

# Who is my hero?

...for many, it's the Doctor, but who would **Matt Smith**, **Karen Gillan** and head writer **Steven Moffat** nominate as their hidden hero of *Doctor Who*?

**Doctor Who**  
Saturday 7.05pm BBC1



## STEVEN MOFFAT CHOOSES...

"Rory Pond is everything I could never be – brave enough to show when he's scared, man enough to take his wife's name, and so steadfastly in love that he'll wait 2,000 years and not complain once. Everyone needs a Rory in their life."

STYLISHLY DISHEVELLED in a sweater that may have first seen the light in the last winter of discontent, Arthur Darvill, who plays Rory, looks a little downcast. "I don't think they've actually brought out a Rory action figure," he sighs. "I've done the face-modelling for it – they do a weird camera scan of your head in different positions – so I presume there will be one, but not yet. We should start a campaign."

While Darvill appreciates the importance of action figures (his He-Man still hides somewhere in his parents' attic, though his ThunderCats were sold at a car-boot sale long ago), he clearly isn't that bothered by his lack of a plastic mini-me. Perhaps this is because Rory himself was made into a plastic centurion in the last series of *Doctor Who* and perhaps it's because Darvill, 29, is as unassuming an actor as you're likely to meet.

Still, the current lack of a Rory doll is telling. When he and Amy first took up residence in the Tardis, Rory played gooseberry as Amy and the Doctor renewed their acquaintance. With Amy infatuated with her "raggedy man", Rory held the coats. But as Darvill promised *RT* back before Easter, this series has seen Rory "man up" and become more than merely Mr Amy Pond. After Amy realised just how important Rory was to her in *The Girl Who Waited* and the Doctor challenged her to embrace being Amy Williams in *The God Complex*, Rory's heroism is no longer unsung.

"It's been epic and it has required a lot of coffee," Darvill says, scratching his head as if he hasn't had quite enough caffeine today. "Your life kinda goes out the window a bit, but we all help each other through it. I've made some of my best friends working on *Doctor Who* and I'd worked before with Matt [on stage in London in 2007]."

All told, Darvill is remarkably unfazed by being aboard the *Who* juggernaut. He didn't really think about it changing his life – he argues that

filming in Cardiff insulates them from media pressure and "being followed around all the time" – and, as he didn't really watch *Doctor Who* as a boy, he wasn't daunted by the heritage. "I was aware of it, but my older friends were more into it than I was. A friend did give me an 18-foot Tom Baker scarf, which I loved, but that was more to do with me having a bit of a wool obsession."

It transpires that Darvill has another couple of, if not obsessions, then certainly passions. There's music, of course. As well as being chums with folky-popster Fyfe Dangerfield, he's a musician and composer himself (look on YouTube for his former band, Edmund), inspired by his dad, Nigel, who played the Hammond organ for the likes of Edwin Starr and Ruby Turner. "I'm not classically trained or anything, but I've always been surrounded by musicians. I'm making new music at the moment."

Then, there's the slightly less common passion for taxidermy. "I prefer live animals, but you wouldn't want to keep a red squirrel in captivity, would you? I want an owl at the moment," he enthuses. "I like the idea of having a gentleman's study, with a globe, a library and some stuffed animals. I wanted to get the dog stuffed when he

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ARTHUR DARVILL



died, but my parents said no. I love the Natural History Museum for the stuffed animals."

As Darvill grins, slipping almost into reverie, you'll have gathered by now there's something charmingly odd about him. Well, there's one more thing. It's not just stuffed animals that he has an interest in – he can also make balloon animals. "Oh yes!" he grins. "I haven't done it for years but it's on my CV. I can make a monkey on a tree, a tortoise, and a guitar that you can play a tune on. When I left school, I had a job driving all over the country training people to do kids' parties for McDonald's."

When you're living in a house full of stuffed animals and can make guitars from balloons, life in the Tardis might sometimes seem a little, well, ordinary. But surely nothing feels stranger than Rory being father of the bride in *The Wedding of River Song*, this Saturday's season finale.

Gareth McLean

MATT SMITH AND KAREN GILLAN'S HIDDEN HEROES ► 17





## KAREN GILLAN CHOOSES...

"Stephanie Carey, my stuntwoman, a fearless, talented woman who makes Amy Pond an action hero. Without Steph we wouldn't have the amazing shots of Amy being flung across a pirate ship, or flipping through space with a decent amount of grace."

**STEPHANIE CAREY:** I don't mind the cuts and bruises. It's part of the job. One of the stunts I've done for *Doctor Who* was what we call in the industry a "jerk back". Basically, Amy had to fly back when the

Siren [in *The Curse of the Black Spot*] pointed a wand at her, and that was me. I wore a special vest with a wire attached, which the team pulled with such force that I was jerked back 20 feet. Even if I wear pads, I know I'll get knocked around on a heavy stunt like that. I wear a wig and shy away from the camera. Obviously, it helps to be a similar size – Karen is 5ft 11 whereas I'm only 5ft 8, but it's close enough.

You never know what you're going to get when the phone rings. Recently, I doubled Sigourney Weaver in a new film, so spent seven weeks racing around Madrid in car chases. That was brilliant fun. I've played a Death Eater in *Harry Potter*, assassins in *Spooks* and exited speedboats seconds before they explode...



me and my stunt double steph carey



## MATT SMITH CHOOSES...

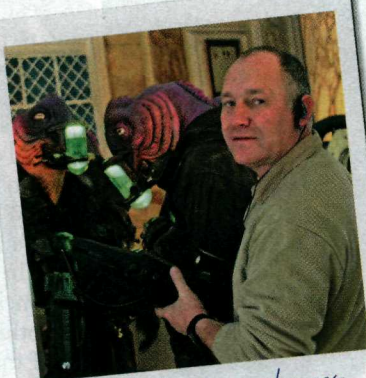
"Phill Shellard, our standby props man. When he's not there, you notice. When he is, you don't. He was formerly a tool-maker. I break everything. Without Phill we'd have no chance. He is brilliant."

**PHILL SHELLARD:** I've heard Matt Smith called clumsy, but I prefer to think he's enthusiastic. Matt likes to show his props off, especially his favourite: the sonic screwdriver. He's developed it into something of an art form – flipping and tossing it up into the air – and at his request the prop-makers have tweaked and tailored it to his tastes. Which doesn't stop him breaking it: I do tend to spend a lot of time hastily sticking it back together with tape, wire and superglue. In fact, we now have four sonic screwdrivers – one for every stunt

and scenario – so there's always a spare when it takes a battering in Matt's hands.

I've been on *Doctor Who* since the very first episode of the new series [in 2005]. I think I have a reputation as being a bit of a taskmaster. I'm a little overprotective, but with good reason: one missing prop will bring the whole shoot to a grinding halt.

A couple of years ago, I had just half an hour to devise a replacement. Scouring the set for anything that bore any resemblance, my eye fell upon the vacuum cleaner, and I took a hacksaw and pot of glue to it. So we did the scene with the actor running around holding a souped-up vacuum cleaner. Nobody realised, hopefully, but I'm not going to reveal which episode it was, in case your readers zoom in too closely...



Phill shellard on the set of The Doctor's Daughter



We review the season finale straight after it's aired: [radiotimes.com/doctor-who](http://radiotimes.com/doctor-who)

## 5 GREAT ESCAPES

This week the Doctor faces certain death, but he's got out of tight spots before...

### 1 THE SEEDS OF DEATH

**Patrick Troughton, 1969**

It's a fairly ordinary calamity as the monsters lumber toward the Doctor and there's no hope

of escape. But the solution is pure *Doctor Who* as the Ice Warriors corner the second Doctor, yet he stops them simply by protesting: "Your leader will be angry if you kill me. I'm a genius!"



### 2 THE DEADLY ASSASSIN

**Tom Baker, 1976**

Another Time Lord tries to drown the fourth Doctor and the episode ends with his face looking



up from under water. Nobody remembers how he got out of it, but everyone knows the cliffhanger (it was slammed by watchdog Mary Whitehouse). Next week, he just breaks free.

### 3 THE CAVES OF ANDROZANI

**Peter Davison, 1984**

There are two escapes. First, the fifth Doctor and Peri are shot by firing squad, but have been replaced by androids at the last second. The better, nobler certain death is when they're poisoned and the Doc gives Peri all the antidote. "I might regenerate," he says. And does.



### 4 THE EMPTY CHILD

**Christopher Eccleston, 2005**

"Are you my mummy?" Hospital patients have been transformed into



gas-mask-wearing zombies by alien technology. They're about to give the ninth Doctor, Rose and Jack, the same treatment. Next week, the Doctor gets rid of them all by saying: "Go to your room!"

### 5 THE END OF TIME

**David Tennant, 2010**

He's jumped from a spaceship, crashed through a glass ceiling, and is nose to nose with wicked Time Lords and the Master. He gets through that, no bother, but can only save Bernard Cribbins by dying and regenerating, yet this is the first time the change really feels like a death. "I don't want to go," says the tenth Doctor.

