt. Pepper's to shame. This is remarkable (REMARKABLE) stuff.

After this madness, it's only a short step to the Bob Raefelson/Jack Nicholson collaboration on Head and the resulting spiral into litergy and (in Tork's case) bankruptcy. That's rock and roll for ya!

The great live LP is something that bands have tried for years to perfect. The Rolling Stones' *Get Yer Ya Ya's Out* is satanically good in places but is ruined by a suspicion that some of the guitars have been overdubbed in the studio, other aibatos-like gigantic messes of live presentation like Zeppelin's *Song Remains The Same*, remind us of 70's excess and should be avoided like the plague. I remember once listening to Queen's *Live Killers*. For all of the horrible pompous pretention of the recording the band remain, pointlessly, tuneful. There's even a drum solo. If I'd been there I'd have thrown things at them.

The 'great' live LP is rare and, to date that has only been one that has eclipsed a bands studio output. This is *One Man Clapping* by James, recorded at the Moles Club in Bath in front of an audience of around 600. This is the perfect (some would say only) way to capture a band live and especially this band. There is something about the electricity between James and their audience that is a little difficult to describe to the uninitiated. To cut a long story very short, Manchester's James gained a small, but vocal cult following during this mid 80's with their series of remarkable singles on Factory (*What's The World, Hymn From A Village*) and Sire (*Chain Mail, What For?*). Their first LP, *Stutter* gained critical acclaim although today it sounds a mite hurried and frustrating as though the band knew what they wanted to do but couldn't quite summon up the energy or the bottle to try. After a second LP, *Strip Mine*, was held up for almost a year by Sire's reluctance to release it, the band found themselves living on thirty quid a week, unable to tour by Sire's financial restrictions (placed, allegedly, because the company that had signed the Ramones and the Undertones, had poured all their money into Madonna's *True Blue* tour and couldn't afford anything else). Having managed to extract themselves from Sire, James staged



what was, at the time, designed as a farewell concert at Moles with drummer Gavan Wheilan leaving because, in his own words 'I'd be better off on the dole'. Hence One Man Clapping, an LP full of definitive versions of the bands' best material (*Chain Mail, Sandman, Why So Close, Johnny Yen, Scarecrow, Are You Ready?*) together with three new songs. *Whoops* took the bands' manic energy to an extraordinary level, as did the set closer *Stutter*, a heavy metal nightmare of a song in which bassist Jim Glennine and guitarist Larry Gott, basically race to see who's going to get finished first.

If Tim Booth's intention had been, as stated to finish like *The Singing Detective* and go whistling off into the distance then *Stutter* is the perfect vehicle. However it was the second-to-last song of the set, *Burned* which caused the most attention.

*Burned* is a (not even thinly veiled) attack on Sire - as bitter and vicious as any song ever written by anyone about anything: "If you don't look cool/ they won't look at you" sang Booth on the opening line, from here onwards, it's like a decent into hell. "As fake as the wrapping, the gift/ is a throwaway stone/ all we want is an empty throne/ I feel I've been burned" and "my belief is all shaken/ I'm lost in grief at the state I'm in/ seen too much goodness, taken up by moneymen/ if God exists he should make us King" and "what must we do to make money?/ Sell our dreams to some phrases?/ Believe that all everyone wants is power and fame?/ If you won't get screwed don't go on the game..."

There are those who were at Moles that night who cried openly. It was the end of an era but, just as is often the case, the story didn't end there. One Man Clapping was designed to make James some money to pay off some of their debts but, typically, Sire claimed three quarters of the royalties in lieu of monies owed to the company from the bands' days with them. James carried on, found a new home at Fontana and suddenly with the *Gold Mother* LP and an expanded line-up, found themselves actually selling records. *How Was It For You?* and *Come Home* were small hits, the anthemic *Sit Down* a vast hit and, suddenly they were pop stars. Now it has become unfashionable to like them since the recent LP *Seven* showed a disturbing trend towards stadium rock. Me, I will love them until the day I die. Great bands don't become bad bands overnight.

The development of R.E.M.'s following through ten years of superb LP's and singles is, like James, the tale of triumph over adversity. Coming from the unfashionable deep south of the states, initially pigeon-holed as leaders of some mythical 'stateside invasion' of U.S. guitar bands, raised on a diet of 60's beat and 70's Brit-punk (whose number also included Green On Red, Wall Of Voodoo and the Long Ryders), Stipe, Buck, Berry and Mills were in reality the most original and most intelligent band of their time.

The early stuff, *Chronic Town* (*Carnival of Sorts* especially), *Murmer* and *Reckoning* display a band whose discovery of the Rickenbecker sound is tangible and whose joy in confusing their audience with semi-inaudible vocals and murmured (ha!) lyrics spoke volumes for where their priorities lay. They had a shaky spell mid-80's when they seemed in danger of turning into an AMERICAN ROCK BAND (and all of the shite that entails - see James above), but by 1989's *Green* they had rediscovered their weirdness and, in the process, found themselves a huge (and I do mean HUGE) audience who were looking for something vaguely 'alternative' or 'indie' (and all of the shite that that entails). A similar case could be given for the reason why the Smiths, five years after their demise are suddenly the biggest selling English band in America.

In 1991 R.E.M. released *Out Of Time*, their most coherent, most consciously 'poppy' LP to date. Staggeringly, given the bands' acknowledgement of their audience's pivotal role in their legend, the band chose not to tour with the LP and, instead, spent the year doing low-key acoustic gigs and secret appearances, dragging back some mystique from the pop-star glam that their sudden, new-found fame had created for them.

*Out Of Time* is close to being the greatest LP ever realised by anyone. Certainly it is an audacious, lyrically breath-taking, stylistically daring LP of the

90's. The rumour that R.E.M. had done a dance track (cue "We've like, always had this dance element to our music..."), brought groans from many sections of their audience in 1990, but *Radio Song*, with input from rapper KRS-1, became a hymn of dissatisfaction that, in some ways, predicted the LA riots. In the same way that songs about radio conformity from Elvis Costello's *Radio*, *Radio* to the Smiths' *Panic* have used the idea that radio is in control of people's lives, here Stipe takes the opposite route. Radio is out of control, dive-bombing helplessly without any apparent motivation. There is no way out of the situation, either ("What are you saying/ what are you playing/ day-after-day-after-day-after-day in/ all our lives we grow up prisoners/ all our lives radio listeners...")

*Losing My Religion* has many champions as the song of the 90's; a howl of fear from the singer that he is in danger of following the listeners of *Radio Song* into the abyss if, as has been suggested, the song is about Mark Chapman, then this makes the decent into personal madness and the solutionless end to the song even more poignant ("That's me in the corner/ that's me in the spotlight/ losing my religion/ trying to keep up with you"). After this, and the anguish of *Low* (one of R.E.M.'s most important and understated songs) it comes as a positive relief when the next three songs, all slight and yet in their own way perfect pop deliver the listener with the feeling that life can be worth living (*Near Wild Heaven* into *Endgame* into the ludicrously jangly *Shiny Happy People*). Then it starts to get morbid again, through *Texarkana* and the downright weird *Country Feedback*, songs which seem to wish to say "NO" to life but, again, the effect is destroyed by the closing song, *Me In Honey*, a thing of poetry and beauty.

R.E.M. will do very well to match *Out Of Time* and, despite the praise heaped upon the recent follow-up *Automatic For The People*, the LP's somewhat morose nature isn't counterbalanced in the way that *Out Of Time* is.

If *Out Of Time* had a companion-piece when released it was the eponymous debut LP by Liverpool's the La's. The La's four years in the making and, upon release, disowned by its creator singer/guitarist Lee Mayers is, nevertheless, the great lost Beaties LP - recorded somewhere between *Help* and *Rubber Soul*, with all of the cynicism one could imagine and more besides.

The band had already scored notable hits with *Timeless Melody* and the classic *There She Goes* when they took their live set into the studio. The La's sounds like it is, raw, brutal, funny, witty, sexy, dangerous. From the opening bars of the rocking *Son of a Gun* ("Run, rabbit run/ run into the sun/ kick your heels in the killing fields/ run rabbit run/ you son of a gun") to the closing chimes of the 8 minute epic *Through The Looking Glass*, The La's, like another of its contemporaries The Stone Roses (another LP with an 8 minute closer!), revels in the discovery of the hurt of love. The punning social comment of *Doledrum*, the cynical wordplay of *Way Out*, and the simple rock and roll love song *Feelin'*, are just three of the 12 perfect slabs of Merseybeat, 90's style. The La's, the LP to fall in love to that summer.

So far, most of the material that I'd take with me has been white pop/rock played by young white men on electric guitars. That's to be expected, firstly because dance music works at its best a) in the club and b) on a 7 inch single - and since I'm able to take neither, I've had to avoid butt-shakin' sounds. However, since I'm planning on taking a multi-deck stereo with me that will allow me to use tapes, I intend to cheat and slip into my life-jacket pocket that oh-so important c120 tape featuring selected Temptations, Marvin Gaye, James Brown Otis Redding and other gems from the Motown back catalogue on one side and twenty of my favourite disco, funk, house and rave singles mixed into a continuous 60 minute loop on the other. ("I will attack/ an' you don't want that/ DUR du-du-DUR...")

Actually, since I'm taking something to dance to, I'd better include The Shamen's *In Gorbachev We Trust*, in which Colin and Wm, after they'd given up wanting to be Pink Floyd and before Will went and died (in a bizarre and very Spinal tap 'drowning accident') and Colin turned himself into a comic-strip parody of himself ("What-ho Mister Shamen indeed), managed to produce their perfect

synthesis of style and content.

*Synergy* is a song to die for. An absolute gem of a song, mixing drug-speak with Star Trek samples and thrash guitar. Everybody in the western world should be made to listen to this song at least once a day (possibly twice). After that, even the funky-wibbling of *Raspberry Inundibulum*, *Jesus Loves Amerika* ("how can we be devil worshippers if we don't believe in God?" asked Will Sin sensibly after MP Geoffrey Lickens tried to get this single band), and *Transcendental* sound tame. Also, In Gorbachev We Trust includes a new twist on that old standby, the drug song, *Adam Strange*.

And so we come to the finale: One last LP to take. Well, since I'm taking my favourite LP's of 'ali time' and since 'all time' is 'anytime' and there being no time like the present, there is nothing that excites, amuses or pleases me more than Denim.

For those who don't know (and I admit this is probably most of you), Denim are the bastard offspring of the 70's, formed by Lawrence Felt with various ex-members of the Glitter Band. Denim sing songs about the 70's in a way you've never heard before. Back in Denim is a seriously funny record. I mean, any band who can have the nerve to record *Theme From Robin's Nest* as a B-side have got to be worth a laugh, right? The opening song, *Back in Denim* informs us that "Denim put the soul in your rock and roll", which is the greatest piece of self deification since *Hey Bo Diddley*. In *Middie of the Road*, Lawrence produces a literny of all of the music he hates before telling the listener that, if they are looking for him, he'll be found 'in the middle of the road'. There is better to come as the LP progresses through it's centre piece, *The Osmonds*. *The Osmonds* is the most important song ever written about the 70's, whether tongue in cheek or completely serious. *The Osmonds* tells it how it is, or rather was. "In the 70's, there was long hair/ there were left-over hippies everywhere/ and I should know cos I was there/ men looked like Jesus in crushed velvet flairs/ In the 70's, there were chopper bikes/ oxford bags and kung-fu fights". The song name-checks every facet of the era, from *Love Thy Neighbour* to *Derby County* and everything else inbetween, all with the inevitable chorus, "in the 70's there were Osmonds/ there were lots Osmonds/ lots of little Osmonds everywhere".

*American Rock* is the best Lou Reed song that Lou Reed never wrote, concerning two guys called Jake and Bill and a girl called Jane. It's affectionate and witty and also goddamn rockin'. Back in Denim ends with Lawrence's most personal song, *I'm against the Eighties* in which the singer tells us why he's hated the last ten years so much. "I'm against the 80's and bands that couldn't play/ I'm against the 80's and singers with nothing to say/ I formed myself a band and we toured around the land/ I took a look around but there was nothing going down/ in the 80's..."

It's interesting that from the nostalgic distance of two decades away, even the Osmonds can look pretty groovy. Wow, 70's term, kids...

*Let all the children boogie.*

## NEON HELL

KEITH TOPPING

It's easy to get caught up in the usual web which Ridley Scott's work almost inevitably weaves in front of our eyes. It's an alluring proposition; how can we fail to be seduced by such looks. His films have always had the ick, from *Alien's* mechanical oppression, through to the recent opulent landscapes of *Thelma and Louise* and 1492's surfeit of billowing flags n' fog. The big debate has always been whether this is all a portentous smokescreen fooling us into thinking that a mediocre film is actually a great one. Fitting, perhaps for a director who cut his teeth in adverts, to try to dazzle rather than inform. Or so they say.

*Blade Runner* is generally singled out as that strange beast; a cult film. Far

from being a big hit on its release over a decade ago, it's reputation has grown, lovingly nurtured by the film buffs who will dismiss nearly all sci-fi unless it's slow and moody. BR (now there's an unfortunate couple of initials) takes the scenic route and then some. No wonder the new director's cut is snorter and omits some of the major faults of the original - the silly voiceover which sounds unconvincing is apparently gone as is the upbeat ending and the thing has been tapered somewhat. If the distributors got their act together I could confirm all this with much more certainty.

Taken as a story, BR is slim. Much of the source book from which it's taken is ditched leaving the basis of what most directors would fashion into a Total Recall style violence fest. Scott however, while never flinching from upfront blood and guts is happier to frame it in a wider context. At times it's as if he's more interested in the world he's creating than in the story itself and the attention to detail is relentless yet also rewarding. Even so, the later Black Rain set in contemporary Japan, was so similar that it may go some way towards the critics' acceptance of this film. Familiar product logos abound (ironically several have gone out of business since) as if Scott is paying homage to his advertising roots. This concentrated approach works wonders on old empty hotels, poky rooms full of (his trademark) diffused light and rainswept maudlin streets packed with cross-cultural flotsam, yet it fails to ignite anything deeper.

The script is, to be honest, very poor. Deckard is little more than an amalgam of some Philip Marlowe detective (even down to long coat) and both in voiceover and conversation is blank and lifeless. Harrison Ford's got a good line in sardonic one-liners but often looks bewildered by what he's handed here. Rutger Hauer fares far better, relying on a taut chemistry to convey moods and it's such a rivetting presence that you forget how cliched his lines are; Darryl Hannah, too, revels in expression and poise and, all round, is the best performer.

Sean Yong on the other hand, may well be portraying a replicant but that's scant excuse for her wooden and uninvolved turn here. Aside from this, Deckard makes too many guesses and that machine where he continually enlarge the photo is obviously purchased from Plot Device Ltd, it was at this point that I wondered if a gore fest might not have been a better idea. In fact, the reason why Deckard bothers to come out of retirement is barely credible and sloppily handled. There are altogether too many coincidences throughout the film.

Conceptually, Philip K. Dick's electric animals are only touched upon and the motivations of the Tyrell corporation are given little exposition. Despite this, it's the sequences with Tyrell which prove the best realised. Alongside the opening interrogation and the tense confrontation at the climax. When the action does come it is well done; the sheer overcrowded near squalor of Earth comes over in the chase with the snake dancing replicant and the Batty/Deckland conflict is pacy and exciting.

Ultimately though what remains most is Scott's vision of our future. It's easy to scoff now, but so much has been influenced by his style here and his grim, dark view of what's to come plays on our fears of natural or man-made catastrophe. And lets not forget, nobody had heard of the ozone layer in 1982. BR's commotion filled and unsettling technoscape where everything seems littered or dropped rather than placed or built is a far cry from the warm white-lit metallic corridors that filmic sci-fi so often presents. It's this neon hell which is the real achievement of this picture.

JOHN CONNORS