Nicholas Courtney, He’s the Brigadier, fearless leader of UNIT in the never-ending battle against alien evil.

often asked about practical jokes or bloopers that occurred on the set in his years with Doctor Who. Generally, he must defer to others for stories. “I don’t remember jokes very much, or things that went wrong,” he says. “As [current Who producer] John Nathan-Turner has said, at the time they happen, those situations are very funny, but if you try to re-create them, or tell others about them years later, they’ve lost the humor. ‘Wasn’t this a gas when such-and-such happened?’ If you weren’t there, the humor won’t strike you particularly.

“Sometimes, when people ask me, ‘What’s the funniest thing that ever happened to you on Doctor Who?’ I reply, ‘The BBC fee.’ But that isn’t really true.”

Pressed, however, Courtney does recall one incident—a practical joke on himself that didn’t quite pan out. Perhaps he remembers it because it occurred during production of his personal favorite adventure—“Inferno”—wherein he played a dual role: the Brig and his alternate Earth counterpart, the Brigade Leader.

“It’s my favorite story because it gave me the chance to play two diametrically opposed characters,” he comments. “Villains are great fun to play. It took an hour and a half in makeup having that duel scar put down my cheek.

“I also wore an eye patch. In one scene, during dress rehearsal, the Doctor, Liz Shaw [Caroline John], and Sgt. Benton [John Levene] enter my office while I have my back to the door. I swung around to them and they all had eye patches on. So, I just began my dialogue, and they responded, and I just went on with my lines, and one by one, they all broke up. They were hoist on their own petard. John Levene went first, then Pertwee, then Caroline John. And I asked them, ‘What’s the matter? What’s funny, hmm? Don’t you know the lines?”

Another problem for Courtney during the period was the Brig’s mustache. “Right at the beginning, I could have saved myself grief if I had grown my own mustache. I’ve always thought that my own didn’t look military enough, like the kind of mustache the Brigadier would sport,” he recalls. “So, I didn’t grow my own. That was probably a mistake. I had so many false mustaches over time and some of them were pretty horrendous. And they changed—there were five or six different styles, maybe more. Jon finally said to me, ‘For heaven’s sake, why don’t you grow your own?’

“He was right. I should have. We would be doing a scene in the pouring rain or damp conditions, and the damned thing would start to droop, and soon I would be wearing half a mustache. I had to hold it up.

“Finally, in *The Five Doctors,*” Courtney says proudly, “I used my own mustache.”

One Pertwee era family member didn’t finish the five-year run. Roger Delgado, who

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Nicholas Courtney

The beloved Brigadier, the only actor to co-star with all of the first five Doctors, remembers leading UNIT against the Master and monsters alongside Dr. Who.

**By Patrick Daniel O’Neill**

Jon Pertwee once said of Nicholas Courtney, “He’s afraid of loud noises, he can’t shoot straight, and he can’t drive.”

“*He would* say that, wouldn’t he? Well, I don’t like loud noises, that’s very true,” responds Courtney, who spent five years alongside the Third Doctor as Brigadier Alastair Lethbridge-Stewart in the long-running BBC SF series, Doctor Who. “But I think I can drive, and I can shoot... he said that, did he? Well, you should see him running! After all the lovely things I’ve said about Jon....”

Any animosity displayed between Courtney and Pertwee is a sham. The mustachioed actor, who portrayed the head of UNIT, a crack alien-investigation team, admits that the Pertwee era was a great deal of fun for all involved. “During that whole time, with the UNIT team, there was an enormous family spirit. We had many laughs together. We worked very hard, we played very hard. The great thing about Jon Pertwee was that early in each story’s production, when the new cast would arrive, he would make absolutely certain they all sat down during a coffee break so he could find out about them. He wanted to know what made them tick, what sort of people they were, to share the family feeling with them. That has always been true of Doctor Who, no matter which Doctor was the lead.”

Appearing at conventions, Courtney is
How did Courtney see the relationship between Lethbridge-Stewart and the Time Lord? "The essence of their relationship was the clash between the military and the scientific minds. As far as the differences between the five Doctors I worked with, I reacted in the same way an actor reacts to any other actor replacing someone in a role."

"Over time, the Brig began to accept the Doctor's oddities: 'Oh, here we go, he's changed his face again.' First, the Brig was absolutely outraged that anyone would pull that sort of trick—'It's not on, really not on at all.'"

Courtney points to a scene in "The Daemons" as representative of the Brigadier's attitude toward the bizarre world he was forced to inhabit. "The Brigadier is faced with Bok, a stone gargoyle come to life, and he summons his corporal and says, 'Jenkins—chap with the wings; five rounds rapid.'"

How much of Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart is Nicholas Courtney? "I don't know—it's all unconscious, isn't it?" he replies. "Quite a lot, I suppose. At the same time, I have no ambition to be a soldier—I'm a celluloid soldier, not a serious soldier."

"My father was a professional army man before he was a diplomat, so something must have rubbed off there. It gave me a chance to observe army life and I remembered the way they talked, looked and acted."

MacArthur & Math

Courtney's last appearance as the head of UNIT came in a story he also counts among his least-liked: "Terror of the Zygons," with Tom Baker as the Doctor. "Some of the monster shots were not the best," he comments. "There were many script problems and, above all else, I had to appear in a kilt. No wonder I didn't like it so much."

"During the whole thing, I was very much aware that this was the end. I was very depressed, I thought I was going to be like Douglas MacArthur and simply fade away. They didn't give me any great stormy scene to go out on—saving the world or being killed off or something. It's just as well they didn't—or John Nathan-Turner wouldn't have been able to bring me back."

That return came in 1982's "Mawdryn Undead," Courtney's chance to appear with the fourth of the first five TV Doctors, Peter Davison. Courtney had worked with Davison before, on "All Creatures Great and Small," and on a British situation comedy called "Sink or Swim."

Once again he played a dual role, with a difference—both characters were the Brigadier, but from different time periods. The earlier mustachioed Brig had just retired from the army and became a math teacher at a private school. The latter one, much depressed and clean-shaven still had the job, but remembered little of his UNIT career.

"In doing 'Mawdryn Undead,' I filmed all my scenes as Brigadier 1 on one day, and all the scenes as Brigadier 2 on the next," Courtney recalls. "That meant that we filmed and taped even more out of order than usual. It was a complicated story at the best of times and was made even worse by the necessity of my doubling up. Basically, there was no time to be fiddling with my makeup for the two roles."

Most amusing to Courtney and his friends was the idea of his teaching mathematics.

"I'm very bad at math. When I was in school in Egypt, I got a report from my headmaster, which said, 'I defy anyone to get mathematics into Nicholas' head.' History was my subject. But it didn't matter, because it was quite a fun moment between Peter Davison and myself, as he raised his eyebrow, saying, 'Math, really? You?' And my reply, 'Well, you don't have to be a Time Lord to understand mathematics!'"

Warming to the subject, Courtney continued (continued on page 71)
Gibbs (continued from page 54)

Terry Jones (STARLOG #106), the SFX team helped create a perpetually vomiting man. "In my opinion, that was the greatest comedy sequence ever filmed," Gibbs claims. "I don't think anybody'll ever top it."

"We used about 5000 gallons of sick for the vomiting scene—made from canned foods: catering tins of plums, beans, peas, mixed vegetables, corn, peppers, you know—and after a week, it was like real sick."

The "simulated expectorate" didn't come from the mouth of Terry Jones, Meaning of Life's director, who portrayed Mr. Creosote. "The angle was always slightly three-quarters to the camera," Gibbs explains. "We had a tube at the side of his face. If anything was actually spit out, it was just a cupful Terry held in his mouth." The SFX team also built Creosote's enormous body. "We never even tested that, we just did it," Gibbs observes. "When he walked into the restaurant, we had aeronautical balloons underneath him to make him wobble. Then, when he sat down, we had a fiberglass shape, which was fixed in front of him. Latex air bags, which we made, were laid on top of that. And we just inflated them with vacuum cleaners. The funny thing was, the air bags got bigger and bigger and actually lifted Terry up by his neck. It was quite funny."

Gibbs also worked on Conan the Barbarian. "We didn't do much on that—just lots of blood and guts," he says. "I was working alongside Nick Allder on that one—Nick built the snake. That was the film's only big effect."

Since Labyrinth, these FX jacks of all trades have been in demand again. Richard Conway is working on Little Shop of Horrors for director Frank Oz. "The sequence that I'm doing is pretty well separate from the whole film," Conway notes. "They call it the 'Epilogue.' It has no continuity with the film at all. It's the equivalent—for anybody who has ever seen the stage play—of when all the plants, all the tentacles, come down from the ceiling and into the audience. It's virtually a filmic equivalent of that effect.

"George isn't involved with Little Shop of Horrors at all. He actually turned this film down, originally, unfortunately, because he thought that Labyrinth required his services a bit longer. The floor effects are being handled by Effects Associates [supervised by Martin Gutteridge]."

George Gibbs has not been idle, meanwhile. As well as working in Morocco on director Elaine May's Ishtar, starring Warren Beatty and Dustin Hoffman, he has also lined up what may be the duo's next project.

"Terry Gilliam has asked us to do Baron von Munchhausen, which would be lovely to work on," says George Gibbs. "I really enjoy working with Terry. He really is great—such a nice, normal, down-to-earth person. He doesn't like any bullshit, he just likes people to be honest."

Brickman (continued from page 62)

would play until 1:00 a.m. at Michael's Pub in Manhattan. Still, Brickman, who lives across from Allen in Central Park West with his wife and two children, follows his former partner's career quite closely.

"I have to see everything Woody does," Brickman says. "I liked Hannah and Her Sisters very much; it's nice to see that people like Hannah. People have been praying for Woody's redemption five or six films now. It's nice to see he's warmer and there's a little more closeness to his characters."

Brickman was offered the chance to direct following his successful screenplays with Allen. His first project, Simon, received some glowing reviews but didn't draw much at the box office. Still, Brickman remains proud of the effort and the experience it gave him. "I relate it to a painter who has a canvas and makes a mistake," he says. "The painter adds a little here and a little there, until, finally he has a painting that's all lopsided. The idea on my first film was to stick as close to the budget as I could and get the painting done. I guess you could say I believe in art through limitation. I feel that if you give somebody $35 million, it's hard not to make a decent film."

Today, Simon plays as a flip-flop variation on Altered States. In one of his patented, off-the-wall performances, Alan Arkin plays the title character, a college professor whose isolation tank research is used to brainwash him into thinking he's an alien. Simon becomes protective of his adoptive planet, and proclaims himself an expert on the quality of human life. "It's not an autobiographical movie; I'm from this planet," Brickman jokes.

Brickman followed Simon with another small, albeit more sweet-natured comedy. Lovesick featured bored psychiatrist Dudley Moore falling for one of his patients (Elizabeth McGovern) and seeking aid from the ghost of Sigmund Freud (Alec Guinness).

The inspiration for Lovesick came from spending a few years in psychoanalysis. "I spent the money I got from the Deliverance royalties on psychoanalysis, but I got a script out of it," Brickman laughs. "The process certainly gives you a world view, mine being that life is filled with some happy accidents."

Brickman says he likes being able to write his own scripts, the process of choosing his own cast and the other responsibilities that come from producing his own projects, as he did with The Manhattan Project. As for directing, he cites the job in an analogy. "Being the director is being given enough rope," he suggests. "It's like being a helmsman on one of those supertankers that takes 10 miles to stop and five miles to change direction. You just hope you're pointed in the right direction when you leave."

And what will be Marshall Brickman's next "happy accident?"

"I can't give too much away," he says. "I just want to go for the jokes. I have an idea for a movie that goes wildly over-budget."