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ISSUE #13 MARCH 2010  
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**KLEIN  
SIGHT**

Steve Lyons on  
creating  
Elizabeth Klein

**DARK  
SHADOWS**

Stuart Manning on  
the long-awaited  
return to  
Collinsport

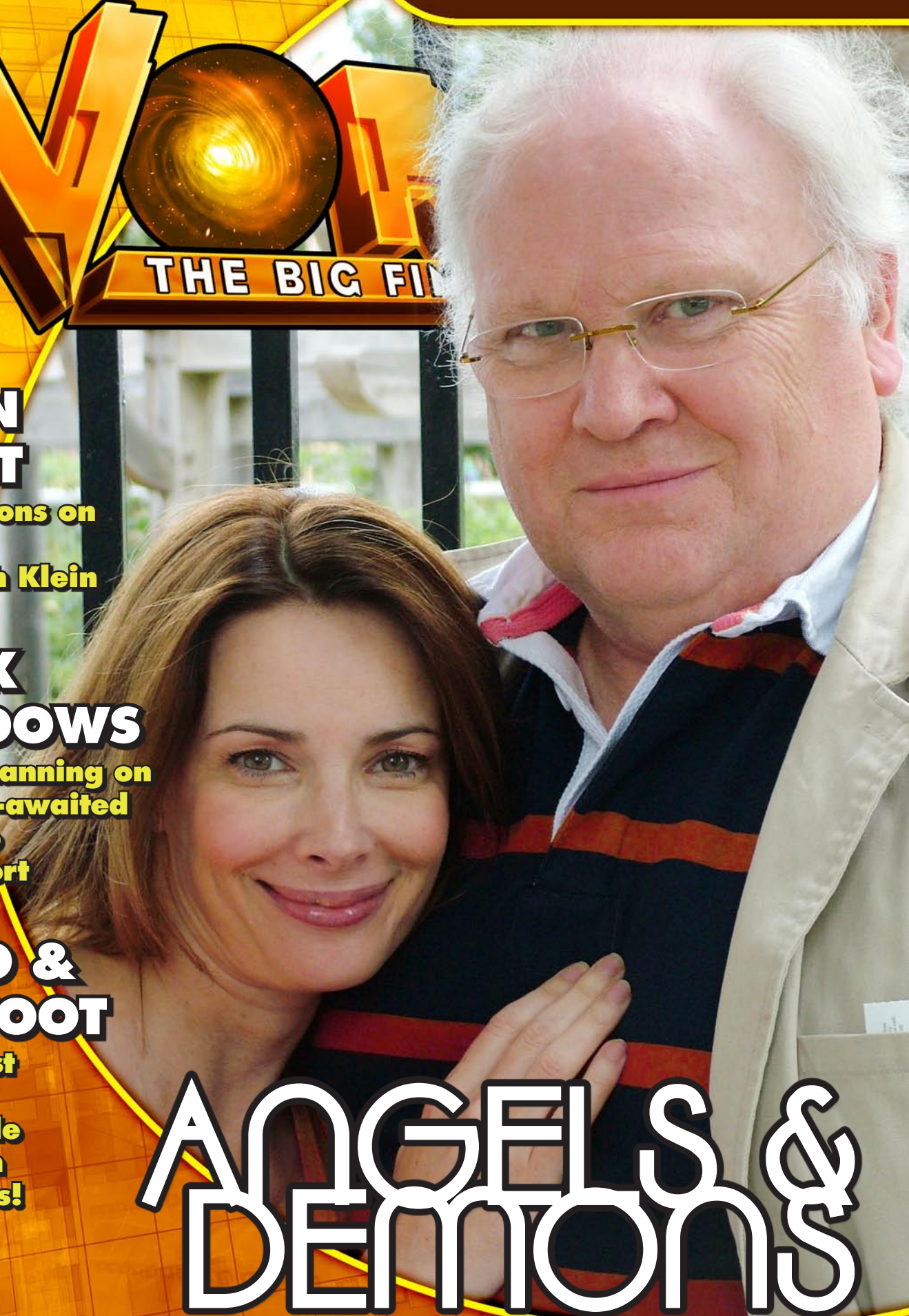
**JAGO &  
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**PJ HAMMOND TAKES US TO PARADISE 5**

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REBELLION.

# DOCTOR WHO

## THE COMPANION CHRONICLES THE SUFFERING

Maureen O'Brien is Vicki and Peter Purves is Steven  
in a special two-disc adventure

OUT  
NOW!

COMING SOON...

MARCH



THE EMPEROR OF ETERNITY

Starring  
Deborah Watling as Victoria  
and Frazer Hines as Jamie

APRIL



SHADOW OF THE PAST

Starring  
Caroline John  
as Liz Shaw

MAY



THE TIME VAMPIRE

Starring  
Louise Jameson as Leela  
and John Leeson as K9

MAY



NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS

Starring  
Frazer Hines  
as Jamie

JUNE



SOLITAIRE

Starring  
India Fisher as Charley  
and David Bailie as  
The Celestial Toymaker

## EDITORIAL



I'd like to talk to you about communication. I know we're always saying this, but it's only because it's true: Big Finish can only keep going if you continue to support us. Which is why we have an Enquiries email address, a forum on our website, a Facebook page, plus a letters

page in this very magazine. We are very aware that you have much to say to us, and we're really keen to engage in a conversation with you... when we're not busy actually making the productions, which admittedly takes up most of our time.

We've recently started to focus on our Facebook page a bit more, so if you haven't already joined up, I urge you to have a look. There are, of course, discussions and all the usual features of Facebook, including the latest BF news on a daily basis, plus videos, photos, and a link to monthly podcasts.

And talking of videos, can you resist a guided tour of the Big Finish production office? Go on, take a look! Some of you have commented that it's a lot smaller than you'd expected, so in response I'm planning a video podcast where I actually measure the room for you, with a tape measure, to prove that the camera can be deceptive. I must say that, in the video, my tummy looked a lot bigger than I expected, so I won't be measuring that. My partner, Steph, says it's all down to the camera angle and nothing to do with being middle-aged, so I'll go with that explanation, I think. I was considering that we should use a wide-angle lens to make the office look bigger, but if it has the same effect on my tummy, then that idea is right out of the window!

But for those of you worrying that we're crushed into a tiny office with nothing for company except David Richardson's foul washing-up mess, I'd like to reassure you we also regularly work in a studio the other side of London, and that there is a mailing warehouse (which we production folks hardly ever visit) just outside the M25, and that's much bigger (both the M25 and the warehouse!).

So do let us know what else you want to see in our short video podcasts and in general on our Facebook page... as long as it's not more tummy exposure.

Oh, and we're on Twitter too! Naturally...

Nick Briggs – executive producer

## SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS



### Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: The First Doctor Box Set

More unmade adventures from the Doctor's past, as Moris Farhi's scripts from 1964 are finally realized after 46 years! Carole Ann Ford and William Russell perform these enhanced audiobooks, with superb support from John Dorney as Alexander the Great in the epic historical *Farewell Great Macedon*. The four-disc set also includes the one-part story *The Fragile Yellow Arc of Fragrance*, plus a fine set of extras – which includes an interview with the two lead actors, and a talk with *Lost Stories* expert Richard Bignall. **AVAILABLE IN NOVEMBER 2010**

### Doctor Who - Short Trips

The books are no more, but the name will live on in a brand new series of audio releases. The two-disc sets will be read by well-known actors from the *Doctor Who* universe, and some of them will be written by brand new authors! Plus there's one surprise author in there too... **AVAILABLE IN NOVEMBER 2010**

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# NEW MOON

It's all go for the residents of Collinsport, as recording gets underway on the gothic soap's most ambitious audio story ever...

"Lela Swift, a genius director on the original **Dark Shadows** series, once called making the show 'the impossible dream'," says series producer and co-writer Stuart Manning. "We've tried to stay true to that ambition, and I hope listeners will agree." With four hour-long episodes, more than a dozen actors, 194 scenes and a star cast gathered across two continents, **Dark Shadows: Kingdom of the Dead** promises to be epic.

For the uninitiated, **Dark Shadows** was an offbeat daytime soap opera that aired from 1966-1971 on ABC Television. For five years, a generation of children ran home from school to enjoy thrilling supernatural tales of the mysterious Collinwood mansion, headed by reluctant vampire Barnabas Collins. Forty years on, the show remains a cult classic, with DVD releases and a big screen remake in the works, starring Johnny Depp and directed by Tim Burton. Since 2006, Big Finish has produced over a dozen new stories featuring the classic cast, with nine more coming in 2010.

"*Kingdom of the Dead* is a continuation of our dramas, but it's very much a new beginning for the characters," says Manning. "From the start, I felt we should widen the scope of the storytelling. I wanted a proper soapy rollercoaster ride, with twists and turns and plenty of surprises."

"Stuart had come up with a great overall concept," says series co-writer Eric Wallace. "From the beginning, we were both keen to up the emotional stakes and story pacing. The goal was to make this series feel less like a play and more like a bona fide soap opera."

"Just as we began working on the storylines, I had to go into the hospital for a week with my wife who was giving birth to our daughter – she was born prematurely. So there I was, holding my wife's hand, helping her breathe... then, when she went to sleep, I'd curl up on a couch in the pre-birthing room and type out long-winded emails about vampires and werewolves! Needless to say it was all a bit surreal, but I guess that's perfect when brainstorming ideas for a show as unique as **Dark Shadows**."

The first recordings took place during the summer in New York City, with Nancy Barrett returning to the role of Carolyn for a guest appearance in Part Four, joined by Marie Wallace. London recording began in January, featuring Lysette Anthony and Alec Newman as Dr Rankin and her mysterious patient, two new inhabitants of the Windcliff asylum.

Lysette played Angelique on the 1991 **Dark Shadows** remake, while Alec played Barnabas for The WB's 2004 pilot episode. "**Dark Shadows** has a history of medical characters whose agendas are – how shall we put it politely? – a bit bizarre," Wallace says. "Just think about Julia Hoffman and Eric Lang and you'll get the idea. Well, Dr Rankin takes macabre medical practices to a whole other level."

Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, David Selby (Quentin), Lara Parker (Angelique) and Andrew Collins (Barnabas) have been back in the studio, with regular director Darren Gross at the helm. More cast members, old and new, are scheduled to record in the coming weeks before post-production begins in earnest.

So what's in store for the residents of Collinwood? "First of all, there's a great new villain," says Wallace, "plus there's also some romance this time around. But best of all, there are some very spooky – and, dare I say it, scary – moments in *Kingdom of the Dead*. This was something Stuart and I agreed upon immediately; we really wanted to send chills down the spines of the listeners."

"*Kingdom of the Dead* is a new beginning for **Dark Shadows** on audio," says Manning. "If you've never listened to a **Dark Shadows** story before, this is a great place to join the ride, and if you're a regular listener, prepare for the most exciting **Dark Shadows** story Big Finish has ever told!"

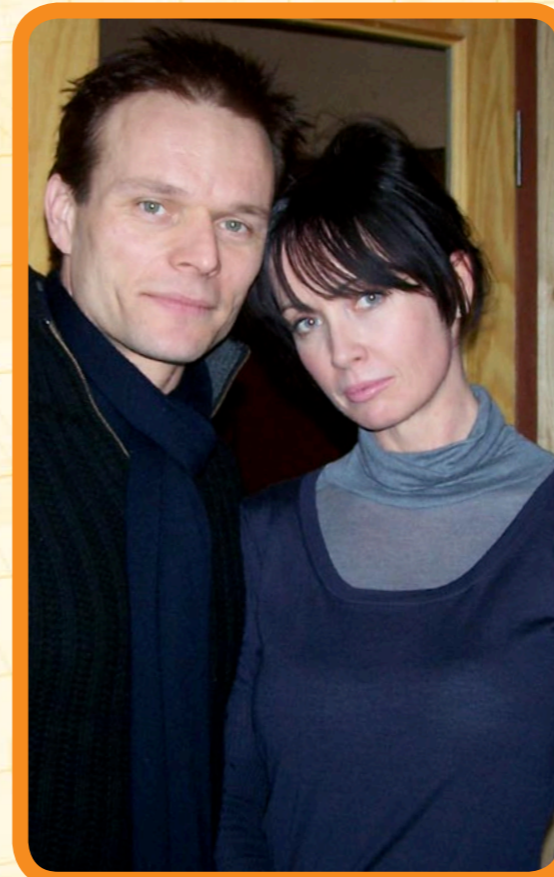
*Dark Shadows: Kingdom of the Dead* is released in July



Left: David Selby, who plays Quentin Collins, scrutinizes the ambitious script

Below left: Alec Newman and Lysette Anthony

Below right: Lara Parker prepares to step back into Angelique's shoes





# PJ HAMMOND

In 1985, *Sapphire and Steel* creator PJ Hammond almost wrote a *Doctor Who* story – but it was pulled before he finished the script. Now, 25 years later, his work on *Paradise 5* has been adapted for audio as one of the *Lost Stories*. He tells *Vortex* all about this newly discovered classic...

**How did you originally come to write *Paradise 5*?**

By 1986 I wasn't watching much *Doctor Who* on the box. I had, of course, been involved with *Sapphire and Steel* and other shows. I was also more of a fan of earlier *Doctor Who* series, such as the Patrick Troughton and Jon Pertwee years. I found these stories more to my taste. Although they had their fair share of monsters they also had supernatural stories, which I preferred. I have never been a monster enthusiast.

Out of the blue on a snowy February morning in 1986 I received a phone call from Eric Saward asking if I would like to write for *Doctor Who*. I then met him at his London office the next day and he explained that it was an emergency and I would need to provide a written premise for a story in two days. I wrote the premise as requested, then, following a second rushed meeting, was asked to write a first episode and a synopsis of a further three episodes in just two weeks! I was given some production scripts to read and told I must incorporate various bits of baggage such as the Doctor's ongoing trial and some character developments for the new female assistant, played by Bonnie Langford. It was a tall order, but in those days I liked the occasional challenge of writing under pressure, even on a typewriter! And I was rather excited about the chance to write a *Doctor Who*, especially for Colin Baker, who I knew. In other words – to use a modern phrase – I was parachuted in.

During this second meeting with Eric Saward I noticed John Nathan-Turner lurking around outside in the corridor and taking a peep or two through the open office door. He never bothered to introduce himself. I sensed a bit of an atmosphere, but having once worked as a script editor in the very same building I remembered such atmospheres, usually in times of pressure. And there were a few BBC staff members who were difficult to get on with.

**What were the circumstances that led to *Paradise 5* being pulled from the schedule?**

Within thirteen days I'd finished and posted the script and the synopsis, and was pleased with them. Then the following day my agent rang to say that both script and synopsis had been rejected. I phoned Eric Saward, but it was a strange, stilted conversation on his part. He said they liked the story but were unsure of it. But I sensed that he was saddened and frustrated at having to say this, rather like someone being told what to say while a gun was held to his head.

It was only later that I learned about the ongoing conflict between Saward and Nathan-Turner. Therefore I seemed to have been parachuted into an editorial war zone and ended up being caught in the crossfire. Shame, really.

**How did you react when we suggested making the story on audio?**

After 25 years it was a delight to be contacted by Big Finish and told they would like to make *Paradise 5* on audio. It meant that the story and its characters could be released from cryogenic hibernation!

**What were your thoughts about Andy Lane's adaptation of your script and storyline?**

Having had problems writing for radio a long time ago, I have never had much confidence in my efforts as an audio writer. But Andy

Lane's fine adaptation of *Paradise 5* showed me how it could be done. His was a seamless piece of work that blended my style of writing with his so that the two were able to coexist without any clunky misrepresentations. He obviously cared about the story.

You wrote two highly regarded episodes of *Torchwood*. What was that experience like? *Torchwood* was wild and wacky and great fun. It also found an audience that had long been waiting for that kind of entertainment. I enjoyed writing my episodes *Small Worlds* and *From Out of the Rain*. As far as ideas were concerned, I was allowed free rein to be as weird as I liked. They also didn't mind me not writing about aliens, which was good. I'm not happy with aliens.

The *Torchwood* team was marvellous to work with, yet I was a little disappointed with one aspect of *From out of the Rain*. I was asked to put a lot of explanations into the final product, and an overload of exposition is something else I'm not happy with. I feel that it nullifies the contributions of actors and camera. I prefer subtext that allows the viewers to imagine and conclude for themselves. Perhaps that's why radio writing

didn't work for me. If I'd had my way I would have cut out those huge chunks of chat that I felt slowed down the middle section of *Rain*.

You created *Sapphire and Steel*, which remains popular to this day. You must be thrilled by how much the show is still loved. It's strange, but after thirty years *Sapphire and Steel* never seems to have gone away. There is still a huge fan base. And when I attended a Cult TV event a few years ago I was both surprised and moved by the amount of people, young and old, who wanted to talk about the show. So it's great that Big Finish is also helping to keep *S&S* alive. And David Warner is perfect in the role.

Might we ever see *Sapphire and Steel* back on TV?

Over the years there have been many planned attempts at resurrecting *Sapphire and Steel*. The most recent one was a year ago. ITV plc was keen to get the show up and running again. I had meetings with drama executives and plans were made for a production. Sadly, the network turned it down, saying they did not want any more remakes. It was the closest yet for a return of the series. So fingers crossed for next time.

What are you currently working on?

I am still writing for *Midsomer Murders*. I've been doing it for ten years now and have claimed 24 victims! Most of them deserved it. They allow me to write creepy stories, and I quite enjoy working on something that is over an hour and a half in length. In its way, *Midsomer* is yet another wild and freakish show. I see it as science fiction, because it has a strange landscape that is almost unreal, like a parallel universe! And who would want to live there? My current episode has just been produced. It's a ghostly story.

*Doctor Who: The Lost Stories - Paradise 5* is out this month

## 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 - The Emperor of Eternity* (4.08, Second Doctor)

## MAY

- *Doctor Who - The Wreck of the Titan* (134, Sixth Doctor/Jamie)
- *Doctor Who: The Lost Stories - The Song of Megaptera* (1.7)
- *Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles - The Time Vampire* (4.10, Fourth Doctor)
- *Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles - Night's Black Agents* (4.11, Sixth Doctor)
- *Dark Shadows - Audiobook 12*

## JULY

- *Doctor Who - Cobwebs* (136, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)
- *Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures - Situation Vacant* (4.02, Eighth Doctor and TBA)
- *Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles - TBA* (5.01, First Doctor)
- *Dark Shadows - Audiobook 14*
- *Dark Shadows: Kingdom of the Dead 1* (2.1 Full cast audio)

## SEPTEMBER

- *Doctor Who - Cradle of the Snake* (138, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)
- *Doctor Who - TBA* (139, Seventh Doctor/Ace)
- *Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures - The Book of Kells* (4.04, Eighth Doctor and TBA)
- *Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles - TBA* (5.03, Third Doctor)
- *Dark Shadows: Kingdom of the Dead 3* (2.3 Full cast audio)

## NOVEMBER

- *Doctor Who - TBA* (141, Seventh Doctor/Ace)
- *Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures - The Greater Good* (4.06, Eighth Doctor and TBA)
- *Doctor Who: The Lost Stories - The First Doctor Box Set* (2.1)
- *Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles - TBA* (5.05, Doctor TBA)
- *Short Trips: Volume 1* (2 CDs, various readers)

## APRIL

- *Doctor Who - City of Spires* (133, Sixth Doctor/Jamie)
- *Doctor Who: The Lost Stories - Point of Entry* (1.6)
- *Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles - Shadow of the Past* (4.09, Third Doctor)
- *Dark Shadows 11: Blood Dance*
- *Love Songs for the Shy and Cynical* (Paperback)
- *Sherlock Holmes 1.3: Holmes and the Ripper* (Full cast audio)

## JUNE

- *Doctor Who - Legend of the Cybermen* (135, Sixth Doctor/Jamie/Zoe)
- *Doctor Who: The Lost Stories - The Macros* (1.8)
- *Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles - Solitaire* (4.12, Eighth Doctor)
- *Jago and Litefoot - Series 1 Box Set* (Four full cast adventures)
- *Dark Shadows - Audiobook 13*

## AUGUST

- *Doctor Who - The Whispering Forest* (137, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)
- *Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures - Nevermore* (4.03, Eighth Doctor and TBA)
- *Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles - TBA* (5.02, Second Doctor)
- *Dark Shadows: Kingdom of the Dead 2* (2.2 Full cast audio)

## OCTOBER

- *Doctor Who - TBA* (140, Seventh Doctor/Ace)
- *Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures - Deimos* (4.05, Eighth Doctor and TBA)
- *Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles - TBA* (5.04, Fourth Doctor)
- *Dark Shadows: Kingdom of the Dead 4* (2.4 Full cast audio)

## DECEMBER

- *Doctor Who - TBA* (142, Fifth Doctor/Nyssa)
- *Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures - TBA* (4.07, Eighth Doctor and TBA)
- *Doctor Who: The Lost Stories - The Second Doctor Box Set* (2.2)
- *Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles - TBA* (5.06, Doctor TBA)

## EVENTS

## DIARY

March 12 - 14:

*Time Quest 2*

BF guests: **Nicholas Briggs** (executive producer), **Robert Shearman** (author), **Lisa Bowerman** (Bernice Summerfield/director), **David Richardson** (producer), **Jamie Robertson** (sound designer)

March 20:

**Robert Shearman** signing *Love Songs for the Shy and Cynical* Waterstones Thurrock, Unit 69, Lakeside Shopping Centre, Thurrock RM20 2ZG

March 27

**Tracey Childs** signing the Klein Trilogy at The Who Shop

April 24

**Nicholas Briggs** signing *Holmes and the Ripper* Waterstones Thurrock, Unit 69, Lakeside Shopping Centre, Thurrock RM20 2ZG

May 14 - 16:

*Utopia 2010*

BF guests: **David Richardson** (producer), **Lisa Bowerman** (director), **John Ainsworth** (director), **John Banks** (actor: *Paper Cuts*, *Leviathan*, *City of Spires*, *The Song of Megaptera* and more), **Alex Mallinson** (cover artist/actor), **Paul Finch** (writer: *Leviathan*)

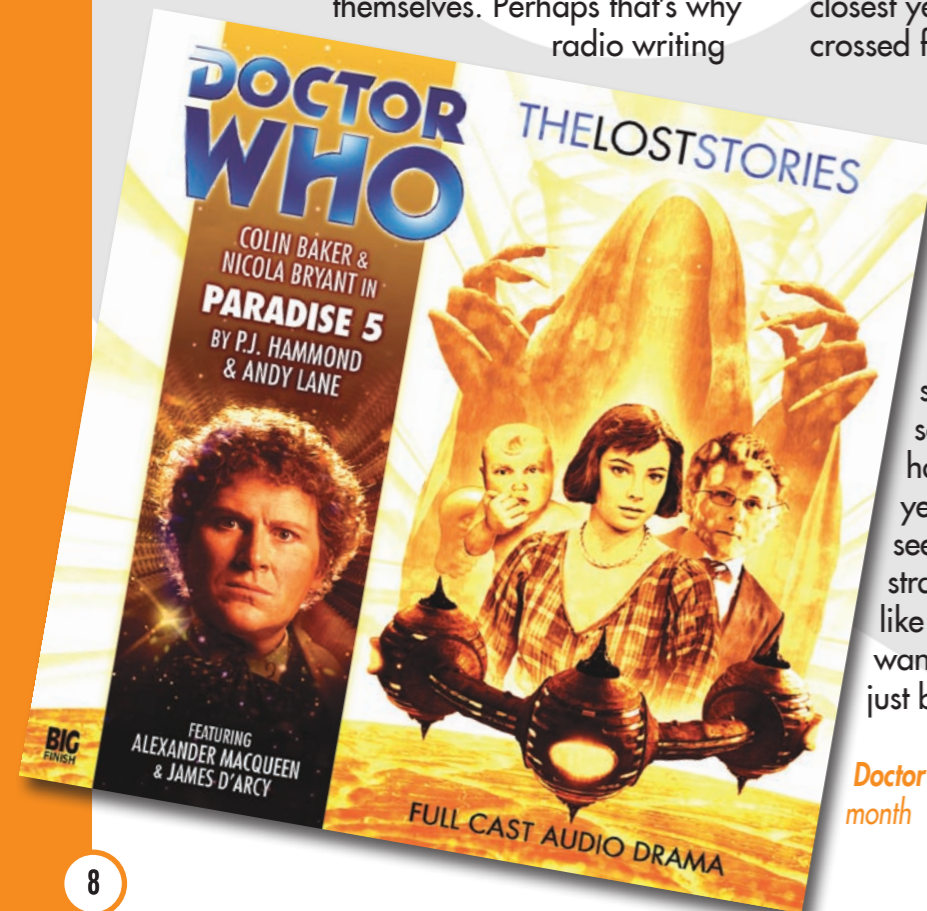
June 11-13:

*Bad Wolf*

**David Richardson** (producer), **Lisa Bowerman** (Bernice Summerfield/director) Convention guests include **Nicholas Briggs** (Voice of the Daleks, BF executive producer), **Christopher Benjamin** and **Trevor Baxter** (*Jago and Litefoot*)

June 26

**Christopher Benjamin** and **Trevor Baxter** signing *Jago and Litefoot* series one at The Who Shop



# JAGO & LITEFOOT



June sees the release of **Jago & Litefoot** – Series 1, a box set containing four brand new full cast audio stories starring everyone's favourite theatre impresario and pathologist. Producer David Richardson gives us a taster of what's to come...

Were you surprised by the success of *The Mahogany Murderers*?

I think 'surprised' is the wrong word. We were just very happy. Director Lisa Bowerman and I had such a glorious time working on it, and believed so very strongly in it, that we would have just been desperately disappointed if it hadn't been a success. That day in studio, when Christopher and Trevor were reunited for the first time in over thirty years, was absolutely glorious.

So what are Christopher and Trevor like to work with?

They're a joy. They're not just brilliant at what they do – recreating Jago and Litefoot seemingly effortlessly – but they're also two of the nicest people I've met. And they're very funny – we spend the day just laughing with them. If anyone has seen them at a convention, you'll know that they endlessly tease each other. I remember

the first day of recording, and Trevor had been in the studio recording the early scenes alone. Christopher came in to join him and said, 'Ah, I thought you were in here!' 'Why's that?' asked Trevor. 'Oh, it's just that I was able to get a word in edgewise in the green room, that's all.' And thus the badinage carried on for four blissful days.

Did you ever consider continuing the story as another **Companion Chronicle** rather than full cast audio?

*The Mahogany Murderers* was an instant hit. We've mentioned before that the original pressing sold out within two months – a record for the range. So it was clear early on that there was a potential audience to support a full cast series. It was executive producer Jason Haigh-Ellery's idea to do it as a box set, following the model set by **Iris Wildthyme** and **Cyberman 2**.

Tell us about the lead characters.

Well, aside from Jago and Litefoot, Lisa Bowerman is back as the barmaid Ellie, who becomes embroiled in their adventures. Lisa played the same part in *The Mahogany Murderers* and did it as a favour – Andy Lane had written a third character, but the budget was only big enough to cover two roles! So, seeing as she was directing, Lisa generously offered to play Ellie for nothing. In the end, it became an audition for a recurring role – Ellie gained her own lease of life, and fitted so naturally into the series that we all wanted to include her. And Doctor Tulp, who also appeared in the **Chronicle**, is back again – this time brought to malevolent life by the brilliant Toby Longworth.

And you've got Conrad Asquith returning as Quick...

Yes! That was a late bit of inspiration on my part! The original season planning document, which was devised by Andy Lane and Justin Richards, had mention of a police sergeant. It just occurred to me that we could bring back the character of Quick from *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*, promote him to Sergeant, and we'd have another link to that classic story. I rang Conrad's agent and he was delighted by the prospect. He proved to be a great addition to the ensemble cast.

What can you tell us about the four stories?

Well, they are four very different adventures that ultimately form part of one much bigger story. *The Bloodless Soldier* by Justin Richards is a monster tale, concerning a creature that has been brought to Britain by a group of soldiers – it's dark and gothic and quite scary. *The Bellova Devil* by Alan Barnes is a clever puzzle of a plot, which begins when Litefoot is assigned to do the post-mortem on a man who has died before. *The Spirit Trap* by Jonathan Morris is a romp concerning a seemingly fake psychic, while the season culminates with *The Similarity Engine* by Andy Lane. It's a big, epic ending in which Jago and Litefoot are pitted against an old enemy...

How did you choose the guest cast?

It was largely the usual mix of people we've enjoyed working with in the past, and people we'd always wanted to work with. Janet Henfrey, who plays Mrs Vanguard in *The Spirit Trap*, was an example of the latter – I've always loved her work, and she was so thrilled to be asked. She left the most lovely message on my answerphone on the day after the recording saying what fun she'd had. Stephen Thorne (*The Secretary* in *The Bellova Devil*) is a long-standing friend of Christopher Benjamin's – Chris suggested him, and I thought it was a terrific idea. Lex Shrapnel (*Toby* in *The Spirit Trap*) I'd worked with before on **The Companion Chronicles** and *Holmes and the Ripper* – great actor, a lovely bloke and perfect for the part. I'd also like to mention Alex Mallinson, who plays a number of very diverse roles in the series, and really proves his worth as a very talented actor.

Are there plans for any more?

Gosh, I'd love to. I remember the week before the studio I was doing a final check on the scripts, and I just felt absolutely elated. It just felt that we'd hit upon a really great series. And we keep thinking of new ideas that we could explore. But it all depends entirely on pre-orders and sales.

*Jago & Litefoot* – Series One is out in June



Above: Janet Henfrey and Stephen Thorne

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- 1.2 The Bellova Devil
- 1.3 The Spirit Trap
- 1.4 The Similarity Engine

PRE-ORDER NOW FROM  
**BIGFINISH.COM**

I signed up with yourselves as a Big Finish subscriber for 12 months in December. I don't quite understand why I cannot get my hands on *An Earthly Child* as it states on the homepage it's available to all subscribers.

I had to read the forums to tell me that unless my subscription began with *Plague of the Daleks* (and it doesn't because I bought it separately), it's not available to me. Which seems very odd and unbelievable.

Can you tell me, am I entitled to *An Earthly Child* and if not why not? Also, if I am not, I think you should remove the advert on your home page or amend it.

John Branigan

Nick: Hi John, really sorry for the confusion here. It's one of those occasions where something has always been the case, and we've forgotten that new subscribers will not know. Since far back beyond me taking the role of exec producer of Big Finish, the 'subscriber-only specials' have only been available to subscribers whose subscription includes the December release. Our adverts used to detail all of this, but recently we've been trying to cut down on the amount of text on adverts, to make them more striking. People tend not to be attracted towards huge blocks of text (like this answer!). We are in the process of making this clearer to all subscribers. We really appreciate your raising this point.

I'm enjoying collecting your *Doctor Who* stories. Unfortunately, being a bloomin' sequentialist, I have to get them all, and in order! I read on some of your mailouts that a subscription starting with an earlier title would cost £100 rather than £140. This doesn't seem to be reflected in your online store and is rather holding me back from placing the order. Can you offer some guidance?

Andrew Tomes

Nick: Thanks for pointing this out. It isn't as clear as it should be and we hope to get our webmaster, Paul Wilson, to make this simpler and clearer in the near future. What actually happens is that when you go to the check-out, the discount then shows up. But this is far from satisfactory, because for a moment it looks as though you're about to part with more money than you want to! While this matter is sorted out, please proceed to check-out to get your discount.

As a subscriber I have written several times in the past saying what a fab job I think you are doing, and this was continued with the marvellous *Castle of Fear*. Almost everything you have tried with the Doctors has been intelligently and stylishly achieved.

Having said that, I do have my reservations about the Sixth Doctor's lost season, as I think as admirable as it is to give this to *Who* fans, it is a massive step backwards for both BF and Colin

Baker, as the Sixth Doctor is now so much more than he was on screen, a milder, more intelligent, more empathic and much more enjoyable character.

I like the thinking behind it, but I can't see it working. *The Nightmare Fair* was okay, but despite Colin, Nicola, Nabil Shaban and Maggie Steed doing their best, *Mission to Magnus* is b\*\*\*\* awful. It makes *Slipback* easy to listen to and that's saying something.

I'll still keep renewing my subscriptions as I love listening to the CDs; just thought you'd appreciate a little feedback.

Gary

Nick: Gary, we do appreciate your feedback here. It was a concern of mine too, but I think that overall the project is worthwhile. Clearly it won't be to everyone's taste, but revisiting these lost stories has created a lot of excitement and has brought some people to Big Finish who have never tried us before. As for the character of the Doctor, it's something Colin and I have discussed, and what Colin has tried to do, with great success I feel, is tread a kind of middle line, where he portrays the necessary harshness of these, perhaps 'old fashioned' scripts, but tempers it whenever possible with the more multifaceted version of the Sixth Doctor he has developed for Big Finish over the years.

David: I'd also add that I think there's something in the series of *Lost Stories* for everyone. Personally, I'm very happy with *Leviathan*, which has received a huge amount of praise, plus I think the upcoming *Paradise 5*, *The Song of Megaptera* and *Point of Entry* are particularly strong.

There are many Big Finish stories that I would like to listen to, especially *Doctor Who*, but I just don't have a limitless bank balance or infinite storage space. Have you ever considered a rental scheme, in much the same manner as Blockbuster and Lovefilm do with DVDs?

Stephen Bell

Nick: It's a constant worry for us that ardent listeners can't afford to buy everything they want from us. That's why we keep doing special discount schemes, so please do keep looking out for those. But the problem with a rental scheme is that, because we don't want to irritate people by using anti-copying software on our CDs, it would be very easy for people to rent a CD from us and copy it, then pass it on. I'm not suggesting you would do this, Stephen. But there are unscrupulous people out there who just don't think it's stealing to copy and distribute our productions for free. We suffer enough from piracy and I feel that a rental scheme would make matters worse, unfortunately.

Love your CDs and always look forward to your podcasts. It makes my Sunday morning, coming home from walking the dogs and settling down

with a cup of tea to listen.

My question/comment/request is: please could you consider reorganising your track listings on your main range CDs as (to me) I think they are in the wrong order. I have enjoyed the *Three Companions* serial; however, like those old *Flash Gordon* serials at the pictures I would like to see/listen to it before the main feature. Then the CD extras can be moved to the end of the second disc rather than interrupting the main story.

Also, I don't want to listen to a trailer to the next story before I have listened to the current instalment of the main range. Can you imagine *Doctor Who* on television showing 'next time on *Doctor Who*' before the current episode!?

M Toates

Nick: As I'm always reminding people, you have total control of your CD. You don't have to listen to them in the order of the tracks. But I know you know that. The reason the tracks are in the order they are is that I feel strongly that we need to promote the next production in a predominant position. If the trailer was at the end, it could easily be missed. We took this decision some time back and it has worked for us very well, bringing the next production more to the attention of listeners. We put it on a separate track so that it can easily be skipped if a listener wants to come back to it later. As for putting the *Companion Chronicle* before the main story, I just don't feel this is right at all. *The Three Companions* was a kind of bonus to listeners, so I felt it would sit better after the main feature. But naturally, you have the choice of listening to it first, very easily. The same with the extras, which are positioned at the end of the first CD because there's a natural break in the story. But again, you don't have to listen to it after episode two. That's entirely your choice.

Just wondering whatever happened to the *Tomorrow People* range; there's still so much more you can do with it. Why can't you buy the CDs from the Big Finish website? Also, I am a fan of Sherlock Holmes and think it's great that Big Finish is now producing the *Sherlock Holmes* CDs. What do you think Sherlock Holmes would have made of the Amityville case? Would he, like his creator, be interested in the supernatural side of the case or would he just have been interested in the more down to earth side? Will Sherlock Holmes ever meet the Doctor in the Big Finish range?

James Brant

Nick: The company who own the rights of *The Tomorrow People* did not renew their licence with us, because they apparently had plans to make a new TV series... but we have, as yet, seen no sign of this happening, which is a shame. Glad you're keen on *Sherlock Holmes*. I'll be making another three of those this year. Not sure what Holmes would make of the Amityville case.

I'll have a puff on my metaphorical pipe and think about that. There are currently no plans for Sherlock Holmes to meet the Doctor, although he does get a mention in an upcoming *Doctor Who* adventure.

I am halfway through the original show of *Dark Shadows* and I purchased all the CDs you have available. I can't wait for the other dramatic readings, and most for the full cast dramas. I was wondering if it could be possible to have Diana Millay return as Laura Collins (aka 'The Phoenix'). Laura Collins was David Collins' mother. I would love to have her in a story. Also, please bring back Alexandra Moltke Isles as Victoria Winters. I think fans would really appreciate having her back on these audio stories. Perhaps she and Carolyn could go on an adventure in the closed off sections of Collinwood and find out some information about her past.

Just as an overall note I would like to say thank you. Thank you for these wonderful stories and bringing these wonderful actors back for everyone to enjoy. These really are precious gems. I love the stories, I love the music, and love the actors. I have also enjoyed your *Stargate* series. And I have recently purchased your *Robin Hood* series, which I loved watching. I do intend to listen to the *Sherlock Holmes* and start all the *Doctor Who* stories. I think Big Finish is great. I would high recommend all your products to all my friends.

Chris Odell

Nick: Chris, thanks so much for your positivity. It warms the cockles of our hearts here. Here's *Dark Shadows* producer Stuart Manning...

Stuart: Since Big Finish began making *Dark Shadows*, we've tried to involve as many of the classic cast as possible, and we're always on the lookout for ways to add new voices to the mix. For the dramatic readings, we've featured Marie Wallace and Lisa Richards as new characters, with Jerry Lacy joining our regular cast for all four parts of the new *Kingdom of the Dead* mini-series. As for Victoria Winters, she's a character definitely in our sights - I'd love to have her return, so maybe one day we'll make that happen.

I understand your pricing format due to the loss of revenue of people ripping your CDs and selling them. What I do not get is why those of us that want CD-perfect sound must buy the CD and have no download format? I rip all of my CDs in FLAC format and in the last year or so artists have slowly started to release some of their work in this format. The Beatles and Metallica are a couple of the biggest names that have done so. I have all 700 or so of my CDs in this format which after you take the time to properly scan in the artwork is worth the extra \$1 or \$2 that they charge for FLAC

over MP3. Plus the sound quality and archival properties of lossless formats are major reasons I have switched. I hope to be able to put my CD collection into a box in a closet for good. Basically I am saying that I would like to be able to download the *Doctor Who* shows from your site in FLAC format. I am willing to pay \$1 or \$2 more than the MP3 download. I will never buy another MP3 in my life and I do not feel that I should have to pay the nearly double price for the CD copy even if I know why it is that way.

Ryan

Nick: Ryan, you will no doubt be alarmed that most people can't tell the difference between CD quality and an MP3! I know, I know, you are an enthusiast and you really know your stuff. I think it sounds like a great idea to use the FLAC format, and I will certainly be raising this issue within Big Finish.

I just wanted to contact you to let you know how much I enjoyed your *Stargate SG-1/Atlantis* audiobooks. I recently purchased your entire catalogue of these CDs at Chevron 7.4 and I have just finished listening to them and I have to say they are fantastic. I particularly liked *Zero Point* and *Impressions: David Nykl and Kavan Smith* have excellent reading voices.

I will definitely be branching out into your other sci-fi stories. I do hope that you will be producing more stories soon and I am sure I will be at the front of the queue when they come out.

Judith Taylor

Nick: Thanks, Judith. Really glad to hear you liked them. There will certainly be more *Stargate* from us. And Paul Spragg assures me that it will be bigger and better.

Would you please make a sequel to *Doctor Who: Real Time* already? I realize that everything is eventually okay based on later stories with Evelyn (or is it?), but it has been an incredibly extended cliffhanger waiting to find out how her cyber infection was resolved. Please don't tell me that Cyber Controller was really her! At least not in the final version of events. Unless somehow she is completely cured?

If you refuse to do a proper sequel I will be forced to assume the Vyrans took care of it and erased everyone's memories...

Trevor Salla

Nick: Trevor, that's not a bad assumption! The thing is, that was Gary Russell's story, and although Gary will be working with us again in the future, I don't think he has any plans to revisit *Real Time* just now. But hope springs eternal... It would be nice to sort all that out.

*The Mists of Time* was exciting with a couple of amusing moments, but one flaw and one missed

opportunity: the machine would create a simulation of whoever you were thinking about, but:

Error: after the Doctor refers to Hitler and Genghis Khan and the other one, they should have appeared because he, and then the people he was talking to, would have thought of them.

Potential scene: Jo could have said to the villain "What would your father have thought of that? What would your mother have thought?" and then those people would have appeared and either stopped the villain or at least delayed 'em.

Dana Snow

David: Hi Dana, thanks for getting in touch. The machine only summons up people who the characters were close to personally - so Jo could, for example, bring forward the Brigadier, but the Doctor couldn't manifest Hitler. It's this deep emotional connection that's important to the story.

I wanted to write to you to say how much I am enjoying the podcasts, which I have recently discovered on iTunes. I have downloaded all your podcasts from the beginning of 2009 and am almost up to date now. Although some of the news has been a little out of date, they have nevertheless been very enjoyable. Nick and David are a tremendous double act and highly entertaining and hysterically funny. I could listen to Nick and David for hours. I'd love to hear more from Lisa Bowerman as her podcast on Benny was tremendous and again, she is wonderful to listen to.

Your podcasts have made me want to listen to some of the releases again. Normally I only get the chance to listen to them once, but some deserve a second listening.

It's strange to know that you are just down the road from me in Sydenham and I pass BF every day on the train.

I currently buy all my Big Finish CDs from 10th Planet but am intending to change and become a Big Finish subscriber as 10th Planet take weeks to get the CDs to me these days and I am nearly always a couple of CDs behind. So rather than getting the CDs signed by them, I'd sooner become a BF subscriber and get all the extras that you say a BF subscriber receives! And to get them on time!

On another matter: I have really enjoyed the *Sherlock Holmes* CDs and can't wait for the third one. I hope you do more of them. And I was so sad to say goodbye to Charley. *Blue Forgotten Planet* was just stunning. One of my all-time favourites.

Alan Jones

Nick: Thanks, Alan. Glad you're enjoying the podcasts. And glad you're moving over to Big Finish for your subscription. You know what they say, subscribers get more at... Well, you know! And apologies for the delay on the third *Holmes* release. I've actually paused my work on it to answer these letters. Right, back to work, then...

# LYONS & SHARKS



This month Steve Lyons is again writing for two of his own creations – Elizabeth Klein and the Selachians – in *The Architects of History*

What are your memories of developing and writing *Colditz*?

I remember that the time paradox gave me a headache! It took me ages to work it all through, and make sure there were no loose ends.

What was the original inspiration for Klein? Klein didn't arrive in my head fully-formed, she came about very slowly, piece by piece. I wanted to have the Doctor accidentally change history, but the big problem was how to show this. I didn't want him leaving Colditz Castle and going to a Nazi-dominated future, because then you've lost the focus of the story. The alternative was to have a second time traveller arrive in 1944, someone who has seen the altered future. At first I thought that might be the Master, but Big Finish had other plans for him. I considered creating another Time Lord, but then I thought, 'What about

someone who actually comes from that altered future?'

It took me a while to commit to that idea because, as I said, it made for a very knotty time paradox that was difficult to work through. The Time Lord would have been a lot easier but I kept coming back to the 'future Nazi' idea because it felt so much more exciting.

Originally, Klein was going to be a man. This was an automatic choice, as he had to pose as a German inspector and gain access to Colditz Castle, and a woman in that role would have seemed out of place. I began to think about changing Klein's gender because *Colditz* had, apart from Ace, an all-male cast and I don't think that's a good thing for an audio play. Of course, as soon as I considered making Klein female, I realised that her seeming out of place in 1944 was a good thing, not a bad one.

And only after all that could I start thinking about Klein as a character, what she would be like. I wanted someone who could stand up to the Seventh Doctor, really challenge him. She had to be absolutely sure of herself and her cause,

and I wanted people to be able to understand her point of view and, to an extent, sympathise with her, because, after all, what the Doctor has done to her is pretty awful, albeit necessary.

For that reason, I played down Klein's Nazi background. I didn't want her to be evil. Never does she condone the Nazis' atrocities. She does turn a blind eye to them, but, given the version of history she was no doubt taught, that was probably an easy thing for her to do. She's a product of the world she comes from more than anything.

Did you have any plans to continue the character?

I always hoped to use Klein again, and in fact Gary Russell asked me to submit another story for her during the recording of *Colditz* – as soon as we heard Tracey's performance in the role. We even talked about rewriting the end of *Colditz* there and then so that she would end up hiding in the TARDIS to emerge in a future story, but I quite liked the idea of her being at large in the Forties and Fifties, an anomaly with dangerous knowledge of the future. A few years later, Gary talked about using her in the Forge audios. In the end, though, none of those plans came together, and I eventually gave up hope that we'd ever hear from Klein again.

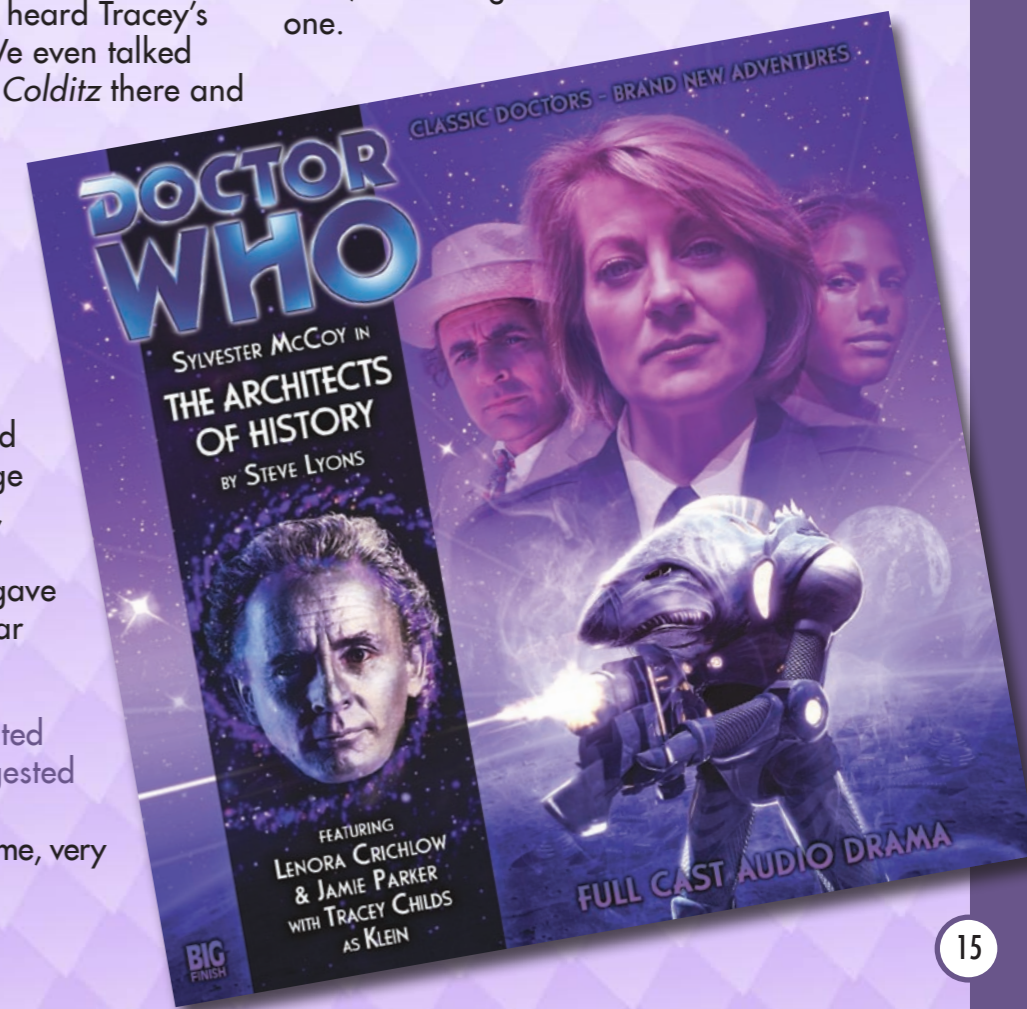
You must have been delighted when John Ainsworth suggested bringing her back... Delighted and, after all this time, very surprised.

You put together a planning document for this season of three Klein stories. What sorts of things were in there?

It was very focused on Klein herself and her particular arc, so for the first story it was the Fifties setting, Klein involving herself in an alien incursion that she had knowledge of from her own world and the Doctor's reasons for taking her away with him in the TARDIS. For the second, it was a few lines on how the Doctor and Klein might interact as companions.

Why did you choose to write the last of the three stories?

I was planning to write the first, as that would have been the 'return of Klein' story I'd been thinking about for eight years. Klein ended up being more pivotal to the third story, however, and I found myself writing twice as much on that story in the planning document as I did on the other two. Basically, there was plenty of room in the first two stories for other writers to come in and do their own thing, far less so in the third, so I thought I'd better take that one.





How did you come to bring back the Selachians?

I needed a monster, and I wanted it to be one we had seen before, as I thought the part two cliffhanger would work better that way. The Sontarans weren't available. John and I talked about the Axons, bizarrely enough, but we felt they weren't a good fit. John suggested the Selachians, and at first I wasn't sure because in their earlier appearances I had tied them to one particular era. In the end, though, we realised we could use that. So, we have time-travelling Selachians, and the reason they're travelling in time became a vital part of the story.

Tell us a bit about the history of the Selachians.

I created the Selachians for two BBC Past Doctor novels, *The Murder Game* in 1996 and *The Final Sanction* in 1999. I wanted them to be fairly traditional monsters, because I was writing a fairly traditional **Doctor Who** story in *The Murder Game*, but I also wanted to be able to return to them later and flesh out their background a little. Most of all, I wanted a monster that would work in prose, because I think 90% of what makes a **Doctor Who** monster work is its physical presence. I wanted one of those monster-bursting-in cliffhangers, which you can't really do if you have to stop the action for a 100-word description of what the monster in question looks like. 'Walking, armoured shark', on the other hand, is only a three-word description, which hopefully plants an image in your mind very quickly.

Do they work well on audio?

I think so. I hope so. For the same reason, really, because they're easy to visualise, and certainly being able to hear their voices and their guns and their armour clanking helps to build up that picture. And, of course, anthropomorphised Earth creatures are all the rage in **Doctor Who** these days anyway...

What was it like attending the recording of *The Architects of History*?

I loved it. I think I'm over any self-consciousness now about hearing actors saying my words, and it was especially lovely to meet Tracey, because she's been in two of my plays before – as well as *Colditz*, she played a mad computer in *Time Works* – and we missed each other at both recordings. It was great to see how enthusiastic she was about playing Klein.

In terms of tone and themes, how would you describe the story?

It's an alternative timeline story, which is something I was a bit dubious about approaching because it brings to mind those many, many episodes of **Star Trek: Voyager** that start with the crew detecting chroniton particles and then one of the regulars dies and you don't care in the slightest because you know there's a big time travel-related reset switch looming. So I sort of overcompensated for that and wrote a story that is all about consequences, and specifically about the consequences of what the Doctor does. And it's about walking armoured sharks stomping about the place with big guns too.

Having brought back two of your own creations this year, are there any others you'd like to work with again?

I'd quite like to write Chancellor Valyes again, I think. I only used him once, in a **Gallifrey** audio, and he's gone on to bigger and better things since then, even becoming Lord President for a time. The only other character I've created with the specific intent of using again was Grant Markham, a companion to the Sixth Doctor in the *Virgin Missing Adventures*. I never got to finish his story, but, I don't know, that seems a very long time ago now.

*Doctor Who: The Architects of Time is out this month*

Script editor and director John Ainsworth discusses his work on the Klein trilogy.

How did you come to decide to bring back Klein?

It was a no-brainer as far as I was concerned and I was amazed that it hadn't been done already. Klein was a very popular character in *Colditz* and it was clearly set up for her to make a return appearance. The listeners have been asking for Klein's return ever since her first appearance. So when I was asked to script-edit a Seventh Doctor trilogy with a new companion, this seemed the obvious choice.

What was the thought process behind the arc of the season?

Having decided to bring back Klein we were faced with the idea that she would be forced to travel with the Doctor. I see the Doctor as an idealist who always believes that there is good in someone, however deeply it's buried. We've seen him show compassion to the likes of the Master and to Davros, so I thought it was entirely in character that he would believe it possible to 'cure' Klein of her Nazi beliefs. So the central thread of the trilogy was to force the Doctor and Klein together and make them examine each other's philosophies.

Did you enjoy directing *Survival of the Fittest* and *The Architects of History*?

Directing the second and third parts of the trilogy was great fun and I enjoyed the experience very much. I've worked with Sylvester several times before and he's always good. However, I thought he gave particularly strong performances in these two stories. Tracey Childs was also excellent. She worked well with Sylvester and clearly loved the character she was playing. On top of that we had excellent guest casts, with, amongst others, Adrian Bower and Lloyd McGuire giving memorably strong performances. I'm very pleased with how these stories turned out.

What can we expect from *The Architects of History*?

You can expect an exciting **Doctor Who** adventure which manages to combine several story types in one play. On the one hand it's a base under siege story, on another it's an action/adventure space opera with aliens cast from the classic **Doctor Who** monster mould, wielding big guns. And of course, in amongst all that, the Doctor and Klein face off against each other, which leads to a conclusion that might not be what people expect...



**Nick Briggs on...  
There Will Be Blood**

I very nearly hated this the first time round, when I saw it at the pictures. But I rewatched it recently on DVD and absolutely loved it. It's the story of an 'Oil Man' in the wilds of America during those frontier days. It is a fantastically brooding, raw and uncompromising story of someone who is essentially very driven and not very nice, as it turns out. Day Lewis gives us his usual awesome attention to detail. The first time around, I thought it was self-indulgent, but this time I thought it was brilliant. Just goes to show that the frame of mind you're in can fundamentally affect what you think about something. Obvious really.

**Alex Mallinson on...  
Ginger**

After a row with a housemate about something exceptionally trivial, I was presented with a jar of Co-op ginger preserve as a peace offering. I'm quite easy-going so I have to be really, really upset before I explode. Equally, I am very easily placated, and the preserve was just the thing. It also re-kindled my love of ginger. It goes in everything! Ginger beer, ginger chicken and rice, ginger and banana smoothies, ginger cheesecake, ginger biscuits dunked in ginger tea! These all top my list of things that are nice in my mouth. And yet it looks terrifying. Who hasn't pressed a particularly knobby root to their eye in the supermarket and grimaced at their partner? No one. That's who. Ginger is awesome. Ginger hair neither excites nor repulses me as it does the Doctor and Npower respectively, but it may amuse those Titian-tops who have endured jibes thanks to their fulvous follicles that in Singapore, Caucasians are known as Ang Mo Kiu, or 'Red-Haired Devils', regardless of their hair colour.

**David Richardson on...  
Planet of the Daleks**

I buy all the **Doctor Who** DVDs but I'm so behind. I haven't even watched the 1996 movie yet, and when was that released! But I did find time to watch *Planet of the Daleks*, and was hugely impressed by it. Terry Nation writes it like a movie with huge set pieces. Ice volcanoes! Dalek armies! Daring escapes! Plagues! And, despite being made on a paltry TV budget, it all hangs together beautifully. If ever one of the classic series stories were to be made into a big budget blockbuster, this would be a good candidate.

**Barnaby Edwards on...  
Twitter**

With great trepidation I finally decided to join the ranks of the Twitterati and discover for myself just how Stephen Fry can make the *Daily Mail* quake in its boots with a single tweet. I was expecting Twitter to be rather forbidding for newcomers and rife with cavilling and captiousness. But I was wrong. Aside from being pestered by a Russian Zionist (why me, for Heaven's sake?), my experience thus far has been extremely pleasant. Famous last tweets...

**Toby Hrycek-Robinson on...  
My Neighbour Totoro**

Fellow Twitterer Alex gave me this DVD at Christmas ostensibly, I think, for my young kids, but I love it every bit as much as they do. An enchanting film from Japanese animation studio, Studio Ghibli (who also made *Spirited Away*), it's mysterious, cutesy, surreal, scary, fun and sad in equal measures, but delightfully devoid of schmaltz.

**Paul Wilson on...  
Owl City**

I normally listen to Radio 4 when driving, but for some obscure reason I was listening to some popular commercial station as I drove home. For most of the trip I had completely tuned out until I realised that I was listening to something a little different and I really liked it; the song was called *Fireflies* by Owl City. When I got home I looked them up on Spotify and listened to everything that was there. Owl City is the brainchild of Adam Young, who spent his nights in his parents' basement making music with his computer as a diversion from insomnia. These songs will never go down as pop classics, but if you're looking for something a little different, very easy to listen to and with quirky lyrics, then why not give them a try?

**Paul Spragg on...  
Losing at Video Games**

My little brother Nick (he's a whole three years younger) visited me recently, and it quickly became a celebration of our childhood. We ran through a bunch of old jokes, quoted episodes of *Blackadder* and *Red Dwarf* and, most importantly, played computer games. Despite my acquisition of the contemporary genius of a PS3, Nick suggested I bought a collection of old Megadrive games for it, including *Golden Axe*, the early *Sonic the Hedgehog* ones and our personal childhood favourite, *Streets of Rage*. After singularly failing to reach the end of any of them, demonstrating the loss of some of our youthful prowess, Nick kindly proceeded to smash me into the ground on the more contemporary and rather splendid *Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe*. It was just like old times. Thankfully I beat him on quiz game *Buzz*, so at least I got a small amount of vengeance...

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