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HEX APPEAL

Philip Olivier chats about Hex, conventions and the highlight of his career so far...

JANET FIELDING

on returning to Tegan

LISA BOWERMAN

on Benny Season 11

ALSO...
DEAD AND BURIED
Animated action!
AFTER THE BREAK-UP
Carrie Sutton's new book

DIMENSIONS

12, 13 & 14 NOVEMBER 2010

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EDITORIAL

Here I am, back from my theatricals in Nottingham. A huge thank you to anyone who came along to the Theatre Royal to see me as Inspector Pratt in **Murdered to Death**. We had great reviews and truly wonderful huuge audiences. Back to reality now, but what a brilliant reality it is. **Doctor Who**.

Just recently, David Richardson and I went over to Katy Manning's place in London to talk to her about a new project. It's beautifully bonkers and it's thoroughly Katy. And she is really quite an amazing human being. It made me think how lucky I am to be in the position of chatting to the likes of Katy Manning. Well, it's my job. But like many of you reading this, I'm a proper old **Doctor Who** fan. I bought the *Radio Times Special* in 1973. I trawled through the pages of the first edition of **The Making of Doctor Who**, piecing together my **Doctor Who** memories. And I literally felt sick with excitement when I saw that Target had published **Doctor Who (In An Exciting Adventure With The Daleks)**...

So I do keep having those 'must pinch myself' moments. Tom Spilsbury (*Doctor Who Magazine* editor, as if you didn't know!) recently put on his Facebook page that he doesn't think he'll ever get used to receiving emails from Tom Baker. And I feel exactly the same! Emails from Tom Baker, texts from Lis Sladen, tea with Katy Manning... it's all so strangely low key considering that these were supposed to be characters from my childhood. I suddenly feel a bit like Amy Pond (steady, lads), in that fictional people from my past have come to life in the present and are talking to me as if they're real.

And as for those Tom Baker scripts that everybody, including Tom Baker, keeps asking me about... they're nearly, nearly, nearly done. Fingers crossed, the Fourth Doctor should be landing on a Big Finish audio one day in the not-too-distant future.

Nicholas Briggs

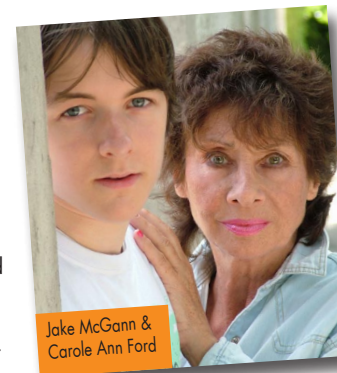
SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: Quinnis

Carole Ann Ford returns as Susan in only her second **Companion Chronicle**, for a dazzling tale set before the TV show even started! The Doctor and Susan are travelling alone in the newly acquired TARDIS when they land on the planet Quinnis, lose the TARDIS and meet the mysterious Meedla (played by Tara-Louise Kaye - who's actually Carole's real-life daughter!). Written by Marc Platt, it's an intricate and evocative script. And continuity fans may spot the link to *The Edge of Destruction*, which name-checked the planet Quinnis. *Out December 2010*

Doctor Who - The Eighth Doctor Adventures: Relative Dimensions

The Doctor doesn't really have a home... but he does have a family, and this direct sequel to *An Earthly Child* finds him reunited with his grand-daughter Susan (Carole Ann Ford) and great-grandson Alex Campbell (Jake McGann). Marc Platt takes up the writing reins again, but this is a very different tale from its predecessor - not only because it's got a real festive spirit. But there's a deadly, unstoppable enemy loose within the TARDIS... And if you also get this month's **Companion Chronicle Quinnis**, you'll discover its origins too... *Out December 2010*



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FIELDING QUESTIONS



Janet Fielding talks reunions, the heart of Tegan and life as an agent with Paul Spragg

How's the reunion been so far?
Hell, lovey, hell. Absolute hell. No, it's been wonderful. I've had a great time, we've had a lot of laughs. We take the mickey out of each other all the time, and we always did. I'm only ever nice to Peter [Davison] behind his back! It's an interesting way of approaching things. We torment each other. We give each other grief. It's just like a family, like siblings. Sort of.

It was Mark Strickson (Turlough) who suggested we reunite you all. Did he? Bless his furry little feet. I was told early on that he was coming in from New Zealand and therefore that's why we ended up getting together, and it turned out to be great.

You've not done an audio for a while. Did you intend to do more of them?
No, I didn't. But then there was this reunion thing and I thought, 'Okay,' and somehow... You know you have a no column for doing things and a yes column for doing things? Suddenly the yes column seemed to be longer than the no column. And then I thought, 'Well, okay, then I may as well do it!'

Feisty and argumentative: Janet Fielding is back as Tegan Jovanka

Does Tegan still have plenty to do?
Well, funnily enough, the last story I did [*The Gathering*] – which was very well written, the story was good – I found her a bit cruel. And she's not cruel; she's feisty and she's argumentative but her heart's in the right place. I'm quite pleased that she's back to being herself again.

The TARDIS is awfully crowded! But Tegan always does quite well. I always did do quite well out of those scenes. I think Sarah's [Sutton, Nyssa] character has done well out of these as well. I think they struggled a bit with her character when we were doing the series, and didn't quite know how to do a goody two shoes. It's hard to make a goody two shoes interesting. But you could have made her a slight pain, and at times she is in this and I think that works quite nicely.

How did you find it returning to acting?
It's hard work! At the end of the first day I was absolutely exhausted! And I know we were just doing my scenes, but even so... You've got an awful lot to convey with just your voice, and you're trying to make the voice sound lighter because, of course, it's set a long time ago now, and you think, 'Hmm, I was a lot younger then!'

Did you watch any episodes for a reminder?
No. I have seen episodes because I've had commentaries to do, and I saw some in November because I was doing interviews. But no, I didn't for this. What can you do? You can only lighten your voice. Because my own voice is quite deep, especially now.

You don't need to practice the accent any more though.
Well, funny you should say that. I use my Australian accent now more than I ever did. I started really using my Australian accent a lot when I was an agent, because it was user-friendly with a wide selection of people. There's an interview with me in the Eighties and I'm so anxious to be cast as an English person. There are a whole raft of reasons why I gave up acting – primarily because there are no roles

for women once you get beyond about 30, etc, etc – but there was also another thing that was happening, which was I couldn't get to use my own persona. One's personality is bound up with how one sounds. And somehow it just felt right. I stopped wanting to sound English.

What did you take away from being an agent?
I learnt quite a lot. Especially about being needy. It's interesting. There's a certain kind of confidence. It's interesting to look at actors and go, 'Ooh, you're going to have a major battle with your personality'. Not your talent but your personality, in order to ride the kinds of currents that were out there.

"She's feisty and she's argumentative but her heart's in the right place. I'm quite pleased that she's back to being herself again."

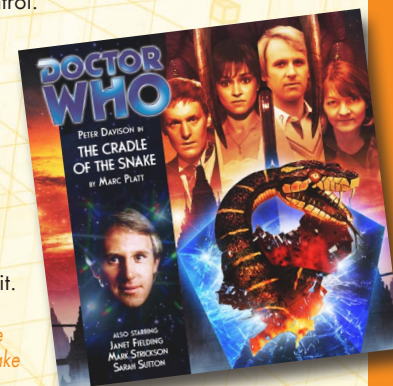
Was it something you'd always wanted to turn your hand to?
No, but it was just this fabulous offer that came to me, and I thought, 'I can't pass this up'. I didn't do it for that long, actually, I did it for six years and

then I sold out to the women who worked with me. I enjoyed it, but it wasn't for me long-term. I'm glad I did it, I'm hugely glad I did it.

It's interesting that of the four of you, only Peter has stuck with acting as a career. In my experience, most actors seem unwilling to give it up.
Maybe they just did better out of acting and didn't want to move on! It's a very agreeable life to some people. For me, I found it a little bit lacking in control.

Would you return to the profession now?
I don't look at a cast list and see lots of things that I could play. I just don't see it.

Doctor Who - The Cradle of the Snake is out this month



Philip Olivier discusses the current state of his Hex life with Paul Spragg

So, Mr Olivier, it's been a while since Hex got shot. Were you worried you weren't ever coming back? I was looking by the phone quite a lot thinking, 'Hang on a sec, what's happened here? Have I gone and they've not told me?' They went, 'You're really good at dying,' and I thought, 'Right. That's it. I'm gonna have to tone down my dying scenes or they're actually going to write a real one in!'

Because of the Klein trilogy, it has been quite a wait to find out what happens.

I think it was about a year, in fact! Or over! And waiting to find out about the history of Hex has been hanging in the balance for so long. [*Project: Destiny's*] great because we got to answer a few of the questions of Hex's past and it's nice that he's more established than he was. Hex is coming into his own now. He's starting to know a few bits. Whereas before he was asking lots of questions, he was like the bumbling idiot. He's kind of grown up, just the way I have!

It must be slightly odd to see you as you look now on covers alongside pictures of the Doctor and Ace from the Eighties.

I know! They're going to have to stop showing my face soon, I'm 30 now!

What did you think of *Project: Destiny's* revelations?

I felt it was slowly building about two, three years ago. There were a couple of scripts where some questions needed answering from Hex about his mother and it was implied that the Doctor knew all about this. And then they said 'the next story we're going to find out all these answers' and I never expected what happened in *Project: Destiny*. I'm vampire blood, which is kind of cool.

Are you looking forward to getting the superpowers later on?

Yeah, definitely! I feel like I've got them in that booth already; they keep telling me off constantly. I'm so energetic in there that if I'm strangling someone you'll see me doing that [mimes a strangle] and I'm whacking windows, all sorts!

You're not alone. India Fisher's very much one for acting everything out.

It helps you in your head, though. I can understand where she's coming from.

Sylvester and Sophie were always a close-knit team on TV; have they made you welcome?

They have! I remember about five years ago, Sophie actually gave me a call and she said she was down in Liverpool. Sadly I wasn't there but that was the first time I was like, 'Oh, I've been let in!' I was a bit starstruck when I came because when they were on TV, that was my era when I was watching **Doctor Who**. And I don't think they've changed. But it's so hard to get to know someone when you're here because you come in, you go into your separate booths and you've only really got lunchtime to speak. But after eight years all those lunchtimes add up; it's not only that that's got us close now, it's also the activities that **Doctor Who** provides us. We went to LA once; Sylvester's just been to Alaska on a **Doctor Who** cruise. All of the extra-curricular activities, they're

like a bonding exercise as well, and when I went to that one in LA, it's just ridiculous to see the fanbase around the world – and long may it continue!

"I never expected what happened in *Project: Destiny*. I'm vampire blood, which is kind of cool."

Will you be doing more conventions?

There's another one in LA at the beginning of the year; I'll be going to that, but that'll be all up on the website, who's going and everything. Anyone who's a real big hardcore fan will know. But I'm hoping to go to [Gallifrey], I think it's early February. I'm over in LA at the same time so I'll definitely go. What [Big Finish] do is split it up and give different actors the chance to go over, and I think I've not had my quota for the last four years! [laughs]

Do you have a favourite type of story to work on?

It's nice doing the action stuff. I really do revel in that because you can let your imagination go and this is one of the only jobs you can do it in, to be honest. **Doctor Who's** like the head of English sci-fi. When you're doing audio, everyone's got their own picture in their head and it's such a nice job to work on.

LET'S TALK ABOUT HEX

FEATURE

Have you seen any of the new TV series? I've seen a couple, not much. I know what side my bread's buttered on, and that's here in the audios!

We do allow you to like both...

I don't mind liking both, but I do prefer the audiobooks, I really do. I just think anyone's imagination... like when you read a book, how many times has the film beaten the book? And I think that's the same with these as well.

And now to the most important part of your career. Last year you won Escape from Takeaway Prison, making your way to safety after being captured by the stars of **Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway**.

That was amazing. Honestly. That was probably the pinnacle of my life. I've peaked now. Winning on a trike. I won't forget that day as long as I live! The amount of stick I got: 'You look like you're so enjoying it!' I'd enjoy winning tiddlywinks! It does my head in! I hate being competitive. I think we stayed there three days overall. But they didn't lock us up, it was in a lavish room in a hotel! I'll tell you what, Rowland Rivron, who came in the final with me, he was competitive. He went on the travelator thing and he slipped, smashed his nose - did they show that? It was dripping with blood everywhere, and he's going, 'No, I'll carry on!' just like Rocky or something!



Sophie Aldred, Sylvester McCoy and Philip Olivier



The latest Seventh Doctor trilogy begins this month with Project: Destiny

Carrie on baggage

Carrie Sutton gives **Vortex** some insights into how her book, **After the Break-Up**, came to be

After the Break-Up: A Girl's Guide is a bit of a new departure for Big Finish books. There are no alien planets, no ghosts, no mysteries and no strange happenings – other than those between men and women on the singles scene! It's all about the year following a tricky divorce and shows how one 28-year-old girl got through it and ended up stronger and wiser. It's been described by Alistair McGowan as 'a must-read for those who've just come out of a relationship – a blueprint for survival for women and a lesson for men'. So maybe it's time to meet the author, Carrie Sutton, to find out more...

Hi Carrie. Tell us a bit about yourself. I'm divorced! I'm an actor, singer and dancer from Scunthorpe. I've danced and performed ever since I can remember. My poor grandmother was subjected to many an impromptu showcase while she ironed! I did anything and everything related to theatre as a kid. Classes, school plays, amateur dramatics, songwriting contests, ballets and pantos until, after a season or two with the National Youth Theatre (and getting through 13 GCSEs), I left sunny Scunny to train professionally. I've had some really nice jobs covering everything from Shakespeare to dancing naked in Rufus Norris's production of **Cabaret!** And I've worked with some terrific people, a particular favourite of mine being Alvin Stardust who I did **Chitty Chitty Bang Bang** with – and secretly rather fancied!

And now you've turned your hand to writing. I actually wrote my first book at the age of eight, in a hardback edition, which I made myself. It was about a little girl called Rosie who loved ballet, ingeniously titled **Ballet for Rosie**.

Fair enough! **After the Break-Up** is the story of a year in your life – a pretty eventful one. What happened? Everything! My marriage fell apart, so I had to move out, sell up, send the dog to my mum and dad and go it alone. It was terrifying and liberating all at once. I went out drinking a lot,

dated some horribly inappropriate men and bought a whole heap of new underwear. The rest you'll have to read the book for, though I will say there was many an embarrassing episode, plus a fair number of hair-raising escapades.

It sounds a bit personal. What made you decide to write it all down? My friend, actually. We were having a coffee in Chancery Lane and we got to talking about this guy I'd been dating – who also happened to be her landlord and flatmate! She was telling me a really funny story about him and, as we both fell about, through her tears of laughter she managed to squeak, 'This should be written down, it's hilarious.' And that was it. I bought a notebook and the rest, as they say, is history...

There's a lot of painfully honest stuff in there. You're not embarrassed? Not at all. There's nothing in there that other people haven't been through. We've all experienced horrible things, embarrassing things, had difficult break-ups, drunk too much, slept with men we really shouldn't have... that's just life, it's what shapes us as people. I don't think you should hide away from the things you've done – whether you're proud of them or not. Honesty is definitely cathartic and sharing your experiences can give other people hope. And I think that making people laugh at it all can help give them a bit more strength to do what they need to do.

But you wouldn't find this book in the self-help section of the bookshop. My book is definitely not a self-help book. I'd say my book is a non self-help book or an anti self-help book. Perhaps it's the antidote to self-help books! It's packed with funny stories that we all can relate to in some way. When I left my ex, I searched desperately for a book like this. I didn't want therapy, I wanted a book where I could find people that had really been through it all, just like me. For example, I am a big fan of **Sex and the City**. People love how frank the writing is. If only the characters were real. So I decided to write my real-life **Sex and the City** story. I bared all, and that's what makes it unique. It's part memoir,

part great girly advice guide. The reader feels like they are talking it all through with a best friend who's been through it herself. I want people to read my story and see that they are not a tragic disaster case who is in it all alone – that there are millions of us out there all going through it together and that they will survive!

You were influenced by the fact that lots of other people were breaking up at the same time as you. Yeah, that's right, it seemed like every other person was splitting up from a long-term partner or things were going wrong. Not many people got together with someone that year!

Do you think you dealt with the break-up well? I think I came out of it okay in the end. I think some parts I coped with really well and others not at all. For the best part – late-night drinkathons and dodgy blokes aside – I always tried to see and use my situation positively. I chose to cope well, if that makes sense. I had to think that we were putting something behind us that had become unhappy. I let myself go with the little journey of self-discovery I found myself on, to a place where I am finally happy with who I am inside my own skin.

There are a lot of fun parts in the book – it's the opposite of doom and gloom! Even a recipe for chocolate lovers... I wanted lots of lovely light moments to weigh against the heavier ones. After all, it is about how you take something that is quite awful and turn it around, make it a new beginning, learn from it and move on. Of course there are sad parts, but it's all about coming out the other side, so there are lots of helpful hints on how to do this thrown in!

Who would you say this book is for? This book is for anyone and everyone – although perhaps not for my mother... Just kidding, she's already had a preview! It's a funny and interesting read even if you're not going through a break-up right now. There's dating tips and loads of stuff if you're just plain old soul-searching. But I think if, like me, you're a **Sex and the City** type of gal or guy then this would be right up your street. It's very

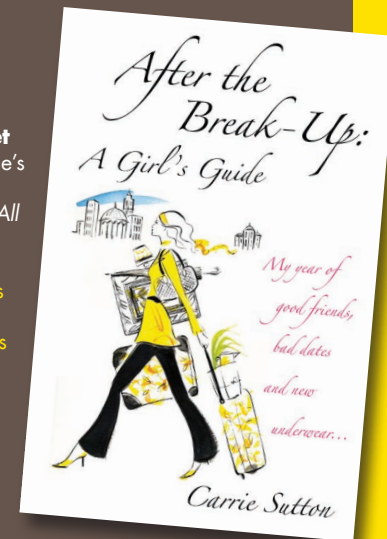
appealing for all those who have watched and related to the scene in **Bridget Jones** where she's drinking vodka and listening to *All By Myself!*

Do you think this book would be useful for men as well as women? Absolutely. Men go through horrid break-ups too and I think men are often far less likely to discuss intimate things with their mates than women, so it's definitely a good read for them. And maybe it's useful for them to see how women cope with it all and, maybe even more so, to see how we don't! It's great for them to see the other side of things, to help fathom us out a bit. If nothing else they can see why we operate the way we do and learn how women see them. And perhaps learn the things not to do on a first date!

If the book was made into a film, who would play you? Well, the actress in me would love to do it myself. But sometimes it's harder to play yourself than anything else so I guess we'd have to wait and see! Maybe Renee Zellweger? I keep getting told I look like her!

They say everyone has a book inside them. Was this it or are there more? I have loads of ideas in the pipeline rattling noisily around and keeping my brain up at night, so watch this space...

After the Break-Up is out this month



BENNY IS BACK

Bernice Summerfield has already sailed past her milestone first decade. This year sees the release of the eagerly awaited *Season Eleven* – a collection of four stories that will propel the adventuring space archaeologist into new territory. It's the start of a whole new era – and Benny herself, Lisa Bowerman, tells us all about it...

So what keeps bringing you back to the role of Bernice?

Let's be honest... when it comes to actresses of a certain age being in employment the chances of finding a character like Bernice are almost 100 to one. Generally speaking, the kind of roles most actresses get these days are either council house mums or women in suits, managers.

The attraction, not only to me but also to people who discover Bernice, is that although she is an adventuress she is also very fallible. I think that fallibility makes her interesting, and it makes it more interesting for the writers to be able to explore that. She is three-dimensional.

She has also progressed as a character and from my point of view that's also another reason why I keep coming back. Had it been the same old stuff trotted out all the time it might have been time to say goodbye to her.

Do you tend to make suggestions to the writers?

Yes and no. There have been times in the past when I might have thought she was overwritten in a script and I've said, 'I think we can tone back

the jokes a bit'. But more recently, as the series has gone on, I think we've lost sight of the fact that she's actually an archaeologist. I think within the stories it was important to get her back to her roots and what she did. Archaeology is actually a good springboard for a lot of very good stories. I think that's why the archaeologist within fiction has become a popular pastime; there is scope for discovering lots of exciting things.

The first two stories in the series, *Resurrecting the Past* and *Escaping the Future*, bring a long-running story arc to an end. What can you tell us about that?

It is the end of an era when it comes to this particular storyline. What's been quite cleverly done is that it is ended, but it gives an opportunity to reboot for the next two stories. As with any series, at any point there need to be jumping-on points and I think there is a bit of a reboot in episodes three and four.

"Although she is an adventuress she is also very fallible. She is three-dimensional."

It must have been fun to have the whole ensemble back.

Oh yes. And at conventions you get a lot of fans saying, 'When are we going to get Braxiatel back?' and so on. They're all very well written characters – they are not ciphers in order just to make Bernice look good. They challenge things, so it was great to have them back.

So what can you reveal about the new direction that the series takes in the last two stories?

It's very difficult not to do spoilers... It plays with the idea of history and time. Let's just leave it at that.

The season finale is co-written by John Dorney (who wrote the hugely popular *Solitaire*) and Richard Dinnick.

That was *Dead Man's Switch* – I enjoyed that. It centred on a very big dilemma. That one is very good.

Do you think Bernice Summerfield has a bright future?

I do, as long as we have interest and the audience has interest! What's been so encouraging is that the last series was received really well and that's very exciting. There are still plenty of ideas to be played with.

You've also been appearing as Ellie Higson in *Jago & Litefoot*.

Good old Ellie! I've loved it. As you know, I originally did it as a favour, because Andy Lane had written an extra role into *The Mahogany Murderers* and there was no budget for an actress! And from there she has gained a life of her own... she's actually become a part of the *Jago & Litefoot* world. I think both Chris [Benjamin, Jago] and Trevor [Baxter, Litefoot] fear it's going to be 'The Ellie Show' soon!

And what are your thoughts on the Bernice Summerfield animation, *Dead and Buried*?

I was told some time ago that Alex had pitched an idea to do some sort of short animation for Benny, which would lead into the

new series. The idea was very exciting. We recorded the script for it during the recording sessions for the new series, and over the past few months I've been treated to ever-growing snippets of it from Alex every time we're in the studio. The more I saw, the more my jaw hit the deck – it's amazing. I couldn't believe how complicated the process is, and I'm lost in admiration for Alex's work.

It really is a thing of beauty, and I can't wait to see everyone's response to it!

Bernice Summerfield - Season 11 begins this month with *Resurrecting the Past*



BENNY-MATION

Alex Mallinson, director of *Dead and Buried*, takes us through the process of animating Bernice Summerfield.

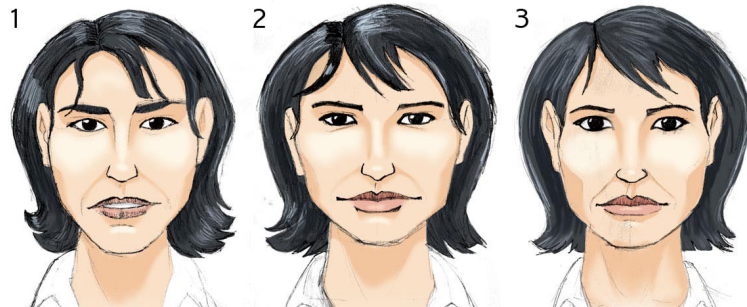
The **Bernice Summerfield** range has often been a testing ground for new writers, actors and ideas. It was also, of course, the range with which Big Finish launched in 1999. It only seems fair, then, that Benny should be the star of Big Finish's first animated adventure. The **Benny** animation stems from my long-held desire to do something animated with Big Finish. Everything else is there – the writers, actors, directors and sound designers – so it seemed to me that adding a visual element was an obvious step, although it turned out to be rather a large one. As I write this, I've still got 15% of the animation left to complete, so it's hard to be objective. It's been more labour-intensive than either I, or the sound designer Matthew Cochrane, realised but it's coming together fast, and I'm really proud of what we've all done.

It all started with a chat with **Benny** producer John Ainsworth. We've talked about doing an animation before, but somehow the will and the opportunity came together and in November 2009 we resolved to create a five-minute, stand-alone intro to Benny's eleventh season. One in which we'd see long-standing threads tied up and a whole new story begin. The animation though, John felt, should be as visual as possible, leaving the explanations for the audios.

The story emerged through discussions with John and Eddie Robson.

They ensured that the animation would bolt onto the beginning of what would become #11.1, *Resurrecting the Past*. John contributed the opening monologue in order to introduce the characters to new viewers. Meanwhile, I started to draw up ideas for the action sequences. After having played with some lighting effects, I was keen to have a sequence in which a glowing enemy chased Benny around a darkened space, the glow being the only light source in a spooky game of cat and mouse. Although originally, the robot would become red hot through being pinned to the front of Benny's spaceship as she left the atmosphere. John wisely scoled this and other excesses back until the animation was more manageable.

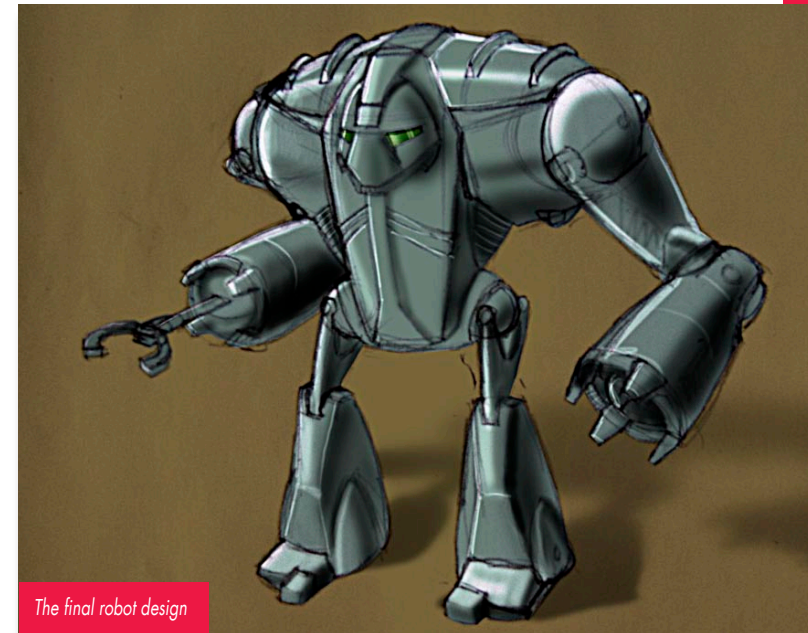
As the script came together, I started to build the characters and props. Benny herself was quite a challenge. John suggested an amalgam of Lee Sullivan's original Benny illustration (see **Bernice Summerfield: The Inside Story**) with Adrian Salmon's current representation. In all honesty, I didn't feel confident of producing a convincing caricature of Lisa herself, and wasn't sure how stylised the characters would be. In fact, there's a Pixar-like vibe about the finished character, with a dash of Anime about the proportions – unsurprisingly as I'm steeped in the films of Miyazaki.



Some early Benny character designs, dubbed (from left) Kirsty Wark, Penelope Cruz & Catherine Keener

John planned to record the animation alongside 11.1 and 11.2, and generously cast me in a small part in *Resurrecting the Past*, where I was chased by the same robot I'd built for the animation. It was easy to be terrified with that stocky, relentless automaton in my head. The approved design threw up a few problems though, the foremost being... it couldn't walk! The exaggeration of the robot's extremities meant that it simply couldn't function as a biped. I had to make apparently solid metal warp and flex in order to get round it. The shoulders, too, refused to function and had to be reverse-engineered in entirely the wrong way. These would be just the first of a great many bodes and short-cuts in order to finish the animation.

The process of CG animation can be simplified to three stages. The first is modelling, during which the characters are built, textured and rigged for movement and the sets constructed. The second is animation, in which the movement of the characters, cameras and other objects is plotted. Finally, once the various elements have been rendered comes the compositing stage in which the layers of the final image are built up and effects like motion blur, depth of field and flares are added.



The final robot design

With the main characters built I turned my attention to the storyboard and animatic, and the frames began to pour out of me, having been carrying them vividly in my head for months. I was determined to give the animation a sense of verisimilitude, despite the cartoony style, so deliberately used camera moves that were practical, going so far as to generate a hand-held look for the final showdown between Benny and her pursuer. Every now and then I'd get stuck on practicalities. How to get the robot out of the crypt and up to the ruins? John's solution was simple: 'Don't show it!' From Benny's point of view the robot vanishes and finds a different route to the surface. Phew! However, despite these simplifications, the animation had now grown from a manageable five minutes to a mammoth ten. It was time to enter production!



Benny and the robot meet

animation, to give the sets a satisfying, miniature feel.

With time running short, I wouldn't have the luxury of computer-generating the dry ice which pours from the split cryo-tank. Instead, the redoubtable Tom Guerrier (brother of Simon and an occasional actor in Benny's adventures) kindly agreed to shoot smoke elements

I resolved to complete a scene a week, excepting scene two, which I calculated would take three weeks from the opening of the tomb to the destruction of the heat ray (in the end it took four weeks). The time pressure was mounting and I was painfully aware that although my modelling and compositing skills were adequate, my biped animation skills were largely untested. I decided to start with scene five, in which Benny is confined to the cargo container. As I set to work, I began to enjoy the company of digital Benny, her vulnerability and fallibility make her an appealing character, and I felt odd pangs of sympathy for the hell I was putting her through. That said, as she turns the tables on her pursuer my sympathies expanded to include the hapless robot. As I animated his stumbling walk from the cryo-tank I felt a rush of sympathy for the massive goon. I started to wonder if I'd been shut in a room with these two for too long!

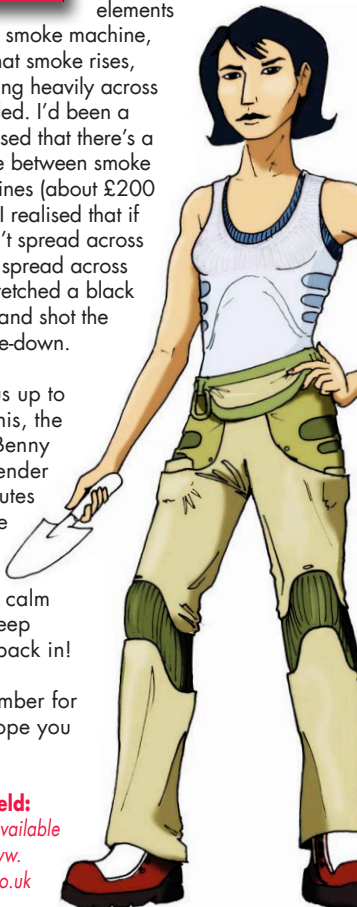
With the frames coming in thick and fast, I began to composite the elements. It quickly became clear that the finished frames needed something extra. I wanted the animation to have the reassuring solidity of miniatures which we **Doctor Who** fans love. One of the giveaways of small-scale effects, besides fire and water, is depth of field. Shooting at high speed generally necessitates a wide aperture, resulting in a very shallow depth of field. For this reason, the foreground of miniature sets will often become too blurred to be realistic. I decided to emulate this effect in the

for me. I hired the smoke machine, only to discover that smoke rises, instead of spreading heavily across the floor as I needed. I'd been a fool, and not realised that there's a massive difference between smoke and dry ice machines (about £200 for a start!). Then I realised that if the smoke wouldn't spread across the floor, it would spread across the ceiling, so I stretched a black curtain overhead and shot the whole thing upside-down.

And that brings us up to date! As I write this, the robot is hauling Benny into the air, the render is taking two minutes per frame and the shot will be done in 50 minutes. A short period of calm before I take a deep breath and dive back in!

See you in September for the premiere! I hope you enjoy it.

Bernice Summerfield:
Dead and Buried is available to view for free at www.bernicsummerfield.co.uk



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SEPTEMBER

Doctor Who – *The Cradle of the Snake* (138, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)
Doctor Who – *Project: Destiny* (139, Seventh Doctor/Ace)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *The Book of Kells* (4.04, Eighth Doctor and Tamsin)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *Find and Replace* (5.03, Third Doctor)
Bernice Summerfield – *Resurrecting the Past* (11.1)
Bernice Summerfield – *Present Danger* (Short Story Book)
Dark Shadows: Kingdom of the Dead 3 (2.3 Full cast audio)
After the Break-Up by Carrie Sutton (Paperback)

OCTOBER

Doctor Who – *A Death in the Family* (140, Seventh Doctor/Ace)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *Deimos* (4.05, Eighth Doctor and Tamsin)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *The Invasion of E-Space* (5.04, Fourth Doctor)
Bernice Summerfield – *Escaping the Future* (11.2)
Dark Shadows: Kingdom of the Dead 4 (2.4 Full cast audio)
Mervyn Stone 1: Geek Tragedy by Nev Fountain (Hardback)
Mervyn Stone 2: DVD Extras Include: Murder by Nev Fountain (Hardback)
Mervyn Stone 3: Cursed Among Sequels by Nev Fountain (Hardback)
Mervyn Stone 1: Geek Tragedy by Nev Fountain (Leatherbound)
Mervyn Stone 2: DVD Extras Include: Murder by Nev Fountain (Leatherbound)
Mervyn Stone 3: Cursed Among Sequels by Nev Fountain (Leatherbound)

NOVEMBER

Doctor Who – *Lurkers at Sunlight's Edge* (141, Seventh Doctor/Ace)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *The Resurrection of Mars* (4.06, Eighth Doctor and Tamsin)
Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – *The First Doctor Box Set* (2.1 – *Farewell, Great Macedon & The Fragile Yellow Arc of Fragrance*)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *A Town Called Fortune* (5.05, Sixth Doctor)
Bernice Summerfield – *Year Zero* (11.3)
Graceless – Box Set (Abby & Zara, 3 episodes)
Doctor Who: Short Trips – *Volume 1* (2 CDs, various readers)
The Big Finish Companion by Richard Dinnick – Volume 1 (hardback)

DECEMBER

Doctor Who – *The Demons of Red Lodge and Other Stories* (142, Fifth Doctor/Nyssa)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *Relative Dimensions* (4.07, Eighth Doctor, Susan and Alex)
Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – *The Second Doctor Box Set* (2.2 – *Prison in Space & The Daleks: The Destroyers*)
Bernice Summerfield – *Dead Man's Switch* (11.4)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *Quinnis* (5.06, First Doctor)
Doctor Who – *The Four Doctors* (Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Doctors; Main Range subscribers only)

JANUARY 2011

Doctor Who – *TBA* (143, Sixth Doctor/TBA)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *Prisoner of the Sun* (4.08, Eighth Doctor and Tamsin)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *Peri and the Piscon Paradox* (5.07, Fifth Doctor, 2 discs)
Jago and Litefoot – *Series 2 Box Set* (Four full cast adventures)
Highlander - *Series 2 Box Set* (Four enhanced readings)

FEBRUARY 2011

Doctor Who – *TBA* (144, Sixth Doctor/TBA)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *TBA* (4.09, Eighth Doctor and Tamsin)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *The Perpetual Bond* (5.08, First Doctor)
Doctor Who: Short Trips – *Volume 2* (2 CDs, various readers)

MARCH 2011

Doctor Who – *TBA* (145, Sixth Doctor/TBA)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *To the Death* (4.10, Eighth Doctor and Tamsin)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *Boundary Conditions* (5.08, Second Doctor)

APRIL 2011

Doctor Who – *TBA* (146, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)
Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – *Thin Ice* (2.3, Seventh Doctor and Ace)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *The Sentinels of the New Dawn* (5.10, Third Doctor)

MAY 2011

Doctor Who – *TBA* (147, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)
Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – *Crime of the Century* (2.4, Seventh Doctor and Raine)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *Ferril's Folly* (5.11, Fourth Doctor)
Doctor Who: Short Trips – *Volume 3* (2 CDs, various readers)

JUNE 2011

Doctor Who – *TBA* (148, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)
Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – *Animal* (2.5, Seventh Doctor and Raine)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *The Cold Equations* (5.12, Fourth Doctor)

I just finished **Dalek Empire**. I loved it. Big shocks by me at the end of episodes two and four, but what a solid ending. To coin a phrase my friend uses, 'the landing stuck'. I would classify it as a Very Good Sci-Fi Story and would easily recommend it to my friends who don't know **Doctor Who**. And I loved hearing Nicholas Briggs say 'I obey' as Tanlee, which is so opposite how he probably says it any other time.

I almost wish it didn't have Daleks because they're really not necessary to the story. Is **Dalek Empire II** only available on CD? Can I just make the purchase and you can provide the downloads?

Rob Konigsberg
 Nick: Hi Rob, so glad you loved it. I know what you mean; it's a paradox. Although the Daleks are kind of integral to it, you can see how it would work as a non-**Doctor Who** universe story. It's about the characters and emotions and all that stuff, not the Daleks. But the Daleks kind of stimulate the action and raise the stakes. **Dalek Empire II** is available for CD and download.

I have just listened to *Cobwebs* and thought it was superb. Great script and the regulars sounded as though they had travelled forward in time to 2010. More of the same please.

Stephen Broome
 Nick: Cheers, Stephen. This has worked out brilliantly, we immodestly feel! And I wouldn't be surprised if there was more of the same next year. What a winning team. It's like they'd worked together before... oh, hang on...

This is old news but I just learned that the Big Finish **Doctor Who** audio adventure *Jubilee* and the **Doctor Who** TV episode *Dalek* start off almost the same. Since both stories were written by Rob Shearman, maybe Big Finish can get him to talk about them on one of your future podcasts.

Steve Small
 Nick: Old news indeed. Rob has talked about the similarities and differences between *Jubilee* and *Dalek* ad infinitum almost since the moment *Dalek* was broadcast. I'm sure we've got an archive interview with him somewhere that we can run.

Lots of questions!

1. Have you ever asked Eric Roberts to come back as the Master?
2. Any chance of Strontium Dog **Crime Chronicles**?
3. Why no Textbook Stuff on CD?
4. Any chance of the **2000AD** audio CDs going back in print?
5. Would you ever use the Shalka Doctor? Thanks for letting me nitpick!

Henry Rempel
 Nick: We've never asked Eric, no. Hmm. Strontium Dog... I'm afraid the **2000AD** range continues to under-perform so it's not likely. We love them. You love them. People just steal them and don't pay for them, so we're stuck. As for Textbook Stuff, try asking Barnaby on the forums. He's been asked that question loads of times. It's all a question of cost. I'm afraid there's not much chance of the **2000AD** audios being repressed as the sales were just too low. I'm not certain, but I don't think the Shalka Doctor is counted as 'canon', so it's unlikely that we'd use him in the regular series. No problem, Henry. Nipick away, that's what we're here for!

Just wanted to write to let you know how much I am enjoying **Dark Shadows: Kingdom of the Dead**. I've listened to parts one through four once already and will soon be listening again. The storyline is terrific and very true to the original series. The acting is great. The original cast hasn't missed a beat. I am already looking forward to the Petoif storyline that was teased in the last few minutes.

Paul Kopp
 Nick: Cheers, Paul. Our **Dark Shadows** guru, Stuart Manning, adores the series, and our audios are crafted with his loving care.

I have recently read the news that your company is stopping production of the Eighth Doctor adventures. Why?

Phil Whitehouse
 Nick: I don't know where you read this news, but it is slightly inaccurate. We are stopping the separate Eighth Doctor adventures, but we are continuing with Paul McGann's Doctor in the main range. There will be other **Doctor Who** story strands in the single-CD adventure slot.

Hello. Is there a list anywhere online showing the chronology of the BF **Doctor Who** stories?

Mat Coward
 Nick: I'm not aware of such a list. But a search on the internet should yield results. In fact, there is this: <http://www.doctorwhoreviews.co.uk/Index.html> But maybe it's something we should do in *Vortex*.

Basically, I have an idea for a **Doctor Who** audio script, but have no idea what to do with it. So I was wondering whether or not you accept script treatments. Or do you just find writers through agents?

Anyhow, the overall question is: could I submit this idea?

George Lamb
 Nick: Unfortunately, we have a policy of not accepting uncommissioned submissions. This is because in the past we have experienced some difficulties with unsolicited material which we haven't had the time to read, then the writer contacts us and threatens to sue us because we've allegedly copied their idea (which we hadn't read in the first place!). So it is to protect us from that kind of worry and you from disappointment that we don't accept unsolicited material. We do, however, from time to time, have submissions opportunities. We did that for the upcoming series of **Short Trips** audios and for the December 2010 Peter Davison release *The Demons of Red Lodge*.

Can someone please contact me to confirm how I can get the **Companion Chronicles**, specifically for *The Three Companions*, and how much the cost is? Thank you in advance.

Fran Porta
 Hi Fran. **The Companion Chronicles** are all available for download or on CD from our website. *The Three Companions* is in 12 episodes, and these are included in the 12 CDs from *The Magic Mousetrap* onwards. We do have tentative plans to release a **Companion Chronicles: The Specials** box set, comprising *The Three Companions*, *Freakshow* and *The Mists of Time*, but no release date is currently set.

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