

"She's getting a little bit more tomboyish as she becomes more of an action girl"

WESTERN GAL
Karen Gillan (Amy Pond) opts for jeans while filming in the Valley of the Gods, Utah. But what are those strange markings on her arms..?

Doctor Who hits AMERICA

The Time Lord is back, but way out West in a Stetson – Matt Smith shares his US diary exclusively with *RT*. But first – hold your horses – who's that in jeans? Karen Gillan tells us why she's wearing the trousers

Doctor Who
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I SPENT A LOT of time in Utah running around the desert," says Karen Gillan. "It simply wouldn't have looked the same if we'd filmed it in Cardiff against a green screen. The desert backdrop really gives the opening two episodes an epic feel."

You'd think filming in the desert would be hot work but, at night, temperatures fell below freezing: "We were all 'thermalled' up and I had on two pairs of trousers and four tops! Then the sun would come up, making it blistering hot and we'd all peel off the layers," laughs Gillan.

Trousers? Yup, for some fans of Amy Pond that's the bad news. In the opening episodes of the new series, Amy will forsake her traditional micro-mini in favour of sensible trews and her high heels for trainers.

"It's true!" giggles Gillan. "I quite like the idea that she's getting a little bit more tomboyish as she becomes more of an action girl."

Then, of course, she's married. Not that this will change her, she insists. "I hate it when people settle down into a rut when they marry and get all subdued and a bit more boring. I was determined that that would never happen to her."

The new series marks a new start for the character Gillan simply calls "Pond". "As the Doctor rebooted the universe at the end of the last series,

Pond's been given the life that she should have had," she reasons. "The life where she wasn't sat down by psychiatrists telling her she's crazy. She was obviously a broken person. She's generally a bit more settled now."

Pond may be more settled, but Karen Gillan can still be thrown by the twists and turns of the story: "Everything's so important and precise in Steven Moffat's scripts. There are a couple of throwaway lines in the opening two-parter, which I thought were just a couple of funny gags but turn out to be one of the most important things that Amy's ever said. And I didn't know that at the time!"

But where else would she get the chance to swash her buckle playing an intergalactic pirate as she does in "a full-on fight with no stunt double" in episode three of this series?

"I'm wearing a miniskirt in that one," she reassures, "with some ridiculous pink tights, so I'm like a pink-tighted pirate! I love that so much."

A final thought. Who wears the metaphorical trousers on set? Has Matt Smith ever requested a cup of tea from the Doctor's "assistant"?

"Actually, he did try that the other day," she laughs dismissively. "He didn't get one."

Enough said. *John Naughton*

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MATT SMITH'S US DIARY ▶

WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2010 VALLEY OF THE GODS, UTAH

So, *Doctor Who* in a foreign land. I arrive later than Karen and Arthur [Darvill], because I had to go on Craig Ferguson's *Late Late Show* in LA. He's such a huge fan. He was so welcoming. I think it's the most fun I've ever had on a chat show.

Everyone in LA tells me there's nothing here in Utah. It's pitch black, so I can't see. I just feel the long road lull as we wind through endless American desert. Utah has to wait till morning.

And boom – from my motel, I look out and see the red-coloured desert, and I'm in awe. It's majestic. I go get pancakes. Karen is on the make-up wagon. "Oh my God, oh my God, it's amaaazzzing," she buzzes. I agree.

Across the street, a lady in a camper van has pulled up on the roadside. She wears a hat, has a small table and holds up an iPad across which flash the words "AUTOGRAPHS, PLEASE". We're in the middle of nowhere – even the coyotes get lost here, I'm told – but this lady, by some twist of fate or luck or persistence, really wants an autograph, so we oblige.

As the day winds on and we bemoan our jetlag, I'm excited about this afternoon. Karen is being chased by a helicopter, and we have big



PICNIC IN ARIZONA
Who puts the sand in sandwich

black stately cars kicking up the dusty desert in a chase. It's such a wonderful step for *Doctor Who* to have this type of location. It gives us the scale of a movie. This is where Forrest Gump stopped running, where Indiana Jones found the Temple of Doom, and now where the Doctor faces his darkest hour.

But for now – I'm sprawled on the bonnet of the coolest car [a bright red 1959 Edsel Villager Station Wagon], wearing a Stetson. Yeah, the Doctor wears a Stetson now. Stetsons are *totally* cool. I've been campaigning for a hat like this for months. And a coat. I want a coat. Not today, it's far too hot, but when we're back in Cardiff – later in the series – just you keep watching!

It was my idea to lie on the car, by the way. The script said the Doctor was leaning against it, but the Doctor is always leaning, it's such a Doctor thing to do, so I thought, "A car this cool? I have to lie on it!" To my surprise, they didn't say no.

THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER LAKE POWELL, ARIZONA

Another drive through the night. A few hours' sleep. A new day, a new state... and a sandy beach bordering a lake. This is where we're shooting today. I decide to wear thermals. It's windy on this beach. Five hours later, it's noon, the sun blazes, the thermals were a mistake, and we're all lying on a blanket having a picnic. But this is no ordinary picnic. It feels like the last supper. The Doctor is in trouble...

And so am I – the sand is getting everywhere. It's real food, cheese, bread – but real sand. Euk! One of my pet hates is actors not eating in scenes when they should be. It looks rubbish. So I either have to go for it, or try to eat as little as possible. I opt for the second. The Doctor isn't hungry, I figure. He's preoccupied with what – or who – is about to come out of the water. Spoilers!

The wine *isn't* real. It's grape juice, and warm. Still, drinking warm grape juice in the sun, on the beach, among friends – there are worse ways to spend a day. There's one brilliant line where

the Doctor wonders which came first, the wine or the gums. Kids will love that. That's why Steven Moffat is a genius – he taps into the minds of children, the jokes, the scares...

It's hard sometimes for Karen, Arthur, Alex [Kingston] and me to stop playing and concentrate. We must drive the crew mad, but that's part of our strange energy. It isn't like that on other jobs – it's far more serious. Don't get me wrong, we take *Doctor Who* very seriously and get the work done, but the energy constantly needs to be so high, so I think we're consciously trying to keep it alive and bouncy. It's a very particular atmosphere. If you see us out of work, we're probably very different.

FRIDAY, 18 NOVEMBER LAKE POWELL, ARIZONA

Another early start. It's 6am. The sun is yet to rise, there's a brisk wind – and this morning my thermals are a sure-fire hit. But poor Arthur has to wade into the freezing water. I can't tell you why, reader – I would have to kill you – but let's just say his teeth are chattering, but he looks determined not to be cold.

Is there a certain amount of schadenfreude, watching him waist-deep in Lake Powell? Well of course there is! You're always thinking, "Thank God it's not me wading into that freezing lake at six in the morning"... until you see it on screen, that is, and think, "Oh, wow, that would have been totally worth it." It's tough,



DOCTOR COOL
Matt Smith is glad of his thermals on a cold dawn shoot

this US shoot, for all of us

– but by God, it'll be worth it on screen.

As the sun comes up, I can see for miles, space, distance... the colour of the land is unique. What's so special is the sense of scale here. Alex Kingston says she feels something spiritual, and I think she may be right.

For the rest of today, we're filming some crucial scenes for River Song. I can't be any more specific, reader – or I'd have to kill you, again, and who'd want to die twice? – but I will tell you that Alex is a dream to work with. She's a regular now. She's part of "Team Tardis", as we like to call it, rather smugly. I think Steven basically re-enacts his fantasies through Alex. He gives her the best exits and entrances, and great one-liners. She is a firecracker for sure. I simply love River Song. I'm hugely fond of her. Today, she is on top form. Everyone is.

Team Tardis does America... and I've a feeling we'll be winging our way west again before long. It would seem that the Doctor loves an American breakfast. *Matt Smith*

Rory MAN'S UP!

Rory's in it much more this series," says Arthur Darvill. "We discussed what it would be like with three people in the Tardis. My slight concern was that Rory was going to be a third wheel, but all the writing's been really clever. More things happen and people can go off in different directions."

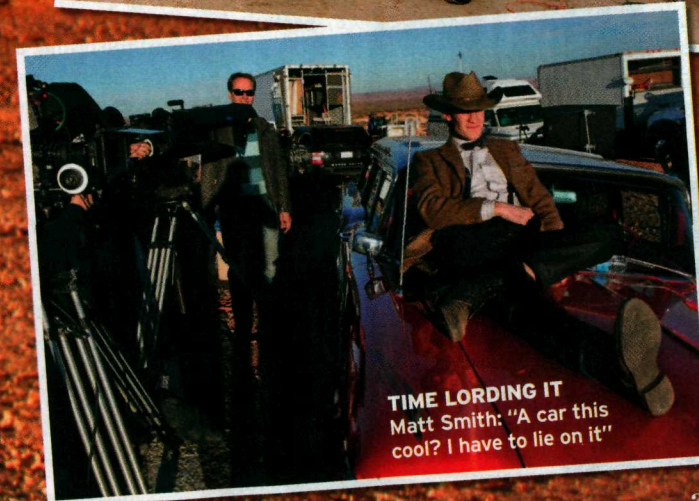
And Mr Amy Pond displays more backbone in this series. "Going on these adventures makes him man up a little bit. Amy will always wear the trousers in the relationship. As much as Rory has proved himself, it's Amy after all, and I dare any man to be in charge of that relationship. She's a firecracker."

Asked to describe the sight of his on-screen wife wielding a sword in her pirate regalia, Darvill is to the point: "Terrifying. I did think she was going to have someone's eye out, but she was actually quite nimble. Karen Gillan does her own stunts. Official!"

Darvill also plays guitar and piano and has supported Fyfe Dangerfield of Guillemots on tour. Given these talents (and Katherine Jenkins in last year's Christmas special), is the series inching towards a *Buffy*-style all-musical episode? "We keep joking about it actually. It's fun occasionally to just rehearse the lines as a musical!" And what's Karen's voice like, we wonder? "Piercing." *JN*



BLANKET COVERAGE
Arthur Darvill isn't too sure about Karen Gillan's new look



TIME LORDING IT
Matt Smith: "A car this cool? I have to lie on it!"

Matt Smith's US DIARY