

InterMission "THE INVASION"

The Date – 1968

The Place – Living room of 25 Woodside Close, Tolworth, Surrey, England

The Time – Around 17:40pm

A small 7-year-old boy is sitting transfixed on the sofa as Jamie, Zoe and their new friend Isobel, descend through a manhole into a dark and dingy sewer below. The group clusters together, looking from side to side. The young boy gets up off the sofa and, without taking his eyes off the screen, backs to the door and leaves the room.

As the trio hear a noise coming down the sewer towards them, the boy is now watching wide-eyed through the crack in the door. Suddenly, the terrifying silver shape of a Cyberman lurches out of the darkness, making an horrific electronic howling noise. As the inhuman creature approaches Jamie, Zoe and Isobel, the boy's eyes open wider in shock. With a sigh of relief, the image of the Cyberman fades and is replaced with the familiar names of those who "you have been watching" and the boy, mind etched forever with this image, returns to the room. What would happen next? Would Jamie, Zoe and Isobel escape from the sewer ... and how would they escape? Only seven days to find the answer.

I'm sure you won't be amazed to discover that the small boy was myself, aged 7, and the scene described is one of my cherished memories of watching sixties **Doctor Who** live and as it happened. And I really did watch the show through the crack in the door and not, as some would suggest, from behind the sofa. For the sofa was pushed back against the wall, and ... *things* ... lurked back there in the darkness. To watch from behind the sofa meant the possibility of a silver hand suddenly clamping down on your leg and dragging you back to a grisly fate. Or just maybe the stray threads that hung there were not cotton at all, but fronds of stinging seaweed ...

This 1968 Patrick Troughton story stayed with me throughout the early seventies. The first ever **Doctor Who** reference book, *The Making of Doctor Who*, published in 1972 by Pan Books, proved to me that these stray memories I had of watching the show were not simply figments of my own imagination. They were real. They had actually happened. This was reinforced by the *Radio Times* tenth anniversary special in 1973 and, in that magazine, I found a title for this piece of unforgotten sixties television: *The Invasion*.

Fast forward to 1976, when I discovered the existence of the *Doctor Who Appreciation Society*. I joined up in November of that year, and one of the first things I found was that their Reference Department, then being run by Jeremy Bentham (who nowadays, is best known by many for his definitive work on the early years of show, aptly titled *Doctor Who – The Early Years*). The Reference Department had detailed information available about a selected few **Doctor Who** adventures – amongst them was *The Invasion*.

Imagine as a somewhat Cyber-obsessed fifteen-year-old sent off his postal order for however much these things cost and then settled back to wait.

A scant two days later, the postman delivered a somewhat crumpled, rolled up set of A4 sheets. I carefully slit the sellotape holding it together and there it was ... an incredibly detailed synopsis of all eight episodes of this story. Wow. Oh wow.

STORY INFORMATION

DOCTOR WHO

THE INVASION

SERIAL NUMBER: VV
SERIAL TYPE : 8 EPISODES

Episode One

Spinning back into the Universe of Reality, the TARDIS materialises in Space. Almost immediately the ship becomes the target of a missile fired, by enemies unknown, from the dark side of the Moon. The Doctor hurridley ships the craft and it comes to rest, invisibly, in a field in England in the mid-twentieth Century. The Doctor decides the TARDIS is in need of an overhaul and the three travellers start off on a hike to London to see their old friend Professor Travers to enlist his help. They are given a lift by a man in a lorry who tells them they are inside the huge area of land owned by International Electromagnetics; a corporation which has managed to virtually monopolise the computer and electronics industry, but which surrounds its operations in a cloak of secrecy that even the man's organisation has been unable to pierce. The driver is evidently frightened and his fear is well-founded. Shortly after dropping the Doctor, Jamie and Zoe, he is well-dead by I.E guards.

The crew of the TARDIS reach Travers' address but find that the good professor is now in the United States with his daughter. Until his return his house has been rented to a Professor Watkins and his photographer niece Isobel. A week earlier Watkins left to take up a position at International Electromagnetics working on a secret invention. Leaving Zoe with Isobel the Doctor and Jamie set out to pay a legal visit to the firm.

At I.E's offices the Doctor is amazed to find the building is run almost totally by computers. But there are humans about as Jamie and the Doctor discover when they attempt to pass beyond the reception area and are set upon by Packer, the Chief of Security, and his brutal underlings. The two are taken before the managing director; Tobias Vaughn who is all apologies for the rough handling the pair received at Packer's hands. He appears helpful and friendly and offers to help repair the damaged TARDIS circuits (though he is ignorant of their purpose), but he skilfully manages to divert the Doctor from seeing Watkins. The Doctor instinctively distrusts Vaughn (making a comment upon his irregular blink-rate) despite Jamie's delight at being given a free I.E radio by the man.

Vaughn watches them leave and then presses a button which opens a hidden cabinet in his office. A strange device is concealed within and as the door opens it begins to pulse with light. . .

Episode Two

Back in Central London Zoe becomes concerned about the Doctor and Jamie's long absence and she and Isobel decide to go in search of them.

Outside the I.E. premises the Doctor and Jamie are kidnapped, bundled into a car, and driven to an airfield where they are taken aboard a large transporter plane. This is the secret headquarters of a newly formed group of scientists and soldiers – the United Nations Intelligence

Words cannot express how excited I was to read the details of this story. An adventure in space and time that I only half remembered seeing. A brief snatch of my past relived before my eyes. I was hooked. Not only did the reference Department have *The Invasion*, but they had details of many other stories too and, as often as funds allowed, I would send off for them and marvel at this incredible history that **Doctor Who** had, a history that I had only just glimpsed before through the earlier reference works.

As a side note, this moment of revelation of **Doctor Who**'s history is one which I envy any young fans coming to the programme today. It is something that so many of us take totally for granted, and yet for me it was, I think, the defining moment between my not being a fan, and my becoming committed to the show for life. The message is, don't take this for granted. Don't be superior to younger fans, and allow them their moment of discovery that **Doctor Who** is far more than just a single Doctor, or a single story ...

Having discovered the Reference Department, it was not long before I struck up correspondence with Jeremy Bentham. He was kind enough to tolerate questions and suggestions, and when we finally met (I can't remember the circumstances) he was a nice bloke as well. Before long I was contributing to the range. I seem to recall *The Talons of Weng Chiang* as being one of my earliest Story Information (STINFOs as they were called) publications, but I also did ones for *The Invasion Of Time*, *The Sunmakers*, *Image Of The Fendahl* and *The Robots Of Death*.

As a result of this involvement, I got to know the other people involved in the running of the Society, notably Jan Vincent-Rudski, who was the president. Again, I cannot remember the details, but I became aware that there were audio tapes of some of the early **Doctor Who** adventures in existence. I had been recording the show myself since *Robot*, but I was surprised for some reason that others might have had the same idea as me, but much sooner.

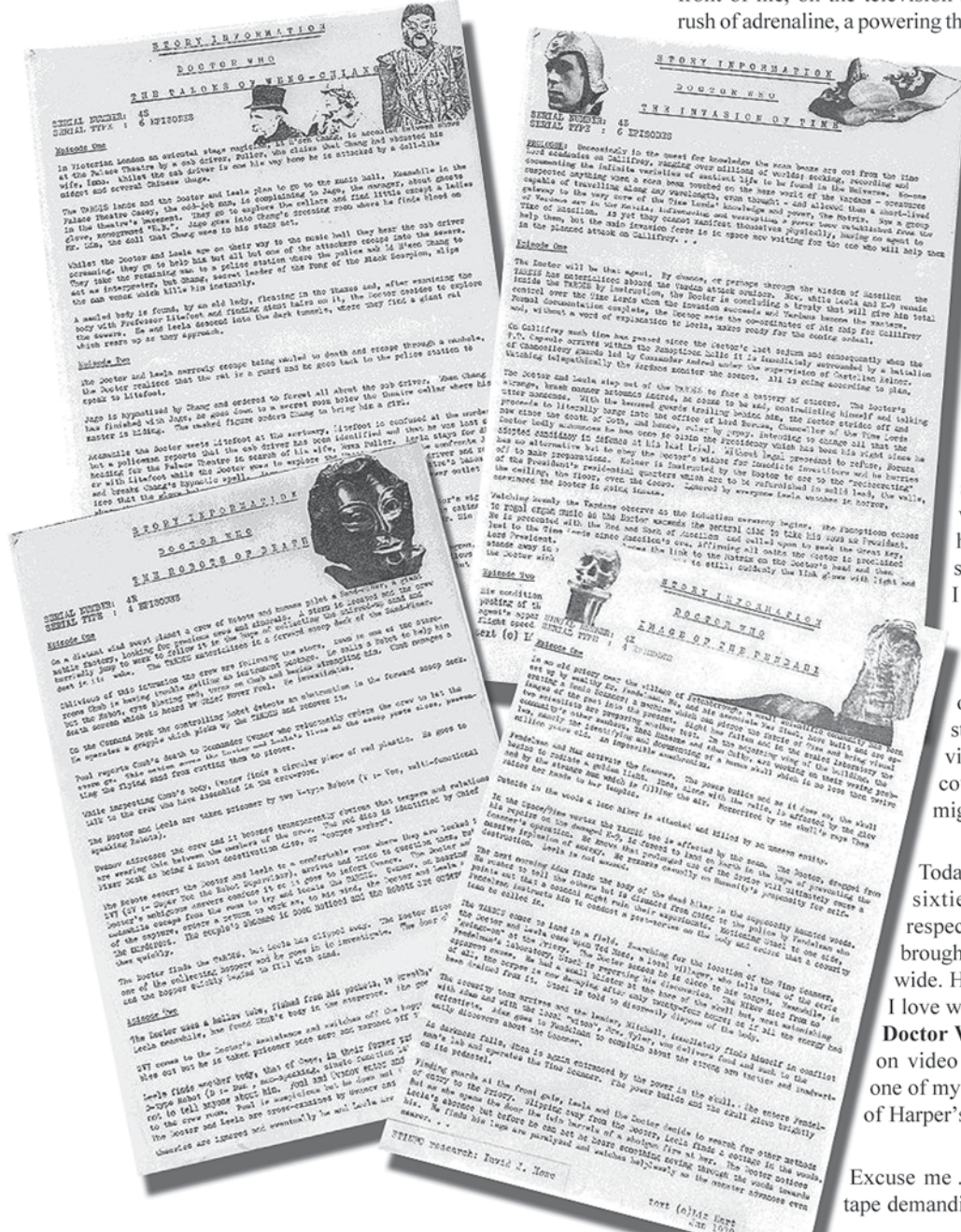
Once I learned that they existed, I plucked up courage and asked Jan if he might consider doing me some copies. Thankfully he was a generous soul and agreed. And can you guess what the first story I requested was? Indeed. *The Invasion*.

Picture the scene. I would set up my dad's cassette decks in the back room of our house – luckily my dad had a pretty decent hi-fi set up, which was why I had been able to record **Doctor Who** directly from a TV tuner rather than via a microphone since the time I started recording it. I would then slip on a pair of headphones and settle back in the armchair, press “play” and close my eyes. With a whoosh the TARDIS reformed in space and the Doctor, Jamie and Zoe were wondering where they were ... it was the dark side of the moon, and someone had fired a missile at them!

What an experience that was. To actually listen to this particular **Doctor Who** story after all those years. But what *really* got to me was the music. That haunting Don Harper score transported me like nothing has before or since. Even today I cannot hear that music without being plunged into a reverie of goosebump-raising pleasure, full of images of the second Doctor, Jamie, Zoe and the Cybermen. I find it hard to believe that just four minutes of music – for that is all there is, it's just repeated a lot – can have such a profound effect on a person.

I loved *The Invasion*. Loved it with a passion. When I eventually managed to get my hands on a video copy of it some years later, my love affair with this single sixties adventure continued unabated. To actually watch it was, at the time, still a great novelty – something else which fans today forget. Not everyone used to simply be able to go to their cupboard and have the choice of numerous **Doctor Who** adventures before them. I can remember being pleased and surprised that Benton was there at the start of episode two. I was also staggered as to how good Kevin Stoney was on-screen – I already knew him from the audio, but being able to see the visuals was simply mind-blowing.

When I got to the scenes in the sewers ... whoa ... severe sixties flashback time. There was my memory, as I remembered it, there, in front of me, on the television screen ... I can't explain but it's like a rush of adrenaline, a powering through of nostalgia and love and pleasure and awe all mixed together.



When I started my own series of detailed synopses for the *DWAS* reference Department, we started with season 7, but when we came to season 6 (there was no rhyme nor reason for the order, just what we felt like doing) I of course wrote the synopsis for *The Invasion* myself. Something that I was particularly, and obscurely, proud of, was that I tried really hard with the pieces for episodes 1 and 4 which did not exist on video. As a result, in certain green-eyed quarters there were claims that I had somehow hoarded those episodes on video as there was no way that I could have got all that detail without having seen the episodes recently. I beg to differ. I did not even remember watching those episodes in the sixties, but with Jeremy's original synopsis to guide my way, and having listened to the tapes on numerous occasions, I could hear the story, while my imagination supplied the visuals. I just wrote them down as best I could, while not trying to do anything that might be disproved in the future.

Today I still love *The Invasion*. It is a classic sixties **Doctor Who** adventure in many respects, and the commercial video release brought it to the attention of many fans worldwide. However, for me it is still the audio that I love with a passion. I really enjoy listening to **Doctor Who** on audio, even stories which exist on video in their entirety, and *The Invasion* is one of my favourites. I only have to hear the bars of Harper's music to be transported again ...

Excuse me ... I have to go now. There's an audio tape demanding to be played.

DAVID J HOWE