Doctor Who Celebration

Report by Richard Hollis

Every summer for over ten years the BBC has held an exhibition of Doctor Who props and costumes at Longleat in Wiltshire, the stately home of the Marquess of Bath. It seemed therefore that here was an ideal place with its spacious gardens and huge parking facilities for a special convention to be housed, celebrating twenty years of the world's most famous space traveller. Months of planning led to the event which culminated in two full days, the 3rd and 4th of April, 1983 and gate attendances totalled 70,000 people.

On arriving by car on the Sunday morning, the queues into Longleat were already extending back into the main roads around the Estate. However the efficiency of the gate attendants meant a reasonably speedy entry into the park and as you drove down the hill towards the house, you caught your first glimpse of the convention nestled behind a row of hedges and flanked by an already enormous queue of people. It immediately became obvious that the whole event looked a little squashed, even if the Cybermen, Daleks and dummy figure of Peter Davison at the entrance were well over life-size.

After parking in what seemed like aisle number 364 and row 48, it wasn't difficult to join the throng of people already heading into the Gardens. The programme book available in the ticket tent for 50p, gave a detailed map on the back cover showing the various attractions imperative to the Doctor Who fan. BBC Costume tents, Studio Sets and Merchandising areas were squeezed together, dwarfed on one side by the house and on the other by the half-mile lake.

Unfortunately the BBC had overlooked one very important point - the number of people who turned up. The tickets had originally been advertised through the post anything up to a couple of months beforehand but a lot of people had preferred to leave it to the weekend in case of bad weather and, as it was bright sunshine and blue sky, they arrived in droves.

Suddenly it was discovered that unlike the Doctor's TARDIS, which is much larger on the inside than on the outside, the crowds had swelled beyond a comfortable capacity. Queues were growing and most attractions, even when you finally reached them, were so packed it was impossible to have a good look round. Further ticket sales were suspended, which began to upset a lot of people and there were some angry scenes.

However, those lucky enough to be in the Gardens were oblivious to the outside world as they mingled with celebrities and bought overpriced goods. In fact the only way a visitor would know that his fellow man was experiencing problems in seek-

ing admission, was when the voice of K-9, magnificently handled by actor John Leeson, rang out over the heads of the multitude requesting that the unfortunate fans outside visit the house instead or go boating or take a train ride or do anything, rather than try getting into the Doctor Who Celebration. The cinema was screening the Dalek Invasion Earth story from the William Hartnell era.

Already a certain number were queuing outside the Orangery for the first autograph session. Elizabeth Sladen who played Sarah-Jane Smith during the Jon Pertwee era, Carole Ann Ford, the first ever companion for Doctor Who and John Nathan-Turner, the producer, were the first to wield pens for the happy masses.

The Merchandise tent was also the home of the auction where a massive number of Doctor Who props sat waiting to fall under the auctioneer's hammer. There was everything imaginable from Elrod's...
Saden and John Lennon, the voice of K-9. During these scenes, John, Medium and co-star, Audie Murphy, is set alight on the beach over the water, while the others are on the shore. The film was shot on location in the United States and Canada.

The film's plot revolves around a group of people who are attempting to stop a powerful alien entity known as the "Dark Lord" from taking over the world. The group consists of a group of scientists, a group of soldiers, and a group of ordinary citizens who band together to fight against the alien threat. The film is filled with action, adventure, and suspense as the group faces countless challenges and battles to save the world.

The film's tagline, "The Dark Lord rises from the ashes," sets the tone for the entire film. This line is repeated throughout the film, serving as a reminder that the Dark Lord is always lurking in the shadows, waiting for the right moment to strike.

At the heart of the film is a love story between two of the main characters, John and Medium. As they work together to defeat the Dark Lord, they grow closer and develop a deep affection for each other. However, their relationship is tested when they must make a difficult choice to save the world.

The film's climax is a epic battle between the Dark Lord and the group of heroes. In the final battle, Medium sacrifices himself to stop the Dark Lord, leading to a bittersweet ending for John. The film ends with a shot of Medium's remains laid to rest, along with a voiceover of Medium's final words: "I love you, John."