

A FUNNY thing happened to Janet Fielding on the way to the airport . . . she was hoisted on to the Tardis, and that's how she comes to be Doctor Who's latest assistant tonight at 5.10.

She's 17th in line on the programme that's been running 17 years and become more an international way of life than a TV show.

And it is the programme's worldwide popularity that has persuaded the BBC to employ its first ever non-British assistant.

Janet, 23, came from Brisbane, Australia, three years ago to tour with a play and never went home.

"I was 20, had just finished university and though I'd never trained as an actress, I was very involved in student theatre. A group of us from my university were working with a writer-director who wanted to bring our show to England so I came.

"I love England but the weather! When I was at home I just took it for granted that every day was sunny, I never thought I'd miss it.

"But there is a lot here that makes up for the weather. I've even persuaded my mother to spend her holidays here.

"She's staying with me now and I'm showing her the parts of the countryside I've got to know well while touring."

Hiding

But they are back in the Putney flat she shares with a friend for today and together they will watch Janet's TV launch.

"We will celebrate by drinking champagne together. Though I'll probably be hiding behind the sofa!"

Not only is it the first time they've had an Australian assistant on the show but the first time this Australian has been on TV.

**JANICE
MORLEY
meets the
new girl
aboard
the Tardis**



Bossy Janet . . . overjoyed to be acting in the space saga she loved as a child

I'm bossy enough to take on two doctors!

"I've concentrated on the theatre up until now but I went for the audition when they asked for a bossy, vulnerable person and got it. "My friends all said I really ought to go in for it—I'm bossy enough for the part!"

What tickles Janet about landing this job is that she is actually acting in a programme she watched avidly as a child, never dreaming she'd grow up to be in it.

With her three brothers she used to be glued to the family set; "Even Dad watched. He's a scientist and enjoys that sort of science fiction fun."

Her brothers went on to be a doctor, a dentist and a trainee doctor but the science fiction theme stuck in Janet's blood.

"I took 'A' levels in maths, physics and chemistry,

I've always been interested in the structure of things, how the universe happens."

And one of her longest runs in the theatre since she has lived here has been with the Science Fiction Theatre of Liverpool.

"We had some lovely, fantastic stories to act. There was a monk who invented a machine that made all the vegetables grow larger, and enormous carrots appeared on set.

"Then there was one play where a bloke brings his ancestors back from the dead and casts them into the future. Very weird."

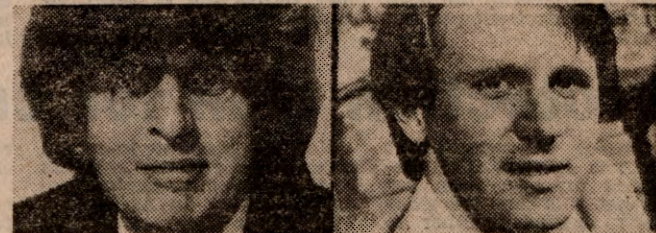
Dr Who seems a natural follow on and will keep her very happy during her two-year contract.

Janet has done the first episodes with Tom Baker as the Doctor but is also looking

special effects, it's nice being a bit zany."

It will be a while before this episode gets shown in Australia: "It gives me time to let my friends at home know when to watch—we were brought up on Dr Who."

And, it seems, so were 100 million TV viewers in 37 countries. An awful lot of people are going to be watching Miss Janet Fielding climbing aboard the Tardis—including her mother if she can coax Janet to come out from behind the sofa.



A Who's Who of time travellers . . . Tom Baker (left) and his TV successor Peter Davison

forward to Peter Davison taking over.

“They’re a really nice cast to work with. It’s so different to the theatre, there are cameras and microphones everywhere but everyone makes me feel at home.”

Janet plays assistant Tegan in an astral purple and silver air hostess costume: “I love wearing it. I love all the