Captured in time

Let the Tardis take you on a journey into the past to witness some magic moments in the making of a TV phenomenon, including previously unpublished photos from RT's archives ...
The mean machines
The date: 1966
The story: The Tenth Planet
RT readers' poll-winning DW adversaries the Cybermen (see page 3 - we didn't allow you the Daleks!) made their debut by attacking a South Pole tracking station. Story director Derek Martinus, seen left with production assistant Edwina Verney hauling a Cyberman to his feet, recalls:
"The costumes were very hot to wear, and it was difficult for the actors to see. They were also very bulky."

Even before that, casting had caused a few problems. Martinus adds: "We felt the Cybermen should look impressive and as menacing as possible. I got the agents to trawl through their books to see who was over 6ft 4in. We ended up with the reception full of very tall men."

Weeks later, the tall terrors were back (main picture), their cloth faces replaced with metal ones. Two years before Neil Armstrong set foot on the lunar surface, the Cybermen did the same in the 1967 story The Moonbase! Their place in the Who hall of horrors was assured.

It shouldn't happen to a Yeti
The date: 1967 The story: The Abominable Snowmen
In this fondly remembered story, Jamie (Frazer Hines) and Victoria (Deborah Watling) accompany the Doctor (Patrick Troughton) to Tibet, where they meet an explorer who's trying to track down the legendary Yeti. The furry beast, and plenty more like him, turn out to be the robotic servants of an alien intelligence.

Frazer Hines, seen (top) showing how to defeat the monster in question - by sitting on it - recalls: "We filmed up in Snowdonia Park in Wales and it was very windy and rainy. There was a scene where I was being chased up the hill by a Yeti... but of course, they couldn't run."

The beasties were built on bamboo frames, padded with foam rubber and covered with fur, which needed brushing between scenes (above). Their hands and feet were made of moulded rubber, which didn't give them much of a grip on the wet hillside.

Once they had fallen on their backs the operators just had to wait till help arrived.

Unfortunately the Yeti didn't turn out quite as frightening as planned. Children who watched the filming loved them and kept stroking them. Deborah Watling says, "They were absolutely huge. They used to come up and cuddle me because it was so cold. One of them took me out for a meal." On that bracing shoot, the actors in the Yeti costumes obviously had the right idea, but they weren't the only ones.

Watling adds, "Patrick Troughton had a huge fur coat on and looked like a Yeti himself!"
Once more unto the Brig

If there's been one constant throughout the whole history of Doctor Who, it must be Nicholas Courtney. He's worked with seven TV Doctors, from Hartnell to McCoy. For most of that time it was as Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart, though first he played space agent Bret Vyon (top left), who was shot dead in a 1963 story. But he landed his signature role in 1968 by default. The part of Colonel Lethbridge-Stewart, as it was then, was offered to David Langton, who had to drop out at the last minute. "Had that not happened my past 30 years might have been very different," reflects Courtney. On set, he remembers, "we worked hard and played hard. There was no time for prima donna!" he says. Langton, of course, went on to find fame in Upstairs Downstairs (right) in 1971.

Big monsters meet little monsters

At Christmas 1963, around the time the Daleks were making their first TV appearance, two of them glided down to Shepherd's Bush market in London to meet the public. Do these children really look terrified? Well, do they?

I obeyed!

Picture the recent 118 phone-number ads. The chap who played "Mr '92" is a vital Who man. He's John Scott Martin (left), who worked with all seven Doctors, in around 110 episodes. He's played everything from Daleks (including one in 1964's Power of the Daleks, far left) and Mutants to Gel Guards and Zarbi - and so was usually invisible to viewers, hidden as he was in suits or machines.

So was it a squeeze getting into a Dalek? "They were a bit small and I was the tallest fella you could have in there," he says (he's 6ft 9in). As for why they were such a hit, he adds: "It was the first monster where you couldn't see that it was a bloke inside a costume." Scott Martin was able to show his face in the show occasionally, however - once, memorably, in 1973 as a Welsh miner who metamorphosed after being infected by green slime. "They called me Jones the maggot," he laughs.

What will happen next . . .

The date: 1968 The story: The Mind Robber

The Doctor, plus Jamie and Zoe (Frazer Hines and Wendy Padbury, above) find themselves first in an endless, pristine-white void, and later in a land of fiction inhabited by Rapunzel, Gulliver, toy soldiers and the Medusa. The fantastical (some might say bonkers) plot proved a handy device for a notable loss of continuity during recording.

"I actually got chicken pox," says Hines. "Hamish Wilson had to play me [Jamie] for two episodes. Luckily it was a surrealistic story." Indeed, in a greater than usual sense of "anything can happen", Jamie is frozen into a cardboard cutout, the face of which disappears. The scatty Doctor is set a puzzle to replace the face and sticks on the wrong eyes, nose and mouth. Enter the "understudy" to play a different-looking Jamie until Hines's recovery! Rapid rewriting has rarely been so ingenious. "It was the best story that we could have worked on," agrees Padbury, who played Zoe Heriot for eight stories and still receives fan mail from Whoians. "That story was my favourite. It was very different from any other. It was so innovative, and I just loved that;"
Here's a planet we made earlier

The year: 1965
The story: The Web Planet
Try to imagine a time before hi-tech special effects, before such exotic things as CGI and animatronics. If a science-fiction production called for a bizarre alien world and weird creatures to inhabit it, they couldn't be conjured up by computer. They had to be built from scratch. Such was the challenge presented by this early story in which the Doctor and Ian (William Hartnell and William Russell, above), intervene in a power struggle between assorted giant insects.

"It was a marvellous idea, but it did rather drain the budget," says Russell. "It came after a story called The Romans and it was a very ambitious project. After the success of the Daleks, the public seemed to want science fiction and not perhaps the historical ones that we enjoyed."

The forbidding planet had pockets of life in the form of huge ants (Zarbi), butterflies (Menoptera) and even woodlice. "It was a very desolate place - Vortis it was called and there were 'pools of acid'. I can remember losing my tie in a pool of acid. And we had terrible problems with the butterflies."

Actor Martin Jarvis can vouch for that. Making one of his first TV appearances, he played one such alien called Hiloo. "It was hilarious," he says, "me with big wings, a fluffy, black-and-white-striped body and antennae! The costume woman said, 'Be careful when you use the lift that your wings don't get shut in the doors.' I was told it was a great leading part, that of the prince trying to save a planet from the Zarbi. I'm thinking I'd be dashing, like Hamlet, and she shows me this picture of a butterfly with black goggles!"

Who was the best?

The year: 1983
The story: The Five Doctors
There have been other multiple-Doctor epics, but this 20th-anniversary special had - count 'em - five Doctors! Well, sort of. Because William Hartnell died in 1975, the First Doctor was played by Richard Hurndall, and Fourth Doctor Tom Baker declined to take part. Previously unused footage of Baker was worked into the story, however, and his part for the appetite-whetting photo session (left) was played by a waxwork.

Cue endless good-natured japey from the other Time Lords, including Doctor-in-residence Peter Davison. The story, written by Who veteran Terrance Dicks, also brought back many companions. Among them was the redoubtable Brigadier (Nicholas Courtney), who says, "I did most of my work with Patrick Troughton. We were filming on the cold Welsh hills and he would produce a hip flask at just the right moment."

So come on, Nicholas, you've worked with all the series' Doctors, who was your favourite? "Well, my father by profession was a diplomat, and I always have the perfect diplomatic answer," he chuckles. "The one I was working with at the time."
Tricks of the trade
The date: 1996  The story: The TV Movie
Doctor Who was about to return to BBC1
after a seven-year break. At the photo call,
Sylvester McCoy symbolically bequeathed
the Tardis key to the incoming Paul McGann.
In the movie, McCoy would briefly reprise
his role before regenerating into McGann.
What does McCoy recall of the crucial
handover? Was he sad? "Well, it was quite
interesting, because Paul McGann is not
taller than I am. They stuck him on a box,
so that's why he looks taller in the picture.
That's what was going through my head. And
then when they published the picture they put
it at an angle to make him look even taller!
"It was strange, because at the time - ever
the optimist - I was very hopeful that the
movie would carry on the Doctor Who tale."

A lofty ambition
The date: 1978  The story: The Stones of Blood
Behind this unusual overhead photograph of Tom Baker at the Tardis controls in the series' 100th story lies an appealing success story. Long-time fan Kevin Davies, who
took the picture, explains: "I'll never forget it. I was an arts student in the summer of 78.
I barged my way into various BBC things, but this was my first visit to a Doctor Who.
After three days on the set they got used to me buzzing around. To take it, I snuck up
the stairway to the lighting gantry. Health and safety didn't enter into it!"
The experience proved a useful foundation. Davies went on to direct the 1993
documentary 30 Years in the Tardis and is a consultant on next month's Story of Doctor
Who, also for BBC1. "My ambition is to direct the programme," he says. Maybe his
namesake Russell T Davies is reading this...

The Guv'nor
The date: 1968
The story: The Mind Robber
Doctor Two, Patrick Troughton, awaits his cue for a scene in the Tardis.
Troughton is the third most popular
Doctor, as voted by RT readers, and
actors who worked with him on the
show loved and respected him, too.
"He was great fun and very impish,"
says Nicholas (the Brig) Courtney.
"He was a great giggler," agrees
Frazer (Jamie) Hines.
"For me, he was the Guv'nor," adds
Colin (Sixth Doctor) Baker. "He was
the one who made regeneration not
only acceptable but exciting. He was
lovely to work with - fun, encouraging,
professional and beguiling."