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ISSUE #7 SEPTEMBER 2009  
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# VOL 1

THE BIG

## **JUDGE DREDD**

John Ainsworth takes us back to the Big Meg

## **BERNICE**

## **SUMMERFIELD**

Producer and scribe Eddie Robson interviewed

## **DOCTOR WHO**

Liz Shaw returns to the Companion Chronicles

# **CHARLEY SAYS...**

**INDIA FISHER  
CHATS ABOUT  
HER TIME IN  
THE TARDIS**

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**EDITORIAL**

Welcome to the Vortex!

Just a word to anyone who's reading this who bought it off eBay for forty quid or something ridiculous. You're an idiot! This is a free magazine. Not only will you get it for free when you buy a Big Finish CD, you can download a PDF of it from our site, [www.bigfinish.com](http://www.bigfinish.com). All back issues are available from the site. Why pay? Save your money for CDs, that's my advice.

And talking of free things, I just wanted to remind you that there's at least one free podcast available from Big Finish every month. Last month there were three! They're always packed with news and clips of upcoming productions as well as interviews with cast members, writers, directors and anyone else we can force in front of the microphone. You can stream

the audio on our site or download it. From time to time, there will be free story podcasts too. Some will feature *Doctor Who* short story readings, others will be re-releases of the *Doctor Who Magazine* freebie CD stories.

If you want to comment on anything featured in the podcasts, or just have your thoughts on Big Finish read out, you'll be in with a chance if you email your thoughts to [podcast@bigfinish.com](mailto:podcast@bigfinish.com).

I'm writing this in the control room of Moat Studios during the recording of the next season of Eighth Doctor stories. There's a new companion and some old monsters. Which reminds me, time to put my hissy voice on...

Nick Briggs - executive producer

**SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS**

**Doctor Who  
Plague of the Daleks**

The third and final story in the Stockbridge trilogy, in which the Doctor and Nyssa discover strange goings-on in the village's distant future. 'I thought this one was called *Village of the Damned!*' we hear you cry. And of course, it was. But things change, and titles more so. And while we initially wanted to keep the presence of the Daleks secret in this one for a while, now is the time to reveal them in all their glory. Daleks in Stockbridge! What more could you want?  
**AVAILABLE IN DECEMBER**

**Doctor Who  
Survival of the Fittest/  
Klein's Story**

The February 2010 *Doctor Who* release continues the story of the Seventh Doctor and Klein, now together as uneasy travelling companions. *Survival of the Fittest* is a three-part story by Jonathan Clements that takes them to a distant world where a whole species is endangered. It's accompanied by the one-parter *Klein's Story* by John Ainsworth and Lee Mansfield, which delivers exactly what it promises.  
**AVAILABLE IN FEBRUARY**

*Being plagued by the Daleks are David Dobson, Keith Barron, Sarah Sutton, Peter Davison and Susan Brown*

**Highlander - Season Two**

It's too early to give out release dates, but we can confirm that a second season of *Highlander* stories is now in development, with Paul Spragg taking over as producer and Jim Swallow as script editor. Once again, there will be four releases, although expect some rather different stories from this new batch. And we have some much-loved *Highlander* actors returning to their roles - more on this as soon as contracts are signed!



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# THE JIGSAW MAN



Simon Guerrier takes us on a tour of his twisted mind as he writes a Liz Shaw **Companion Chronicle**. But what will it be called?

**Thursday 26 March 2009** I'm in the Big Finish studio in a secret location in London, where I've just had my brain melted for the **Companion Chronicle** *The Drowned World*. It's the second of my stories featuring Jean Marsh as the First Doctor's friend Sara Kingdom. I nag producer David Richardson to let me write a third. He's sly and inscrutable, and suggests something else. Would I write a story for Liz Shaw?

David's idea is Liz returning to the scene of an earlier adventure with the Third Doctor. Perhaps, I scribble in my notebook later that day, she is 'working on technology bequeathed by the Martian ambassadors' – from the TV story *The Ambassadors of Death*. Or perhaps, I add, I should come up with something original. Hmm...

**Wednesday 1 April** Once we've heard that Caroline John is happy to reprise the role, I send David a 492-word outline. 'The Doctor is at odds with UNIT when he discovers they're seeking to exploit alien technologies,' it says, which David worries is a bit too **Torchwood**. Also, my ending covers some of the same ground as her previous **Companion Chronicle**, *The Blue Tooth* by Nigel Fairs.

So I have a cup of tea and a think, and send in a new, 1,229-word outline that afternoon. It's doing some of the same things but with a different monster and ending, which I won't spoil here. 'Yeah, getting there,' David replies. He wants the Doctor to be more intelligent and more involved in the solution to the story, and he thinks there should be a big battle between UNIT and the monster.

**Thursday 2 April** I send a proper, 1,583-word outline the next day. David doesn't like the title *The Spitting Image* – it makes him think of rubber puppets – but otherwise he's happy.

**Friday 3 April** 'No big concerns at all,' says script editor Jacqueline Rayner, but five things could be put better. I send back a revised version, now called *The Jigsaw Man* after a character in an old Judge Dredd adventure. David thinks that's a bit like the Sixth Doctor story *The Raincloud Man*, and doesn't like any of my other titles either. Admittedly, neither do I. David suggests *Shadow of the Past*.

**Wednesday 29 April** Outline approved, so David asks about deadlines. 'By the end of May?' I suggest, then remember I'll be away at my brother's wedding in Hungary. We agree a deadline of Monday 15 June.

**Sunday 10 May** Get cracking on the important research. Watch the DVD of Liz Shaw's first story, *Spearhead from Space*. She has degrees in physics and medicine. I don't. I'm going to need some help.

**Wednesday 13 May** Meeting at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich with their 'public astronomer', Marek Kukula. Turns out Marek is a big **Doctor Who** fan. This could be useful...

**Thursday 28 May** 'I could do with picking your brains about spaceships,' I email Marek. 'If a smallish, people-carrier-sized ship was to crash into the Pennines at about the time of *Ambassadors of Death*, would UNIT have been able to spot it in advance, and how much warning would they have got?'

Marek provides a detailed yet simply put answer that same afternoon. So, pushing my luck, I follow up with, 'What tests would hot Cambridge physicist Liz Shaw want to do on an alien spaceship?' Again, a response I can cut and paste into my script. Hooray! He can be my scientific advisor. That night, we go to see Toby Hadoke's show *Moths Ate My Doctor Who Scarf*, and I buy Marek much-deserved beer.

**Thursday 4 June** Seems a lot of this play is pinched from other people. Out on the tiles with a mate of mine who's just back from six months' soldiering in Afghanistan. We chat about some of the stuff he's been caught up in and he says something that becomes central to the character Liz tells her story to.

**Sunday 7 June** Up to my eyeballs in proofing and indexing **Bernice Summerfield: The Inside Story**. 'I could probably get Liz written next weekend in one big slog,' I tell David, 'but I'd rather give myself another couple of days. Can I extend the deadline to Friday 19 June?' He is merciful and agrees.

**Thursday 18 June** I send David the first draft of the script, suggesting yet another title – this time *Starting From Scratch*. 'Thanks,' says David. 'I bet it's rubbish.'

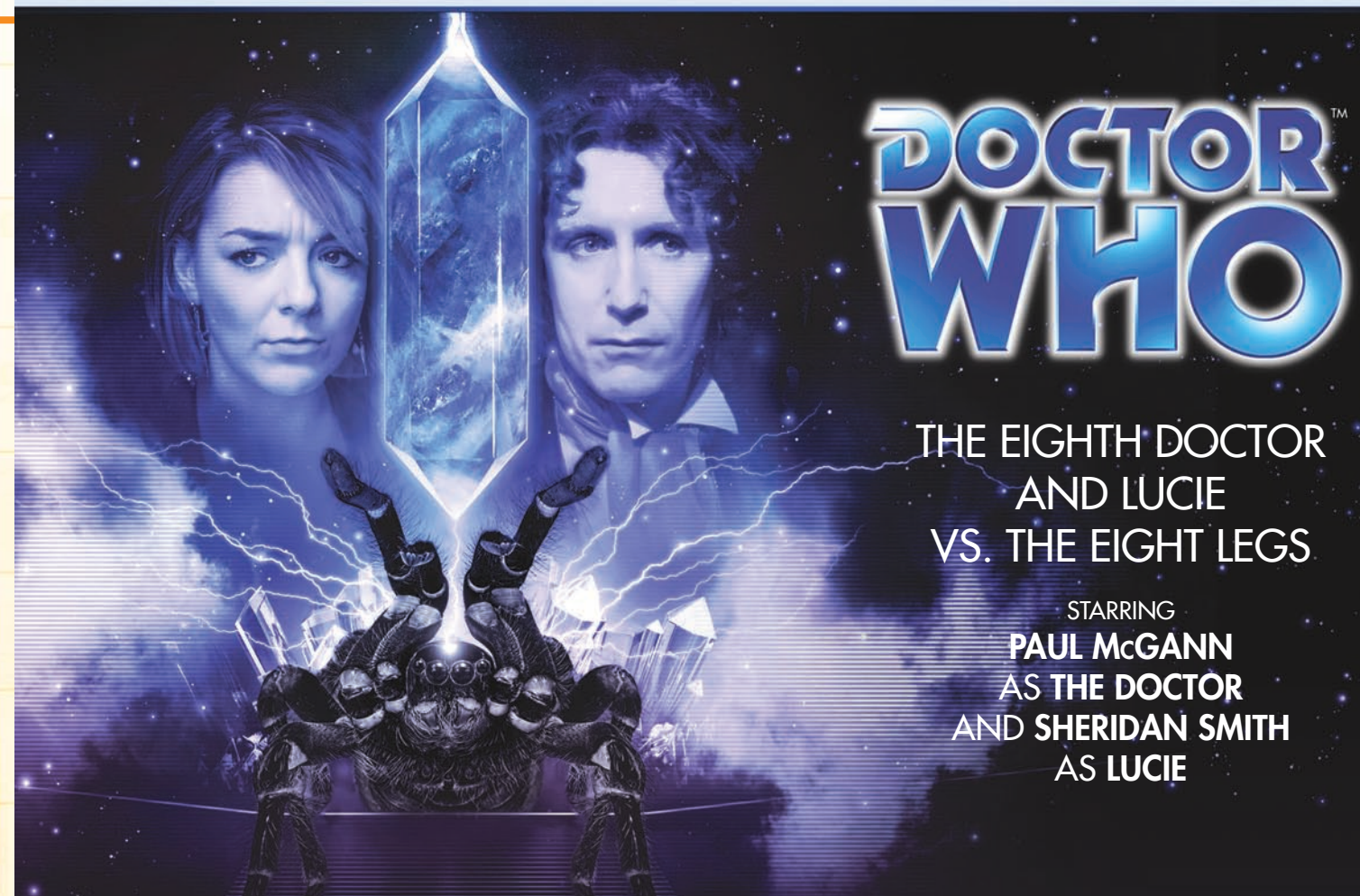
**Saturday 20 June** David provides notes. He's concerned Liz is not sounding enough like Liz, so I put on my DVD of *Inferno* while working on his other notes. We need the script finished and approved quickly so it can be recorded in early August. 'That's fine,' I say, 'assuming Jac doesn't entirely hate every word of it.' David thinks she'll like the words 'the', 'it' and 'hello'.

**Friday 26 June** Jac loves the story, but would 'just like a few things clarified'. Some point-of-view stuff gets reworked. Liz no longer uses the word 'snuck' nor makes a reference to events in *The Five Doctors*. David and Jac make a couple more suggestions over the next few days.

**Monday 29 June** Version four of the script delivered to David. David snips one sentence that gets continuity wrong. Whoops.

**Tuesday 11 August** Fun day in the studio, cracking through the script. Lex Shrapnel patiently answers my questions about the **Thunderbirds** movie (he played John Tracy). Some serious talk about how to play the tone of the last few scenes. And I got two lots of pudding at lunch. Couldn't be happier. Hooray!

*Shadow of the Past* is out in March 2010



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# CHARLEY SAYS...

This month sees Charlotte 'Charley' Pollard's final two adventures (for now?) with the Sixth Doctor, *Paper Cuts* and *Blue Forgotten Planet*.

Paul Spragg had a chat with India Fisher about the illustrious career of everyone's favourite Edwardian adventuress.

You started out working with Paul McGann until a spot of time travel jiggery-pokery put you in the company of the Sixth Doctor. How's the change worked out? It's been really great, actually. It was a sad thing to leave McGann, and that was the end of an era, but actually, moving over to Colin has just been the most brilliant fun. He's such fun to work with and he's a lovely man and a very good actor. I like where Charley as a character has moved towards; she's got a bit older and wiser and she's had her heart broken by the Doctor and so the scales have fallen from her eyes somewhat. She's a bit more worldly-wise and a bit more grown up, and I like that.

Were you worried when you learned Charley was leaving the Eighth Doctor? Absolutely, absolutely. Well, the sword of Damocles was hanging over Charley from the off; anyone that messes with the Web of Time, you do know that your demise is going to come at some point, and so I always sort of knew that something would happen. But yes, it was very sad when they first told me and I badgered Nick [Briggs] until he made sure that he would carry on using me. So that's nice. I'm gonna have to do that again, I think, 'cos Charley's demise is happening again, but I do understand, because even I am sort of thinking, 'Oh, another script where Charley is messing up the whole of the Web of Time', so I think there has to come a point where we have to say goodbye to her. But it's a very sad thing; I've been playing her for nine years. I mean, lord. There are a lot of stories. It's extraordinary and I love working for Big Finish. It's just a really good, fun day. You get to fight Daleks and things like that. I've said to Nick I'll happily play 'third grunt from the left' in a spaceship with a big machine gun, so hopefully it won't be the end of my Big Finish career but I think it is the end for Charley.

Is there a particular type of role you'd like to do? Just work would be great. Some cash would be nice.

So if we could just send you a bag of money each month...?

Now that, of course, is the best possible option, yeah, I hadn't thought about that. [laughs] Maybe I need to get some pictures on Nick, some nice blackmail stuff. Well, I'd love to play characters as far removed from Charley as possible. Much as I love her, as an actor one wants to have a go at a bit of a challenge. Trying to convince Nick that I can do anything other than Charley is the slight hurdle. I might have to do a voice reel and send it to him. 'Look, I can do all these funny voices!'

You've appeared in *Dead Ringers*; does impressionism appeal?

Noooo. I never said I was an impressionist, I'm an actor and I have a fairly good ear for accents, so if

they gave me a tape of someone I could work out what it was that was specific to their voice and sort of mimic it. In fact Jess [Robinson], who's in this play [*Patient Zero*], is a brilliant impersonator. So no, I wouldn't want to go into that field but yeah, silly voices are always good fun. Doing something with a silly accent or something that's completely against type. In audio you can do that far more easily; things like *Dead Ringers* you can do it because you have so much hair and make-up like wigs and things, but audio you don't need any of them.

Watching you in the booth, Nick seems amused by the way you act out everything.

I do, I do. I'm sad to say, I do act it all out. I have to! Otherwise if they go 'You're meant to be feeling faint' or 'You're meant to be feeling ill', which I've been doing a lot of this morning, I have to go [she reacts] 'Ugh!' I can't just go, [she stays still] 'Ugh!', it doesn't have the same feel. Anyway, I know this won't transcribe! But there's a physicalisation that comes into the voice if you physically move. Maybe better actors don't need that but I do!

Does it help you get more into it?

It sort of reminds you where you are. It's very easy if you're doing an audio to stand and just read the words, and if you remind yourself 'I've been hit over the head in this scene and I'm coming to and there's a strange monster,' I look up and pretend I can see the strange monster. As you say, it helps to make it more of a real world in your head so that you don't do everything on the same level. You can get very stuck if you're just standing on two feet and not actually moving.



India Fisher, Michael Maloney and Colin Baker enjoy their cake.



I've never done any green screen or anything like that, so I think I'd find that quite difficult if someone was saying, 'By the way, this is a T-Rex coming towards you,' and they've got a ping pong ball on the end of a seven foot thing, you'd be like, 'Oh, I'm meant to be really scared by that, am I?' But I find audio very easy, it's one of the things that I slipped into, and I'm quite an over the top actor anyway! I have quite a lot of expression in my voice and for TV and things like that I'm constantly being told to bring it down several levels. No-one ever told me to bring it down in audio, it's interesting. So I think I've found my niche, this is my medium!

**And how's Nick's performance been?**

We can only be underplayed under Nick. Isn't he amazing? The first Dalek story I did with him, I was open-mouthed when he did four or five Daleks and I went, 'They all have different voices!' and he's like, 'Yeah, of course.' That's extraordinary! And he tells a wonderful story about when he was doing the ADR for the actual telly programme and he suddenly

said to one of the directors, 'Ooh, no, no, no, sorry, I did that in Dalek 3's voice and it can't be Dalek 3 because Dalek 3's off doing that, so it needs to be 2'. And the director just went, 'Yeah, riiiiight, okaaaay, whatever you need to get you through the night'. But I think it shows a level of professionalism not often seen. I'm impressed!

**Are the Daleks still scary on audio?**

Yeah! The voice is a terrifying thing! It's not nice! It's that level of aggression. We were just outside in the Green Room when he did his first slot and Jess and I just went, 'Oh, you forget! The Daleks!' I suppose it takes you straight back to childhood, that tone and the insistence, just instantly.

I felt a bit mean when Nick said, 'I'm the voice of the Daleks', and I felt like going, 'Well, isn't anyone with a ring modulator the voice of the Daleks?' And now having seen him do it, I'm like, 'Ah, that's not true'. I have had a go on a ring modulator at conventions and it's hilarious; you just can't do it. You have to act it.

**Speaking of which, you've become something of a regular.**

Conventions are always an extraordinary experience; they're great fun and it's lovely meeting the people that really care about the stories and care about **Doctor Who**. And who wouldn't want people coming up going, 'I really loved that story' or 'I thought you were great in that'? It's a lovely thing. And they're all really nice people, genuinely pleased to see you and affectionate. They're the reason that things sell and the reason that I've been able to do this job for nine years, so it's lovely to actually meet them and be able to say hello and thank you. So conventions are ace. But my convention days are slightly over, really. I did one in Chicago last year, but that's 'cos Colin was the main guest as the Doctor so they got me in. Since the advent of the new telly programme, conventions have died off for me. But that's fine.

**Do you have any particularly devoted fans?**

I have one guy called Ian who came to see me in my play in Stoke that I was doing at the beginning of the year; he came to see me when I was doing a play up in Durham. He's an amazing young lad and I definitely think you should put him in because he'd be chuffed. I would say he was my number one fan because he actually travels to see me and I really, really appreciate him for doing that and it's really touching that someone cares that much.



I'm always humbled and amazed and shocked, really, at the fact people care so much and they are so lovely. As far as I'm concerned I'm just doing this little job and I remember someone saying to me early on, 'Ah, but it's **Doctor Who**' and I was going, 'No, it's just the audios, no one's really going to mind about those...'

**How is your Doctor Who knowledge?**

At conventions and things you can see people getting very disappointed with me, because they'll come up and start talking at great depth about **Doctor Who** and I'll go, 'Sorry, I don't know what you're talking about!' If it's a story I've been in... I probably won't remember it. But I'll try! If it's a story I haven't been in, I have no idea. So you can see they're slightly annoyed but can't be: 'I can't talk **Doctor Who** to you... gaaaahhhh.'

**What are the highlights of your time playing Charley?**

Gosh, I don't know. There have been so many! For me it goes into three different sections. When we were recording down in Bristol that had a very different

feel, because the whole cast would go down for the entire week so it felt like doing a little play, you were in a company. And then we moved up to London and C'rizz and the middle period, and now we're in a bigger studio and now it's Colin. I loved working with Conrad [Westmaas]. Conrad is one of my greatest friends; we met doing this and he's a hero of mine. So all the Charley and C'rizz has a fond memory for me. I'm not sure the fans felt the same, but I loved working with Conrad. The early stuff I adored; *Storm Warning* I think's a great story. *Chimes of Midnight* is a superb story. If I've got to categorically pick one, then finding out that Rob Shearman wrote *Scherzo* to say thank you to me and Paul for

doing *Chimes of Midnight* so well... to have someone of Rob's calibre write a play for you, and whilst on his honeymoon as well, I just thought it was the most beautiful thing. I know it's had mixed reviews, but I just thought it was an extraordinary piece of writing.

**Have you watched much Doctor Who now or are you too busy?**

That's the answer I should give, isn't it? Sadly, and I have freely admitted this years and years ago, I never really watched the series when I was a kid. But everyone's watched some of them. I wouldn't be able to go, 'Oh, this is this episode' and name the episode but Tom Baker was definitely my Doctor. I watched some of the new ones. D'you know, I haven't watched any since David's taken over. Isn't that awful? And I think he's a really, really good actor. But it's Saturday night! I'm never in!

India Fisher, thank you very much.

*Paper Cuts and Blue Forgotten Planet are out this month*



Above: India remains upbeat despite falling foul of the Doomwood curse. Oooo-Arrrrr! Opposite page top left: Sixie and Charley or is it Mila? Colin Baker and India Fisher





# FORTHCOMING RELEASES

## SEPTEMBER

- Doctor Who – Paper Cuts (125, Sixth Doctor/Charley)
- Doctor Who – Blue Forgotten Planet (126, Sixth Doctor/Charley)
- Big Finish Magazine 14 (Doctor Who subscribers only)
- Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – The Eight Truths (3.7)
- Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – The Prisoner of Peladon (4.3, King Peladon)
- Bernice Summerfield – Secret Origins (10.4)
- Stargate SG-1 – Lines of Communication (2.5)

## NOVEMBER

- Doctor Who – The Eternal Summer (128, Fifth Doctor/Nyssa in Stockbridge)
- Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – The Nightmare Fair (1.1)
- Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – Ringpullworld (4.5, Turlough)
- Cyberman 2 (Box set)
- Judge Dredd: Crime Chronicles – Blood Will Tell (1.2)
- Sherlock Holmes: The Last Act

## JANUARY

- Doctor Who – A Thousand Tiny Wings (130, Seventh Doctor/Klein)
- Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – Leviathan (1.3)
- Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – Bernice Summerfield and the Criminal Code (4.6, TBA)
- Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – TBA (4.7, First Doctor)
- Judge Dredd: Crime Chronicles – Double Zero (1.4)

## MARCH

- Doctor Who – The Architects of History (132, Seventh Doctor/Klein)
- Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – Paradise 5 (1.5)
- Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – Shadow of the Past (4.9, Third Doctor)

## MAY

- Doctor Who – TBA (134, Sixth Doctor, Jamie)
- Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – The Macros (1.7)
- Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – TBA (4.11, TBA)

## OCTOBER

- Doctor Who – Castle of Fear (127, Fifth Doctor/Nyssa in Stockbridge)
- Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – Worldwide Web (3.8)
- Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – The Pyralis Effect (4.4, Romana II)
- Stargate Atlantis – Meltdown (2.6)
- Judge Dredd: Crime Chronicles – Stranger Than Truth (1.1)

## DECEMBER

- Doctor Who – Plague of the Daleks (129, Fifth Doctor/Nyssa in Stockbridge)
- Doctor Who – An Earthly Child (Subscribers to main range only, Eighth Doctor and Susan)
- Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – Death in Blackpool (Christmas Special 4.1, Eighth Doctor/Lucie)
- Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – Mission to Magnus (1.2)
- Iris Wildthyme – The Claws of Santa (Christmas Special)
- Judge Dredd: Crime Chronicles – The Devil's Playground (1.3)
- Sherlock Holmes – The Death and Life
- Bernice Summerfield – Secret Histories (Book)

## FEBRUARY

- Doctor Who – Survival of the Fittest/Klein's Story (131)
- Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – The Hollows of Time (1.4)
- Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – TBA (4.8, Second Doctor)

## APRIL

- Doctor Who – TBA (133, Sixth Doctor, Jamie)
- Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – Point of Entry (1.6)
- Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – TBA (4.10, Fourth Doctor)

## JUNE

- Doctor Who – TBA (135, Sixth Doctor, Jamie)
- Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – The Space Whale (1.8)
- Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – TBA (4.12, TBA)

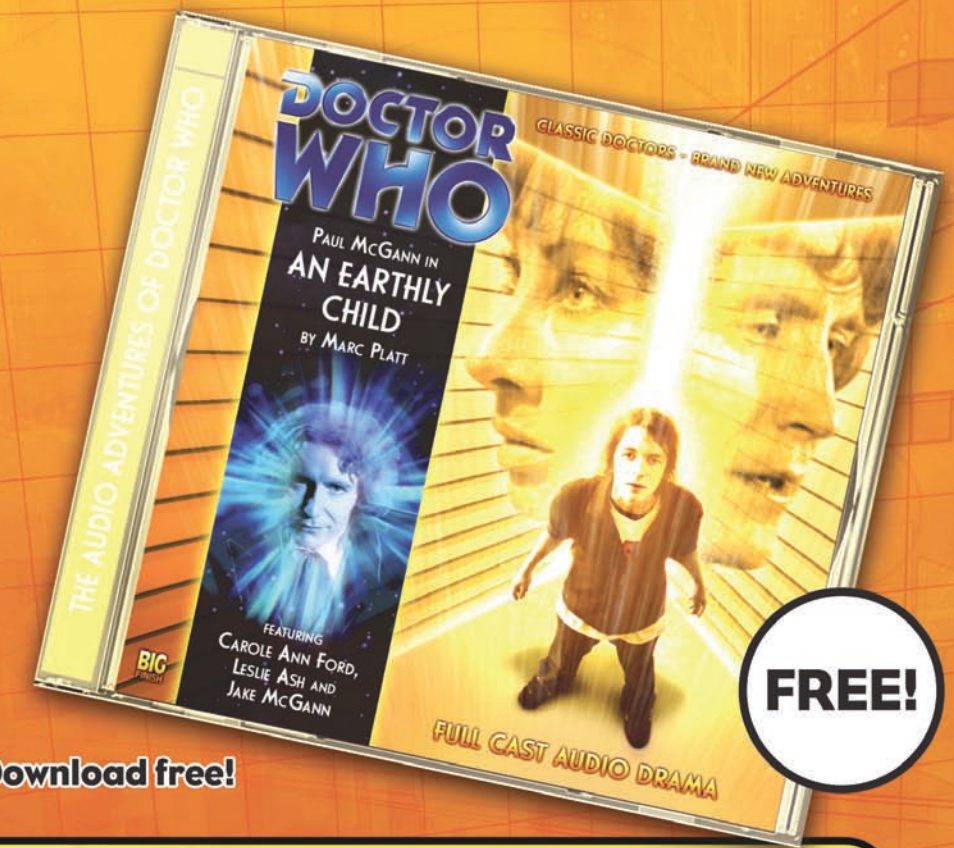
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**BIG FINISH**



# BRING OUT YOUR DREDD!



John Ainsworth has been working for Big Finish for some years, in the capacity of (in no particular order) marketing manager, director, producer... and he's soon to add writer to his credits too. Here he talks about his work on the upcoming *Judge Dredd* audios, and directing *The Lost Stories*...

**How did the idea of doing *Judge Dredd* audiobooks come about?** We'd produced a series of full-cast **2000AD** audio dramas a few years ago. They were well received by those that bought and listened to them, but despite sticking with it for eighteen releases, sales just weren't high enough to make it viable for the series to continue. Jumping forward a few years, the *Doctor Who Companion Chronicles* have become a huge success. Being much more like talking books with just one or two actors, the costs to produce them are quite low compared to full-cast dramas. So, big boss man Jason Haigh-Ellery suggested that we adapt the format for *Judge Dredd* to give it another chance. Rebellion, who own **2000AD** and *Judge Dredd*, were also very keen on the idea and have been very supportive of our efforts to bring **2000AD** to audio all along.

**How did you decide which characters should read the stories, and what kind of stories to tell?**

It might come as a surprise to some people that Judge Dredd is only the narrator in one of the four stories. This was something I decided quite early on. If you think about it, Dredd is usually a man of few words, so the idea of him telling long and highly descriptive stories just didn't seem right to me. I also thought it would give more variety by having other characters tell the stories, not just to have different

voices but also to have different perspectives. I should emphasise that Dredd, played as ever by Toby Longworth, is in all four of the stories. So there's still plenty of Dredd action. The *Judge Dredd Crime Chronicles* also differ slightly in style from the *Doctor Who Companion Chronicles* in that they are more like monologues with dramatised sequences rather than talking books. You won't hear Dredd or any of the other narrators impersonating other characters and reading their dialogue.

In terms of the stories themselves, I specifically asked the authors to set their adventures in Mega-City One. I love the wider Dredd world, and we explored some of it in the earlier audio series, but I felt it was good to stay rooted in Mega-City One for this first series of *Chronicles*.

**Tell us about the casting...**

Obviously we have Toby Longworth returning as Judge Dredd, as well as a few other supporting voices. I can't imagine anyone else playing Dredd now. It's Toby's voice I hear when I read the comic strip. For the other characters, I mostly went with people I'd worked with before. We recorded all four plays over three days in Manchester. I'd recorded a couple of *Doctor Who* plays there a few years ago and I approached local actors that I'd used for those. Both Paul David Gough and Helen Kay were in the *Doctor Who* play *Nocturne*. Gemma Wardle was recommended to me. She'd done some TV and had also been one of the leads in *Les Miserables*. She came in to read for the part of Wendy Plainfolk and was excellent.

**And you have Louise Jameson as Judge Anderson. Tell us about that...**

Casting Louise as Anderson had a lot to do with fortuitous timing. I was pondering who to cast as Anderson – a major character in the Dredd universe and not one that we had been allowed to feature in the original audios – and realised that Louise's tour of *Women on the Verge of HRT* was at the Lowry in Manchester the same week that we were recording the *Dredd Chronicles*. I suppose I had always thought of Anderson as being this young blonde girl, which is how she was when I first started reading **2000AD**. But, of course, she has aged just like Dredd has. I rang David Bishop up who, having been an editor on the *Judge Dredd Magazine*, knows the history backwards. I asked him how old Anderson was and was surprised to find that she is now 47. So, with this in mind, I realised that Louise Jameson was actually good casting for the part. She would be able to have that hard edge that many years on the street would have given Anderson, but could still give her a feminine side. What I didn't want was for Anderson to sound like a woman playing a man, and I knew Louise could pull it off. Happily Louise accepted the part, saying she liked the script very much, and we had a great time recording it. She is excellent!

**What do you think Toby Longworth brings to the role of Judge Dredd?**

I think Toby really *gets* Judge Dredd – both the character and the world. It's not just about being a good actor and getting the right voice, which of course he is and has, but it's the nature of the performance. Dredd is the straight no-nonsense man in an absolutely crazy world. For him to work as a character he has to be played completely straight, regardless of the ridiculousness of the events happening around him. Toby plays Dredd so straight that it's often hilarious, but there's no sense of parody or mockery in the performance. Although there may be other actors who could sound like Dredd, I can't think of any that would bring that extra dimension to the part that Toby does that keeps Dredd interesting. With Toby's performance, you frequently get the feeling that Dredd is constantly struggling not to lose his temper with the many idiots that he has to deal with.

**Do you have any favourite episodes of the existing *BF Judge Dredds*?**

I'm immensely proud of the eighteen **2000AD** audios we did. I think we managed to maintain a very consistent level of high quality throughout the run. Even with hindsight, I don't think there's a lot I can think of that would improve the productions – which isn't something that I could say about all of my non-**2000AD** producing and directing work. I have very few regrets about those eighteen plays. So, with that in mind, it's hard to choose favourites as there's quite a wide variety of styles and stories. I'd recommend *Jihad*, *The Big Shot* and *I Love Judge Dredd* as good ones to choose if you haven't heard one before. You don't need to have listened to any of the other audios or even have read the comics to understand and enjoy them.

**You're script editing, and directing some, of the *Seventh Doctor/Klein* season for next year. Why did you decide to bring Klein back?**

It seemed like such a no-brainer to me. I don't know why it hadn't been done before. The character had been very well received in the original *Colditz* story and even then it had been clearly set up for her to return. Audience reaction to Klein was very positive and ever since *Colditz* people have regularly been asking for her return. I also think she is a very interesting character with an agenda quite different than most other *Doctor Who* villains. She's certainly not just a female Master. And, of course, Tracey Childs gives a great performance, which has as much to do with the character's appeal as Steve Lyons' writing.

**Any hints as to what the stories will be like?**

They will be very good!! Without giving too much away, there will be a progression through the trilogy from the small through to the epic with (hopefully) a satisfying and credible conclusion. We involved Klein's creator and author of *Colditz*,

Steve Lyons, at an early stage. After much discussion, Steve produced a document that outlined the arc of the three stories whilst leaving plenty of room for the other authors to write their own stories. Steve was given the choice of which of the three scripts he wanted to write and he elected to do the final wrap-up story.

One thing I was very keen to explore further was Klein's character and how she had been the victim of the Doctor's manipulation. I really liked the idea of forcing the Doctor and Klein together as unwilling travelling companions – a nice contrast to the usual Doctor/companion set-up. I also wanted to show that even though Klein is a Nazi and has quite repellent ethics, she is still a human being capable of falling in love, having friendships, etc. Although I certainly don't want the audience to sympathise with Klein's ideology, I did want them to have an appreciation for what motivates her to do the things she does. I think Klein is quite a tragic figure and is very interesting, dramatically speaking, as a result.

**You've also been directing a number of the *Lost Stories*. How has that experience been?**

This has been very interesting as for most of the scripts it really has been like stepping back in time twenty years. I think almost all of the scripts that I've worked on in the series have had that unique Eighties feel – and that's certainly something that we've wanted to retain. We haven't tried to update them – even so far as allowing them to contradict established continuity. The approach to these scripts has been very much the same as we applied to the stageplay adaptations that we did last year.

I've enjoyed working on all the plays from this series so far, but I think my favourite is likely to remain *The Nightmare Fair*. It's the most well-known of the missing stories and I got to adapt the script myself, which I really enjoyed. Also, the studios days were particularly enjoyable. Colin and Nicola were on good form and we were all pulling in the same direction. On top of that, Graham Williams's widow and sons came along and were very kind about my adaptation and direction which I was quite moved by.

**You're producing the next series of *Benny* for 2010. What stage is that at?**

It's at a very early stage!! I've had initial discussions of ideas with Paul Cornell, which have been very productive. Paul is Benny's creator and I was keen that he should be happy with the direction we are taking the series in and, of course, welcome his input. We've come up with what I think is a great new story arc which will run through from the second half of the next series to the end of the 2011 series. Before that, though, will be the final resolution to the very long-running Braxiatel story arc. I can promise that there will be a satisfying and final conclusion to this story. The 2010 series will comprise two two-part stories, with each story being like a movie. The first will be the Braxiatel conclusion story, which will lead into the second two-parter which will take Benny in a new direction, but without forgetting her past. There will also be a short story collection that will tie in to the audio stories as well.

See page 10 for details of all the forthcoming releases mentioned in this article.



# EDDIE ROBSON

a lot to keep track of and lots of different demands to fulfil. And this is after Simon Guerrier effectively streamlined the job by taking Benny off the Collection and slimming the regular cast – it was always tough to get everybody's schedules to line up, and for me it was much easier because I knew Thomas Grant would almost always be able to do weekends, so I just had to find a Saturday or Sunday which Lisa could do and when the studio was free, and we were away. But I know some people weren't happy with the change of direction that entailed – lots of people liked the regulars and liked the Collection.

I did learn a lot in terms of script editing – I discovered how hard it is to keep even the simplest ongoing storyline on track. Perhaps the hardest thing, though, was script-editing my own work – it was very odd to bring a script into studio that had only been informally looked at by anyone else. On my second season, it was good to have John Ainsworth as an extra perspective, especially on *Secret Origins*. I'm a great believer in the notion that collaboration strengthens material, rather than diluting the artist's vision or whatever some people seem to believe, and producing **Bernice Summerfield** has confirmed that.

**Why do you think the character of Benny remains so enduringly popular?**

I've always found her very likeable from the start – she was a great favourite of mine in the **New Adventures** days, and in the late Nineties I co-edited a fanzine about her adventures, so it's been very satisfying to spend a couple of years in charge of her! I like her irreverence and her general sense of humour, but she also embodies what I think is a fairly common experience, that of feeling somehow like a fake: that no matter how much you know or how much experience you have, there are still moments when you feel like you're busking it and you'll be found out. That neat little character detail which Paul Cornell threw into the mix is a defining point, and chimes nicely with how Lisa plays the character, that hesitant quality she has – like she's always checking she hasn't given something away. So that's a nice character tension, that she's defined both by her sense of humour and the fact that she wants to be taken seriously, and a well-set-up tension like that can keep a character going for a long time.

**You've written this month's Bernice Summerfield release, *Secret Origins*. What can you tell us about it?**

As the title suggests, it's influenced by superhero comics and other long-running characters, and the way that their history gets rewritten and fudged – partly to cover for the fact that they don't age, or age really slowly. The story of *Secret Origins* moves both backwards and forwards. The previous play, *Venus Mantrap*, closes with Bernice discovering that Peter has been kidnapped – so people might be surprised that this one opens with that situation resolved. A flashback reveals who kidnapped Peter and how Bernice got him back – but it also introduces a mysterious new character, Robyn, who claims to have a long shared history with Bernice. As the play progresses, Bernice starts to remember more and more of this history...

**This is your swansong as producer. Have you enjoyed your time as series runner?**

Yes, although it's been a big learning experience. The productions are relatively small, but there's still



**You've also written this month's Eighth Doctor story, *The Eight Truths*. What was it like writing the *Giant Spiders* for audio?**

I think they're a great fit for audio.

They were

disappointing on TV, because they didn't move very well – they just sort of hopped and flopped around, and that doesn't look anything like as sinister as a real spider. If they were to bring them back on TV today, they'd be able to do a good CGI spider, but as far as audio goes they're great because it's so easy to convey what they look like – everyone can picture giant spiders immediately.

**The Eighth Doctor stories have a faster pace than the standard monthly releases. Is there an art to writing for that?**

I don't think I really modify my approach between the two ranges. You do what serves the story, I think. I always try to put a lot of incident in at the outline stage to make sure I'm not left short during the actual scripting. In fact, I tried to depart from that recently – I put together an outline for a four-parter in the monthly range which would all be based around a single storyline, no companions, and it would all move in a single direction and really ratchet up the tension, because there weren't any other storylines to cut to as a release. Then Alan [Barnes] decided it would slot nicely into the new McGann season and repurposed it for that, but cut it down to two episodes. And when I started scripting it I was relieved he'd done that, because even with all the twists and turns I'd put in, it wasn't an awful lot of plot for four episodes. It would've moved quite slowly. That would've put a lot of pressure on the actual writing itself – and the production in studio, and the post-production – to keep it interesting, whereas in the two-part version the plot itself takes on much of the work of driving the whole thing forward. I feel more comfortable when things are moving fast, I don't worry that anybody's getting bored. That said, I'd really like to have a go at writing something with a different kind of pace, like Joe Lidster's *Master*, because I love plays like that when they're done right.

**You've written many scripts for BF now. Which are you most proud of?**

My favourite is probably still *Human Resources* – I still like the idea behind it, and the script came together more or less how I wanted. Even all the Cybermen and Headhunter stuff, which was added after the initial storyline had gone in, slotted in nicely and enhanced it. I also like *Urgent Calls*, the one-parter I did for Colin. I think it's an effective little concept piece.

**And although I've only just finished it, I'm pleased with my latest McGann script – that's the one I was talking about earlier.**

**Can you give us any teasers about your upcoming *Companion Chronicle*, *Bernice Summerfield and the Criminal Code* (Jan 2010)?**

Yeah, that's an interesting one. Big Finish has obviously done lots of Bernice stories, and the **Companion Chronicles** are necessarily focused around the companion character, so the challenge was to put her in the kind of story which would only happen when she was with the Doctor. I think we've managed to do that. We could also hark back to a younger, less experienced Bernice, who's slightly playing second fiddle to the Doctor.

**Any more *Doctor Who* scripts in the pipeline?**

Yes – I've written another for the [new Eighth Doctor] season, and they couldn't be more different, which is what I like! I always like to try different things, different styles, different settings.

*Bernice Summerfield: Secret Origins and Doctor Who: The Eight Truths are out this month.*





Firstly, thank you so much for bringing new life to my favourite show, **Dark Shadows**. The productions are fantastic!

There are a number of **Dark Shadows** projects available only through CD purchase. I'm hoping these will someday be available via download, as most other of your productions are. Will these eventually be made available via download?

Thanks so much, and keep up the good work!  
Lori Rorke

When **Dark Shadows** started, many of our contracts didn't allow for download release. Releases in many of our ranges had to be recontracted for download, which is the case for these two stories. The reason they are not available is that one or more of their participants have as yet not signed the new contract.

I was looking over the selection for **Judge Dredd**, and I noticed something strange. There are multiple volumes missing in the list, namely 1, 4, 9, 11 and 12. I was curious why they were missing?

Thom Brown

This is a similar case to **Dark Shadows**. Some of the **Judge Dredd** contracts have not yet been signed by participants in the productions. There's also the added issue that we are out of CD stock for some of them. Unfortunately, the sales were so low that they do not warrant the cost of a repress. As soon as all the contracts are in, all the **2000AD** range will be available as downloads.

Are we going to hear any more stories with the Eighth Doctor and Fitz? I really enjoyed all the stories but enjoyed Fitz and Izzy best. Also, what about hearing more of Samson and the other one – can't remember her name offhand. We need more male companions please.

Simon Taylor

There are currently no plans to produce any further stories with Fitz, Izzy or Samson and 'the other one'! I wouldn't, however, entirely rule Fitz and Izzy out. I thought the Mary Shelley adventure worked particularly well.

I've been purchasing your audioplays (some online, mostly at **Doctor Who** conventions) for years now and have been delighted with them. I especially love the Eighth Doctor plays, since the Paul McGann series was cut short before it started and I wanted so much to have more stories with the Eighth Doctor. It was a pure delight when you made that happen.

I've been interested to see the other ranges you offer, branching out into other series and

stories. With this in mind I would like to make a request that you consider doing audioplays for **Moonlight**. Like the Eighth Doctor, this series was cut short before its time, and there are thousands and thousands of rabid **Moonlight** fans out there who are still desperate for more of it! There are countless **Moonlight** stories waiting to be told and the story would be utterly ideal for audio. The original cast was so devoted to the show it's hard to imagine that they wouldn't be up for it!

Thanks for your time and I hope you will consider this request!

Amy Bechtel

So glad you love the Eighth Doctor adventures. We've got a great fourth season coming up! The criterion for taking on any new franchise is whether or not it has a fairly large, dedicated following. In our experience, it is only the core of dedicated fans of any TV show who will be interested in audio drama based on the show. So, even if the show has a huge following, it may not have a large enough dedicated core of fans to form the basis of a viable audience for audio dramas.

I thoroughly enjoyed *Company of Friends*; each of the vignettes was well-written and it was interesting to hear some voices outside your usual range. The first three segments were lighter than usual and I had some concern that the writing was becoming slapstick; it's also too bad that you couldn't get Christopher Eccleston to show up for the regeneration sequence in *Mary's Story*. However, these are minor nits on an excellent production. I would be interested in hearing more from Fitz, Izzy, and Mary in the future.

Phil Nadeau

PS I'd be interested in hearing more from Benny as well but you still don't have her series for download.

As I mentioned above, with regard to **Judge Dredd** and **Dark Shadows**, when a release is not available for download, it is always a contractual matter. That's why the **Benny** stories are not yet available to download. But I am assured that they will be. Many people are saying they'd like to hear more from Fitz, Izzy and Mary, so I'll certainly be considering that.

Just a quick email to say well done on the new download site, easier to use and the cover art view is awesome!

Craig Andrews

Thanks, Craig, Paul Wilson and Alex Mallinson will be glowing with pride! Literally... yes, I can see them now. Put that glow out and get on with your work!

My question for Nick is...

Have you every thought about bringing out **Dalek Empire** as a series of graphic novels?

I would love an animated version but I know you cannot do animation due to licensing agreements.

So I thought second best would be a graphic novel. I am sure I would not be on my own in wanting such a product.

Just a thought.

Roger M Smith

It's a lovely thought, Roger. But the licensing issues would be just as difficult. Random House, an imprint of Penguin, currently has an exclusive licence to do **Doctor Who** books, and Panini handles the graphic novels. I shall keep that thought in a very special Daleky place in my brain, though.

While looking on Amazon.co.uk for a Terry Nation book entitled *Rebecca's World*, I stumbled across a product labelled *Rebecca's World* CD (Unknown Binding). I clicked on it to find out further details. Despite the fact I didn't get much, I did notice that the publisher's name was Big Finish.

So, are you doing an audio adventure of *Rebecca's World*, because if you are I can't wait for it to come out.

Cameron Stewart

We have indeed recorded and completed a production of *Rebecca's World*. It was read by Paul Darrow and directed by Lisa Bowerman some time ago. However, the release was being held up by contractual matters with Terry Nation's estate, concerning the cover artwork. We think we've reached an agreement now and Alex Mallinson is feverishly re-creating the packaging based around the original book cover.

I'm just listening to *Seven Keys to Doomsday* and there's mention of a 1970 script for the theatre which Barry Letts turned down. As you're now enacting unmade scripts, will you try to track down a copy of this play?

Also, I remember a series of articles in *DWM* of stories the **Who** production office abandoned at the 11th hour. Would you try to do these too at some point?

And, of course, the ultimate adventure (pardon the pun) would be to get Tom Baker's **Scratchman** film made into an audio.

Just some suggestions.

Vince Tennant-Tavares

These are fun suggestions that we do consider from time to time. But remember also how people often comment that we produce too much **Doctor Who** material. But all things are possible... (he said, mysteriously, vanishing into the void...)

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Alan Barnes on... blackberries

No, not those wretched electronic devices fetishised by the irredeemably self-important. Real blackberries. Proper English late summer blackberries, gathered from the bramble on a hazy Sunday afternoon. Is there a finer pleasure in life than rolling your socks over your trouser bottoms to wade into a bed of nettles, in a bid to reach those nice big plump juicy ones more cowardly pickers have passed by? Then returning home, with your lips smeared purple and your forearms a maze of cuts, to bake up a lovely pie of blackberries and windfall apples, then scarfing down the lot with a tin of Bird's custard? No, there is not, and I'll tell you why: because blackberries are FREE!!!

Barnaby Edwards on... hotels

Staying in hotels is lovely, isn't it? There's a guilty thrill in the knowledge that it's someone else's responsibility to feed you, clean your room and make your bed. My reverence for these hallowed establishments was seriously called into question this week, however. Upon presenting my room key at reception, the lady behind the desk looked at her computer screen and then at me and, without so much as a flicker of doubt, said, 'Rosemary, is it?' I gave her a level look and said, 'Not for many years now'.

Paul Spragg on... Chicago

As I'd only been to Florida before, I was looking forward to checking out a major American city when I was told I could head to Chicago for a recent **Stargate** convention. Visiting the home of the skyscraper was a fascinating and neck-pain-inducing experience, as I wandered the streets checking out key places of interest and then headed up all 103 floors of Sears Tower (yes, your ears pop) despite my hatred of heights and then, after a certain amount of steeling myself, stepped into one of the totally clear boxes affixed to the building from which you can look down to street level in vertigo-vision. An incredible experience, almost as joyous as three days of meeting some truly lovely people at the convention itself.

Toby Hrycek-Robinson on... *When Borat Came to Town* (Storyville, BBC Four)

Little to do with the film, a documentary shot mostly in the Hieronymus Bosch-like landscape of Glod – a remote Romanian village meaning 'Mud'. It veers from comedy to Dickensian tragedy when international lawyers fail to deliver promised millions from suing the **Borat** producers. Real-life surreality, simultaneously uncomfortable and enjoyable to watch.

David Richardson on... *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy

So there we were during the recording of *Plague of the Daleks*, all sitting around talking about books. Liza Tarbuck and Sarah Sutton were swapping suggestions, and writer Mark Morris came up with some too. I actually wrote down his two recommendations, bought them, and ended up reading **The Road** in a day. It's absolutely compelling – the story of one man and his young son as they walk across a post-apocalyptic America, desperately attempting to reach the warmer climate of the south before the winter freeze sets in. Bleak, dark and disturbing, this is a compelling story that stays with you for days. It's a story about the good and very bad in human nature, and – without a doubt – you'll be recommending to your friends that they read it too...

Nick Briggs on... *You Have Been Watching*

Alas, the series has now ended, but I have loved every minute of Charlie Brooker's fake quiz show excuse for ranting about television. I have loved his work in the *Guardian* newspaper and his brilliant BBC Four series **Screenwipe** and **Newswipe**. For those not familiar with Mr. Brooker, he is a foul-mouthed, angry TV critic. But amongst all the ranting and swearing, which I have to confess makes me laugh a lot, he is actually very accurate, very insightful and surprisingly fair. He's also a bit of a **Doctor Who** fan, which can't be a bad thing! Let's hope there'll be a new series soon.

Jason Haigh-Ellery on... *Burn Notice*

An American spy show with a difference – our hero Michael Westen (Jeffrey Donovan) has been cast adrift by his bosses, for a reason he doesn't know. He's had a 'burn notice' meaning he's blacklisted by everyone – no credit history, no bank account, no passport, and he's not allowed to leave his hometown of Miami. Which means he has to see his Mum (beautifully played by Sharon Gless of **Cagney and Lacey** fame) for help and rely on an ex-girlfriend (**Press Gang's** original blonde bombshell Gabrielle Anwar, no less) and a retired associate (the ever-loveable Bruce Campbell) to get by. This comedy drama is a bit like **James Bond** meets **Only Fools and Horses**. There's always a scheme to make some money and there's always a spy to shoot at.

Alex Mallinson on... *Women writers*

It's a terrible generalisation I know, but when it comes to novels in general and fantasy in particular, I prefer the female touch. I've just finished Isabelle Allende's take on the Zorro legend and am now re-reading Angela Carter's **Nights at the Circus**. These are vibrant, unpretentious, sensual books (Although Carter's prose can seem archaic, it's never inscrutable.) When it comes to the popular male authors of the day I sometimes feel as if they're jousting over whom is the most insightful while the women busy themselves telling great stories. Best of all, while their characters may struggle with identity, as in Carter's **The Passion of New Eve**, or subjugation, as in Margaret Atwood's **The Handmaid's Tale**, they don't dwell in impenetrable angst. I'm not sure why, perhaps it's something to do with looking outwards for inspiration as well as inwards. Whatever the reason, I'm always perplexed that so few women have written for **Doctor Who**.

I'm also going to hijack this last paragraph to laud Alan for using the word 'bramble' It's possibly my favourite word in the English language. Say it out loud. Then again. Keep going. I'd be astonished if you don't laugh.

Right: Lenora Crichlow and Sylvester McCoy

Below: Tracey Childs as Klein and Jamie Parker as Richter



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# THE WHO SHOP

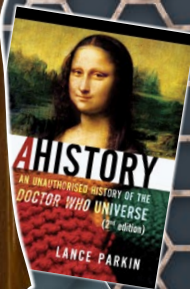
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