

IN, SEE PAGE 28



Dr Who girl Nicola Bryant:
New series scrapped

Hard-up BBC axe Dr Who

By JAMES MURRAY

THE hard-up BBC's axe is to fall on Doctor Who, it was revealed last night.

The cult series, which has 100 million fans throughout the world, is being dropped for "at least 18 months". The bombshell decision, by new BBC-1 chief Michael Grade, is to save cash to make other drama programmes, said a spokesman.

But it looks as if the Beeb plans to use the expected torrent of protest as a weapon in its battle to put up the licence fee by £19.

My own guess is that Dr. Who will be reinstated just as soon as the new fee has been settled at the end of March.

The axing of Dr. Who comes a month before filming is due to start on the next series, starring Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant.

"We want to make a lot of new drama programmes and

Page 3 Column 6



Beeb axe Dr. Who

From Page One

we cannot do that and produce Dr. Who as well," said the spokesman. "So the Doctor is being rested."

It will be the first time in the serial's 22 years on TV that it has been missing from the screens for so long.

Colin Baker, who took over as the sixth Doctor last year, said the series was one of the "most profitable" for the BBC.

"It is shown all over the world," he said. "There is a mass following in more than 54 countries. I have just come back from a convention in America where up to 2,000 people turned up every day."

Members of the 3,000-strong Dr Who Appreciation Society



Nicola Stock



Layla Malloch

pledged last night to fight to save their hero.

"The loss of Dr. Who will leave a hole in the heart of the viewing public which will be impossible to fill," said co-founder Jeremy Brentnham.

And the 40,000-strong American Dr. Who Fan club challenged the BBC to allow it to pay for the new series, which costs about £100,000 an episode.

"There's no way we want to let the Doctor be dropped," said its president, Ron Katz. "We'll raise the money somehow."

York university student Nicola Stock, 21, from Bristol said she was "horrified" at the Beeb's decision. "Millions of kids and adults will be bitterly disappointed at the news," she said.

ET . . CENTI

Layla Malloch, 10, of
George Leigh Street, Man-



**Pc Kevin
Thornton**



**Stephen
Young**

chester, said : "It's one of my favourite programmes. I'd hate to see it dropped.

P.c. Kevin Thornton, 29, paused on his beat in York to say: "Saturday afternoons will never be the same. Like millions of other people I grew up with Dr. Who and it will be sad to see his tardis disappear from the telly."

Glasgow brothers Stephen Young, 10, and Darren, were shattered to learn that the series is to be axed. "You've got to be joking," said Stephen of West End Park Street. "It's our favourite TV show."

Six actors have played the role of the ageless Doctor. The original was William Hartnell and his successors were Patrick Troughton, Jon Pertwee, Tom Baker, Peter Davison and now Colin Baker.