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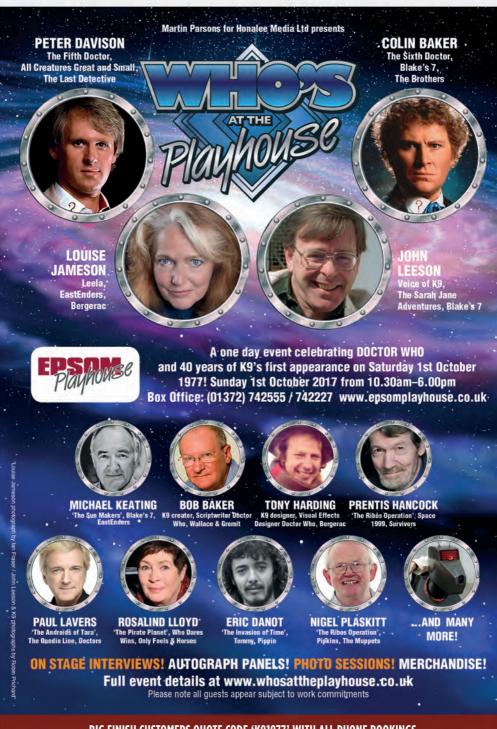


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EDITORIAL

M REALLY excited for this month's release of The Lives of Captain Jack. I don't know if the main reason is because I like John Barrowman (we Scots have to stick together!), that I adore Captain Jack Harkness, or love how Big Finish can extrapolate whole adventures from throwaway lines. It's probably a combination of all three!

We never did find out what happened to Jack and Midshipman Frame after *The End of Time*, and we know that Jack kept an eye on Rose growing up in the Powell Estate. But what did he do before he arrived in the 19th century and before Torchwood? And, of course, what is his real name? We're about to find all of this out – and I can't wait!

Also, just in case you hadn't noticed, this month marks the 100th issue of *Vortex*.



Vortex has come a long way since the first issue was released highlighting the **Eighth Doctor Adventures** in March 2009. It has evolved over time, with the late, great Paul Spragg shaping it into the magazine it is today.

To mark the occasion, as a special one off, we've brought back *Team Twitter*, an old favourite feature from the early days. For those who don't remember it, it gives you, the reader, the chance to find out just what the Big Finish team are into in their personal lives, whether their TV viewing, cinema or theatre going habits, current listening, or anything else they are up to.

And keep an eye out for the Big Finish Spotify playlist, to hear what everyone has been listening to lately! KENNY

SNEAKPREVIEW

Big Finish's memorial writing opportunity...

IG FINISH is giving its listeners the chance to write a short story and have it released later this year, in memory of the beloved Paul Spragg.

In May 2014, Big Finish lost Paul, a hugely valued member of staff. It left a space still felt today. Big Finish executive producer Nicholas Briggs remembers that day, saying: "It was one of the worst days of my life. And in so many ways, I believe I am still in shock at the loss. He was always full of such happiness and positivity."

The chance to find that positivity again was a motivator in Big Finish's

memorial writing opportunity, which last year resulted in Joshua Wanisko's **Doctor Who** – **Short Trips:** *Forever Fallen*.

Short Trips producer Ian Atkins says: "We know that a lot of people would like to write for us, but unless it's very controlled we'd get into all sorts of copyright issues with reading unsolicited ideas, stories and scripts – and just man hours! – so opportunities have been thin on the ground. Last year, when it came to marking the anniversary of Paul's untimely death, we realised it was a fitting way to pay tribute through hearing the very voices he'd been encouraging and sharing his time with."

So 2017 sees a second time Big Finish are opening their doors to **Doctor Who** short story submissions, asking potential writers to submit a storyline and first page of prose before July 1.

Details can be found here: https://goo.gl/bd08j8

Joshua's story is available as a free download here: http://bit.ly/2ruwYhU

APTAIN JACK Harkness is a complex man. He has lived - and loved – for centuries. He's a man who changes depending on the company he keeps – he can be fun-loving and carefree when he's with the Doctor, but with his Torchwood team, he is a man with a responsibility, to save the Earth from invasion. We've seen what Jack is like with his Time Lord friend and his team in Cardiff but, thanks to Big Finish, this month we see the errant time agent on his own, at various points in his life.

John Barrowman headlines the series as Russell T Davies's legendary creation, which also welcomes back other old friends from the TV show. Writer and producer James Goss reveals: "David Richardson suggested it. Also, we knew that John was going to be in the country during the recording of **Torchwood**: *Outbreak*, so we were able to jump at the chance."

The Lives of Captain Jack takes place at four distinct points in his life, starting with *The Year After I Died*, by Guy Adams, which is set

the Emperor Dalek's attack. We know that he hung around the Powell Estate. We know that the Doctor put him together with Alonso Frame. And, then, of course, there's that curious missing two years of his life (and no, we don't exactly fill it in!)."

AMES IS keen to point out that the Jack in this set is very much the man who appears in **Doctor Who**, rather than **Torchwood**, saying: "This is definitely before-the-watershed Jack. It's also Jack roaming the universe, having adventures and bumping up against **Doctor Who**-ish villains and being brilliant.

"But it's also showing Jack at very different periods in his life - the confused man who finds he's

still alive; the sad man who is looking for rescue, then for forgiveness; and finally the bright young star of the Time Academy."

Guy says: "This was one of those lovely projects where James and I sat and poked at the whole thing, sharing thoughts and ideas and chocolate biscuits. He'd already come up with little thumbnails for

CALL THE CLASSIC SPOOKINESS OF SAPPHIRE & STEEL BUT WITH MORE SAUSAGE ROLLS! 77 JAMES GOSS

With Jack having lived such a long time, what made James pick these particular eras in his life? He explains: "Guy Adams and I sat down and did a lot of rewatching. There's so much about Jack that's hinted at and we're edging towards.

picks up from

of Time, where

Captain Jack and Alonso Frame have only

just met. But why did the Doctor

want them to be together? The

final tale in this set is Month 25

by Guy Adams, and goes back to the early days of Jack's life, in

which he is the young star of the

Time Agency, and his whole life

is about to fall apart. But that's

not going to stop him winning.

the events

in The End

"We know that Jack stayed on Earth and helped it rebuild after each of the four stories which had then gone to Russell T Davies for his thoughts. Russell's feedback then left us with something we could develop further, both pitching in ideas as to how we could explore each story. We then divvied them up and came up with full storylines.

"Picking up from *The Parting* of the Ways is an interesting one

If the coat fits... John Barrowman at the Doctor Who Experience.



Jack and Jackie reunited John Barrowman and Camille Coduri.

> in the year 200,101, on an Earth ravaged by the Daleks, where Jack struggles to save humanity from its oldest enemy. The second story is *Wednesdays For Beginners* by James, in which Jack and Jackie Tyler must unite to rescue the Powell Estate from a force whose name Jackie can never say. One Enchanted Evening, also by James,

for *The Year After I Died*, as Jack obviously has no idea what's happened to him. How did you get into his headspace for that?

"It was a case of pinning down the events of the story from his perspective. As far as he's concerned he got lucky. He didn't know he's immortal. He faced death and got a second chance. So, when we first meet him we find the one thing you never expect when you meet Captain Jack: a cautious man."

He adds: "I took the handful of details Russell scattered through the story to help build a picture of Earth at this point (most of them taken from **The Weakest Link** questions!) and then ran with that really. Stir a – yes, let's be blunt – fearful Captain Jack into the mix and you're away."

HE SECOND adventure in the set features what happens when Jack meets Jackie Tyler – a brilliant combination, if ever there were one.

James says: "Episode two is essentially **Sapphire & Steel**, but with Jack and Jackie Tyler. So, all the classic spookiness of **Sapphire & Steel** but with more sausage rolls and pan pipes. Camille and John are just amazing in it – so joyous.

"I've just listened to the first edit of it, and there's a special hell reserved for people who laugh at their own jokes. Especially in Poundland."

Series director Scott Handcock adds: "It's always nice to reunite old friends, and Camille and John were no exception.

"Though their characters only briefly crossed paths with one another at the end of series four, as actors they know each other better, and it was a delight to give them a chance to play opposite one another. They bring out completely different sides to the characters: Jackie's a lot softer (but still frustrated) with Jack, and Jack finds his patience tried, but can't help but be charmed by her.



Written By: James Goss, Guy Adams Directed By: Scott Handcock

CAST

John Barrowman (Jack Harkness) Russell Tovey (Alonso Frame) Camille Coduri (Jackie Tyler) Sarah Douglas (Vortia Trear) Shvorne Marks (Silo Crook) Scott Haran (Malfi Pryn) Aaron Neil (Gorky Sax) Katy Manning (Mother Nothing)

"It was also a thrill to be the first to welcome Camille into the Big Finish fold, and from the very first read of the first scene, it was clear that Jackie Tyler is hardwired into

DOCTOR WHO: THE LIVES OF CAPTAIN JACK

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Ellie Heydon (Ginny) Jonny Green (Station Computer) Hannah Barker (Female Passenger Conor Pelan (Male Passenger Ellie Welch (Bay Guard) Kristy Philipps (Colby) Joe Wiltshire Smith (Pods) Sakuntala Ramanee (Maglin Shank) Kieran Bew (Krim Pollensa) Alexander Vlahos (The Stranger) Christ Allen (The Council) Christel Dee (The Council) James Goss (The Council)

on lines and tiny moments from the TV series, then use them as the foundation for some really expansive stories. I don't think it would have ever occurred to me to bring back

GG [RUSSELL T DAVIES] DID OFFER JACK'S REAL NAME, SO THAT WAS LOVELY. **JJ** JAMES GOSS

her system. It's a brilliant, effortless performance, and one I hope we get to hear a great deal more of."

Another TV series favourite is back in *One Enchanted Evening*, with Russell Tovey returning as Midshipman Alonso Frame.

James teases: "Episode three is sort of an un-farce. Captain Jack and Alonso Frame are heading towards their happy ending – when something happens. Then something else happens. Then something else..."

And Scott reveals: "I love how James has found ways to pick up Alonso Frame, but the instant you read the script, it's a no-brainer. He's not a hero in the most obvious sense, but what you see in *Voyage of the Damned* is a man who will go to extraordinary lengths to do his duty, and in some ways he and Jack have a lot in common. Alonso's just a lot more cautious and less gung-ho!

"Having Russell in studio was lovely though. When you think it was just one episode he appeared in back in 2007 (plus a cameo two years later), it was clear he'd really invested in the character, and he's

Doctor Who version of Captain Jack, I couldn't be more excited. John's got such remarkable energy – he's enormous fun, but also an utter professional – I relished the opportunity to do something a little different, and fling him out into new environments!"

Scott was particularly pleased to be working on scripts written by two people he knows and respects. "James and Guy are two of my favourite writers," Scott continues, "I worked with them both a lot on the **Torchwood**

range. Between them they've managed to deliver a set of four very different, extremely engaging adventures that plunge Jack into scenarios we'd never be able to do on **Torchwood**. "It's lovely to have a version of Jack that's the cheeky **Doctor Who** version, rather than the more serious

rather than the more serious **Torchwood** interpretation, and John's absolutely run with it.

"The four stories take us to very specific points in his timeline so the level of care and detail that's gone into them is extraordinary. And we've got a brilliant guest cast along for the ride. Not only Camille Coduri and Russell Tovey, but the likes of Sarah Douglas, Scott Haran, Kieran Bew, Alexander Vlahos and Katy Manning. It's a rollercoaster of a box set, and one I'm very excited for people to hear!"

With four adventures all set to be unleashed across time and space, could there be more adventures with Jack still to come?

James grins: "Totally. There's so much in the man's history that you could fill boxsets. There's the Boe Transfiguration, for one thing..." **VORTEX**

John Barrowman and Alexander Vlahos



John Barrowman really likes that coat!

no stranger to the world of radio drama. It was a very easy recording session. He also brought his French Bulldog Rocky along for the ride, which immediately meant I never wanted the recording to end!"

James teases: "Episode four solves one of the biggest mysteries about Jack – what his real name is. Russell pointed this out and provided it." And Month 25 writer Guy continues: "It was just such an obvious element to draw on for this set. From the word go, James knew he wanted stories that took in various different moments of Jack's life. To ignore his time at the agency would have been madness.

"Russell T Davies was perfectly open to us exploring Jack's past –there really weren't any restrictions, it was up to us how much we wanted to explore or reveal. He did offer Jack's real name, so that was lovely."

OR DIRECTOR Scott, working on The Lives of Captain Jack was a real thrill, especially as he had previously got to know John Barrowman through another Big Finish series.

Scott says: "I'd already worked with John on the **Torchwood** range, so when James told me about the plan to do a box set featuring the

WHAT THE

OH. MY. GOD! Hex is back with the Doctor and Ace, and Philip Olivier couldn't be more delighted...

T'S BEEN a while since we last had a new adventure with Thomas Hector Schofield. Back in September 2014, Hex left the Doctor and Ace's side in Signs and Wonders, after 24 adventures in the monthly range.

Since then, Philip Olivier has been a busy man – he's now a father with two young children, and a third is due on August 16 – and his acting career has been put on the backburner as he's developed a highly successful career as a businessman in his home town of Liverpool.

This month, former **Brookside** star Phil, who played Tim 'Tinhead' O'Leary, is back alongside Sylvester McCoy and Sophie Aldred in the latest **Doctor Who** monthly release, *Shadow Planet/World Apart*.

Having left the TARDIS – twice! – the affable Scouser admits he wasn't expecting to be back again.

He laughs: "It's crazy. I was so delighted to get the call. I couldn't believe it – I thought I had finished, but in the world of **Doctor Who** you never can tell.

DOCTOR WHO

"He's already had a big send off, and has died a couple of times, so I really did think that was me away. I'll never believe them again when they say I'm gone! It's like cry wolf!

"That's the thing about time travel, you never can tell, so it's great to go back and do this. It was just so good to be back with



Sophie and Sylvester. It always feels like you're meeting up with friends and having fun.

"I've grown up with them – before I was a young, free and single lad, and now, here I am, a family man with responsibilities. I've seen Sophie's boys grow up, seeing them two or three times a year, every year – it's been weird." Shadow Planet, by AK Benedict, takes the friends to psychic planet Unity, where visitors' shadow inner selves are released. Scott Handock's World Apart is a tale with a difference, as the time travellers discover there is no escape from the planet Nirvana.

Phil says: "I really enjoyed doing these two, as there was a lot to

work with. And the end of *World Apart* was a really good challenge."

EX FIRST appeared in *The Harvest*, which he recorded in March 2004 – and the story was set in the incredibly distant year 2021 – which is now almost upon us. "That's just incredible, isn't it?",



DOCTOR WHO: SHADOW PLANET/WORLD APART

OUT THIS MONTH!



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Written By:

AK Benedict, Scott Handcock Directed By: Ken Bentley

CAST

Sylvester McCoy (The Doctor) Sophie Aldred (Ace) Philip Olivier (Hex) Belinda Lang (Mrs Wheeler) Sara Thom (Sandy/Captain Karren) Nickolas Grace (Professor Grove) Ben Mansfield (Loglan/ Shadow Loglan)



says Phil. "It seemed so far away then, and now it's just around the corner!

"But I still love doing it. It doesn't matter where you are, there's always someone who's a Big Finish fan! I get people recognising me as Tinhead all the

GALLY LOVE SURVIVORS – IT'S BEEN SO GOOD. THEY ARE DOING SOME REALLY GREAT STUFF WITH THAT AT THE MOMENT. 33

PHILIP OLIVIER

time, but it's a little bit special when someone shouts out, 'Hex!'

"I was at a convention – I think it was Chicago TARDIS about eight years ago, when a young girl, maybe 14-years-old, asked me, 'Can you say your catchphrase?' And I thought, 'Oh, I don't even have a catchphrase.' Then she said 'Oh my Gaaaaaad!' It didn't half touch me, that someone on the other side of the world had invested so much in this character.

"Oh, it's nice to get recognition for all the hard work you put in, and anyone who says they don't want it, well, they can't be an actor! Every actor wants to be liked!"

N THE meantime, Phil is keeping himself busy. He says: "Last year, I bought an open top bus business in Liverpool which had gone into receivership. After putting a new infrastructure in place, we've gone from six staff to 24, and now 12 buses.

"We introduced multilingual systems with languages for the international markets, and have now introduced a city and Beatles tour. It's really taken off.

"All I'm thinking of is securing the future of my family, so when





the opportunity came up to buy this business, I jumped at it. I've always had properties, which I've kept on the backburner with a pension in mind, but I wanted a business. The world of acting is so unpredictable and it's such a pleasure to be in tourism in Liverpool.

"I love this city – what we're getting in customer feedback is great. I've had a few guides who are actors – they play instruments on the tour, and have been given thanks from the top councillors downwards. It's nice to be appreciated in your own city.

"That's been at the forefront for me lately, and I said to my agent, I'm really hands on here for this first couple of years to get it set up', so they have only put me up for things they knew I would like.

"I produced my first play at the beginning of year – I've got a lot more respect for producers now! But now I'm getting itchy feet as it's been about a year since I did any acting.

"I'll be at the Theatre Royal in St Helen's at the end of the year. As long as I get a couple of stage roles a year, I'm happy."

Phil also hopes to be back doing more Big Finish, and has his eyes on one particular series.

He reveals: "I really love Survivors – it's been so good. They are doing some really great stuff with that at the moment. I would love to be in it." VORTEX

#TEAMTWITTER

Riverdale

JASON HAIGH-ELLERY CHAIRMAN

Riverdale on Netflix – I'm a bit of a sucker for a good teen drama and there hasn't been a decent one for some time, until I came across Riverdale by accident whilst surfing. Based on the Archie comics (the first issue of which appeared in 1942!), **Riverdale** is a re-imagining of the all-American classic comic series – it's a bit odd, a bit scarv, a bit addictive and a bit **Twin Peaks**. Ironically, I don't think Archie is really the lead here – Lili Reinhart (as Betty) and Camila Mendez (as Veronica) steal the show. This could be the new Veronica Mars.

This Is Us

DAVID RICHARDSON SENIOR PRODUCER

I'm absolutely hooked on This Is Us, which I can only describe as a high concept family drama from America. It focuses on one family through a lifetime (or more), with scenes flashing between the present day and the distant past as we discover who these people are, and the events that shaped them. I sit and weep through every episode. One brilliant conceit is that a key character in the past scenes isn't in the present - all we know is that they died somewhere along the way, and we don't know when. I've ordered in extra tissues for that episode, when it happens.

Vortex #100 lovingly designed with the assistance of:

- Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds
- Strong coffee
- Wotsits and Fizzy Fangs
- Sneaking out to watch
- Alien: Covenant Radio 4
- Staying up to watch Twin Peaks

Frank Sinatra contemplates having Nick under his skin



NICK BRIGGS • EXECUTIVE PRODUCER I realise that my favourite music is eclectic and very contained. The only 'pop' music I have ever bought on iTunes are the following... Roxy Music, Over You; Paloma Faith, Can't Rely on You; Frank Sinatra, I've Got You Under My Skin; Tony Christie, Avenues and Alleyways; Kraftwerk, We Are The Robots and The Model; plus the Cinnamon Flava We Love Mono remix of We Are The Robots. I listen to these tracks a lot.

Is that healthy?! On TV, I've been watching **Line of Duty** and **The Last Kingdom**, both of which I'm finding quite irritating. I really enjoyed the emotional stuff in the latest series of **Broadchurch** – talking of Mr Tennant, I saw him in **Don Juan of Soho** the other night, in London's West End, with Jason and Paddy. Superb!

Hear Nick's playlist at: http://spoti.fi/2qy0mm0

Mass Effect 4

IAN ATKINS

PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR I'm currently trying to relax with Mass Effect 4, but I'm also in the final stages of the Companion Chronicles First Doctor edits, and waiting for Jago & Litefoot scripts to come in...

BrainDead

KRIS GRIFFIN

MARKETING GNU/CAT WRANGLER Other than negotiating a new contract for Sid's appearances on Unwrapped, I've been into lots of great TV, old and new. The Crown was wonderful. Orange Is The New Black was addictive and brilliant. The Man In The High Castle is epic and better than Game of Thrones in my opinion. Sue Cowley made me watch BrainDead which I'm grateful to her for, it explains many, many things. I hear the sun is out...

Newbie

PADDY FREELAND MARKETING EXECUTIVE

I've just joined the Big Finish family and it's been a real thrill! So far I've been getting up to speed with the company, the wonderfully talented team. and all its secret machinations and projects (all of which will be coming soon!). As to what I'm listening to, now that I've got access to the Big Finish archives, I think I'm going to start from square one and work my way through every release. Ever. Although I am excited about **Captain** Scarlet and the Mysterons, coming out in September.

SEE YOU IN ANOTHER 7 YEARS (MAYBE)!

KENNY SMITH FINDS THAT ABBY, GREG AND JENNY JUST...

KEEP ON





OR THE first five box sets," producer David Richardson says, "We've told big story arcs over a run of episodes. We felt it was time for a change with series six – we wanted to go back to the storytelling style of the TV series, and do standalone stories with only minor (if any) connection."

This is the world of **Survivors**, where, following the 'Death' pandemic, only a fraction of the global population has survived, and the survivors are trying to rebuild society and create a new future. David continues: "We're now working within the world of the TV show's third season, where Greg is in Norway, Jenny is left behind and Abby was lost long ago. So this allows us to follow different paths with our three lead actors, and then – perhaps – bring some of them back together in surprising and emotional ways. I think it's worked beautifully – our writers have once again delivered superb scripts – and going beyond series seven, we know exactly where we want to take **Survivors**!" "I think **Survivors** appeals partly because we all have that sense of 'how would I cope if everything we rely on was dashed away?' and because it dramatises a clash of worldviews about how to rebuild if that happened." These were the thoughts of Ian Potter, writer of the first story in this set, *Beating The Bounds*. "Would we try to put back everything as it was? What would we hope to change? What compromises do we make for our ideals? What would keep you wanting to live?

SURVIVORS



GATHE BLEAKNESS IS WHAT MAKES SURVIVORS SUCH FUN TO WRITE. 33 CHRISTOPHER HATHERALL



"The brief I got for my play was for one about Abby alone, still searching for her son, barging into someone else's story. If you like it was imagining a parallel TV series, where Abby turns up in a different community each week like David Banner or Sam Beckett and gets involved in their troubles.

"That got me thinking about one of the things I like most in that kind of storytelling, which goes



right back to tales of Arthurian knights, those stories where a hero's greater quest destabilises the world he arrives in."

Ian continues: "Because the only established character I was working with here was Abby I had less homework than some of the other writers. Having read the scripts for the first five box sets I'm always hugely impressed by how seamlessly they integrate old and new regulars. I just had to worry about finding Abby's voice, which involved a lot of rewatching her TV episodes and listening to Carolyn Seymour's reading of Terry Nation's novel for a sense of how he saw her.

"I only touch on it, but in my head the search for Peter is all that's keeping Abby going, and she's invested so much in him she's right on the edge of cracking. I think she's quite obsessive by this point, and her quest for him definitely brings harm in my story. He's a normal life and hope for the future, but a) they sent him away to school, and b) he'll have grown into quite a different young man by now - so if they ever meet I'm not sure they'll even really know each other. He probably only dimly remembers his mum as a lady with long hair ... "

TORY TWO is The Trapping Pit by Christopher Hatherall. He grins: "The bleakness is what makes Survivors such fun to write. Pitting characters against seemingly insurmountable odds within that harsh unforgiving world is what creates the drama and brings the enjoyment. It's a chance for the good people to use their decency to overcome their struggles and a chance for the bad characters to use their nefarious qualities to achieve their selfish aims. And in the greying middle of all that is where the engagement and enjoyment arises as a writer. Exploring the shades of humanity is great fun.

"The brief asked for a scenario that would introduce Ruth back into the **Survivors** world and give her and Jenny a medical emergency to overcome. From that I did some research on what they may reasonably encounter on a routine trade journey and discovered trapping pits, which are an old-fashioned way of capturing animals. Everybody is trapped in this world, physically, emotionally,

SURVIVORS

and between their values of right and wrong. They just have to make the best out of it and survive."

Chris admits he revels in the chance to write for this series: "In the **Survivors** world, every character is interesting as the demands put upon them bring out ever more engaging reactions. Being asked to reintroduce Ruth SURVIVORS SUPER-fan has written the third tale, *Revenge of Heaven.* Acclaimed novelist Simon Clark was a fan of **Survivors** since it was originally transmitted.

He says: "The TV series of **Survivors** first aired when I was in my teens. It was groundbreaking TV drama. The effect on me was Richardson's trust in the writers that the 'brief' is just that, very brief. He encourages us to spread our wings creatively. For *Revenge of Heaven* I was told Big Finish series six takes place in the **Survivors'** world, just after TV's series two, and that my episode would feature Greg Preston. At the end of TV series two, Greg flies to Norway



GATE EVERY CHARACTER IS INTERESTING AS THE DEMANDS PUT UPON THEM BRING OUT EVER MORE ENGAGING REACTIONS. 37 CHRISTOPHER HATHERALL

was great for me. It was a chance to shape a regular character and give her an introduction with some impact. Like all good characters, she is contradictory at times; blunt and practical, but also with wavering self-confidence when the proverbial hits the fan and she is required to save the day." extraordinary. As plague swept through London and Abby's pleasant village it felt as if a pair of huge hands had reached out from the TV screen, grabbed hold of me and wouldn't let go until the end credits rolled."

For his story, Simon reveals: "It's a mark of producer David



with Agnes and Jack. I've always wondered what happened to Greg and his travelling companions in Norway so I saw an amazing opportunity here to fill in a blank gap in Greg's story. What did he do in Norway? Did he succeed in helping the Norwegians restore industry as he'd been asked to do by Agnes? As soon as I asked myself those questions, images flashed through my head of Greg being forced to undertake a high-speed journey through the wild, snow-covered Norwegian wilderness. This would be a desperate chase to get hold of a certain something that would be of immense importance to the future of survivors everywhere. And as soon as I thought about that dash across Norway I immediately realised that the vehicle that would carry him would be the balloon."



ERIES SIX concludes with *Lockup* by Andrew Smith. Andrew tells *Vortex*:

"**Survivors** is becoming my favourite gig, as I love doing it. I think, of all the 25 or so scripts I've done for Big



SURVIVORS: SERIES SIX

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BEATING THE BOUNDS THE TRAPPING PIT REVENGE OF HEAVEN LOCKUP

Written By: Christopher Hatherall, Simon Clark, Ian Potter, Andrew Smith Directed By: Ken Bentley

CAST

Carolyn Seymour (Abby Grant) Ian McCulloch (Greg Preston) Lucy Fleming (Jenny) Helen Goldwyn (Ruth) Zoë Tapper (Evelyn Piper) James Wilby (Brendon Glover/Duffin) Emily Joyce (Sasha Flint) Gunnar Cauthery (Alan Kelly/ Sam Fulcher) Leighton Pugh (Dan Lacey/Ulryk) Julie Graham (Katherine Tanner) Tracy Wiles (Professor Valentina Raskova) Alex Blake (Pierre/Hague) Ellie Burrow (Postwoman/Gail Fulcher) Andrew Wincott (Sick Man/Mangham) George Watkins (Craig) Hannah Genesius (Spike), Christopher Hatherall (Titch) Sheila Reid (The Countess)



Finish, the two I did for series five of **Survivors** are maybe my favourites.

"When the series plan came out, I was allocated the episode where Greg comes back and meets up with Abby. Because we're in the era of the third TV series, we have the opportunity for Greg to meet Abby, because of things that happened in the TV series, without being spoilery about it. Effectively, what I got was 'Episode 6.4, title to be confirmed, by Andrew Smith. Cast: Abby, Greg and others. And the synopsis was just 'Abby and Greg meet'.

"The story idea I had was for a story set in a prison that has been taken over as a community, involving at least one person who had been in the prison before on the staff, and taking it from there. Having been in a couple of prisons and detention centres (visiting professionally, I hasten to add!) in my time, I could see the possibilities.

"Again, we revisit the justice theme, which I looked at in Judges, to show what happens after the 'Death'. It's a strong thread in the story, with a crime and punishment theme, and how far is too far? Can you have zero tolerance?" VORTEX

KENNY SMITH DISCOVERS THE LATEST COMPANION CHRONICLES BOX SET IS...

NE OF the many great things that sets Doctor Who apart from other sci-fi shows is its ability to travel anywhere in time and space.

FRS

And that's something that also applies to Big Finish, with audio adventures that take us back to recreate eras of the programme from over 50 years ago.

This month, the latest First Doctor **Companion Chronicles** box set is released, featuring new stories performed by Maureen O'Brien as Vicki, Peter Purves as Steven and Anneke Wills as Polly, with Elliot Chapman as Ben. Producer Ian Atkins says: "I'd really enjoyed working with Anneke Wills on the Second Doctor **Companion Chronicles** and a lovely **Short Trip** *Lost and Found*, and I talked to her about her memories of working with William Hartnell. I know for some that was a difficult time, but Anneke's very philosophical and positive, and once I found she was enthusiastic about revisiting it, I looked at doing some Ben and Polly First Doctor stories for the range, with both her and Elliot Chapman as Ben.

"The problem is that all the First Doctor stories connect on screen or through dialogue, so I wanted a reason (as well as a way) for us to have Ben and Polly going off piste. And the answer meant doing two stories as we begin and end an arc, while informing what went into the other tales in the set. Although *Fields of Terror* and *Across the Darkened City* stand alone, there's something ticking along in the background there...'

"For Fields of Terror, I went to John Pritchard and basically said. 'Right, what do you want to do next?' as after his spooky (award-nominated) The Mouthless Dead, I was open to any suggestion. His love of military history threw up an episode of French revolution lore and as that's a familiar

DOCTOR WHO



Elliot Chapman

set. We agreed which companions it would feature, and he came up with some helpful suggestions, particularly about the nature of the adversary, that helped to shape the finished storyline.

"I've been interested in the war in the Vendée ever since I studied 1793 (the greatest Victor Hugo novel you've never heard of!) as part of my French degree. I had already researched it in depth for a series of online adventure stories I wrote previously - David Bell's book The First Total War was particularly useful. I also watched a DVD of The Reign of Terror to get a

Second Doctor volume one, but it didn't really fit the character arc we were doing with Jamie, but - again, on a Short Trip - when I was in studio with Peter Purves, I suddenly thought: "Oooh, Steven would work really nicely with that.'

"David Bartlett took my initial sketchy idea and fleshed it out in ways I'd not imagined and it works beautifully. Peter confessed when he heard the initial idea that he had his doubts, but the script completely won him over. The day of recording was fab,

GG THE ORIGINAL BRIEF WAS TO HAVE A TWO HANDER BETWEEN STEVEN AND A DALEK.

DAVID BARTI FTT

DOCTOR WHO - COMPANION CHRONICLES: THE FIRST DOCTOR: VOLUME TWO



OUT THIS MONTH! CD £14.99 DOWNLOAD £12.99

Written By:

John Pritchard, David Bartlett, Una McCormack, Guy Adams Directed By: Lisa Bowerman, Helen Goldwyn

CAST

Maureen O'Brien (Vicki) Peter Purves (Steven Taylor) Anneke Wills (Polly) Elliot Chapman (Ben Jackson/ The Plaver) Robert Hands (Lagrange) Helen Goldwyn (The Chaons) Nicholas Briggs (The Daleks)

setting for the First Doctor, it felt like fate. We discussed how best to fit the Doctor and friends into it, and tone-it's very black-but it feels very much in keeping with a 1964 story."

John explains: "For Fields of Terror, I'd had an idea for a story set in the French Revolution which I discussed with Ian and he thought it would be suitable for the First Doctor box

feel for the Doctor's first encounter with the French Revolution."

HE DOCTOR'S greatest foe makes a welcome return to the Companion Chronicles in the second adventure of the set. Ian explains: "With Across the Darkened City I'd had an idea about a Dalek story when we were working on the

with Nick Briggs doing some of his best Dalek work ever, I feel."

David says: "The original brief was to have a two hander between Steven and a Dalek stranded on an inhospitable planet with the Doctor either absent entirely or appearing only briefly at some point. The possibility of salvation would lie at the end of a considerable journey, throughout which Steven and the Dalek would face a variety of hostile threats. It was to be an early Dalek story set at the time when the Daleks were only just beginning space exploration.

"I watched the last episode of The Chase and all of The Time Meddler as I wanted to try and capture Steven early on in his adventures. Then I listened to various tracks from the early Dalek story soundtrack CDs to find a sense of what works and what doesn't work when you're writing dialogue for Daleks.

"The main challenge was to find a way to explore the relationship between Steven and the Dalek but keep them both true to their respective characters. I hope I managed to achieve that. My immediate thought when I heard

DOCTOR WHO

the premise was that this would have to be more 'David Whittaker' than 'Terry Nation' so that there could be a whole lot of psychological game playing along the way. Not entirely Hartnell era I know, but a sort of prelude to what was to come later."

Ian adds: "Bonfires of the Vanities and The Plague of Dreams finish the set. I asked Una McCormack to do something with 'scary Bonfire Nights' and she tells a modern parable on communal fears while delivering the chills. Guy Adams' Plague of Dreams is... amazing, really. I'd told him where I wanted it to end up,



Left to right: John Pritchard, Maureen O'Brien and Robert Hands



but the route he took to get there is like nothing I've heard before. Anneke and Elliot were phoning me up in excitement, demanding to know when we'd get into studio!"

Una recalls: "I didn't receive a brief as such. When Ian asked me to participate, I was a bit stuck for ideas, so he suggested the Lewes Bonfires and the Guys from his story wish list. That's obviously a great idea, so I grabbed it and we were off! I'd written Ben and Polly before, for a **Short Trips** anthology, and they're a great pair to put together. I think Polly is underestimated, and I imagine her having hidden talents, like turning out to be a great middledistance runner when she was at school. The First Doctor is starting to fade at this point, and having these young and kindly people around him is very touching to write.

"I kept the period setting as close to the 60s as possible, so that Ben and Polly weren't too out of their depth, but, because it's the 1950s, there are a few confusions, e.g. over the length of Polly's skirt. I like writing **Doctor Who** set more or less in the time it was created. *This Sporting Life*, my other First Doctor story for Big Finish, is set in 1966. I think it allows us to examine our nostalgia."

Concluding the set is *The Plague* of Dreams by Guy Adams. He explains: "There's an arc element – that I won't spoil – that I needed to include. Other than that I pretty much had free reign.

"I was determined to try and come up with a story that justified narration. Not because I have a real issue with it as an element within the **Companion Chronicles** range – it's often a useful device – but just because I like challenging myself with structure. Having

C I WAS DETERMINED TO TRY AND COME UP WITH A STORY THAT JUSTIFIED NARRATION. **JJ**

created a reason for the narration the rest grew from there."

How did Guy find capturing Ben and Polly's relationship with the First Doctor? He says: "It's such a brief relationship isn't it? But we have enough to feed on. It wasn't a problem really, I often understand the characters of **Doctor Who** more than I understand real, living, breathing humans so I never find that part of it too difficult.

"It's a story about storytelling. It's about the artifice of what we do – both what I do generally as a writer and what Big Finish does within the medium – but hopefully never at the expense of delivering a heartfelt, characterful story. As much as I sometimes like playing with the structure a bit, challenging the boundaries, if doing that cheapens the story then you've broken it. I certainly gave Anneke and Elliot an unusual day in studio and that's always something to aim for!" **VORTEX**

LISTENAGAIN Torchwood: The Conspiracy



James was particularly pleased to be involved, as he has a longterm connection with the series, having worked at BBC Wales on the **Torchwood** website.

He says: "**Torchwood** is just so very Cardiff – ambitious and tough but also outrageous."

How did writer David Llewelyn feel about writing what was the first new episode of **Torchwood** in a few years – was there any pressure?

He laughs: "Funnily enough, I don't think I thought of it in that way at

APTAIN JACK Harkness returns this month in his own series, but, of course, he's been part of the Big Finish family for a few years now. Jack – and Torchwood – first arrived for the start of the audio series in September 2015, and have rarely been away since.

The series has been overseen by producer James Goss, who was delighted when it was first revealed by star John Barrowman that he was returning to play his famous role on audio.

James grins: "I loved the saga of the announcement, John delightedly doing it on his Magic FM show. I was in Spain, listening in as John teased it out across two hours of rather good school disco, and the fan forums went steadily mad."

The first play, *The Conspiracy*, was written by David Llewelyn.

James reveals: "When we first started, the range was very much budgeted as a series of enhanced audiobooks rather than full cast

G I LOVED THE SAGA OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT, JOHN DELIGHTEDLY DOING IT ON HIS MAGIC FM SHOW. **JJ** JAMES GOSS

dramas, but we found a way of doing them as full cast.

"The script of *The Conspiracy* was very much the way for us to do that – it showed that you could tell quite a complicated, dramatic story with a cast of four. It also relaunched **Torchwood** and put Captain Jack front-and-centre.

"We learned a lot from *The Conspiracy* – we quickly retired any element of narration (even though John was so good at it) but we used David's great idea to seed a lot of plot elements that we're still working with.

"It was great to be able to hit the ground running – we went so quickly from recording to release, and, if David's script hadn't been so good, that would have been so much harder." all while I was writing it. I was really pleased to be writing **Torchwood**, obviously, and it was exciting writing it for audio, which I love, but it just didn't cross my mind that there's the weight of four previous series – not to mention years worth of radio plays, tie-in novels, etc – behind me!"

David was also pleased to have an accompished and beloved performer in John Barrowman performing his work, adding that it was: "Very exciting. And it really helped with the writing process too. We use a certain amount of narration in this story, and being able to hear his voice say those lines helped bring it all to life. Mind you... my impersonation of him when I read the script aloud to myself was absolutely terrible and no-one will ever hear me do it!" VORTEX

VORTEXMALL Email: feedback@bigfinish.com and remember

Email: feedback@bigfinish.com and remember to put 'Vortex Mail' as the subject...

WHALE TALE

Just heard *Last Orders at the Blue Whale*. The writer really knows **Dark Shadows** history and fits it all in well with a good story. Matthew Waterhouse really draws one into the story with his voices and reading: I almost forgot this was all him as his voices made me feel the characters such as Grimes and Harry. Well done by all.

CHARLES MENTO

Nick: Hi Charles, yes, Matthew has been doing some incredible work for us on **Dark Shadows**. I haven't had a chance to listen to much of it, but rest assured he told me the other day that I MUST listen. And who am I to disobey Adric?

SOUNDING GREAT

I wanted to say I was very pleased to see a lovely little interview with Jamie Robertson for his sound design work on The Haunting of Malkin Place in May 2017's issue of Vortex. As someone who volunteers for local television stations. I find the little insights into the production side of things fascinating, something which is sometimes lacking in behind-the-scenes features or podcasts (though I loved the March podcast that had an interview with Big Finish's sound designers!). Is there any way to shine more of a spotlight on the production side of Big Finish's work, as I think it's an interesting, important part of the company? ANDY RITZ

Nick: It's always great to hear

from the sound designers and composers, not least because I am one of them! But seriously, yes, we try to feature them as often as we can. The trouble is that when the process of making the 'extras' for the productions is underway, the sound designers are often too busy sound designing to do interviews. But we must do more like this. Benji Clifford and I do often talk about sound design in the Big Finish Podcast, so do give it a listen.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

I'm very excited that you're releasing a version of Hamlet. The inevitable question is are you planning on doing any more Shakespeare productions? Big Finish has worked with so many great actors over the vears that I'm sure vou'd be able to assemble some brilliant casts to appear in the Bard's plays. I'd love to hear a BF version of Measure for Measure or Troilus and Cressida. Maybe you could have Christopher Benjamin perform as Falstaff like he did at the Globe in The Merry Wives of Windsor? Anyway, I hope **Hamlet** is enough of a success that you decide to do more Shakespeare! Elsewhere, with Hex and Flip returning to the main range Doctor Who titles this year, might we hear from Will Arrowsmith and Dr Klein before too long? DAVID STEEL

Nick: Hi David! No plans for Will and Klein to return as a team. And there may be more Shakespeare waiting in the wings. Just imagine! (Exit, pursued by a bear.)

A CYBER SUCCESS

Yes, it was expensive, but how beautiful is the special edition of *Spare Parts* on vinyl? A truly magnificent story, presented in a beautiful slip case, beautiful sound coming from my record player. And even when there was an issue of two of the spines being damaged on the LP covers, they were replaced without fuss in a couple of days. Not the sort of thing I would be able to buy everyday, but as a special treat, absolutely magnificent.

KEITH ANDREWS

Nick: Keith, we're happy you're happy. Even though... 'We have no eeemotions'. Ho, ho...

RELATIVE DIMENSIONS?

So I was listening into the new Ninth Doctor Chronicles, which are very good by the way, and I couldn't help but notice that the first stories all featured dimensional portals of some kind. Is it a mere coincidence or is something more sinister afoot?

■ 'BIGGERONTHEINSIDE' Nick: Well, dear 'Biggerontheinside', that's a very interesting point. I think it was a coincidence. Or was it? Mwahahahaaa!

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