

# DR WHO IS AXED IN A BBC PLOT

By CHARLES CATCHPOLE

**DOCTOR Who was axed by the BBC last night . . . and furious fans claimed it was a plot to back up demands for a higher licence fee.**

TV bosses say they cannot afford to make any new shows about the famous time-traveller for 18 months. But even the BBC's own men see the axing of the show — a hit for 22 years — as a cynical bid to whip up support for an increase in the fee.

## DECISION

One official said: "This is absolute madness. Doctor Who is getting around nine million viewers. "There's a strong feeling that the high-ups are using it as part of their propaganda campaign." Actor Colin Baker, who plays the Doctor, said: "I was staggered. We were

Continued on Page Three.



Staggered . . . Dr Who stars Colin and Nicola

## IT'S D-DAY FOR NUM LEADERS

By TONY MAGUIRE and TOM CONDON

**TODAY is make or break day for the leaders of Britain's striking miners.**

After more than half their members returned to work yesterday they face a bleak choice: Either end the 11-month

pit war now—or watch the NUM destroy itself.

The miners' executive meets today in Sheffield and even militant leaders will be pressing for the strike to be called off.

Northumberland, with only 1,500 men out of 6,000 still on strike, became the latest area to call for a

organised return to work next Monday.

They joined the previously rock solid South Wales men who also want a special delegate conference to organise a united return.

But with the help of the biggest coalfield—the Scargill

could still see off the challenge and stick it out.

This would leave the dispute to stutter to a halt on an area by area basis. And tear the union apart.

Last night the Government were quietly celebrating the miners' surge

Continued on Page Two



Scargill . . . defiant

The Defence Ministry denied last night that the Prince was missing for two hours — or that the Queen had been told he had disappeared.

Andrew — "H" to his Naval colleagues — guided technicians from his ship to the stricken helicopter. As soon as it was repaired he flew it back to the frigate



Patrolling the sky . . . Prince Andrew in his helicopter gear

## Prince Andrew in copter drama

**WHIRLYBIRD Prince Andrew had to ditch his Navy helicopter on a remote part of the Falkland Islands, it was revealed last night.**

The Royal pilot made a light-

ning decision when a vital oil pump faltered while he was on patrol near the island's coastline

He opted for a forced landing in a field in the East Falklands rather than risk trying to fly out to sea and land on his frigate HMS Brazen, which is patrolling the area.

Andrew, 25, radioed an SOS to the ship — which was tracking his flight on radar — then landed safely with his co-pilot.

## Hope

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Continued on Page Two

# Dr WHO IS AXED

*Continued from Page One*

all geared up to start work on the next series."

And sexy Nicola Bryant—his assistant Peri—was said to be "very surprised and clearly upset."

Colin said: "I am contracted to the series, but the decision will mean the BBC probably having to pay off a lot of other people. It doesn't seem good financial sense."

Patrick Troughton, 64, who was Dr Who in the Sixties, said: "I think it is just power politics at work. I'm sure the viewers will make their feelings known."

BBC 1 supremo Michael Grade claimed: "We intend to make a lot of new drama, and we cannot afford to do that and Doctor Who."

But Beeb insiders say each episode of the sci-fi

serial costs only £180,000—against an average £220,000 for drama.

They claim dumping the Doctor will **LOSE** the corporation money from sales to 54 other countries. It has a world-wide audience of 110million viewers.

With just five new episodes left to be shown, fans were launching a massive campaign to save the Doctor last night.

## Claim

Jeremy Bentham, co-founder of the Dr Who Appreciation Society, said: "The public won't let it die."

In America, the show's 40,000-strong fan club pledged themselves to raise 1½million dollars to keep the programme on the air.

*The Sun Says—Page 6*