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NICOLA BRYANT

Shares her memories of the new **Lost Stories!**



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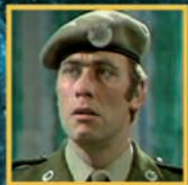
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EDITORIAL

Welcome to this month's packed issue of *Vortex*. Probably as packed as my life at the moment! I'm not complaining... that strange noise you can hear is merely sparks flying off from my nose, because it's stuck to the grindstone.

Okay, I admit it, I did go on holiday to Turkey, but frankly I spent most of the time writing scripts for Big Finish (ask my wife!). I also read the storylines for the next series of our **Sherlock Holmes** audios. They are brilliant! Some really astounding, interesting stuff, beautifully crafted by Jonathan Barnes. Scripts should be completed in July, so I should be in front of the microphone before summer's out... if Watson's available, that is.

At the moment, I'm listening to the sound design for **UNIT: Dominion**, which is sounding rather good, with Tracey Childs and Alex Macqueen on great form as Klein and the Other Doctor. Great work from sound designer Martin Johnson there. I'm also putting the finishing touches on our Paul McGann box set script, entitled *Dark Eyes*. Our new companion for the Eighth Doctor is already cast, so I'm very much looking forward to working with... that person – who shall remain nameless for the moment – into the studio on May 18th! Then, in November, you'll be able to hear exactly what happened right after the final adventure with Lucie Miller, *To the Death*.

I've also just completed... Hang on, David Richardson is whispering furiously in my ear... oh. That's top secret, apparently.

What else? Ah yes: I'm arranging recording sessions for next year's Sixth Doctor and Mel trilogy. Some nifty scheduling to do there! Right... nose down for more work!

Nick Briggs

CREDITS

Managing Editor: **Jason Haigh-Ellery** | Editors: **Nicholas Briggs, David Richardson**
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SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS



As she hurtles towards her twentieth anniversary, work continues on the third new box set of adventures for archaeologist and adventurer Bernice Summerfield. Following on from their recent *Road Trip*,

Bernice and Ruth find themselves on a hostile new world, reacquainting themselves with familiar faces Jack, Braxiatel and Bernice's lost son, Peter. 'It's a thrill to hear our new characters interacting with the old guard,' says co-producer Scott Handcock, 'and to place Bernice in a situation where she somehow has to mediate between them all. Everyone gets a fair slice of the action, and it's a really nice, varied collection of stories. They really keep you – and the characters – guessing all the way through!'

Legion kicks off with Bernice, Ruth and Peter investigating a five-thousand-year-old murder aboard the *Vesuvius* – an explorer-class ship that has drifted into Legion's airspace – in Tony Lee's second **Bernice Summerfield** script, *Vesuvius Falling*. Bernice, Ruth and Jack then explore an abandoned and ancient house with a terrible secret in Scott Handcock's portmanteau horror *Shades of Gray*, whilst Miles Richardson makes his writing debut exploring Bernice's relationship with the enigmatic Irving Braxiatel in *Everybody Loves Irving*. The box set will also be accompanied by a brand new tie-in novel, **The Slender-Fingered Cats of Bubastis** by Xanna Eve Chown.

'It's great to kick off Benny's twentieth anniversary celebrations with a brand new collection of stories,' continues Scott Handcock, 'and already the edits we're getting in are sounding brilliant. Uniting Benny's past and present has really energised her future, and in May we start recording her next eight adventures with the gang! That's not to mention her charity special, *Many Happy Returns*, due for release later in the year, or the adaptation of her **Doctor Who** debut in *Love and War*, out in October. It's a very exciting time for Bernice Summerfield fans. Science fiction genuinely hasn't been so much fun!'



REOPENING THE GATE

Paul Spragg introduces the third season of **Stargate** adventures, featuring the return of **Michael Shanks** and **Claudia Black** as Daniel and Vala – and they're once more taking on Ba'al...

It was David Richardson who first got me into **Stargate**. Way back in the distant past, he was editing *Xposé* magazine and needed someone to review **Stargate SG-1** – then about to begin its third season – so he asked me. Having heard good things about the show, I agreed to take it on, albeit aware that I hadn't yet

seen a single episode. Being a dedicated reviewer who wanted to be sure he knew what he was talking about, I set about watching videos of the forty-four episodes I'd missed, and in short order I was caught up – and utterly hooked. It's addictive you see, **Stargate**. Some of its early episodes are a little wobbly as everyone finds their feet and the show's

direction is established, but when it gels, a few episodes into its first season, it gels like very few TV shows ever have and you just can't stop watching. It's got one of the most endearing ensemble casts on TV. It's got a massive, universe-spanning concept at its heart yet stays down to earth. It perfectly blends action, drama and comedy. It features a group of very real, very fallible humans going from planet to planet and trying to work out where – and indeed how – the human race can stand alongside a galaxy of alien races. And overall, it's just so much fun.

A FULL CAST

I didn't want to lose any of these elements for the third series of audio adventures, but it's a lot to ask any writer to cram in. First, the basic requirements were laid down: the third series, after much demand, was to be full cast. Not featuring the entire **SG-1** or **Atlantis** team (which might have bankrupted us before we'd started!), but featuring a full cast of speaking parts, not just two people. Our two stars would be Michael Shanks and Claudia Black, returning as Dr Daniel Jackson and Vala Mal Doran. Their chemistry in both **Stargate SG-1** and our series one audio *Shell Game* was fantastic, and it was a no-brainer to once more pair them up. They also open up such a wide range of possibilities: with Daniel you can go to town on the archaeological and historical side of things which underpins the entire **Stargate** series, and with Vala you've got an outsider looking in on Stargate Command commenting on its faults, and a wild card who you're never quite sure you can trust to do the right thing. It's an unlikely yet hugely rewarding pairing. Then, at a US convention, executive producer Jason Haigh-Ellery and I were introduced to Cliff Simon, who said he'd love to be involved in the **Stargate**

audios. And if you want a villain for a series, who better than Ba'al, the last of the Goa'uld System Lords, the aliens who set themselves up as gods and who SG-1 took great delight in beating from one end of the cosmos to the other.

All of this was presented to script editor Jim Swallow, who assembled a team of writers, some who'd written **Stargate** audios before (himself, Sally Malcolm, Sharon Gosling) and others who were newcomers to the range (**Stargate** book author Peter J Evans, Richard Dinnick and Steve Lyons). There was early consideration of doing a six-part story,

“It gels like very few TV shows ever have and you just can't stop watching.”

but I felt that as nothing had lasted longer than three episodes on TV, we shouldn't be stretching something out that long lest the story dragged and we pushed the limits of our audience's patience. So two trilogies were conceived, but each story had to be self-contained so it could be enjoyed on its own. There'd be an overall arc, but you wouldn't get confused coming in part-way through.



Jim Swallow (writer), Regina Reagan (Wellan), Paul Spragg, John Schwab (Hunter), Anna Tolputt (La'rath), Andrew Whipp (Zoder) and John Banks (Korek)

WRITER'S ROOM

It was decided to do the preparation US writer's room style. Renting a room in what appeared to be the dark and sinister basement of a London hotel, all the writers and I (minus Steve Lyons, who wasn't available) got together to 'break' the stories. Thanks to a convention slightly beforehand, Jim and Sally Malcolm had had the chance to brainstorm a few ideas and put them in front of the group to be accepted or rejected. It was a vital meeting. Overall arcs were planned for both trilogies, writers were assigned to each part and outlines were created to provide a beginning, middle and end to work towards. I had a few stipulations to throw in: I wanted this series of **Stargate** to

be big. Enormous. On audio you can have as many battles, as many spaceships, as many cavernous, echoing locales as you like and you won't break the bank. But, above all, I wanted the fun. I'm of the opinion that any series is improved by humour as it's often a natural human reaction to even the darkest of circumstances, and **Stargate**, in no small part thanks to Richard Dean Anderson's portrayal of Jack O'Neill, has spent most of its life with its tongue at least partly in its cheek. It's all very well doing gritty drama, but no one is solely humourless and determined all of the time, and if, moments before, someone has been joking around, it helps make dramatic moments more powerful.

BA'AL'S BACK!

For the first trilogy, we already had our nemesis lined up: Ba'al. Ba'al's big thing in the TV series was cloning, particularly creating versions of himself, so

SG-1 kept thinking they'd ended his threat, only for him to pop up again a few episodes down the line. Knowing fans would expect cloning to feature in the stories once Ba'al's name cropped up, the trick was to find a new angle and explore some different areas,

which have enabled us to give more depth to Ba'al, keep listeners on their toes and hopefully spring a surprise or two along the way. It also creates a way to separate Daniel and Vala from their colleagues when they find they can no longer trust any of the people around them and have to operate outside the borders of the SGC to fight back.

Sally was keen to link back to her previous story *Gift of the Gods* and I liked the idea of the audio adventures having

an internal continuity, so a quick note to actor John Schwab and Lt Hunter was back. As a special thank you, he was given a promotion to Major and became the voice of the SGC on the Chinese ship Sun Tzu, allowing the opportunity to play with his 'fish out of water' status a bit.

RECORDING VIA SKYPE

The recording sessions were complicated to organise, and not just because of taking actors' hectic schedules into account. Claudia Black and Cliff Simon were directed in Los Angeles by Jason Haigh-Ellery, where Andrew Collins, taking on any other roles required, was so good playing Keto that he was given the role on the spot. Back in the UK, the supporting cast gathered over several days, with a selection of American and British actors helping to fill out Stargate Command and the Sun Tzu, which had caused some concern with its abundance



Susan Franklyn (Dr Rix)



Paul Hyu (Lt Colonel Yin)

“On audio you can have as many battles, as many spaceships, as many armies, as many cavernous, echoing locales as you like and you won't break the bank.”

of Chinese characters. We didn't want to insist people put on a Chinese accent and run the risk of it sounding terrible, so director Lisa Bowerman quickly suggested asking actual Chinese actor Paul Hyu if he'd be happy to play the part of Colonel Yin. In studio, he was then able to offer better readings of lines and give pronunciations of some of the Chinese words and sayings that appear in the script from time to time.

Then it was Michael Shanks' turn. Without a local actor and director to turn to out in Vancouver, it was decided to link up the UK and Canada so that Michael could be directed from London and recorded in Vancouver, with John Banks coming in to read other parts alongside the ones he'd already been playing in the stories. It was a difficult process, with Skype turning out to be the most effective way of linking the two studios and reducing to almost zero the satellite delay that can slow things down and spoil the energy of a scene. Michael slipped back into character effortlessly, and John Banks helped enormously by changing voices and accents to differentiate characters.

THANKS

It's been quite the epic undertaking bringing this series of **Stargate** to your ears, but I'm delighted with the finished result. Huge thanks to all the

people who've given a massive amount of time to making it all work. The writers, who infused their stories with such imagination, excitement and love for **Stargate**. The stars of the show, who've provided energy and enthusiasm about returning to their characters; the supporting actors who helped realise a fully populated world; Jason Haigh-Ellery for directing out in Los Angeles and Lisa Bowerman for directing at unlikely times of the day in the UK and making sure everything sounds as good as possible in post-production. Studio engineers Richard Dolmat, James Barth and Toby Hrycek-Robinson – especially Toby for supplying his usual incredible food and creating full cooked meals for those of us in studio late at night. Robbie Dunlop for piecing together a vast amount of dialogue from different studios and different countries, Steve Foxon for adding some gorgeous music, and Jamie Robertson for his beautiful theme tune. It's been a tough series to pull together, but I think it's well worth the wait.

Work is just getting underway on the second trilogy, featuring none other than the SGC's frequent alien allies the Asgard, and we've got a few little twists and shocks coming up with them as well. I can't wait to hear the edits and have Thor (once more played by Michael Shanks, who has a soft spot for the little grey guy) and company back in action once again. But more on that in a future *Vortex*...



OUT THIS MONTH!

STARGATE SG-1: SERIES 3 – PART ONE

A shooting in the heart of Stargate Command is only the beginning for Daniel Jackson and Vala Mal Doran. Suddenly it's friend against friend, none of their allies can be relied upon and they're the universe's only hope to foil the latest scheme concocted by the last System Lord, Ba'al.

Starring Michael Shanks and Claudia Black.

CLICK FOR DETAILS

DARK SHADOWS



YOU'VE SEEN THE FILM,
NOW TRY THE AUDIOS...

ENJOYED JOHNNY DEPP AS
BARNABAS COLLINS?

**JAMES GOSS AND JOSEPH
LIDSTER** EXPLAIN HOW TO
GET EVEN MORE OUT OF
THE CURIOUS TOWN OF
COLLINSPOORT...

If you're still reeling from the *Dark Shadows* film and want to know more about the crazy town of Collinsport with its corpses and canning factories, then look no further. As with most things in life, Big Finish has done an entire range of CDs filling in the back-story to life at Collinsport. These act as the perfect bridge between the film and the original TV series (which you should also go and watch – seriously, imagine if someone made *Doctor Who's Ghost Light* as a daily soap opera). Here are some of the key characters you'll meet.

BARNABAS COLLINS



Played by the legendary Jonathan Frid – who sadly passed away last month – in the original series, Barnabas is often credited as being the first tortured vampire (but don't blame him for *Twilight!*). He didn't ask to be made into a monster. All right, so he

cheated on his fiancée and he spurned his lover, but he's not a bad man really. Or is he? Stuart Manning's *The Night Whispers* is a dark psychological tale that really explores the intricacies to his character. Yes, he was a victim of the witch Angelique's curse, but what about his victims? What about Willie Loomis? And it's not as if he was exactly whiter-than-white before he became the feared vampire we know and love. Also starring screen horror legend Barbara Steele, *The Night Whispers* won the 2011 Rondo Award for Best Horror Soundtrack.

ANGELIQUE



Played by Lara Parker, Angelique is not a woman to be messed with. But again, she's no out-and-out villain. Lara Parker herself explores the character's origins in *Angelique's Descent*, a dark tale of how an innocent young girl starts a journey

that will see her become the scourge of the Collins family. If you're interested in a more relaxed, comical

and even human side to her character, why not try *The Death Mask* and *The Voodoo Amulet*? Both see her using her married name (from when she married Roger Collins!) of Cassandra. The stories see her joining forces with Tony Peterson, PI, to investigate mysterious goings-on in Maine and New Orleans – and they show Angelique at her flirty, bitchy best.

THE COLLINS FAMILY



The original actors who played Roger and Elizabeth have sadly died, but the family still has a strong presence in the audios. The full cast audio series that starts with *The House of Despair* and continues through until *Kingdom of the Dead* is set a few years after the end of the television series. The adventures focus on Quentin Collins (we'll come to him later!) returning to the town and discovering that the Collins family have long since fled. Over the series, we slowly see how he, local hotel owner Maggie Evans, Willie Loomis and even Angelique manage to establish a new family of sorts. They bring Barnabas back from the dead (although he's changed quite a bit...) and we even see the return of David and Carolyn. Although their return isn't all that it seems...

Elizabeth does appear in the audios, alongside Dr Julia Hoffman, in *The House by the Sea*. But forget your Michelle Pfeiffers and your Helena Bonham Carters, we've got Colin Baker.

THE HOUSE BY THE SEA



This year's *The House by the Sea* was written to be a perfect introduction to the world of Dark Shadows. A self-contained story, it sees lawyer Gerald Conway – played by Colin Baker – taking

a short seaside break in the town of Collinsport which, obviously, isn't going to end well! Recording his experiences on tape, he tells us about his meetings with Elizabeth, Julia, Carolyn and Barnabas. And he tells us about the banging pipes and the ghost that visits him at night... And the teeth... the little white teeth that seem to appear overnight... so many little white teeth...

And then, dreamy sigh, there's...

QUENTIN COLLINS



Tall, dark, brooding sexy immortal and part-time werewolf, Quentin Collins first appears in the TV series as an evil ghost. To stop him becoming an evil ghost, Barnabas and Julia travel back in time to 1897 to prevent his death.

They fail. But then he comes back from the dead. Only then, because he kills his mad wife (trying to stop *her* killing his lover), his sister-in-law, bonkers gypsy Magda, curses him. And he becomes a werewolf whenever there's a full moon. And, like thunderstorms, there are a lot of full moons in

Collinsport. Luckily, the villainous Count Petofi then commissions a painting of Quentin that a) takes the curse from him and b) grants him with immortality. This, of course, means he doesn't die, which means he doesn't become the evil ghost, so Barnabas and Julia are able to return to the 20th century, their mission complete. Confused yet? But what of the now immortal Quentin? Well, he falls in love and arranges to leave Collinsport with Amanda Harris. But they miss each other at the station, and so he spends the next few years wandering the Earth, looking for his lost love. But, being Quentin, he just can't help getting into trouble. *The Skin Walkers*, *Blood Dance*, *London's Burning*, *The Creeping Fog* and *Operation Victor* are all set during this time. New York, Chicago, London, Germany... Wherever he goes, you can guarantee he'll find himself a glass or two of brandy, a pretty lady and an adventure that'll chill you to the bones.

And what about the other inhabitants of Collinsport? Well, there's Charles Delaware Tate. He paints Quentin's magical portrait after signing a Faustian pact with the sinister Count Petofi. His story is told in *The Blind Painter*. Quentin's long-lost Amanda Harris has her own story to tell in the darkly comic *The Eternal Actress*. Both dramas are very much in the vein of *Tales of the Unexpected*. Standalone spooky stories with a twist in the tale...

And we haven't even got started on the evil Reverend Trask! Possibly one of Dark Shadows' most terrifying creations, his story begins, after being walled-up alive, in *The Wicked and the Dead* but it doesn't end there...

There are some great offers running for the range if you visit the Dark Shadows section of the Big Finish website – and, if you're in the mood for some spooky fun, you've no excuse not to...

Dark Shadows: *The Eternal Actress* is out this month on CD and for download!
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LOST MEMORIES

NICOLA BRYANT, AKA PERI,
ROOTS AROUND TO DIG OUT HER
RECOLLECTIONS OF MAKING THE
LATEST BATCH OF LOST STORIES

When Paul Spragg asked me to do a quick Q & A on the latest *Lost Stories* releases, I cheerily replied, 'Of course!' However, I soon realised, with a shock, I couldn't remember anything about them! It was as if my memories of them had been suddenly cancelled by some malignant force...

I attributed this cancellation to the huge events that had subsequently taken place in my life. Having sold off my home in London, moved to the country, then packed up my mother's home of nearly fifty years and helped *her* to move as well, on top of running my careers and family life, the personal stress levels had gone ballistic and wiped everything...

At first, my only hazy memory was everyone from *The First Sontarans* ending up back at my place after the final recording. We sat out in the garden, consuming bottles of wine until the early hours of the morning. I remember trying to work 'bump' on my iPhone with Anthony Howell, trying to persuade a Sontaran to join Twitter, and enjoying Andrew Smith's many anecdotes about his life as a crime fighter...

I decided I would have to work backwards, so starting from the walled garden of my flat in Notting Hill, I unearthed my original memories,

assembled the cast from that evening into my head and replayed it... was this mysterious 'St Emilion' responsible for the cancellation of my memories?

I can see clearer now (I think my memories are getting vidfired). There was, of course, my faithful companion Colin Baker, played by Doctor Who. It was always good to be in his company and on this



Back: Ken Bentley, Dan Starkey, John Banks, Anthony Howell, Cameron Stewart, Andrew Smith
Front: Colin Baker, Nicola Bryant

rare occasion, Colin agreed to stay late and socialise. It's always an utter joy to work with Colin. The ease with which we slip back into our roles is simply heaven. The fact that we work in a very similar way and now have a long-term friendship to back this up is pure gold. I miss working with him and I confess I'm always utterly jealous of any other companions he may work with at BF. It should, of course, always be me! He is, after all, *my* Doctor, as far as I'm concerned!

Having completed our final three **Lost Stories**, a celebration was in order and a farewell to London for me. Maybe it was working on the **Lost Stories** – pulling both Peri and myself back to that misty time between *Revelation of the Daleks* and *Trial of a Time Lord* – and my future move to leave behind over twenty years in Notting Hill, but I was feeling very nostalgic that night.

Sadly, Lizzie Roper couldn't make the *First Sontarans* social, but has since become a good friend, so another thank you to BF which always assembles

such lovely casts. My dear old friend Cameron Stewart had been cast as Major Thessinger and we'd enjoyed catching up during the recording. We had first worked together in the mid-eighties only to discover we had a connection going back even further. We'd spent quite some time chasing up lost old memories of mutual acquaintances then,

“IT'S ALWAYS AN UTTER JOY TO WORK WITH COLIN. THE EASE WITH WHICH WE SLIP BACK INTO OUR ROLES IS SIMPLY HEAVEN.”

unfortunately, he had a prior engagement that night and was the first to leave the party... and my murky memory.

The band of reprobates left to party included the master of the crew, Colin, our beloved director, Ken Bentley, the charming Anthony Howell, my new old friend, the versatile actor John Banks, whom I'd toured with for nearly a year in **Don't Look Now**, the sweet Dan Starkey – who was a terrifying Sontaran – and, of course, our esteemed writer, Andrew Smith.

Another memory flashes in! We recorded another story that week written by Andrew Smith's eight-year-old daughter, Amy. It was her fervent wish to record her first **Doctor Who** script, entitled *The Lady in the Lamp*, and we all clustered around Andrew's iPhone with our marked pages. I was particularly keen to do this one, as we didn't have that many female writers in my day... And sure enough, there were, of course, lots of great female parts for me to play and Colin played all the male roles. It was thoroughly researched and showed an excellent understanding of the Sixth Doctor and Peri's relationship. It even included Peri's dog Whiskey! If Big Finish are smart, they'll sign her up now...

Amy's dad knocked out quite a good script too, though obviously not on a par with Amy's. It had a lot of Sontarans in it. They always look much more

handsome on audio, don't you find? There was also a photoshoot with a school bear belonging to Jenny, Andrew's youngest daughter. The bear, Jordan, was cuddly and well travelled. A lot like Colin Baker.

What else? Maybe if I traced my steps back to the studio, past the pub on the corner (yes, we'd stopped there too after several recordings) and back into the studio down the corridor and out into the little patio...

I'm watching a grainy picture of myself recording the first of these **Lost Stories**, *The Guardians of Prophecy*. I can now see myself having lunch with the legendary Colin Baker, the great Graham Cole, the saucy Simon Williams, **Who** legend Stephen Thorne, James George, Nigel Lambert, old friend Victoria Pritchard, dear friend and the author of our wonderful script Jonny Morris, our dedicated and conscientious producer David Richardson and our brilliant director Ken Bentley! (Yes, you're correct. I cheated and looked the list up on the Big Finish website.) However, I do remember our lunch. I'm wondering if all my memories revolve around food and drink or is it just that working for BF is so completely professional and utterly enjoyable, both opening our mouths in the recording booths, and opening our mouths at the lunch table. In fact, all my memories of recording for BF are so enjoyable, it probably explains why they all melt together in a sticky cholesterol-themed pile of yumminess.

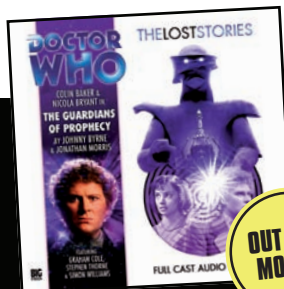
I'm talking to Simon Williams. I remind him that he was part of a memory for me, back in Toronto in the Nineties, when a group of

us went out on the town. He remembered being in Toronto, but he couldn't remember much about the evening. Probably best, I said. Another Lost Story. Memories are such big, squodgy things, I'm realising, you can mould them into any shape. An unforgettable night for an impressionable girl with director/writer Michael Sloan, producer Nigel Watts, Simon Williams and Sam Neill is not imprinted anywhere for another member of the party. I obviously didn't get out much.

I remember talking to Graham about his life on **The Bill** and we talked about Jon Iles, another star of the show in the early days, with whom I'd worked on **The Great Gatsby**. Old memories... and thanks to Twitter I'm still in touch with Graham. He was fabulous as the Melkur and wonderfully sinister in a delightful story.

Moving my feet through the hollows of time – isn't that a **Doctor Who** story? – I find myself sitting on the sofa with the lovely Deborah Watling! How completely wonderful to have the opportunity to do a story with Debbie. I'm thinking to myself how to structure a series of stories to make sure all of us 'old companions' get to work with each other. We're recording *Power Play*, a great romp of a story with David Warwick, Miles Jupp, Andrew Dickens, Howard Gossington, Victoria Alcock, Greg Donaldson and James Hayward. At the helm are, of course, Ken Bentley and David Richardson, with Captain Colin Baker on board by my side.

I can't say any more as I've gone over my word count... but it was fun digging up those lost stories. Sorry I couldn't answer any of your questions, Paul.



OUT THIS MONTH!

DOCTOR WHO – THE LOST STORIES THE GUARDIANS OF PROPHECY

The TARDIS materialises on Serenity, the last surviving world of the Traken Union. Peri expects a good place for a holiday – not tomb raiders and a labyrinth filled with terrifying monsters.

Starring Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant.

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FORTHCOMING RELEASES

MAY 2012

Doctor Who: *The Jupiter Conjunction*

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

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: *Trail of the White Worm*

(1.5, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *The Jigsaw War*

(6.11, Second Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *The Guardians of Prophecy*

(3.4, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

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

Dark Shadows 25: *Eternal Actress*

Stargate SG-1: *Series 3 Box Set 1* (Three full cast adventures)

JUNE 2012

Doctor Who: *The Butcher of Brisbane*

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

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:

The Oseidon Adventure (1.6, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *The Rings of Ikliria*

(6.12, Second Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *Power Play*

(3.5, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

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

JULY 2012

Doctor Who: *Protect and Survive* (162, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *The Time Museum*

(7.01, First Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *The First Sontarans*

(3.6, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

Counter-Measures: *Series 1 Box Set* (Four full cast adventures)

Dark Shadows 27: *Operation Victor*

AUGUST 2012

Doctor Who: *Black and White* (163, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *The Uncertainty Principle*

(7.02, Second Doctor)

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

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

Iris Wildthyme *Series 3 Box Set* (Three full cast adventures)

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

Dark Shadows 28: *Speak No Evil*

Stargate SG-1: *Series 3 Box Set 2* (Three full cast adventures)

SEPTEMBER 2012

Doctor Who: *Gods and Monsters* (164, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)

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

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *Project: Nirvana*

(7.03, Seventh Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *The Rosemariners*

(3.8, Second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe)

Bernice Summerfield Box Set 3: *Legion*

Bernice Summerfield: *The Slender-Fingered Cats of Bubastis*

Dark Shadows 29: *The Last Stop*

OCTOBER 2012

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

Doctor Who – *U.N.I.T.: Dominion* (Seventh Doctor, Raine and Klein)

Doctor Who Special: *Love and War* (Seventh Doctor, Ace and Benny)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *The Last Post*

(7.04, Third Doctor)

Dark Shadows 30: *Dreaming of the Water*

NOVEMBER 2012

Doctor Who: *The Shadow Heart* (167, TBA)

Doctor Who: *The Eighth Doctor Box Set*

Doctor Who: *The Sixth Doctor Specials 1 – Voyage to Venus*

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *Return of the Rocket Men*

(7.05, First Doctor)

Blake's 7: *Archangel* by Scott Harris

Dark Shadows 31: *The Haunted Refrain*

DECEMBER 2012

Doctor Who: *TBA* (168, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *The Child*

(7.06, Fourth Doctor)

Doctor Who: *The Sixth Doctor Specials 2 – Voyage to the New World*

Dark Shadows 32: *TBA*

JANUARY 2013

Doctor Who: *TBA* (169, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: *The Auntie Matter*

(2.1, Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *The Flames of Cadiz*

(7.07, First Doctor)

FEBRUARY 2013

Doctor Who: *TBA* (170, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: *The Sands of Life*

(2.2, Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *TBA*

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Things I Learnt When I Visited Big Finish

Competition winner **Matt Powell** reveals what happened when he visited the studio for **The Jupiter Conjunction**



Janet Fielding, Mark Strickson, Peter Davison, Matt Powell and Sarah Sutton

For those of you who have good memories, you may remember that last August Big Finish launched a competition where listeners had to write a 100-word review of their favourite audio. I picked *Situation Vacant* – come on, that and *To the Death* are some of the best Big Finish has ever done! – and two months later, the winners were announced. Throughout I constantly doubted I had won – and then my name was called out.

After sorting trains, dates and all that jazz, I attended the recording of *The Jupiter Conjunction*; the last day of what sounds to be a very exciting audio! Peter Davison, Mark Strickson, Janet Fielding and Sarah Sutton were all in attendance, alongside the infamous Nick Briggs with David Richardson and director Ken Bentley. And I had perhaps one of the best days of my life as a Whovian. A lot happened that day, so I've decided to summarise it in a few bullet points (see right). You can read more in my fanzines later this year...

Overall, I had a blast. It was perhaps one of the most interesting experiences in my life! It was an honour to meet everyone who was there and the cast and crew were wonderful and kind. I can assure you all the future releases will be brilliant. (Although the only downside is I'm locked in a room with instruments until the audio comes out... help!)



Doctor Who: The Jupiter Conjunction starring Peter Davison, Janet Fielding, Mark Strickson and Sarah Sutton is out this month!
[CLICK FOR DETAILS](#)

■ Peter Davison is not nice to Janet Fielding (of course, in a joking manner) – or is it the other way around?

■ The Big Finish lunches are *amazing*!

■ Peter Davison's booth is very messy – there are script pages everywhere!

■ Janet Fielding calls David Richardson Harpo.

■ Nick Briggs knows how to tease people: he told me he was writing the *Eighth Doctor Box Set*, which had me very excited! (I should have glanced over...)

■ Janet had apparently toned down. I was told by her to cover my ears at one point...

■ Everyone is wonderful and kind – even Nick Briggs!

■ I have finally been in a **Doctor Who** story (more on that in the future...)

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A NOVEL APPROACH

Cavan Scott and Mark Wright provide an insight into their process writing BF's first original *Blake's 7* novel, *The Forgotten*.

“We wanted to tell a story that forces Blake to take a hard look at his crusade.”

What are the different demands of writing a novel to writing an audio play?

Cavan Scott: There's the obvious scope when developing characters. A lot of the audios we write these days need to tell a complete story in just one hour. With novels you can take your time, building more complex relationships.

Mark Wright: With an audio, you're conveying character through dialogue and action, but in a novel you have so much more scope to layer your characters through POV and internal monologue.

CS: Of course, with *Blake's 7* you have the added complication that you have seven main characters before you even start adding your own original creations.

MW: We made it even trickier by adding Servalan and Travis to the mix. As the first novel in the series, excluding them wouldn't have felt right!

How do you work as a pair?

CS: As we live in different parts of the country, much of our collaboration is done over the internet. Every project starts with Skype sessions to bash out the

key points of the plot. It's all good old-fashioned brainstorming. From this we write out a pretty detailed outline, which we then divvy up. We don't so much write alternate chapters but alternate sections. It could be that I handle the first half while Mark jumps in halfway through.

MW: When we get to the end of the first draft, we take it in turns to work through the entire thing, smoothing out problems, tightening up sequences and making sure it all links up.

This is one of the few projects in the last ten years that we've actually had a chance to work on sections together. We holed up in a cottage in Derbyshire with a group of other writers at the end of January to write the last third of the book. It was a real boost.

What was your starting point for this story?

CS: We wanted to tell a story that forces Blake to take a hard look at his crusade. We know what lies ahead for Blake, what kind of man he becomes, but in season one he's still very idealistic. We wanted to show him the path he's treading and see how he reacts to it.



“Some of the Federation tech seems positively prehistoric compared to what we have today.”

MW: I was keen to have lots of familiar elements from the early days of the show to really make it feel like **Blake's 7**, the kind of things that made me love it as a kid. So with those two thoughts in place, the story suggested itself pretty quickly.

How did you feel about being given the first new **Blake's 7** novel out of the gate to write?

CS: It was a mixture of excitement, honour and absolute fear. This would be the first **Blake's 7** novel in over twenty years.

MW: Fans love these characters, and as there hasn't been a lot of official **Blake's 7** fiction since the show finished, the level of scrutiny and expectation from the fanbase is high. That's quite a daunting prospect.

CS: Above all, we wanted to remain true to that first season of the series. It's our love letter to a show we grew up with, writing with the luxury of hindsight, so we could foreshadow things that we know lay in the characters' future.

Did you go fully retro with the style of the book or does it have more modern sensibilities?

CS: A bit of both really. One of the first people to read the book said it felt like a novelisation of a missing season one story. That was exactly what we wanted to achieve, something that felt it could have been a part of the show at the time.

Of course, real-world technology has moved on a bit since the show was on telly. Some of the Federation tech seems positively prehistoric compared to what we have today. But you have to stick with it. In many ways, it's like writing a period piece. You have to make sure it's true to its time.

MW: We had to extrapolate the intention of a 1978 production team that was limited by budget. We could afford bigger space battles!

We loved what Anthony Lamb did with the cover, really taking on board our thoughts that the space station should be modelled on the kind of stations we saw in the series. That's where the retro feel comes into play.

CS: We also didn't have to worry about the watershed. The **Blake's 7** universe has always been harsh, but we could push it further. While we didn't want to suggest that Blake's crew are terrorists, we wanted to show they aren't angels either.

MW: It's definitely in the tone where we could develop things the most, and that's where the modern sensibilities come in. *The Forgotten* is possibly a little more brutal than the series was allowed to be on first transmission.

What other *ahem* projects do you have coming up?

CS: Well, there's *Project: Nirvana* coming out in September as part of the **Companion Chronicles**. It stars Maggie O'Neill as Aristedes, a Forge agent we created for **Project: Valhalla**, our first novel. It's funny – we keep thinking the Forge's story is over. What is it they say? You don't leave the Forge, the Forge leaves you?

MW: There are a few nice little things we have coming up for Big Finish, which we're not allowed to talk about yet! And we have more **Iris Wildthyme** going into studio in May, which we're really excited about. Big Finish has been a part of our professional lives since 1999, and we love that thirteen years later we still get to work on great projects with great people.

Blake's 7 – The Forgotten is out this month. [CLICK FOR DETAILS](#)

I wish to express my sincere thanks for the high quality of the new Tom Baker *Doctor Who* series of audio adventures.

Having long hoped, as I'm sure everyone at Big Finish has hoped, that Mr Baker would be willing to do audio adventures with Big Finish, I am thrilled at the attention that has been given to the project by the Big Finish team in order to do justice to that era. Scripts of quality have been assigned to the series and both Tom and Louise have been given dialogue that is so true to their characters. It appears also that appropriate leeway has been given to the actors to tweak lines to fit the characters that they know so very well. Several one-liners from Tom have made me laugh out loud but have never been over the top or gratuitous.

Likewise, the stories have not had to rely on extra companions, crossovers, long story arcs or any other contrivance. They are great individual stories well told, and are a very welcome breath of fresh air.

I hope you are getting some wonderful feedback from customers about the series and that Tom and Louise are aware of how appreciative the fans are of their work. Keep up the excellent entertainment.

Mekel Rogers

Nick: Thanks, Mekel. Yes, Tom and Louise are brilliant. As you can imagine, Tom offers a lot of off-the-cuff stuff, but always says, 'Well, you can cut it if you like'. He, Mary and Louise are really giving their all. It's such a pleasure to work with such enthusiastic people. It feels like a very special time for us, although it's very true to say also that we enjoy working with all our Doctors and companions very much!

I was wondering if Big Finish has the rights to make a series about a young or younger version of the First Doctor. It's just that William Hartnell was an old man and when I watch him now I wonder what adventures he had when he was younger.

Also, is it possible that there could be audio plays with the first three Doctors by using voice cloning software?

Aaron Crooks

Nick: I don't think it's really a rights issue. But if we ever thought of doing this, it might be something we'd have a conversation with the BBC about.

I'm an aspiring author, and I would like to write *Doctor Who* novels or short stories in the near future. I would like to know if that's possible with you. I've already got some ideas, but I would like to know if it's possible.

Robert Feld

Nick: I'm afraid we don't accept unsolicited submissions, for two reasons mainly. Firstly, we simply wouldn't have the time to process them all.

Secondly, if we encourage unsolicited material, we open ourselves to misplaced assertions from those submitting that we have copied their ideas. This has happened in the past (with a story idea that was submitted and left unread in a filing drawer). But I am committed to us offering official opportunities for writers to submit. We have done this twice in the past on my watch and it is my sincere intention to do it again at some point in the future.

I'm terrible at the forums and lurk on the podcast, so about the only time I talk to you is at ChicagoTARDIS. But I didn't want to wait until November to give you this feedback.

First of all, thank you for taking Paypal! That means a lot to American fans; I'm doubtless not the only one whose credit card has flagged charges overseas – particularly large charges for annual subscriptions – as suspicious behaviour. Paypal avoids that and a host of other issues and makes it easy to give you money. (Which in turn makes it easier to impulse buy away from conventions, so that's good for your bottom line!) The other feedback I wanted to give is about *Sherlock Holmes*. I'd like to take the opportunity to amend what I said at ChicagoTARDIS. (I was the one who begged for original material, as I already have five copies of *The Empty House*.) I've been listening to my large collection of *Holmes* audio and realized that what I don't have – and would very much like to have – are dramatic readings of the complete canonical text, as in your rendition of *The Speckled Band*. There is nothing else quite like that available. There are a lot of adapted for audio versions available. There are also a small selection of audios available of one person simply reading the stories out loud.

There is nothing out there like your version of *The Speckled Band* – the complete text, but given full dramatic treatment. And because of that, I have to say that your *Speckled Band* is far and away my favourite of your canonical adaptations.

I still very much support Big Finish doing original stories (I was thrilled to hear about a possible third series). But I wanted you to know that I would encourage and support your doing more full-text audios like *Speckled Band*. I know that one person is a blip on the financial bottom line, but if you did more like it, I for one would be willing to pay for a monthly series of *Holmes* along with my monthly subscription to *Doctor Who*.

Nea Dodson

Nick: Thanks, Nea. Glad Paypal is working well for you. It's something we wanted to get right for the new site, which is why there was a delay. As for *Holmes* – as you may have heard, we're intending to do a series of

four brand new stories (on CD and download), as well as six download-only *'Speckled Band'-style* dramatic readings of Conan Doyle short stories.

Hello to everyone at Big Finish! I love your work! Thanks so much for getting my personal favourite Doctor, Tom Baker!

I was wondering if you might consider doing an audio adventure for the *Doctor Who* book *Wolfsbane* by Jaqueline Rayner. It features both the Fourth and Eighth Doctors. I realize that there may be an issue with the companions seeing how it features Harry Sullivan and Sarah Jane Smith (RIP Elisabeth Sladen). But I also know that you guys are very good at finding suitable soundalikes. Anyway, I own this book and would love to hear it as an audio adventure! You could also dedicate it to the memory of Elisabeth.

Thanks again for all of your great adventures and I love to listen to the podcast! Keep up the great work!

Michael Shanks

PS Not the Michael Shanks from *Stargate*!

Nick: We wouldn't have minded if you were the Michael Shanks from *Stargate*! He's just done some great work for us in the new series of audios coming up... Interesting idea with *Wolfsbane*. Jac is a great writer and I'm told it's a fantastic book (apologies, I haven't managed to catch up with it yet!). But I think you put your finger on the difficulty. The brilliant Ian and Lis aren't with us any more. I'm not sure I'd be comfortable with replacing them.

I love the selection you folks have! I have been a member of Audiobooks for a long time. However, I twice a month try to purchase nothing but *Torchwood* or *Doctor Who* audios. I cancelled it yesterday. I realized I can download at least most of everything I'd like from you folks directly. Plus, you support the *Doctor Who* community with your advertising. Loved the one I downloaded last night on the Council of Nicaea. Nice drama and script. I'm an episcopal priest, so it was truly enjoyable to say the least. Love the background history and all.

Rev. Vossen

Nick: Thanks for your support, Rev!

I just wanted to voice my appreciation of the April Special Offer you are running. I'm taking advantage of the sale to get some Father's Day presents in advance and the £5 price tag on the CDs means I will be able to get him at least three stories he hasn't got yet. Thanks very much for running a great sale!

James McLeod

Nick: Really glad that's working well for you. There's an exciting summer of special offers coming up!

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