

2005 – THE YEAR OF DOCTOR WHO !

Sometimes life surprises you. And perhaps, just occasionally, life can really amaze you.....

Regular readers of *Magna* have, over the past two or three years, had to endure various articles I have written about *Doctor Who*, including two earlier this year. In March I ‘promoted’ its return, whilst in May I looked both back at the extraordinary and immediate impact it had established, and forward to the second half of the series. “Event television” only happens two or three times a year, but there can be no doubt that is exactly what the return of *Doctor Who* was. Huge viewing figures (knocking Ant & Dec off their lofty perch), fantastic stories, critical acclaim and a truly extraordinary season finale with 500,000 Daleks defeated, and the Doctor regenerated. Suddenly that creaky old cult sci-fi show that people happily derided was mainstream family drama, helping to re-invent Saturday nights!

On June 15th, 3 days before it was shown on BBC1, Leo and I were fortunate enough to join the great and the good to watch the world premiere of the Season One finale “The Parting of the Ways”



on the big screen at BAFTA in Piccadilly – and those Dalek spaceships were mighty impressive! Afterwards Leo met, amongst others, Russell T. Davies (Executive Producer and Main Writer), John Barrowman (Captain Jack Harkness), Camille Coduri (Jackie Tyler) and Noel Clarke (Mickey). They were all so kind to him, they signed autographs, they happily talked to him (and his old man), Camille even made sure Leo joined her in the bar for a Coke after

the screening and Q&A session!! Top people, one of the very best ever nights of his life. When I spoke to RTD (or as he is affectionately known amongst fans Russell Tea Lady) I thanked him for all he had done and for allowing me to be a ‘fan’ again in middle age. I finished off by saying that I looked forward to six months of ‘normality’ before the screening of the first ever Christmas special. But normality never returned.....

Filming started again in July and ever since the series seems to have had wall-to-wall coverage, regularly featuring on the front pages of the ‘red tops’. The return of K9; the announcement of a new spin-off series called “Torchwood”, set to air in the autumn of 2006 and starring John Barrowman reprising his role as Captain Jack; the unveiling of the ‘new’ Cybermen; the will she/won’t she be leaving saga surrounding Billie Piper. It appears that the most in demand Christmas present this year is set to be the 12 inch remote-controlled Dalek! Then a special 5 minute scene, watched by some 11 million people, was screened on ‘Children In Need’ on November 18th – set directly after the regeneration it proved to be a perfect way to briefly meet David Tennant as the 10th Doctor, as well as offering two important continuity links: prefacing that this is going to be a ‘difficult’ regeneration (as a little throw away for fans we also saw the return of the much loved ‘Cloister Bell’), it also set up the fact that the TARDIS is going to land in London on Christmas Eve (although it will be year 2006!)



And so we come to “The Christmas Invasion”. To be screened primetime on BBC1 on Christmas Night, this hour long special will **fully** introduce us to the 10th Doctor as well as see him and Rose battle against the evil Sycorax. And then of course next spring there is the brand new series to look forward to. There can be no doubt that 2005 really has been the year of Doctor Who. Merry Christmas everyone !

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