STARLOG INTERVIEW

Jon Pertwee
The Gallant Doctor

Ten years after he last played
the role, Britain's Third Time
Lord returns to help celebrate
the 20th anniversary of

By PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL

They asked me, 'How do you feel like playing this?'.'' Pertwee explains, ''and I
said, 'How do you want me to play it?'
''Well, as Jon Pertwee."

The great shock of silver hair glints in
the stage lights as he makes his en-
trance, dressed just as you expect him
to be: black velvet smoking jacket, frilly shirt,
with a red-lined Inverness cloak thrown over
it all. He grins and announces, ''I am the
Doctor!''

For five years, from 1970 to 1974, Jon
Pertwee, circus star, vaudevilian, cabaret
entertainer, actor, played the title role in
television's longest running science-fiction
series: Doctor Who. His tenure was perhaps
the show's most unusual era, beginning with
the tale of how he nabbed the part.

As Pertwee tells it, ''One day, between
engagements, I called my agent and let him
know that I would be interested in playing the
Doctor, if—and when—the role ever became
open. Now, mind, this is when Patrick
Troughton was well-settled in the part, and he
hadn't said anything about wanting to quit.
At any rate, my agent was rather dumbstruck
and asked if I were sure. I said, 'Of course, I
am. Be a good fellow, and look into it, will
you?''

''So, my agent rang up the program's pro-
ducer, and said, 'I represent Jon Pertwee,
and I'm calling to let you know that Jon
would be interested in doing Doctor Who
whenever the time comes for a replacement.'
There was dead silence at the other end of the
phone. And my agent said, 'Yes, I know, that
was my reaction, too.'

''But the producer said, 'No, no, that's not
it. Listen, I have my 'short list' in front of me
right now. Would you like to know who's sec-
ond on that list?' And damned if it wasn't
me.''

So, when Troughton opted to depart the
series, Pertwee was chosen as his replace-
ment. Now came a new decision: exactly what
kind of 'man' was this third Doctor to be?
The answer: just like Jon Pertwee!

PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL is a former
Associate Editor of STARLOG and a Dr.
Who aficionado. He chatted with Tom Baker
in STARLOG #77.

24 STARLOG/February 1984
Sellers, hiding under a ‘green umbrella’ all my life. So, playing me was going to be difficult. But after a while, I found I rather enjoyed being me.”

Who's Companions

Jon Pertwee has quite a varied background. Born into a theatrical family, his father, Roland, was a well-known playwright and screenwriter, both in Great Britain and Hollywood, turning out scripts for actors such as Leslie Howard and Ronald Colman. The elder Pertwee was also a noted short story writer, whose tales appeared in the original Saturday Evening Post and Collier's. Jon Pertwee's brother, Michael, is also a celebrated playwright (The Mouse that Roared), and his cousin, Bill, is a popular actor and comedian in Britain.

Pertwee was thrown out of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (for lack of seriousness, he says), and then went into touring companies, “putting up the stage, doing a show and then moving on the next day.” Those days were followed by several years of repertory work, a stint in the Navy during World War II, and then a segue into radio and television. His credentials also include some time in the circus (an experience which would serve Pertwee in good stead during his Doctor Who gig), vaudeville and cabaret. For the past five years, Pertwee has been the star of Worzel Gummidge, a television fantasy about a scarecrow who comes to life, based on the story by Barbara Euphan Todd.

That incredibly varied career allowed him to avoid the bane of every actor's existence: typecasting after a long run in a prominent role. “The people who get typecast are those the public don't know,” Pertwee explains. “I've been in the business for so long I didn't have to worry about it. For example, we had a program in England called Z Cars, all about police in Liverpool. It was tremendously popular, on twice a week, and the people in it were big stars, getting enormous reactions everywhere they went. And after a bit, they said, 'This is ridiculous, I can't go on doing Z Cars. I'll go independent, because I'm really big now.' They would leave the show and then just disappear off the face of the Earth. Nobody would touch them, because producers didn't know them before. The only place anyone knew them from was Z Cars. So, if these actors appeared anywhere else, people would say, 'Oh, that's the fellow from Z Cars.'”

Upon leaving Doctor Who, Pertwee signed on a quiz show, Whodunnit, as emcee. "After Who," he recalls, "I really couldn't go into another series playing myself in an acting role. On Whodunnit, I didn't have to be an actor, just a front man. Then came Worzel Gummidge, with the carrot nose and the makeup to look like a scarecrow, so there's no actual recognition factor."

During his tenure as the Doctor, Pertwee teamed up with three companions: Caroline John as Liz Shaw, Katy Manning as Jo Grant, and Elisabeth Sladen as Sarah Jane Smith (STARLOG #77). He has fond
The "Doctor Who" Episode Guide: The Adventures of the Third Doctor

In an effort to keep STARLOG readers informed about their favorite Time Lord as he marks his 21st year, here's a guide to the adventures of the Third Doctor, Jon Pertwee, currently being syndicated in the United States by Lionheart Television International.

The 14 adventures, totalling 73 half-hour episodes, begin after a major turning point in the Doctor's life. After many years of freedom from the strictures of life on Gallifrey, his home world, the Doctor's superiors, the High Council of the Time Lords, finally catch up with him. For his "crimes" (stealing a TARDIS and interference with alien cultures), they are prepared to execute him. But his moving defense, calling for the Time Lords to assist those races threatened by disaster and despotism, as the Doctor has done, prompts a more lenient sentence. He is exiled to Earth in the 20th century, after first undergoing a forced regeneration (transforming him from Patrick Troughton to Jon Pertwee). His knowledge of time-space travel is removed from his mind, and his TARDIS is rendered inoperable, except by remote control from Gallifrey. In this way, the Doctor is forced to act as the High Council's agent.

Returning to Earth, he signs on as a scientific advisor with UNIT (United Nations Intelligence Taskforce), a semi-military organization devoted to protecting Earth from alien invasion. (By the way, the UNIT adventures do not take place during the era in which they were first broadcast. In several stories, it is said to be the early 1980s.)

**INFERNO** (7 parts)
Airdates: May 9—June 20, 1970
Writer: David Houghton
Director: Douglas Camfield
Guest Cast: Clive Hooper, Christopher Benjamin, Ian Fairburn, Walter Randell, Sheila Dunn, Derek Newark.
A top secret deep-drilling project, which threatens to destroy the Earth by explosion, is also turning humans into beings called Primords. Accidently transported to a parallel Earth, the Doctor witnesses its destruction, but escapes to prevent our own Earth's doom, by battling the power-crazed head of the project, Professor Stahlman (Pooley).

**THE CLAWS OF AXOS** (4 parts)
Airdates: March 13—April 3, 1971
Writers: Bob Baker, Dave Martin
The sort of companion the Doctor needs should fit the "Mary Pickford" syndrome—the 'Help, help, I'm strapped to the railway line' thing. And, therefore, I needed little, very feminine people—as Lis and Katy are—because they're easier to pick up and take care of. But if it's a protective Doctor like me, the cloak was symbolic of the mother hen, taking the chucks under the wing for protection. I used the cloak that way with Katy and Lis.

Compared to the two, Pertwee adds, "Lis is by far the better actress. She's a knockout. If she's able to give the impression she did, playing such an awful character—someone who rushes around, hiding, crying 'Help, help,' and always getting into trouble—and come out as perhaps the most popular companion, that's a remarkable accomplishment. It's a very difficult role to play and come out of it well.

"But Katy had a sort of magic, and there would be days when she would be positively brilliant! She had this incredible face, with memories—and definite opinions—about each actress. "I would never be so bold as to criticize any of them, because actors don't criticize each other," Pertwee begins. "It would be disastrous if we did. Nobody would work with anybody else.

"Technically, they were all utterly, utterly different. Caroline John is, I'm sure, a first class National Theater actress, though I didn't think she was right in Doctor Who. She wasn't quite the right physical stature.
into his timeline and aid him. The three discover the danger is being caused by yet another Time Lord, Omega (Thorne), who has been trapped in an anti-matter universe for thousands of years. (At the conclusion, the Time Lords lift the exile sentence on the Doctor, freeing him to once more roam time and space).

CARNIVAL OF MONSTERS (4 parts)
Airdates: January 27 – February 17, 1973
Writer: Robert Holmes
Director: Barry Letts
Guest Cast: Stuart Fell, Michael Wisher, Terence Lodge, Cheryl Hall, Leslie Dwyer, Tenniel Evans, Andrew Staines, Ian Marter, Jenny McCracken, Peter Hallday.

Promising Jo a trip to Metebelis 3, the famous blue planet, the Doctor instead seems to land the TARDIS on a cargo ship in the Indian Ocean. But that is not their true location. The Doctor soon discovers they are trapped in a cosmic peepshow, containing creatures and environments from around the galaxy — including, unfortunately, the savage Drashigs. The Doctor and Jo must escape the Carnival without releasing the Drashigs.

THE GREEN DEATH (6 parts)
Airdates: May 19 – June 23, 1973
Writer: Robert Sloman
Director: Michael Briant

Two sides are drawn up when Global Chemicals decides to build a refinery in the Welsh village of Llanfairfach. The villagers are delighted, but Professor Clifford Jones (Bevan) and fellow commune members are appalled. A strange death brings UNIT into the picture and the Doctor discovers a swarm of giant green maggots and green slime in the plant’s waste — both fatal to the touch. The plant director (Willis) refuses to discuss the matter, because he is controlled by Global’s master computer, BOSS (Dehart). At the story’s conclusion, Jo Grant marries Professor Jones and leaves UNIT. The Doctor gives her a blue crystal from Metebelis 3.

THE TIME WARRIOR (4 parts)
Writer: Robert Holmes
Director: Alan Bromly
Guest Cast: Kevin Lindsay, David Daker, John J. Carney, Sheila Fay, Donald Pelmear, June Brown, Alan Rowe, Gordon Pitt, Jeremy Bulloch.

Linx (Lindsay), a Sontaran warrior, crashes into the English in the Middle Ages. To repair his ship and return to the Sontarans’ endless war with the Rutans, Linx makes a deal with the robber chief Ivrongon (Daker), providing him with firearms, centuries before their invention. Meanwhile, the Sontaran is kidnapping scientists from the 20th Century to help in repairing his ship. The Doctor investigates for UNIT and time travels to the Middle Ages with a stowaway, journalist Sarah Jane Smith.

DEATH TO THE DALEKS (4 parts)
Airdates: February 23 – March 16, 1974
Writer: Terry Nation
Director: Michael Briant
Guest Cast: Arnold Yarrow, Roy Haymann, Duncan Lamont, John Abineri, Julian Fox, Joy Harrison, Neil Seiler, Mostyn Evans, Steven Ismay.

When a deadly plague spreads throughout the galaxy, a strange collection of creatures gathers on Exilon, source of the only known cure. The Exiliots have rejected all technology, seeing it as a curse. They drive out the automated city. The Doctor and Sarah arrive, the TARDIS drained of power by the City, and are caught up in a struggle for the antidote among Exiliots, humans, and Daleks.

THE MONSTER OF PELADON (6 parts)
Airdates: March 23 – April 7, 1974
Writer: Brian Hayles
Director: Lennie Mayne
Guest Cast: Ralph Watson, Donald Gee, Gerald Taylor, Tina Thomas, Frank Gattiff, Michael Crane, Stuart Fell, Ysanne Churchman, Terry Walsh, Rex Robinson, Graeme Eton, Nick Hobbs, Roy Evans, Sonny Cal alongside, Alan B. Bennion.

The Doctor returns to the site of a previous adventure, the planet Peladon, 50 years after his first visit. He finds that his old friend King Peladon is dead but that Peladon’s daughter, Thalira (Thames), is Queen. The Peladon monster, the Aggregor (Hobbs), is once more on the rampage, spurred on by renegade Ice Warriors, who wish to seize Peladon’s mineral wealth.

PLANET OF SPIDERS (6 parts)
Airdates: May 4 – June 8, 1974
Writer: Robert Sloman
Director: Barry Letts
Guest Cast: Richard Franklin, John Dehart, Terence Lodge, Cyril Sharp, Kevin Lindsay, John Kane, Ralph Arliss, Geoffrey Morris, Joanna Monro, Emyl Hawgood, Jenny Laird, Maureen Morris, George Cargoe.

Jo Grant’s wedding gift, the blue crystal of Metebelis 3, is vitally important to the planet’s spiders. Sending an emissary to recover it, they are discovered by ex-UNIT Captain Mike Yates (Franklin), who alerts UNIT and the Doctor. The Time Lord and Sarah are transported to Metebelis 3, where they must confront the Queen Spider and her gigantic mutated mistress, the Great One (Maureen Morris). Mortally wounded, the Doctor returns to Earth, to undergo his third regeneration.

Producers: Derrick Sherwin (“Inferno” only), Barry Letts

CAST:
The Doctor: Jon Pertwee
Liz Shaw (“Inferno”): Caroline John
Jo Grant (“The Claws of Axos” through “The Green Death”): Katy Manning
Sarah Jane Smith (“The Time Warrior” through “Planet of the Spiders”): Elisabeth Sladen
Brigadier Alastair Lethbridge-Stewart: Nicholas Courtney
Captain Mike Yates: Richard Franklin
Sergeant Benton: John Levene
The Master: Roger Delgado

Pertwee poses with predecessors Patrick Troughton (left) and the late William Hartnell during taping of the 1973 episode “The Three Doctors.”

(continued on page 65)
Pertwee (continued from page 27)

Who's Stunts

Pertwee's memories of the SF series include more than the people, they also include the stunts. More than any other Doctor, Pertwee's character was a man of action, reflecting the actor's own fascination with danger and fast moving vehicles. In fact, one of the most memorable vehicles of the Pertwee era, nicknamed the "Whomobile," actually belonged to Pertwee! A saucer-shaped auto, with hidden wheels, the actor had it specially constructed, not only to drive on Doctor Who, but for his own personal use as well.

"I've always been an adventurous bugger," Pertwee laughs, "much to my producers' horror, because I used to insist on doing all my own stunts, except falls. I wouldn't do falls, because if I broke a leg, then I would put everyone out of business."

"But in a question of, say, roaming a motorbike across a field with Jo Grant on the back, well—Katy would go anywhere with me, because she was so blind she couldn't see anything anyway. She would just put her arms around me and hang on!"

"Sometimes it could get quite riotous, because Barry Letts, the producer, wouldn't ever let me have time to learn. He would just say, 'Oh, Jon can drive or fly anything.' Once, I drove a hovercraft in 'Planet of the Spiders' for a very hysterical sequence. I had exactly one hour's practice with it and I wiped out three camera crews trying to get through this gap, where I had to leap the thing over a tramp eating lunch."

"I was a protective Doctor. The cloak was symbolic of the mother hen."

Sometimes, Pertwee performing his own stunts led to unforeseen circumstances. For example, there was the time when he ran down a stuntman. "Because I'm not a professional stuntman and used to stopping a car dead on the button," the actor begins, "it frequently wouldn't stop dead on the button and I would go powering on and hit old drums or something. Once, in a story called ' Inferno,' there was a great chase sequence, in which I was driving the roadster, 'Bessie,' being chased by the Army. The script called for one fellow, a dear friend of mine named Allen Chance, to leap out in front of me. And I asked, 'What do you want me to do?'

"And he said, 'You barrell along and I'll jump out of the way at the last minute.'"

"Are you sure?" I said. 'You don't want me to brake?'

"No, don't do that," he answered, 'because I won't be able to time it.'

"So, I went shooting down at him about 60 miles an hour, keeping it steady. He was supposed to jump out of the way—and he didn't! CRACK! I hit him! You can imagine how I felt: he was a dear friend and I hit him: with a bumper at 60 miles an hour on his shinbone. It threw him in a ditch, and I came out of the car and was nearly sick. He kept saying to everyone else, 'Take Jon away, take him away. He'll get upset.'"

"Anyway, they took Allen off to a hospital and cut his boot off. The collision had opened him up, practically from ankle to knee and he had 27 stitches put in his leg. But he put his leg in a plastic bag, put another boot on, and came back to the set again, because he thought I would be worried! After lunch, he hobbled around, saying, 'Oh, I can stand.' Well, he fell over after 10 minutes, and they took him home. But he didn't want to upset me. He tried to work with 27 stitches!"

Pertwee returned to the series to do his turn as the Doctor in the BBC's 20th anniversary special, which was also broadcast in the United States. How did it feel to return to a role after nearly 10 years? "It's a question that's inevitably asked, isn't it? And it's an unanswerable question, really, because an actor's only doing a job," Pertwee replies. "Say, for example, you're a reporter on the Boston Globe, and you leave to become a reporter in San Francisco, and a little while later, you go home to Boston. Someone asks you, 'What's it like going back to being a reporter on the Boston Globe?' You would say, 'Just like any other job, just like any other day.' Being an actor is being an actor. I know how to play the Doctor, so if you asked me 20 years from now, I would be a bit slower, but I could still play it."

"Being in the anniversary special was an enormous joy. I was working with Pat [Troughton] and Peter [Davison] and masses of old friends, which was a wonderful experience. It became very difficult for the director, however, simply because we laughed so much. We behaved disgracefully throughout the entire production."

On an American tour, in part to promote the release of 14 of his Who adventures to U.S. television by Lionheart Television International (STARLOG #76), Pertwee is struck by the intense enthusiasm of American fans. "I think it's because they're SF buffs, much more than we British are," he ventures as an explanation. "You Americans have always been science-fiction fans, buying SF magazines and books long before we were. The United States would be a wonderful place to film a Doctor Who story. The Lionheart representative said that they might be interested in putting up the money for location filming of a Who story here with the studio work done, as usual, back in London."

The blue eyes twinkle at the thought. Perhaps in the back of his mind, Jon Pertwee is considering being a part of that production, should it ever happen. After all, for a whole generation of British fans, and for a coming generation of Americans, his "science-fiction James Bond" interpretation is the Doctor! ★