

ISSUE 36 • FEBRUARY 2012
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THE BIG FINISH MAGAZINE



Vortex Magazine
**PART 2 OF OUR
TOM BAKER
INTERVIEW!**

FLIPPIN' OUT
LISA GREENWOOD TELLS US ABOUT
BEING NEW COMPANION FLIP

BENNY TAKES A TRIP
LISA BOWERMAN TALKS ROAD
TRIP AND BENNY'S BEGINNINGS

BLAKE'S 7
PAUL DARROW ON RETURNING TO THE ROLE OF
KERR AVON IN THE LIBERATOR CHRONICLES

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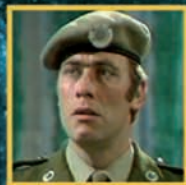
MEET THESE DOCTOR WHO STARS

LOUISE JAMESON
JOHN LEESON
JOHN LEVENE
ADRIENNE BURGESS
MARTIN COCHRANE
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So what is the role of the executive producer of Big Finish? The reason I'm asking that is not because I'm going to do a big list of all the stuff I do for Big Finish; that would probably either sound like showing off or some sort of ridiculous complaining about what is, frankly, a really fantastic job – and a privilege!

No, the reason I bring it up is that last month I made a comment in the letters page about how our story *The Boy That Time Forgot* was 'not one of my favourites'. Quite rightly, the renowned author, Paul Magrs, got in touch with me and expressed some disappointment that I had publicly said this without at least mentioning to him at any stage that I wasn't particularly fond of the story. And, as I said to him, my expressing a view in this way was extremely insensitive and, frankly, a mistake. Really, really sorry about that. Would I like to read that kind of comment from a colleague about one of my stories? No, I certainly would not.

But here's my problem. Even though, as my co-exec (and company chairman) Jason Haigh-Ellery commented to me the other day, I spend a lot of my time making light of things, I take my responsibilities really seriously. And I feel that one of my key responsibilities is to present as honest and straightforward an image of Big Finish as possible. I don't want the company to appear to be headed by a grinning idiot who says everything is amazing. If I constantly say everything is brilliant, you may start to think I'm just giving you a lot of promotional 'soft soap'. But if I occasionally voice a mild criticism of something we've produced, I could be accused of potentially putting people off or sounding too negative and undermining colleagues.

See my problem? What's the answer? I'm mulling it over. But in the meantime, do let me know your thoughts.

NICK BRIGGS

February sees the start of something bold and different for Big Finish. From the Big Finish website, you will be able to download and/or stream a podcast from actor, comedian, writer and generally nice chap Toby Hadoke, star of *Moths Ate My Doctor Who Scarf* and BF's own *Robophobia*, amongst others. This is how he describes it: "It will contain the ramblings of a middle-aged man that are allowed to be described as 'entertaining' rather than 'bothersome' because the man in question has an Equity card and a microphone. There'll be sketches, a DVD review with a difference, obituary corner, answers to listeners' questions and at least three or four of the notes a piano can make when played by somebody who is quite good at it.

"It also has a beginning and an end, though the bits in the middle are generally the more interesting. It will not be self-consciously or overtly about *Doctor Who*, but as I quote Dennis Spooner in my sleep, some classic Lucarotti might slip out unnoticed.

"The credits will be read by someone famous to give it an aspect of class it doesn't actually possess." And what's more, it'll be completely freeeee!

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CALLING AVON

**“I DON’T THINK
AVON WAS A BAD
GUY, HE WAS JUST
MISUNDERSTOOD.”**

**THIS MONTH, BIG FINISH
LAUNCHES A BRAND NEW
SERIES OF **BLAKE’S 7**
ADVENTURES, AND WHO
BETTER TO TALK ABOUT
THEM THAN AVON HIMSELF,
PAUL DARROW? PAUL
SPRAGG GAVE HIM A RING...**

Hello Paul. What got you on board for new Blake's 7 audios?

● Jason Haigh-Ellery, I've known for a long time. We get on very well and I've done **Doctor Who** for him, another thing with David Tennant [**The Adventures of Luther Arkwright**] a few years ago, and I like working for them. I think a lot of people do. It's fun. And I like Lisa Bowerman very much, who directs, and [producer] David Richardson. We get on well, and that's very important, I think. That's one of the things that made **Blake's 7** a success in its original format, simply on the basis that it was a group of people that happened to get on very well, who clicked. That's essential, of course, for any television show or media show. That's what appealed to me about working with the people at Big Finish.

Has the character of Avon ever really left you?

● That's a very good question and a tough one to answer. I suppose it's never really left me in a way; a part, by a process of osmosis, inculcates itself into your psyche. Gosh, that sounds highfalutin, doesn't it! It's always with you to an extent if you play it for a long period of time. I remember Jeremy Brett, alas no longer with us, became very much associated with the persona of Sherlock Holmes when he played him. I think yes, to a certain extent, it does linger. I do have a reputation as an actor of playing 'hard' roles, and one of the greatest compliments I got was when I played the Scottish Gentleman by Mr Shakespeare, and my wife was sitting in the audience by a young fellow on a school outing or something, and he turned around to his mate when I was on stage and said, 'Well 'ard, isn't he?' And I thought, 'Well, that's a compliment.' So I tend to get those roles, although I'm not like that in real life.

Is it good to get an iconic, memorable role, or can it be confining for an actor?

● Both, really. It can confine you. I've been fortunate, touch wood, inasmuch that it hasn't

entirely. And anyway, if you do play that kind of character, the hard bad guy if you like – although I don't think Avon was a bad guy, he was just misunderstood – what happens is you get offered similar roles. Humphrey Bogart nine times out of ten was playing a tough gangster or a cop, and there's nothing wrong with that.

What's it like being back in the role?

● Oh, interesting. Very interesting. The scripts are good, although there was one I didn't understand at all! It was a bit technical. David Maloney, the producer of **Blake's 7**, said to me once, when I had a longish speech, 'Do you know what this means?' It was technical stuff. And I said, 'No, I haven't the foggiest.' And he said, 'Well, apparently it's accurate scientific speculation, what do you want to do?' And

“THE AVON CHARACTER BECAME MUCH MORE – I HATE TO USE THE WORD, BUT TO AN EXTENT PSYCHOTIC.”

I said, 'Well, I'll say it and see what happens.' And after we'd finished the scene David Maloney turned round and said, 'Well, you convinced me you knew what you were talking about, so we'll leave it in!' I think the writers have got the character pretty much down. And I said to David Richardson, when it first started, 'It's been a long time, I wonder if I sound the same?' And he said, 'Oh yes. Yes you do.' So I said, 'All right, okay.' That's what smoking does for you, I suppose!

Does it feel authentic to the original show?

● Pretty much got it down, I think. They've set stories in the first series so you have the entire



Paul Darrow returns as Avon

original cast, as it were. It would be tricky to write it later on because of the characters. For example, the Avon character became much more – I hate to use the word, but to an extent psychotic. He wasn't a psychopath but he did have symptoms and the reason, I would claim, is because I had to get round various storyline obstacles. For example, in the original series when Tarrant and Dayna arrive, Avon programs them into the Liberator's computer, Orac. And I said to the producer, 'He would never do that, opting to give anyone else control'. And the producer turned round and said, 'Well, look, put it this way, Paul: if you don't, we haven't got a series because they can't be in it.' So I had to find a way round that; why would he let them when you wouldn't under normal circumstances? I wouldn't, personally, if I had to fly a spaceship through the universe. With all due respect to you, Paul, I wouldn't program you into it to encourage you to nick it off me!

I was in a fortunate position because, not playing the eponymous hero, I didn't have to behave as a hero is supposed to behave. I remember somebody once writing – I think it was Alexander Walker in

the *Evening Standard* – about the Bonds and saying 'The difference between Sean Connery as Bond and Roger Moore as Bond was that if they were playing a tennis match, Roger Moore's Bond would say 'May the best man win' and Sean Connery's Bond would say the same thing – and then kick him in the crotch just to make sure'. And that's how I decided to play Avon. Kick him in the crotch and make sure. People are interested in that because that's what you'd do.

I remember while we were doing the show; it was quite by accident, the director said, 'I've got the camera on tracks' – we were on location – 'and it's very difficult to turn round, and there are these two guards but they've got their backs to you, so you'd better put in a line where you call out and they'll

“AND THAT'S HOW I DECIDED TO PLAY AVON. KICK [THEM] IN THE CROTCH AND MAKE SURE.”

turn around.' And I said, 'Why?' And he said, 'You'd do that, wouldn't you?' And I said, 'Well, I wouldn't and Avon certainly wouldn't! I'd shoot them in the back! Why give them a chance?' So he said, 'All right then,' so I did! I shot them in the back. Let's face it, if you're up against them and you know they're pretty good and they're armed, you're not going to give them a chance are you?

What would you say to encourage people to pick up Blake's 7?

● I need the money! [laughs] So does Jason, so does everybody. So do you! The popularity of the show extends to the present day; there's no doubt about that. I still get, not as much as I used to, but a fair amount of fan mail. People stop me in the street. I changed dentists just before Christmas because I



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by Peter Anghelides

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thought, ‘Why am I going miles away to a dentist when there’s one down the road who’s very good?’ So I went in there and the dental nurse just looked at me and said, ‘Oh, I used to have a picture of you on my wall.’ And I said, ‘What happened to it?’ and she said, ‘Well, I had to take it down when I got married!’ So I said, ‘You should have kept it, waited until I’m dead, put it on eBay...’

**“I HAVE I.T. IGNORANCE
- WHICH IS A SAD
ADMISSION TO MAKE
CONSIDERING I WAS
SUPPOSED TO BE A SUPERB
COMPUTER EXPERT!”**

So it’s still a familiar show. The original fans, most certainly I would think, would flock to it. I do a thing, it’s called **An Evening with Paul Darrow**, and it’s a group of people who come along and we have a private room, we have dinner, then I get up and talk, and a lot of people who come on a frequent basis, we’ve become friends, and I was telling them all about it and they were very enthusiastic. Not all of them are necessarily **Blake’s 7** fans. People who come to my evenings, for instance; somebody came from Switzerland. Somebody came from Australia – admittedly not just for the evening. Some Americans came. They go, ‘What’s happening?’ and they don’t know [about the audios], so I have informed them!

I go out and buy stuff that I liked from way back. Old movies, for instance, I get a lot of. I have IT ignorance – which is a sad admission to make considering I was supposed to be a superb computer expert! – and I’ve got a new laptop: Windows 7, excitement all round! Someone has very kindly put me on Amazon so that I can go on there and get stuff, and I’m trawling through Amazon now for some movies I want.

I think the key thing about these recordings is the enjoyment, certainly that I had doing them, and I think enjoyment communicates itself to the listener. It certainly did to the viewer all those years ago, and I think it will communicate itself to the listener. Because people tend not to listen just once; that’s the trick, isn’t it? You want to hear it again. So there you go. It stays with you. It stays with me, and I was in it. People who watched it and enjoyed it, I think it stays with them. Certainly with the dental nurse, anyway... **VORTEX**



ON THE 9117 SIDE

LISA GREENWOOD TALKS TO PAUL SPRAGG ABOUT TRAVELLING IN THE TARDIS AS NEW COMPANION FLIP, AND MEETING THE FANS...

Hi Lisa! Welcome back to **Doctor Who**! I've got recording time for up to two-and-a-half hours, so off you go...

● Where do I start? My first childhood memory...

Mine is seeing the video for Pink Floyd's *Another Brick In The Wall Part 2* and being scared of the weird people in it.

● It's quite scary, my one. When I was little, I lost control of my bike. That's my first memory and it's quite gruesome. The bike was my sister's so I couldn't touch the floor. I was really going for it on this bike and I saw some ducks, lost control of the bike and my foot scraped across a brick wall and totally took my big toenail off! That was my first memory! I just

remember sitting there thinking, 'Ow!' and my Dad had to take me to the hospital. It's really bad. I can't remember much of my childhood though, which is quite strange.

I think I read that you remember earlier things as you get older. Anyway... on to **Doctor Who**. Did you think you'd be back after *The Crimes of Thomas Brewster*?

● Not at all. I'd done that one little episode and I thought that would be it. Then I got the phone call a few months later asking if I wanted to do it and I jumped at the chance. I had such a good time the first day that I was here. I didn't realise there was a secret audition!

How have things changed for Flip over this trilogy?

● Flip's still very much the same person; she's just a normal girl, getting on with life. She's learnt a lot more now; she's gone through a few adventures, things that would never happen to anyone normal. She's quite a courageous girl and a lot of that's come out in the scripts. She's got a lot of different aspects to her personality but one of the ones that sticks out is she's just so brave. I can't believe how brave she is! All the stuff she does, I'm thinking in my head, 'What are you doing, why are you doing that???' She's written as a very forceful character. I could have played her a lot more subtle and a lot nicer, but I think Flip's in your face. She is what she is, love her or hate her.

Have you done audio work before?

● No! My first ever audio was my first **Doctor Who**. I'm really quite new to the whole industry; it's been a complete whirlwind for me. I never thought

wasn't familiar with Colin's character, so I did some research on Colin, had a little look at his stories and stuff, but I'm very familiar with the modern stuff; I watch it.

I hear you've also been reading some reactions to your casting on our forums. What did you make of it all?

● I'm never coming back! That was a joke. I was being too nosy for my own good to be honest, I shouldn't have gone on there! But it's understandable; people really enjoyed the previous companion and they've got their ideas about what they want. I don't think Flip's had much time to show what she can do yet. All I can do is the best I can do, and if you like it, I'm really happy about it and if you don't, I'm sorry! Don't hate me!

I wasn't too bothered about it. It made me want to do well more. I've got something to prove now. But as I said, it's understandable. If I watch something on TV and I really like a character and all of a sudden

"I JUST REMEMBER WALKING IN THROUGH THE DOOR AND EVERYBODY STARTED CLAPPING AND I WAS LIKE, 'WHAT IS GOING ON?'"

I'd be where I am at this particular moment in time, it's been so quick. I didn't really know anything about it, I just got told to come along to Big Finish to read the script, basically! I really enjoyed it, though, and I would do it again, definitely.

I love working with Colin [Baker]. He's such a lovely man, and the guys here as well. Just a lovely crew. I keep saying the word lovely but they really, really are! They are so nice. One of the best bunches of people I've worked with. Friendly, really warm. They're standing behind me, that's why I'm saying this! [laughs] They just made me part of the crew. It was really nice.

How familiar are you with Doctor Who?

● I'm very familiar with the TV series but more so since it returned; not so much in the past. I

that character's gone, I'll be like, 'Oh, why? I really liked her'. But change is good, I hope!

You were, of course, first introduced at Big Finish Day.

● It was scary! I wasn't expecting the whole entrance thing! I thought it was going to be a little room and just a few people in there, but it was huge! They guided me to this door; I just remember walking in through the door and everybody started clapping and I was like, 'What is going on?' It was really, really good though. In situations like this, I'm fine to talk to; I'm totally relaxed. But in situations like a panel, I feel a bit nervous. I don't know what to say or I'm a bit apprehensive about it, so Colin was really good that day; he took me under his wing and he kind of showed me the ropes and gave me things to sign

and he took a few of the questions for me when I was a bit, 'Er...'. He jumped in for me, so that was cool.

What's the relationship like between the Doctor and Flip?

● I think with Flip, she doesn't say it but the Doctor, to her, is so cool. He's taken her to different planets where she's seeing all these different aliens and she's amazed by this. So yeah, he's cool to her. It's grown more into a father/daughter relationship. He does look out for



Lisa Greenwood and Colin Baker

her and I think she does worry about him as well. It's a nice relationship that they've grown to. But she does protest. She protests quite a lot about 'he isn't her dad'!

Poor Flip is in at the deep end as well, facing off against the Daleks first time out.

● I thought that was brilliant, my first story in and I'm getting to work with the Daleks! And Nicholas [Briggs], I had no

idea he was the actual voice of the Daleks! I was like, 'Oh my God!' It was amazing. And they actually let me do a Dalek voice. I got to say 'Exterminate'. It was the pinnacle of my life, ever.

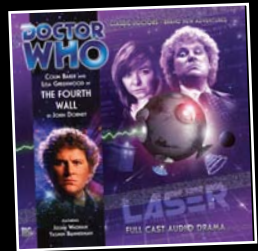
How does it feel to be flying the flag for Essex girls?

● It feels good. I'm not actually from Essex myself, I'm from East London, but I grew up and went to school in Essex. It shines a different light on a typical Essex girl; Flip isn't your stereotypical Essex girl; she's got some balls, Flip! Some of the stuff she does I would never do!

And you've also got to work with some great guest actors.

● They've all been really lovely. And some people have amazing voices; I'm in awe, actually. This is the first time I've done anything like this and I'm totally taken in. Sometimes I just end up watching them do it, and miss my line because I'm so engrossed in listening to what they're all saying. I'm, like, [staring] out of the window and end up missing my line and everyone's like, 'Oh, Lisa! Come on! Do your job! Do what you're paid to be doing!' [laughs] **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO THE FOURTH WALL OUT THIS MONTH



STARRING COLIN BAKER AND LISA GREENWOOD

■ Business is bad for intergalactic media mogul Augustus Scullop, whose Trans-Gal empire is on the rocks. But, having retreated to his own private planet, Transmission, Scullop is about to gamble his fortune on a new show, made with an entirely new technology. The Doctor finds himself drawn into Scullop's world when his new travelling companion, Flip, is snatched from inside the TARDIS...

■ This story takes place between *The Trial of a Time Lord* and *Time and the Rani*.

AUTHOR: JOHN DORNEY
DIRECTOR: NICHOLAS BRIGGS

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Vortex Magazine

TOM BAKER continues to chat about the new lease of life both he and the Fourth Doctor have been given, with Paul Spragg

BREAKING THE FOURTH'S WALL

PART TWO

“The wonderful thing about the cod science of science fantasy is that it’s quite a lot of work because it’s utter nonsense!”

When we left Tom Baker last issue, he was explaining what had brought him round to the idea of working with Big Finish. One of the biggest draws was the opportunity to reunite with Louise Jameson, who is helping him recreate the teatimes of 1977 by returning once more to the role of Leela in the first series of **Fourth Doctor Adventures**. Has the reunion been all Tom had hoped for?

“It’s effortless. We just slip back in the groove. You never forget something that’s been such a big, important part of your life, so with Louise and I, we just make little tiny adjustments here and there and usually [it’s] one read-through for levels and we get it on the second take. It does get more elaborate. Sometimes there are big, convoluted speeches,

because the wonderful thing about the cod science of science fantasy is that it’s quite a lot of work because it’s utter nonsense! If you’re reversing the polarity and going into a plasma paralysis beam, you’ve got to phrase it carefully in bed before you get there.”

Those readers arriving late to this discussion and getting confused should probably be told at this point that last issue Tom revealed he pores over scripts in bed prior to recordings. “My wife often says to me in bed, ‘What are you talking about?’” smiles Tom. “I say to her, ‘I’m just reversing the polarities,’ and she says, ‘What, at your age? That’s not a good idea.’ So it’s absolutely great being with Lou and [first Romana] Mary Tamm, all those girls who were wonderful.

And there was, of course, the savage blow of the death of Elisabeth [Sladen]. In fact, I’m expecting a

book any minute. She'd written a book and they want me to review it, which I'll do with great pleasure. It was a terrible blow, because she was, in a way, the most successful of all the girls because she'd come back, hadn't she? They'd called her back on **The Sarah Jane Adventures**. But she was always so reserved, you know, and terribly discreet, and she had been ill eight, nine years ago and beaten cancer but never mentioned that to me. Of course, she was the first girl I worked with, and we both came from Liverpool and she never forgot me. I was very touched when Brian, her husband, wrote to me recently in answer to my letter and said, 'And Lis had saved all your cards' which must have been a big box full because I wrote her a lot. I was very touched that she saved all my silly cards."

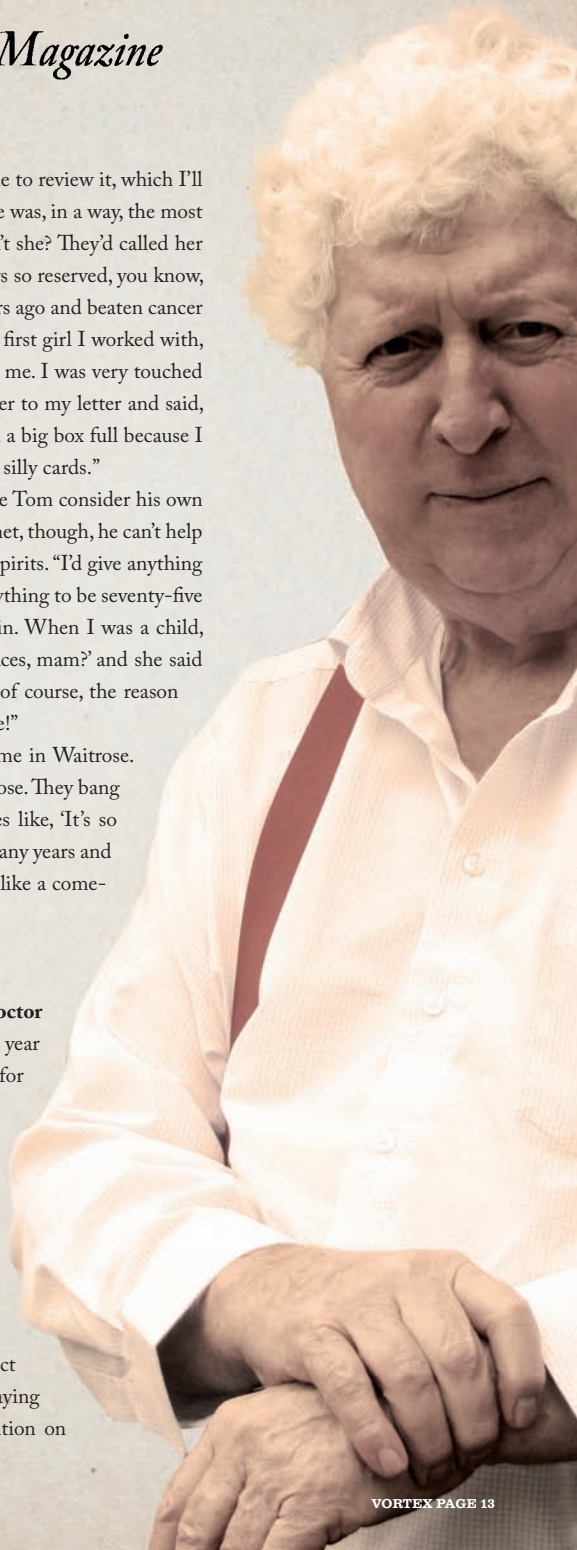
Elisabeth died aged sixty last year and it's clear it made Tom consider his own mortality. As one of the most life-loving men on the planet, though, he can't help but take such gloomy thoughts in good heart and high spirits. "I'd give anything to be only seventy again! Come to think of it, I'd give anything to be seventy-five again! I would! How amazing that is. Seventy-five again. When I was a child, I used to say to my mother, 'Why do old people pull faces, mam?' and she said 'Mind your own business' or something. Now I realise of course, the reason why they're pulling faces is they're all in pain; it's terrible!"

He grins. "Now, of course, old ladies make passes at me in Waitrose. Not Tesco – Waitrose. I'm a bit of a sex symbol in Waitrose. They bang into my trolley and sometimes say wonderful sentences like, 'It's so wonderful to see you. You know, I've been a widow for many years and live quite close by'. And I think to myself, 'That sounds like a come-on to me! Do you take sugar?'"

Absolutely splendid

Next year will be the fiftieth anniversary of **Doctor Who**, and Big Finish will be kicking off the year with a second series of new adventures for Tom. But could there be more in the pipeline? "I'm up for it; the only thing is they'd better get on with it!" he laughs. "I'm wondering actually if they could put a room here for me, or maybe a B&B over the road..."

"I'd love to be involved in [the anniversary]. They'd have to do something absolutely splendid; I mean, the obvious thing would be to try and get all the living Doctors together, even if it was only briefly. That would be terribly expensive, I suppose. I did suggest a project where all the Doctors were in one piece, you know, playing different parts. Unless they invented a kind of convention on



Gallifrey where there's an old people's home, with all these old Doctors bitching about each other, and references to various adventures, saying, 'He was always a liar, you know. I mean, the stories he used to tell us about the talons of Weng-Chiang, oh, terrible old phony...' and then cross-cutting with the various nurses going in and saying, 'Hello Doctor.'

Shattered

There's always a home for Tom at Big Finish, but the question everybody keeps asking is whether he'd return to the TV series. "Oh, I don't think so, no. I don't think so. Unless it was very witty. I wouldn't go back as a kind of figure of fun. Because I've physically changed so much and I'm now an ugly, shattered old man, I thought they should have invited me back as the Master. The idea being, which is logical, that Sherlock Holmes and Moriarty are really the same person; the villain and the hero, they don't exist one without the other. It would have been amazing, I would have thought, and amusing for the fans for the young Doctor looking at me now, thinking, 'I find it kind of disturbing really, because he knows something about me that I don't really know. Sarah Jane had better look out for this one; he looks dangerous.' It could be all that kind of sadistic glee, because villains have got to be full of glee as well. You've got to love villains because they provide all the entertainment.

"I thought they should have invited me back as the Master."

"Maybe they'll ask me to do something; a little cameo for the fiftieth. I mean, it'd be incredible, wouldn't it, if I was playing a guard on a train, and I'd say 'Tickets please' and it's Paul McGann, you know? And I'd say 'Thank you, sir. Nice day. Everything all right sir? You busy these days?' and onto the next one and it's Peter [Davison], and so on and so on. Then when I get off at the end and I'm taking my little machine out, there's the driver and it's Colin [Baker]. In fact, you could repeat that sketch ad infinitum in all sorts of things – a people carrier arriving, getting off an aeroplane. And of course we could do wonderful group pictures, couldn't we?"

But there's one thing above all that Tom feels **Doctor Who** needs. "The fans like it upbeat; they don't like it too dark because it's about fun. It's got to be heroic and fun and uplifting and you're on the side of the Doctor, and the pleasure of the villain being vanquished and the girl being lovely." And with that happy image, we leave the Fourth Doctor to return to his vanquishing. Long may he continue. *Vortex*

BFPi



Exciting audio adventures in time and space...

The Doctor TOM BAKER
Leela..... LOUISE JAMESON

6.05pm **Doctor Who** *The Renaissance Man*

A two-part story by **JUSTIN RICHARDS**

Part One: To continue Leela's education, the Doctor promises to take her to the famous Morovian Museum. But the TARDIS lands instead in a quiet English village, where they meet the enigmatic collector Harcourt and his family. But there's something sinister going on within the walls of Harcourt's manor, and the stakes are higher than they can imagine.

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THE WRATH OF THE ICENI
OUT: MARCH 2012



ENERGY OF THE DALEKS
OUT: APRIL 2012



**TRAIL OF
THE WHITE WORM**
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THE OSEIDON ADVENTURE
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FORTHCOMING RELEASES

FEBRUARY 2012

Doctor Who: *The Fourth Wall*

(157, Sixth Doctor and Flip)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:

The Renaissance Man (1.2, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Selachian Gambit (6.08, Second Doctor)

Bernice Summerfield *Box Set 2: Road Trip*

Bernice Summerfield: *The Weather on*

Versimmon by Matthew Griffiths (Book)

Blake's 7: *The Liberator Chronicles – Box Set 1*

Graceless : *Series 2 Box Set*

Dark Shadows 22: *The Voodoo Amulet*

MARCH 2012

Doctor Who: *Wirrn Isle* (158, Sixth Doctor and Flip)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:

The Wrath of the Icen

(1.3, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

Binary (6.09, Third Doctor)

Jago and Litefoot: *Series 4 Box Set*

(Four full cast adventures)

Everyone's Just So So Special

by Robert Shearman (paperback)

Dark Shadows 23: *The House by the Sea*

APRIL 2012

Doctor Who: *The Emerald Tiger*

(159, Fifth Doctor, Tegan, Turlough and Nyssa)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:

Energy of the Daleks (1.4, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Wanderer (6.10, First Doctor)

Sherlock Holmes: *The Adventure of the*

Perfidious Mariner

Dark Shadows 24: *Dress Me in Dark Dreams*

MAY 2012

Doctor Who: *The Jupiter Conjunction*

(160, Fifth Doctor, Tegan, Turlough and Nyssa)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:

Trail of the White Worm

(1.5, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Jigsaw War (6.11, Second Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories:

The Guardians of Prophecy (3.4, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

Blake's 7: *The Forgotten* by Mark Wright and

Cavan Scott (Book)

Dark Shadows 25: *Deadhouse*

Stargate SG-1: *Series 3 Box Set, Part One*

JUNE 2012

Doctor Who: *The Butcher of Brisbane*

(161, Fifth Doctor, Tegan, Turlough and Nyssa)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:

The Oseidon Adventure (1.6, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Rings of Ikiria (6.12, Third Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *Power Play*

(3.5, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

Dark Shadows 26: *The Fall of the House of Trask*

JULY 2012

Doctor Who: *Protect and Survive*

(162, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Alchemists (7.01, First Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *The First*

Sontarans (3.6, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

Counter-Measures: *Series 1 Box Set*

(Four full cast adventures)

Dark Shadows 27: TBA

AUGUST 2012

Doctor Who: *Black and White*

(163, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Uncertainty Principle (7.02, Second Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *The Masters of*

Luxor (3.7, First Doctor, Ian, Susan and Barbara)

Irish Wildthyme: *Series 3 Box Set*

(Three full cast adventures)

Blake's 7: *The Liberator Chronicles – Box Set 2*

Dark Shadows 28: TBA

Stargate SG-1: *Series 3 Box Set, Part Two*

SEPTEMBER 2012

Doctor Who: *Gods and Monsters*

(164, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)

Doctor Who: *The Burning Prince* (165, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

Project Nirvana (7.03, Seventh Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories:

The Rosemariners (3.8, Second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe)

Bernice Summerfield *Box Set 3: Legion*

Bernice Summerfield: *Legion tie-in book*

(title TBA)

Dark Shadows 29: TBA

OCTOBER 2012

Doctor Who: *The Orpheus Pulse* (166, TBA)

Doctor Who – U.N.I.T.: *Dominion*

(Seventh Doctor, Raine and Klein)

Doctor Who Special: *Love and War* (Seventh

Doctor, Ace and Benny)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Last Post (7.04, Doctor TBA)

Dark Shadows 30: TBA

NOVEMBER 2012

Doctor Who: *The Castle at the End of the*

World (167, TBA)

Doctor Who: The Eighth Doctor Box Set

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

TBA (7.05, First Doctor)

Blake's 7: *Book 2*

Dark Shadows 31: TBA



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VORTEX MAIL

WRITE TO: FEEDBACK@BIGFINISH.COM

I have been a subscriber since the beginning of Big Finish with the earliest **Bernice Summerfield** audios, and wrote to you after the **Companion Chronicles** Jago and Litefoot adventure. I wondered how you could top that effort.

Jago and Litefoot series three made my Christmas week a wonderful time with those remarkable characters and the amazing actors, Mr Benjamin and Mr Baxter. The joy these men and the whole supporting cast bring to your recordings is a tribute to your common genius and to your entire team that brings pleasure to so many fans.

I thank you as a long time **Doctor Who** fan and theatre aficionado. I wish you a successful, productive and happy new year, and many more.

JON SCHMEYER

NICK: Thanks, Jon. This kind of email warms the cockles of our hearts.

Thank you for producing such a great version of *Hound of the Baskervilles*. It's really fantastic that such a well-known story can be so atmospheric and gripping! The perfect antidote to festive overindulgence! Looking forward to more **Sherlock Holmes** in 2012!

ROBIN ROWLES

NICK: Glad you enjoyed Richard Dinnick's great adaptation. I set out to make it as authentic as possible. And Martin Montague has done some incredibly atmospheric sound design, with great music from Jamie Robertson.

I just wanted to say that it was fantastic to hear Honor Blackman on *The Children of Seth*.

Did you know she co-authored a book on self-defence back in the Sixties? I read it and it was quite good. Thankfully, I never needed to use any of the judo it taught. Best wishes for the new year and I hope your subscriber list doubles this year.

BILL SHAW

NICK: Nice to know that Honor could potentially help you to get out of sticky situations.

I just wanted to thank you for having such an amazing download service. I've bought a few BF audios over the years, and recently had a hard drive crash that caused me to lose most of my files. I was pleasantly surprised to find everything I'd purchased could be re-downloaded for no charge. I'm unbelievably happy right now! Thank you, thank you! You guys are top notch!

RYAN SCHICK

NICK: This is something that our web editor, Paul Wilson, established right from the beginning. He's done such great work for us.

I'm just making an enquiry into my order, the Fourth Doctor series one CD bundle.

I've ordered the series as CDs, but it's also showing in my account that I can download it as well. Is that correct? Does ordering the CDs allow me to download them as well, or is it an error?

PAUL LENKIC

NICK: That's right. A CD purchase from Big Finish entitles you to a free download of the story as well. Are we crazy or what?

I just downloaded the 156th original Big Finish **Doctor Who** audio. Now I know I won't be the first to mention it, but now that you've told more individual stories than the entire twenty-six season original series, I would like to tip my hat to you and your accomplishment.

As someone who owns all of the above (thanks to the missing episodes existing as audio stories), I would also like to add how much I've appreciated every story and what a joy it is to listen to every one.

I'm a long time listener and have enjoyed your work for years but the Fourth Doctor was my Doctor as a boy and so to have these episodes be so strong and enjoyable brought me joy that really overwhelmed me. That said, it's not the best bit.

The best bit is that I have a seven-year-old daughter. Her Doctor is obviously Matt Smith and while I've got her to listen to audio adventures and she's enjoyed them, they haven't had quite the impact that Matt does. At least, they hadn't until she finished her second Tom Baker adventure. We'd just finished listening to *The Valley of Death* when she turned to me and said, 'I think the Fourth Doctor is my new favourite!' So thanks for that.

CRAIG FERNANDEZ

NICK: Wow, Craig... that is rather special, isn't it? And thanks for being such a loyal, dedicated listener. It's so easy for us to forget that there are so many people like you, when we look on the forums and trawl through vociferous complaints by about fifteen people who sound like the whole world moaning. Mind you, we mustn't get too carried away with the praise. Constructive criticism and our taking note of it has been one of the keys to BF's popularity and success.

I absolutely love your **Doctor Who** stories. I try to buy one download a month. I had a suggestion for the website that I think would make it convenient for people who regularly use it. More than likely, you are already working on this. It can't help to suggest. I wish the website had a save for later/wishlist feature. I hear wonderful reviews of your stories on many podcasts and come over to see what the details are. I wish I could put it in a wishlist for when I have money to purchase it later. I sometimes forget the title of the audio I want to buy or have to make lists and post them around my computer. A wishlist feature like audible.com has or a save for later feature like Emusic uses would be awesome.

SCOTT COLCORD

NICK: That is a brilliant idea. We will look into that.

I am curious to know if Big Finish plans on exploring more of the villains or even aliens/cultures used in **Doctor Who** under Big Finish productions in a series or one-shots in a manner similar to the **Cyberman** and **Dalek Empire** mini-series?

In a non-**Who** related question, what is **The Scarifyers**? If there was a notation in one of the news postings on the Big Finish website about it, I may have not seen it.

One last question: knowing that Big Finish has a YouTube channel, has there been any consideration for occasional video interviews with some of the actors/actresses or even staff involved (such as whoever composes the music/backing sound used in each story) featured in Big Finish productions?

FRED ORTIZ

NICK: We're not really using our YouTube channel very well. There was quite negative reaction to the Tom Baker slide show we put up. Since I edit these things in my spare time, it's rather dampened my enthusiasm. I was putting together a little film about Chicago TARDIS, but the negative comments made me stop in my tracks. I'm just being a silly, sensitive old Hector, I guess. **The Scarifyers** is a great, spoofish, sci-fi supernatural series starring the late, great Nick Courtney with Terry Molloy and loads of other stars, including Brian Blessed and David Warner. As for the stories about monsters without the Doctor present, these have proved less popular and not really financially viable. Anyway, have fun with **The Scarifyers**!

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ROAD WARRIOR

**Benny herself,
LISA BOWERMAN,
discusses nuns, a
trip to Weatherfield,
revisiting Benny's
beginnings and
the new *Bernice
Summerfield* box set,
*Road Trip***

*Hello Lisa. Where do we find Benny at the start of *Road Trip*?*

● I really have to wrack my brains on this one; a lot of the **Benny** audios have been recorded out of sequence, and actually rather a long time ago now! The last we heard is that she'd been in stasis, and when she came out of it, had received a message from 'someone' (spoilers!) to inform her of her son Peter's whereabouts. *Road Trip* pretty much says it all in the title!

*How has she been changed by her experiences in *Epoch*?*

● As ever with Benny, any experience is grist to the mill. The one thing she knows now is that she

can't necessarily trust what she thinks is reality. The driving force of pretty much the first two box sets has always been her continued journey to find Peter. Having said that, the reality she thinks she knows keeps shifting – so every time she makes progress something gets in the way. Very much a case of one step forward, two steps back.

How is the relationship developing between Benny and Ruth?

● I think it really works. It's becoming more of a mother/daughter relationship, but that's not to say that Ruth hasn't a mind of her own – and isn't above putting Benny in her place if she gets carried away. The fact is, they're almost family now, and have become really reliant on each other. Certainly Benny is very protective of Ruth – and there's a real emotional bond there.

There are some great guest stars in this box set; who were your favourites?

● We've had an amazing range of people in. I was delighted to see Arthur Darvill again; he's one of those actors I've had on my radar for some time. I met him first when he was at drama school – and I'd taken his photos. I'd subsequently seen him in a show at RADA, when I went along with Wendy Padbury, who was talent spotting at the time for her agency. Then a few years later, once he'd been snatched up by **Doctor Who**, bumped into him again at a convention – like you do. So to actually get him in for a part (especially now he's so in demand) was a real coup. It goes without saying; he was really good.

Jacqueline King is also another friend (my brother's known her for years) – and I was delighted that she said yes to taking part. Maria Von Trapp has

nothing on her; you'll see what I mean when you hear the story!

I've also got to put a word in for the wonderful Roger Hammond, who's an actor I've been a big fan of for years – it was a real thrill to have him in!

As ever, it's just lovely to have people in that you know, so having India Fisher around was a blast.

Then new faces in Anjali Mohindra from **The**

Sarah Jane Adventures, even 'H' from Steps!!! As they say, wot larks!

"This is going to be a real treat... To actually get a chance to perform the Doctor and Ace's very first encounter with Benny."

The box sets have freshened Benny up and brought her a new audience; how would you convince those still on the fence to take a punt on everyone's favourite intergalactic archaeologist?

● Of course I'm biased, but I truly believe that the **Benny** series

has a bit of everything. The whole joy of

the character is that she isn't superhuman – she has weaknesses as well as strengths. To get out of awkward situations she has to use her wits, which is invariably a mixture of humour and pragmatism. Certainly in the new launch she's very much back to her archaeological roots. I think a bit of that got lost in the last few years. I also know that [producers] Gary Russell and Scott Handcock were also very keen to get back to the old strapline of 'Science fiction has never been so much fun'. There's intrigue and suspense, there's aliens, there's space ships, there's nuns! What more do you want? (Also the boxes look lovely – thanks to Alex Mallinson!)

You're about to record an adaptation of the New Adventures book *Love and War*; how does it feel to be returning to the beginning of Benny?

● This is going to be a real treat. Not only because Sylv and Sophie are so great to work with, but to actually get a chance to perform the Doctor and

Ace's very first encounter with Benny. I'm ashamed to say I've never read the book, but what struck me about the script is how consistent Benny is with everything I've known about the character since.



You've recently appeared on Coronation Street; how was soap life?

● I'm just about to go back to do my fifth episode, which I think is my last. Actually, I'm quite sad about that (I would say that, wouldn't I?), but despite the fact that working on soaps is horribly quick, everyone up at Granada have been really lovely to work with. There's a communal green room with hot and cold running food, and everyone who happens to be in there at the time, no matter what their position on the programme or whether you're working with them or not, comes and says hello and welcomes you to the show. That's quite rare on a show which has been going that long!

What projects are you most excited about at the moment?

● A project we've done recently – to help celebrate Benny's twentieth birthday and also recorded for charity – has been really enjoyable. Written by some of my favourite writers, it's a sort of portmanteau of stories.

Away from my **Benny** duties though, I'm genuinely excited about the new **Blake's 7** box sets, which I've been directing. What a great cast they were! We've also had some really brilliant scripts. I'm just about to go into post-production on the new **Stargate** box set, which again, we managed to gather a really great cast for. And, of course, the prospect of completing post-production on **Jago & Litefoot**.

What a joy! **VORTEX**

Group photo clockwise from top left: Roger Hammond, Paul Jones, Christopher Cooper, Robbie Lester, Anjli Mohindra, Lisa Bowerman and Ayesha Antoine

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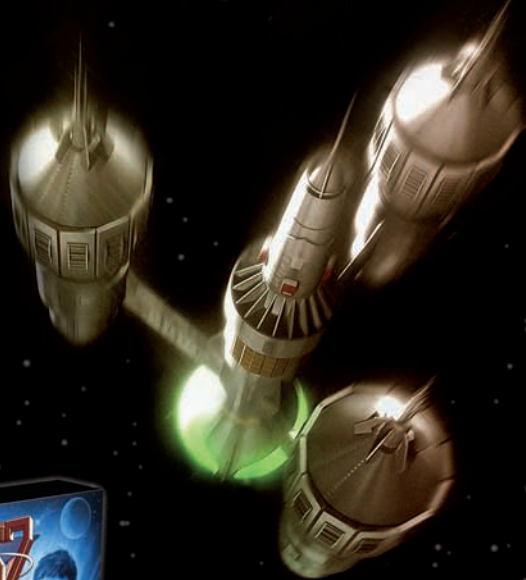
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