This is a chance for me to introduce Radio 4 listeners to a very old friend of mine,” says Tom Watt, alias Lofty of EastEnders. Tom is the first of several guest presenters to be going Down Your Way (Sunday, re-broadcast Monday) and the ‘old friend’ he can’t wait to introduce this week is the city of Manchester, where he went to university and started out as an actor.

Says Tom, who comes from north London: ‘There are a lot of misconceptions about Manchester in the south. Yes, it has its social and environmental problems – but it’s a great place full of great people, whose sense of humour and belief in the future haven’t been dented.’

Who’s the real McCoy
‘He’s not as tall as the other ones,’ quips Sylvester McCoy (who’s all of 5ft 6in) when asked what’s going to be different about his new Doctor (Doctor Who, Monday BBC1). It seems people have been telling him for years that he should play the part: ‘I don’t really know why – maybe it’s because I’ve got a slightly mad quality. Perhaps it was just a way for producers to get rid of me!’

But it’s not all change for the Doctor – he’ll still have Mel (Bonnie Langford) to lean on. See page 87.
Who's taken to the cleaners!

1ST WHEN Melanie (Bonnie Langford) ought it was safe to dip her toes into the swimming pool, she got a nasty shock ... from a bot crab! It's just one of the many monsters - mechanical, humanoid and just indescribable - at rear their unpleasant heads in the new series of Doctor Who (Monday BBC1).

The creepy crabs are supposed to keep the pool clean, but they suddenly become human eking - and Melanie is the nearest human! But you'll have to wait a few weeks before they and other metal menaces like, of all things, bot cleaners, threaten the Doctor (now played by Sylvester McCoy - see Upfront, page 3) and Melanie when they arrive at Paradise Towers.

All the baddies are new for this series - not a alek in sight! - and the only returning arch- enemy is the Rani (Kate O'Mara), the renegade me Lady who is as evil as the Doctor is good.

New monsters to watch out for in the weeks ahead include the fearful Bannermen, alien manoids with red eyes and mouths, led by Don Henderson, and the Bio-mechanoid, an enormous, very bony, flat-headed thing that inhabits the Iceworld.

Other features of the series include new ransions of the theme tune and opening titles, ed appearances by stars like Ken Dodd and Richard Briers, who plays his first TV baddy.

In this week's opening episode, there's the first glimpse of the latest generation of monsters the Tetrap, bat-like people from the planet Skertya, who team up with the Rani.

All you will see of them is a strange-looking and - very similar to the one that's creeping to the bottom of this page. Aagh!!!