



Doctor Who's Who

TELEVISION

The man in the Tardis is turning 50 and he's ready to regenerate. But do you know your Daleks from your Donnas? **Nick Curtis** has the ultimate guide

Planet Gallifrey, cast out by his own people, the temporally and galactically mobile Time Lords, for breaking their code of non-interference in other species' affairs. He is also currently one of the few popular TV heroes of the Sixties, Seventies and Eighties not being investigated by the police, despite

inviting a succession of young "companions" into his police box with the promise of adventure.

He has the ability to regenerate at the point of death, of which more below. He has or had a granddaughter, Susan, a daughter, Jenny, and a "sort-of wife", River Song. His parents, arguably, were the

BBC's head of drama in 1963, Sydney Newman, who commissioned the series, and its founding producer Verity Lambert. A second set of same-sex parents, Russell T Davies and Steven Moffat, conceived and bore a new doctor for the 21st century.

When?

At various times in his life the Doctor has claimed to be 200, 450, 900 and 1,200 years old. What's certain is that he made his first appearance at 17.20 on what was then the BBC's lone TV channel, on November 23, 1963, the

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TOMORROW night the BBC marks half a century of Doctor Who with an anniversary episode, *The Day of the Doctor*, screened simultaneously to 200 UK cinemas and 75 countries. Whether you're a sworn Whovian or a behind-the-sofa newcomer, a Hartnell veteran or a Smith arriviste, you need an opinion on it. Those who don't know their Ood from their Zarbi or boggle at the phrase "I've reversed the polarity of the neutron flow", start here.

Who?

The Doctor is an alien from the



Childhood favourite, cult, guilty

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day after JFK's assassination. There is no evidence these events were linked.

What?

Originally planned as an educational drama exploring scientific themes and historical events, it became a childhood favourite, a cult, a guilty pleasure, an outright embarrassment, and eventually – as is the way of things – a treasured pillar of British popular culture.

Where?

The first Doctor lived in a junkyard, the third seemed to spend all his time in a quarry, and the ninth, 10th and 11th are – despite being able to travel anywhere, anytime – improbably based in Cardiff. The Doctor's only permanent residence is his spaceship/time machine, the Tardis. The initials of which, as any fan knows, stand for Headquarters of the National Dyslexia Association.

The Tardis is bigger on the inside than the outside, and is supposed to blend with its surroundings, but, fortunately for prop-builders, producers and audiences alike, got stuck as something cheap, portable and – as it turned out – anachronistically evocative.

Why?

That's a bit too existential a question, even for Doctor Who.

How?

Now you're confused: How was an entirely different TV programme altogether, in which Fred Dinenage imparted fun facts to a teatime audience.

Who's Who (Golden Age)

After three years as a grumpy old man (William Hartnell, 1963-66), the Doctor metamorphosed into a slightly younger, Chaplin-esque, recorder-playing clown (Patrick Troughton, 1966-69). This era is considered the Golden Age by die-hard Whovians, probably because many episodes were wiped by the BBC. The recent discovery in Nigeria of hitherto "lost" stories – including most of the Web of Fear, in which Troughton's Doctor battles fat robot

yetis on the Underground – may bust this myth wide open.

Who Dares Wins (Silver Age)

The reigns of the third doctor (Jon Pertwee, 1970-74) and the fourth (Tom Baker, 1974-81) were actually the best, because a) they were in colour, b) they were fearfully exciting, must-see TV at a time when there were still only three TV channels, and c) they got right up Mary Whitehouse's nose. And anything that put that mad old bat's knickers in a twist (see: Terror of the Autons, The Deadly Assassin, The Brain of Morbius) had to be worth a look.

Who the F*** (Wooden Age)

There is a school of thought that sees the fifth doctor (Peter Davison, 1981-84) as the twilight of the Silver Age, but for others the rot set in with the casting of this flaxen moppet who looked like someone's 12-year-old fag and was previously famous for putting his hand up cows in All Creatures Great and Small.

And then came the slow, sad, peevish decline of Colin Baker (1984-86) and Sylvester McCoy (1986-89) before the long, long hiatus broken only by the brief, dandyish sputter of Paul McGann in the 1996 TV movie. This attempt to simultaneously please British fans and cater to the American market gave a pretty good idea of what a chicken cross-bred with a pig would look like.

Look Who's Back Again (Platinum Age)

And lo, the Doctor rose again, and was reborn, initially as the combatively northern Christopher "serious actor" Eccleston (2005), who looked ready to headbutt his way through a legion of Cybermen. Then came quiffy sexpot David Tennant (2005-2010), and antic hipster-nerd Matt Smith (2010-2013).

The modern Doctors have appeared in stories that seem dark and complicated to adults but which eight-year-olds apparently take in their stride.

Who He?

Tomorrow night's anniversary programme sees Tennant's and Smith's Doctors united with a "lost" incarnation, the War Doctor, played



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pleasure – and now a national treasure

by John Hurt, while the Christmas Day special will see Matt Smith's Doctor regenerate into Malcolm Tucker, aka The Spin Doctor or Doctor What the F***ing F***. This would seem to shatter the convention that Time Lords can only regenerate a dozen times. But... HELLO!... it's a MADE UP SHOW about a TIME-TRAVELLING ALIEN in a POLICE BOX. The writers can do whatever they want, including making the doctor female or black (indeed, I'm sure I remember a sketch featuring a black time traveller called Doctor Wh'appen).

What's more, there has already been a 12th doctor – Peter Cushing, in the 1960s feature films *Dr Who and the Daleks* and *Daleks – Invasion Earth: 2150AD*. These are weirdly regarded as non-canonical, probably because of their terse and abbreviated titles, and despite the fact that Cushing's co-star in the latter, Bernard Cribbins, played the granddad of Catherine Tate's Donna, the companion to Tennant's doctor. Which brings us to...

Who's Your Friend?

From the start the Doctor has had companions or assistants who function as a proxy for the audience, reacting, asking questions and screaming. Companions also do light dusting of the TARDIS control rooms, but they don't do toilets or ovens, or work weekends (a meaningless concept to a time traveller, anyway).

The TARDIS of Hartnell's era had a bedroom with prim single beds off the control room; but with a swimming pool, cloister, art gallery and dressing rooms the

Doctors and companions: top left to right, Jon Pertwee with Katy Manning, Tom Baker with Louise Jameson, Paul McGann with Daphne Ashbrook, Christopher Eccleston with Billie Piper. Below left, Sylvester McCoy with Kate O'Mara and Bonnie Langford, and Matt Smith's current oppo Jenna-Louise Coleman

ship always had the potential to be a sort of intergalactic bachelor shag pad. The first real hint that the doctor was a sexual being, though, came when Paul McGann's Doctor kissed Grace Holloway, and since David Tennant locked lips with Rose Tyler (Billie Piper) the show has been a full-on snogathon: Amy Pond, lest we forget, was a kissogram.

The concept of the companion as totty dates back to Jean Marsh's catsuit-clad Sara Kingdom, with honourable mentions due to Deborah Watling's pouty Victoria, Katy Manning's sex pixie Jo Grant, Louise Jameson's buckskinned warrior Leela, BOGOF Time Lady Romana and Nicola Bryant's Peri, with her warp-speed cleavage.

There's male totty too: Frazer Hines recalled sewing lead weights into his kilt as Jamie McCrimmon to stop the crew checking to see, during windy shoots, if anything was worn beneath it. (In fact, everything was in perfect working order, badoo-tss.) The Doctor's first overtly gay companion was John Barrowman's Captain Jack Harkness, although a question mark hangs over Matthew Waterhouse's Adric, and there are rumours that Nicholas Courtney's Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart went through a "pink" phase while at Fettes.

Who's Got It In For You?

The Doctor has an arch enemy. No, not the Daleks, or the Cybermen, or the Silurians, or the Sontarans, or the Ice Warriors, or the Zygons, or the Silence, or the Weeping Angels or even the Master. I'm talking about Michael Grade, who as controller of BBC1 put the series on 18-month hiatus in 1985,

moved it to a midweek slot opposite Coronation Street, fired Colin Baker and took a job at Channel 4, leaving the 1989 cancellation of the show he admitted he hated to his successor, Jonathan Powell.

It is hoped that Grade has booked a holiday this weekend, possibly on the planet Trenzalore, lest he get a sonic screwdriver where the sun don't shine from an angry Whovian.

■ Find out where to watch *The Day of the Doctor* in cinemas at doctorwho.tv



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