

# TV MAGAZINE

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# FINAL COUNTDOWN

**MATT SMITH AND KAREN GILLAN** ON THE EXPLOSIVE END TO THEIR OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD ADVENTURE



# IT'S THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Matt Smith spills all on the return of the Doctor, *almost* being Sherlock and how he'll cope without co-star Karen Gillan

WORDS PAUL SIMPER

Everything to do with the new *Doctor Who* series is cloaked in secrecy – but then, that's all part of the show's timeless thrill, isn't it? We've lost count of the number of times over the years Matt Smith has teased us with a smile and told us

he *could* reveal a gripping new twist... but if he did, he'd have to kill us.

Which makes the story he's divulging to *TV Magazine*, while cheerily supping tea in a carefully secured room at the show's Cardiff HQ, all the more extraordinary.

"We were auditioning for the Doctor's new companion in the deepest bowels of the BBC," he says. "It was all top secret. We'd been filming with these wonderful actresses for three or four hours, when we heard a cough from behind a partition. We looked behind it and there was this security guard sitting there with his feet up."

Matt laughs incredulously. "We said: 'Man, do you know what this is we're doing here?' He was like: 'What?' Of course he's *never* been seen again. I called the Daleks up and said: 'I've got a favour to ask, boys...'"

Sensibly heeding that warning, we wouldn't dare reveal the mind-blowing secret that lies behind the first episode of the new seventh series, *Asylum Of The Daleks*. The opener marks the beginning of the final five episodes featuring the much-loved Amy Pond (Karen Gillan) and her stout-hearted husband Rory (Arthur Darvill) – before the Time Lord will be joined at Christmas by new assistant Clara Oswin, played by former *Emmerdale* star Jenna-Louise Coleman.

"This series is all about the fall of the Ponds," says Matt, whose *Doctor Who* journey started the same time as Karen and Arthur's in April 2010, when he replaced David Tennant. "That's where we start – saying goodbye to our friends. The read-through for the episode where we say goodbye was very emotional, and I'll be sad to see them go. But one has to embrace change in

*Doctor Who* otherwise it leaves you behind. So it's business as usual. Forward is the only way to look. We're just intent on making our last episodes together the very best they can be for our journey to come to its climax."



## TIME FLIES

And *TV Magazine* is delighted to be watching that unfold before our eyes on a chilly April day at Bute Esplanade, a quiet corner of Cardiff Bay that's the exterior location of Amy's mid-Victorian terraced home. As we watch Matt attacking the TARDIS' controls with his usual enthusiastic vigour, it's hard to recall a time when he *wasn't* the Time Lord.

"I remember when me and Karen were sat in a restaurant in Cardiff with Alex Kingston [who plays River Song] a week before our first scene two years ago," says Matt. "Alex said: 'You have no idea what's going to happen to you, do you?'"

"That's what it was like with Jenna-Louise at her audition. I just tried to put all the

LOOK WHO'S BACK!



actresses there at ease as much as possible so they could do their best work, because it's quite a big thing. If you get that job, your life – for better or for worse – is going to change.

"Steven Moffat wrote the hardest audition scene in the history of the world for those actresses! It involved them doing all these finger clicks. I just remember thinking: 'Oh my God, these poor girls.' But this show is so much about Steven's writing – and Jenna-Louise absolutely nailed that tone of fear and adventure."

Matt himself knows how tough auditions can be. Before playing the Doctor, he auditioned in front of Steven for the part of Dr Watson in *Sherlock*. So what was his Watson like compared to Martin Freeman's?

"I thought I was very good, but clearly not good enough!" smiles Matt. "I thought I did a bloody fine audition. But I think they looked at it and thought: 'He's not Watson.' Martin Freeman was born to play that part, wasn't he? And rightly so. With me as Watson, it would have been like having two Sherlocks."

"But *Sherlock* is brilliant – it's nice to have good stuff on TV, isn't it? I'm pleased and proud for Steven because he's a mate."

And that my audition was how I met him – Steven said: 'He *would* be quite a good Doctor.'

Of course, Steven was right. And now Matt, in his current incarnation as the 11th Time Lord, has the honour of leading the show into its 50th year – when we could finally get an answer to the question that not only concluded last year's series but has been at its heart since 1963: *Doctor who*, exactly?

"WE WANT TO MAKE IT AS BIG AND BOLD AND BRILLIANT AS WE CAN"

"We want to make things as big and bold and brilliant as we can leading up to the 50th anniversary, which we hope will be one of the monumental bits of TV history," explains Matt. "Will we get an answer as to his identity? You tell me! That's always part of *Doctor Who* and what we're all dying to know."

That, no doubt, will remain a secret until 2013. Does the show's careful confidentiality ever bother Matt? "I kind of like the secrecy,"

he grins. "When will I ever be part of a show again where people care enough to want to know about it?"

**WATCH IT! *Doctor Who* Saturday 7.20pm BBC1**

## TVCV MATT SMITH

### 2006

#### THE RUBY IN THE SMOKE

In his first TV role as an amateur detective, Matt starred alongside ex-*Doctor Who* actress Billie Piper.

### 2007

#### THE STREET

He was in one episode of the classy drama as a young man falsely accused of murder.

### 2007

#### SECRET DIARY OF A CALL GIRL

Matt had an even closer encounter with Billie as call girl Belle.

### 2007

#### PARTY ANIMALS

This underrated BBC2 political drama saw Matt play a Labour party researcher.



**After two epic years, it's almost time to say goodbye to *Doctor Who*. How was filming your final episode?** It's always a long day and this one was no exception, but there was this just really serene feel. It hit us when we wrapped on our final ever scene. All three of us were in the TARDIS and Matt pulled the door for the last time and we all just kind of broke. It was the craziest thing actually.

**We've heard the final read-through was emotional, too...** I couldn't physically get the words out. Then I looked up and most of the women in the room were crying as well and it just really set me off. Then Matt was patting me on the back just trying to support me.

**Even now, can you get your head round the fame the show has brought?** It's difficult to get completely used to something like that. There was a moment when we were filming in New York when I'd just joined Twitter and Steven Moffat joked: 'Imagine if you hadn't turned your email notifications off!' [By default, Twitter emails you when you gain a follower.] Of course I hadn't. I was like: 'Oh no, guys! My emails!' Steven, Matt and Arthur just laughed at me for about five minutes non-stop. I've abandoned that email account...

**Who has helped you keep your feet on the ground?** My family are so down to earth. If I ever got above my station they wouldn't have it. And my friends don't really care about it, which is really nice. But it's been weird – like living a double life.

**Is there anything you wish you'd known before this whole adventure began?** If anything, I wouldn't want to know what it's going to be like. That's why I didn't want to push too

much advice on Jenna-Louise Coleman. I was like: 'You've got to see this for yourself – it is the best thing ever!'

**And did Jenna-Louise have any questions for you?** No, not really. We've been texting each other a bit and she's been winding Matt up with the fact we're in cahoots. So that's good – I'm still getting to him even when I'm not there! It's like a conspiracy of companions.

**What makes a good companion?** A bit of naughtiness and mischief. I love the fact that it's a strong female role, rather than just chasing round after a man.

**Were you given any nice leaving gifts?** Arthur and I got these massive pictures of ourselves, which was kind of strange! I feel a bit weird having a big picture of myself in my house, so it's just leaning against the wall. All of Amy's outfits are in exhibitions, though, so I'll come back for them when nobody cares about Amy any more. Oh, and I stole the binoculars from the TARDIS...

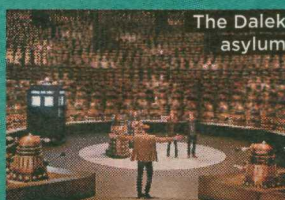
**Has it been hard to keep the secrets of what's going to happen from your family?** I don't think Dad knows what's going on anyway, but my mum is a massive fan of the show and is relentlessly badgering me for answers. I'm not saying a single word!

**So, what's next?** I'm making a film called *Not Another Happy Ending* – I play a writer who works better when she's a bit unhappy. I've also decided that I'm going to learn to drive.



## EXTERMINATE! THE STARS ON THOSE DASTARDLY DALEKS...

**MATT SMITH:** "Any *Doctor Who* monster that's brought back has to evolve. With the Daleks, this time we're aiming to make them properly scary again. Some people may say they're just like pepper pots that can move around, but from the Doctor's perspective, a Dalek is an alien psychopath in a tank. We've got Daleks from all the different eras. Karen and I took a picture



of our favourite – it's this blue one from 1963."

**KAREN GILLAN:** "The 1963 Dalek is so cool and retro. It's funny, because I can see the link between outfits that

I like wearing and that Dalek. It must be that vintage feel."

**ARTHUR DARVILL:** "I don't like to pick a favourite in case I offend the others. What I do find funny is when the Daleks sit around between shots, they speak in their regular voices. It's as if when the Doctor's not around, they can all talk normally!"



A modern-day Dalek. Inset: Matt and Karen's favourite version from 1963.