

12 weeks that changed my life

She hit the headlines by bringing sex appeal back to the Tardis, but who is the real **Karen Gillan**?

Doctor Who

Saturday 6.40pm **BBC1, BBC HD**

I'M THINKING. I really am. I'm racking my brains," says Karen Gillan. The classical chin-on-hand thinker's pose is offset by poison-green nail varnish. As she concentrates, one long leg winds tightly about the other, slim and supple as the limbs of an elegant octopus. But it's no good. Gillan is stumped. She cannot come up with a single downside to fame.

It's three months since the red-haired, 5ft 10in Scot first climbed aboard the Tardis and the escalating profile of *Doctor Who*'s latest companion is approaching warp speed. Magazine cover shoots, personal appearances and almost daily puffs of tabloid outrage – the kind of outrage, requiring extensive photo-coverage, that's reserved for exceptionally pretty girls in short skirts – have all been taken in Gillan's athletic stride.

"It's weird," she says, of her crash landing on Planet Famous, "but nice-weird. It feels like you're being monitored a bit more and I really wasn't prepared for that kind of attention. Of course, it's strange to wake up and find journalists staking out your house, but no one's been nasty. And it's not like

I'm cowering inside, scared to put a foot wrong.

"I went on the Tube the other day, at night, and no one looked twice. Bit of an anticlimax, really. I can use public transport depending on the time of day – if there were a lot of children around, it would probably be impossible. But that's not something you can worry about. I mean, *Doctor Who* is just the most brilliant job. I'm not going to take that for granted and start moaning about 'the cost of celebrity'."

Surfing on adrenaline, Karen "Kaz" Gillan is the original breath of fresh air. When she giggles – and she giggles a lot – it's not so much nerves as sheer good nature. None of which disguises the best-foot-forward determination that, at 22, has made her Britain's most bankable new talent.

Having left home in Inverness at 16 to go to drama school in Edinburgh, she went on to appear in *Rebus*, *Stacked* and *The Kevin Bishop Show* – as well as playing a soothsayer opposite David Tennant's Doctor in *The Fires of Pompeii* (2008).

But as Amy Pond, she's raised the game of the Doctor's companion from sidekick to genuine co-star. There's a classic screwball energy in her professional relationship with Matt Smith >



"Ultimately, I think they're like brother and sister – he's quite protective of her and they bicker like siblings do, but ultimately they'd do anything for each other. Sometimes, though, she's attracted to him, and that's when

"I guess Amy's default attitude is 'Come on, impress me'. And she's not going to mope around when the Doctor's not there – she's going to do her own thing, whether it's fighting monsters in strange new worlds or just getting on with her life in her own village. I really loved the episode [*Amy's Choice*] where she's ▷

Doctor Ooooh!

How the Time Lord's saucy, short-skirted new companion sent viewers into orbit

THE LORD'S STUNNING NEW ASSISTANT

I'm the sexiest sidekick Dr Who's ever had

EXCLUSIVE
LARA GORDON INTERVIEW

Doctor who, don't forget this: I'm the sexiest sidekick Dr Who's ever had

SHE'S the flame-haired temptress who'll be helping Dr Who win his cosmic Skywalker...

The new Miss of mystery is the most confident and beautiful beauty goddess in sci-fi. And she's got a few tricks up her madcap sleeve. **EXCLUSIVE** Lara Gordon talks about her new role and the show's new direction.

Asked whether she's a temptress, the blonde says: "Who engages me in the show is a very handsome man, and I'm a very beautiful woman without a power 'You I am'."

Doctor Man, 27, agrees and explains: "I'm 27. The reason she's called Lara is because she's got a lot of power."

◁ married and pregnant. I grew really attached to that pregnancy bump – I'd catch myself rubbing it. But I was quite happy to take it off at the end of the day. I suppose I realised I'm not ready to be pregnant!"

NOR IS SHE ready to discuss the impact of her new-found pin-up status on her private life. "Och no," she says, smoothing away a blush with the flat of her hands. "Let's just say I've had lots of nice letters, some lovely letters, but my relationship with my boyfriend [photographer Patrick Green] is exactly the same as it always was. I don't really talk about him, because I'm sure he'd rather not be talked about, but all the *Who* craziness hasn't affected us at all. We still go to the same places and see the same people.

"In fact, nothing in my life has really changed, except that I've got this really great job and a bit more money. And to have that sense of security at this age and stage of my career is a very nice feeling. Though, actually, I'm rubbish with money. I don't think I'm mentally extravagant, but every so often, I'll go out and buy really nice things and deal with the consequences later.



STONE ME

Stonehenge, River Song (Alex Kingston) and the head of a Cyberman... What does it all mean for Amy and the Doctor in the epic two-part finale?

I can't drive, but I'd quite like to own an Aston Martin or something. If we're going all-out, I'll have a chauffeur with it! Then I can sit in the back and play my iPod. But that's fantasy territory – I don't know if that will ever happen."

As fantasies go, it's not so far-fetched. America,

where *Doctor Who* has a vast following, already can't get enough of Amy Pond and the call to Hollywood is surely a matter of time.

"Do you know, there really hasn't been time to think of all that," says Gillan. "We start on the new series in a couple of weeks and I'll be filming for nine months, so I can't even get into talks about anything else. Once I've finished *Doctor Who*, I'm just going to have to see what the world has to offer!"

There's neither cockiness nor false modesty here, but Gillan's smile is not without a hint of challenge. "Come on," it says. "Impress me."

➤ See more photos of Karen at radiotimes.com/karen-gillan, learn about former companions at radiotimes.com/doctor-who-classic and read our weekly blog at radiotimes.com/who-blog

NEXT WEEK
MATT SMITH IN
THE RT INTERVIEW



WHAT MAKES THE PERFECT COMPANION – HAS AMY POND GOT IT ALL?

SEX APPEAL

POLLY (Anneke Wills)
1966–67

After an initial run of frumps and urchins, Polly was the first sassy modern woman in 1960s *Doctor Who*. No dumb blonde, posh Polly worked as a PA at the newly opened Post Office Tower and hung out at London's hottest nightclub – Inferno. It was as if Julie Christie had suddenly stepped aboard the Tardis.

Does Amy match up? ✓

BRAINPOWER

ZOE HERIOT
(Wendy Padbury)
1968–69

Zoe was the first companion to bring dazzling intelligence into the equation. Belying her teenage demeanour, she was a highly educated astrophysicist from the late 21st century. She frequently outsmarted her friends, once saying, "The Doctor's almost as clever as I am."

Does Amy match up? X
(But then even the Doctor rarely topped Zoe!)

RESOURCEFULNESS

SARAH JANE SMITH
(Elisabeth Sladen)
1973–76

A freelance journalist with a nose for trouble, plucky Sarah was a liberated 1970s woman who didn't take no for an answer. Decades later, she's still saving the Earth in her own CBBC series *The Sarah Jane Adventures* (where she'll be teaming up with 11th Doctor Matt Smith this autumn).

Does Amy match up? ✓

BRAVERY

LEELA (Louise Jameson)
1977–78

"You will do as the Doctor instructs or I will cut out your heart." No one messed with Leela. Armed with a dagger and deadly Janis thorns, this noble savage was the most fearless and intuitive of all the Time Lord's allies.

Does Amy match up? ✓

COMPASSION

ROSE TYLER (Billie Piper)
2005–2010

Impulsive Rose was the perfect woman to help a despondent ninth Doctor (Christopher Eccleston) rediscover his joie de vivre. She empathised with the last of the Daleks and went back to the 1980s to save her dad's life. Rose fell in love with the tenth Doctor (David Tennant) – an emotion he reciprocated for the first time.

Does Amy match up? ✓

