

Environmental Hazards

News and views from the HPA's Centre for Radiation, Chemicals and Environmental Hazards

Chilton relives fame as Doctor Who location

Not many people know it, but the HPA's Chilton site has an alter ego. In 1975 the building was home to the National Radiological Protection Board – but it was also known as the Space Defence Station.

Well, at least it was to millions of TV viewers the world over when it had a starring role in *Doctor Who* story 'The Android Invasion'.

The BBC, including TARDIS incumbent Tom Baker and the recently deceased Elisabeth Sladen, descended on the Oxfordshire site to film the story on a roasting July day.

The tale involved a sinister plot in which aliens built a detailed replica of Earth, populated by androids, so they could rehearse an invasion of earth. The Doctor realises something is amiss when he notices that radiation readings at the Space Defence Station (Chilton) are staggeringly high.

Because the BBC is releasing the story on DVD later this year a film crew paid a flying visit to

Chilton in March to make a new documentary about the 1975 filming.

Ed Stradling, producer of the documentary and a lifelong *Doctor Who* fan, said: 'It was interesting to see how much the centre had changed in some respects, and yet in others was very much the same as it looked back in 1975 when the Dr Who crew filmed here.'

During their visit to the centre the crew filmed the front of the building, by stores and on the roof of one of the wings of the building. The presenter of the documentary was Nick Briggs, who provides voices for the Daleks in the recent *Doctor Who* series.

Kate Blowfield, John Cooper's personal assistant, lived in Chilton village in 1975 and visited the set on the day of filming. 'I even got to meet Tom Baker,' said Kate. 'He called me "pretty Kate" because I'd lost a tooth just a few days earlier.

'I even got his autograph. I've no idea where it is now though. More embarrassing is that I remember that Tom Baker ripped his trousers and my mum offered to sew them up for him.'

