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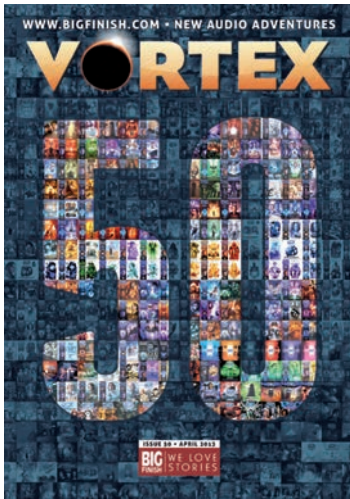
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# EDITORIAL

I'm now halfway through recording **The Ordeals of Sherlock Holmes**. This is a four-story box set, which forms the third series of Big Finish **Sherlock Holmes** audios. It's written by Jonathan Barnes and it's been a great adventure for me. Once again, it gives me renewed respect for those actors who play the Doctor in our **Doctor Who** audio range. Why? Well, because, since I'm playing the title role, it is a timely reminder for me of how much pressure and responsibility lies on the shoulders of the leading actor.

As you may know, we work at quite a pace, since all the effects, sound design and music are added in post-production – so on average, we spend about half the time a comparable BBC Radio production would spend in studio (where they add a lot of the effects and stereo positioning as they go along). This means that, if you're playing the main man, you really have to be on the ball. Standing up for most of the time is only the start of it. You have a responsibility for leading the cast and setting the tone. It's not easy and it reminds me of how naturally and seamlessly our Doctors do this.

As for **The Ordeals** themselves... the planned release date is December 2013. Leading up to that, we'll be teasing you along the way. All I can tell you now is that it is a series of stories that take us through various stages of Holmes and Watson's lives. For logistical reasons, we've already recorded the final episode and it was a fantastic experience, featuring the brilliant Blake Ritson as a pivotal character. An honour to work with such an incredibly talented actor.

We're also planning a series of Conan Doyle Holmes short story dramatized readings to complement the box set. These will be released for download only at bite-sized prices! So prepare yourselves for a Holmesian Christmas from Big Finish! Just what the Doctor (Watson) ordered after a November full of fiftieth anniversary **Doctor Who** celebrations!

## NICK BRIGGS

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## SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS

### JAGO & LITEFOOT – SERIES SIX

They're back in Victorian London! For those who haven't yet heard the 1960s-based series five, don't worry – that is not a spoiler. We always knew they would make it back... but how? And what awaits them on their arrival?

Well, for starters, four brand new stories await Henry Gordon Jago and Professor Litefoot when they return to the 1890s, to be reunited with the trusty Ellie and Sergeant Quick. Writers this season comprise Jonathan Morris, again given the duties of setting up the series after his sterling work on *The Age of Revolution*, Matthew Sweet (with perhaps his strangest episode yet!), George Mann (a respected author and BF contributor, making his debut in the range) and the trusty Justin Richards – who delivers Jago's bravest and funniest escapade yet!

Expect a meeting with Freud, a mystery in a spooky coastal town... and a steampunk foe that will threaten London. Corks!

**(OUT NOVEMBER 2013)**





# BIRTHDAY BONANZA!

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AND WRITER NICK BRIGGS  
EXPLAINS THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTING CELEBRATORY  
MULTI-DOCTOR STORY **THE LIGHT AT THE END**

**T**o begin with, and I feel like I've said this to the entire world by now, I was against doing a 'traditional' fiftieth anniversary story for **Doctor Who**. I felt that, because that was expected, we should shock people and do something entirely different. So I resisted the idea of a multi-Doctor story for ages. The truth is that line producer David Richardson wore me down. He kept sort of saying, 'Oh, so you're not going to do that, then? Hmm.' And I'd say, 'Yes, that's right, we're not going to do it!'

But it's like that whole thing of not wanting to celebrate Christmas in the traditional way, then the nearer you get to Christmas, the more you sort of get caught up in the warm glow of tradition. That kind of happened to me in this instance. I started to wonder why I was resisting doing the thing that everyone wanted. Then David and writer John Dorney came up with a loose plot structure – and I found myself pouncing on it.

**“I STARTED TO WONDER WHY I WAS RESISTING DOING THE THING THAT EVERYONE WANTED.”**

I felt very keenly that this was my job to do. Once upon a time, before I became executive producer, Big Finish was all about lots and lots of different writers. To a large degree, that tradition continues – and so it should. But my predecessor, Gary Russell, although he has been a prolific and successful writer throughout his career, chose not to write that much for Big Finish. He kept his script contributions fairly quiet, contributing far more material to scripts than anyone will ever fully know.

**B**y redefining the job as that of *executive* producer and getting a line producer on board, I moulded the job into something that I felt suited my personal skillset. I was impressed with the way I saw Russell T Davies running the TV show, and I felt that was sort of the way I wanted to run Big Finish – with my role being very much more about writing scripts. And the scripts I wanted to write were those pivotal moments. The arrival and leaving of companions, the new beginnings and all that sort of stuff. So

the fiftieth anniversary had, in that sense, 'me' written all over it.

So I took David and John's broad outline and created an entirely new story, although I still followed a lot of the structure they had suggested. They had given me an excellent launch pad from which to blast off.

**T**he story is about the possibility of everything the Doctor has ever done being wiped from the face of eternity. It's his struggle to realize that this is what is happening and, ultimately, how he pulls all the resources within himself together in order to put things right.

The problem with multiple Doctor stories is that they are a poisoned chalice. I keep saying this. What's the matter with me? Am I trying to curse myself? But the thing is that they are hotly anticipated and people campaign for them but, I would suggest, none of them on TV have been great favourites for anyone. The expectations are so huge that it's almost impossible for them to live up to them.

So the trick is to do it differently. We tried that with our very first release, *The Sirens of Time*, which has been our single most successful release – so there was some degree of success there. Each Doctor had their own adventure, then they came together in the final episode. *The Four Doctors* was far more about each Doctor having their own adventure. The only reason they finally did get together in that script is that I wrote that final scene!

*Zagreus* took an entirely different approach, and I can see why. Confound expectations and feature the actors who played the Doctors in different roles! It was a bold idea, but confounding expectations is a risky business, and as you approach Christmas, as it were – using that as my fiftieth anniversary analogy – it's probably not a good idea suddenly to proclaim, 'Santa wears yellow and doesn't have any presents!' You're liable to break a few hearts if you do that. And we don't want to break any hearts. We want to warm the cockles of people's hearts at a very special time for **Doctor Who**.

**U**ltimately, though, you set out your stall in your story and you tell that story to the best of your ability. That's all you can do as a writer. I set up the unfolding situation and, no matter how fantasy-based and crazy it might be, I follow the internal logic of that situation and that's what gives me the story. I hardly ever think, 'Oh,

wouldn't that be smart?' or 'Wouldn't that be funny?' or try to put in things I hope people will like. In order to write, I have to immerse myself in the story and let it take over. It's a trick I play on myself, of course, because a story can never actually take you over. If it does, you probably need to see a psychiatrist! But that's the game I play. I enter my world of make-believe! The time for working out what should be included or avoided is before you enter that world and afterwards, during the script-editing process.

The atmosphere in the studio sessions was definitely that of something special. Everyone knew they were participating in a sort of milestone production. And I'm so grateful and honoured to say that everyone was very positive about my script. We had a lot of fun. As a fan of the show, of course, it gives me a warm feeling inside to write a story for the

first eight Doctors. The key thing was to find a story that absolutely had to be about that. Stories featuring different incarnations of the Doctor are, by definition, special, extraordinary entities. You have to raise the stakes and make it feel like it's kind of an 'all or nothing' situation. If you don't, it could just descend into a sort of comedy sketch. You know: the Doctor pops into a supermarket and finds himself, in the guise of Jon Pertwee, buying some horsemeat ready meals. There have to be bigger and better reasons for the Doctors to meet. That's what creates the high drama!

**VORTEX**



## PRODUCER DAVID RICHARDSON PREVIWS A SET OF ANNIVERSARY COMPANION CHRONICLES WHICH STARTS BEFORE THE TV SERIES BEGAN...

**W**ho is Quadrigger Stoyne? That's a question that will prove to be very important in November, as *The Companion Chronicles* joins the celebration of fifty years of *Doctor Who*.

Stoyne's genesis began during the initial discussions on a special anniversary trilogy. I knew how I wanted it to open – with the Doctor and his granddaughter Susan fleeing Gallifrey. That wonderful, previously unrealized (at least with actors) moment that sets the whole fifty-year legend in motion.

**“IN A FLASH OF GENIUS, MARC SUGGESTED AN ADDITION TO THE MYTH. PERHAPS, WHEN THE DOCTOR AND SUSAN LEFT GALLIFREY, THEY WERE NOT ALONE.”**

I approached Marc Platt, a lovely man and a writer that I hugely admire, to pen the script of what I wanted to be called *The Beginning*. Genuinely, Marc rose to the challenge of creating the very first *Doctor Who* story ever (at least in terms of chronology), fleshing out those moments you've always wanted to hear. Reading the script gave me goosebumps. Script editor Jac Rayner said the same happened to her...

In a flash of genius, Marc suggested an addition to the myth. Perhaps, when the Doctor and Susan left Gallifrey,



they were not alone. Perhaps there was an engineer on board the ship, one who would be dragged away through time and space against his will – and this Quadrigger Stoyrn would consider himself greatly wronged by the Doctor.

**W**e had a beginning with *The Beginning*; my next step was to bring in two other writers who would map out this trilogy with Marc's help. Nick Wallace – who I've worked with on *Blake's 7*, but he's here writing his first **Companion Chronicle** – was recommended by fellow writer Simon Guerrier. Nick is handling the second story, which became *The Dying Light*, and stars Frazer Hines and Wendy Padbury, recreating the Second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe in a tale set just before *The War Games*.

**M**att Fitton, who's become one of our rising stars, has written story three, which is a sprawling four-parter that intersects the adventures of two different Romanas. It is called, fittingly, *Luna Romana*, and it was written to star Mary Tamm and Lalla Ward.

I'd discussed the idea of doing *Luna Romana* with Mary while we were recording the second run of **The Fourth Doctor Adventures**. Although we knew she was ill we never thought the worst, and Mary was really excited about the idea of coming in to record Matt's script. And then, one day on holiday in Wales, I switched on Twitter and read the awful news. Our lovely friend and colleague Mary had passed away.

For some time, conflicting thoughts went through my head. We should abandon the script. We should rewrite it with another companion (that never felt right). And then finally I realized – we should make it as a tribute to Romana 1 and Mary. Matt did a major rewrite to accommodate this, and there's no denying that *Luna Romana* comes now from the heart.

**W**e recorded the trilogy in order, and I got the Stoyrn that I wanted – Terry Molloy, best known for playing Davros opposite the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Doctors on TV. Terry is pure class – a character actor of the old

school, who can put his hand to anything and everything. I knew he'd deliver a very different character to Davros, and he gave us even more than I'd hoped for. Stoyrn is a very interesting beast indeed, and he goes through a very interesting journey over the arc of these three tales.

So for the golden anniversary we have taken something old – the legend of the Doctor's flight from Gallifrey – and made it new again. We've involved significant players from three different eras of the show, and tied it all together with a pivotal ongoing story arc that you never knew existed before.

I can hardly wait. **VORTEX**



# Vortex Times

GALLIFREY EDITION

**Three writers, one year. Eddie Robson, Jonathan Morris and John Dorney reveal what's coming up in our 1963-set *Doctor Who* trilogy**

## 1963 *Audio one*

### Fanfare for the Common Men

*Eddie Robson*



It was my friend Daragh Carville – a playwright and screenwriter who's written for **Being Human**, amongst others – who said I should pitch a **Doctor Who** audio about The Beatles. Both of us are Beatles obsessives, and when we realised it had never been done, we agreed I should pitch it ASAP before someone else did. Probably Jonathan Morris.

My original concept was that it should be set in early 1960s Hamburg, before the group were famous. Script editor Alan Barnes said he wasn't sure about doing something involving historical figures who are still alive – but what if it was a parallel history with another group in the centre of it, like The Beatles but not The Beatles? Something a bit like Eric Idle and Neil Innes' brilliant film **The Rutles: All You Need is Cash**, which spoofed **The Beatles Anthology** twenty years before it came out.

Whilst we were knocking this idea back and forth, Alan suddenly said, 'Hang on a sec' and I didn't hear from him for two months. When he came back, he presented me with the idea for the 1963 series. The Beatles idea was obviously perfect: November 1963 was the month The Beatles played **The Royal Variety Performance** and the word 'Beatlemania' was coined. To get the most out of the concept, I decided to

hop around in history, including a thread using the original Hamburg 1960 idea.

The one problem I had was naming the group. Supplanting an iconic name like The Beatles is tricky... and then I remembered the big anniversary we were celebrating. I emailed Alan – what if the group is The Common Men, the group Susan's listening to in *An Unearthly Child*, before they hooked up with John Smith? And he fired straight back with the title. So here it is – the untold story of The Common Men, before they went from nineteen to two in the Hit Parade.

....

## 1963 *Audio two*

### Space Race

*Jonathan Morris*



The brief was to write a story set in 1963. Oh great, I thought, I can have the Doctor meeting the Beatles... oh no, Eddie's doing that one. Oh well, I thought, what about the Profumo... oh no, John Dorney's doing that one. So what else was going on in 1963? Aldous Huxley was on his death bed; maybe the Doctor could visit a Brave New World? No. Maybe something to do with the Great Train Robbery? No, some of the participants are still alive. Maybe an adventure set during the filming of **Doctor**



**Strangelove**, the Doctor meeting Peter Sellers and Stanley Kubrick? Hmm. Maybe not.

Then Alan suggested a story about the space race, and the Soviet space programme. Immediately, not only did I have an idea for a story, I also had the title! Because in 1963, the Soviets were way ahead in the space race. They'd sent the first animal into space, the dog Laika; the first man, Yuri Gagarin; and the first woman, Valentina Tereshkova. And yet, at the end of the Sixties, the first person to walk on the moon was an American. So what caused the Soviets to lose their momentum?

I had a little mystery. I had a setting: the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan (a country the Doctor's never visited before!), a base simply waiting to be placed under siege. And I had a starting point for a **Quatermass**-ish story: a seventh Vostok mission, to send a cosmonaut into lunar orbit. Radio contact is lost as the capsule passes behind the far side of the moon, and by the time radio contact is regained, something has happened to the cosmonaut. Something alien. And now they're heading back down to Earth...

And I had my end of part one cliffhanger. Oh, it's a mad one...

.....

## 1963 *Audio three* The Assassination Games

*John Dorney*



So Alan Barnes emails me. 'Can you write us a story set in November 1963 featuring Sylvester [McCoy, the Seventh Doctor] and Sophie [Aldred, Ace], plus Gilmore and Allison from the Counter-Measures mob? Maybe Rachel too. Something a bit Profumo, a bit 'White heat of technology'. And it's the actual monthly range release for the fiftieth anniversary, so a birthday treat. Can you do that? No pressure.'

Every writer has a different nemesis. For some it's plotting, some the dialogue. For me it's coming up with the ideas in the first place. That's like getting blood from an Ogric. Long walks and lots of coffee for weeks, sometimes months, on end. This was the hardest yet – so many different elements to factor in over and above the brief – squeezing in [Counter-Measures'] Sir Toby as well, avoiding



*The Assassination Games: Karen Gledhill, Simon Williams, Sylvester McCoy, Pamela Salem and Sophie Aldred*

quintessentially Sixties concepts we'd already utilised in **Counter-Measures 1** and **2**, slipping it into the existing continuity. Overall, trying to get inspiration to strike took approximately five months and I can only commend Alan on his patience in allowing me to create the story I wanted.

As it turned out I needed every one of those days, as little aspects of the story filtered through across the entire period. A vague notion of the villains was an early element. A friend's Facebook posting led me to playing with the notion of Bond films (oddly, immediately after finishing the opening sequence, I went to see **Skyfall**... and found the exact same sequence happen in reverse therein). Finally I was cast in a play set within the world of politics, which provided me with a little known bit of trivia that became a key plot point (one day, Sophie Aldred herself came to see the show – little knowing I was sat behind the scenery researching the very script she was going to be recording in six months!).

After that, the actual scripting was a pleasure. It's certainly my favourite monthly range story that I've done and the recording was a blast. It's such a privilege to be part of the anniversary celebrations. **Vortex**

# BIRTHDAY BONANZA!

## JOHN AINSWORTH REVEALS HIS JOY AT PRODUCING ANNIVERSARY RANGE **DESTINY OF THE DOCTOR**, FEATURING ALL THE INCARNATIONS OF OUR FAVOURITE TIME LORD!

How does it feel to be working on the first audio series to feature all eleven Doctors?

It feels fantastic! This year really is the most exciting time to be involved with *Doctor Who* – both professionally and as a fan. So, to be producing a series that celebrates the anniversary and visits all eras of the programme – and all the Doctors – is amazing. It really does feel like travelling through time.

How did you set about choosing the writers for each story?

A lot of different writers were considered with Michael Stevens from AudioGo, me, Nick Briggs and David Richardson suggesting various people. As a result I've ended up working with some writers that I've worked with before and some for the first time, which has proved a nice mix. I tried as much as possible to give the writers a choice of which Doctor they wrote for, although I was particularly keen to match up particular writers with specific Doctors. Nigel Robinson for the First Doctor, Jonathan Morris for the season 17 Fourth Doctor, and Alan Barnes for the Eighth Doctor all seemed like good matches based on the writers' previous works.

You've directed all the stories so far; is that to give it a consistent feel or was it just happenstance? Do you approach each era differently?

I think in some ways it made the project simpler with me directing all, or at least the majority of, the productions. And, of

course, I enjoy that side of the work very much. I think the eras' specific elements come mainly in the writing and in the post-production. I've been particularly keen to evoke the incidental music of each era and have sent samples of the original TV scores to the composers to give them some guidance. I think this has worked very well so far.

We've not had any of the Doctors starring so far; might there be any, or was it always going to be problematic with availability?

I've gone mainly for actors who've played companions as readers, to give the whole series a consistency. It just seemed odd to me to have some read by the Doctor actors and not others.

What can you tell us about the stories coming up in the range?

The Fourth Doctor story, *Babblesphere*, is very deliberately an attempt to do a Douglas Adams-style story that one might imagine happening in season 17. Lalla Ward is the reader. The Fifth Doctor story, *Smoke and Mirrors*, has the TARDIS team of Tegan, Adric and Nyssa and is read by Janet Fielding. Nicola Bryant reads the Sixth Doctor story, which is a pseudo-historical that revolves around a key moment in history. The Seventh Doctor story, *Shockwave*, is read by Sophie Aldred and is set mainly on a spaceship in the far future. The Eighth Doctor story, *Enemy Aliens*, is set in 1930s England and sees the Doctor on the run, blamed for a crime he didn't commit. The Ninth Doctor story is *Night of the Whisper* and has a futuristic setting with an American noir ambience. *Death's Deal* is the Tenth Doctor adventure and takes place on a highly exotic – and dangerous – alien world. The final story, featuring the Eleventh Doctor, is called *The Time Machine*.

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# JANET FIELDING AND SARAH SUTTON EXPLAIN HOW THEIR ALTER EGOS, TEGAN AND NYSSA, ARE TAKING OVER IN A NEW FIFTH DOCTOR TRILOGY



## COMPANIONS IN CONTROL

Welcome back to studio for another trilogy, which of course starts with *Eldrad Must Die!*

**Sarah Sutton:** That was Cornwall and lots of icy crystalline things.

**Janet Fielding:** And people saying, 'Eldrad must die!'

Which meant another chance for you to be possessed, Sarah.

**SS:** I fell in a swimming pool with a whale. That was a first. But I did get possessed a bit.

Today, meanwhile, you've been recording *Prisoners of Fate* (out June), which brings to a conclusion some of the big arc points for Nyssa.

**SS:** I've been doing deep emotional scenes.

**JF:** I was weeping, Sarah. It was very touching. The bit I found most touching was when you tried to understand the plot. That's the bit I found particularly touching.

Before that, of course, is *The Lady of Mercia*, in which Janet gets to be royalty.

**JF:** Which is only appropriate.

**SS:** I liked that because I actually understood that story.

**JF:** I understood that story too!

**SS:** That was another first for me. I actually read it at home and thought, 'I get that! I get that totally!'

**JF:** You were probably worried at that point.

**SS:** Then I read [*Prisoners of Fate*] and I thought, 'Oh, lordy.'

**JF:** It made the whole Higgs boson thing look easy, didn't it?



**SS:** I think the key with this one is not to try to understand it too hard.

**JF:** I think it's a bit like those Escher drawings.

Each of these stories has a big role for one of the companions; was it good to get the chance to shine like that?

**JF:** As they say in American movies, 'Damn straight!'

**SS:** With these trilogy ones, stories do tend to be biased towards one assistant or another, so the Doctor shuts up for a change. In this story I get to have a good strop with the Doctor, which is very unlike Nyssa, so that's been good fun

**JF:** A strop's always good fun.

## "I LIKED THAT BECAUSE I ACTUALLY UNDERSTOOD THAT STORY."

**SARAH SUTTON ON *THE LADY OF MERCIA***

Do you feel the dynamic is building and evolving? Are you getting what you want out of these audios?

**JF:** Oh yeah, I always have a good time. I thought they were a good bunch of stories for the characters.

**SS:** For Nyssa, because we've had this thing about her having had this other life, it's a great opportunity to do other things with the character. I suppose I'm lucky in that respect, that I've gone and come back and got older and got younger – and now I don't know where I am!

**JF:** I got killed off.

**SS:** Did you?

**JF:** First one of these I did [*The Gathering*], with Gary Russell.

**SS:** That wasn't very good, killing you off in the first one.

**JF:** Because I said I'd never do another one, I said I'd do one and only one, and then I had a really good time!

**SS:** So how did they resolve that, then?

**JF:** I don't think we should ask those questions.

**SS:** Maybe we could get another script written that does resolve that.

**JF:** Who was the one in *Dallas* they brought back to life? Bobby.

**SS:** He was shot in the shower, wasn't he?

**JF:** Yeah. That must have hurt.

Do you still enjoy being part of the wider world of *Doctor Who*?

**SS:** Yeah, I still do conventions. There aren't as many conventions and things around as there were in years gone

by, but they're good fun to do and it's always fun to meet up with the other girls. Even though I never worked with them, it doesn't seem to matter somehow.

**JF:** Yeah, there's a sort of family thing, which is nice. I mean, I didn't do them for years and years because it just wasn't appropriate; you can't do it when you're running *Women in Film* and agenting and all that sort of stuff. You have to limit – severely limit in my case – like I think I do one a year. You can burn out.

On a sad note, they've just recorded the final shows at BBC TV Centre. Are you sad to see it go?

**SS:** Oh yeah! The very first time I worked at TV Centre I was eleven, and I can remember it very clearly.

**JF:** Well, it was only last week.

**SS:** I wish! But times will change, and the way things are done has changed.

We're now in the fiftieth anniversary year for *Doctor Who*. How are you celebrating?

**JF:** Funnily enough, there will be, next week, the first convention of the anniversary year for Project Motormouth, which will be David Tennant, Peter Davison, Colin Baker, Paul McGann, Sylvester McCoy, Frazer Hines, Simon Fisher-Becker and Andrew Smith to raise money for this charity called Project Motorhouse.

**SS:** It's a good start to the anniversary year.

**JF:** Yeah, a good start.

**SS:** And we're doing another one, aren't we, in August? A girlie one.

**JF:** There'll be cupcakes. And a lot of pink. A very pretty pink TARDIS. And those knicker blinds. You know those blinds that look like gathered knickers?

**SS:** And pretty bunting.

And you're both in *The Light at the End*.

**JF:** Yeah, but I only have a tiny part. Tiny!

Should we rewrite the whole thing so you're the main character?

**JF:** I think that's fair.

**SS:** It could just be Tegan and Nyssa. Do we need a Doctor?

**JF:** I don't see why... **VORTEX**

**ELDRAD MUST DIE! IS OUT THIS MONTH. FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT [WWW.BIGFINISH.COM](http://WWW.BIGFINISH.COM)**





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**BBC**



# EXPLORING THE FRONTIERS

THE WRITERS OF THE NEW **BERNICE SUMMERFIELD** BOX SET, **NEW FRONTIERS**, GIVE SOME TEASERS FOR WHAT TO EXPECT...

## XANNA EVE CHOWN: A HANDFUL OF DUST

Hi Xanna. You've been writing for the *Benny* books recently; how different was it writing for her on audio?

■ It actually surprised me how much I enjoyed writing *A Handful of Dust*. I was working on it at the same time as *The Slender-Fingered Cats of Bubastis*, but I never expected that I would enjoy writing audio Benny *more* than book Benny. I was just totally engrossed. Plus, with a book you don't get to go to the studio and hear it being recorded (insert obligatory reference to amazing lunch here) and I loved

that. There are so many other people suddenly involved with what you've written, and they all have their own take on it. For example, when I wrote Vonna Byzantium, I heard her as loud and vampy, then Ellen Salisbury played it softer and more sincere, and suddenly Vonna became a lot more sinister. It reminded me of when I used to commission illustrations for puzzles in children's magazines. You'd ask for something like 'A boy is holding a pencil. He looks worried' and then a few days later you'd get sent a picture of a worried boy with a pencil. Exactly what you asked for – but always completely different to how you imagined it. I loved it. It was like magic!



**"I THINK BENNY IS GREAT TO WRITE FOR, BECAUSE THERE ARE LOTS OF DIFFERENT BENNY'S INSIDE HER – BENNY THE DRINKER, BENNY THE ADVENTURER, ETC."** XANNA EVE CHOWIN



The cast of *A Handful of Dust*

can hone in on the combination of characteristics they're most interested in. Which, for me, seems to be Benny the archaeologist and Benny the mother. In fact, really when I write about her, she's just an average working mum like me.

## ALEXANDER VLAHOS: HMS SURPRISE

Hello Alexander! You've got the middle slot in this box set; what's your story about?

■ I'd liken it to a zombie romp! Set on an abandoned shipyard at the end of the cosmos, Benny and co are needed to solve the mystery of the HMS Surprise, the only ship left in the harbour. It's an eerie tale, but filled with humour (in the typical Summerfield way) and hopefully a few shocks and surprises too.

This is your first Benny adventure; how did you end up in the writer's seat?

■ I have been writing a lot of plays for theatre, small-handed pieces, for a good couple of years now. Scott Hancock knew this and asked if I would be up for writing a treatment for the next

How tricky is it to balance the long history of the series with the desire to make it understandable for new listeners?

■ When I pitched the stories for the book and the audio to Scott [Hancock] and Gary [Russell, producers], it was right at the start when they were rebooting the series, so they were looking for standalone ideas. Then, when I was writing them, I read the surrounding scripts and storylines so I knew what was going on and where Benny was heading. I know that Benny has a lot of history, and it obviously informs the way you write about her, but you can't cram references to all of it into one story or it would weigh everything down.

Do you feel that, as a female writer, you bring a different outlook to Benny and its lead characters than the male writers?

■ That feels like a bit of a loaded question. Probably? I just wanted to write a ghost story. But then, thinking about it, perhaps I chose to focus on... ah, can't write that without ruining the end of the story!

I think Benny is great to write for, because there are lots of different Bennys inside her – Benny the drinker, Benny the adventurer, etc – so each writer



# BERNICE SUMMERFIELD



The cast of HMS Surprise

box set. I jumped at the opportunity, so I wrote a ridiculously fast-paced adventure filled with impossible tasks and a new alien race (basically something that I would like to see the gang get up to) and never in a million years did I think it would get selected and I'd have to write the damn thing!

**Was it a scary prospect or did you find it quite straightforward?**

■ At first, I was exhilarated at the challenge ahead – I'd never written for audio! But to be perfectly honest, as I went on, I struggled a fair bit to turn the treatment into a decent script. I missed countless deadlines, heaven knows how I managed to get it done at all. The end product, though, is one I'm very happy with – the cast has worked wonders and it's such a joy to listen to.

**"I MISSED COUNTLESS DEADLINES, HEAVEN KNOWS HOW I MANAGED TO GET IT DONE AT ALL."** ALEXANDER VLAHOS

**You've also acted in Benny; how much did that help you get a feel for the characters?**

■ So, so much. I could hear the voices of Benny (Lisa Bowerman) and Jack (David Ames) in my head as I typed, so writing for them was very rewarding. I think I wanted to give the guys the chance for a lot of fun in the studio.

**The Confessions of Dorian Gray went down very well with listeners; what did you think of the end result and your performance?**

■ I am still overwhelmed and incredibly proud of what we've all done with the **Dorian** range. I think the majority of why it's done so well is down to Mr Hancock for his vision, the scripts being so well written, and being brave with the tone of the series. Dorian is a complex character, so voicing him was a challenge – considering we recorded the whole

thing out of order, it's a wonder it makes any sense – but I'm very pleased with how it's all turned out. I'm incredibly indebted to Scott, Gary Russell and Nick Briggs for the opportunity, and of course to the listeners for the lovely response and reviews it's had.

**People will also have recently seen you in Merlin; what was your experience of being on the show?**

■ I thoroughly enjoyed my time on **Merlin**. It's a juggernaut of a show,

a well-oiled machine that has a massive following. Playing Mordred, which is an iconic part, was daunting but, in the end, the show has given me so many happy memories.

## GARY RUSSELL: THE CURSE OF FENMAN

**Hello Gary! You're closing out this box set of adventures; what's your story about?**

■ The past and how everything that happens in life comes back in one way or another. Sometimes it's lovely and fluffy. Sometimes it bites yer bum! This is a real bum-biting story for all our characters. A chance to find out about our 'new' Irving Braxiatel, to get the back-stories on Jack and Ruth, to sort out Peter's head and, most of all, for Benny to confront a ghost from her past, possibly the most important ghost of all.

**What brought you back to writing Benny?**

■ It's really weird. I've sort of co-written **Benny** before with Scott – although, truth be told, they were 95% him, with me





The cast of *The Curse of Fenman*

**"THIS IS ACTUALLY THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER WRITTEN A BENNY ADVENTURE ALL ON MY LONESOME – WHICH TOOK ME BY SURPRISE, TO BE FRANK."** GARY RUSSELL

sweet in the flashbacks as she passes through her other 'dominoes' lives, and equally bitchy as full-on Avril. I think Scott and I just went 'It's Georgia' together one day. And to spend another day in studio with Georgia is always fun – especially if you chuck that vagabond Sean Biggerstaff into the mix. Those two are sooooo naughty together!

**You've been involved in Benny's life for a long time; how have things changed in the character and in production terms from then to now?**

■ Oh, that's a real 'how long is a piece of string' question. Her basic character doesn't change, flaws an' all. But because of the depth and class Lisa Bowerman brings to it, she inevitably changes and matures. I love Benny, almost as much as Paul Cornell does (nope, I love her more, but don't tell him!!) so coming back to briefly play with her again, move her along, give her new friends and situations, has been a blast.

**Can you give any hints of what's in store in the next box set, *Missing Persons*?**

■ Well, the clue is in the title. We've built up a whole new family, a whole new situation for Benny. Now we disassemble it, take away all her comfort zones and wrap up storylines I set up back in 1999 as well as ones Scott and I created with the *Epoch* set.

**What are your hopes for the future of Benny?**

■ That she keeps growing and having fun. **Benny** isn't **Doctor Who** – nor is she all about angst and soap opera clichés. Science fiction should never be more fun than when Bernice Surprise Summerfield and her chums are around. **VORTEX**

just adding a few bits here and there. This is actually the first time I've ever written a **Benny** adventure all on my lonesome – which took me by surprise, to be frank. In my head, I've done it loads of times, but in fact never have. So many years guiding and nudging other writers into telling the stories they thought they wanted to tell but in fact I wanted them to tell (ha – they all thought it was free will, but no, I've been a little Pandora inside their heads all the time), I thought it was time to do it m'self. It started out on a car ride home with Scott after we recorded [**Benny** story] *Paradise Frost* – we were talking about an Amicus Films portmanteau thing. Scott had just done it with the Benny/Dorian Gray play and I thought this was a great way to fill in the back-stories of our gang. All sat around the Advent Feast, telling campfire stories, with someone unpicking their memories and revealing some truths. It developed from there and once I knew who my villain was going to be, it all slotted perfectly into place, with a *raison d'être*.

**Georgia Moffett is playing Avril Fenman; what can you reveal about her, and how was Georgia in the role?**

■ Avril is, frankly, Benny's oldest foe, long since thought done away with. She's a soul-sucker, a disembodied being that 'borrowed' Benny's body once, and got her pregnant with Adrian Wall's baby, Peter. That's a fairly massive life-changing event Benny had no control over and, although she loves Peter more than life itself, that lack of control over her body has always been at the back of her mind. When I asked Jac Rayner if I could bring her back – and to life on audio for the first time – Jac didn't hesitate to say yes, which was so kind. Then we wanted to cast someone who could be sickly

**BERNICE SUMMERFIELD: NEW FRONTIERS IS OUT THIS MONTH. FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT [WWW.BIGFINISH.COM](http://WWW.BIGFINISH.COM)**

# JALX-ING APART



**WRITER JOHN DORNEY PROVIDES THE INTRIGUING BACKGROUND TO THE JUSTICE OF JALXAR, WHICH FINDS THE DOCTOR REUNITED WITH JAGO & LITEFOOT**

Hello John. We released *The Justice of Jalxar* a little early, but for those who've not heard it yet, what's it about?

■ There's a line in the script that sums it up. I pretty much wrote it for the trailer. 'The Doctor, Romana, Jago and Litefoot. Do you need anything else?' If that doesn't get your blood going, no further words from me are going to help.

Did you get a brief for this one, or was it fairly open-ended?

■ We'd initially talked about superheroes as a possibility. I was wary of that as I knew the Nest Cottage audios [AudioGo's Tom Baker stories] had done that, but when David threw in Jago & Litefoot, those fears evaporated. Victorian superheroes was quite an appealing concept. I threw in a few stipulations of my own – I wanted something that both matched the continuity of our own *Jago & Litefoot* series but would also have made sense if transmitted after season sixteen. Otherwise, a free hand.

You've written for the Fourth Doctor and Jago & Litefoot separately before. What changes when you put them together?

■ You have to find ways to shut them up and give the others a chance to speak! Three incredibly loquacious characters battling together... it's a wonder I was able to squeeze in a plot!

But it does help get the story going. Neither of our infernal investigators are quick to action, whereas the Doctor will just charge in. He's got them in the thick of it before they know what's happening.



How did you approach the dynamic of Jago, Litefoot and Romana? Was it a foregone conclusion that Jago would instantly fall for her?

■ I think it's pretty much a foregone conclusion that anyone would fall for Romana? She's a beautiful and classy lady, like Mary [Tamm] was! It seemed too good to miss.



Trevor Baxter, Tom Baker and Christopher Benjamin

Certainly, we thought that the team-up would work better if it wasn't just reuniting the same team and bringing in Leela.

You sort of know what you're going to get. Throw a newbie into the mix and you've got all manner of places you can take it. The characters are so strong and distinct that you can just fling them into a room together and see what happens.

What was the atmosphere like in studio?

■ Fabulous. The Kent days are always a joy, such a pleasant place to be working, if it counts as work. But this was particularly special as you'd got all these brilliant old school actors turning up and being a joy to talk to. Huge levels of respect back and forth and much laughter. It was almost a shame to be stuck in the booth for most of the day!

You've written a wide variety of stories for us now; is there anything you've not done yet that you'd like to try?

■ Ooh... I've been very lucky and done most things I'd want. When I started, there was no prospect of Tom [Baker] audios, Janet [Fielding] had barely done any and now, four years later, I've done plenty of scripts for both. It's amazing.

I've done stories I'd never have expected the possibility of doing. It's such a privilege to be involved with big releases like the Fourth Doctor/J&L reunion, and the Seventh Doctor/Counter-Measures team-up for the fiftieth anniversary. They're all dream commissions!

I suppose I'd like to complete the set. Finish off the classic Doctors, the big name monsters. I've not done Pertwee, not really covered McGann... I'd like a crack at the Cybermen one day. That'd be nice. I have a concept called *The High Price of Parking* that I'd love to find a place for. And perhaps my biggest dream is I want to write a **Doctor Who/Adam Adamant Lives** crossover. That's a cracking TV series... and Gerald Harper is both still alive and bafflingly unused by **Doctor Who!** Make it happen, someone! And I'd love to write a story featuring the Dominators.

You're also an actor and script editor; are there other strings you'd like to add to your bow?

■ Oddly, given the choice of metaphor, I'd love to learn an instrument (I've been failing to learn the clarinet for about five years) and learn another language (I adore the shape of German). But in **Who** terms, in artistic terms... I don't particularly feel the urge to direct, I think I'd be mediocre at best. And I don't have the organisational skills to produce.

You've recently been appearing in **Coalition**, both in Edinburgh and London. What was the experience like?

■ **Coalition** was a fantastic satirical play by Robert Khan and Tom Salinsky set amongst a fictionalised version of our current government. I was surrounded by lots of famous comedians – Phill Jupitus, Jo Caulfield, Thom Tuck – playing multiple silly roles. It was a blast. Doing the reading of it (where it also featured Dan Starkey and for once neither of us killed the other) got me a gig in the Radio 4 sitcom **My First Planet**, soon to have its second series, so it'll long have a place in my heart.

Will it come back? Who knows? With a topical piece, there's obviously a ticking clock. But those writers will be back.

Talented chaps. **VORTEX**

**THE JUSTICE OF JALXAR IS OUT NOW. FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT [WWW.BIGFINISH.COM](http://WWW.BIGFINISH.COM)**

# RED DAWN

KENNY SMITH REVISITS THE FIRST BIG FINISH AUDIO APPEARANCE OF THE ICE WARRIORS



**T**he Ice Warriors return to *Doctor Who* on television this month, in the series' eighth year since its revival. But Big Finish got there first, defrosting the Ice Warriors in just the eighth release.

*Red Dawn* by Justin Richards saw the Fifth Doctor and Peri land on Mars, a commission from producer Gary Russell – a self-confessed fan of the Martians. Justin recalls, "Right from the start my brief was that the Ice Warriors were not the villains – not out to invade or anything. So that meant I needed my own villain, and that meant it had to be one of the Mars Crew from Earth.

"Gary wanted some Ice Warrior historical/social background stuff adding in so it went in there, and I think it lends weight to the ending. The point of the end is, of course, that while the Ice Warriors know that Webster is lying, they have to behave as if he is telling the truth or else they demonstrably don't trust him – which would be dishonourable. And he knows that."

Another element Gary asked to be included was Peter Davison's daughter (and future Doctor's daughter and Doctor's wife) Georgia Moffett as Tanya Webster. Justin explains, "That meant I had to think of a reason why NASA might allow a fifteen-year-old girl to go on a Mars mission – and, of course, they wouldn't. So that became one of the twists in the story, the real reason for it."

Playing the Lord Zzarl was Matthew Brenher. He remembers, "I loved playing the Ice Lord – great fun. Gary didn't try to sell the part to me – they didn't need to do that. I accepted it as I would any other part Big Finish offered me: with glee."

*Red Dawn* marked the Big Finish debut of award-winning composer Russell Stone, who had impressed Gary with samples of work he'd sent in. "Doing *Red Dawn* was an atypical experience for me in every respect," he says. "As I work full-time anyway, I was really worried about being able to get the score finished in time to meet an unspecified deadline. I had no idea of what was expected of me; musically, I was also worried about doing right by Justin who I knew from university. And I had no choice but to suppress quickly my anxiety about doing right by my TV hero too. I was quite in awe of suddenly having Peter Davison's voice in my headphones.

"I crammed just about everything I could into the score: a nod to Philip Glass here, a bow to Paddy Kingsland there and a curtsy to Malcolm Clarke somewhere in the middle. For inspiration, I turned to the Sixties Ice Warrior stories and tried hard to emulate that 'phase' effect on the percussion (though the end result reminded me, perhaps appropriately, of *Tomb of the Cybermen*)." **VORTEX**



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# FORTHCOMING RELEASES

## APRIL 2013

- Doctor Who: **Eldrad Must Die!** (1.72, Fifth Doctor, Tegan, Turlough and Nyssa)
- Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Library of Alexandria** (7.10, First Doctor)
- Bernice Summerfield: **New Frontiers Box Set**
- Bernice Summerfield: **Filthy Lucre** by James Parsons and Andrew Stirling-Brown (New Frontiers tie-in novel)

## MAY 2013

- Doctor Who: **The Lady of Mercia** (1.73, Fifth Doctor, Tegan, Turlough and Nyssa)
- Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **Phantoms of the Deep** (2.5, Fourth Doctor and Romana)
- Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Apocalypse Mirror** (7.11, Second Doctor)
- Blake's 7: **The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 4**
- Blake's 7: **Lucifer** by Paul Darrow
- Blake's 7: **Lucifer audiobook** (Read by Paul Darrow)
- Dark Shadows 33: **The Phantom Ride**

## JUNE 2013

- Doctor Who: **Prisoners of Fate** (1.74, Fifth Doctor, Tegan, Turlough and Nyssa)
- Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **The Dalek Contract** (2.6, Fourth Doctor and Romana)
- Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **Council of War** (7.12, Third Doctor)
- Graceless 3 - **Box Set**
- Dark Shadows 34: **Beneath the Veil**

## JULY 2013

- Doctor Who: **Persuasion** (1.75, Seventh Doctor and Klein)

- Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **The Final Phase** (2.7, Fourth Doctor and Romana)
- Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **Mastermind** (8.01, The Master)
- Counter-Measures: **Series Two Box Set**
- Dark Shadows 35: **The Enemy Within**

## AUGUST 2013

- Doctor Who: **Starlight Robbery** (1.76, Seventh Doctor and Klein)
- Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Alchemists** (8.02, First Doctor)
- Blake's 7: **The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 5**
- Iris Wildthyme: **Series Four Box Set**
- Dark Shadows 36: **The Lucifer Gambit**

## SEPTEMBER 2013

- Doctor Who: **Daleks Among Us** (1.77, Seventh Doctor and Klein)
- Doctor Who: **1963: Fanfare for the Common Men** (1.78, Fifth Doctor)
- Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **Upstairs** (8.03, First Doctor)
- Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: **The Dark Planet** (4.01, First Doctor)
- Bernice Summerfield: **Missing Persons Box Set**
- Bernice Summerfield: **Missing Persons tie-in book** (title TBA)
- Dark Shadows 37: **The Flip Side**

## OCTOBER 2013

- Doctor Who: **1963: Space Race** (1.79, Sixth Doctor)
- Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **Ghost in the Machine** (8.04, Third Doctor)

- Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: **The Queen of Time** (4.02, Second Doctor)
- Gallifrey VI (**Three full cast adventures**)
- Blake's 7: **The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 6**
- Blake's 7: **Novel** (TBA)
- Dark Shadows 38: **Broadcast Critical**

## NOVEMBER 2013

- Doctor Who: **1963: The Assassination Games** (1.79, Seventh Doctor, Ace, Counter-Measures)
- Doctor Who: **The Light at the End** (Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Doctors)
- Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Beginning** (8.05, First Doctor)
- Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: **Lords of the Red Planet** (4.03, Second Doctor)

## DECEMBER 2013

- Doctor Who: **TBA** (1.81, TBA)
- Doctor Who: **Night of the Stormcrow** (Fourth Doctor and Leela)
- Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Dying Light** (8.06, Doctor TBA)
- Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: **The Mega** (4.04, Third Doctor)
- Doctor Who: **Dark Eyes II** (Eighth Doctor)
- Jago & Litefoot: **Series Six Box Set**
- The Ordeals of Sherlock Holmes: **Box Set**

## JANUARY 2014

- Doctor Who: **TBA** (1.82, TBA)
- Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **TBA** (3.1, Fourth Doctor and Leela)
- Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **Luna Romana** (8.07, Fourth Doctor)



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