London's Tower Bridge looms over the Thames River, carrying cars, trucks and red double-decker buses across the busy metropolis. But below the routine bustle of commerce on the bridge, some decaying, uninhabited warehouses and remnants of 19th-century dockland are the scene for an unusual meeting.

Inside one of the dimly-lit warehouses, an irate British Army Sergeant is questioning an intruder. "Time corridors! Alien beings! I've never heard such nonsense in my life!" Dressed in a woolly white sweater and striped slacks, the intruder is also wearing a loud hat, and pinned to his lapel, a leafy stick of celery. He is the Doctor.

But the soldier's outburst must remain unanswered. The Doctor's intrusion is only the beginning: soon, the soldier will be inexorably drawn into a terrifying experience. For when he sees the relentless advance and hears the hysterical metallic screech of an alien monstrosity, the sergeant will realize that the eccentric Doctor may be his—and Earth's—only hope! Nothing could have prepared this ordinary military man for the historic conflict into which he is about to be so brutally thrown—the shocking return of the Daleks!

Dawn of the Daleks
BBC TV CENTRE, Shepherd's Bush, North London. October 1983.
It's a recording day for Doctor Who, the world's longest-running SF TV show, and in Studio 8, the Doctor's latest confrontation with an extraterrestrial menace is now being filmed. Peter Davison, the Doctor's fifth in

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carnation, is facing his predecessors' most notorious enemies for the first time. Accompanying him is Janet Fielding, as the Doctor's brash Australian companion Tegan, and Mark Strickson, as the alien Turlough.

"Resurrection of the Daleks" is the fourth of seven stories comprising Who's eventful 21st season. This year, Turlough and Tegan will leave the Doctor, and he'll be joined by Peri Brown, the new American companion portrayed by Nicola Bryant (STARLOG #77).

The season's penultimate story features Davison's own departure from the series, and the Doctor's regeneration into his sixth incarnation, actor Colin Baker. So, by year's end, there will be an entirely new cast. "And it's a big monster season," says John Nathan-Turner, now in his fourth year as the show's producer (STARLOG #82), "that's what has most pleased me about it."

Twenty-one years of continuous production and popular acclaim is unusual, even for a BBC program, but Who has a relative immunity to the ratings war which destroys and disfigures American TV series. Funded by more than $100 million in annual compulsory TV license fees, the BBC permits an editorial independence which has allowed Who's independent producers to leisurely change its format over the years, rather than react to network pressure or ratings competition.

The reason for the program's continued success is simple. "I think it's a very brilliant basic premise," says Nathan-Turner. "A man and a couple of sidekicks travel around in time and space within a London police box which is bigger on the inside than the outside." He doubts that BBC program executives would initiate such a series today.

Those 21 years of Who mean 21 years of Daleks, too. Introduced in the second Who story ever broadcast, the Daleks were written by Terry Nation's brainchild and their visual appearance was the work of talented BBC designer Raymond Cusick. Since then, these sinister, evil aliens, devoid of emotion and with a lust for universal conquest, have intimidated and entertained millions in their confrontations with the Doctor.

This new story ends the Daleks' four-year absence (apart from a brief cameo in "The Five Doctors") from the show. Their last appearance, in the Tom Baker story "Destiny of the Daleks" (written by Nation), was disliked by some fans for its unfavorable presentation of the aliens' strengths and weaknesses, and Nathan-Turner decided they needed a rest.

Initial moves by Who's production team to bring back the Daleks were frustrated at an early stage. Creator Nation, co-owner with the BBC of their copyright, had moved to America and had no interest in writing the characters again. With his permission, it would be possible for another writer to script a Dalek story. Later, Nathan-Turner and Nation met for the first time at a Chicago Who convention. Nathan-Turner outlined his plans for the Daleks' return, and Nation, though retaining script approval, authorized the move.

Nathan-Turner assigned the crucial story to series' script editor Eric Saward, who had penned the popular return of the Cybermen in "Earthshock." Saward's career had begun with a Who script, "The Visitation," after he spent five years writing plays for the BBC's world-renowned radio drama department. Shortly thereafter, he was offered the post of Who script editor, which he assumed halfway through Davison's first season.

Saward's script had to re-establish the Dalek's reputation for evil. "The basic feeling was to try and bring back some of the old impact they once had," he says. "We wanted to try and create a story where the Daleks could be what they are remembered for—that is, being savage, nasty and vindictive.

"The other thing I tried to do was to show this aggression, this enormous menace that they have, and yet at the same time, place them in rather a vulnerable situation. I wanted to show their strengths and energies in a positive way. The fact is, although they're vulnerable, they are great survivors." Saward's completed script is an action-packed adventure story, layered with subplots and climaxmed with a succession of twists. "Resurrection" not only includes the Daleks' return, but also their twisted creator Davros, a Dalek presence on Earth, Dalek Troopers and Tegan's departure from the TARDIS. An "average" Who episode has 35 to 40 scenes. Saward's four-episode script, with exactly the same period of time for production, contains an incredible 258 scenes!

**Direction of the Daleks**

To handle such a technically daunting story, Nathan-Turner brought in a director new to Who, Matthew Robinson. "He has a tremendous reputation for boundless energy, and for being very, very fast," the producer explains. "And I must say, he has been absolutely marvelous." Robinson was prepared for the challenge of the unusual script. He has 10 years experience directing TV drama, current affairs programs and even recent attempts at live TV drama, a medium almost untouched in England for 10 years.

Robinson was eager to work on Who, particularly a tale with the infamous Daleks. "Eric has been script editor for three years and he knows what makes a Doctor Who show work," asserts Robinson, "and so, he threw just about every single trick in the book into this particular script."

The director's first day in the production office was a reminder of the complexity ahead in bringing such a fast-paced story to the screen: "Eric Saward rang up and asked my assistant, 'Has he arrived yet?' She said 'No.' And he said, 'Oh, has he gone home after reading the script?'" Robinson recounts with a grin. "He knew these four episodes would be very difficult to do."

Six weeks of pre-production were followed by two days of location filming at Tower Bridge under Robinson's direction. Then, came rehearsals and studio recording. Although BBC TV Centre is Europe's largest TV studio complex, the demands on its recording machinery are such that studio time is extremely limited and each day's quota of scenes must be recorded as scheduled. A different show with different sets (assembled overnight) will be using the studio the next day. The pace is hectic and the atmosphere tense; each day must yield 15 minutes worth of screen time. It demands a high degree of professionalism which Davison and his colleagues provide unflinchingly. They must not only remember their lines, hit their marks and convey a sense of character, but also fit into an extremely strenuous working environment. Who's technical considerations, such as special (mechanical) effects, consume
John Nathan-Turner and his team on other episodes with different stories, helmed by different directors. On schedule for the following week is an unusual overseas lensing trip for Peter Davison and the *Who* crew. The Doctor’s journey to the “Planet of Fire,” featuring the Master (Anthony Ainley, interviewed in STARLOG #80), and the introduction of Peri Brown, will be filmed on location on the mountainous Canary Island of Lanzarote. Then, in “The Caves of Androzani,” Davison’s Doctor will make his final appearance and Colin Baker (briefly, at the final episode’s end), his first.

Requested about his reasons for leaving, Davison is sensitive: “Well, ‘falling audiences’ is not correct,” he says, responding to a common criticism, “because it’s not true. It really made me cross when the British press implied that it was.” The 32-year-old actor points out that despite not being at a technical “all-time high,” the United Kingdom viewing figures have increased since Davison took over from Tom Baker. Another factor which must be considered is the recent drop in audiences for all programs due to the home-video boom. And on a percentage basis, Who’s figures have dropped less than other shows.

“I did anticipate only doing it for three years,” Davison insists. “Three years is a long time—I know it doesn’t seem that way when Tom did it for seven, but to me, it’s really a big chunk out of my life.” The next step is Davison’s career? “I have absolutely no specific plans for anything; it entirely depends what comes up. I’m going to take a holiday first.”

John Nathan-Turner is sorry to see Davison go. “I shall miss Peter very much indeed, because we’ve worked solidly together for almost seven years, beginning with *All Creatures Great and Small*,” he says. “So, it will be quite a parting.” But Nathan-Turner promises that before Davison’s regeneration, there will be an explanation for that stick of celery the Doctor wears!

The season’s final story, “The Twin Dilemma,” penned by Who newcomer Anthony Steven and directed by Peter Moffatt, will spotlight Colin Baker’s full debut as the new Doctor. How will the character be portrayed? “He will be a mixture of a hard-edged alien attitude with a good dose of eccentricity which results from being a slightly Merlinsque character,” says Eric Saward. “The aspect of the Doctor that has worked best seems to be his eccentricity, especially as played by Tom Baker, who was excellent; also Patrick Troughton, who had this wonderful gift of being the clown, but you never lost sight of his alien intellectual aspect, of a man who does come from a different culture and can look at people in a rather dispassionate way.”

“And also there’s an alien aspect emerging in terms of experience—the number of skirmishes and mental fights that he has survived would leave its scars on anybody.”

Old monsters, a new Doctor, a determined production team and the resurrection of the Daleks—the 21st season of *Doctor Who* promises to be one of the best yet.