



# DOCTOR • WHO

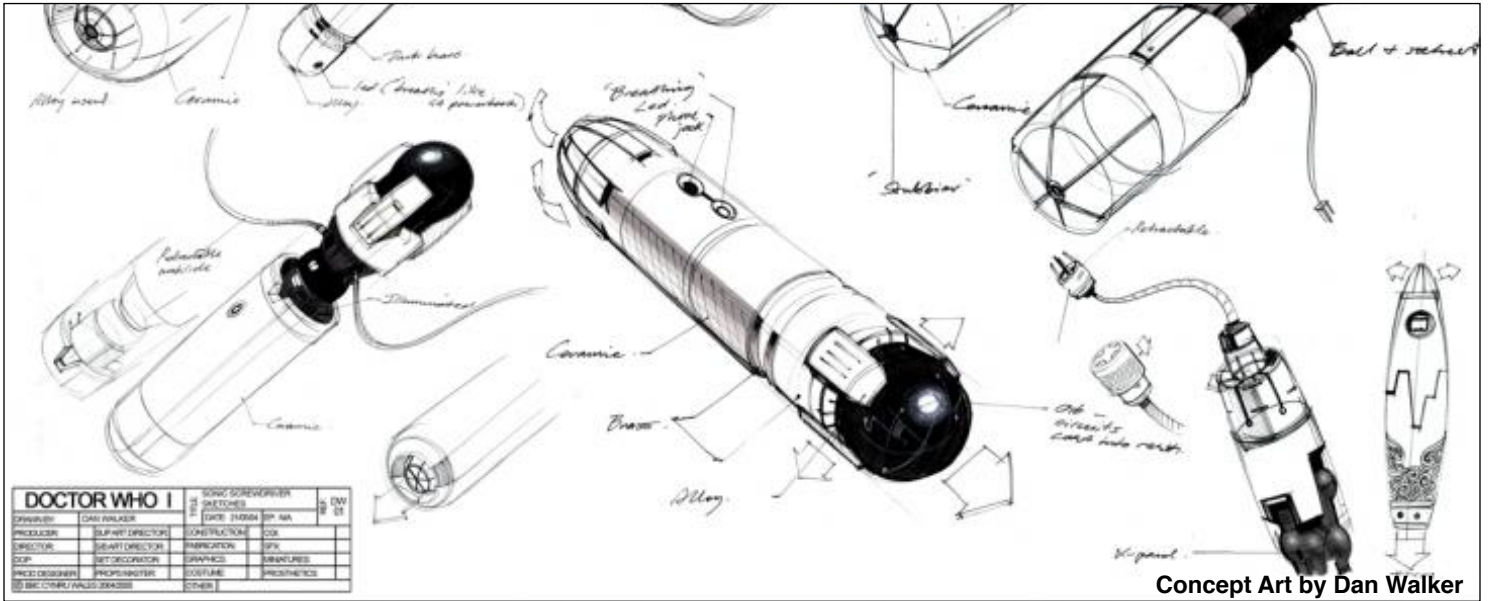
## THE RTD ERA SONIC SCREWDRIVERS A Compiled History

by Brian A Terranova



# Original Concept Art

by Dan Walker



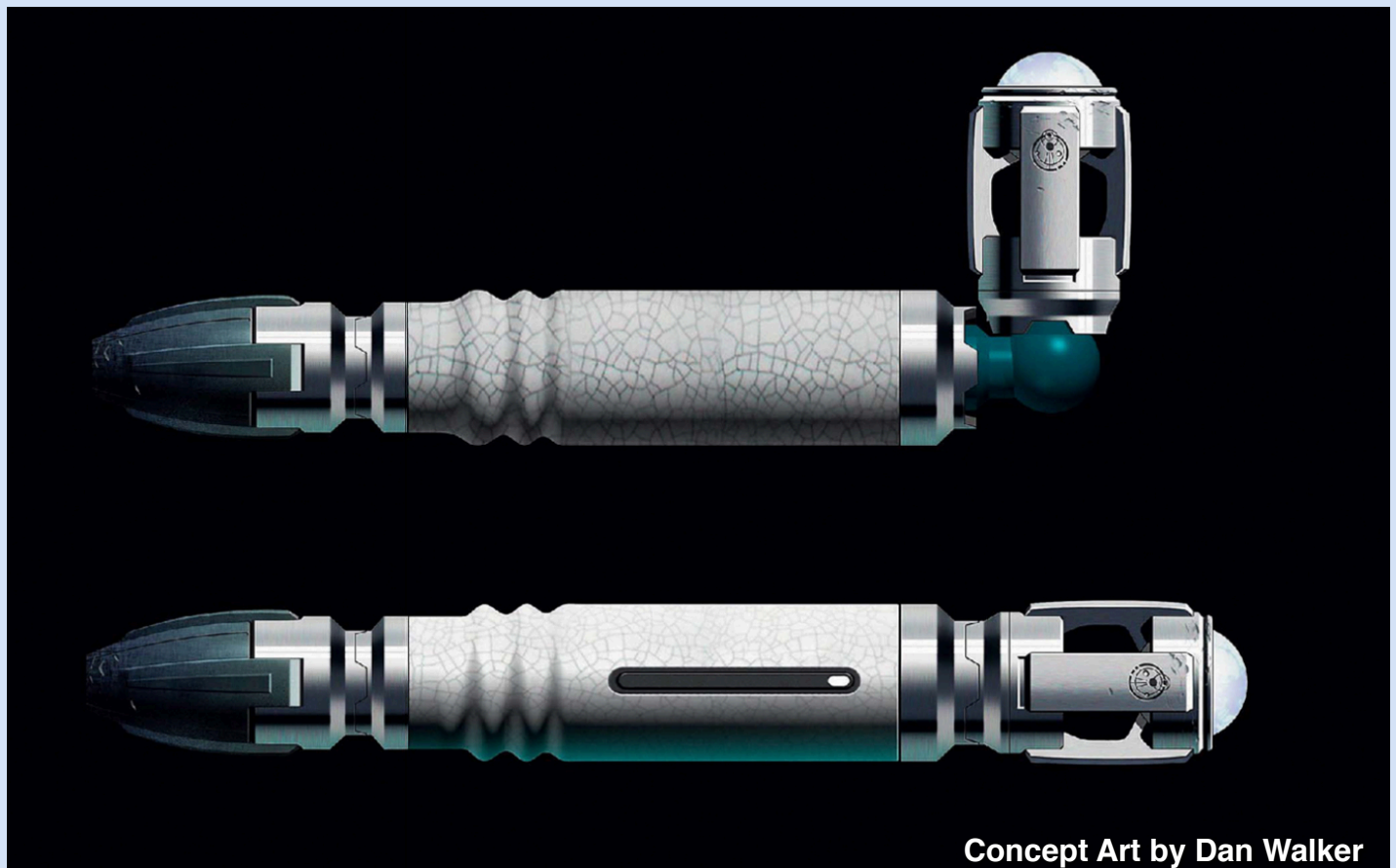
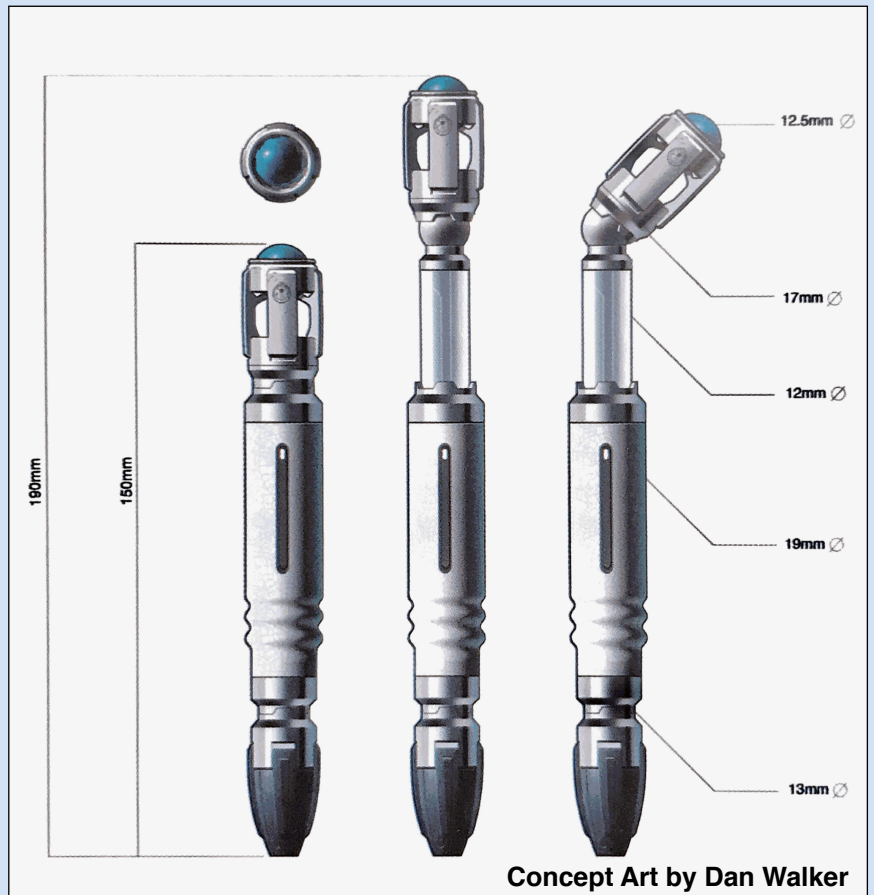
For the 2005 revival of Doctor Who, the Sonic Screwdriver was also revived and reimagined. The newly imagined Sonic Screwdrivers were designed by Dan Walker, and two filming props were made from these designs by Aztec Modelmakers. Because of this, fans have dubbed these sonics as “The Aztecs”. Each prop was painted with a distinctly different crackle finish, which was designed to give the appearance that they were an extension of the TARDIS.





The purpose of this write-up is to catalogue the introductions and changes to all versions of the Doctor's Sonic Screwdriver Hero Props, as seen in Series 1 through Series 4/The Specials, as well as briefly cover the alterations made for "The Eleventh Hour" in Series 5.

This file will also cover the replicas used for The 50th Anniversary Special; "The Day of the Doctor" (Series 7), as well as the Series 10 episode, "The Pilot", which were also variations of Dan Walker's original design for the 2005 revival of Doctor Who.



# The Colony Cream Aztec

## Series 1, Recording block 1



As previously stated, Aztec Modelmakers machined two Sonic Screwdriver props for Series 1, based off of Dan Walker's concept art. The two Aztec props were very similar in design, however they weren't exactly identical to each other. Because of this, each version of the Aztec will get its own section in this write-up in order to better illustrate the differences between them.

The first Aztec prop to be used in Series 1 was the Colony Cream Aztec; a name derived from the color of its handle. The color itself being a combination of the Colony Cream Plastikote crackle finish top layer, and the gold base coat underneath, giving the handle a beige or cream colored finish. This paint finish was designed to make the Sonic Screwdriver feel like it was part of the TARDIS, matching the coral/crackle finish of the TARDIS console. Although the Plastikote is a crackle finish paint, the crackle effect is more vein-like than the cracked porcelain look we would later see on many of the Tennant era props.

Interestingly, the Colony Cream Aztec is never seen with the emitter section extended. All of its screen time and BTS photographs, show the emitter head in the closed position; although in both cases the emitter teeth are separated by a small gap, suggesting that the prop could extend, but that the head and collar possibly couldn't seat fully closed.

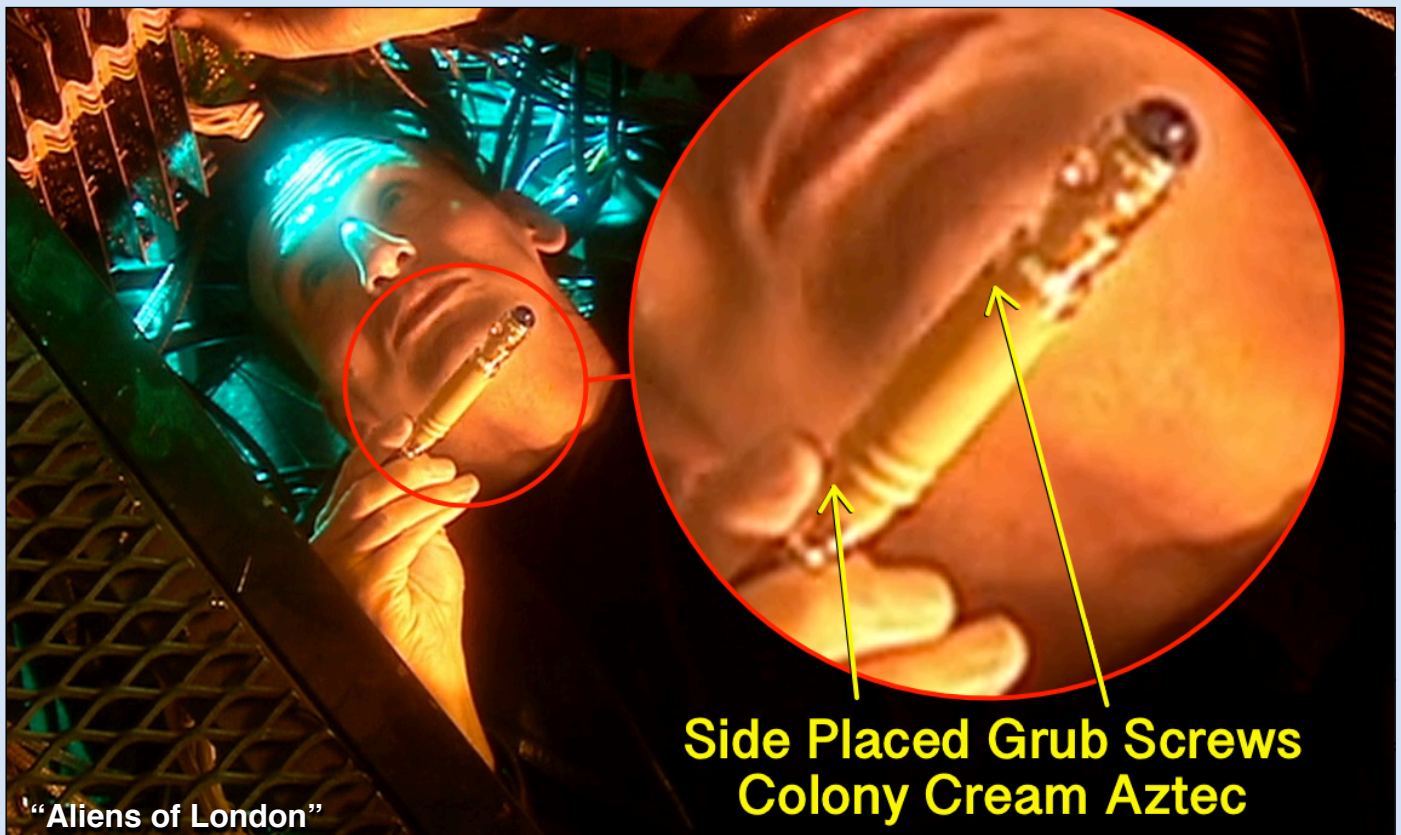




While on the Jonathan Ross Show in 2005, Christopher Eccleston stated: “we had a bit of trouble with the sonic”. One of those troubles appears to have been that the collar and aluminum end were held in place with glue, which made changing the batteries a bit difficult. This is best seen when the Doctor deactivates the Auton arm in “Rose”; one of the earliest scenes filmed for Recording Block 1. In an attempt to ease the difficulty, an alternate method was implemented.



During Filming for Recording Block 1, the Cream Aztec body was altered so that the collar and aluminum end-piece were now held onto the body by two retention grub screws; located on the side of the prop, directly opposite of the blue strip. These side grub screws are most clearly seen in “Aliens of London” when the Doctor is repairing the TARDIS console from underneath. The way Christopher Eccleston held the prop is thankfully very revealing; showing both grub screws, but not the blue strip, which would have been visible from this angle had the grub screws been placed on the back of the prop.



**Side Placed Grub Screws  
Colony Cream Aztec**

One of the original concept features of the Aztec Sonic Screwdriver saw the black end cap opening up and fanning out as legs for the base to act as a tripod/stand for hands free functioning. The same end piece was also originally intended to plug into the TARDIS console to recharge the sonic, or download data between adventures. While the tripod legs were dropped, due to difficulty in realizing the function on the actual filming prop, the 'plug in' feature was used at least once during the RTD era in "Aliens of London". The Sonic Screwdriver can be seen plugged into the TARDIS console just behind the monitor, soon after the Doctor returns from Albion Hospital, when Jackie, Mickey, and Rose join him in the TARDIS.



The Colony Cream Aztec was used throughout Recording Block 1 of Series 1, which consisted of "Rose", "Aliens of London", and "World War Three"; episodes 1, 4, and 5 respectively. After the recording of these three stories, the Colony Cream Aztec was never again used in its original configuration.

For Recording Block 2 of Series 1, further, and more extensive, modifications were made to the Colony Cream Aztec. These alterations initially lead fans to believe that there was a third filming prop for Series 1, when in fact it was actually just the revamped Colony Cream Aztec prop all along. The modified Aztec prop became known to fans as "The Wide Slider" Sonic Screwdriver. Although, given this information, it should more accurately be named "The Wide Slider Aztec".



# The Wide Slider Aztec

## Series 1-2 (aka The Colony Cream Aztec Alterations)



Doctor Who “The Vault”

The Wide Slider Aztec started out as the Colony Cream Aztec sonic, which was later modified with a wide channel cut into the body, allowing the prop to be extended by thumb, via the sliding microswitch. The wide channel running most of the length of the body is what earned this prop its fan given nickname. It first appeared in this new form in Series 1, Episode 2, “The End of the World”, which was the fourth episode of Series 1 to be filmed.

With no official word from Aztec Modelmakers, it has been difficult to get confirmation as to how exactly this prop conversion came to be, or whether or not Aztec Modelmakers did the alterations themselves, or if it was done in house at the BBC. Whatever the case, it appears as though the Wide Slider Aztec was made to give Christopher Eccleston more versatility with the prop by allowing him to manually control the emitter length, at will, within a scene.



Doctor Who Confidential  
“Weird Science”

Although the prop was repainted after its conversion, the body dings and the side placed grub screws give away the prop's true origin, not to mention the fact that the Colony Cream Aztec was never seen again after "World War Three".

The Wide Slider handle was repainted with the same Colony Cream Plastikote crackle finish, only this time with a brown base coat, rather than gold. This combination of paints and the clear coat process, as well as various lighting conditions often gave the appearance of a grey finish. This new paint finish wasn't as even as the original cream finish. Instead, it was a mix of vein-like cracks towards the bottom half of the handle, and scuffed paint throughout the top half. The Wide Slider would retain this new paint application all the way through to its final use in the episode "Doomsday", which was of course the ninth episode filmed for Series 2 as part of Recording Block 3. For Recording Blocks 4, 5, and 6, it appears that only the Grey Aztec was

used, based on detailed close up shots and the way that David typically would hold the Grey Aztec prop, in comparison to the Wide Slider Aztec.

There was one notable paint change that took place by "Bad Wolf" in Series 1; the two side retention grub screws seem to have been painted to blend in with the body paint of the sonic, while earlier in the series, they were black. Although for much of Series 2 the screws were black again, until "Doomsday", where they appear to be painted once more.

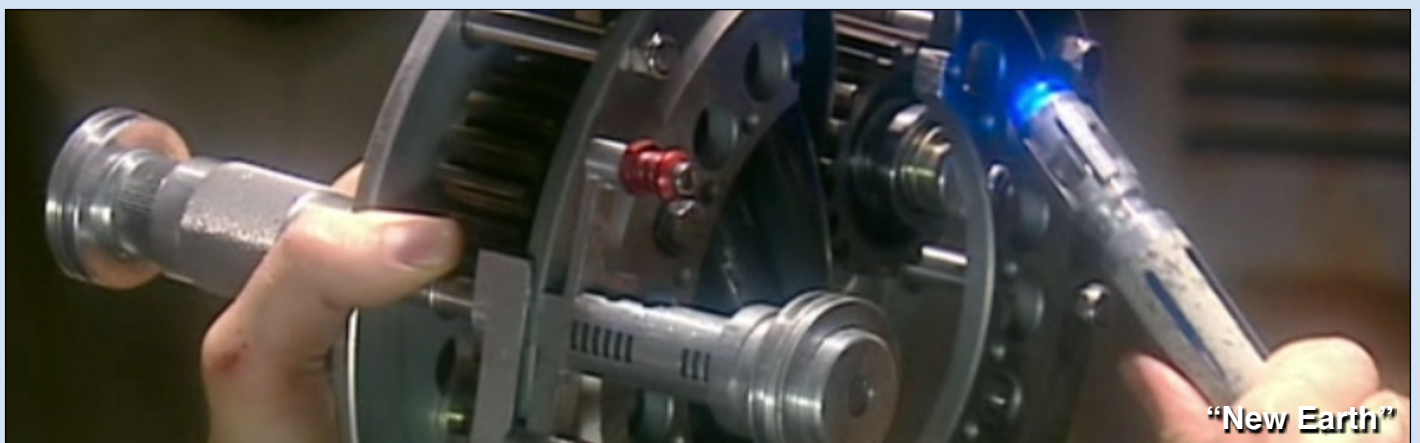






Although Christopher Eccleston and David Tennant both used the Grey Aztec fairly often throughout Series 1 & 2, the Wide Slider Aztec appears to have been the favored prop during its time in the show, presumably due to its functionality.

While the Colony Cream Aztec was given a new lease on life when it became the Wide Slider, it seems that this was not to be its final form. For Series 3 the prop would undergo another major change when parts of it were repurposed to make a new prop; The Intermediate Sonic for “The Runaway Bride”.



# The Grey Aztec

## Series 1-3



The second Aztec prop - known as The Grey Aztec - differed from its counterpart in two ways; First, the frame around the microswitch was much softer in appearance, with a wider, rounded edge boxed shape. Second, the body was painted in the same way as the Wide Slider Aztec, with the vein like Colony Cream Plastikote top layer, a brown base coat, and a protective clear coating, which together gave the sonic its grey appearance; however, unlike the Wide Slider Aztec, the paint finish was very evenly cracked all over. Interestingly, the collar and the aluminum end piece on the Grey Aztec continued to be held in place with glue until Series 3 when two slotted screws were added to the the back of the body, to better secure them in place for repairs/battery replacement. It had previously been speculated that the screws were always there, and that they were used to set the emitter length at various levels, however this theory turned out to not be true.

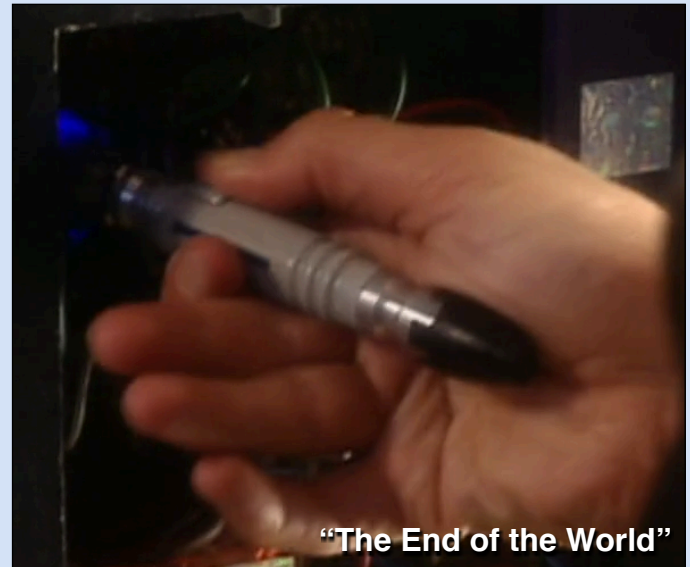




The Grey Aztec first appeared in “The End of the World” which of course was the second episode aired, but the fourth episode filmed. Unlike the Colony Cream Aztec, this version of the Sonic Screwdriver was used throughout the first three series of the Doctor Who revival, with only a couple small modifications made to it for Series 3; as well as some heavy wear and tear due to years of use.

It should be noted that both Aztec props (Colony Cream/Wide Slider & Grey) had the emitter head aligned so that the space between the struts was centered with the activation button, although at a first glance of a 2004 production photo of the grey prop, it appeared as though it could have been aligned differently, however this was actually not the case. A closer look reveals that the collar is set for an alignment with the space between the struts, which means that the Aztec props did not have a design element in place to stop the

emitter heads from turning out of place while being set to varied lengths. This is also evident in various episodes from Series 1 through 3 where the Grey Aztec emitter head is offset from the collar alignment, which always stays true to the space between the struts.



**“The End of the World”**

In early 2018, the original Grey Aztec body went up for sale by a private owner. In an effort to prove the lineage of the sonic part, the new owner - Brian Uiga - compared photos of the body in its current state to the 2004 BBC Photograph of the Grey Aztec Sonic. This comparison brought to light an interesting fact about the prop; even though the surviving body had significant wear, such as bare metal areas, black grime from hand oils and use, and the missing button frame, the aged Aztec body matched perfectly with the 2004 photo - crackle line, for crackle line. This side by side comparison proved that the Grey Aztec prop had never been repainted during its three years of use, from its introduction in Series 1 through to its final use in the end of Series 3.

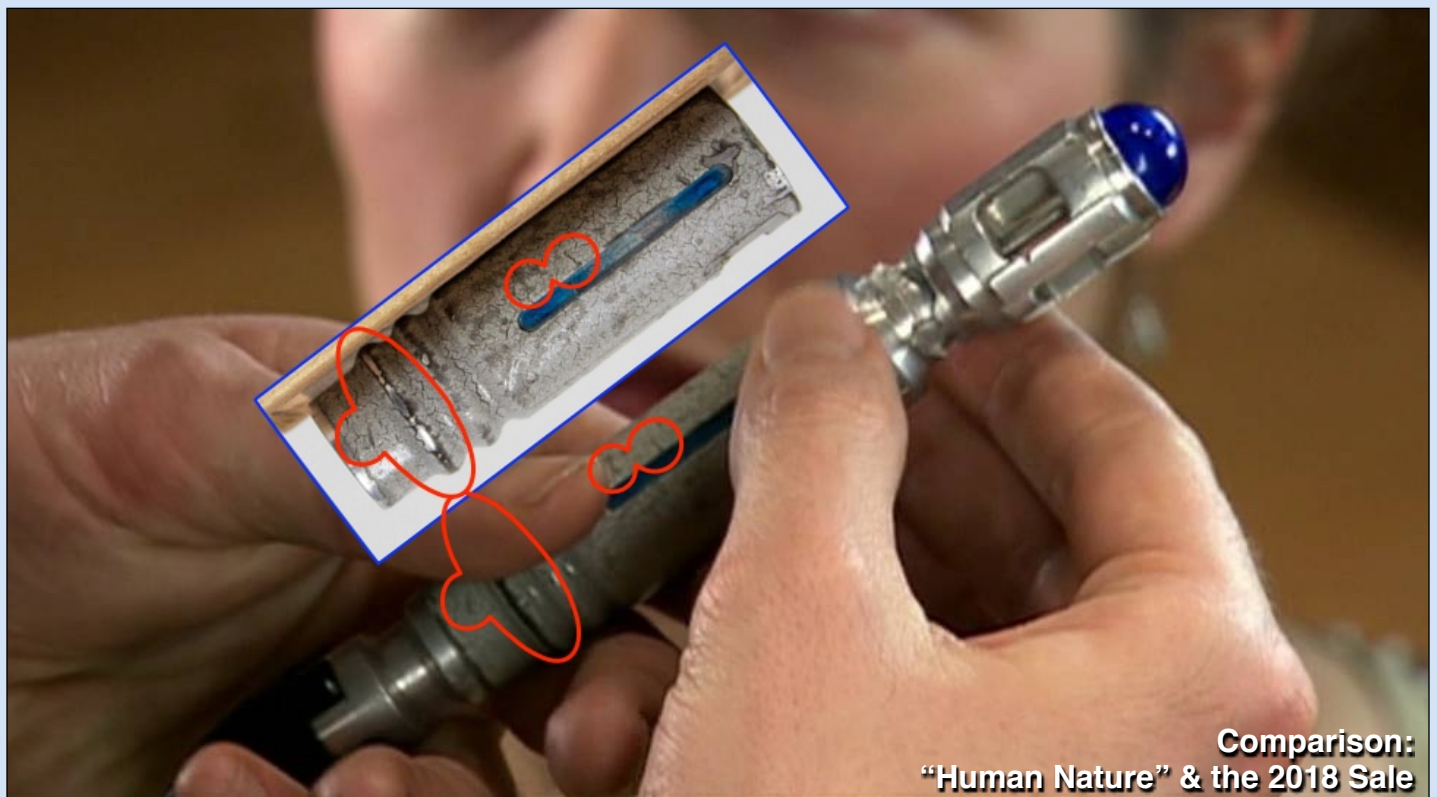
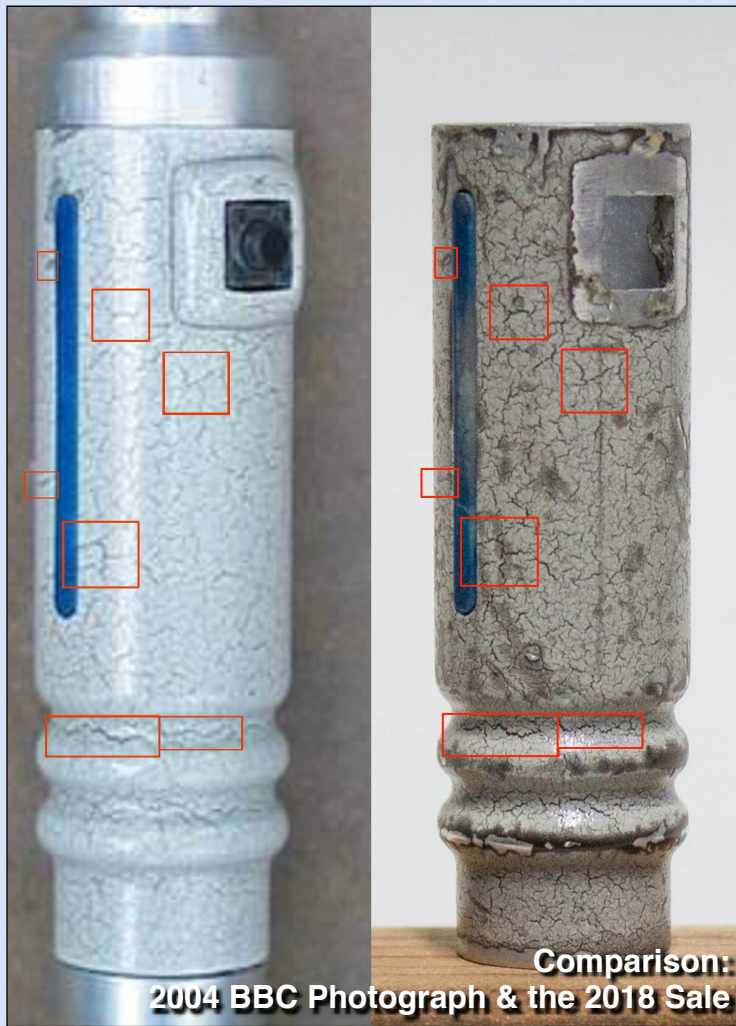


**Grey Aztec Body  
Freema Agyeman's Back Stage Tour**



**Grey Aztec Body sold in 2018**







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<b>DOCTOR WHO III</b>		DATE: 07.08.06		EP: 1
DRAWN BY:	PETER MCKINSTRY	DOOP:	PROPS MASTER:	
PRODUCER:	DIRECTOR:	FABRICATION:	CONSTRUCTION:	
PROD DESIGNER:	ASSOC DESIGNER:	SFX:	COO:	
SUP ART DIR:	CHIEF SUP ART DIR:	COSTUME:	GRAPHICS:	
SUB ART DIR:	SET DECORATOR:	OTHER:		
©BBC CYMRU WALES 2006/2007				

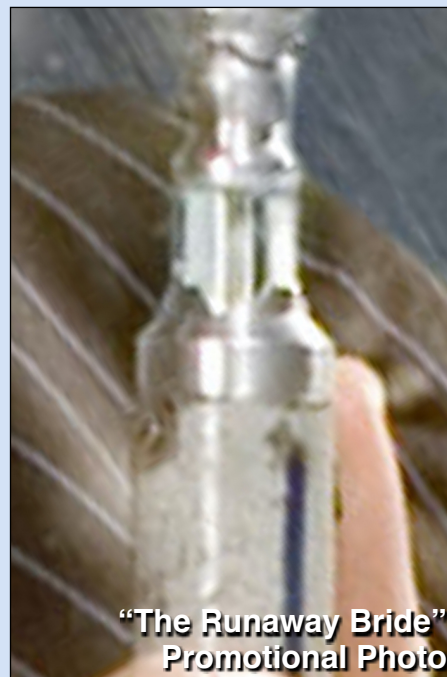


**BBC Concept Art by Peter McKinstry**

Since we now know that the Grey Aztec was never repainted, the only intentional alterations to the prop took place for the filming of the Series 3. These changes were first seen in the Christmas Special; “The Runaway Bride”, and were retained throughout the filming of Series 3. These included the previously mentioned addition of the slotted screws on the back - which has been confirmed thanks to Series 2 promotional photos showing worn paint, but no screw hole, in the area where the screws would later be placed. In addition to that, the black & red wires were replaced with two yellow wires, while the acrylic rod had either begun to crack/frost or was replaced as well. Lastly, the aluminum end section had been shortened on the top, where it meets the handle; most clearly seen in the still from “Human Nature” on the previous page, and in the burnt out sonic concept art above from “Smith and Jones”; which used a photo of the actual prop as a base.



**Series 2 Photoshoot**



**“The Runaway Bride”  
Promotional Photo**



**“The Runaway Bride”  
Promotional Photo**

In Series 3 it's clear to see how significant the wear on the prop truly became, aside from the paint wear previously mentioned; the emitter head appears to have been hot glued in place with the teeth misaligned; from "Human Nature" through to the end of the Series, the emitter cage had large nicks on two of the struts, and the micro switch frame had fallen off by the recording of "The Lazarus Experiment", which was the fifth episode filmed, leaving the space it used to be attached, as bare metal. The frameless button can also be seen in "The Runaway Bride" promotional photos; however these images project a false timeline, according to Will Brooks, who was able to track down the original photographs. Will discovered that Catherine Tate was photographed separately just two weeks prior to David Tennant, whose shots were taken during the filming of "Daleks in Manhattan". Of course, "Daleks in Manhattan" aired prior to "The Lazarus Experiment", so the frame can be seen missing just a couple episode prior to Lazarus, however the two part story was recorded after "The Lazarus Experiment" was filmed.



**"The Sound of Drums"**



**"The Runaway Bride" Promotional Photo**



**"Human Nature"**



**"The Lazarus Experiment"**

Despite its battered appearance, the Grey Aztec was still used as the main sonic prop for David Tennant throughout Series 3, sharing some screen time with the Intermediate sonic. Although the Grey Aztec was last used in the Series 3 story "Last of the Time Lords", parts of it were later harvested by Nick Robatto to make one of the Tennant Props for Series 4.



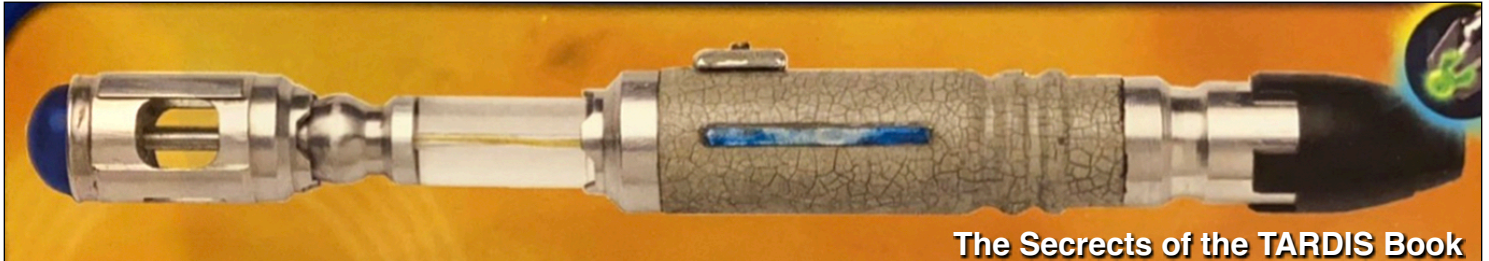
Before moving onto the next sonic, here's a fun fact:

It appears as though Christopher Eccleston had a bit of a Tom Baker moment during "Bad Wolf" with either the Grey Aztec or the Wide Slider Aztec; unfortunately it's not clear which prop was in the scene due to how it was held. Many may recall the famous story from Tom Baker's first episode - "Robot" - where he pulled the sonic out of his jacket, and the emitter ring assembly had fallen off inside his pocket, which forced him to use the prop without it, in order to save them the trouble of reshooting the scene. Similarly, "In Bad Wolf" after the Doctor, Jack, and Lynda are arrested, an officer pulls the Sonic Screwdriver from the Doctor's pocket and asks "What is the purpose of this device, sir?", as he does this it's clear to see that the emitter bulb is missing, presumably having fallen off in Eccleston's pocket, with the LED seen sticking out of the emitter head. While no ad-libbing was needed in this case, the similarities were too fun not to mention, and with the wonder of editing, the bulb was back on the prop in the very next shot.



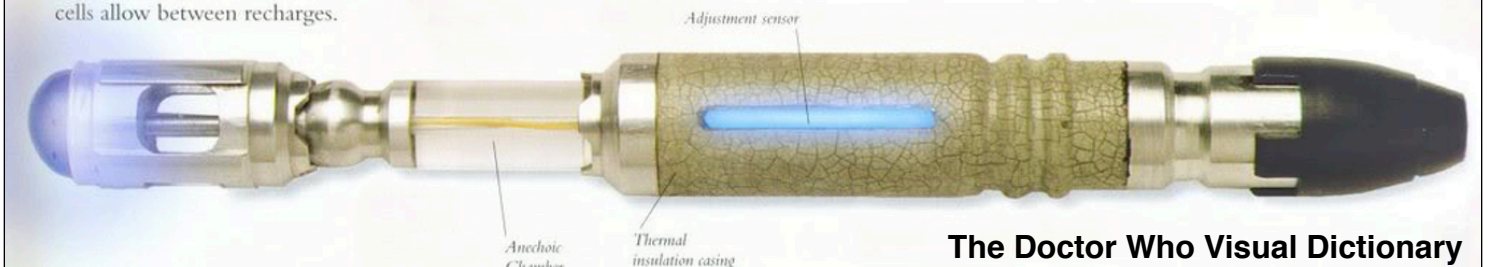
# The Intermediate Sonic

## Series 3 (aka The Temp Sonic)



**The Secrets of the TARDIS Book**

The Doctor keeps the tool on him for as long as its power cells allow between recharges.



**The Doctor Who Visual Dictionary**

The Intermediate sonic, as it has become known to fans, was first used by David Tennant as the main sonic prop for the 2006 Christmas Special; “The Runaway Bride”, with the Grey Aztec as the secondary prop. Little is known of the exact origin of this prop unfortunately, although the handle was still in Nick Robatto’s workshop as of January 2013, with what appears to be a resin emitter head and collar attached. Nick, of course, has worked on the series since 2004 as a prop maker, and has been responsible for making all of the Sonic Screwdrivers since “Voyage of the Damned” through to the Thirteenth Doctor Era, as of the time of writing this piece.

Since Nick had the body in his possession, I reached out to him to see what he could tell me. According to him, the Intermediate sonic was made by Mark Cordory, who also worked on the show as a prop/set maker since 2004. However, when I contacted Mark, he could only recall making resin stunt props of the Sonic Screwdriver - one of which is clearly seen in “The Lazarus Experiment” - but had no

recollection of working on the Intermediate prop. That said, I was recently able to piece together more history on this prop.



**Photograph by Nick Robatto**



After going over each episode of Series 3 again, it became clear that the two scenes previously thought to use the Wide Slider prop, had actually turned out to have been the Intermediate and the Grey Aztec instead. This finally explained where the emitter head, collar, and black end cap came from to make the Intermediate prop. The Colony Cream/Wide Slider Aztec was once again repurposed and given new parts to make the Intermediate sonic for “The Runaway Bride”.

The Intermediate’s design differed from the Aztecs in a few ways; the handle ridges were more squared edged and bell shaped, rather than the rounded ridges of the Aztecs. The Intermediate also had a much slimmer slider channel when compared with the Wide Slider Aztec, as well as a unique square/rectangular slider plate with two embedded slotted screw heads on either side of the activation button; which itself was also a slotted screw. The end aluminum piece was also a newly constructed part which had a much wider diameter for its

narrowest area, when compared with the Aztec sonics. The handle was painted with a lighter grey crackle finish, this time looking more liked cracked porcelain than the vein-like pattern seen on the previous three variations. Interestingly, the emitter cage doesn’t seat all the way down on the ball joint, as we can see a of couple millimeters of the base on the top of the ball joint. Lastly, unlike the Aztecs, the Intermediate Sonic only ever had yellow wires within a frosted canal acrylic rod.



“The Runaway Bride”



“The Runaway Bride”



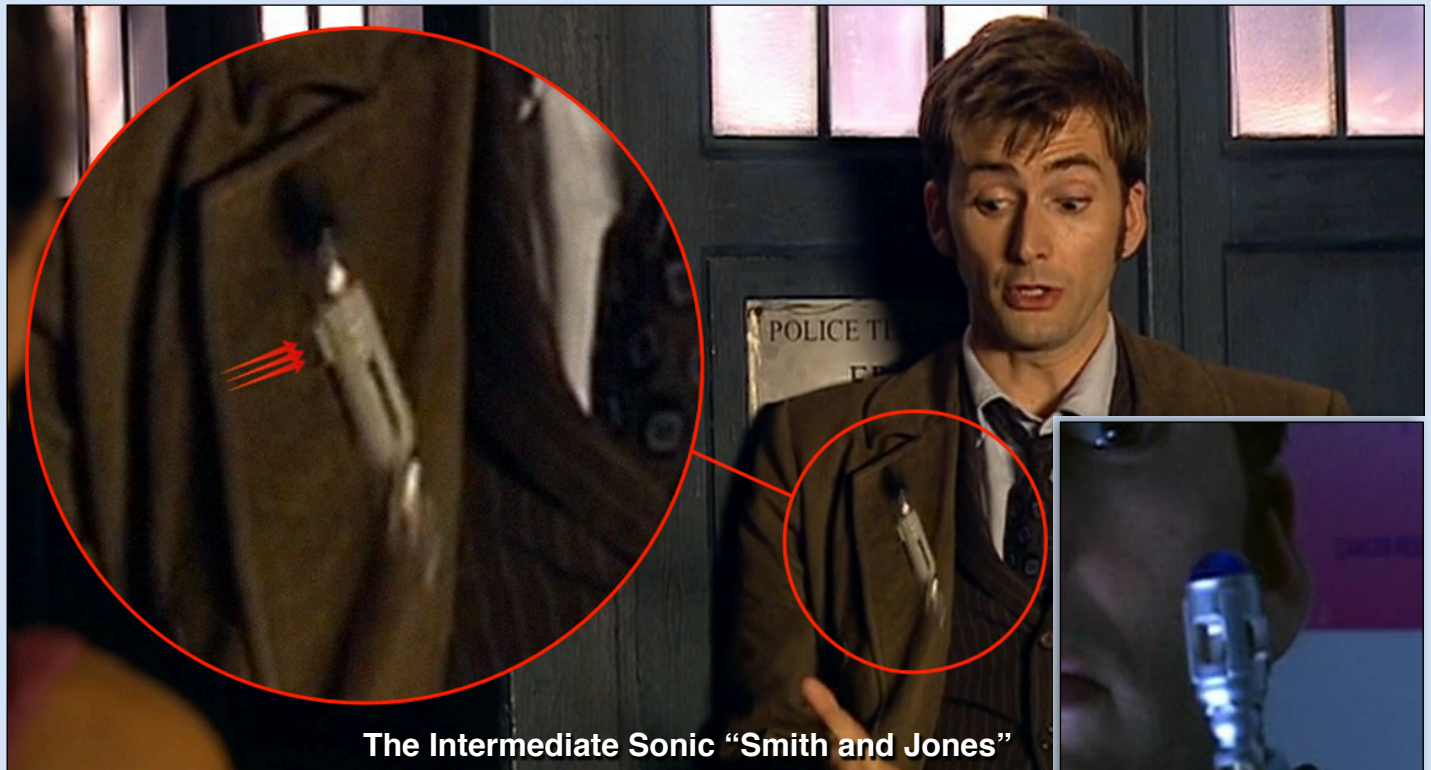
Photograph by Nick Robatto

It should be noted that the Intermediate sonic prop, as well as a couple of scenes in the Series 3 opener; “Smith and Jones”, had caused some confusion as to when the two Tennant props were actually first used in the show. The two scenes in question involve the in story destruction of the Doctor’s Sonic Screwdriver, where the sonic - represented by the Grey Aztec - was destroyed after the Doctor used it to enhance the radiation output of a medical x-ray unit in order to stop a Slab from attacking him and Martha. Of course the “destroyed” sonic in the scene was only a resin stand-in made with battle damage, and not the real Aztec prop.

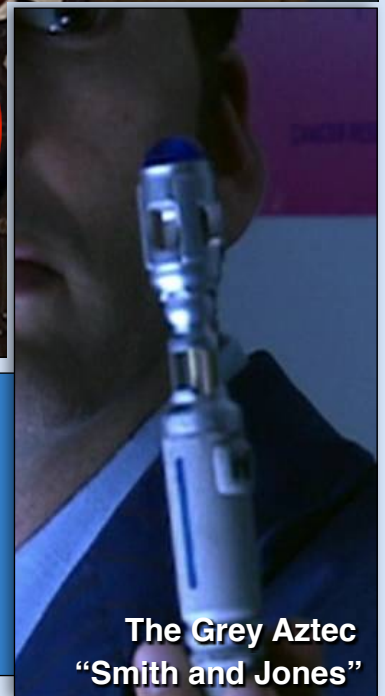
The second scene takes place at the end of the same episode where the Doctor tells Martha that he has made himself a new Sonic Screwdriver, and then causally flips the prop in

the air. Because of the “destruction” of the sonic, and the Doctor’s declaration of making himself a “new” sonic, many believed that the Nick Robatto made Series 4 Tennant props were introduced in Series 3 for “Smith and Jones”, however this is not the case. When the Doctor show’s off his new sonic to Martha, three screw heads on the boxy slider plate can just be made out as he flips it in the air, indicating that the “new” sonic was actually the Intermediate Sonic prop, which was used for the first time just one episode before.

In fact, when taking a closer look at the individual scenes, it’s apparent that the most used sonic prop for Series 3 was actually the Grey Aztec; looking the worse for wear, with the Intermediate prop appearing only a handful of times as a secondary prop.



Given that the Grey Aztec was the main sonic for Series 3, it becomes evident that scenes in “Smith and Jones” were never intended to explain any change in appearance of the sonic prop. These scenes couldn’t even have been meant to explain the yellow wires, as they were very visibly seen on the Grey Aztec prior to the sonic’s “destruction” as well.

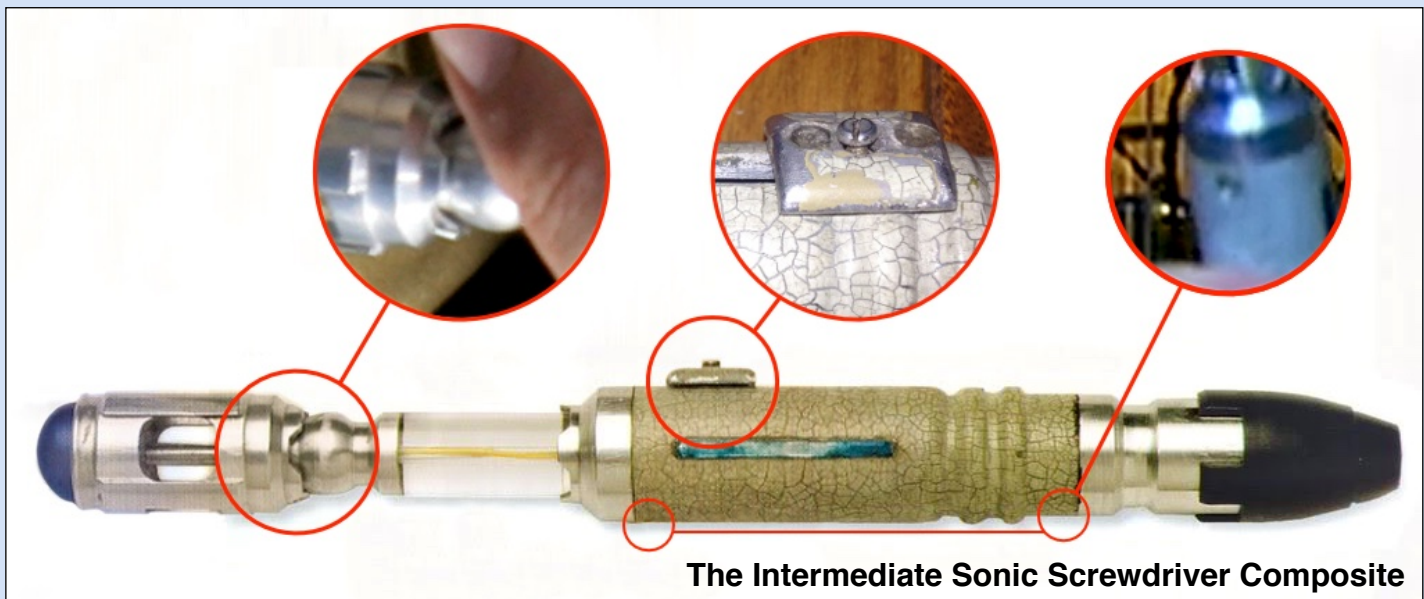




The final appearance of the Intermediate prop was in “Utopia” when the Doctor used it to fuse the coordinates of the TARDIS, locking them permanently so that the Master could only travel between the year one hundred trillion and the last place the Tardis landed; present day Earth. While the front of the prop is not visible within the scene, it is still easy to tell which prop was used; since David extends the emitter head within the scene, this tells us that the prop used could only have been the Intermediate prop. This scene also revealed the silver grub screws on the back of the prop, which of course were used to secure the collar and aluminum end.



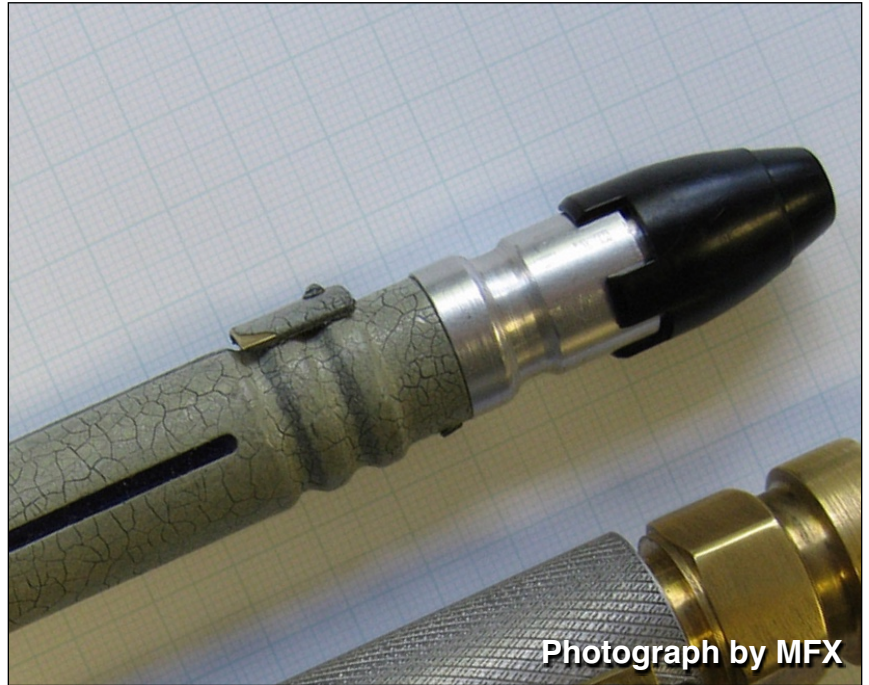
It could be argued that the final appearance of the Intermediate sonic was actually in “The Sound of Drums”, however these shots were flashback sequences from a scene in “Utopia”. That said, while we have established the final use of this prop as a whole, a few parts of the Intermediate (once known as the Colony Cream Aztec and the Wide Slider Aztec) were later used to make the second of the Series 4 Tennant hero props.



**The Intermediate Sonic Screwdriver Composite**

# The Tennant Props

## Series 4 - The Specials



Thanks to a special feature on the Series 3 DVD/Blu-ray boxset, the timeline for the creation of the two Tennant Sonic Screwdriver Props is very easy to pinpoint. The special feature in question is Freema Agyeman's Back Stage Tour, where she takes us on a tour of the BBC studios and props department. This is significant because the feature was filmed during preproduction for the 2007 Christmas Special, "Voyage of the Damned", four months after Series 3 had wrapped.

In the tour Freema is excited to speak with Barry Jones, the Props Fabrication Manager, and says to him "You're revamping the Sonic or something, are you? I've heard.", to which Barry replies; "Yeah, um, Nick's (Robatto) been re-machining it." We then see a close up of one of the new Tennant sonics in its case, disassembled, and painted only in grey primer. Barry continues saying; "Its got an old body

there" then he picks up the old grey Aztec body - the same one that surfaced for sale in 2018 - which is very worn and battered, "You know, it's all got a little bit dog-eared where David's been throwing it around", followed by a montage of David Tennant using the various Aztec props (Grey, stunt, and destroyed resin) from Series 3.

After the montage Barry continues again; "We are just in the process of just revamping it" and then he shows Freema the second new sonic from another case. This one is fully assembled, minus the blue bulb and still only painted with a grey primer, aside from the slider plate which is bare brass, and the emitter cage is fitted with the usual blue light LED. He continues one last time; "and it's this little LED in there. And uh, so that's just gotta be painted now and the crackle grey put on it and what have you."



With the creation timeline so clearly pinned down, I decided to reach out to Nick Robatto again to see what he could tell me about when he worked on these props. Nick said that had he made the two new Tennant props by reusing parts from the Aztec props (the Grey Aztec, and the Colony Cream Aztec/Wide Slider Aztec/Intermediate conversions); specifically the emitter heads, collars, black end caps, and the aluminum end from the Intermediate. For everything else, Nick had machined all new parts.



**Freema Agyeman's Back Stage Tour**



**Freema Agyeman's Back Stage Tour**

The Tennant props present a third ridge shape for the handle; this time they are a bit more bell shaped with flat edges, although since they were hand milled one of them has softer edges. They have an even slimmer slider channel than the Intermediate, and a simple flat/curved slider plate with a small peg for an activation button. The Tennant props started out with yellow wires and the frosted canal acrylic rod look that was first used on the Grey Aztec and Intermediate sonic for Series 3. The emitter bulbs were also replaced with new ones that had more domed tops, and both props were painted with a grey crackle finish that once again looked like cracked porcelain. Aside from the ridges, the two props did have one other visible difference pertaining to the head alignment; One prop had the slider channel channel aligned more centered with the space between the struts, as all the other filming props had done from Series 1 through Series 3, while the second prop had an emitter strut more closely lined up with slider channel.



**Freema Agyeman's Back Stage Tour**



**"Voyage of the Damned"**

The two new Robatto props remained largely unchanged from their first use in "Voyage of the Damned" all the way through to Tennant's swan song – "The End of Time" - with only two notable alterations made for the Series 4 Specials; first a small slotted screw was added just below the slider channel of both props, by the time of the Christmas Special, "The Next Doctor". The second change involved the grub screws on the back of the Tennant Prop 1, prior to "The Next Doctor" both props used black hex head grub screws, however as can be seen in "The Wedding of Sarah Jane Smith", the top screw on the back of the Tennant Prop 1 was replaced with what appears to be a slotted grub screw, or more likely a regular slotted screw seated flush against the body, and painted to blend in with the grey crackle finish.







Photograph by MFX 2009



Photograph by MFX 2009



BBC Photograph 2009

(This photo appears to be photoshopped using the head to collar of the T1 and the body of the T2)

The last on screen appearance for one of the Tennant sonics was in “The End of Time”, David’s final story from his era. While the last scenes that Tennant had filmed with his props were for the “The Wedding of Sarah Jane Smith” from Series 3 of “The Sarah Jane Adventures”; although this story aired before “The End of Time”.



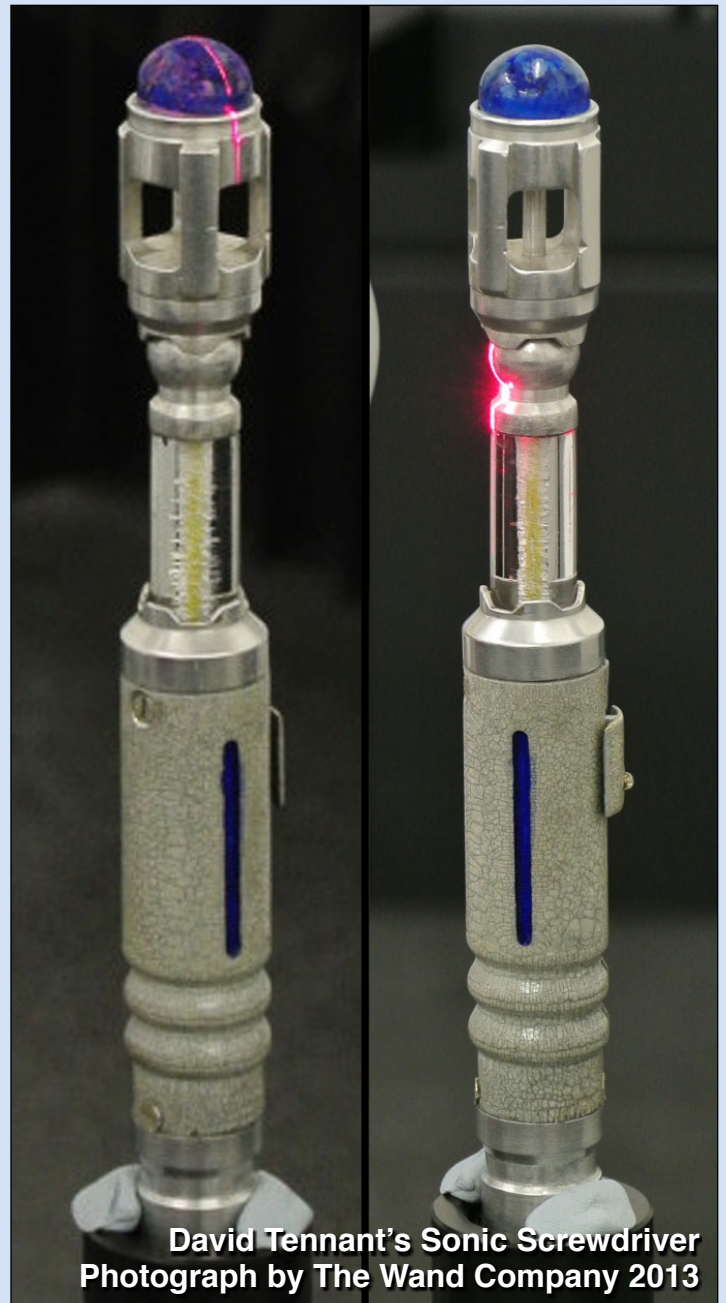
“The End of Time” Part 2



When David left the show in 2010, the Tennant Prop 1 was given to him as a keepsake from his era. In 2013 David lent this sonic to The Wand Company, to be 3D scanned, in order to make the officially licensed Tenth Doctor's Sonic Screwdriver Universal Remote Control.

The Wand Co. shared four high resolution pictures of this prop, where the alterations made to it for the Specials Year can be seen. We could see the replaced top screw much more clearly here than in the screen-cap from "The Wedding of Sarah Jane Smith", and we could now see that the lower grub screw was replaced with a regular slotted screw; like the one used on the front of the prop, below the slider. The crackle finish appears to be fully grey, again like "The Wedding of Sarah Jane Smith", rather than the yellowed tone seen in the 2009 photos by Millennium FX. It is unclear whether or not the prop was repainted or cleaned for the Specials Year, as the previous photos of the Tennant Prop 1 are not detailed enough to compare the cracks.

The Wand Company's picture also confirmed Nick Robatto's recollection of reusing Aztec parts for the Tennant props, since the photo shows a clear view of two nicks in the emitter head struts. These nicks can be seen on the Grey Aztec in Series 3 while the Doctor makes the Perception Filter TARDIS keys in Episode 12, "The Sound of Drums", and when Martha presents John Smith with the Grey Aztec in Episode 8, "Human Nature".



David Tennant's Sonic Screwdriver  
Photograph by The Wand Company 2013



The Grey Aztec  
"The Sound of Drums", Series 3



# The Tennant Props (Redux)

## Series 5: "The Eleventh Hour"



**"The Eleventh Hour" Prop BTS Photograph**

The final on screen appearance for the Tennant Prop 2 was in Matt Smith's debut story, "The Eleventh Hour" for Series 5. Here it had two more alterations made to it since its use in the Series 4 Specials.

The first change involved adding two Philips head screws in place of both of the black grub screws on the back of the prop, although these were added during the filming of the story, as the black grub screws can be seen in some shots as well.

The second alteration was that the main body was repainted with a blue hued finish, rather than the usual grey. It appears that the props team had attempted to strip and repaint the prop, but after a quick acetone bath, they changed their minds. This quick bath ruined most of the crackle finish, leaving behind some cracks and many new dimples. They then gave the prop a dark wash with some blue tone and back paints, to give it its unique and worn finish. Whether or not this paintwork was intentionally done to show damage after the troublesome regeneration is unknown.



**"The Eleventh Hour", Series 5**

The regular usage of the Dan Walker designed RTD era Sonic Screwdriver came to an end in “The Eleventh Hour” after the Doctor’s sonic was destroyed - in story, that is - while using it to try to gain the attention of the Atraxi. Of course, the destroyed sonic portrayed by two resin props; one made to look destroyed, and one clean stunt prop that was used for the pyrotechnics. As for the actual second Tennant prop itself, as of early 2018 it had been confirmed to be in a private collection, although the owner has chosen to remain anonymous.



**“The Eleventh Hour”, Series 5**



**Resin Stunt Prop  
“The Eleventh Hour”, Series 5**



**“The Eleventh Hour”, Series 5**



**“The Eleventh Hour” Prop BTS Photograph**



# The MFX Replica

## Series 7 & 10



**The MFX Prototypes**

In 2009 Millennium FX released the first officially licensed replica of the Tenth Doctor's Sonic Screwdriver, with a limited run of 500. Neill Gorton, owner of Millennium FX, and his team have worked on the show since 2004, although their department was usually in charge of the makeup, special effects, and robot suits. However, neither he or anyone on his team had ever made a Sonic Screwdriver prop for use in the show, prior to making their replica.

When the MFX sonic was first released, it unfortunately led to heated debates among fans about the screen accuracy of the replica. In fairness to the fans, the handle body was made of brass, whereas the real handle was aluminum. The crackle paint was not the grey

cracked porcelain used in Series 4, but instead a yellow vein-like crackle finish, with a brown base coat; a color chosen because the paint on the original props had yellowed by the time MFX was able to measure them. There were also various differences in dimensions when compared to the original props.





Despite the screen accuracy debate, many fans were thrilled to finally have a replica of the Tenth Doctor's Sonic Screwdriver in their collections. Something that wouldn't happen again until The Wand Company released their the Universal Remote Control Sonic Screwdriver Replica in 2013, however, even though that was made from a 3D scan of an original prop, it still came with its own set of inaccuracies.



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## THE WAIT IS OVER... THE SONIC SCREWDRIVER IS HERE!!!

**LIMITED TO  
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WORLDWIDE**



### The Doctor's Sonic Screwdriver

Designed as an exact replica of the Doctor's Sonic Screwdriver used during filming. All the materials, measurements and finishes have been referenced from the actual filming prop.

This Sonic features the thumb slider of the original hero filming prop and is made from aluminium, brass and acrylic just like the original.

Just like the prop this replica has a working LED in the tip which is illuminated by a switch mounted on the slider.

There will be **only 500** of these replicas made and they will be sold on a strictly first come first served basis. **NEVER AGAIN WILL WE MAKE A REPLICA OF THIS SONIC SCREWDRIVER** so this is your one and only chance to own the most authentic and accurate replica of the Doctor's Sonic.

The Sonics will be made individually by the team at Millennium FX, but differ from our 'Authentics' range because we did not make the original prop. That was created by the BBC art department, who kindly allowed us to use their screen-used prop for reference.

Price: £219 + VAT

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The MFX Email Flyer



The MFX Replica



The Wand Company remote wasn't the only notable moment for an official replica in 2013; For the 50th Anniversary Special of Doctor Who, the production team was in need of Sonic Screwdriver props for David Tennant's return to the show, and rather than risk damaging David's original, the team made other plans. Which brings things back to Neill Gorton, who had lent the production four of his own personal MFX replicas for David to use in "The Day of the Doctor". After filming, all four of Neill's replicas were returned to him, however, sometime after the airing of the 50th Anniversary Special, three of the four have been sold into private collections.

The inclusion of the MFX sonics in "The Day of the Doctor" has retroactively made these replicas a perfect screen match to a screen used Sonic Screwdriver, which was pretty great to see for those of us who own one, and who stuck by Neill through the debates. It also gave us a piece of the 50th Anniversary of Doctor Who in our very own hands.



"The Day of the Doctor"



"The Day of the Doctor" Photoshoot

There was one more curtain call in the show for an MFX replica, just four years after the 50th Anniversary Special.

For the Series 10 opener, “The Pilot”, a fan owned MFX replica was used as part of the set dressing for the Doctor’s office. The replica was arranged, with other versions of the Sonic Screwdriver, sitting atop the Doctor’s desk within a mid 19th century lignum vitae string pot.

Rhys Purton had sent his MFX replica to Nick Robatto for repairs to have the nonfunctioning blue LED replaced, and the replica was still in Nick’s care during the filming of Series 10. Nick had already used the replica in various photos of his own while it was in his possession, so when he got a call from the BBC saying that they were in need of a Tenth Doctor version of the Sonic Screwdriver to accompany the other past versions for the Series 10 episode, “The Pilot”, Nick took it upon himself to add Rhys Purton’s MFX into the string pot. This not only fulfilled a need for the production team, but it also made Rhys’

MFX replica a screen used Sonic Screwdriver prop.



Photo from Rhys Purton’s Instagram

And there you have it, that’s the history of the Doctor’s RTD Era Sonic Screwdriver props, so far as we currently know it.



“The Pilot”



# The Hero Props

## A Side By Side Comparison



\*The MFX Replica pictured in this comparison is from my own replica Sonic Screwdriver collection.