

# HOW DOCTOR WHO CHANGED LONDON



From the Post Office Tower to the London Eye, 'Doctor Who' has embraced – and sometimes toppled – London's most iconic monuments. **Peter Watts** finds the sites at the centre of the universe

As a Time Lord, Doctor Who can visit any point in the universe at any moment he chooses. So why has London been so central to his story? Does this support London's claim to be the greatest city ever founded? Or is this intergalactic bias more to do with the location of the BBC?

London is where the Doctor's adventures began in 1963, ended in 1989, and were

reborn with Christopher Eccleston in 2005. Many of the most legendary episodes feature London – usually being invaded by Daleks, Cybermen, Autons, dinosaurs, yetis or any combination of the above. The show's inventive use of London landmarks waned as the series declined and the city became wallpaper for sci-fi waffle. But in 2005, TV writer Russell T

Davies (see interview page 16) embraced the past and put London centre-stage again. As Steven Moffat and Matt Smith take over from Davies and David Tennant, we celebrate London's most memorable 'Doctor Who' moments. Welcome to our guide and double-page map, which we've prepared so you can make your own Whovian tour of the capital.



# A Time Lord's London

'Doctor Who' has a fine tradition of using London locations as inventive settings. **Peter Watts** materialises some favourite Whovian locations (turn the page for the story of each numbered site). Illustration **Peskimo**



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**WILLIAM HARTNELL**  
The War Machines, 1966

**DAVID TENNANT**  
The Next Doctor, 2008

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**JON PERTWEE**  
Invasion of the Dinosaurs, 1974

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**SYLVESTER MCCOY**  
Remembrance of the Daleks, 1988

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**CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON**  
Rose, 2005

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**PAUL MCGANN**  
Doctor Who, 1996

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**COLIN BAKER**  
Attack of the Cybermen, 1985

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**PATRICK TROUGHTON**  
The Invasion, 1968

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**PETER DAVISON**  
The Visitation, 1982

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**TOM BAKER**  
The Talons of Weng Chiang, 1976

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**The First Doctor**

**William Hartnell**  
1963-66

**'The War Machines' (1966):  
Post Office Tower**



In 'An Unearthly Child', the first episode (broadcast November 23 1963), we meet the Doctor and the Tardis for the first time at **76 Totter's Lane** ①, a scrapyards in Shoreditch. London (including the Transport Museum, Trafalgar Square and the Thames) features in 1964's 'Dalek Invasion of Earth', but Hartnell's best London episode is 'The War Machines', when he battles WOTAN, a super-computer located on top of the **Post Office Tower** ②. Here we see an early Whovian device – the subversive use of iconic contemporary London locations. The Tower was completed in 1965 and opened by Harold Wilson and Tony Benn. It embodied the 'white heat' of Wilson's technological revolution, a key symbol of what *Private Eye* called 'Benn's Hover Britain', but 'Doctor Who' turns this promise inside out. **WATCH IT!** [www.tinyurl.com/TOWho1](http://www.tinyurl.com/TOWho1)

**The Second Doctor**

**Patrick Troughton**  
1966-69

**'The Invasion' (1968):  
St Paul's Cathedral**



Gripping stuff, as Cybermen come out of a manhole outside **St Paul's** ③! The Second Doctor's other great London story was 'Web of Fear', in which he fought a Yeti on the tube at **Piccadilly Circus** ④. It was filmed in a studio, but London Transport were so impressed by the set they accused the BBC of filming underground illicitly. **WATCH IT!** [www.tinyurl.com/TOWho2](http://www.tinyurl.com/TOWho2)

**The Third Doctor**

**Jon Pertwee**  
1970-74

**'Spearhead from Space' (1970): Ealing**



A new Doctor takes on the Autons, evil plastic dummies controlled by the Nestene Consciousness, after they burst out of a shop window (now M&S) in **Ealing** ⑤. London featured in 1974's 'Invasion of the Dinosaurs', with the dinosaurs controlled from **Trafalgar Square tube** (now Charing Cross) ⑥. In 1973's 'Frontier in Space', the **South Bank** ⑦ is used to represent London in 2540. **WATCH IT!** [www.tinyurl.com/TOWho3](http://www.tinyurl.com/TOWho3)

**The Fourth Doctor**

**Tom Baker**  
1974-81

**'The Talons of Weng Chiang' (1976): Clink Street**



Dressed in homage to Sherlock Holmes, Baker

took the Tardis to Victorian London for this Fu Manchu-esque episode, which begins with a fight filmed on **Clink Street** ⑧. Russell T Davies has compared the dialogue in this episode to Dennis Potter. We are not sure what Potter made of 1975's 'Terror of the Zygons', in which the Loch Ness Monster swam down the **Thames** ⑨. **WATCH IT!** [www.tinyurl.com/TOWho4](http://www.tinyurl.com/TOWho4)

**The Fifth Doctor**

**Peter Davison**  
1981-84

**'The Visitation' (1982):  
Pudding Lane**



The David Gower Doctor's most memorable London appearance is also temporally controversial, as a Terileptil weapon explodes and causes a fire. In 1666. In **Pudding Lane** ⑩. Geddit? Davison returned for 'Resurrection of the Daleks', with scenes shot by **Tower Bridge** ⑪ and in derelict dockland warehouses. **WATCH IT!** [www.tinyurl.com/TOWho5](http://www.tinyurl.com/TOWho5)

**The Sixth Doctor**

**Colin Baker**  
1984-86

**'Attack of the Cybermen' (1985): 76 Totter's Lane**



The episode begins with an attack in the Fleet sewer and continues with the Tardis landing back at **76 Totter's Lane** ① (filmed at Becklow Road, W12), although with a different Doctor, now dressed as Ronald McDonald, and Peri, his improbably cleaved companion. Much criticised by fans, but it does at least feature Brian Glover (the episode, not the cleavage). **WATCH IT!** [www.tinyurl.com/TOWho6](http://www.tinyurl.com/TOWho6)

**The Seventh Doctor**

**Sylvester McCoy**  
1987-89, 1996

**'Remembrance of the Daleks' (1988): Roupell Street**



When filming the Dalek v Dalek fight in **Waterloo** ⑫, the explosions were so loud the fire brigade was called to deal with what was assumed to be an IRA bomb. The Seventh Doctor's final scenes in 'Survival' (1989) – the last TV episodes until 2005 – took place in, wait for it, **Perivale** ⑬. **WATCH IT!** [www.tinyurl.com/TOWho7](http://www.tinyurl.com/TOWho7)

**The Eighth Doctor**

**Paul McGann**  
1996

**'Doctor Who' (1996):  
Houses Of Parliament**



London made a fleeting appearance in McGann's 1996 TV movie, with the **Houses of Parliament** ⑭ appearing for about one frame as one of the world landmarks getting sucked

into the Eye of Harmony by Eric Roberts's uber-camp Master. Blink and you'll miss it. The Eighth Doctor was regenerated for a radio series which included the London-soaked serial 'Dead London' (2007), where he encounters aliens named after St Sepulchre's Church. **WATCH IT!** <http://tinyurl.com/TOWho8>

**The Ninth Doctor**

**Christopher Eccleston**  
2005

**'Rose' (2005): London Eye**



Russell T Davies revived the notion of London as a temporal playground for competing forces. In Eccleston's very first episode – echoing 'The War Machines' – a futuristic London landmark (**The London Eye** ⑮) is used for nefarious means. The Autons also returned, this time at Henrik's department store, modelled on **Harrods** ⑯. London also featured memorably in 'Aliens of London', when a spaceship crashes into **Big Ben** ⑰, and 'An Empty Child', which takes place during the Blitz. **WATCH IT!** [www.tinyurl.com/TOWho9](http://www.tinyurl.com/TOWho9)

**The Tenth Doctor**

**David Tennant**  
2005-10

**'The Next Doctor' (2008):  
River Thames**



Tennant's rom-com Tenth Doctor has spent an extraordinary amount of time battling malevolent forces emanating from London landmarks. There are the Cybermen made in **Battersea Power Station** ⑰ ('Rise of the Cybermen', 2006); the Daleks and Cybermen at **Canary Wharf** ⑱ ('Army of Ghosts', 2006); the Racnoss spider-people at the **Thames Barrier** ⑲ ('The Runaway Bride', 2006); the evil energy transmitter in **Alexandra Palace** ⑳ ('The Idiot's Lantern', 2006); and the **Brixton-Victoria bus** ㉑ that ends up on an alien planet ('Planet of the Dead', 2009). And let's not forget the episode in which a spaceship called the Titanic almost crashes into **Buckingham Palace** ㉒ but is saved by the Doctor and Kylie Minogue ('Voyage of the Damned', 2007), prompting the Queen to declare: 'Thank you, Doctor! Thank you! Happy Christmas.' However, our favourite is the 'The Next Doctor', in which the CyberKing emerges from the **Thames** ㉓ and stomps all over 1851 London like an angry metal Godzilla, something that Peter Ackroyd astonishingly omitted from his otherwise definitive history of the city. **WATCH IT!** [www.tinyurl.com/TOWho10](http://www.tinyurl.com/TOWho10)

Thanks to Ian Grutchfield at the BBC. Further reading: 'Who Goes There' by Nick Griffiths (Legend Press, £7.99); 'BFI TV Classic: Doctor Who' by Kim Newman (BFI, £12); [www.doctorwho locations.net](http://www.doctorwho locations.net).

