



It's about Time

No more waiting! *Doctor Who* is back with a geek-chic Time Lord and revamped Tardis, plus a striking new companion. *RT* quizzes the *Who* recruits, while series boss Steven Moffat gives us an exclusive sneak preview ▹

THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH
Below: Amy Pond (Karen Gillan) meets the "raggedy Doctor" (Matt Smith) after the Tardis crash-lands in her garden. Far left: regeneration complete and suited and booted in his new look, the Doctor's ready for anything from Weeping Angels to a sinister crack in time...



THE NEW DOCTOR MATT SMITH

REGENERATING IS A tough gig. Filling the shoes of the most popular Doctor in the history of the world's most popular sci-fi show is hard enough. When you have precisely 65 minutes to foil your first intergalactic threat, you need to hit the ground running.

"Yeah, no pressure," laughs Matt Smith, the 27-year-old actor who came, appropriately enough, from nowhere to scoop the title role in the new series of *Doctor Who*. "My Doctor is like a new-born lamb, trying to discover what these limbs are on his body, but he's straight into active service. It's a bit like trying to save the world with flu."

It seems a safe bet that eight-year-olds all over Britain will soon be plaguing their mums for a bow tie. There's a fogeyish charm to the eleventh Doctor (Smith prefers "geek chic") with his worn tweeds and flapping fringe. Smith's own manner is a likeable blend of puppyish and professorial, with a tendency to talk in italics. Playing the Doctor, he points out, is a little like "giving your Hamlet". You have to make the part your own.

"I mean," he says, "the Doctor has always been, and he always will be. But how many parts are there in world TV that could be played by a 27-year-old or a 60-year-old? It's been wonderful, just exploring the *multitudes* of him, but it takes a while to evolve a strong identity."

A graduate of the University of East Anglia, where he studied drama and creative writing, Smith has his own way of accessing this enigmatic character. "I had the part six months prior to shooting anything on camera – and for much of that time it was all a big secret – so I had to find a way of channelling my energy and excitement, my *lust*, as it were, for creating this persona. I was thinking, 'Who in the world has a brain and a silliness which is close to the Doctor?' and then I saw that photograph of Albert Einstein poking his tongue out and it just clicked. I found this book of quotes by Einstein – which I recommend as a life choice, he was such an insightful man – and I started writing short stories about Einstein and the Doctor, where the Doctor was getting irritated with the great man's buffoonery. He'd be saying, 'Come on, Albert, keep up!' and I think that, more than anything, was my way in to the part."

With new head writer and executive producer Steven Moffat on board, the role could be tailored to Smith's own personality as the season developed. "There's a slight sort of madness and a great tenderness to the Doctor. I don't know if that's me, but he's also very clumsy and that's definitely me," says Smith. "It helps, too, that I've always been completely fascinated by the time/space continuum. I was never that into sci-fi – I grew up in that barren age when *Doctor Who* was taken off the air – but I once shared a house with an

FRESH PAIR OF LEGS
New Doctor Matt Smith has a kickabout with James Corden during a break in filming



"So much of what I do, instinctually, as an actor, comes from my footballing background"

obscenely clever guy who was doing his doctorate for Cambridge on the subject of time, and ever since, it has seemed to me the great, omnipotent force of the world. The new series plays so cleverly with the concept of time travel. I don't know how Steven does it; you think there's no way he's going to be able to join those dots and tie the whole thing up but, by God, he does. For me, to go to work and be in touch, on a daily basis, with that crazy, time-bending magic is just incredible."

SMITH NEEDED ALL his enthusiasm – supplemented by weapons-grade Vitamin C – to carry him through the series' seven-month shooting schedule at Cardiff HQ, where he featured in practically every scene. "If you're ill, it's just tough. I think your head would have to be falling off before you could take a day off."

Fortunately, Smith is used to pushing himself to the limit. Long before he thought of acting as a career, he was set to be a professional footballer. Selected for Northampton Town under 11 and 12s, Nottingham Forest under 12, 13 and 14s and Leicester City under 15s and 16s, he was on course for the premier league – he remembers playing against Jermaine Pennant who went on to play for Liverpool – when a serious back injury knocked him out of the game. "That was a difficult time for me, for sure. But you know, what doesn't kill you... And my dad was always very keen to drill into me that it's not the disappointment that counts, it's how you react to it."

Smith was switched onto acting by Jerry Hardingham, his drama teacher at Northampton

School for Boys. "I can remember his first drama lesson," says Hardingham. "He possessed this raw power and presence. I knew that if that power could be harnessed, he could go places. I cast him in *Twelve Angry Men* while he was holiday, without auditioning him. I rang his mum and told her to tell him he's doing it; he hasn't got a choice! He did and he loved it – he got a taste for it."

In other words, Smith discovered his soccer skills were eminently transferable. "So much of what I do, instinctually, as an actor, comes, I'm sure, from my footballing background," he says. "There's supposed to be this divide between art and physical culture, but I look at someone like Zinedine Zidane and I see the pure expression of artistic grace. The courage needed to be a great sportsman applies equally to art in general and acting in particular. So much of acting is about summoning courage and confidence and, as in sport, there are lots of elements of your life that have to be put on a back burner because there's only one real focus. Not to mention the need for timing, rhythm and balance."

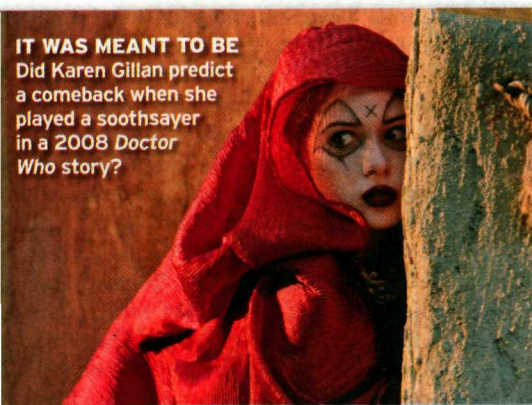
Rising through the ranks of the National Youth Theatre, Smith appeared in the second run of Alan Bennett's *The History Boys*, the play that was a springboard for a new wave of British talent including James Corden, Russell Tovey and Dominic Cooper. "They were in the first run," Smith points out, scrupulously. "I've just been working with James [for episode 11 of *Doctor Who*] – God, he's funny – and he's constantly going on about how he was doing *History Boys* in New York and I was doing it in Milton Keynes. Nothing against Milton Keynes" – Smith seems genuinely concerned not to give offence – "there's a wonderful theatrical culture there, but New York it ain't."

Does he hope to follow previous Doctors David Tennant and Christopher Eccleston to Hollywood? "Why the hell not?" says Smith. "I could do with a bit of poolside. I'd take my mum – she'd love it." Certainly he's keen to pursue new projects in shooting breaks from *Who*, but he's not going anywhere before mastering the sonic screwdriver. "I've broken four of them," he confesses. "I like to have it about my person at all times, just twirling it around and flicking it. It's all part of the magic, isn't it?"

For Smith, for now, *Doctor Who* is where he wants to be. "I feel very safe, literally safe, in the Tardis," he says. "I can't quite explain it. Maybe it's because I know that once it lands, the adventure is about to begin." *E Jane Dickson*

THE NEW COMPANION KAREN GILLAN

KAREN GILLAN DOESN'T scare easily. But she's working on it. The wattage dims in the laser-green eyes and her smile sags to a mask of startled horror. With the wavy red-gold hair and pearl-white complexion, she looks like a Botticelli nymph aghast at some mythological outrage. Botticelli in biker boots. Then, with a hoot of laughter, she's "back in the room": "That was my default scared face," she says. "But I try not to flip into it too often. Keeping the fear fresh: that's the big challenge of playing Amy." ▷



IT WAS MEANT TO BE Did Karen Gillan predict a comeback when she played a soothsayer in a 2008 *Doctor Who* story?

"She's funny, clever, gorgeous and sexy. Or Scottish, which is the quick way of saying it"

HEAD WRITER STEVEN MOFFAT

< Gillan is the girl who grabbed the role every actress would die for: the companion to the eleventh Doctor. The 22-year-old from Inverness may be cheerily blasé about working with Weeping Angels and Daleks, but when it came to auditioning for the iconic role, the fear was real.

"I wasn't allowed to tell anyone what I was going up for – not even the staff on reception at BBC Television Centre. I had to say I was up for something called *Panic Moon*, which is an anagram of "companion". I was so nervous. I remember being cold and sweaty and I went into the audition room; Matt was there and that was even scarier. But once we started reading together it just seemed to work. It's made a big difference that we're both starting at the same time."

For Steven Moffat, Gillan was the obvious and immediate choice for Amy Pond. "We saw some amazing actresses for the part, but when Karen came through the door, the game was up. She's funny and clever and gorgeous and sexy. Or Scottish, which is the quick way of saying it."

GILLAN BATS AWAY compliments as exceptionally pretty girls do, but she's pleased about the Scottish bit. "I tried out in my own voice and in an English accent. They weren't sure, but they went with a Scottish Amy in the end. And I think it suits the character. She's quite a feisty girl – I know that's true of most of the

companions, but Amy's not so much in awe of the Doctor. It's something to do with the way they meet. But it makes her rather sceptical of the Doctor at first. It's a really interesting dynamic because she doesn't just listen to any old rubbish – Amy gives as good as she gets."

It sounds like the classic set-up for romance. "I really can't say if there is or there isn't," says Gillan, colouring on her character's behalf, "but I will say it's not the driving force behind the relationship. It's much deeper – more like a connection between two lost souls who have found each other."

A larky, open manner belies Gillan's tight, professional focus. Leaving home at 16 to take up places at drama schools in Edinburgh then London, she found roles in *Rebus* and *The Kevin Bishop Show*. Between jobs, she supported herself with modelling stints. Her distinctive style – boots, frothy lace mini, tangerine nail varnish – is more thrift shop than catwalk and she sounds affectionately frustrated by Amy Pond's workaday wardrobe, like someone itching to do a makeover on a best friend: "I think a bit more about things, in terms of fashion, than Amy does. Her style is very thrown together – quite different from mine. But she's a cool girl. Cooler than me."

Plunged into the deep end (the new-series trailer showed her tumbling through a monster-haunted vortex), Gillan has, rather to her own surprise, risen to the physical challenges. "The vortex scene was one of the most terrifying things I've ever done – I really was falling through space inside a kind of tube. Many of the stunts couldn't be done by a double. It had to be me, so I've had to face loads of things inside myself – claustrophobia, for one – and it's been quite liberating."

Fans camped outside the *Doctor Who* set are a reminder of the show's unique place in British culture. "I was never really into science fiction when I was growing up," she says, "though my mum was a big *Doctor Who* fan. Now I've turned into a real sci-fi geek. Once you get sucked into that world, it has its own logic and laws, which is why I think people are so passionate about it."

But nothing in sci-fi prepared Gillan for seeing her first Amy doll. "They do this incredibly detailed head scan on you, so that it's a proper scale model. It's freaky, because it's so accurate. It really does look like me!"

That's just the start. When the new series airs and Gillan falls through the fame vortex, she knows her life will change. "I'd be lying if I said I wasn't daunted by the fact that there's an enormous amount of pressure that comes with the role – you're not just an actor, you're kind of a role model, too – but it's a privilege to play a part that people care about so much. "It's scary," she adds, no hint of the "default" on her excited face. "But not enough to scare me off." *EJD*

THE NAME'S POND ...Amy Pond. "She's a feisty girl," says Karen Gillan, "and gives as good as she gets"

MARK HARRISON

THE ULTIMATE EPISODE GUIDE BY STEVEN MOFFAT

The Who boss's series overview gives a tantalising taste of things to come

1 The Eleventh Hour

Writer Steven Moffat.

Guest stars Annette Crosbie, Nina Wadia and Arthur Darvill.

Geronimo! A brand-new Doctor crashing to Earth. New face, new body, new man. And he's barely staggered out of the blue box, before he's found himself in the middle of the Crisis That Just Won't Stop! No time to rest and recover, no Tardis, no screwdriver – just six billion human beings about to die and only one man to save them. But the new Doctor encounters more than danger – this is the day he meets Amy Pond. Can he persuade her to trust him, when he's been letting her down all her life?

"Who da man?"



2 The Beast Below

Writer Steven Moffat.

Guest stars Sophie Okonedo, Terrence Hardiman.

The Doctor takes Amy to the far future, and *Starship UK*. The British people, adrift among the stars on a giant spaceship, in search of a new home. But there are secrets here, in the rusting corridors and clanging hallways. A masked figure, who knows the Doctor of old, begs his help, while Amy encounters the terrifying Smilers [above], and uncovers a secret so dreadful, no one can remember it...

"Nobody talk to me! Nobody human has anything to say to me today!"



3 Victory of the Daleks

Writer Mark Gatiss.

Guest stars Ian McNeice (above) and Bill Paterson.

From the terrifying future of the United Kingdom to one of the darkest chapters of its past – World War Two. The Doctor and Amy find themselves in a top-secret cabinet war room deep beneath the London streets. And there, gliding among the nicotine walls and Bakelite telephones, the Daleks are hatching their deadliest scheme yet. Only one man can help the Doctor – but whose side is Winston Churchill on?

"I wanted to know what their plan was. I was their plan!"

4 The Time of Angels 5 Flesh and Stone

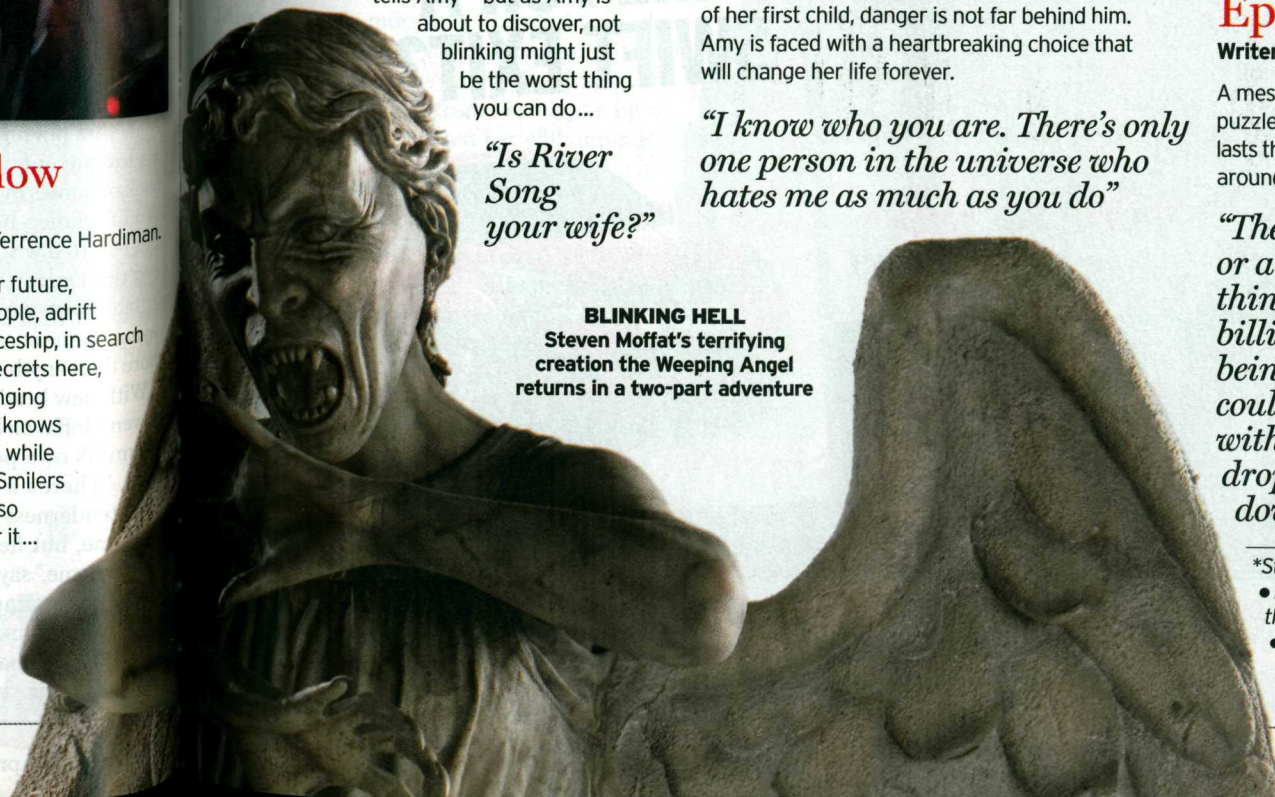
Writer Steven Moffat.

Guest stars Alex Kingston and Iain Glen.

A two-part story. A crashed spaceship, a shattered temple and a terrifying climb through the maze of the dead – River Song is back in the Doctor's life, and she's brought more trouble than even he can handle. The last of the Weeping Angels is loose in the ruins of Alfava Metraxis, and the Doctor is recruited to track it down. "Don't blink!" everyone tells Amy – but as Amy is about to discover, not blinking might just be the worst thing you can do...

"Is River Song your wife?"

BLINKING HELL Steven Moffat's terrifying creation the Weeping Angel returns in a two-part adventure



6 Vampires in Venice

Writer Toby Whithouse.

Guest star Helen McCrory.

In Venice, even danger is beautiful. The House of Calvierri has the whole city under its protection, but something is very wrong. There are blood-drained corpses in the street, something lurks in the canal, and the Calvierri girls are the loveliest in town, except when you glance in the mirror...

"You know what's dangerous about you? Not that you ask people to take risks, but that you make them want to impress you!"



7 Amy's Choice

Writer Simon Nye.

Guest star Toby Jones.

It's been five long years since Amy travelled in the Tardis with her mysterious Doctor – and when he shows up again, on the eve of the birth of her first child, danger is not far behind him. Amy is faced with a heartbreaking choice that will change her life forever.

"I know who you are. There's only one person in the universe who hates me as much as you do"

Episodes 8 and 9*

Writer Chris Chibnall.

Guest stars Meera Syal, Stephen Moore and Neve McIntosh.

In 2015, the most ambitious drilling project in history is under way. Dr Nasreen Chaudhry and her team have reached 21 kilometres into the Earth's crust – but something is stirring far below. Amy Pond discovers there's nowhere to run when you can't even trust the ground at your feet.

"While you've been drilling down... something else has been drilling up"

Episode 10

Writer Richard Curtis.

Guest star Tony Curran.

Terror lurks in the cornfields of Provence, but only a sad and lonely painter can see it. Amy Pond finds herself shoulder to shoulder with Vincent van Gogh, in a battle with a deadly alien – saving the world has never been so ginger! But can even the Doctor save Vincent?

"Art can wait, this is life and death. We need to talk to Vincent van Gogh!"

Episode 11

Writer Gareth Roberts.

Guest stars James Corden and Daisy Haggard.

The Doctor faces his greatest challenge yet – a flat share! People are disappearing on Aickman Road, and the Doctor must solve the mystery of a staircase that people walk up – but never down.

"All I have to do is pass as an ordinary human being. What could possibly go wrong?"

Episodes 12 and 13

Writer Steven Moffat.

A message on the oldest cliff-face in the universe, a puzzle box opening from the inside and a love that lasts thousands of years...The fates are drawing close around the Tardis – is this the day the Doctor falls?

"There was a goblin. Or a trickster, or a warrior. A nameless, terrible thing, soaked in the blood of a billion galaxies. The most feared being in all the cosmos. Nothing could stop it, or hold it, or reason with it – one day it would just drop out of the sky and tear down your world"

*Story titles for episodes 8 to 13 to be confirmed.
• Doctor Who Confidential (Saturday BBC3) follows the Doctor on a tour of the regenerated Tardis.
• In the new issue of Doctor Who Adventures, Matt Smith talks about his very first scenes
▶ radiotimes.com/doctor-who