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**THE DA VINCI
CODE ON TRIAL**
EXCLUSIVE REPORT

**THE WORLD'S
HAIRIEST PEOPLE**

JO-JO THE DOG-FACED
BOY AND OTHER
HIRSUTE HUMANS

**ALIEN EXCHANGE
PROGRAMME**

THE PLANET
SERPO STORY

BIRTH OF THE CYBERMEN

FROM SPARE-PART SURGERY TO CYBERNETICS:
THE MAN WHO CREATED DOCTOR WHO'S MOST FEARSOME FOES

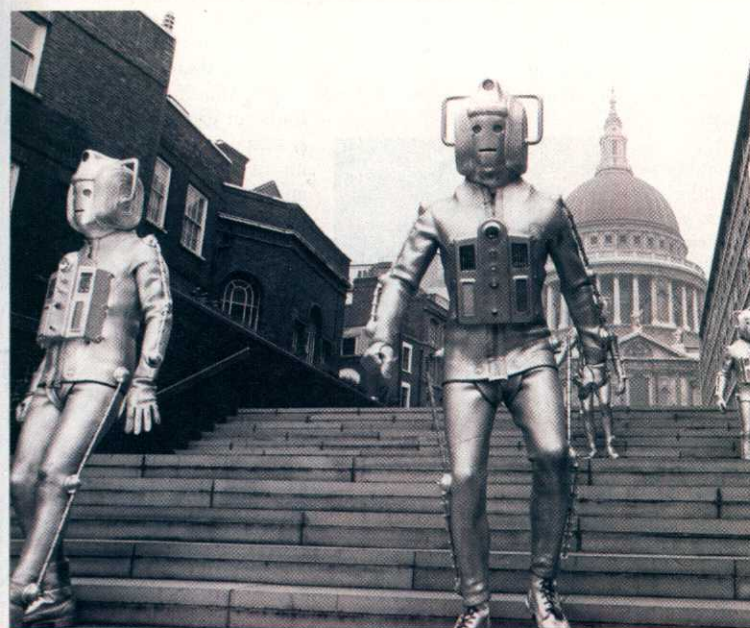



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PUBLISHED BY

DENNIS CONSUMER DIVISION,
30 Cleveland Street
London W1T 4JD, UK Tel: 020 7907 6000

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PRINTED BY SOUTHERNPRINT

DISTRIBUTION

Distributed in UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd.

86 Newman Street, London W1P 3LD

Tel: 020 7396 8000 / Fax: 020 7396 8012

Speciality store distribution by Worldwide Magazine

Distribution Ltd, Tel: 0121 788 3112 Fax: 0121 7881272

Distributed outside the UK and Ireland

by Seymour International Ltd.

86 Newman Street, London W1P 3LD

Tel +44 20 7396 8000 Fax +44 20 7396 8273

Queries on overseas availability should be emailed to

intquery@seymour.co.uk

STANDARD SUBSCRIPTION RATES

12 issues: UK £30; EU £37.50;

REST OF THE WORLD £45; US \$59.40

DENNIS PUBLISHING LIMITED

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Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations.
Printed in the UK. ISSN: 0308 5899
© Fortean Times: APRIL 2006

editorial

Alien autopsies and Cybermen

DOCTOR WHO

After years in the wilderness, Dr Who is quite the man of the moment; with his second regeneration in as many years about to hit our screens, the ageing Time Lord is as popular as ever, and the once sniffy BBC is nowadays to be seen patting itself on the back for having created a 'national institution'.

Whatever you make of Russell T Davies's version of the Saturday night classic (there's a review on p62), we're sure you'll be pleased that the Cybermen – those silver-suited horrors of the Sixties – are returning. In this issue, we present a profile of their creator, Dr Kit Pedler, revealing how his interests in science and spare-part surgery gave birth to such monsters, and how his restless fortean mind led him beyond the confines of conventional medicine into the realms of cybernetics, environmental issues and parapsychology.



COVER: CYBERMAN IMAGE COURTESY
BBC PICTURE PUBLICITY

ON THE SLAB

By the time you hold this issue of *FT* in your hands, the *Alien Autopsy* film, with cheeky Geordie TV presenters Ant and Dec as its unlikely stars, will have opened (and, indeed, possibly closed). It amused us that while, back in 1995, our own Bob Rickard was one of those present at the Museum of London presentation of Ray Santilli's supposed footage of a Roswell alien on the slab, no one associated with this latest venture even thought to invite us to a press screening! So, at this point, we know as much as you do – although word has it that this British comedy-drama is neither very funny nor particularly dramatic. We will see – and to get us in the mood, Jenny Randles trawls through some of ufology's most celebrated – or notorious – alien photographs on p 28.

CROSS-PURPOSES

Oh dear. In *FT*208 – as many readers delightedly pointed out to us – we made a rather, er, revealing mistake, printing not just the third of our *Fortean Times* crosswords but also its solution! Our apologies to both the setter, Mactabilis (who will undoubtedly make his next crossword particularly fiendish by way of revenge) and to any readers who were cheated of their enjoyment. Having said that, we've certainly received more than the usual number of entries...

BAD BLOOD IN MANCHESTER

If you're a northern-based fortean, then do try and take in the 5th Commonwealth Film Festival's special, *FT*-supported *Bad Blood* horror film nights at Manchester's Cornerhouse Cinema. On 29 April and 6 May,

the Cornerhouse will be hosting 14 films over two consecutive Saturdays, including novel interpretations of classic horror stories such as Edgar Allan Poe's *Tell Tale Heart*, unsettling tales of retribution (*Pedigree*, *Strings* and *Bad Blood*) and films about vengeful body parts (the outrageous *Danger Zone*). Meanwhile, William B Davies (the Smoking Man from *The X-Files*)

finds out just how much his life is actually worth in the multi-award winning *Cost of Living*, and zombies spoil dessert in the wonderfully trashy gore-fest *After Ate*.

To book tickets for *Bad Blood*, or any of the other festival screenings, call 0161 200 1500. www.commonwealthfilm.com

LAST CALL FOR UNCONVENTION!

As we await the judge's ruling in the case of Baigent and Leigh vs Random House – in which Dan Brown stands

accused of pinching much of *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* and recycling it in his best-selling *The Da Vinci Code* (see pp4-5) – it seems timely to remind you that this year's UnConvention is just around the corner, and that matters Da Vincian will definitely be on the agenda.

We are pleased to welcome punk legend Rat Scabies to the stage, where he'll be regaling us with tales of his own Grail Quest, and can now confirm that previous UnCon favourites Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince will be with us to share their researches into the *real* Priory of Sion. Intrigued? We certainly are. We'll also be presenting exclusive screenings of the HP Lovecraft Historical Society's remarkable *Call of Cthulhu* movie, conducting human/computer interaction experiments with ASSAP and presenting a phantasmagoric magic lantern show with Dr Mervyn Heard.

Full speaker details, and information on how to buy tickets, can be found on p13 – and don't forget, this is your last chance to book. See you there!

DAVID SUTTON

BOB RICKARD

PAUL SIEVEKING

Why fortean?

Everything you always wanted to know about *Fortean Times* but were too paranoid to ask!

SEE PAGE 78



FATHER OF THE CYBERMEN

In 2005, British viewers welcomed Doctor Who back to their TV screens. This year, they'll also be seeing the return of some of the show's most enduring villains – the Cybermen. MATT SALUSBURY looks back on the career of Kit Pedler, the doctor and scientist who created the soulless silver monsters and whose unconventional interests took him into the world of the paranormal.

Christopher Magnus Howard Pedler was born in 1927 into a fourth-generation medical family and trained in medicine at London's King's College Hospital. In his own words, "as a doctor and biological scientist I have lived in various experimental laboratories since the age of 18."¹ Earning a second doctorate in Experimental Pathology, he lectured at the University of London and set up the Anatomy department and electron microscopy unit at the University's Institute of Ophthalmology, where he undertook 12 years of research on eye diseases and the functions of the retina, publishing 38 original medical papers. Dr Pedler's entry in the *Medical Directory* of 1969, his last year in practice, listed the highlights of his distinguished career, modestly summing up his other achievements with "etc."

But that "etc." masked several self-reinventions by this extraordinary polymath, who was more usually known as Dr Kit Pedler, or just plain Kit. His hobbies included building racing cars and, like his mother, he was an artist and sculptor. And, 40 years ago this October, Kit Pedler's coldly rational spare part cyborgs, the Cybermen, made their first TV appearance in *Doctor Who*, sending a generation of terrified children into hiding behind the sofa. This year, the Cybermen return to *Doctor Who* in two eagerly awaited new episodes. (See 'Creating the Cybermen' on p 34).

As well as bringing chillingly plausible monsters to *Doctor Who*, Pedler brought us *Doomwatch*, a British *X-Files* of its day that featured a terrifying environmental catastrophe each episode – from plastic-eating bacteria and missing nukes to transplanted pig hearts affecting their recipients in terrible ways. Pedler then went beyond science fiction, renouncing 'the harmful side effects of technological medicine' and the 'technogenic' disorders of industrial society in *The Quest for Gaia*, a 'deep-green' rant that was decades ahead of its time. His final reinvention was as a popular forteen investigator on primetime television in the series

Mind Over Matter. Here, he brought a charming bedside manner and a scientific rigour to investigation of the paranormal. It was a feat that the medium of television has not seen repeated in the quarter century since the series's transmission.

Pedler's 'voyage of discovery' into the paranormal moved the former *Doctor Who* scriptwriter to comment that "the science of physics has moved sharply towards a view of the Universe... which shows the real fabric of things to be so strange, mysterious and fascinating that any well brought up science fiction writer would give up in sheer despair".²

HORROR HOSPITAL

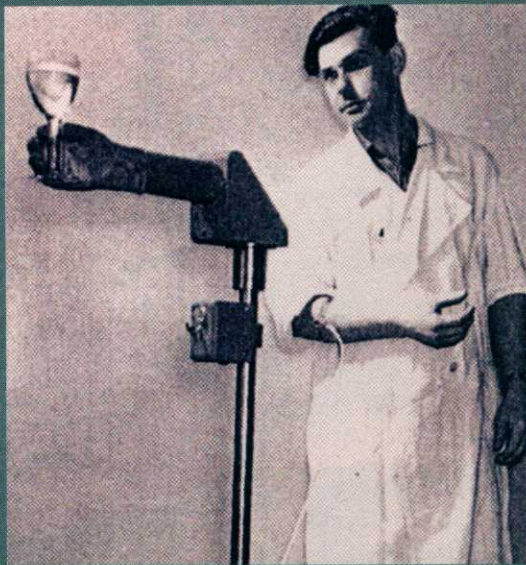
Dr Pedler's medical achievements included *The Fine Structure of the Corneal Epithelium* – cutting-edge work on eye cells including 'cytoplasmic organelles of basal cells tissue from anaesthetised kittens'. His paper *The Fine Structure of the Radial Fibres in Reptiles' Retina* was among the first to examine the 'profuse' fibre in the eye cells of lizards and geckos. To 21st-century readers, his nonchalant description of how "after decapitation, the eye was removed" from his subjects, sounds as disturbing as any of his *Doctor Who* scripts. Kit later denounced the excessive vivisection of the medical establishment: "There is conditioned brutality among scientists, especially in the universities of Britain."³

Pedler's long immersion in the world of pure medical research provided him with material for creepy medical horror stories in which he explored feasible yet frightening forms of immortality. In *The Long Term Residents*, a biochemist is lured from a world of 'biomedical conferences, grant applications and experimental data' to a strange seaside hotel, whose owner turns out to be a scientist from his past who continues working after death through injecting



ABOVE: Kit Pedler. FACING PAGE: The Cybermen take London in the classic 1968 *Doctor Who* episode *Invasion*.

FROM CYBERNETICS TO CYBERMEN



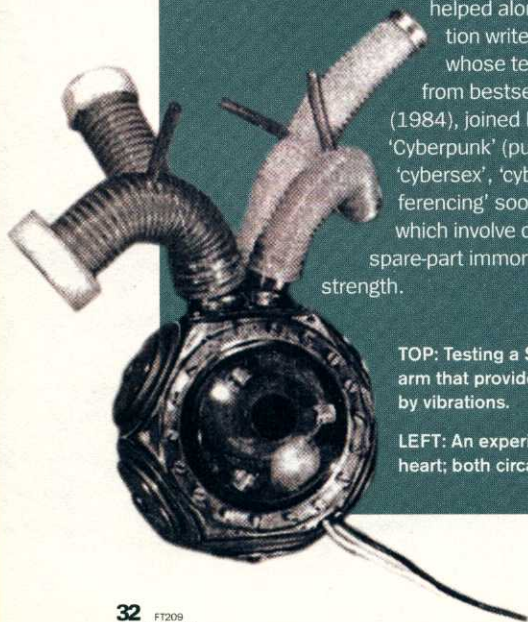
The now ubiquitous 'cyber' prefix comes, via a very convoluted route, from Cybertetus, helmsman of the Styx ferry that carried the dead to the Greek underworld. Cybertetus's steering mechanism, to adjust for the Styx's strong current, was a primitive 'self-regulating control system'. Mathematician Norbert Wiener's 1948 book *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* coined a new term, associated with the control of complex systems, both in the natural world and in machine networks. Wiener, like Pedler, recognised the ethical implications of his work, and after World War II refused to take on any US government contracts.

1960 saw cybernetics evolve the term 'cyborg' (cyber organism) with physiological research by Manfred C Clynes and Nathan S Kline at Rockland State Hospital, New York. Clynes and Kline were looking at the interface between humans or animals operating machines in the harsh environment of space – possibly, though not necessarily, augmented by surgery, implants or drugs.

'Cyborg' was still a relatively novel term when Pedler invented the Cybermen in 1966. But the increasing interaction between humans and machine systems – computers and the Internet in particular – spawned a whole host of Cyber-terminology, helped along by science fiction writer William Gibson, whose term 'cyberspace', from bestseller *Neuromancer* (1984), joined Bruce Bethke's 'Cyberpunk' (published 1983); 'cybersex', 'cybercrime', 'cyberconferencing' soon followed – none of which involve creepy silver-suited spare-part immortals with superhuman strength.

TOP: Testing a Soviet servo-controlled arm that provided its user with feedback by vibrations.

LEFT: An experimental electro-magnetic heart; both circa 1968.



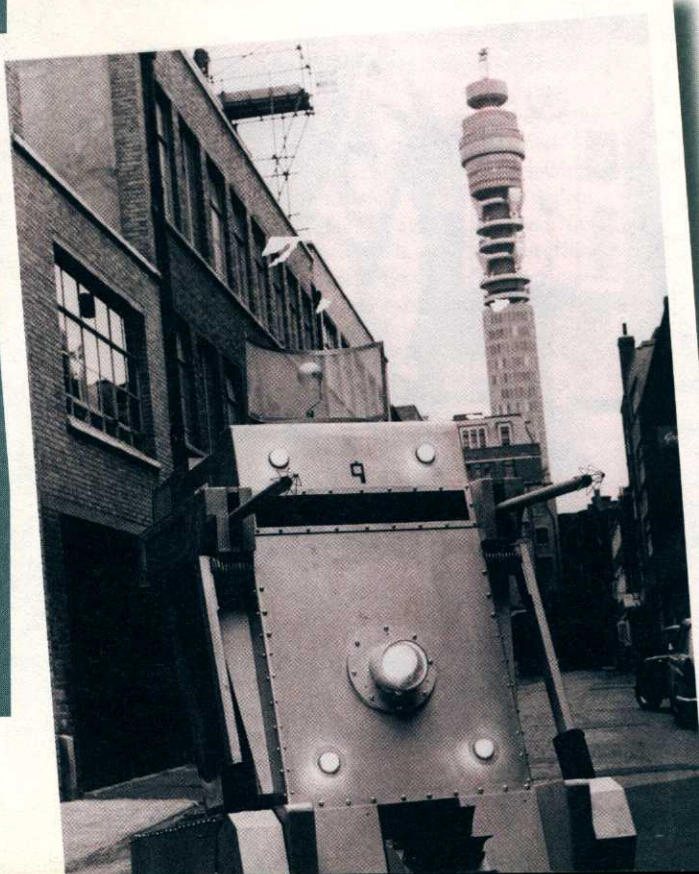
compounds into an implanted "lumber unit". The narrator is sentenced to immortality, confined to a chair in a room filled with ancient scientists discussing pure science problems for all eternity. *White Caucasian Male* concerns a microbiology lecturer, whose routine of 'monotone and pedestrian lectures' and 'effect of A on B research' changes when he accidentally rearranges human brain cells grown in a culture into a miniature mind, which drives him to self-destruction with its hallucinatory, telepathic death-screams.⁴

Pedler suffered a near-fatal illness – he wouldn't go into details – an experience which, he felt, gave him a different outlook on life. He gradually drifted away from the medical establishment: "It was years after I had qualified as a medical doctor before I realised I had been subject to a six-year long conditioning process. I had been turned out of school as an efficient medical and surgical technician, but woefully bereft as a healer." Over time, these criticisms would sometimes turn into fully-fledged rants. He was particularly scathing of the infant science of heart transplants: "£18,000 and 25 graduates to give patients a life expectancy of an extra seven months."⁵

ENTER THE CYBERMEN

But while he still felt at home in the world of the retina, Pedler's expertise led to a new outlet for his many talents – television. He had already appeared on the BBC science programme *Tomorrow's World* when, in the spring of 1966, Gerry Davis from the science series *Horizon* came to Kit's lab for a programme on heart transplants. They were impressed enough to engage him 'for help and advice' on the *Doctor Who* serial that became *The War Machines*. "Mr CMH Pedler... agreed a payment of £25 for each episode".⁶ *The War Machines* featured the brand new futuristic Post Office Tower – now the BT or Telecom Tower – visible from Pedler's lab window and at the time London's tallest building (below). The story foreshadowed the Internet by having as its villain the supercomputer WOTAN controlling all of the world's computer networks via telephone lines. It wasn't so much Pedler's science ideas that gave *The War Machines* its realism, as his feel for 'science and society' issues – one key scene takes place at a press conference for the launch of WOTAN.

Pedler's relaxed bedside manner was already endearing him to many. Veteran broadcaster Joan Bakewell called him 'my favourite scientist'. A co-worker said: "He was an easy man to work with, a regular guy, good fun, and although a double doctor, approachable... A thoroughly nice guy... You didn't feel you were dealing with a



BELOW: The series' creators, Kit Pedler (left) and Gerry Davis (right) pictured with producer Terence Dudley.

BOTTOM: The heroes of *Doomwatch*, otherwise known as the Department of Measurement of Scientific Work.

man with 27 million qualifications"; or, as the *TV Times* put it, "with almost twice as many letters after his name than in it".⁷

The Post Office Tower featured again in the genesis of Pedler's next *Doctor Who* creation, the Cybermen. As early as the spring of 1963, he had looked out of his laboratory window and daydreamed of silvery space beings landing at the foot of the tower. There had followed a discussion that evening with his wife, also a doctor, on what would happen if someone had so many mechanical spare parts they would no longer be able to tell the difference between their human self and a machine.

Kit imagined the Cybermen as having plastic and metal prostheses (their more robot-like, all metal design evolved later in the *Doctor Who* series). The first Cybermen – in the series *The Tenth Planet* – still had a recognisable facial bone structure and identifiable human hands sheathed in clear plastic.

Spare-part surgery at the time was a world of frighteningly huge 'electro-magnetic' mechanical heart-lung machines, while prototype Soviet prosthetic hands made it possible to operate faster than with a natural hand. Spare-part surgeons were predicting that microsurgery, grafts and transplants would take over from prosthesis by the 1990s. Yet the medical ethics of spare-part surgery was in its infancy. Experts were seriously suggesting wiring amputees' nerve-endings to machines, sending 'intention signals' directly from the brain to work them more quickly.⁸ In the face of such attitudes, Pedler was right to express anxieties about the practice of spare-part surgery – see 'From Cybernetics to Cybermen' (p32) and 'Creating the Cybermen' (p34).

Kit had little formal experience as a writer for television and worked closely with script editor Gerry Davis, a veteran of police series *Softly, Softly*. At the end of his stint at *Doctor Who*, Kit admitted he still hadn't learned to write science fiction properly. His Cybermen scripts had to be extensively reworked by Davis and others. But he was an excellent ideas man, and the BBC was happy to leave the narrative structure to others.

Kit's association with the Cybermen attracted controversy, and he was forced to defend them against enraged parents after a scene in *Tomb of*

Pedler imagined the Cybermen having plastic and metal prostheses



the Cybermen showed fluid spurting from a dying Cyberman's innards. Then there was the incident in which "Pedler took one of *Doctor Who*'s Cybermen into a busy shopping area of St Pancras; he almost blocked the street and 'got into trouble with the police'". Recalling the occasion, he doesn't sound very penitent... "I wanted to know how people would react to something quite unusual... but I also wanted to be a nuisance."⁹

The last Kit Pedler Cyberman story, *The Invasion*, ended with the Cybermen repulsed, just three weeks after Pedler had appeared on *Horizon* talking about the retina. By then, he had departed the 'genial hokum' of *Doctor Who* and announced his next collaboration with Gerry Davis. Having scared the nation's kids, Pedler and Davis next

found a way to keep adults awake with scientifically plausible, anxious eco-nightmares.

DOOMWATCHING

The first episode of *Doomwatch* aired on 9 February 1970, breaking all records for a new series by bringing in 13 million viewers. *Doomwatch* was born out of scrapbooks of newspaper cuttings on environmental hazards – such as a death from noise pollution at Fylingdales radar station – which, according to Davis, were "slowly cutting our throats". Davis

had realised, through "picking Pedler's brains with *Doctor Who*", that he and Kit were fellow doom merchants. "*Doomwatch*," Davis insisted, "is not science fiction."¹⁰

The programme's title is the codename for the 'Department of Measurement of Scientific Work', a trio of government scientists who deal with the worst excesses of sci-



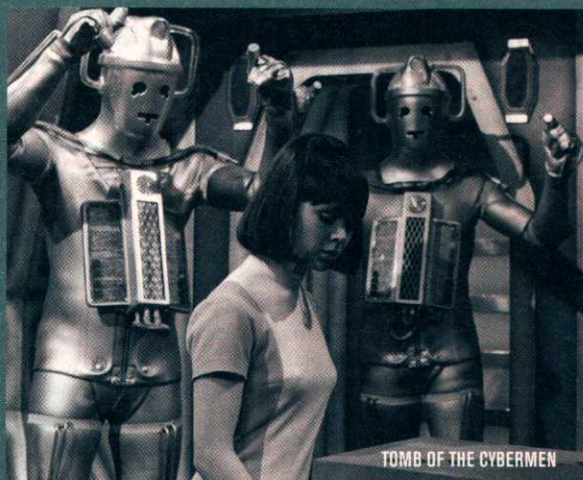
CREATING THE CYBERMEN

Kit Pedler admitted he was influenced by the *Dan Dare* strip from the famous *Eagle* comic, and the evil green Treens in particular. He originally envisaged the Cybermen as Jedi-like 'space monks', but Gerry Davis urged him to follow his anxieties about spare-part surgery.

Pedler's first Cyberman adventure, *The Tenth Planet* (1966) introduced the Cybermen back-story: they had exhausted their planet's natural resources and were driven underground as the atmosphere began stripping away. In desperation, they started to convert themselves into immortals with superhuman strength but lacking any emotion. Cybermen come from Earth's evil twin planet Mondas, which split from Earth billions of years ago, just as the Moon did. Some of the 160 'exoplanets' (planets outside our Solar System) that have been discovered in the last decade have bizarre orbits according to earlier ideas of planet formation, and a 'rogue' planet like Mondas, which breaks up at the end of *The Tenth Planet* as it nears Earth's atmosphere, is beginning to seem more plausible.

The original Cybermen came to superficially resemble humans through parallel evolution, while Cybermen from subsequent stories are just people like us, taken prisoner and 'converted'. Part of their terror lies in the seductive possibility that we might actually want to be 'converted'. In *Tomb of the Cybermen*, the almost deaf-mute character Toberman is found by his colleagues to be partly-converted, with a metal and plastic arm, while Tobias Vaughn – one of *Doctor Who*'s most convincing villains – is converted from the neck down, but finally dies helping the Doctor thwart a Cyberman invasion.

The original Cybermen were plastic and metal, with identifiable human hands and facial bone structure. Cyberman design has evolved in a more metal, robot-like direction over the years – their costumes have featured plastic hoses, golf balls, silver-sprayed wetsuits, and



Plastic hoses, golf balls and silver-sprayed wetsuits

Wellington boots. 1970s Cybermen had flares, while the 1980s version sported baggy silver jumpsuits and recognizably human throats that moved when they spoke. The 2006 Cyberman redesign features a completely metal exoskeleton.

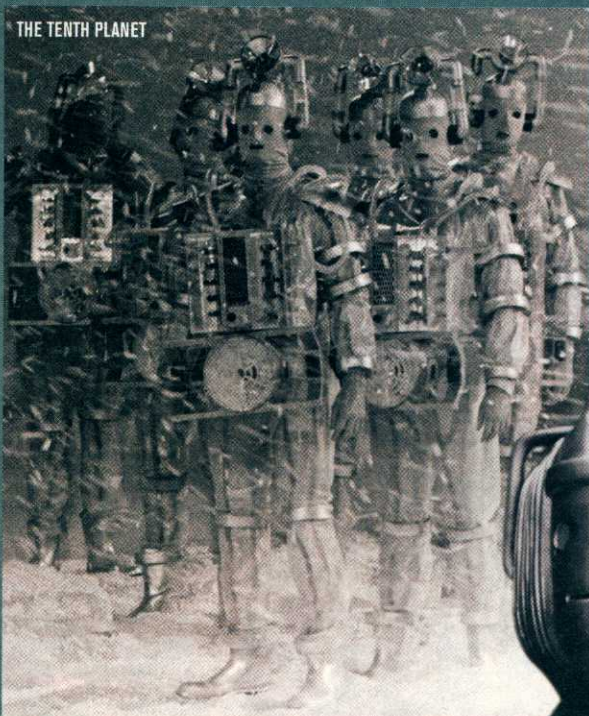
A CYBERMAT

Cybermen possess superhuman strength – they can punch through walls and throw people across rooms (although you can often see the wires!). Over the years, the Doctor discovered several novel ways of killing off the near-indestructible Cybermen – fuel rods from a nuclear reactor; giant X-ray lasers; nail varnish remover-type solvents that affected the 'respiratory units' in their chests; and gold – either as dust or in the form of bullets, gold's density providing good armour-piercing properties.

If Cybermen were to be built today, with 21st-century technology, they would probably have a ceramic skeleton with Teflon and carbon-fibre ligaments. Contemporary Cyberpeople include the artist Stelarc, who has electrodes implanted in his muscles to allow his limbs to be operated over the Internet, and scientist Kevin Warwick, who has a transponder in his arm, allowing him to open the door of his lab.

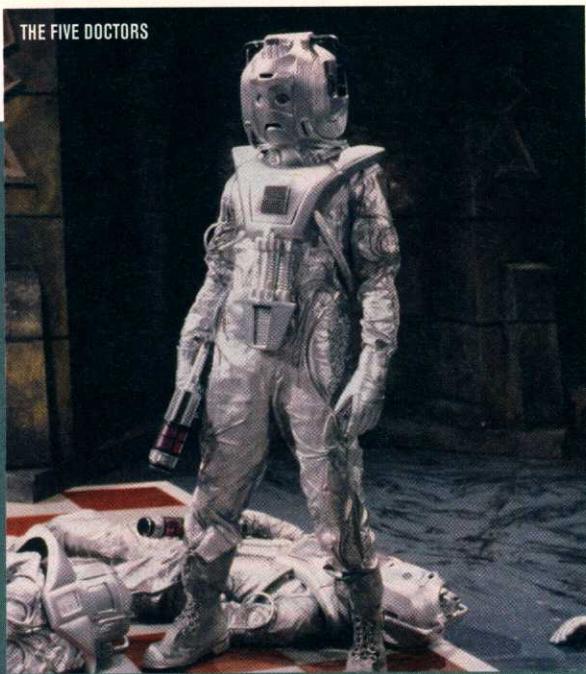
The Cybermen's voices also evolved over time. In their debut in *The Tenth Planet*, they were staccato, with the same kind of weird, discordant intonation we're now familiar with from phoning banks and cinemas. As they became more robot-like, Cybermen developed buzzing, ring-modular voices, and the actors had to open and close a little slit for their mouths when they spoke. Later Cybermen had a booming, more human-like voice.

Pedler and Gerry Davis also conceived the Cybermats – cat-sized reconnaissance cyborgs (cyber organisms) modelled on silverfish and delivering a toxic bite. Such animal cyborgs are already with us in the form of 'RoboRat'.



THE INVASION

ALL PHOTOS: BBC PHOTO LIBRARY



a rat with implanted electrodes whose every action can be controlled by a computer, and flying 1mm square 'microbots' that use the antenna of a real male silk moth to follow a pheromone trail (FT186: 50-53).

The glory days of the Cybermen were in the era of the Second Doctor, played by Patrick Troughton. *The Tenth Planet* was quickly followed by *The Moonbase* (1967) – credited to Kit Pedler only, as Gerry Davis was also working on the series as its script editor. In *The Moonbase*, The Doctor turns the Gravitron – an anti-gravity device that manages Earth's weather – on the Cyberman invasion fleet.

Then came *Tomb of the Cybermen* (1967) – the one in which the Cybermen burst out of their frozen tombs and chuck humans around, and the Cybermats make their debut. Next was *The Wheel in Space* (1968) – written by former *Who* script editor David Whitaker – based on Kit Pedler's tense but convoluted story about a space station hypnotically attacked by space-walking Cybermen and Cybermats.

Scriptwriter Derrick Sherwin made only 'casual' use of Pedler's concepts for *The Invasion* (1969) – the one where the Cybermen famously come up through the sewers around St Paul's Cathedral. *The Invasion* predicted that all the world's computer operating systems would be in the hands of one corporation – although its name was International Electromatics, and it was a Cyberman front company.

Gerry Davis went on to write *Revenge of the Cybermen* (1985) alone – here the Cybermen have guns in their head units and nearly rip off latest Doctor Tom Baker's head after he calls them 'a bunch of pathetic tin soldiers'.

Post-Pedler and Davis Cyber-stories were often nostalgic retreads of old ideas. These include *Earthshock* (1982) – in which the Doctor's companion Adric is killed and the Doctor crumples his gold star badge into the Cyber leader's control unit, and *Attack of the Cybermen* (1985) – in which partly converted prisoners attempting to escape knock the head off a Cyberman. These stories were almost as confused as the 1988 *Silver Nemesis*, in which the Cybermen fight Nazis and a living, screaming 17th-century silver statue. A squad of Cybermen also has a very bad day when it strays into the Time Lords' gladiatorial zone in *The Five Doctors* (1983).

RIGHT: The Cybermen return to the screen this year in the new *Doctor Who* series.



ence and fight constant battles against central government and MI6.

Brilliant Nobel Laureate Dr Spencer Quist headed the fictional Department, whose ever-changing staff included argumentative MI6-trained burglar Dr John Ridge and baby-faced heartthrob Tobias Wren.

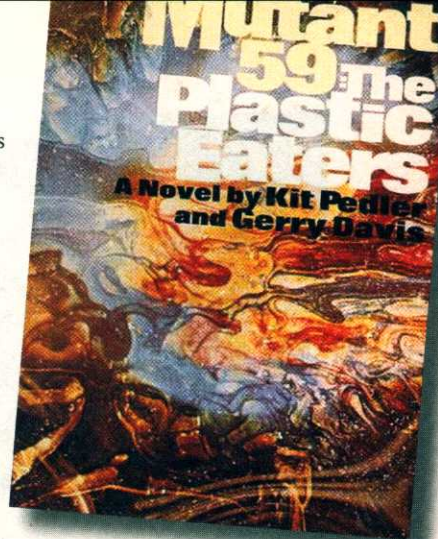
The opening episode, *The Plastic Eaters*, centred on Aminostyrene, a genetically engineered bug for breaking down biodegradable bottles that acquires a taste for aircraft electrical wiring insulation. Kit and Davis rewrote it as *Mutant 59: The Plastic Eaters* – a *Doomwatch* Novel, and the gleefully Ludite novelisation is funnier and more exciting than the original episode, with scenes of *Gremlins*-type chaos as a prototype lunar survey robot on display in a department store runs amok and demolishes Santa's grotto: the 'smell of rotting plastic' fills the air, gas meters burst, and radios and TVs disintegrate. Other *Doomwatch* subjects tackled super-resistant GM rats and mass male impotence caused by hormone-laced manure from a battery chicken farm leeching into the soil. Pedler correctly predicted that while the moral dilemmas of science in the 1950s and 1960s were largely around physics, biology would be the new ethical minefield. *Doomwatch* even got its own *Oxford English Dictionary* entry: "the surveillance of the environment to prevent harm to it from human agencies". Labour MP Ray Fletcher proposed the creation of a real-life parliamentary *Doomwatch* committee – with Kit Pedler sitting on it.

Producer Terrence Dudley moved *Doomwatch* away from science and turned it into a thriller in its second series, with the Pedler-Davis team now having little input into the programme and even criticising its new direction. They wrote two more novels, the long-winded *The Dynostar Menace* (a race to shut down a brand-new orbital fusion reactor before it starts transmitting power to Earth and destroying the ozone layer) and *Brainrack* (a mass dumbing-down of the population through petrol additives).

The firm grounding Pedler had in the environmental sciences through his work on *Doomwatch* led to environmental consultancy work for industry on waste reduction and energy saving – decades before

European Union regulations forced these issues into the corporate mainstream. A 1975 *Man Alive* documentary had him as its nuclear waste expert. His next project left science fiction behind and took him in a deep-green philosophical direction, with *The Quest for Gaia* – *A Book of Changes*.

Gaia was a damning but futuristic indictment of 'technologist toymakers' and of 'cybernarchy' – the 'parasitic industrial society' of packaging, supermarkets and hamburgers. Another target of Pedler's wrath was baths and how much energy they used – through both the hot water they used and the casting and enamelling of the tub: "I regret the passing of my bath immeasurably... marvellously relaxing. But there it is, in a Gaian society, baths are out." *New Scientist* described the book as 'searching





LEFT: Pedler with biologist Beverley Rubik at Indian Rock for the first televised 'real time' Remote Viewing experiment in the 1981 *Mind Over Matter* television series. RIGHT: Pedler participating in a ganzfeld experiment at Dr Carl Sargent's Cambridge lab, also in *Mind Over Matter*.

and deadly'.¹¹

Gaia led to more environmental consultancy work for Kit, which in turn led to an appearance on the Thames TV consumer programme *Money Go Round*, interviewed in a scrapyard near Shepperton, to show how the infant science of recycling could work. In the 'local boozer afterwards', the conversation turned to 'UFOs and ghosts and all the rest of it'. Kit asked: "Wouldn't it be interesting if someone did a proper science programme" on these phenomena?

MIND OVER MATTER

The result was 'a very brave decision': seven half-hour episodes of *Mind Over Matter*, which went out at 7pm on Tuesdays on ITV in the summer of 1981. Pedler was the main presenter and wrote the tie-in book *Mind Over Matter: A Scientist's View of the Paranormal*. His co-presenter was the man who had interviewed him in the scrapyard – Tony Bastable, presenter of the 1970s children's programme *Magpie*.

The focus was on precognition, telepathy, clairvoyance and psychokinesis. The book included do-it-yourself experiments in Ganzfeld, psychokinesis, telepathy, RV and metal bending – the latter a nod to the Uri Geller phenomenon.

Pedler's presentation demonstrated a fortean's healthy distrust of orthodoxy: "I have always distrusted 'experts' and 'specialists' who try to exclude 'laymen'. There was never anything difficult about science: it was only made so by some scientists."

But *Mind Over Matter* had hard science credentials, with "more Nobel Laureates interviewed than you could shake a stick at". As Pedler insisted: "Although it sounds outlandish, it's really a very down-to-earth series. We're dealing with proof, not speculation." The first two episodes looked in detail at how to lay down ground rules for evidence, and Pedler demanded the same double-blind experimental protocols he had learnt on the hospital wards.¹²

He concluded that there was plenty of room in quantum physics for paranormal phenomena: "Einstein, Bohr, Schrödinger and Dirac... imagined such unfamiliar immensities as to make what I have referred to as the 'paranormal' almost pedestrian by comparison." Theirs was a quantum Universe where the act of measurement might change the object being measured, where cause might not always precede effect, and where it might eventually turn out that "future events cast a shadow back into the present". In the 25 years since then, quantum physics has, of course, got a whole lot weirder.

Mind Over Matter featured what is believed to be the first ever real-time Remote Viewing experiment to be filmed, at Indian Rock, Berkeley, California. Sceptical photographer Hella Hammid, who'd become 'rather good at RV', drew the

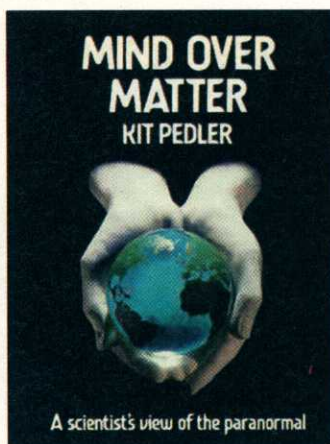
His presentation demonstrated a fortean's distrust of orthodoxy

features of Indian Rock, the location randomly picked from an envelope, as Pedler wandered up and down the rock – except that Hammid's sketch showed *another* location from the experimenter's list. This was attributed to 'the displacement effect', well known in RV. Kit confessed that it was his fault. Before the experiment, he wrote on a bit of paper "During the experiment, a part of the equipment will *inexplicably* fail" and sealed it in an envelope. The experiment's random number generator also crashed.

This 'displacement effect' reared its head again when Pedler donned the cut-in-half golf balls for a filmed Ganzfeld experiment. While Carl Sargent and others tried to mentally send Kit an impression of a randomly chosen photograph, he described one of the other pictures that had remained in its envelope. While the Ganzfeld environment was supposed to relax Pedler, it had the opposite effect, and he confessed to being "anxious and tense at different parts of my mind working against each other... What rubbish you've got yourself into, Kit". He also fretted about the experiment's possible outcome: "My God, what if I succeed? I don't want to be a psychic!"

Pedler interviewed Stephen North, who could apparently bend metal, in psychokinesis experiments conducted by Birkbeck College's Professor Hasted. North said of his wild talent: "Certainly I don't know how I can do it, but there are ways I can stop it from happening. For instance, when I started to do it, everything in my house began to bend. All the cutlery bent and gradually I found I could stop that when I wanted to, and I can stop it from damaging my watch or my own keys."

Mind Over Matter also revisited the mid-1970s case of 'Philip' – a fictional ghost "living at the time of Cromwell in the 1600s", who was deliberately made up by a "group of eight meeting for two hours a week for almost a year... to see whether ordinary people could generate some sort of spirit".



RIGHT: Kit Pedler's most famous creations emerge from the *Tomb of the Cybermen* in the *Doctor Who* story from 1967.

The group was of a 'sceptical turn of mind', but its members eventually found that their "table itself began to move" – an event filmed for Canadian TV. Then the "table [was] flying around the room". Kit interviewed one witness, Dr Lawrence Lesham, who had a "fair amount of experience with conjuring" and "was convinced no-one present was rapping the table". Pedler dryly concluded that psychokinesis was 'the least implausible explanation'.¹³

Pedler's medical experience informed *Mind Over Matter's* look at faith healing – "I am afraid we have to face the real probability of professional bias" – and the placebo effect, for which he drew on his time on the wards. "I worked for a doctor who cured people simply by looking magnificent... he would intone with exquisitely measured mellifluousness 'You are much better.' And they got better."

BREAKTHROUGH

On 26 May 1981, Dr Kit Pedler was found dead outside his house in Sittingbourne, Kent, by his girlfriend Cherry Gilliam. The doctor who had been so disparaging of heart surgery had dropped dead from a heart attack, aged 54. The fifth episode of *Mind Over Matter*, which went out the next week, was – perhaps appropriately – about out-of-body experiences.

Why have there been no programmes like *Mind Over Matter* in the 25 years since 1981? Yes, there have been endless programmes about UFOs, ghosts and other phenomena, but none of these have possessed the kind of scientific rigour that Pedler brought to such subjects.

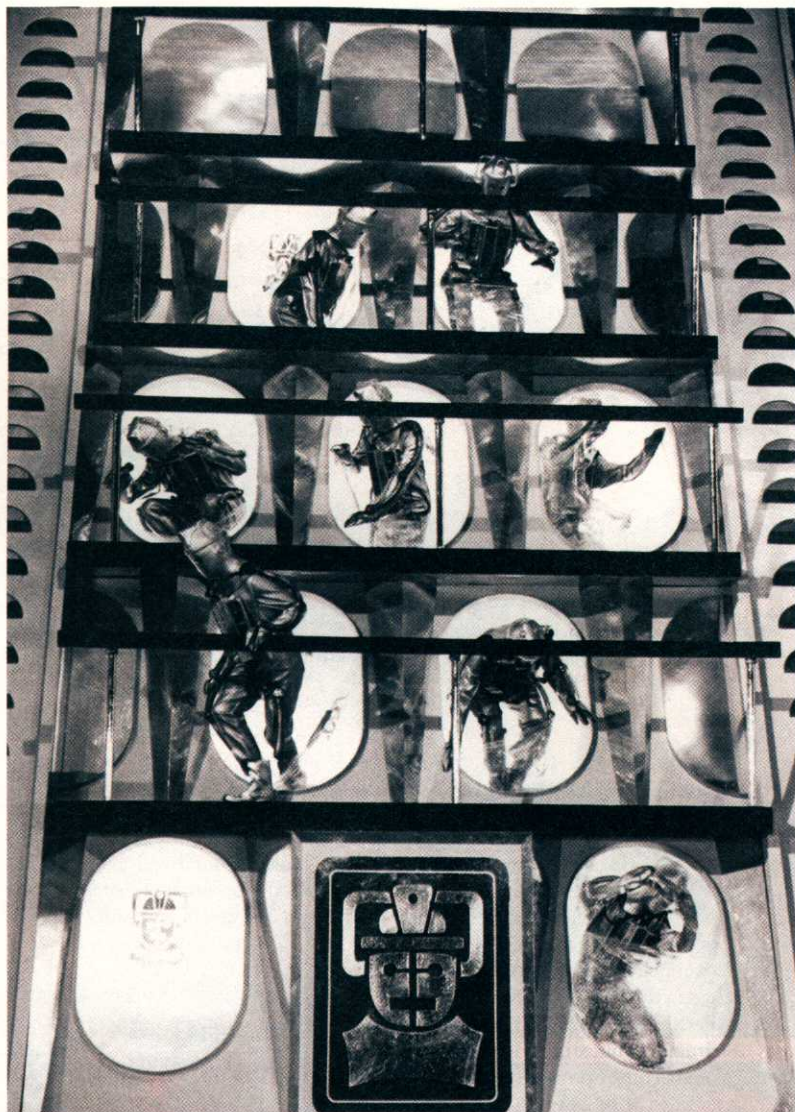
Pedler's tone throughout *Mind Over Matter* suggested that a breakthrough in the science of the paranormal was just around the corner; but he admitted the situation was not helped by "a very large number of completely gullible people in the field who accept absolutely everything they hear about the paranormal, from sharpening razor blades under pyramids to UFOs from Atlantis". ITV's own publicity for the series trivialised it by introducing it with a segment in which pop star Alvin Stardust, actor Donald Sinden and other celebrities shared their own 'spooky' – and rather uninteresting – experiences.¹⁴

The final *Mind Over Matter* episode was intended to take the form of a panel with Kit Pedler in discussion with a number of experts. In the event, co-presenter Tony Bastable was in the chair, filling the dead man's shoes, and recalls putting it to *Supernature* author Lyall Watson that "anybody who goes into this field automatically suffers derision". *The TV Times* listing for the programme (transmitted 23 June 1981) asked: "If we accept such things as telepathy, do we have to change our view of the world around us? Is there a future for the subject, or will it simply fade away?"¹⁵

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



MATT SALUSBURY knows an awful lot about *Doctor Who*, but he also has a life. He is deputy editor of *Freelance*, the National Union of Journalists' newsletter for freelancers, and teaches IT at the College of North East London.



BBC PHOTO LIBRARY

NOTES

1 *Mind Over Matter – a scientist's view of the paranormal*, Kit Pedler, Eyre Methuen, 1981.

2 (ibid).

3 *Experimental Eye Research*, volume 2 no 3, 3 July 1963, Academic Press, London and New York. Dr Pedler quoted on International Vegetarian Union website, www.ivu.org/people/quotes/experim.html, no date or source given.

4 'The Long Term Residents' in *The Seventh Ghost Book*, Barrie and Jenkins, 1971; 'White Caucasian Male' in *The Ninth Ghost Book*, ed. Rosemary Timperley, Barrie and Jenkins, 1973. Kit's editor Rosemary Timperley was heavily into pure physics as an explanation for ghosts, suggesting that ghosts could be made of 'neutrinos'.

5 *The Quest for Gaia – A Book of Changes*. Kit Pedler, Souvenir/Granada, 1979.

6 Memo from Gerry Davis, BBC Drama, referring to an earlier 'copyright brief' of 18 May 1966, BBC Written Archives.

7 Telephone interview with Tony Bastable, 9 December 2005; Margaret Driscoll on *Mind Over Matter*, *TV Times*, 16 May 1981.

8 *Spare Part Surgery – The Science of the Future*, Donald Longmore, Aldus, 1968.

9 'The Day a Cyberman went shopping in St Pancras', *Radio Times*, 23 November 1968 p. 39.

10 'The honeymoon of science is over – and married life is not so rosy',

Elizabeth Cowley, *Radio Times*, 5 Feb 1970, p 5; 'Doomwatch – Past Perfect', *SFX* magazine, September 2004, Future Publishing, Bristol; *Mutant 59: The Plastic Eaters*, Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis, Vector, 1972; *The Dynostar Menace*, Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis, Souvenir, 1975; *Brainrack*, Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis, Souvenir, 1974.

A real-life African execution in the *Sex and Violence* episode of *Doomwatch* resulted in the BBC finally pulling the plug on it, long after Kit had left the series. Its final episode in 1972 was about killer dolphins. Dr Quist and his team appeared as walk-ons in the 1972 *Doomwatch* feature film, and Trevor Eve played him in a one-off 1995 Channel 5 *Doomwatch* episode.

During filming of *Mind Over Matter* in 1981, Kit complained that he was still getting a considerable postbag of complaints about him killing off the dishy Tobias Wren character, played by Robert Powell, at the end of the third series, despite the fact that he had stopped writing for *Doomwatch* some years earlier. There was even a 'structural reader' abridged and edited for foreign students learning English who needed a bit of hard science in their studies – *Doomwatch – The World in Danger*, Longman 1975. This featured 'The Plastic Eaters', 'Red Sky' (the sound from experimental rocket engines resonates a lighthouse like a giant clarinet reed and drives its occupants to suicide) and 'A Bomb is Missing' (defusing a washed-up nuke on a seaside pier). There are 'comprehension and structure' English exercises at the back.

11 *The Quest for Gaia – A Book of Changes*, Kit Pedler, Souvenir/Granada, 1979. Kit promised in *The Quest for Gaia* that he would produce a follow-up volume with practical 'blueprints' for a Gaian society, but this never appeared. In 1969, he was working on a science fiction book that was to be a look back at human history from the viewpoint of the year 2016, but this remained unfinished. Although Kit was an ex-Catholic atheist, *The Quest for Gaia* still features in theological debate on the role of environmentalism in Christian ethics.

12 *Mind Over Matter: a scientist's view of the paranormal*, Eyre Methuen, 1981; Author's telephone interview with Tony Bastable, 9 December 2005. Bastable admits that Kit and *Mind Over Matter* director Richard Mervyn (a veteran of *The Tomorrow People*) did most of the work; Margaret Driscoll on *Mind Over Matter*, *TV Times*, 16 May 1981.

13 *Conjuring Up Philip*, Owen and M. Sparrow, Harper and Row, New York, 1976, quoted in *Mind Over Matter*.

14 Bastable felt that *Mind Over Matter* being mostly shot on the then low-grade VHS videotape format (instead of film) hindered its chances of reaching a bigger audience, as it was not of sufficient quality to be sold to English-speaking TV networks abroad. The videos, stills and scripts for *Mind Over Matter* are now with Fremantle Media Archive Sales in London. *Mind Over Matter* feature, including interviews with Alvin Stardust, Donald Sinden and Eurovision Song Contest winner Lindsay De Paul, in *TV Times*, 16 June 1981.