

THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

# VORTEX



# LOST WARRIORS

**THE NINTH DOCTOR  
ENCOUNTERS A  
FAMILIAR FACE...**

**ALSO INSIDE**

## **UNIT: NEMESIS**

Dealing with the odd, the unexplained.  
Anything on Earth... or even beyond...



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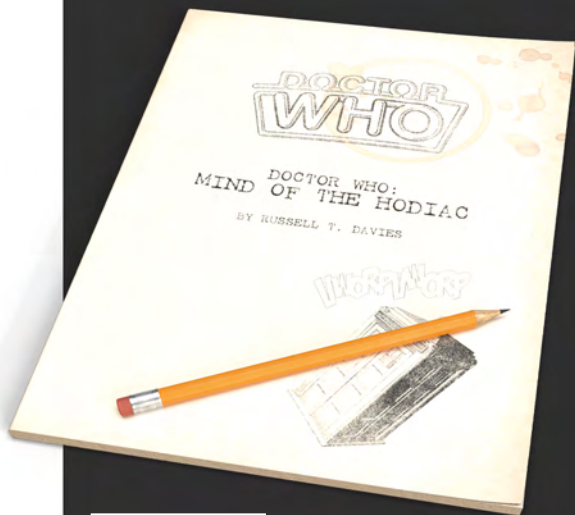


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DOCTOR WHO

# MIND OF THE HODIAC

**FOR MANY** years we thought that the **New Adventure Damaged Goods** was the first **Doctor Who** story written by former showrunner

Russell T Davies (adapted for audio by Big Finish in 2015). However, we now know that his first **Doctor Who** adventure was actually written almost a decade earlier for the Sixth Doctor and Mel.

Russell came across *Mind of the Hodiac* in its original typewritten 1986 script some 35 years later, and now it has been adapted for audio with a second episode written by Scott Handcock following Russell's detailed original notes.

*In the depths of space, the mysterious Hodiac is manipulating the Galactic Stock Exchange to raise money. His aim? To hire mercenaries for a deadly quest across the stars. Meanwhile, on Earth, an ordinary British family is*

*plagued by a series of psychic events. The one thing connecting these events is a magnificent patchwork coat – which just so happens to belong to the Doctor!*

Colin Baker told *Vortex*: "No one could deny that Russell is a master storyteller and even in his embryonic writing form he has summoned from the imaginative ether a firecracker of a yarn. What is extraordinary is that you can see the future writer of **The Second Coming**, **Casanova** and **Cucumber** flexing his young creativity to examine what happens when the ordinary and the everyday suddenly come face to face with the extraordinary and the far from everyday." **VORTEX**

## DOCTOR WHO

MIND OF THE HODIAC

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## EDITORIAL

**I** **AT SCHOOL** I loved English (which is kind of handy considering that my career took me into journalism!). And of all the texts we examined, **Macbeth** was the one which really grabbed me with its ideas of vaulting ambition and how dreaming big may not always work out for the best if you take the shortcut to glory. So you can imagine how excited I was when I learned that in the next Ninth Doctor box set we would hear the Doctor encountering Lady Macbeth. And it being set in Scotland also made an extra appeal to me!

Talking of Scotland, the Doctor isn't the only Time Lord visiting soon as the Eleven is back and on his way to terrorise Kate Stewart, Osgood and the team as UNIT returns in **UNIT: Nemesis** – *Between Two Worlds*. You can expect to experience my homeland in some fascinating locations – some more familiar than others – with Andrew Smith taking over as script editor.

During my school years, I was also drawn into a fascinating TV show called **Dark Season** written by a young man by the name of Russell T Davies. It was absolutely gripping and showed so much promise. I remember thinking at the time, this guy should be writing for **Doctor Who**. I wonder what happened to him? Answers on a postcard...

Last and most definitely not least, this month we have another Big Finish **In Conversation** release, *I, Jacobi*, featuring Scott Handcock's chat with Sir Derek Jacobi. Having always loved Derek's acting work I can't wait to hear more about the life of this Knight of the Realm...

What a busy Autumn it's going to be. Better set aside a good few hours for listening then... **VORTEX**

*Kerry*



The new Ninth Doctor adventures sees the Doctor encounter a familiar face...

# SOME WERE ONCE WARRIORS

**THE NINTH** Doctor continues his travels as the TARDIS materialises for his third volume of adventures from Big Finish in **The Ninth Doctor Adventures: Lost Warriors**. Previously

Christopher Eccleston's Doctor has alluded to previous adventures with brief mentions of Sontarans or of staying in one place for a while (*Stranded*), but now he finally meets an old foe in the Cybermen.

And that's not the only creature he encounters in this trio of tales. Some were once warriors and now hide away or have been hidden from the universe, a bit like the Doctor himself...

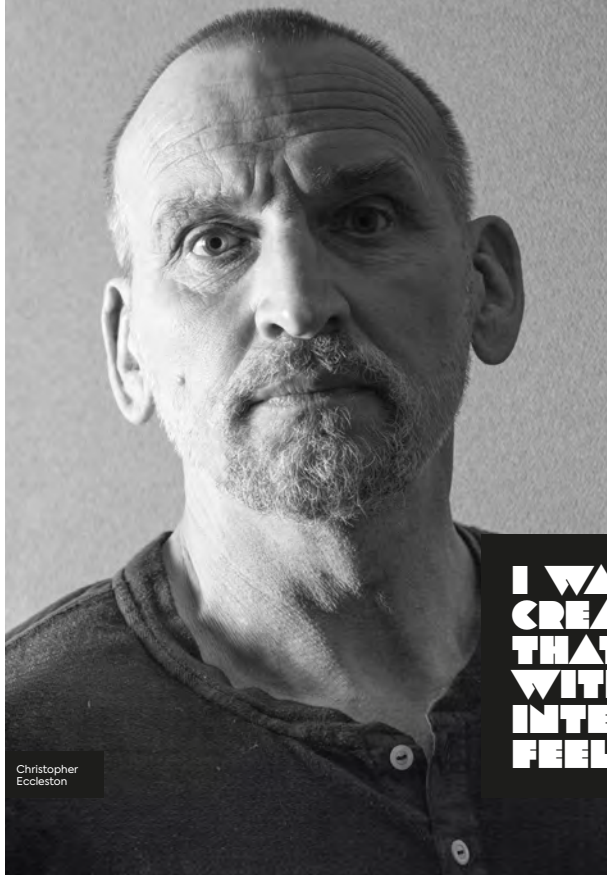
Producer David Richardson reveals: "We made a conscious decision to avoid too much continuity or returning characters in the first half of our Ninth Doctor run, aiming instead to find our own tone with these audio adventures.

"It was inevitable, however, that old friends and enemies would eventually turn up – and the first taste of that happens in the third adventure of this set as the Ninth Doctor encounters the Cybermen.

"It's a taste of things to come – as well as being exciting and scary – in another really moving script from John Dorney. Chris remarked on how much he loved performing these scenes."

Script editor Matt Fitton adds: "In each of these stories we have soldiers, people who are scarred by their experience of war like the Ninth Doctor himself. They are hiding away or escaping something or just missing from the universe. It's an interesting theme to explore especially given what the Doctor has been through as well."

**THE FIRST** adventure of the set is *The Hunting Season* by James Kettle. *Duberry Hall is under siege as aliens maraud through the estate. It's a frightful business, and as Lord Hawthorn battles the Fleshkin, the Doctor finds friends below*

Christopher  
Eccleston

**I WANTED TO  
CREATE SOMETHING  
THAT WOULD CHIME  
WITH CHRIS'S OWN  
INTERESTS AND  
FEELINGS.** JAMES KETTLE

stairs. Can he convince the household to unite to defend itself?

Matt explains: "This is the Ninth Doctor taking on **Upstairs, Downstairs** with added aliens! It's great to have the Ninth Doctor arriving in quite a classic **Doctor Who** environment, a posh country house with the toffs and the servants, as he has a completely different dynamic with that kind of household than other Doctors in the past. And then we have some alien hunters thrown into the mix terrorising the grounds!"

Writer James tells *Vortex*: "When I got the original email (headlined 'Top Secret' or something like that!) I immediately felt two things. Firstly, what a great opportunity it was to write something for an actor like Chris, someone I've admired since **Cracker**, who makes wonderful performance choices and wrings every bit of potential out of the

work he's given. And secondly, how brilliant to be able to revisit one of the best years of my **Doctor Who** watching life. It's easy to get blasé now that we're 16 years into the new series but at the time when the show came back there was no expectation that it would succeed either commercially or creatively.

"**Doctor Who** had been widely regarded, rightly or wrongly, as a bit of a joke for decades. We now take for granted what Russell T Davies and Chris did to revive the show but it remains a spectacular achievement. And that first season of new **Who** is so good – the storytelling is phenomenal. There's something in every episode that'll make you cry. And it made **Doctor Who** matter again, not just to fans but to everyone. What a treat to make yourself vicariously part of that story."

James particularly enjoyed finding this Doctor's voice: "I'm a **Doctor Who** fanboy but a Russell fanboy too. Russell's one of the very best writers on the show with a seamless blend of comedy and stirring emotion. I was a bit poleaxed when people in the industry were saying of **It's a Sin** that it reminded them how good he was. I wondered, 'Why had you ever stopped thinking that?'"

"The character of the Ninth Doctor is a joint creation of Chris's performance and Russell's writing. And that's what I had in my head the whole time I was drafting the script. In the same way that when I write for comedians I imagine them telling the jokes, I'm imagining Chris delivering the lines – sometimes

even muttering them out loud. I can't do the accent justice though!"

"I wanted to create something that would chime with Chris's own interests and feelings, and I know that he's very driven by egalitarianism and a dislike of snobbery and class-bound attitudes as I am myself. My wife is a big fan of **Downton Abbey** and this story's in part a reaction to having had it inflicted on me for so many years! I wanted to write a more cynical take on that sort of world with violent butlers and cruel aristocrats, and aliens turning up to make a mess of the expensive carpets. Oh, and it's also a Western. I hope I haven't made it sound too worthy. There are also jokes and sadism so something for the whole family...!"

**THE CURSE** of *Lady Macbeth* by Lizzie Hopley is the second adventure of the set. *The TARDIS is drawn to Scotland again – to the troubled kingdom of Moray, and its Queen Gruach. Or, as the Doctor knows her better, Lady Macbeth.* Matt



says: "I suggested Lady Macbeth to Lizzie. She had already written something about her in the past and had done lots of research so she jumped at it.

"When I was thinking of ideas for Chris, from reading his autobiography it was clear how interested he was in the character of Macbeth and the play. It gives him a strong female character to bounce off as well and lets us discover things about the real historical figure of Lady Macbeth that may surprise a few people."

Lizzie was delighted to be part of the Ninth Doctor team. She told *Vortex*: "It was a massive honour, I know how thrilled the Big Finish family are that Chris said yes. Chris wanted to be involved in the choice of stories so when I was asked to pitch ideas I thought very carefully about the type of actor he is, how he likes to work and what might excite him personally.

"I saw Chris play Macbeth in Stratford where he was multi-layered in his interpretation and worked diligently to create the character. I was just hoping the experience had been a good one and he might want to do more of and not put it



## WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE IF THEY HAD A CYBERMAN INSTEAD OF THE ROBOT?

JOHN DORNEY

behind him! It was also a genuine opportunity for me to explore the Macbeth story further."

Lizzie continues: "I attended a lecture in Edinburgh on the real historical Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and I wanted to approach it from that angle giving Chris a different view of the story. I trusted it would peak his interest in the same way as it did mine and I was thrilled when he approved the storyline and apparently loved the script.

"Lady Macbeth is usually interpreted as an evil, manipulating villain. Shakespeare certainly manipulated history for his storytelling and brilliantly so, but I wanted to explore the myth of where that 'evil' came from. Scotland has a

wealth of spooky folklore so there's bags of that in the script as well.

"It was an enormous pleasure to plan the first encounter of the Doctor and Macbeth himself. Two legends meeting and exploring their attitude to fighting. It's one of the most fun scenes I've written for Big Finish ever!"

**THE FINAL** adventure moves from 1606 to more than 300 years later in *Monsters in Metropolis* by John Dorney. *Berlin, 1927. The making of a science fiction legend. But death stalks the film set and history is not what the Doctor expects it to be. And this new 'Machine Man' is a more terrifying vision of humanity's future than Fritz Lang had in mind...*

Matt says: "I think it was always going to happen that the Ninth Doctor would meet the Cybermen at some point, especially after that little moment in the television episode *Dalek* when he sees the Cyberhead and refers to it as an 'old friend'.

"After suggesting the idea of the story to John, he then came up with the setting of the making of *Metropolis* in 1920s Berlin. But history is altered slightly so instead of the Machine Man on screen there's a Cyberman in its place."

John says: "The moment I was asked to come up with an idea I went for a jog in my local park listening to music and letting my brain tick over. I was thinking about celebrity historicals and finding something that would fit into the Russell T Davies style – the interesting people who would work for a celebrity historical. I knew nothing about Fritz Lang and his life, and at that point I hadn't seen *Metropolis*, although I have seen one of his later films, *M*.

"I do a podcast with some friends where we watch the films that have won awards, and for the year

HE HAD SUCH ENERGY, ENTHUSIASM AND INVENTIVE BRILLIANCE THEN – AND HE'S STILL GOT IT NOW.

BARNABY EDWARDS



1927 we watched **Metropolis**. So I formed an image of **Metropolis**, what would it be like if they had a Cyberman instead of the robot? There wasn't a plan to do Cybermen but I suggested it and everybody was happy to go with it.

"I had to do a lot of research even though I had been watching films from that period. I got the blu-ray and watched the film again with a more complete version of the cut. I listened to the commentaries and watched **M** again, read the BFI Classics book on it – all of which helped. There are a couple of fascinating details about the making of **Metropolis** in a biography of Lang which I decided to use as plot points. There's more in the script which is solidly accurate than you might expect!"



Christopher Eccleston

#### DIRECTOR BARNABY

Edwards, who worked with Chris on the TV series (Barney was a Dalek) adds: "It was a huge treat to be reunited with Chris 16 years after we last worked together on **Doctor Who**. He had such energy, enthusiasm and inventive brilliance then – and he's still got it now.


"Each adventure works as an entirely separate entity with great plots, fun characters and surprising villains but together they present a fascinating dialogue on how conflict can change a person. And that's especially true of the Doctor himself. I love all three of these scripts. They're so varied and so perfect for the Ninth Doctor." **VORTEX**

### THE NINTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **LOST WARRIORS**




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## THE DOCTOR'S DAUGHTER IS BACK... AND IN AS MUCH TROUBLE AS EVER!

**JENNY THE** Doctor's daughter is ready to save planets, fight monsters and save the day once again... but maybe not in the same manner as her father!

Forget diplomacy and patience when there's fun to be had as Jenny, played by Georgia Tennant, and sidekick Noah – the calming influence played by Sean Biggerstaff – are back for a second box set of thrilling adventures in **Jenny The Doctor's Daughter** – *Still Running*.

Producer Emma Haigh says: "It's great to have Jenny and Noah back and I've loved getting to know them, their world and their adventures. This box set takes us on a great

roller-coaster of a ride where we learn a little more about our heroes' histories and those of their enemies. Saddle up for some fun!"

Script editor Matt Fitton explains more: "This range has a different tone from a lot of the things Big Finish produces – it's almost overtly comedic. Georgia, who is also associate producer, wanted these releases to be enjoyed by everyone. So you don't need to be steeped in **Doctor Who** lore to understand it. A key note for the range was to make it fun.

"When we started planning this series we looked at having the same people writing it as we had for the first box set but as time moved on I

asked Lisa McMullin to take over on the episode I was going to do, and then I helped Christian Brassington out with his Cyberman episode.

"The writers all have a good handle on Jenny and Noah. Our heroes are hopping around space and time avoiding the Colt 5000 bounty hunter that's on their trail."

**WE HEAD** *Inside the Maldovarium* by Adrian Poynton for the series two opener. Adrian concluded the box set of series one and tells

Vortex: "Writing an opening episode always comes with extra pressure, especially on a second series, so I had the weight of that! But it also came with the reward of getting to follow directly from my last episode and therefore I was able to make a few decisions about where





Georgia  
Tennant

to each other and to events around them. So I really relished pushing Jenny and Noah's relationship in a new direction this time around, supported by characters and a story that I think people will like."

How did Christian find writing for the Cybermen? Christian tells *Vortex*: "There's something so grimly fascinating about the relentlessness of the Cybermen so, without giving too much away, this was a great opportunity to distil that terrifying single-mindedness down to a concentrated form. It sounds like I'm talking about cooking here! 'Cooking with Cybermen', could that be a new reality TV show?"

"I hope the listeners enjoy hearing this adventure as much as I enjoy writing it. The themes

## 'COOKING WITH CYBERMEN', COULD THAT BE A NEW REALITY TV SHOW?

CHRISTIAN BRASSINGTON

Jenny and Noah are now. Things like, are we joining them seconds after the end of *Zero Space* or is it months later and they've had lots of (as yet) unseen adventures in-between? I got to make those choices for myself which was great. And in the process of asking that question I sort of got to answer it by using a running joke I'd set up previously... so that was fun.

"When Matt Fitton asked me to write another episode for this range he only said three words to me: 'Jenny' and 'Dorium Maldovar'. And I was instantly giddy to see what would happen when I put them in a room together! I'm very proud of what happened. So, let me tell you this... Jenny and Noah arrive at the Maldovarium looking for parts on the night of a very special auction hosted by Dorium. An auction that is way more than meets the eye."

**ALTERED STATUS** by Christian Brassington and Matt Fitton sees Jenny encounter an old foe of the Doctor. Christian reveals: "It was a real treat getting together with the other writers to talk through our ideas for a second series of **Jenny**...and then of course COVID-19 happened and everything was delayed. I haven't seen any of the other writers in person for such a long time now but the process of writing is pretty much a solo enterprise anyway, sat down in front of a screen typing away.

"The part of writing for Big Finish I most enjoy is creating new, fantastical worlds and characters then trying to make those characters as real and relatable as possible, despite how extraordinary their experiences might be. I feel like I know who Jenny and Noah are; how they speak and how they react

invoked are pretty timeless and pertinent (I think!) but they also have a few laughs along the way."

**THERE'S PLENTY** more fun to be had as Jenny and Noah head to the Wild West in *Calamity Jenny* by John Dorney. He reveals: "I really enjoyed writing for the first run of **Jenny** so the chance to come back in and write more with pretty much the same gang – plus Lisa – was a great delight.

"Jenny's a little bit greener than the Doctor but she's still resourceful and clever in her own way, and the relationship between her and Noah is a great deal of fun.

"We had the initial meeting a long time ago and I liked the idea of Jenny on a horse chasing down a train, Western-style – I think Matt suggested the title *Calamity Jenny*. Once I'd got that, that was the root. And that's not a spoiler, it's the opening scene!

l-r: Sean Biggerstaff and Georgia Tennant

## THE CENTRAL THRUST OF IT IS A LITTLE ON THE ABSURD SIDE.

JOHN DORNEY

"I've created a slightly unreliable narrator, to give it that old world western tale feel, and I thought it was quite funny having the narrator not knowing as much of the story as the audience does as he frames it within his understanding while we're aware of more than he is.

"I also wanted to give Georgia a dual role so she's both Jenny and her doppelgänger, Calamity. It's probably got a lighter tone than some of the other stories. I wouldn't say it's a comedy per se but the central thrust of it is a little on the absurd side. It felt like an entertaining place to throw her!"

**JENNY AND** Noah's bid to escape the Colt 5000 concludes in *Her Own Worst Enemy* by Lisa McMullin. Lisa enthuses: "I love Jenny! She's pretty much the Doctor but less in control and less honed in terms of her time

piloting skills. She's got the cleverness, ingenuity, bravery and heart of the Doctor but can't quite focus her talents as well. But she could inadvertently implode the universe just through sheer enthusiasm.

"I also love her dynamic with Noah. He's the calming one, the one who worries about things, while Jenny's saying, 'Oh, it will be fine...'. Noah's the one who will pick the pieces up afterwards and try to steer her in the right direction – or at least in a less madcap way!

"*Her Own Worst Enemy* is pretty much *It's a Wonderful Life* but with cyborgs. Jenny and Noah are being pursued by a cyborg and they reckon that if they jump back along its timeline to find out what made it a nasty killer in the first place, they might be able to stop it. "They meet a woman called Geraldine who thinks her life has


been a failure and exists in a society where, if your life is not productive, bad things happen. Jenny and Noah take her on a trip to prove her life has been worthwhile..." **VORTEX**

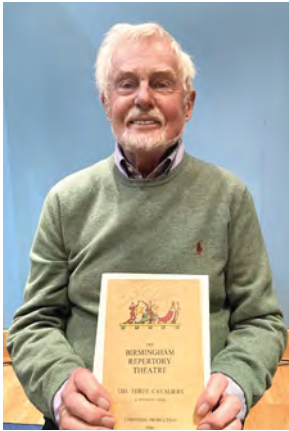
### JENNY THE DOCTOR'S DAUGHTER



STILL RUNNING

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IN CONVERSATION

# A MASTER OF HIS CRAFT

The next Big Finish In Conversation release features British acting royalty, Sir Derek Jacobi...

**TOM BAKER**, Colin Baker, Jacqueline Pearce, Christopher Benjamin, Trevor Baxter, Alexander Vlahos and Carolyn Seymour have more than one thing in common. As well as being fantastic actors they've also featured in the Big Finish In Conversation range. And joining them this November is another great, Sir Derek Jacobi.

Scott Handcock, producer and director of **The War Master** range for Big Finish, says: "I've really enjoyed the variety of Big Finish's previous **In Conversation** releases and have had the title *I, Jacobi* scribbled on my to do list for quite a while now. It actually became a reality earlier this year when Derek dropped me a message asking if we might be needing him again any time soon. We'd already recorded a few **The War Master** box sets during lockdown – and didn't currently have any new scripts – but as restrictions were easing I suggested it might be nice to reunite in the flesh for a day and just talk about him... and happily Derek said yes!"

Scott continues: "We hit it off pretty much instantly during **The War Master** recordings. We both take our work very seriously but not ourselves, and so we've always had a nice relaxed atmosphere during recording sessions. I think if Derek hadn't enjoyed himself he wouldn't have asked to come back after the very first box set! We know one another quite well now so he knew, when I asked about this

## THE TOUGHEST PART OF THE WHOLE PROCESS WAS DECIDING WHAT TO EXCLUDE!

SCOTT HANDCOCK

interview, that he could trust the direction it would take. Derek is quite a private individual so it was a real privilege to be able to talk with him in-depth about his life and career.

"I love hearing people chat about what they've done: it's fascinating to get a sense of other people's perspectives. And during lockdown, I started a podcast where I interviewed people from across the queer community – including quite a few Big Finish regulars – so I'd sort of hit a rhythm in terms of maintaining these long-form conversations.

"The toughest part of the whole process was deciding what to exclude! I did a lot of research because I didn't want to leave anything out but inevitably you can't include everything. I could have spent a week chatting with Derek and still not covered it all, his career alone spans 60 years! But he remembers it all in so much detail. It was a joy to listen to."

Scott has one absolute highlight. He tells *Vortex*: "Honestly, the conversation covers so much and goes in so many different directions but the highlight for me is when I presented Derek with a programme from the 1960 Christmas production of *The Three Cavaliers* I'd managed to track down a few weeks before. It would have been one of the first plays that Derek starred in professionally, just a month or two into his stint at the Birmingham Rep, and he was so thrilled to be given some memorabilia from his early days. It was charming to have him flick through a simple theatre programme with so many memories flooding back!" **VORTEX**

IN CONVERSATION



I, JACOBI

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# FIRST ELEVEN

**WE LAST** heard from our heroes at UNIT when they fought off threats in *Incursions* released in April 2019, and this November they're back on duty in **UNIT Nemesis: Between Two Worlds**. Regulars Kate Stewart (Jemma Redgrave), Osgood (Ingrid Oliver), Josh Carter (James Joyce) and Jacqui McGee (Tracy Wiles) are joined by Fourth Doctor companions Harry Sullivan (Christopher Naylor) and Naomi Cross (Eleanor Crooks) as they take on the Eleven played by the amazing Mark Bonnar.

Co-producer David Richardson, who is stepping down from the range after this series, says: "A new start, a new era for UNIT – and the beginning of a sixteen-part epic that will see the return of a number of

popular monsters. But what is young Harry Sullivan doing here in the 21st Century? And who is his colleague Naomi Cross? **UNIT Nemesis** is an important piece of a jigsaw puzzle that has been in planning for some time with a storyline that will run over the next few years."

Co-producer Emily Cook tells us more: "On a submersible off the west coast of Scotland, marine biologist Professor Adam Merchant discovers a large stone arch which has apparently been buried for millions of years. Where has this mysterious arch come from? And where does it lead to? UNIT is on the case! Unfortunately, someone else is too..."

Script editor Andrew Smith tells *Vortex*: "It was great to be involved in this new series. I've

always enjoyed working on it and I remember the very first phone call about it from David when it began – it was the first modern **Doctor Who** spin-off from Big Finish so it was a big deal.

"I am delighted to be doing the script editing and I've come up with a connected arc for 16 stories over four box sets. There were a couple of things I wanted to do with it, and a premise which I thought would have legs.

"I've made an overview of where we will go with the story in each box set and where we'll finish up. There's an anachronistic arc with advanced technology embedded in it that's found underneath the Mull lava flow in north-west Scotland – and it all starts from there."



## DEALING WITH THE ODD, THE UNEXPLAINED. ANYTHING ON EARTH... OR EVEN BEYOND...

**MARK BONNAR** was delighted to feature in some stories in the **Doctor Who** universe without that pesky do-gooder Time Lord to foil his plans! Speaking to *Vortex*, he said: "Recording *Between Two Worlds* was great as it was a whole different bunch of people, and a different set-up. I didn't know much about UNIT before. It's ostensibly a **Doctor Who** range but there are all these strands that cross over. Big Finish has set up this world in which lots of people can co-exist, it's a really clever thing that they've done.

"And it was great getting to plunge the Eleven into a new situation rather than just being the Doctor's rival. There's something he wants

**WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO STOP DOING SOMETHING AS MUCH FUN AS THIS?!** MARK BONNAR

to get: there are a number of adversarial combatants shall we say, and they're all pushing particular buttons. I really enjoyed it!

"It's always good playing the Eleven and I'm looking forward

to hearing what the writers have got up their sleeves for him next time round. As long as they keep having great ideas, I'm more than happy to keep playing him. Why would you want to stop doing something as much fun as this?!

"I've missed being in studio with everyone though as that's part of the fun – the joy of being able to actually see each other in person."

Actor Jemma Redgrave adds: "This is a really exciting adventure and it's the first time I've encountered the Eleven. It's an extraordinary thing to hear Mark create 11 completely different personalities so distinctively, brilliantly and terrifyingly. He does it all effortlessly too – it's a masterclass. I loved every minute of it."



**THE 16-PART** epic begins with *The Enemy Beyond* by script editor and writer, Andrew. In a UNIT facility beneath Edinburgh Castle, Kate and Osgood work to unlock the mystery of a stone arch discovered buried in a prehistoric rock formation. When the arch takes one of their number away to a strange, bleak world, it leads to an encounter with a Time Lord – one with multiple personalities. Soon the Eleven is loose on the streets of Edinburgh and plotting to seize the arch from UNIT by any means necessary.

Andrew says: “I remember listening to the first episode with the Eleven in **Doom Coalition** and thinking what an ingenious idea the character was. He’s so interesting to play with and Mark is just electrifying as him.

“UNIT have a regional base under Edinburgh Castle. In real life it’s actually an operational barracks and I visited there a few years ago when I was working for the police. I’m using parts of the city as well in this script.

“It was interesting setting this whole thing up and getting the ball rolling. One thing I really wanted to do was introduce an alien planet to UNIT so we have another world too. There’s a mystery there as well – UNIT go to this world and find the Eleven. How did he get there, what’s he doing, what is the arch and where does it come from? We won’t get too many answers in the first box set but they will come in the second...”

**FIRE AND ICE** sees writer John Dorney return to the UNIT fold. When Kate needs Harry Sullivan’s help with a threat from the Eleven, she and Osgood travel to Australia to meet him. He’s there with Naomi Cross, a UNIT secretary keen to earn her stripes investigating footage of an apparent UFO crash that turned up on social media. They find themselves caught in the middle of a conflict between Ice Warriors. And one Ice Warrior isn’t so icy – in fact he’s red hot. And getting hotter...

Andrew explains: “We’ve got Harry and Naomi appearing but the question is what are they



Jimma Redgrave



James Joyce

## A WHOLE CRIMINAL GANG WHO JUST HAPPEN TO BE IN THE ONE BODY!

LISA McMULLIN

doing there? And Harry doesn’t seem to be any older... You’ll just have to listen to find out why!”

John says: “I’m delighted to get back to UNIT and to return to

these characters as it has been a bit of a while. But it is very much like coming home as they are such defined characters.

“It’s great having both Harry and Naomi feature. I’ve written for them in their series with Tom Baker and I was very aware that this is the introduction for them. I’ve got four very strong characters and then there’s the bonus of having the Ice Warriors as well.

“I’m always very keen to find an angle for a story that hasn’t been done before with an old monster so I thought, ‘Can I send the Ice Warriors somewhere hot?’, and because I’m half-Australian my first thought was to send them to the outback! I probably ended up making the Northern Territory feel slightly smaller than it really is though but it was all in the service of keeping the plot moving.

“It was part of the game plan to involve them in UNIT and because I know about them from **The Fourth Doctor Adventures** it seemed appropriate for me to write this one.

“My episode is basically standalone. Harry’s already caught up in an adventure but we’re playing with timeframes with things happening at different times for different people.”

### ELEVEN’S ELEVEN

by Lisa McMullin is the third story in the set. A series of jewel robberies in London and the Home Counties draw the attention of UNIT, when it’s discovered that some of the stolen gems are alien in origin. The robberies are the work of an organised criminal gang led by East End villain Ava Drake. But Ava has a new, ruthless partner – the Eleven has promised her riches and for him the gems are a means to defeat UNIT and regain the arch.

Lisa reveals: “Andrew asked me for a heist story involving a familiar criminal – like a female Kray brother – working with the Eleven and linked in to the ongoing story of the portal that leads to another dominion which the Eleven is trying to get his hands on. But, of course, UNIT want to keep it out of his reach. It becomes a race against time, and will UNIT be able to stop the Eleven before he completes a series of robberies?”





Ingrid Oliver  
and friend

"With the Eleven you are writing a story about a whole criminal gang who just happen to be in the one body! Actor Mark is just a genius in the way he portrays the different personalities of him.

"It can be quite complicated to write for the Eleven - I hadn't actually written for him before. I've written for the Twelve but she has an inhibitor which keeps the other incarnations in place.

"I can't wait to hear how it sounds. I've said it before but no matter how good you think it might be, what they do in studio and in post-production makes it just so much better.

"And *Eleven's Eleven* is such a great title, I just wish it was mine! I had a working title of *Ocean's Eleven's*

*Eleven* and then Andrew suggested *Eleven's Eleven*. It's so good!"

**THE SET** concludes with *The Curator's Gambit* by Andrew. *The arch is taken to the Under Gallery for safe keeping, under the protection of the Curator. When the Eleven penetrates the Gallery's security, the Curator initiates an emergency plan. He and UNIT play a game of cat and mouse with their pursuers within the Under Gallery's original location, Hampton Court Palace.*

Andrew says: "We had permission to use the Curator and I was thinking, while I was watching the 50th anniversary special *The Day of the Doctor* again, the National Gallery wasn't around until the

1830s so the Under Gallery must have been somewhere else when Queen Elizabeth set it up - and the natural place for that would have been Hampton Court Palace. So I visited the palace for the first time and had a look round with my notebook in hand.

"And that's where we go. The arch is in safe keeping in the Under Gallery in the care of the Curator and when the Eleven

## WHAT THEY DO IN STUDIO AND IN POST-PRODUCTION MAKES IT JUST SO MUCH BETTER.

LISA McMULLIN

comes for it the Curator has a plan in mind to protect it... and then there's a cat and mouse chase at Hampton Court Palace! There's also a cliffhanger ending that I think people are going to like..."


Andrew concludes: "It wasn't entirely deliberate but I came up with the name of **Nemesis** after I came up with the storyline of the arch, and another way to express the term 'nemesis' is 'arch-enemy'... but who is the nemesis? Is it the Eleven?" **VORTEX**

## UNIT THE NEW SERIES



NEMESIS: BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

- RELEASED: NOVEMBER 2021
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: [bgfn.sh/mull](http://bgfn.sh/mull) 



# DARKEST BEFORE DAWN

**I**T'S THE end of the world as we know it as **Survivors** returns for another hurrah in *New Dawn*. Based on Terry Nation's BBC TV series which ran from 1975–77, **Survivors** is a post-apocalyptic drama concerning the plight of a group of people who have survived a worldwide plague. *New Dawn 1* picks up a couple of decades after the previous Big Finish series with original TV series regulars Abby Grant (Carolyn Seymour) and Jenny Richards (Lucy Fleming) in a renewed fight for survival.

Producer Emma Haigh says: "I'm so pleased **Survivors** is returning for another two box sets. In these stories we explore how communities and society rebuild after such life-changing experiences and look to a brighter future. And I couldn't be happier than to be working with Carolyn and Lucy and the team."

Writer Andrew Smith is also script editor of the series. He says: "David Richardson contacted myself and Emma to say we'd got the green light to do two more box sets of **Survivors**. I was approached about script editing **Survivors** before we made *Series Nine*, and our initial plan was to do something in the **Chronicles** vein where we would have Jenny and Abby being the principal narrators with one guest cast member. I'd been expecting that but then they became full-cast which gave us more room to tell the stories.

"The idea was to set *New Dawn* some years after *Series Nine* where things are drifting back towards a kind of normality but because it's **Survivors** nothing is ever structured or happy and people are never that nice – and our heroes are never going to have an easy ride!

"I then had a think about what kind of society it would be, what infrastructure and transport – there's some very limited air transport but people still mainly get around on horseback.

"There's a new federal government based in Cambridge but there are still big lawless areas. Democratic elections are coming up and law and order is the responsibility of a group called the Rangers. The country is divided into zones run by governors... but some governors are not so law-abiding – they are unelected, corrupt and out for their own ends."

**TETHERED BY** Andrew kicks off the set. He explains: "At the end of *Series Nine* Abby has gone off with her son, Peter, and Jenny is left with the federation group that she has been virtually leading. When we rejoin



Jenny she is a cabinet minister, the equivalent of the Home Secretary. She's a law minister within the New Federal Government – the NFG – an unelected government with an interim prime minister and elections are on the horizon.

“Abby and Jenny haven't seen each other for about 15 years but events bring them back together. Abby is heading home on a tragic mission, travelling through the Yorkshire countryside on a horse and cart when she meets someone who she thinks is a good Samaritan – John Bedwell.”

The second episode is *My Generation* by Katharine Armitage. Andrew explains: “In the second episode we have Louise Jameson

## THEY ARE UNELECTED, CORRUPT AND OUT FOR THEIR OWN ENDS.

ANDREW SMITH

back as Jackie Burchall who has a particular role in this one. Abby's on the run. Jenny helps her and Jackie digs in to assist too when things start to go wrong as Abby becomes involved with an activist group called the Veil.”

**WAS IT** difficult to imagine where the world would be post-the Death given how the real world had developed by the 90s? Katharine says: “I did find this difficult, especially as someone who grew up in the 90s and is very much a product of the time. It felt a little like having to unpick my own history! I bombarded my parents with questions about their experiences of life in the 70s – what it was really like – so I could start from the world as it was and try to build from there into an imagined ‘other’.

“My script started from a really simple question: what would the younger generation be like? The ones who didn't know the world before the Death, and what would they want? The characters who have formed the core of the *Survivors* world are all those who remember how the world was and want to return to it, but, if you never knew that world, how would you feel about their efforts to seemingly ‘take you back’? I am fascinated by how the generations younger than mine are so different in so many ways, in particular their awareness of climate issues and their attitude towards identity and sexuality. So I wanted to give a voice to the *Survivors* version of the new generation who are going to be challenging old ideas, even ideas the rest of us might hold sacred. Throwing Jenny into the role of an authority figure – when she's always been the rebel – felt like a good challenge for her character: that terrible moment when you realise that by seeking to change the establishment you have become it.

“I particularly loved creating the quieter moments between Abby, Jenny and Jackie. To get to write for these incredible women (both the characters and the actors who play them) and try to capture the nuances of their long friendships was a marvellous feat. I also had great fun imagining up a pirate radio station for that world. My top



Carolyn  
Seymour





Lucy Fleming

highlight was writing the ending – about which I will say no more!”

**THE FINAL** story, *Behind You* sees writer Roland Moore return to **Survivors**. He admits: “I love **Survivors** as a range because it allows you to really ‘go there’ and produce some visceral and harrowing drama. The actors always perform it so brilliantly too. And I also enjoyed the twist with this series – that it’s set about twenty years on from the Death. That allowed for some new directions to be taken...”

“In some ways it was easy to imagine what the 90s would be like in the **Survivors** world because technology and infrastructure effectively stopped in the mid-70s.

So the only advancements – if you can call them that – which we see in the 90s are things built up by the survivors themselves. And of course there are developments since the last series as we have moved nearly 20 years forward. But most of those developments are to do with getting back what was lost such as plane and train travel, biofuel production and, most importantly, democracy. We all had a really good steer on what the world might be like from the brilliant Andrew Smith who had planned the arc for the series.

“*Behind You* sees Abby confronting something from her past, and although it’s not an unpleasant memory back then, it’s changed into something darker now. It’s about how

we can be prompted to remember things from our past by ‘signals’ in our present. One exciting factor was that even though the action takes place in the late 90s there are scenes set in the mid-70s before the Death. We see Abby back then before she became the survivor she is now.”

Andrew adds: “Roland has come up with a character, Leonard Ross, who’s a link back to Abby’s time as a comfortably well-off, suburban, perhaps pampered, housewife from before the Death: Leonard was a children’s entertainer who did one of Peter’s birthday parties. She finds herself in his company and learns he’s even more awful than she thought!

## I LOVE SURVIVORS AS A RANGE BECAUSE IT ALLOWS YOU TO REALLY ‘GO THERE’

ROLAND MOORE

“*Behind You* is a great way to finish this set, and it gets things ready, very nicely, for the events to follow...”

**Survivors: New Dawn 2** will be released in February 2022. **VORTEX**

### SURVIVORS



NEW DAWN 1

- RELEASED: NOVEMBER 2021
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: [bgfn.sh/plague](http://bgfn.sh/plague)



# BOOK CLUB



**DARK SHADOWS**

## KINGDOM OF THE DEAD

**FANS OF** American cult horror soap opera **Dark Shadows** were delighted when Big Finish obtained a licence to create new audio stories based on the original show.

Overseen by co-producer Stuart Manning, the first four stories were released in September 2006 with the second series, *Kingdom of the Dead*, following in July 2010.

Written by Stuart and Eric Wallace, Stuart told *Vortex*: "I wanted a bigger cast and more of the **Dark Shadows** actors involved this time – I didn't just want to redo the same stuff again, it needed to be bigger and better! In the first series the stories were split into individual episodes with cliffhangers as a concession to **Dark Shadows**'s soap roots but for me that format never quite worked. The breaks were contrived so you just wrote across them and without the enforced

pause of switching a disc they were never going to have a big impact.

"Although I really liked the first series, this time I wanted a big villain who we could really play with and that dictated doing a single four-part adventure. And immediately that felt right, now we could have proper cliffhangers, make the overall situations more complex and we'd not be forever looking at the clock."

The recurring villain across all four releases is Seraph, played by David Warner, joining a cast which features many of the show's original actors including Lara Parker, Kathryn Leigh Scott, the late John Karlen and Jerry Lacy.

Stuart continues: "Some people might sneer at soaps but they are immensely challenging to storyline. Compared to other adventures with just one or two key protagonists, you have to remember throughout that every single character is effectively

the star of their own show – you don't have the hierarchy of lead/supporting characters that an hour-long drama might have. That was a real shift in emphasis but I knew it would make our stories feel more authentically like **Dark Shadows**.

"Of course that wasn't taking the easy route. Switching from one-hour stories with five regular characters to a four-hour story with more than 10 made us definitely work harder – it was a different way of working.

"Keeping track of everything wasn't easy but it paid off. Good soaps have a sort of joyous coincidence where unrelated threads affect other situations and *Kingdom of the Dead* certainly had its share of those moments. Everything came together to make a bigger story which was always going to be more exciting."

Stuart confirms: "My ambition was to make an audio soap and in many ways that's about creating a rhythm in the scenes and a sense of community throughout the story that transcends individual moments. I think we managed that." **VORTEX**

### DARK SHADOWS



#### KINGDOM OF THE DEAD

- RELEASED: JULY 2010
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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Thirty years since it first appeared on British television screens, a science fiction classic is returning...



# BACK IN DARK SEASON

**RUSSELL T** Davies is no stranger to writing stories about plucky people saving the world from diabolical forces. Long before *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood* there was *Dark Season*, a six-part BBC television drama. *An ordinary day at school takes a sinister turn when the mysterious Mr Eldritch promises a free home computer for every pupil – computers which conceal a terrible power. Only three teenagers, Marcie, Thomas and Reet, are alert to the danger. Soon they're caught in a conspiracy of brainwashing, kidnaps and a threat to the whole human race. Worse still, the school itself hides ancient secrets buried beneath its foundations as the awesome Behemoth rises from its tomb, intent upon the destruction of all. Eldritch has*

*summoned his Dark Season, which heralds the end of the world...*

The first TV drama to be written by Russell, *Dark Season* starred Victoria Lambert as Marcie and Ben Chandler as Tom, with a young up and coming actress called Kate Winslet as Reet. And appearing as the villainous Miss Pendragon was Jacqueline Pearce, best known today as *Blake's 7*'s Servalan.

Although it only ran for six episodes, *Dark Season* put Russell's career on the tracks. Following the tradition of children's television at the time, Russell also novelised *Dark Season*, and this November it is being brought to life on audio by Big Finish.

Narrated by Victoria Lambert, in her first acting role since she originally played Marcie on screen, the release is produced and directed

by Scott Handcock who tells *Vortex* the series began as a result of a chat with the Big Finish chairman.

Scott explains: "Jason Haigh-Ellery's a massive fan of both *Dark Season* and *Century Falls* (Russell's first two TV dramas) and I think when he started chatting about making Russell's lost *Doctor Who* script *Mind of the Hodioc*, he couldn't resist venturing the possibility of also reviving *Dark Season* on audio.

"Russell kindly asked for me to be involved and it occurred to me that the series actually turns 30 in November – it seemed mad not to mark that somehow. I tracked down a copy of Russell's original novelisation from 1991 and suggested we do an audio reading of it. And we were very lucky to be in contact





Victoria Lambert

**NARRATOR VICTORIA**

Lambert, who is retired from acting and was approached for this recording by Russell, said: "When I first got the message I thought it was someone taking the mickey, and it took me about an hour before I plucked up the courage to just send a little message back – just a single line! **Dark Season** was my first TV series – I'd done all sorts of things before but it was my first and only 'big' thing. It was quite exciting." "I prepared for the audio by watching the series again – although it's always there, it's always in the back of my mind!

**I HOPE A NEW AND TERRIFYING DARK SEASON MIGHT BE ABOUT TO FALL...**

RUSSELL T DAVIES

with the original Marcie Hatter herself, Victoria Lambert, who has long-since retired from acting but remains utterly marvellous."

Scott was a first generation viewer of **Dark Season**.

He explains: "I was seven years old when **Dark Season** aired so I was just the right age to see it on first transmission. It was in the slot for slightly older children and, at my young age, it felt quite edgy and, well, dark.

"So much of the imagery is burned into my brain. Mr Eldritch who cuts such a sinister figure, Jacqueline Pearce terrifying everyone as Pendragon. And some of those set pieces... the ideas are all so massive and bold and it's incredible to think they were achieved practically live without green screen or CGI. It's a brilliant series – mostly because it doesn't talk down to children and touches upon more grown-up themes. It's been great to revisit it and bring the original story to life in the audiobook format."

For those unaware of **Dark Season**, what would Scott say about it? He replies: "Considering it wasn't just

Russell's first TV drama credit but also his first prose work, the novelisation is a thumping good book in its own right! **Dark Season** is very much a story of sinister technology and how it can creep into our world and sometimes ultimately threaten it.

"It's quite prescient in a lot of respects: a celebration of computing but also a wariness of where that might lead. On the surface it's an adventure about three children, who are sort of outsiders, saving the world against an impossible villain. But there's a greater story about good versus evil, heaven versus hell and it's all written with Russell's typical heart and wit."

Writer Russell T Davies said: "When I wrote my first TV script 30 years ago I never dreamt I'd be revisiting it all these years later. To be reunited with its star, Victoria Lambert, has been an absolute joy. We both agreed that in 1991 this was my trial run for **Doctor Who!**

"And it's not just about revisiting the past. With Scott Handcock and Big Finish at the helm, I hope a new and terrifying **Dark Season** might be about to fall..."

"I watched it again and I thought, okay, if I'm narrating this, I need to know everything such as what the characters sound like because I can't really remember all of them. It was slightly surreal. When I was reading the lines, the TV programme was playing in a compartment of my head – I could see each scene and the moment I was reading about." **VORTEX**

**DARK SEASON**



NOVELISATION AUDIOBOOK

■ RELEASED: NOVEMBER 2021  
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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# VORTEX MAIL



## GO FOURTH?

With the release of *The God of Phantoms* and Sadie Miller taking over the role of Sarah Jane Smith from the late great Elisabeth Sladen, would Big Finish consider creating some **Philip Hinchcliffe Presents** stories set in season 13 with the Fourth Doctor and Sarah?

**ADAM ROSS**

*Nick: Adam, we'd certainly consider that. Nice idea.*

## CLASSIC IDEA

I'm a big fan of Big Finish's full-cast audio adaptations of classic literature and I'm curious if y'all have any plans to expand this range? Sherlock Holmes is great and all but it would be a dream

come true to see you adapt some of Maurice LeBlanc's Arsene Lupin stories – you could even do the "Hercock Sholmes" crossovers!

**JOEL FOX**

*Nick: No current plans for that, Joel, but an interesting suggestion!*

## JAGO-A-GO-GO?

I enjoyed the audiobook format of season 14 of **Jago & Litefoot**. I know it was adapted from the full-cast drama scripts written before Trevor Baxter passed away. I think the format works, so I want to know: will there be further seasons in this format?

**PETER SQUIRE**

*Nick: We'll be looking at the sales figures and making a calculation on that one, Peter. But all of us at Big Finish love Jago & Litefoot.*

## CALLAN CALL

I have loved listening to the **Callan** sets, I hope there are more to come? Is there any chance the 'Lost Callans' could get the same great Big Finish treatment as **The Avengers – The Lost Stories** did, please?!

**STEVE LINES**

*Nick: Steve, there are always rights issues about any 'lost stories' but we do hope to do more Callan. It's also difficult to find a time when Frank and Ben are simultaneously available as they're both very much in demand. Of course, I could easily be available for a Hunter spin-off...*

## TERRIBLE TIMES

With all your immensely awesome **Doctor Who** output, why have we never ever had an appearance from the Terrible Zodin? Surely this is a question screaming for a good answer. I would truly love to see one of the Doctors come up against that woman of rare guile and devilish cunning. Or is it that you are too scared to tackle her? If so, I can understand! I think fans would love to have a Zodin story too.

**MATTHEW RABJOHNS**

*Nick: I am definitely too scared of Zodin, Matthew! I wake up in the night cowering, screaming her name...!* **VORTEX**



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"And by the year four million,  
 our skins will be vermillion."

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DW | THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES  
*Dalek Universe 3* (LIMITED VINYL EDITION)

DW | THE THIRD DOCTOR ADVENTURES  
*Volume 8* (BOX SET)

DW | THE DIARY OF RIVER SONG  
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THE OMEGA FACTOR  
*Immaculate Possessions* **DLO**

BERNICE SUMMERFIELD  
*The Two Jasons* (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

ROBIN HOOD *The Complete Series*  
 (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

TORCHWOOD SOHO *Ashenden* (BOX SET)

TORCHWOOD  
*The Great Sontaran War* (55)

### NOVEMBER 2021

DW | THE NINTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES  
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DW | THE NINTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES  
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*Series 2: Still Running* (BOX SET)

DW | UNIT: THE NEW SERIES  
*Nemesis 1: Between Two Worlds* (BOX SET)

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I, JACOBI  
*Derek Jacobi in Conversation* **DLO**

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SURVIVORS  
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DARK SEASON *Novelisation* (AUDIOBOOK)

TORCHWOOD *The Red List* (56)

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THE WORLDS OF BLAKE'S 7  
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*Enter Wildthyme* (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

IRIS WILDTHYME AND FRIENDS  
*The Polythene Terror* (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

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THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

# VORTEX



# NEMESIS

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## **LOST WARRIORS**

The Ninth Doctor encounters a familiar face...



ISSUE 152  
OCTOBER 2021  
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