



RETURN OF THE DANDY DOCTOR

**Stephen Arnell celebrates the new Doctor's dandyism by recalling
the most sartorially flamboyant regeneration Jon Pertwee**

“I love Jon Pertwee, the third Doctor’s outfits. Lovely velvet jackets and frilly shirts, I feel a connection to him. Our Doctors are the only two who dress like sluts.” Ncuti Gatwa, the 15th Doctor.

After an interlude that for some reason sees the return of David Tennant’s 10th Doctor for three specials, Gatwa will debut in the role of the Doctor this Christmas. With budgets now boosted by the involvement of Disney as co-producers, *Doctor Who* may now have finally said goodbye to its association with budget special effects, and see an enhanced costume budget for the new Doctor.

Just as well, since the actor has expensive tastes. “The day Russell (T Davies, showrunner) invited me to meet everybody, they asked me what sort of costume I wanted. I showed them this Ralph Lauren

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Would you buy a used Tardis from this man?

collection that was in partnership with Historically Black Colleges in America. I love those pieces, they're so preppy and so black. But then they asked what else, because they'd been thinking about lots of outfits, almost a different one each week. Which is new. I love it! The Doctor has travelled all of time and space; they're going to have a sick wardrobe."

And with Gatwa's adoring praise (although 'slut' may be a little wide of the mark) regarding Jon Pertwee's third Doctor ringing in our ears, what better time to revisit my personal favourite incarnation of the Gallifreyan space/time drifter.

I confess not to be a regular viewer of the revived series; in fact, I gradually disengaged towards the end of Tom Baker's long run (1974-1981). After all, it's essentially a kids' show, and when I hit my mid-teens I had a lot more on my mind than silly monsters and daft plots, although the occasional comely assistant (step forward Nicola Bryant's Perpugilliam 'Peri' Brown) would draw my attention back to Whovian affairs.

"SO YOU'RE MY REPLACEMENTS – A DANDY AND A CLOWN."

William Hartnell as #1 in *The Three Doctors* (1972), addressing Jon Pertwee and predecessor Patrick Troughton.

Although all Doctors had their unique sartorial quirks, Pertwee's third incarnation (the first in colour, excluding the Peter Cushing movies)

easily tops the list as the best dressed, not least because he regularly changed his outfit during his stint (1970-74, second in length only to Baker) in the role. He also avoided the terrible tailoring of Doctors 5 (Peter Davison), 6 (Colin Baker) and 7 (Sylvester McCoy), who variously preferred cricket sweaters, Riddler-style motifs and self-consciously Harlequin-esque patchwork outfits.

Pertwee favoured velvet suits, ruffled shirts, jabots, capes, bow ties and very nice fitted black leather boots and driving gloves. And even better was that this is what the actor wore in real life, using his own wardrobe for the first photoshoot as the Doctor in 1969. The result was a blend of early 1970s raffishness and Edwardian gentleman; Jerry Cornelius meets Adam Adamant, with a hint of Christopher Lee's Dracula when togged out in his black and red ensemble.

Another plus point for me was the baddies in the Pertwee-era *Doctor Who* – a time which saw the introduction of The Master, the Autons, Sontarans, the Silurians, the Sea Devils and, my personal favourites, The Daemons. This bunch of demonic miscreants drew, to my mind, inspiration from Nigel Kneale's *Quatermass & The Pit* and folk horror films popular at the time, in the story of an archaeological dig at the infamous Devil's Hump in the quaint village of Devil's End, which unearths an ancient evil – as opposed to the usual old clay pipe or discarded comb. *The Daemons* features the now classic





So you're my replacements – a dandy and a clown

scene where Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart (Nicholas Courtney) orders one of his UNIT troopers to unleash fire at one of the capering winged imps: “Chap with wings there. Five rounds rapid!”

Fellow Gallifreyan the Master, who continues to plague the Doctor, also features in the final 5-episode story in season 8 (1971), played by Pertwee’s close friend Roger Delgado, whose death in a car accident in 1973 was cited by the actor as a reason for him deciding to leave the

show the following year, coupled with the lack of a substantial pay rise. Delgado was replaced by several noted thespians, including Anthony Ainley, Eric Roberts, Derek Jacobi, John Simm, Michelle Gomez and Sacha Dhawan.

And, pre-empting the X-Files by decades, Pertwee’s tenure was principally confined to Earth-bound stories, as his Time Lord superiors had exiled The Doctor to *Terra Firma* for various misdemeanours, although by later seasons he was once again given free rein to roam the spaceways. During his exile on Earth, the Doctor worked closely with UNIT (United Nations Intelligence Taskforce) in investigating strange phenomena and inexplicable events. Mainly, it must be said, in the Home Counties.

As a personality, the Third Doctor was more three-dimensional than some other versions; he could be alternately kind, querulous, chivalrous, patronising, short-tempered, humorous and arrogant. Despite this, he managed to inspire a strong degree of loyalty and affection among his companions and allies. Not exactly a father figure, but certainly not the eccentric penny-whistling tramp of Troughton’s previous Doctor. Or the



Careful – this daemon is more dangerous than he looks!



Ncuti Gatwa – the Dandy Doctor returns

occasionally borderline sociopath of Tom Baker's cheerfully unhinged interpretation.

Pertwee the man hailed from ancient Huguenot noble stock; he once claimed that he should really be styled 'Jon de Perthuis de Laillevault' but was happy to mix it with the proles. A seasoned raconteur, Pertwee always provided good value on the chat show/*Doctor Who* convention circuit, playing up his imaginary rivalry with Troughton. Like Troughton, and Doctor #5 Peter Davison, Pertwee had offspring who also achieved acting fame, in his case son Sean, who is rarely off our screens. Davison's daughter Georgia is married to Doctor #10 David Tennant.

Pertwee worked with 007 creator Ian Fleming in Naval Intelligence at one point during WWII, where he "did all sorts. Teaching commandos how to use escapology equipment, compasses in brass buttons, secret maps in white cotton handkerchiefs, pipes you could smoke that also fired a .22 bullet. All sorts of incredible things." He also claimed a nice sideline in flogging off Winston Churchill's old cigar butts – and deliberately muffing an interview to be a liaison with the Free French (no fan of De Gaulle he), only to find he had missed out on a posting to Tahiti.

Of course, no article on Pertwee could be complete without a mention of his other most famous role, an almost anti-Doctor (in terms of both intelligence and dress sense), the TV series version of Barbara Euphan Todd's *Worzel Gummidge* (ITV, 1979-1981, C4, 1986-1989).

Whereas Pertwee's Third Doctor would expound on weighty matters such as how to, "reverse the polarity of the neutron flow," Gummidge had more mundane concerns, chiefly the acquisition of, "A cup o' tea an' a slice o' cake." If not forthcoming, he would angrily exclaim, "I'll be bum-swizzled." Regarding attire, the contrast could hardly be more marked, the dapper Doctor vs the dishevelled scarecrow, in his pocket a field mouse instead of a sonic screwdriver.

Rather than senior Time Lords, Gummidge was overseen by his kindly creator The Crowman, played by Geoffrey Bayldon, best known as scatter-brained time-travelling medieval wizard *Catweazle*.

With Ncuti Gatwa following in Pertwee's footsteps as a Dandy Doctor, could he also one day essay a Gummidge-type character? Only The Time Lords know. And, presumably, Gatwa's agent. ■