


of pottery production. The tour began in the museum showcasing key events in the pottery's history with displays of its famous ranges. The museum provided information about the people instrumental in making Poole Pottery one of the most creative 20th century producers of ceramics.

Touring the factory gave visitors a view of the life of a piece of tableware from the beginning to the end. Specially adapted telephones explained everything including firing, slip casting, hand decoration, quality control and back stamping with the unique dolphin insignia. There was also a chance to see the kilns and a simulated kiln tunnel which, if in action, was more than 11 times hotter than a boiling kettle.

The final part of the experience was the craft village featuring demonstrations, including some by Poole Pottery's master potter. Having learned from the experts, guests could throw their own pot or paint a piece of pottery. Visits were completed by securing bargains in the shop followed by refreshments in the tearooms or the sophisticated restaurant.

In the latter part of the 20th century, the business was subjected to corporate acquisitions, becoming part of Pilkington's Tiles in 1964, the Thomas Tilling Group in 1971, British Tyre and Rubber in 1983, and became independent Poole Pottery Limited in 1992. It went into administration in the early 2000s. Now most Poole Pottery production takes place in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire.

My family's passion for traditional Poole pottery and the ranges of the 1960s and 70s stem from my wife's grandmother who was one of the factory women working for Carter, Stabler and Adams in the 1920s and 30s. The items still take our breath away. The world has moved on and few houses have space for large collections of these gorgeous pieces. The spirit of Jesse Carter and Poole Pottery is kept alive through the talks and meetings of the Poole Pottery Collectors Club (0845 463 2209, poolepotterycollectorsclub.uk).

A walk along Poole Quay these days conveys little about the eminent past of the family of Jesse Carter and the prodigious Poole Pottery. While a pottery shop remains open, the quay is no longer dominated by a busy and noisy pottery factory nor by countless day trippers keen to take home a ceramic souvenir made on the quay. Instead, tourists sit in cafes where the factory once stood and gaze at the marina or admire the luxurious boats being manufactured on the far side of the quay. I wonder what Jesse Carter would think about this scene, 150 years after he started his business. 

ON TARGET



Russell Cook browses through 50 years of a publishing phenomenon



Knight, Piccolo, Puffin, Armada, Corgi. All nouns in their own right, they are also the names given to various children's book publishing imprints of the 1960s and 70s. See one of these logos today on the spine of a book and you are most likely to be in a secondhand bookshop or browsing the wares of a Sunday morning car-boot sale.

The Famous Five, The Secret Seven, Biggles, Jennings, and the Just William stories are all under the banner of those iconic publishing emblems. However, there is one imprint that is often forgotten and overlooked – step forward the Target Books brand. It was created in 1973 by Universal-Tandem Publishing with the

intention of producing a wide and varied children's selection of titles, both fiction and non-fiction, to be published in paperback.

To begin with, the back catalogue consisted of buying up titles that were long out of print and to republish and rebrand them in accessible and friendly editions to attract the attention of children who were looking for something a little different. The cachet was to appeal to the more inquisitive reader and titles such as Investigating UFOs and The Story of the Loch Ness Monster would be marketed to

Top: A selection of Target's non-Doctor Who output including early releases The Story of the Loch Ness Monster. **Right:** The input, creativity, originality and accessible prose style of Terrance Dicks resulted in 64 Doctor Who novelisations between 1974 and 1990.



appeal to the hide-behind-the-sofa brigade who liked good unsolved and creepy mysteries that could be lurking just around the corner of a vivid imagination.

Target books got off to a slow start and, despite publishing titles by such literary royalty as Elisabeth Beresford and Spike Milligan, the range was missing the big seller, the title that could propel the burgeoning imprint to stand proudly alongside the likes of other family favourites.

However, things took a positive turn towards the bestseller lists when a canny employee of Universal-Tandem acquired the rights to three hardback novelisations of early Doctor Who stories starring William Hartnell, which were long out of print.

Published in the mid-1960s by the publisher Frederick Muller, they had achieved modest success in libraries and two of the three titles were long out of print.

In May 1973, paperback Target editions of Doctor Who and the Daleks, the Zarbi and the Crusaders made their way on to the bookshelves with new colourful psychedelic covers by Chris Achilleos. They sold like hot cakes and anyone who has enjoyed a hot cake often utters the phrase: "More please!" A publishing phenomenon was born. Very soon a deal was struck with the BBC through the Doctor Who production office.

At the time Jon Pertwee was playing the Doctor and was at the height of his popularity, so the first two titles naturally were adaptations of his first two stories, though renamed as the Auton Invasion and the Cave Monsters as these were considered more exciting than their television counterparts Spearhead from Space and Doctor Who and the Silurians.

Wherever possible, the original writers of the screenplays were contacted to adapt their tales into books. If a writer declined then the novelisation duties usually fell to a former script editor of Doctor Who, Terrance Dicks.

"I'd always wanted to write a book," Terrance once said as he tackled his first tale. One book turned into 64 novelisations between 1974 and 1990. Without his input, creativity, originality and accessible prose style, the Doctor Who book range could easily have just been a drop in the publishing ocean as opposed to a tidal wave of bestselling books that kept the Target imprint going at a time when the parent company



In addition to its novelisation of television stories, Target's Doctor Who range included several factual titles.

was struggling in a very competitive publishing industry.

At their peak, the Doctor Who novelisations were being published virtually monthly. Tom Baker had taken over from Jon Pertwee and the focus was on novelising the stories that had recently been on television as quickly as possible. For a few years Terrance was kept very busy, and the books became more than a full-time commitment.

“ There was just one thing missing: the Target symbol in all its blue, yellow and red glory. ”

With the books raking in a considerable amount of money for the Target imprint which was eventually taken over by WH Allen & Co, then much later by the then fledgling Virgin Books, those behind the success story did not rest on their laurels. Target continued to publish a wide variety of other series including The Mounties and Star Quest series, both by Terrance Dicks, but the imprint's main continuing success was the novelisation.

In the mid-1980s, Target capitalised on the success of The A-Team, Knight Rider, and Street Hawk which were riding high in the television ratings. However, these book adventures never made it to double figures. Other novelisations, such as the teenage children's series Galloping Galaxies! – by Rentaghost creator Bob Block – clip-clopped out of the publisher's bargain before trotting off to the nearest stabby bookshop.

During this time, the Doctor Who

novelisations continued to be published and continued to sell, many now being written by the original authors of the screenplays though the reliable Terrance Dicks was at hand in the case of a writer not being around or available to adapt their work.

By the 1990s, the home video market had taken off. Twenty-six years of available Doctor Who adventures were gradually appearing in VHS form on the shelves of Our Price Records and WH Smith. This coincided with Target books reaching the end of the line as regards new novelisations. By 1993, all stories that were available to be turned into prose form had been published. For a while, the Target range continued with many titles being reissued with new covers

to attract new readers, but sales were dwindling, not helped by the television series having seemingly ended in 1989. VHS was capturing the next generation of Doctor Who fans and, in early 1994, the last reprint was published and the iconic Target symbol in all its forms ceased.

Time travel forward 17 years to 2011 and Doctor Who is back on television. In the publishing world, Penguin Random House and one of its imprints, BBC Books, reissued six classic novelisations including Doctor Who and the Daleks and Doctor Who and the Auton Invasion, complete with the original covers painted by Chris Achilleos. They sold well enough for several more titles to be released the following year.

These, plus subsequent releases, were Target books... almost. There was just one thing missing: the Target symbol in all its blue, yellow and red glory. The books felt like imposters on the shelves – duplicates, copies.

Then, in 2018, after the success of the reprints, it was announced that novelisations of a new series of stories were to be published. Titles such as Rose, and The Day of the Doctor officially joined the Target family with the return of that logo that meant – and still means – so much to many.

Here we are in 2023 celebrating 60 years of Doctor Who. The show is well and truly back, as is Target. The novelisations continue with more announced for 2024. Back in 1973, a half century ago, a marketing decision was made. "Let's call the range Target." We, as readers, will be eternally grateful, with memories born, never to die. Happy half a century, Target. 🎆