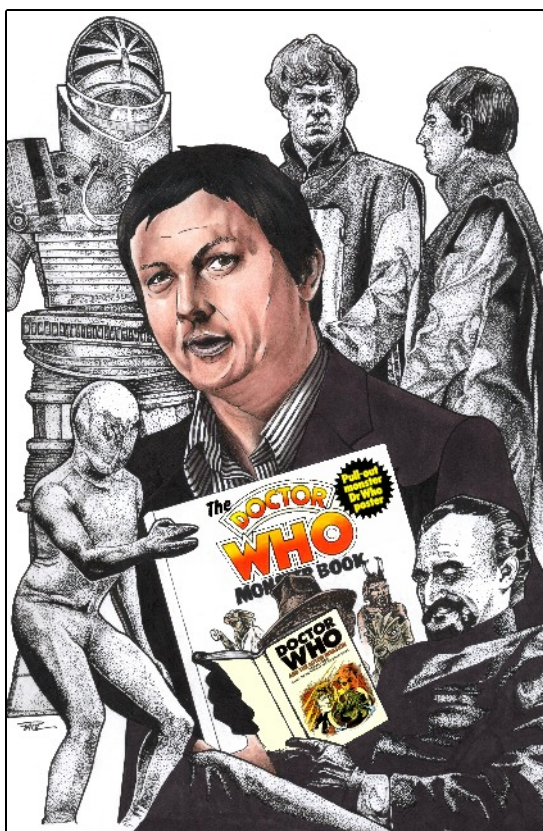


TERRANCE DICKS

A TRIBUTE



FEATURING:
CHRIS ACHILLEOS
JOHN LEVENE
JOHN PEEL
GARY RUSSELL
AND MANY MORE

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A TRIBUTE



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2019

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In Memory of
Terrance Dicks
14th April 1935 – 29th August 2019



Adrian Salmon

Gary Russell

He was the first person I ever interviewed on stage at a convention. He was the first “famous” home phone number I was ever given. He was the first person to write to me when I became DWM editor to say congratulations. He was a friend, a fellow grumpy old git, we argued deliciously on a tour of Australian conventions on every panel about the Master/Missy thing. The last time I saw him to talk to at length was at the launch for the Target cover art expo in London – wow that was 2016. I must have seen him since, surely – anyway we continued a previous convo there about the McGann TV Movie “it’s still shit, Gary” he said, in an effort to shut me down. So I embarrassed him by giving him a big hug and loudly saying “don’t ever change you miserable bastard”. You taught me to look up words in dictionaries when I was ten, you taught me to write when I was twenty and you never forgot me throughout my life. And I’ll never ever forget you or your kindness and friendship. I loved you Terrance.



John Peel

I can definitely remember the first time I knew who Terrance Dicks was. It was in 1972, in a newsagent’s shop in Nottingham. Every Saturday, I would catch the bus into town and it stopped just outside the door of the shop. I’d pop in, and head for the back of the shop. In the

far corner, they had stacks of books piled up, and I'd browse through them for anything interesting. On this particular day, I found a copy of a book called *The Making of Doctor Who*, written by Malcolm Hulke and Terrance Dicks. I had been watching the show throughout its run, and this was definitely a book to own! So I bought it, and had read most of it by the time I reached home.

I'm sure I had seen his name in the show's credits, but I hadn't paid much attention to credits at that point, so it had never really sunk in. But with a book – a real book – in my hands, the name *did* sink in. So, two years later when *Doctor Who And The Auton Invasion* came out, I recognised the author's name. And promptly bought (and thoroughly enjoyed) the book. And the next sixty or so he wrote... I used to scour the book stores (mostly WHSmith) in search of each new Target Book, never knowing when the next one might be found. (I didn't really need an excuse to hunt through book stores, but every little excuse helps.) He wrote TV stories, too, of course, but somehow it was always the Target Books that mattered the most.

There was a dip in quality eventually, but even the slim, large typeface stories had their appeal. And there were also his non-Who books... I really loved his 'Mounties' series (so much so that the only autographed book of his I have is the first in that series). He really knew how to write exciting books, even though by this point I was well over the 'suggested reading age' – for a

Terrance Dicks book, *every* age was appropriate.

Then I became a writer myself, thanks in large part to another writer whose name I knew from a young age, Terry Nation. And I eventually wound up writing the very first original *Doctor Who* novel. The very second was written by none other than Terrance Dicks...

It's a funny thing that a lot of people assumed I knew Terrance, but I never actually met him until L.I. Who in 2014. Met him? I got to interview him. It was then I discovered why everybody who knew him loved him: he was funny, charming, kind and just absolutely interesting. Any question I asked him, he had a witty and enthralling reply to.

For example:

Did it bother him that I had written the first original *Doctor Who* novel, and he did the second? Not at all. 'I knew the first one would get all the flak. It was better to be second.'

So, what about *Moonbase 3*? 'Are you going to bring up all of my failures?'

He just wowed the audience – and me.

I have never heard anyone say a bad word about Terrance – and, in the writing business, that's incredibly rare.

An amazing number of people say that they learned to read and enjoy books because of Terrance. For a writer, what better tribute could be offered? He entertained and inspired an awful lot of people. Isn't that a wonderful thing to say about anyone? He was

everyone's 'Uncle Terry'.

I haven't even touched on his *real* job, as script-editor for the entire run of Jon Pertwee's Doctor. Just look at all the wonderful stories that he oversaw. Much as I love other eras of the show, the Pertwee era had one amazing fact: there's not a single bad story in it. Oh, there are some that aren't as good as others, but there are none that are cringe-worthy. And just look at the classics that he oversaw: *The Three Doctors*; *The Daemons*; *The Sea Devils*; *Inferno*; *Carnival of Monsters* ... And the ones he actually wrote, including fan favourites like *Horror of Fang Rock*, *State of Decay* and one of my own personal greats, *The Brain of Morbius*.

And then there's the one thing I accused him of when we met: creating *Doctor Who* fandom. That one puzzled him, until I explained my reasoning: his *The Making of Doctor Who*. Up until that point, the fans didn't have any information on the older shows, as there were no 'episode guides'. He provided one. And, as a result, fans finally could argue about which the best stories and best Doctor were...

It made him laugh. And he made us feel so very much.

Thank you, Uncle Terry: your work and influence live on.

John Levene

Ladies and gentlemen, whatever your age, there are a

couple of things that you need to know – things that we rarely talk about.

On a TV show it is usually the star that gets all the attention, but behind all this you'll find the producers, directors, screen writers and script editors. Now, this is where Mr Terrance Dicks comes in!

When someone passes away, we're unlikely to say that we absolutely dislike the deceased, or they did nothing good for me. Well, I'm very happy to say the absolute opposite is the truth of Mr Terrance Dicks.

When I first met Terrance he was enchanted by my innocence. I wasn't a trained actor. I had no theatre, no stage, no voice training. No nothing! I was just a menswear salesman coming from Salisbury to the big city.

Then I realised that, as a support actor, you live and die on the words given to you. Terrance didn't write lots of screenplays, but he certainly edited many. In a way, although I often rave about Douglas Camfield for spotting me, Barry Letts for listening to Douglas Camfield, and Jon Pertwee for putting his creative arms around me, it is Terrance who is the fifth brick in the wall. Without him, I would not have been the success I was. And I don't mean financially successful (at £80 an episode you hardly call it buying three houses. It was a miserable existence on a very low wage), but I would like to offer creative gratitude to Terrance for giving me lines like... Well, I'm not going to quote them. You already know them.

Terrance took large stories and made them smaller. The poignant moments he chose, the incredible understanding of the actors, in terms of Jon Pertwee, Roger Delgado, Nicholas Courtney – he is the one that gave us the lines, he is the one that managed to make us look so good.

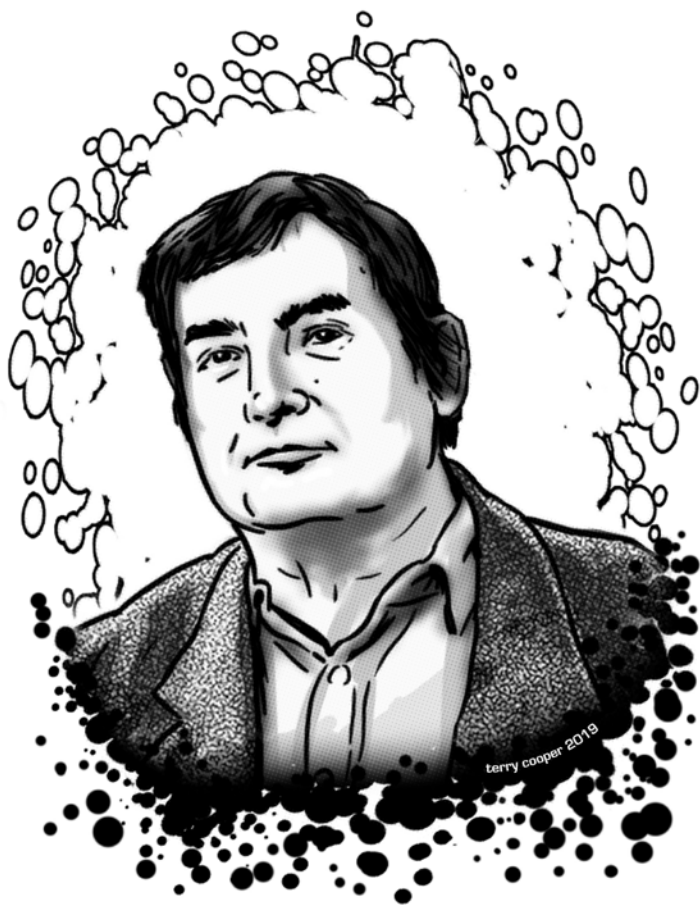
So, ladies and gentlemen, readers young and old, I had the privilege of being written for, written about, edited positively by Mr Terrance Dicks. Terrance is the great mind behind the success of *Doctor Who*, when it reached the zenith of its popularity back in the '60s and the '70s, with Tom Baker, Jon Pertwee and, of course, Pat Troughton.

In closing, Terrance Dicks, I'll never be able to thank you, so maybe I'll just say 'God Bless You' and you are now at rest. Your pen is still, but your words will flourish for the rest of the world, and the rest of time, because *Doctor Who* will never die.

Nick Walters

I know for absolute certain that I am not the only writer who will say that Terrance Dicks was a major, if not the major, inspiration for their career. His books, with their clarity of prose, vivid descriptions, and economic yet evocative renditions of televised *Doctor Who* stories, were our bread and butter.

One of the first *Doctor Who* books I ever read was his novelisation of *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*. It begins with the



Terry Cooper

line, 'Through the ruin of a city stalked the ruin of a man.' An opening line worthy of comparison with the likes of 'It was a bright, cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.' (In fact, Dicks' line has aged rather better, considering the widespread adoption of the 24-hour clock since Orwell wrote. But I digress.) It pulls you immediately into the story, you're interested straight away: where was this city, why was it ruined, and what – chillingly – can the 'ruin of a man' be? So much information and impact, in just that one line. Terrance taught us so much about writing and how to construct a story.

He is a great loss not merely to the world of *Doctor Who*, but to the whole of literature.

Adrian Sherlock

With a strange, wheezing and groaning sound, a figure loomed out of the swirling green fog and stalked menacingly towards us. He had a pleasant, open face and was that mysterious storyteller of time and space known as Uncle Terrance. Armed with an impossibly large ability to write exciting stories, this enigmatic stranger was soon to become an integral part of childhood for a whole generation of young readers growing up in the 1970s and '80s, kids who were hooked on the adventures of *Doctor Who*.

Where does one begin to measure the life and legacy of a man like Terrance Dicks? He was a humble man, from all accounts, displaying a delightful, self-effacing

sense of humour in interviews. He once said writing was the only thing he could do and if he hadn't been a writer, he would have ended up a dustman. He also claimed his life had been an incredibly lucky one, chance meetings with mentor and friend Malcolm Hulke and temporary *Doctor Who* producer Derek Sherwin leading him to get opportunities which set him on the path to become a writer in the final season of Patrick Troughton's era on *Doctor Who*. When he became script editor on the series for the Pertwee era, he claimed it was rather like becoming cabin boy on the Titanic. But as is often the case in life, it's not the opportunity which matters, but the quality of the work a person puts into it.

Terrance Dicks, along with producer Barry Letts, worked hard to make a success of the Pertwee era of *Doctor Who*.

The series had begun life with the Doctor trying to get two teachers back to 1960s London, only to land in many periods of Earth history instead. But Terry Nation's Dalek serials had been the biggest hits. Innes Lloyd had eventually done away with the history and brought in many new monsters, as alternatives to the Daleks. But around the time Terrance Dicks arrived, there was another subtle shift in the series focus. Villains such as Tobias Vaughn started getting the most screen time, while Cybermen and other monsters were pushed into the background. In *The War Games*, written by Dicks and Hulke, a bad member of the Doctor's own race, the Time Lords, was the trouble maker. And when Barry Letts

decided a Professor Moriarty was needed, Dicks came up with the ultimate villain, the worst Time Lord of them all, naming him the Master.

The Doctor and the Master lifted *Doctor Who* to new heights in the '70s, and before he and Letts left the show, they made sure the future of the '70s was well set up with Tom Baker, Philip Hinchcliffe and Robert Holmes set to take over. The show was now well and truly about villains and had become a series which could claim to not only enthrall children, but also hold adult viewers thanks to its intelligent scripting and well devised characters and themes.

But Terrance Dicks was not done with *Doctor Who*. His greatest legacy was yet to come. In between writing half a dozen serials for the show, including the classic *Horror of Fang Rock* and the 20th anniversary special *The Five Doctors*, Terrance novelised sixty-four *Doctor Who* stories for Target books. He had no editor, he just wrote the scripts into book form and Target published them. The remarkable thing about the novelisations is the quality of the writing. The pace is absolutely unflagging, the prose is simple, direct and crisp, the approach is always intelligent, good-humoured and suspenseful and never patronising.

Young readers who loved the *Doctor Who* series were able to pick up these books and be drawn in right away, finding themselves swept along by exciting stories. Uncle Terrance's authorial voice always made children feel

welcome and understood, yet his books were also great fun for older readers.

For me, personally, I recall very clearly picking up *The Android Invasion* and *Planet of the Daleks*, both adapted by Terrance from Terry Nation serials, bringing them home from my local news agent and reading them quickly and excitedly. They were the first two chapter books I ever read. I went from being a somewhat weak reader to someone who could get through one of Terrance's books in a few days. By the end of high school, I was able to read one in a day.

A few years later, studying literature and professional writing, I probably knew deep down inside that it was Terrance Dicks who had taught me to love reading and shown me the example of how to write. There was a time in the wilderness years, between the end of classic *Doctor Who* and the 2005 revival, when original *Doctor Who* books began to aim for meatier, deeper, darker, more adult-oriented material. During this time, some fan reviewers began to dismiss the Terrance Dicks canon as rather simple and possibly naive or twee. However, this seemed to thankfully pass and in the last decade or so, there has been a new appreciation for the important impact of Terrance Dicks and his enormous contribution to *Doctor Who* fiction.

Outside of *Doctor Who*, Terrance wrote a wide array of other works, dealing with all manner of topics. He also did other TV work, script editing the classic serial

for Barry Letts, including Tom Baker's turn as Sherlock Holmes in *Hound of the Baskervilles*, editing for Letts again on *Moon Base 3* and perhaps showing us how *Moon Base 3* might have been had he been allowed to be more adventurous when he contributed an episode to the Gerry Anderson series *Space: 1999*. *Moon Base 3* often dealt with psychological issues with people in space and Terrance gave the hero of *Space 1999* an emotional breakdown, something which series star Martin Landau appeared to throw himself into with great commitment.

I've often looked at my own influences as a writer and while I can count and name a few, there's no doubt the first and most significant influence was Terrance Dicks. I've got to know a lot of writers who have written *Doctor Who* spin-offs and tie-ins and I am sure they all feel indebted to Terrance Dicks.

In fact, deep down inside, I'm willing to bet we are all secretly longing to be another Terrance Dicks. With his passing, we have lost a giant, a very humble and understated giant, but a man of enormous influence and significance all the same. *Doctor Who* would have been a poorer thing without him. His contributions were rich and far reaching. He touched the lives of people, young and old, all around the world.

Our Uncle Terrance said he got very lucky in his life and career, but I think it is actually us, the public, the fans, who really got lucky. We were lucky to have him, to receive all the good he shared with us. Thank

you, Terrance Dicks, farewell and godspeed, sir, may you rest in peace, great storyteller of time and space.

Rick Cross

As an Army brat bouncing around the US throughout my childhood, I got to know the inestimable Terrance Dicks via *Doctor Who* novelisations long before I grasped that the curly-haired fellow I'd seen on PBS wasn't *always* the Doctor. I was an omnivorous young reader, devouring a novel every 2-3 days, so my parents surprised me one Christmas with all ten volumes of Pinnacle Books' Target reissues... likely to keep me out of their hair until school started up again.

In a week, I'd read the entire stack, six of them by Terrance Dicks. I was hooked, not just by the Doctor's exploits but by the joyous, propulsive writing of the franchise's most prolific literary steward. When I finally absorbed his TV era, it was proof positive that good writers can write well in any medium, so long as they serve the needs of their characters and audiences equally. Terrance always did that.

Now, at 52, I find myself returning often to those gems I discovered during that long-ago holiday, and they still satisfy.

People praise Dicks for helping ensure generations of British kids grew up as readers and advocates of the written word. He did that for some of us on this side of the pond, too.

Chris Achilleos

When I met Terrance Dicks a couple of years ago, I found him to be quiet and modest, although if my memory serves me correct he did like his wine.

At the time, the BBC were reprinting the Target novelisations, and Terrance was very grateful for this. He said that every now and then a cheque would arrive through the post, and he asked me if I got the same, but I said 'no'. I just got paid for the cover once and that was it.



I do believe that my work complemented his and vice versa. We were bound together. When I visit conventions people often say that they bought the books for the covers, but upon reading Terrance's wonderful words they got hooked. These were kids that had never read a book in the life, but they started off on this road because of *Doctor Who* books. This is a lovely thing to hear. At the time you couldn't get *Doctor Who* on video, so Terrance and I that filled the gap. This seems to

matter a lot to people.

I am really saddened by the news, but I am sure his legacy will live on.

George Ivanoff

'Kriz was dying.' [*Doctor Who and the Brain of Morbius*]

'It moved through the silent blackness of deep space like a giant jellyfish through the depths of the sea.'
[*Doctor Who and the Claws of Axos*]

'The planet was alive.' [*Doctor Who: The Planet of Evil*]

Terrance Dicks knew how to grab a young reader with his first sentence and keep them reading, desperate to find out what happened next, unwilling to put the book down until every last word had been devoured.

As a kid, he inspired me to read, with his *Doctor Who* novelisations. I hung on his every word.

As a kid, he inspired me to write. After reading his books, I began to write my own *Doctor Who* stories. Yes, they were pretty dreadful bits of fan fiction, but they taught me that writing could be fun. Such an important lesson.

So then I grew up and became a writer. And Terrance Dicks continued to inspire me. I would read his work and see the genius of its construction. His carefully worded opening sentences and paragraphs, designed to hook in the reader. The shorthand descriptions that immediately brought characters to life within the short word-count of a Target novelisation. The way he

provided insight on motivations and the way he expanded stories beyond the budgetary limitations of the television series.

I would look at his career and marvel at his professionalism and his ability to produce so much while maintaining quality and enthusiasm and a love of his craft. Something I strive for in my own career. He became my writing hero.

Now, when I run school writing workshops that focus on structure, Terrance Dicks always gets a mention. I read out what I believe to be one of the greatest opening lines, ever.

'Through the ruin of a city, stalked the ruin of a man.'
[*Doctor Who and the Dalek Invasion of Earth*]

Although the Terrance is now gone, his writing remains. I can pick up and read his words whenever I want. I can recommend his books to other readers. I can use his words as an example when I am teaching.

I never met Terrance Dicks. I never knew him as a person. But I knew him as a writer. And to that writer I would like to say...

You inspired me to read.

You inspired me to write.

And for that, I am forever in your debt.

But the final words, I shall leave to Terrance Dicks, the writer...

'The doors closed, there was a wheezing groaning sound, and the TARDIS faded away.' [*Doctor Who and the Brain of Morbius*]

James Middleditch

Like many, I feel like I've lived my whole life with Terrance Dicks being a part of it. To me, he is the epitome of cosiness. He represents everything comforting and joyous about *Doctor Who* and reading, connecting my adult-self back to my child-self, and that archetypal image of a boy curled up with a book, lost in the rapture of experiencing a new *Doctor Who* story from before he was born.

Much has been and will be written about Terrance Dicks as a Target writer, and quite rightly so. But we should also remember that he was much more than that. In my teenage years, his words would also push forward the stunning print Universe of The New Adventures, where he seemed to combine the familiarity of his clear prose style with some surprisingly bold new directions. He wrote for the darker Seventh Doctor, Ace and Benny as confidently and brilliantly as the writers known for the more 'radical' elements of the series, and he resurrected his old creations in new and dynamic ways.

The wisdom and twinkling joy with which he spoke about *Doctor Who* would also become fundamental to the experience of the series in the 1990s through documentaries and the 2000s through the DVD range. Somehow he could find the exact concise phrase for a Doctor, an era, for the series itself. His vocal patterns and inflections are as familiar as those phrases themselves. I only have to conjure that voice, and those words, and I smile.

I was lucky enough, as many of us have been, to meet Terrance at a couple of events. The first was at my very first convention in 1994; I had been so nervous attending, as a terribly shy fourteen-year-old, but he was so genuinely calm and friendly, I felt empowered to chat to him, as if the difference in age and experience was nothing.

The second time was at the launch of the BBC Books Eighth Doctor range in 1997, where I was reporting for a fanzine. At seventeen, I wasn't much more confident than I had been at fourteen, but again, we chatted as fluently and enthusiastically as before. On this occasion, having already given me a love of reading a decade or so before, he added to my life a passion and determination to be a writer. He made me believe that by continuing to do it, even despite the inevitable rejection letters, I'd 'get there in the end'.

The clearest, most exciting words, in the clearest, most exciting order – whether these be in his novelisations, his original novels, his retrospective commentaries or real life conversations – that was his awesome power, wielded as calmly and cosily as paradox will allow. Terrance Dicks, who has shaped so many literary lives in some form or another – Uncle to us all.

Jonathan Macho

I would imagine that the first time I encountered

Terrance Dicks was when I first learned of *Doctor Who*. I know that sounds corny and saccharine, something that Dicks' work deftly sidestepped on a regular basis, but it's true. While this man's incredible shadow stretches so completely over the show that it would be tempting to say to know it you have to know him ('Never cruel or cowardly' is burned into its hearts, after all, and quite right too) I'm going to try and stick to the facts here.

My first *Doctor Who* might have been *Rose*; it almost certainly was, but either a little bit before it or a little bit after, depending on what part of my brain I want to believe, my dad came home with a DVD. It was a free *Doctor Who* story, given away with a magazine, probably to mark its long awaited return to screens. It was a favourite, my dad said, one of his favourites with his favourite TARDIS team. So we sat down, ate our tea and watched *Horror of Fang Rock*. It's been one of my favourites ever since too.

The slow burn of terror. The beautifully written supporting cast. Maybe the most chilling cliff hanger in the entire history of *Who*. I can still see the moment now, and feel what I felt then, as the Doctor said he'd made a terrible mistake. That he'd trapped it in there. With them. Peerless stuff. It must be noted that I was still young then, and privy to foolish, dismissive thoughts when it came to classic science fiction. Why would I watch the one with the silly blobby jellyfish? Eccleston faced down an entire Dalek fleet last Saturday. Why take the downgrade?

Because it was brilliant. It was brilliant enough to shine past blobby jellyfish. It was brilliant enough to make me TERRIFIED of the blobby jellyfish. And it still does.

I like to think I would've made a note of Mr Dicks at that point. He had, after all, scarred my young brain magnificently. Even if I didn't, I certainly would have not long after, when I purchased my first *Doctor Who* DVD because, let's face it, after *Horror of Fang Rock* there was no way I was calling it quits.

This was *The Five Doctors* (unless, as some scholars claim, it was *Remembrance of the Daleks*; it was definitely one of them). You can see my logic: I wanted to catch up on past Doctors, and here was five for the price of one. And there he was again. Terrance Dicks, in the writer's credit. But this was a completely different story. A much more challenging story. A story that had to juggle a massive cast of previously established characters, monsters and leading men, not to mention touch upon twenty years of history.

There was no chance someone coming to it this early in their *Who* life could keep up.

I did, of course. I loved it all. It was a welcoming continuity-fuelled epic, that rarest of things. You encounter characters that have been around for twenty years and yet you understand who they are, why they're loved, and you want to see what you've been missing. You can feel the history and it's wonderful. Terrance Dicks did that. In the universe of

Doctor Who, he was one of the few people who could. As we previously established, his shadow stretches far, covering the whole magnificent messy history of my favourite television show. In some ways, I've known his work for as long as I've known *Doctor Who*. And for those memories, and so many more favourites, I will be forever grateful.

David A McIntee

So many people have made the point that a generation of kids – especially boys – got hooked on reading by Terrance's books – not just the *Doctor Who* novelisations for Target, but his many other original works too. And it's true, certainly for those of us who grew up in the late '70s, when he had a new adventure out every couple of weeks. Certainly I remember my parents getting me them as reward for doing my school homework. I was always a reader, so even without that, would probably still be a reader – but I doubt I'd be a writer. That one's definitely all his fault.

He was good bloke too, which always helps, and I suspect my abiding memory will always be of doing the signing for *Shakedown* in 1995 where there was him, Sophie Aldred, Jan Chappell, myself, and I think Andrew Skilliter. Terrance and I were the first people the queue met, but people would stop to talk to Sophie and Jan, so very quickly Terrance got up and started along the line. I joined him, then the others, and soon it

was more a mingle and meet signing than a queue past tables... He'd realised the line would jam and people would get bored or miss out, and just went straight into changing that rule and turning it into a friendly gathering. That's the sort of guy he was.

Tim Gambrell

I don't think it's an understatement to say that Terrance Dicks was a titan within the world of *Doctor Who*. As a script editor he was second-to-none. As a scriptwriter he was responsible for some of the most noteworthy and watchable stories ever made for TV. This alone would be sufficient to make him loved in the eyes of many fans. But, on top of that, there are the Target novelisations, and, further, Terrance's subsequent original fiction.

His tireless output of Target novelisations meant that, for many of us fans and readers, he was the filter through which much of our appreciation of *Doctor Who* developed and grew. His words painted the scenery of the stories we'd not seen on broadcast or could never get to see.

Within the outpouring of love and affection in honour of Terrance, I've seen the same stories repeated over and again: 'Terrance Dicks taught me to read', 'Terrance Dicks inspired me to want to write stories'. I'm happy to be counted among the masses on this. A combination of my love for *Doctor Who*, and Terrance's accessible prose, meant that from the age of seven onwards the Target books – mainly the ones Terrance penned – were my

favourite reads. They encouraged me to read far more than any of the other books I had access to at school or at home. They were a manageable length. They were pacey and concise, and at the same time they helped expand my vocabulary.

I first discovered the Target books in 1981, when I picked up a copy of *The Mutants* at a book fair at my school (I liked the cover). The following year, I picked up a haul at a local jumble sale. A world of old TV adventures was opening up before me – *The Auton Invasion*, *The Loch Ness Monster*, *Planet of Evil*, *Pyramids of Mars* and *The Brain of Morbius*. All written by Terrance Dicks and all seemingly scarier and more exciting than the weeknight *Doctor Who* I was currently watching on TV.

The chapters were never overlong, and he'd end each one on a cliffhanger of sorts. That's very important, particularly with younger readers. I remember having fun trying to work out which ones would have been the actual episode endings on TV. I recall, too, the comfort of returning to a Terrance Dicks book after I'd read other authors in the Target range. This feeling of comfort extended to his contributions to the Virgin and BBC ranges of original fiction in the 1990s and early 2000s. As an older reader, it felt like I was catching up with a fond uncle I'd not seen for a while.

Regrettably, I encountered strong prejudice against Terrance Dicks through much of my school life. I was told over and over that I shouldn't be reading him (or

Enid Blyton, either) because, in the teacher's opinion, Terrance's books were not sufficiently well written. True, they weren't Dickens – but then they never needed to be. I was consistently one of the best and most accomplished readers and creative writers in my year as I progressed through school. Weekends and evenings spent Hoovering up my favourite Terrance Dicks books were, surely, responsible for that.

The first *Doctor Who* story I ever wrote, in fact the first piece of creative writing I recall undertaking outside of school, was a story about the Fourth Doctor, Leela, Davros and the Daleks. It was heavily influenced by *Destiny of The Daleks* (which I'd loved on TV) and in particular Terrance's novelisation, which I'd been reading regularly from our village library. I was eight years old and I wrote the story at my nan's house, one weekend afternoon. As a teenager, I would write more stories, and my inspiration (and phrasing) almost always came from a Terrance Dicks novelisation.

His influence pervaded into adult life too. The first story of mine to get published was 'The Bledoe Cadets and The Bald Man of Pengriffen', in *The HAVOC Files 3*, 2017. As I was plotting it, I knew I wanted to split it into four short chapters. I had Terrance Dicks very much in mind as I crafted the cliffhanger endings for each of the first three chapters.

I never met Terrance. I've never been the sort of fan who attends conventions or signings. But I always found him an engaging raconteur and a charismatic contributor

to special features on the *Doctor Who* DVDs. It's reassuring to hear from others that Terrance knew he was loved. He's left behind a massive and enduring legacy, and I don't think it's an understatement to say that much of what we consider to be 'classic' *Doctor Who* owes a debt to Terrance.

Wink Taylor

'He's in trouble again!' Mum shouted, as I came in through the door.

'What's he done this time?' I said, putting my school bag down.

'Been cheeky to one of the teachers,' Mum said, raising her eyes heavenward.

I smiled and Mum smiled back. We were both worried, but also highly amused. We couldn't help it – he was just so funny!

He had recently been ejected from the Cubs. He had climbed on top of the church hall roof, pretending to be King Kong, and then he had disgraced himself in the Cub Scout Puppet Show. His puppet had committed acts of indecency on the rest of the puppet cast, culminating in headbutting one puppet with such force that it was subsequently decapitated. I sat at the back of the hall with my mum and dad in hysterics; however the rest of the audience were disgusted. His position was untenable and he was excommunicated from the Cubs.

He always had a history. As a pre-school tot at play

school he was described as 'a little demon.' He was once asked to leave a church service for wrestling and punching the cassocks, whilst signing the theme tune to Adam West's *Batman* at the top of his voice. His teachers continually called my mother in to say he was uncontrollable. These numerous incidents were very funny, but were also very troubling. He was becoming more and more unpopular and utterly unfocused.

'He's upstairs. Go and see him,' Mum said. She was still smiling, but behind her eyes I could see the fear. She was looking into his future and I could tell she didn't like what she saw.

As I walked up the stairs, I could hear him behind his bedroom door. He was playing with his action figures as always. I could hear him performing all the voices, providing all the sound effects and even composing the incidental music in a fluting, bombastic tone. As I opened the door, he turned from his epic and grinned at me. I instantly grinned back. I couldn't help myself.

'What game are you playing?' I asked.

'Han Solo wants to get into the Millennium Falcon, but Chewy keeps farting and Han can't stand the smell!' he said with a dirty giggle.

'This sounds like a story of real quality,' I said sarcastically, while gingerly stepping over a melee of action figures.

He sniggered. With his beaming face framed by a scraggy pudding bowl haircut, and his unkempt school uniform, he looked like a Dickensian street urchin. He was

a squealing, bubbling mass of unfulfilled potential. If only his tremendous energy could be channelled into something else. But what?

At that point a multitude of images jumped into my mind. A giant spider appearing on a decorative carpet. A group of soldiers shooting at a Tyrannosaurus Rex. A squat, black clad figure removing a helmet to reveal a hideous, hobgoblin face. A curly haired, wide eyed figure running from a huge silver robot. A pulsating brain in a bubbling green jar. A viscous, green blob slithering through an Edwardian lighthouse. Of course, *Doctor Who*! We both loved it. Maybe that could be the answer.

My bedroom was positively festooned in *Doctor Who* ephemera. I had every single *Doctor Who Magazine* and all of the Target novelisations. (Some of them several times over!) I was a fanatic. But that fanaticism was encouraged and fed by my family, as they all saw the positive influence the programme engendered. I had become a voracious reader with *Doctor Who* acting as the spring board for my literary appetites. Could I pass this passion on?

‘I’ve got an idea,’ I said gently. ‘Why don’t we read something?’

‘Naaah,’ he said, returning to his own story of Han Solo’s battle with Wookie flatulence. ‘Reading’s boring.’

‘No, let’s give it a go. I’ve got a fantastic story, we could try it.’

‘What is it?’ he said, not looking up.

‘A great story about monsters in the London Underground. It’s brilliant!’

We had recently stayed up late in defiance of our parents and had seen a terrifying film which had featured cannibals in the Underground. I knew I had pressed the right buttons.

‘Is it scary?’ he asked with relish. Clearly, I had piqued his interest. I had almost hooked him in.

‘I’ll go and get the book. You’ll love it.’

‘All right then,’ he mumbled.

I rushed into my room, grabbed the book and returned to his bedroom as quickly as I could. I knew his interest wouldn’t last long, so speed was essential. He was sitting on his bed and he was waiting for me. I had his full attention, the problem now... was keeping it.

‘Here it is! *The Web of Fear* by Terrance Dicks.’

He suddenly gave a loud snorting snigger which wouldn’t have been out of place in a low grade comedy film.

‘Dicks!’ he roared.

I’m ashamed to admit – I laughed as well. There’s nothing the school boy likes more than a rude comedy name.

Then I opened the book and read the first chapter.

I looked at him. He was transfixed. As Terrance Dick’s words filled the room, we were both transported to the dark, oppressive setting of the labyrinthine London underworld. We both felt the thrill of fear and the excitement of mild terror. We laughed at the witty descriptions of the Doctor, and were charmed by the character interplay. Not a word was out of place and not a

sentence was too long. As I read the words aloud and performed each character, I thrilled in making the text come alive. I was enjoying myself, and he responded to my enjoyment with undivided attention. There's nothing better than speaking out words aloud, particularly when the words were as well written as these.

'Right then, boys, time for bed!'

'Oh no!' we both cried.

'Come on, clean your teeth and pj's on!' Mum shouted. We were both disappointed that this trip to imagination had to end.

'I'll finish it tomorrow,' I said.

'No, I'll carry on reading it in bed,' he said determinedly.

'But what if you don't understand any of the words?' I asked, hoping that Terrance's love of vocabulary wouldn't stifle this astounding, new-found enthusiasm.

'I'll use the dictionary,' he stated with a shrug, giving me a look to say that I had missed the blindingly obvious.

'Fair enough!' I replied. I picked myself off the bed to retire to my own room. As I left, I couldn't help but wonder if he would stick to his new project. Judging by his past – the chances were slim.

It took him a few days, but he did it! And the best news – he loved it! To see his brown bowl head in a book, rather than in trouble, gave me nothing but pleasure. Terrance Dicks had opened the door. He had

proven that other worlds, other points of view and other people were all available to be met and understood within the pages of a book. The dictum of Dicks had created the gift. The gift of reading, and another convert had been added to the cause.

Flash forward nearly forty years later.

'I think Terrance Dicks has died!' my other half called down the stairs.

As I heard those words, I instantly thought of the small boy whose lack of focus threatened to send him on a rudderless path. I thought of him as he is now – a lifelong lover of books and reading. A man who defied all the teachers' predictions, passed his exams and went to University.

Typically, in his A Level History, the papers also featured questions from another syllabus his school had not studied. As a protest against his teachers, he decided to answer those instead. He passed! He had read the books on all the syllabuses that year for pleasure! He had certainly not lost his rebellious streak, but he had definitely channelled it.

So thank you, Terrance, for inspiring a generation of boys like my brother to read. I mourn your wit, your words and your prolific contribution to my favourite programme. You will never be forgotten, but I think this is the best tribute I can give you.

I must leave these pages now, as I want to give my brother a call...

I'm desperate to know what he's reading.