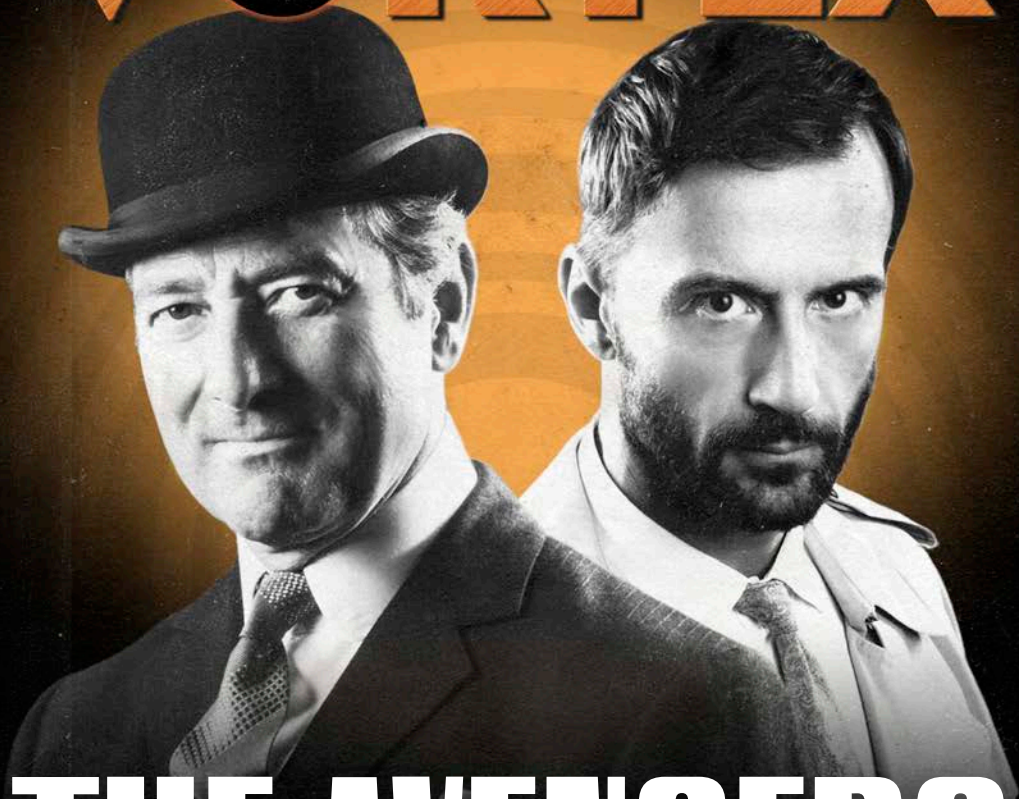


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# VORTEX



# THE AVENGERS

JULIAN WADHAM ON BEING STEED!

**PLUS! DOCTOR WHO: COLIN BAKER**  
**FOURTH DOCTOR SERIES THREE PREVIEW**  
**BLAKE'S 7: GARETH THOMAS**

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ISSUE 59 • JANUARY 2014

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THE LIFE AND  
CAREER OF  
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## SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS

### CHARLOTTE POLLARD BOX SET

**T**he Edwardian adventuress finally strikes out on her own! Yes, Charlotte Pollard is back. The woman who caused the web of time to unravel when she escaped her destiny on the R101 airship is now Doctor-less and seeking brand new adventures – but what will her current ‘employers’ the Viyrans have to say about that?

The wonderful India Fisher returns to the role she’s been playing since 2001’s first Big Finish Eighth Doctor adventure, *Storm Warning* – and there’s quite a ride in store for her! Picking up the threads from her last *Doctor Who* main range appearance in *Blue Forgotten Planet*, the first **Charlotte Pollard** box set contains four stories of dashing heroism and intergalactic adventure.

What is the Ever-and-Ever Proximity? What danger does the Lamentation Cipher bring? Will Charley ever see her family and friends again? And how can she bestride the universe without a TARDIS to hand? All these questions and more are answered in *May* when the box set is released, and starring alongside India Fisher you’ll also hear Michael Maloney (**The White Queen**, **The Iron Lady**), Louise Brealey (**Sherlock**), Terrence Hardiman (**The Demon Headmaster**), Jacqueline King (Donna’s mum in TV *Doctor Who*) and some other familiar names we’re not quite ready to reveal yet...

# EDITORIAL

**I**t’s a bit of an odd time to be writing an editorial. It’s Christmas Eve for me, but you chaps will be reading this in January after the seasonal celebrations have ended and it’ll all be old news. Presents will be neatly put away, stockings taken down and trees will be looking a bit bare. I’m also not feeling too brilliant after a stomach bug knocked me for at least six (closer to nine, frankly) last weekend. Good timing, huh?

But this isn’t the time for moaning! This is a time for looking onwards and upwards! I think it’s safe to say Big Finish had a rather good year all round in 2013; there were many popular releases, some neat little twists and turns we hope you didn’t see coming and, of course, that anniversary you might be tired of hearing about by now. Huge thanks to everyone for all the feedback we’ve had over the year (the vast majority of it positive) and for supporting us through the year.

If you thought we’d be taking this year quietly, don’t you worry! We’re kicking off with a strong trilogy of adventures for the Sixth Doctor and Flip in the main range, closely followed by the much-anticipated return of the Eighth Doctor and his canonical companion Molly in *Dark Eyes 2* come February. Also coming soon is the conclusion to eight – count ‘em! – series of **Companion Chronicles** and the launch of new range **The Early Adventures**.

Charley Pollard finally takes the lead in her first box set (find out more over to the left), we get up and running with our first full cast run of **Blake’s 7** adventures, and there’s more from **Dark Shadows**, **Counter-Measures** and **Jago & Litefoot**. And let’s not overlook our two big new series launches this year, starting with this month’s **The Avengers**. Launch yourself back into that special era of the Sixties with Keel and Steed as they fight for what’s right. And later in the year, we revisit and revitalise the Terry Nation favourite **Survivors**. We’re proud of what we’ve produced so far but wait until you hear what comes next. It’ll blow your ears off...

Right then, I’d better have a quick Christmas. Happy new year!

### PAUL SPRAGG

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# TRUSTY STEED

**THE AVENGERS ARE BACK!** RETURNING TO THE ORIGINS OF THE MUCH-LOVED SPY SERIES VIA ITS ORIGINAL FIRST SERIES SCRIPTS, BIG FINISH'S JOHN STEED, JULIAN WADHAM, TELLS PAUL SPRAGG OF HIS DELIGHT AT GIVING THE CHARACTER NEW LIFE

Hello Julian. How excited were you to get 'the call' from David Richardson?

■ Oh, really excited. For two reasons: firstly, **The Avengers** is exactly the era in which I was growing up. I was born in 1958 so I sat there and watched these original programmes, and I can still remember the thrill and the style of those programmes. And of course John Steed deservedly became an iconic figure and I remember very clearly the jaunty angle of his hat and the sense of humour and the smile and the seductive eyes – although, of course, at that age I wouldn't have realized that's what they were! So I remember the original performance and the programme with great affection. The other reason I remember it with great affection

is because my father, who was a wonderful man, worked in the city. He would leave every day wearing a bowler hat so the whole thing is very evocative to me of my childhood.

Did you ever offer to get him a swordstick?

■ It's funny you should say that; at some point there must have been a vogue for them, because he was given a swordstick by a cousin!

You're following in the footsteps of two previous Steeds: Patrick Macnee and Ralph Fiennes.

■ I'd forgotten, of course, Ralph Fiennes had played it. Was that for a film?

OUT THIS MONTH!



## THE AVENGERS - THE LOST EPISODES

Recreating the existing scripts on audio with a full cast of actors.

Discover, for the first time in over fifty years, the beginnings of a TV legend...

### HOT SNOW

Confronted with an apparently motiveless crime, David Keel feels compelled to investigate. His only hope may be a mysterious gentleman who appears to know more than he says.

### BROUGHT TO BOOK

Still on the trail of the men who wrecked his life, Dr Keel gets to know John Steed rather better as they infiltrate warring gangs running amok in the betting community.

### SQUARE ROOT OF EVIL

Steed goes undercover amongst a group of forgers. As the stakes get higher, his risk of discovery increases and Dr Keel may be his only chance to escape alive.

### ONE FOR THE MORTUARY

It should have been an easy day for David Keel. But John Steed's arrival disrupts everything, as usual. Our heroes find themselves enmeshed in an intricate web of laundry, taxidermy and murder.

## THE AVENGERS: JULIAN WADHAM

It was indeed. Were you worried by how closely associated the character is with Patrick Macnee?

■ The thing I think I share with Patrick Macnee is I certainly have an affectionate regard on life and it seems to me that he did. And there's something about the twinkle in his eye and the smile that is a pleasure to replicate. And that is the only thing that I would particularly want to replicate. I think if you approach a part that other people have played before, you really want to run in the opposite direction; I certainly do. And then you let the part come to you through your understanding of the scripts. It's nice that we're playing the original scripts. This really is the Sixties that we're reading, it's not a contrivance. These are the authentic, original documents.

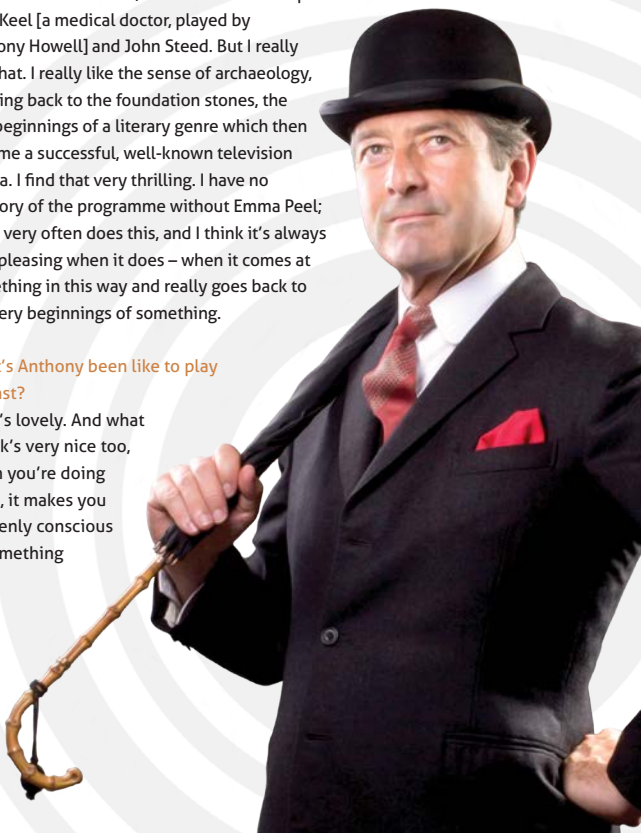
**“THIS REALLY IS THE SIXTIES THAT WE’RE READING, IT’S NOT A CONTRIVANCE. THESE ARE THE AUTHENTIC, ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.”**

How do these stories compare with the *Avengers* that came later?

■ Well, the biggest change, of course, is the absence of Emma Peel. But at this point she's not in them; the main relationship is Dr Keel [a medical doctor, played by Anthony Howell] and John Steed. But I really like that. I really like the sense of archaeology, of going back to the foundation stones, the real beginnings of a literary genre which then became a successful, well-known television drama. I find that very thrilling. I have no memory of the programme without Emma Peel; radio very often does this, and I think it's always very pleasing when it does – when it comes at something in this way and really goes back to the very beginnings of something.

What's Anthony been like to play against?

■ He's lovely. And what I think's very nice too, when you're doing radio, it makes you suddenly conscious of something



Below: Anthony Howell, David Richardson and Julian Wadham



## “I HADN'T REALIZED UNTIL PLAYING THIS PART OF HOW PERSISTENT A WOMANISER [STEED] SEEMS TO BE!”

And there's even a line in one of the **Avengers** scripts where Steed introduces himself as 'Steed, John Steed'. Which is fascinating, to see how **The Avengers'** success was possibly picked up by the creators of the **Bond** movies and emulated in their films.

I hadn't realized until playing this part of how persistent a womaniser he seems to be! I think it's okay though; in fact, I'm really enjoying it. I think from the way it's written it's kind of implicit that he's as liked by women as he likes them. Otherwise he'd just be a nuisance!



He does seem quite respectful of women; certainly he seemed to have a respect for Mrs Peel's marriage even while flirting with her.

■ Yes, I think that's absolutely right. It's nice looking back on a kind of age of innocence in a way; I can't remember who it was who said sex was invented in the Sixties; certainly contraception and all the rest of it seemed to come along in the Sixties so there was something about the Sixties that was sexy and exciting. But there was also,

certainly from our perspective now, a lovely innocence and I think the series captures that.

We live in an age where, for example, the prime minister is talking openly about the censorship of pornography on the internet; we are very immersed in a rather cynical culture. Capitalistic, obsessed with money, obsessed with sex. There are not many innocent pleasures left and I think that its great virtue as a programme is that it's going back to a more innocent age, looking forward to a more hopeful future.

What would you say to bring in someone who'd never encountered **The Avengers** before?

■ Gosh, you ask challenging questions! In the battle between good and evil, The Avengers, without being superheroes in the comic strip, Superman kind of mould, they fly the same kind of flag. They are unashamedly on the side of good and justice, and they pursue that with tremendous style and flair. **VORTEX**

you've only been subliminally aware of previously, which is the different qualities of people's voices. And I think we work very well together, I think we're quite a good contrast of vocal range, so it's nice to work with someone who's nice in themselves but whose voice is a pleasure to listen to.

What's the relationship like between Steed and Keel?

■ Well, it's early days. It's a bit like Holmes and Watson. It's rather like going mining or something; you're going right back to the very lowest level where the role was just being created for the first time and you have to sort of feel your way into it. It's very interesting watching its evolution. I don't know where it'll go from here; this is the early stages.

Do you feel there's a different dynamic which comes from a male-male partnership than a male-female one?

■ Yes, and funnily enough that rather surprised me, because of course like probably ninety per cent of the public, I was anticipating a John Steed/Emma Peel kind of dynamic. John Steed, it seems, is the model for James Bond's flirtatiousness. Although the **James Bond** books were written before the **Avengers** series, the style in which John Steed flirts with every woman he comes in contact with is not something that was in the **Bond** books; apparently that was created for the films, which came after **The Avengers**.



STARRING JULIAN WADHAM AND ANTHONY HOWELL



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# SONTARANS TO ZYGONS

PRODUCER DAVID RICHARDSON PREVIEWS THE THIRD SERIES OF **FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES**



### 3.1 THE KING OF SONTAR

Guest Stars: **Dan Starkey, David Collings**

*"You will surrender to me! All of Sontar will surrender to me! Join my glorious cause or die!"*

Strang: the greatest Sontaran of

all. He is the clone that even the Sontarans fear. And even the Doctor may not be able to defeat him.

#### Why Should I Pick This Up?

A really exciting, action-packed script from John Dorney that begins with a bang and then throws the Doctor and Leela into a battle for their lives. Dan Starkey (Strax from the TV series) has a ball playing the meanest Sontaran ever, while David Collings is reunited with Tom and Louise having played opposite them previously in *The Robots of Death*. And, being a Dorney script, it delivers a big emotional punch too...



### 3.2 WHITE GHOSTS

Guest Star: **Virginia Hey**

*"Outside there is only dark. Not just ordinary dark. Leela, we're at the edge of the universe."*

Many people are afraid of the dark. But what if the dark is the safest place to be? Because when it is light, the White Ghosts come...

#### Why Should I Pick This Up?

Writer Alan Barnes takes the Fourth Doctor back to his scary, Hinchcliffe-esque roots in this claustrophobic chiller that might need to be listened to from behind the sofa. Fittingly, Philip visited the studio for the recording – and thus the idea of doing *Philip Hinchcliffe Presents* was born that day...



### 3.3 THE CROOKED MAN

Guest stars: **Neil Stuke, Sarah Smart**

*"It has the air of the gallows this place, the air of sacrifice. Death walks the streets here."*

Something evil is on the loose in the quiet English seaside town of Eastwold. Best lock your doors and bolt the windows... because The Crooked Man has arrived.

#### Why Should I Pick This Up?

Another winning script from John Dorney that will send chills down your spine and then have you quietly brushing away a tear...

There is also a cast to die for: Neil Stuke (Billy in BBC1's acclaimed legal drama *Silk*) and Sarah Smart (*At Home With the Braithwaites*, *Doctor Who: The Rebel Flesh* and *The Almost People*) make their Big Finish debuts, and are simply brilliant. Without a doubt, this is one of the season highlghts.



### 3.4 THE EVIL ONE

Guest stars: **Geoffrey Beevers, Michael Keating, Gareth Armstrong**

*"Miss Leela, you have been working for the Great Xaonan for many years. You are his most*

*valued and trusted employer."*

What happened to the passengers and crew of the Gigantic Class Cruiser Moray Rose? Red Calvert from Galactic Insurance has been sent to investigate... and discovers a man called the Doctor and his young savage companion...

#### Why Should I Pick This Up?

Any story that features the Fourth Doctor verbally sparring with the Master is always worth the price of admission, but Nick Briggs takes their relationship to a new level. This is a terrific adventure for Louise Jameson as Leela, and it touches upon a theme that will recur in this season... the fate of her father.

### 3.5 LAST OF THE COLOPHON

Guest stars: **Gareth Thomas, Jessica Martin**

*"This door wasn't designed to keep visitors out. It was designed to keep something in..."*

Near a ruined city on a lifeless grey rock, the Doctor and Leela meet a survey team from the third imperial consortium. But things are not always as they appear, and this world is not as dead as they once thought...

#### Why Should I Pick This Up?

Many of the best Fourth Doctor stories on TV were inspired by classic horror tales, and *Last of the Colophon* takes the same approach – we'll leave the source a mystery for now for fear of spoilers. Jonathan Morris delivers another tense and exciting script, while Tom Baker and **Blake's 7's** Gareth Thomas get to act together for the first time, and have the time of their lives...

### 3.6 DESTROY THE INFINITE

Guest stars: **Michael Fenton Stevens, David Sibley, Clive Mantle**

*"If we attack and destroy The Infinite, several hundred innocent victims will die. If we don't, billions will die. I don't relish the fact, but every life on that ship must be regarded as expendable."*

When the TARDIS lands on the planet Delafoss in the far future, the Doctor and Leela find themselves in the middle of a war between the Earth forces and the mighty Infinite Warriors...

#### Why Should I Pick This Up?

As listeners, we first met the Eminence and his Infinite Warriors in *The Seeds of War*, the Sixth Doctor story released in March 2013. The Doctor had encountered the Eminence before... and this is that meeting, which will establish a story arc that will become highly significant across a number of Big Finish **Doctor Who** stories over the next year.

### 3.7 THE ABANDONED

Guest star: **Stephanie Cole**

*"Can you feel it? It's beginning. The bridge is almost complete."*  
There are strangers aboard the TARDIS. The Doctor and Leela face a battle for the ship itself...

#### Why Should I Pick This Up?

Teaming up with her friend Nigel Fairs, Louise Jameson makes her **Doctor Who** writing debut with a script for the Fourth Doctor and Leela, which is set entirely aboard the TARDIS. And Louise has also brought in her **Tenko** co-star Stephanie Cole for a major guest role that is likely to be of great interest to fans, adding something quite significant to the **Doctor Who** canon.

### 3.8 ZYGON HUNT

Guest stars: **Michael Maloney, Gillian Kearney**

*"I've encountered them before. Their home planet became uninhabitable centuries ago. They had a plan to restructure Earth for colonization. I imagine the plan hasn't changed."*  
The TARDIS lands on an alien world that the Solar Knights have leased for their sport. But as they hunt creatures across the jungle, in the shadows the Zygons are watching...

#### Why Should I Pick This Up?

The long-awaited rematch between the Fourth Doctor and the Zygons – does it get more exciting than this? Interestingly, this story was written and recorded long before the Zygons returned to TV in *The Day of the Doctor*... but it's wonderful to see these most effective of **Doctor Who** monsters back in the public eye so much. **VORTEX**



# BLAKE'S BACK!

**This month sees the release of a new range of full cast Blake's 7 audios. And who better to chat to about it than Blake himself, aka Gareth Thomas, thought Paul Spragg...**

Hello Gareth. How's it been today?

■ Fine; it always is! The audio stuff's always great fun. And we finished an hour and a half early!

And you've had a proper reunion with the entire original Blake's 7 cast.

■ Oh, it's happened on and off since we did it. It's always great fun. We've met a lot at conventions, one or two of us have met at different times and every now and again we all

get together, though Jackie [Jacqueline Pearce, Servalan], I believe, is still in South Africa so she's not here. But otherwise, it's great! We always used to get on well together, which is what made the series great. We didn't have any troublemakers.

You've been working for Big Finish for some time now; how does this compare?

■ I love it. Now, at my age, I prefer audio work to anything



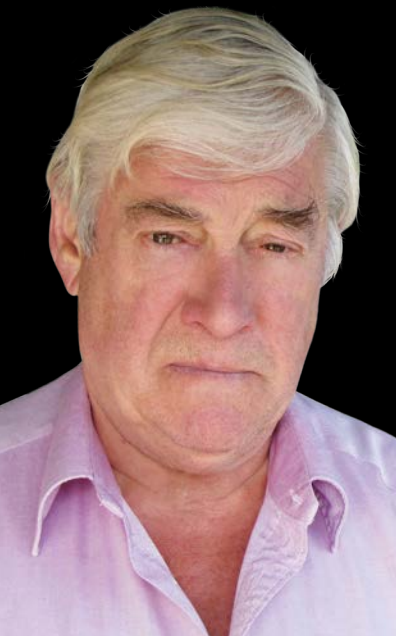
OUT THIS MONTH!

## BLAKE'S 7: FRACTURES

An attack by Travis and a squad of Federation pursuit ships leaves the *Liberator* damaged, its engines in desperate need of repair.

Blake is forced to take his ship into The Derelict Zone, which is filled with hundreds of drifting spacecraft that never made it out alive...

The same fate awaits his crew. Because the time long expected has come... one of them has turned traitor.



else, I think, actually. It's a bit more difficult to make a living at it, but I prefer it to anything else, yes. As far as Big Finish is concerned, they're a very fine audio company and I'm very happy to do any work for anybody that's worth working for, integrity-wise.

### What's the best part of doing full cast audios?

■ The appeal of having the whole lot is it's going back to the original series, which is what people remember. I think the audience should love it. They're all very different characters; interestingly enough I think the majority of us are actually very similar to what we were thirty-five years ago in terms of character. I don't think we've thought, 'Oh, I want to do so-and-so'; I think we've stuck with it. Really it comes down to the character, which is already there, and the writer. If the writer's written another side of the character, then I provide it. Otherwise I give Blake what Blake is, or has been so far. I don't think I should try to invent anything totally new. That's got to come from the writer. Well, I say it's got to come from the writer; it's got to be intimidated by the writer and allow me to expand. But otherwise I stick within the bounds.

## “The thing is, it was the Federation versus us and eventually one of them had to win!”

### How's it been returning to Blake?

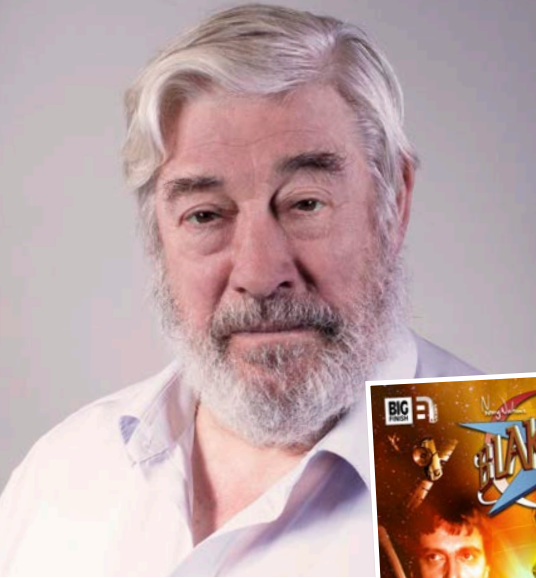
■ In many ways, he's never left! It's fun, it's work, it's meeting the old crowd, it's great. It doesn't particularly bother me whether it's Blake or not; I had great fun being the villain in one of Tom Baker's *Doctor Whos* [*Last of the Colophon*, coming soon]. That was great fun too. So returning to the character of Blake and everything else, yes, I suppose so but it's not doing anything massively new with it except a new story.

### You famously – perhaps surprisingly – left *Blake's 7* at the end of series two. Do you still feel that was the right decision?

■ Oh, it was the right decision to leave when I did, yes, as far as I was concerned. And it was right a) for them to ask me and b) for me to do the last episode. No, I think that was the right thing because you can't as anybody, actor or writer, get so hidebound that you can't actually move. It's slightly different for a writer because he can actually do two things at the same time; each story is a different story but my character is the same character. And there were various reasons why I left; most people know most of them, but I felt it was the right time to go, yes. And I'd done two series; we didn't know how long it was going to go on for. I had the feeling it would eventually end because the whole point about it is it was finite, and the other thing was that it was getting to the stage – unlike *Doctor Who*, where they go off to this planet and that planet, and *Star Trek* and they meet different monsters and different whatever's – *Blake's 7* was very rarely like that. Unless they went off to 'with one bound they were free' [stories]. I think it was

## BLAKE'S 7: GARETH THOMAS

Below: Gareth Thomas



the right thing to do. The thing is, it was the Federation versus us and eventually one of them had to win!

It's interesting to note that **Blake's 7** doesn't necessarily need a supporting cast each episode.

■ Yes, to a large extent. The other thing, of course, is that in audio you probably can't afford a large cast! And I don't mean that rudely, I don't mean Big Finish, I just mean audio; there isn't the amount of money in that that there is on television. You've got six of us, and that is a very reasonably-sized cast on most things so if you add two guests, that's eight, that's a fair-sized cast for an audio thing. I think it's the fact that you've already got six that you don't have too many others.

I can't think of another show with that amount of inbuilt conflict.

■ I can't, really. That was Terry, he was very clever setting all that up. It was a wonderful stroke of Terry Nation's to not only do that but to, at the same time, have a very good reason why they should all stick together. Avon, it's always been grudgingly admitted – but it has been admitted – that he admires Blake; Blake certainly admires Avon's

nerdness, which I think is the modern word: his [ability] with computers, knowledge and all that sort of thing, which Blake doesn't necessarily know at all. So they complement each other even if they argue. But they do recognize each other's need, which is a very clever thing of Terry's to have done. So you've got the niggles but you've also got the need.

There have been rumours of a **Blake's 7** revival. What are your feelings about a new series with a new cast?

■ The principle of someone redoing it doesn't bother me in the least! Good luck to 'em! I mean, the only thing wrong with the original was it was at a time of not very advanced television technology. Now, of course, if the Americans did it, it would be one and a half million pounds a programme, if not a lot more, and wonderful technology. David Maloney,

the producer, we were talking about money – we always talked about money – and of course whilst it was running it was known as bargain basement **Star Trek** and all this sort of thing, which didn't really mean that, what it meant was English and American money. And I mentioned this when we were discussing it, and David said, 'Well, it's not just British and American money; actually we are very annoyed about it because **Blake's 7**, with all the electronic effects and special effects, we get the same amount of money per episode as **Z-Cars**.'

I think it possibly did show a bit in some of the sets; they were well-designed but you couldn't make them solid. Nowadays that wouldn't happen. Nowadays money would be spent on it.

Who do you think would make a good new Blake?

■ I wouldn't have a clue, really. It would depend what they wanted. When **The New Avengers** wanted a new person very, very many years ago, my then-agent put me up for it and about a week after that he said, 'Well, they were very interested but they decided to cast somebody completely and utterly physically different to you' – and they cast Gareth Hunt! We could have played brothers, you know? Dark, curly hair, both by the name Gareth, both the same height. Not that it bothers me, but it's fascinating; why did they put out that they wanted someone completely physically different to me and then cast my almost televisual twin? So it would depend what the producers wanted. They might want a blue-eyed blond lead; who knows? **VORTEX**



Terry Nation's

# BLAKE'S 7



# BRAND NEW FULL CAST AUDIO ADVENTURES!

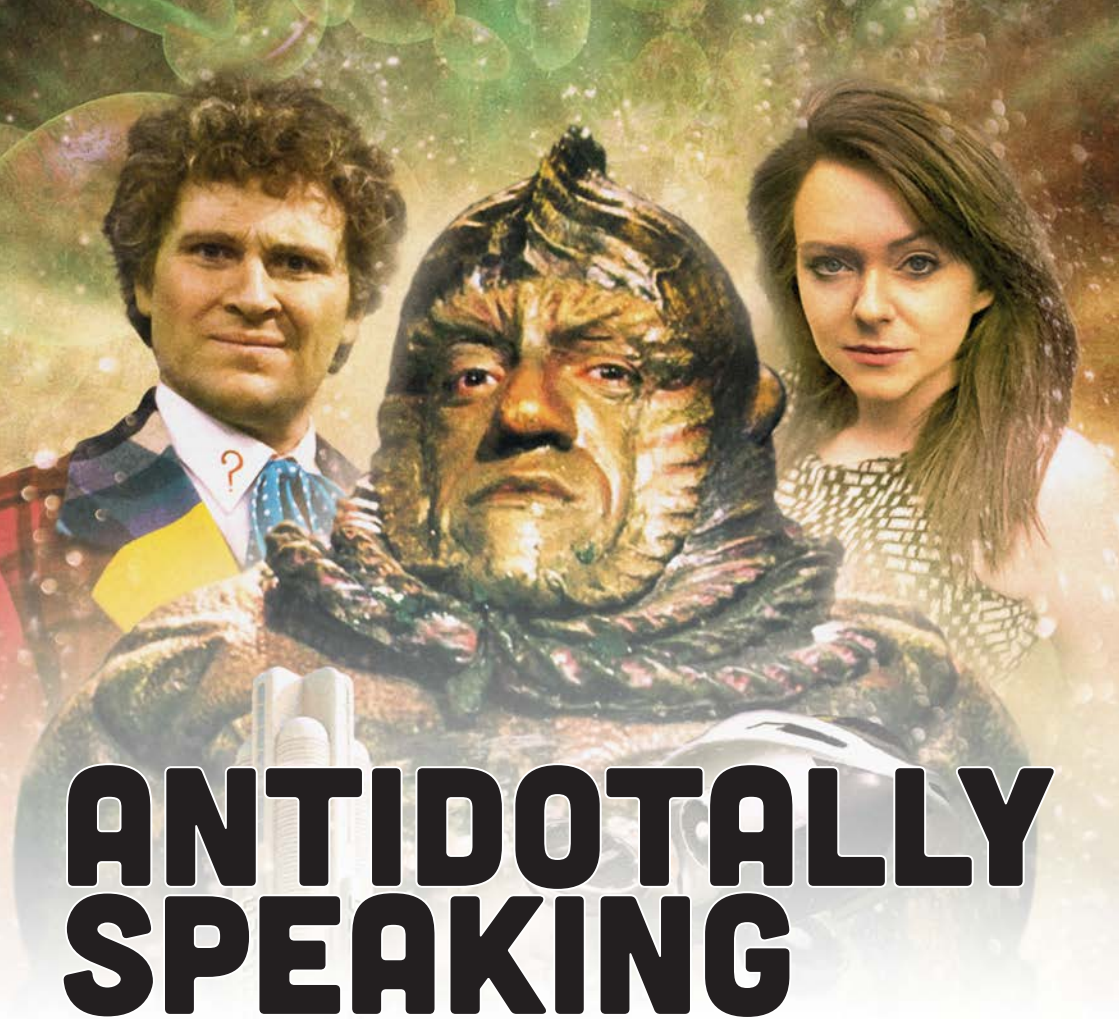
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# ANTIDOTALLY SPEAKING

**IT'S A NEW YEAR, IT MUST BE THE START OF A NEW TRILOGY OF TALES FOR SIXTH DOCTOR COLIN BAKER! PAUL SPRAGG ASKED HIM HOW THINGS WERE SHAPING UP FOR SIXIE AND FLIP THIS TIME OUT**

Welcome back, Colin. And you've brought Flip (Lisa Greenwood) along for the ride too!

■ I love Flip! She's such a little cracker. She's a little streetwise urchin, heart of gold, brain of an ant that gets bigger as the stories progress, and she's just such a lovely character and my Doctor's quite fond of her.

She gives him quite a runaround in these.

■ Yeah. The Doctor is having a little journey of his own so he takes his eye off the ball a bit with Flip, I think.

∴ There's definitely a bit of a sense of him being distracted by unfinished business.

∴ ■ Exactly. Exactly. I'll leave those who are hearing the trilogy to come to their own conclusions but it's very interesting.

∴ How's Lisa been?

∴ ■ Oh, she's great. She's a natural. She does what she does and she does it extremely well. She's just a great, confident, talented little girl – little girl? Don't patronize her, Colin, she's in her twenties!



**“NABIL IS ALWAYS GREAT. YOU KNOW WHAT THE GOODS ARE AND HE DELIVERS THEM IN SPADES.”**

She is tiny though.

■ She's tiny and as pretty as a picture and my daughter was in the other day, my twenty-one-year-old daughter, and they got on like a house on fire, which was lovely.

The first story in this trilogy, *Antidote to Oblivion*, brings back Sil (Nabil Shaban), under the aegis of his original creator, Philip Martin.

■ Good old Sil has returned and working with Nabil again; well, Nabil is always great. You know what the goods are and he delivers them in spades. That wonderful lubricious chuntering of glee, and [Sil]'s got even more callous and self-interested than he was in the two I did with him on television, and he's a great character. I love it when he turns up. All he's interested in is making a profit, to hell with everything else.

If anything, he's a character who seems more in tune with our times now than he did even back in the Eighties.

■ Yes, Sil would do very well in certain international corporations. For all that they talk about caring for the customer, I think the shareholder comes first.

Did you get the feeling that *Antidote* was quite a gruesome story in places?

■ It's not something that struck me, I must confess. I suppose [there's] the mere fact of having Sil in it and it's written by Philip Martin, and Philip Martin is the author of *Gangsters*, that wonderful violent series that I loved in the Seventies. Philip Martin does not shy away from man's physical inhumanity to man, so I suppose yes, that is true. I don't have that objective view; I just dive into a story and do 'what if I was the Doctor doing that'? So yes, you might well be right but I must confess I hadn't noticed it.



Below: Lisa Greenwood, Colin Baker and Nabil Shaban



Below: Lisa Greenwood, Nicholas Briggs and Colin Baker

What do you make of Sil himself these days?

■ He's amoral. But he's not 'bad'. Well, I suppose he is bad, really. But his prime motivation is Sil. I don't think... actually, he might go out and torture people for

the fun of it! Perhaps I'm being too kind to him. It's because he's entertaining that we forgive him some of his worst excesses. It's because he's funny. Funny and nasty is a winning combination.

It also brings back memories of that whole *Trial* season where the Doctor is confused because he was shown things which purported to be him from the Matrix, but of course he had no memory of it, and he had been affected by Crozier's mind probe, so he's not sure whether any of his memories are genuine. Therefore it is very confusing.

### “DOES TAKING A COMPANION FROM A CONTEMPORARY TIME MAKE THE DOCTOR CONTEMPORARY?”



Does playing alongside Flip enable the Sixth Doctor to be seen as existing outside his Eighties heyday?

■ I can't answer that! I'm sorry. That's far too externalised! As an actor, I just get in and do that story. I'll allow others to decide... it's too self-referential for me to be able to talk about that. All of science fiction moves forward with the knowledge of the world which exists when it was written, so some of it ends up being prophetic; some of it doesn't quite. You can only use what exists and imagine the future but you can't always get it right.

Flip is contemporary, but does taking a companion from a contemporary time make the Doctor contemporary? I don't

think it does, to be honest. One has conversations with people that are relative to the time that they have been plucked from, so I suppose in that sense the Doctor is relating to the present day.

How's this trilogy been overall?

■ They've been fun to do! They're very varied. And I'm a great fan of Andrew Smith, and his *Blood of Erys* script I enjoyed doing. Yes, it was a thumping good story; enjoyed doing it.

Was it nice to work alongside some Indian actors in as well, including Anjali Mohindra from *The Sarah Jane Adventures*?

■ It was lovely because they came in talking RP English and then started doing Indian accents, which was quite charming – and obviously doing them much better than we would if we'd tried to imitate Indian accents!. But very, very talented, young Anjali. What a clever girl she is. Really clever actress. She's excellent. **VORTEX**



### DOCTOR WHO: ANTIDOTE TO OBLIVION

Future Britain is bankrupt, its corporate owners facing financial ruin. Fortunately, the Universal Monetary Fund, and its slimy representative Sil, are willing to give its President a multi-billion credit bail-out... but terms and conditions apply, and Sil's proposed austerity measures go far beyond mere benefit cuts.

Responding to a distress call, the Doctor and his companion Flip land in a London whose pacified population has been driven largely underground. But the horrors down there in the dark are as nothing to the horrors that await them at ConCorp HQ, where a young biochemist in Sil's employ is working on a permanent solution to the nation's terminal unprofitability.

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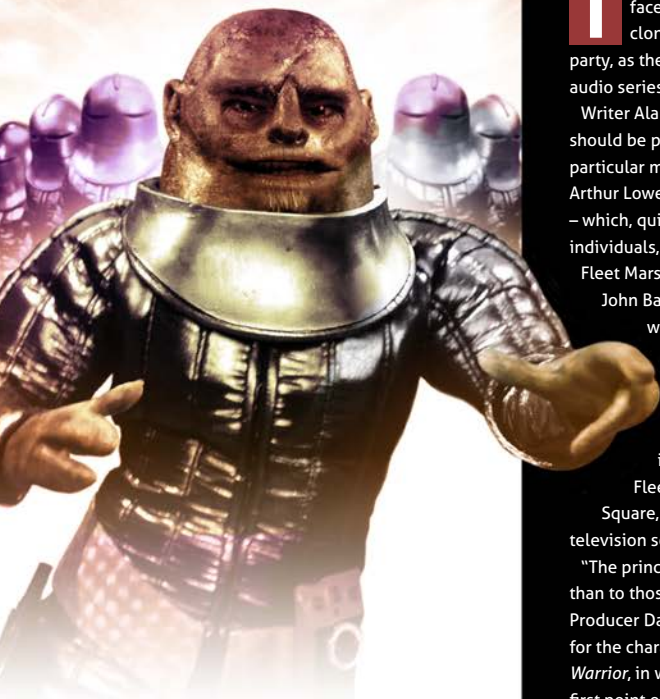
\* Doctor Who: Trial of the Valeyard only available to subscriptions that include the December 2013 Doctor Who Monthly Range release, and will remain exclusive to subscribers for one year. \*\* Where available.

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## LISTEN AGAIN: HEROES OF SONTAR

**KENNY SMITH REVISITS  
THE STORY IN WHICH  
THE SONTARANS PLANTED  
THEIR BOOTED FEET FIRMLY  
ON BIG FINISH...**

**T**his month sees the return of the Sontarans, when they face the Doctor and Leela in *The King of Sontar*. The cloned race were relative latecomers to the Big Finish party, as the last of the main classic monsters to appear in the audio series, first arriving in 2011.

Writer Alan Barnes says crafting the tale was "A joy. As should be pretty obvious, each was slightly based on a particular member of the *Dad's Army* platoon – Thurrr for Arthur Lowe, Mezz for John Le Mesurier, Venn for Ian Lavender – which, quite intentionally, forced me to write them as individuals, rather than generic monsters."

Fleet Marshal Stabb and Trooper Jorr were brought to life by John Banks. He recalls, "We had great fun working out who was meant to be whom and tried to lend the implied and sometimes explicit characteristics of our particular soldiers to the characters we were playing. I don't think it was explicitly stated in the script, but taking my cue from Alan Barnes' intentions, I thought that one of my characters, Fleet Marshal Stabb, should sound a bit like Captain Square, Mainwaring's great rival and adversary in the television series.

"The principal reference was to the original Sontarans rather than to those currently appearing in the television series. Producer David Richardson suggested taking a starting point for the characterisation from the television episode *The Time Warrior*, in which the Sontarans first appeared. So that was my first point of reference and I'm assuming David said the same to the other members of the company who were also to be playing Sontarans."

One of the most memorable moments of the play is the Sontaran marching song, with the actors playing the clones very quickly bonding.

"The words to the Sontaran marching song were provided by Alan Barnes, who had written them with a very strong, integral rhythm," says John. "As I remember, the process of creating the music was left to those of us playing Sontarans. We got together in the studio and, without much discussion, began to collectively chant the words, emphasising the rhythm. Duncan Wisbey took the lead and corralled the rest of us into agreeing on a 'tune'. Within a very short time – a matter of a few minutes – we had the whole thing down and were ready to record.

"I'm sure the familiarity we had with each other helped enormously when it came to devising the Sontaran marching song, and more generally when it came to having fun with our Sontaran characters."

He concludes, "I had a fantastic time recording *Heroes of Sontar* and the other plays in this sequence and, of course, working with such amazing people. We laughed a lot and enjoyed ourselves thoroughly – it really was a great team and a great time was had by all of us." **VORTEX**

As a long term fan of **Doctor Who**, not quite reaching fifty myself this year, but very nearly, and having been along for the whole of BF's fabulous adventure I thought now would be a good time to pass on my thanks to everyone involved in keeping the show alive during the 'dark' days.

I imagine over the years that you have had plenty of correspondence from the legions of my fellow fans. Speaking purely for myself though I cannot put adequately into words how gratefully your efforts are appreciated. These can in no small way be considered as driving the BBC to put it back on the screens where it rightly deserved to be and, in my humble opinion, the main reason we are all looking to celebrate the great milestone next week.

All of the featured Doctors have demonstrated their powers, but it is particularly a joy to see Paul and Colin building rounded interpretations given the limits of their TV portrayals of the Time Lord. Your writers, story developers, producers and directors have significantly contributed also to this wild journey.

Thank you also for all the spin-off and additional lines you have put together over the years. **Gallifrey** is simply stunning (you have to get Juliet Landau back, by the way – is Joss Whedon looking for a new home for **Buffy?**), **Davros** giving the evil genius a meaningful past and **Jago & Litefoot** allowing Christopher and Trevor to expand beyond the limits of *Talons*. Nick's Sherlock (and the other stories in the line) is another brilliant piece and certainly stands out amongst many of the actors who have attempted the well-known detective. Taking Benice Summerfield off the page and into the hands of Lisa (who has proved a brilliant director) was brave, but what an amazing move!

Here is wishing you many more years of success and I look forward to our continuing journey in the land of make believe.

**Stephen McNally**

**Nick:** Stephen, that's a really lovely email. Thanks so much for all that you say.

It's taken me two weeks since Dimensions to find time to concentrate on *The Light at the End*. Having now finished it I just want to offer my congratulations. It is a masterpiece,

entirely worthy of the fiftieth anniversary. A significant contribution from all the Doctors, a potentially-confusing temporal paradox handled with the right combination of mystery and explanation, superb presentation in the boxed set – what more can I add?

Well done, and thanks again for keeping the flame burning through the 'lost decade'!

**(Doctor) Joe McGinnis**

**Nick:** Thanks, Doctor! *The Light at the End* is the result of a huge collaboration. David Richardson and John Dorney came up with a great idea that inspired me to write it, all the actors did a brilliant job and Jamie Robertson's sound design and music was beautiful. I always count myself lucky to be working in such a great team.

Thank you to all at Big Finish. I have just finished listening to **Doctor Who: The Light at the End**, for the first time. I'm now listening to the interviews on the supplementary discs.

Thank you to Big Finish for treating a show, loved by many, with respect.

If an event, a TV show, an audio drama can make me feel emotional in some way, then the people involved have performed an amazing job.

I became teary-eyed, and there was a lump in my throat during the opening theme, anticipating and hoping what I was about to listen to wouldn't let me down. Then there were several times during the listening and finally at its conclusion, and even through the interviews, and as I write this, when there were some tears in my eyes.

Thank you for doing a multi-Doctor story to recognise fifty years. Thank you all for continuing the dream and the love and making me cry with joy for something that has been with me all my life (42 years).

**Anthony Woolley**

**Nick:** We do get emotional about our **Doctor Who**, don't we? I cried so much with sheer nostalgia during **An Adventure in Space and Time** that I ended up with conjunctivitis!

I just wanted to say, thrilled as I was to see Paul McGann return in *Night of the Doctor*, it was even better hearing the Eighth Doctor reel off the names of his Big Finish companions. I didn't need to be convinced you were canonical but this makes it a bit

more obvious to any floating voters. I was glad Colin gave Big Finish a mention in his interview too. There are a great many people who read *Vortex* and *DWM* and who buy your releases who are aware of the massive contribution you've made to **Doctor Who** over the years. Through those painful years when it seemed the TV series would never ever return, the Virgin book ranges and then Big Finish kept the good Doctor alive. I'm so glad you weathered those years and continue to innovate and entertain into these heady days. I'm boggled by the volume and the quality of what you've produced (I'm about a hundred releases behind on the monthly range and making a valiant attempt to catch up! I'm bang up to date on the Fourth and Eighth Doctor ranges, making inroads on the **Companion Chronicles** and the **Lost Stories**, etc)... I'd go as far as saying that Big Finish is one of the best things to ever happen to **Doctor Who** fans.

I just wanted to say a heartfelt thanks – and please keep it coming.

**Mark Bosley**

**Nick:** Thanks, Mark. As you say, we always were canonical, but *The Night of the Doctor* was a lovely treat from Steve Moffat. I knew it was happening, but it was only during the filming of *The Time of the Doctor* that Steve told me he'd taken the time to have Paul mention all his BF companions to date.

Can't wait for Big Finish Day 4 in Windsor in January. I just have one question: do you need a separate ticket for the Big Finish guests? I have one for a photo with one of the event's guests, Paul McGann, but there doesn't seem to be any option for a ticket with, for example, Tracey Childs or Nicholas Briggs, who will also be in attendance. Does this mean there is a looser approach, just general waiting in line, or am I missing something? This is my first event like this, so forgive my ignorance!

**Ian Manning**

**Nick:** As far as I'm aware, you certainly don't need a token to get my autograph, although I may be too busy to do a formal signing session. Going from past experience, the majority of signing sessions will just be a case of waiting in line, so nothing to worry about. We'd advise keeping an eye on the 10th Planet Events site to be sure, though.

# FORTHCOMING RELEASES



## JANUARY 2014

Doctor Who: **Antidote to Oblivion** (182, Sixth Doctor and Flip)  
Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:  
**The King of Sontar** (3.1, Fourth Doctor and Leela)  
Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:  
**Luna Romana** (8.07, Fourth Doctor)  
Blake's 7: **Fractures** (1.1, Full Cast)  
The Avengers – The Lost Episodes: **Volume 1** (Box Set)  
Pathfinder Legends: **Rise of the Runelords –  
Burnt Offerings** (1.1, Full Cast)  
The Confessions of Dorian Gray: **Series One and Two Box Set**

## FEBRUARY 2014

Doctor Who: **The Brood of Erys** (183, Sixth Doctor and Flip)  
Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:  
**White Ghosts** (3.2, Fourth Doctor and Leela)  
Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:  
**The Sleeping City** (8.08, First Doctor)  
Doctor Who: **Dark Eyes 2** (Eighth Doctor)  
Blake's 7: **The Liberator Chronicles – Box Set 7**  
Blake's 7: **Battleground** (1.2, Full Cast)  
Vienna: **Series One** (Box Set)  
Bernice Summerfield:  
**Adorable Illusion** (Missing Persons tie-in book)

## MARCH 2014

Doctor Who: **Scavenger** (184, Sixth Doctor and Flip)  
Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:  
**The Crooked Man** (3.3, Fourth Doctor and Leela)  
Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:  
**Starborn** (8.09, First Doctor)  
Blake's 7: **Drones** (1.3, Full Cast)  
Pathfinder Legends: **Rise of the Runelords –  
The Skinsaw Murders** (1.2, Full Cast)

## APRIL 2014

Doctor Who: **Moonflesh** (185, Fifth Doctor and Nyssa)  
Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:  
**The Evil One** (3.4, Fourth Doctor and Leela)  
Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:  
**The War to End All Wars** (8.10, First Doctor)  
Jago & Litefoot: **Series Seven Box Set**  
Blake's 7: **Mirror** (1.4, Full Cast)

## MAY 2014

Doctor Who: **Tomb Ship** (186, Fifth Doctor and Nyssa)  
Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:  
**Last of the Colophon** (3.5, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

## Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

**The Elixir of Doom** (8.11, Third Doctor)  
Blake's 7: **The Liberator Chronicles – Box Set 8**  
Blake's 7: **Cold Fury** (1.5, Full Cast)  
Blake's 7: **Novel 5** (Author TBA)  
Charlotte Pollard: **Box Set 1**  
Pathfinder Legends: **Rise of the Runelords –  
The Hook Mountain Massacre** (1.3, Full Cast)

## JUNE 2014

Doctor Who: **Masquerade** (187, Fifth Doctor and Nyssa)  
Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:  
**Destroy the Infinite** (3.6, Fourth Doctor and Leela)  
Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:  
**Second Chances** (8.12, Second Doctor)  
Survivors: **Series One Box Set**  
Blake's 7: **Caged** (1.6, Full Cast)

## JULY 2014

Doctor Who: **TBA** (188, TBA)  
Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:  
**The Abandoned** (3.7, Fourth Doctor and Leela)  
Counter-Measures: **Series 3** (Box Set)  
The Avengers – The Lost Episodes: **Volume 2** (Box Set)  
Pathfinder Legends: **Rise of the Runelords –  
Fortress of the Stone Giants** (1.4, Full Cast)

## AUGUST 2014

Doctor Who: **TBA** (189, TBA)  
Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:  
**Zygon Hunt** (3.8, Fourth Doctor and Leela)  
The Fifth Doctor Box Set  
(Fifth Doctor, Adric, Nyssa and Tegan)  
Blake's 7: **The Liberator Chronicles – Box Set 9**

## SEPTEMBER 2014

Doctor Who: **TBA** (190, TBA)  
Doctor Who: **TBA** (191, TBA)  
Doctor Who - The Early Adventures:  
**Domain of the Voord** (1.1, First Doctor)  
Pathfinder Legends: **Rise of the Runelords –  
Sins of the Saviors** (1.5, Full Cast)

## OCTOBER 2014

Doctor Who: **TBA** (192, TBA)  
Doctor Who - The Early Adventures:  
**The Doctor's Tale** (1.2, First Doctor)

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