
Capaldi tops Christmas TV ratings

PETER Capaldi's debut as the Time Lord was watched by more than ten million viewers as *Doctor Who* secured Christmas Day's highest TV audience.

While sitcom *Mrs Brown's Boys* secured the largest average audience overall at 9.4 million, an extra two million tuned in for the final few minutes of *Doctor Who* to see Matt Smith regenerate into Capaldi.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

Just what the Doctor ordered - 10m viewers

Extra fans tune in at last minute to see arrival of new Time Lord

STEPHEN MCGINTY

The arrival of Peter Capaldi in *Doctor Who* secured Christmas Day's highest television viewing figure, with more than ten million switching on BBC1 for the Scottish actor's first appearance as the Time Lord.

While 83 million watched *Doctor Who* from start to finish, they were joined in the last few minutes by an extra two million who switched on just to see Matt Smith regenerate into Capaldi.

In a surprising twist, the top-rated programme on Christmas Day was the sitcom *Mrs Brown's Boys* whose average audience of 9.4 million viewers knocked eastenders from the seats in a traditional spot at the top of the festive tree.

To add insult to injury, the regulars of Albert Square were also trumped by *Coronation Street*, which secured 83 million viewers, 500,000 more than its rival on BBC1. It was the first time in more than a decade that *Coronation Street* was the most popular soap on Christmas Day.

In the battle of the tubs, BBC1 had hidden the storyline not with festive cheer but violence and gloom. *Eastenders* had packed this year's show with incident, including the arrest of Janine Butcher for murder and the arrival of new Queen Vic landlord Mick Carter - played by

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PAGES 42-43

Danny Dyer. Yet the show lost 16 million viewers compared with last year's performance.

However, it was *Coronation Street* which had a little more goodwill that tied with *Doctor Who* on 83 million viewers, to claim joint second spot in the viewing league. The *Doctor Who* special, which saw the Doctor age 300 years and included a brief return for Karen Gillan as Amy Pond, was up 700,000 viewers on last year.

The BBC took six of the top ten places but the Queen's Christmas broadcast missed out at the top end of the list. BBC1's audience for the annual address traditionally figures in the upper ten but this year's 57 million meant it

CHRISTMAS DAY TV RATINGS



Too many TV channels spoil record of new channel figure

ANALYSIS

Paul Whitelaw

WHY, it's often asked, do today's Christmas TV viewing figures never measure up to the fondly recalled, almost mythical blockbuster figures of yesteryear?

The answer is as simple and obvious as *Mrs Brown's Boys* script because of the fragmented nature of today's multi-channel TV landscape. It's simply impossible for Christmas ratings in this day and age to equal - or even come close to - the gargantuan figures of the 1970s, when there were only three channels vying for our attention.

So how did this year's festive offerings measure up? The major high light by far was the *Doctor Who* Christmas special, a beautifully realised send-off for one of the greatest Doctors, Matt Smith.

It may have been too continuity-heavy for the casual viewer, but this sci-fi colossus is undoubtedly now popular enough to get away with whatever it wants.

It is also testament to the excitement surrounding the casting of Peter Capaldi that an extra few million tuned in during the last five minutes to witness his fleeting, yet hugely exciting, debut.

So that is more than 10 million of us now aware that Doctor number 12 (or 13, to be pedantic) is an unabashedly accented native of Glasgow. Fancy that.

Over on ITV, their supposed Time Lord thwarter, *Downton Abbey*, was equally inert and cumbersome. It felt quite interminable.

Meanwhile in soap-land, *Coronation Street* was as always, effortlessly superior to its drab rival, *EastEnders*, where the mucky value of Danny Dyer's presence has already worn off.

As for ratings winner *Mrs Brown's Boys*, I avoided it like the plague, as I was having a nice time and didn't want to ruin my evening.