

DOCTOR WHO'S RORY HAS FACED MONSTERS AND ROBOTS, SPENT THOUSANDS OF YEARS AS A PLASTIC ROMAN, DIED NUMEROUS TIMES AND FATHERED THE EXTREMELY CAMP RIVER SONG. ARTHUR DARVILL'S JOURNEY ABOARD THE TARDIS IS ABOUT TO COME TO A FINAL END, BUT NOT BEFORE GT PUTS HIM IN A FROCK AND TALKS ABOUT STUFFED OWLS



THE NEVER- ENDING RORY



Interview by **Darren Scott**
Photography by **Leigh Kelly** assisted by **Stephen Conway**
Style Editor **Dennis Maloney**
Styling by **Russell Philip Peek**
Grooming by **Evan Huang** using M.A.C and Clinique
Arthur wears suit by **Sandro**, sandro.com, selfridges.com
Necklace by **Thomas Sabo**, thomassabo.com



Arthur wears overcoat by **Ma.Strum**, mastrum.com
Granddad shirt by **Under**, underunderwear.com
Trousers by **Eastle Empire**, eastlestore.com
Boots by **Plectrum by Ben Sherman**, bensherman.com
Bag by **Aspinal of London**, aspinaloflondon.com

'm just going to go and put on some pants," Arthur Darvill tells us without batting an eye.

It's only taken us two years but we got there in the end.

When we first met Arthur in Cardiff on the set of Doctor Who in 2010, he was dressed as a

Roman soldier and we didn't know what the hell was going on. Cut to present day and we've put him in a completely different kind of skirt and poured water over him.

So when we say 'we got there' we do of course mean giving Arthur his first proper fashion shoot.

But our tale doesn't start here. Nor does it begin with Rory the Roman. It starts, in typical Doctor Who fashion, at the beginning of the end, four months ago in Roath Lock, the brand spanking new BBC studios in Cardiff and home to Doctor Who. We're the first press to get access to series seven, which returns to BBC One on Saturday nights this month for five 'movie-like' episodes. A Christmas Day special, which introduces Jenna Louise Coleman as the new companion, follows before the remaining eight episodes screen in the spring.

Make no mistake – this is once again event television.

And the biggest part of that journey this year? Why, saying a fond farewell to Rory Williams and his wife Amy Pond of course.

The recently-turned 30-year-old Arthur has gone on to win the hearts of fanboys – OK, and girls – around the globe. He's up there, alongside co-star Matt Smith, as one of the geekily hot stars of cult television.

He's also, along with co-star Karen Gillan, the longest running companion since Doctor Who was rebooted in 2005.

And today he's fighting Daleks. He's officially cool.

"It feels right," he says when asked if he's glad he's just managed to fit in a Dalek encounter before he leaves. "It's really easy to forget that you're doing Doctor Who, because you're just kind of doing it, but then I turn up

to work and there's loads of Daleks everywhere. It's like, 'oh right, this is what I imagined it would be like.'

"What I think is brilliant is, because there's quite a few of them, [Dalek operators] and they all know each other, they all just kind of chat, quite normally about stuff [inside the Daleks]. Because they're in there for a long time – it's just kind of two Daleks chewing the fat, which I find really amusing.

"I've had quite a few where I've started talking to them and you realise there's not actually anyone in it, I'm just talking to nothing, talking to a piece of plastic..."

Plans were afoot a year ago for both Arthur and Karen to leave at the same time – importantly, when they felt it was right.

"I think the worst thing to do would be to outstay your welcome on a thing like this. We were both very keen to do a really good chunk of time on it and get the best out of it that we could. But I think as soon as it becomes normal or boring, for us and for the audience, I don't think that could be a positive thing.

"We're pushing it to a peak and then we'll leave it there, rather than hanging around for ages and making the same choices. The programme's so much about change, the whole concept is about change and regeneration and new things happening. Every week's a new thing.

"It feels right, but very sad."

This series sees the crew visit Spain, for a Western-inspired episode ("there were loads of horses everywhere and stuff, made friends with one of them"), as well as New York, for their cataclysmic Angel-filled finale...

"It's amazing," he says, when asked about his final episode. "When we were discussing how we were leaving, Steven [Moffat, producer and head honcho] just said, 'You're going to go out on a bang'. And it's more than that, it's brilliant. The read-through – obviously there's people that have come in for the one episode – there were lots of people crying, me and Matt were patting Kazza on the back



This page, Arthur wears shirt by **Baartmans and Siegel**, baartmansandsiegel.com
Trousers by **CH Carolina Herrera**, carolinaherrera.com
Shoes by **Clarks**, clarks.co.uk
Opposite, Arthur wears shirt and scarf by **Holland Esquire**, hollandesquire.com
Trousers by **Percival**, percivalclo.com
Watch by **Thomas Sabo**, thomassabo.com





Arthur wears shirt by **Lou Dalton**, loudalton.com
Tie and trousers by **Ben Sherman**, bensherman.com
Boots by **Timberland**, timberlandonline.co.uk

to get her through it, so the other actors must've been sitting there like, 'God, these guys are taking themselves very seriously!' Felt a bit of a dick. But it was great, because it does mean so much to all of us and I think that's right, I don't think we were being overly emotional about it, and it's one really, really emotional script.

"But not in a boring drawn-out way, in a really exciting way. I'm not going to say any more because I'll start giving stuff away."

OK then. Does Rory get his kit off?

He gives a huge laugh. "Every time we do an interview! There's one episode I spend completely naked. And then I go out with a bang. Damn, you've guessed the ending. We all get naked."

I can't remember if I take my clothes off in this...

You just have to wait and see – maybe on the behind the scenes."

Flash forward to (almost) present day, back to the time of skirts and wet pants, and Arthur is looking his usual self once more as we sit outside a central

London studio enjoying the sun.

He's back in his battered Converse and ripped skinny jeans, a vintage Phil Collins t-shirt and Ray bans, smoking a rolled-up cigarette.

Effortlessly and enviably cool.

"Some great charity shops in Hackney. Scope is pretty good. I tend to do all my shopping in charity shops."

A bit different from what he's been doing for GT today...

"It's something I never really imagined would happen, you know, wearing a skirt and have water dripped all over me. I hope I do start a big skirt thing going on now like 'oh yeah, that guys got a skirt.'"

Talk obviously turns to Doctor Who ("the best job I've ever had") – has he found himself, since being in the show, surrounded by more gays than usual for a normal working day?

He howls with laughter. "Probably

more. I mean I suppose I have noticed it. I think that Doctor Who has such a big gay following, I don't know why it appeals so much? Because me and Matt are so hot," he jokes. "No! There does seem to be quite a big gay community in the job that I do anyway. I'm kind of surrounded all the time anyway."

There are gays in theatre?

"In theatre there are loads of gays," he deadpans.

But before we get to his latest stage stint – how does he feel to leave Britain's biggest drama? Although technically, on screen, he hasn't.

"In my mind I've left it."

Without giving anything away, what was his final scene?

"The last scene we did properly was – it was really nice actually – it was the three of us going into the TARDIS at the end of an episode. We shoot out of sequence, so I think it was for episode four. It was really nice, all three of us ending mine and Kazza's time together. We kind of went into the TARDIS and had a hug and everyone bought champagne out. It was quite emotional but it was good to end on something quite good rather than just a shot of running through a corridor."

He still won't be drawn on his final episode. Not that we'd print spoilers, sweetie.

"We were nervous and excited about reading the script. Karen didn't read it for ages. We had it and she was like 'I'm not going to read it'. Whereas I'm quite impatient so I wanted to know what happened. It's brilliant, it's really surprising and really good and exactly how we'd want to go."

And such is the world of sci-fi, no sooner have people stopped asking 'when are you leaving', they start asking 'when are you coming back'...

"So, this is the thing. I don't think we are. We want to make a proper exit and leave on a high. But then it's Doctor Who isn't it, so anything can happen. But as far as I'm concerned, it would be weird for me to think 'well I'm sure I'll be going back at some point'. You've got to kind of go 'actually I've got to move on from it and it's been

such an amazing time on it and it feels like the right time to go’.”

To the future then. He’s formed a band. Though they still haven’t come up with a name since we saw him in April.

“I don’t really know what I’m doing music-wise. I am writing some stuff. It’s been quite nice having some time to actually sit and write things and do that but yeah, I don’t really know what’s going on. I do want to... You know, I’ve just turned 30.”

Is that a bad thing?

“No, but it’s made me go ‘right, there are certain things I want to do before I get too old’. Before it’s even harder to pretend I’m cool. So, to record an album is one of those things but I might just do it secretly, away from everything, just do it and let no-one listen to it.”

Next up is a stint treading the boards in London’s West End. The show is called *Our Boys* and is set in a 1980s army hospital. We’ll be honest – the cast is pretty hot. Literally, in fact.

“We all met up on Monday to do a publicity photoshoot for that, all in army gear. Everyone else had these really sharp uniforms and I was in cold weather gear. So I had a shirt, a polo neck, a jumper, a massive jacket on the hottest day of the year...”

He’s particularly excited to be starring alongside his best mate Cian Barry as well as Laurence Fox and Harry Potter’s Matthew Lewis.

As if that’s not enough, before he goes on stage in the evening, during the day he’s filming a drama for ITV, *Broadchurch*, written by *Who* scriptwriter Chris Chibnall and starring former Tenth Doctor, David Tennant.

Excited as he is about all of these projects, by far the most animated we see Arthur is when he’s talking about his barn owl. He likes his taxidermy. Where does this come from?

“I don’t know,” he laughs. “I really like the Natural History Museum. I kind of want to make my house like the Natural History Museum. I kind of like the idea of having a gentleman’s study eventually and having lots of dead things around.”

Not the ones dressed up as characters?

“No. Just actually animals and I make sure that they haven’t died just so I can have them on my mantelpiece.”

And is there one that he covets?

“There’s a shop in Hackney called Last Tuesday Society which is brilliant. I went in there and there was a Labrador’s head, which I think is a bit much but no, the owl is my big thing. Maybe I’ll chill out about it all a bit now that I’ve got the owl.”

We’re seeing a bit of a trend. Arthur and his *Who* co-stars seem to talk about animals a LOT.

“I just really like animals. Me and Matt went to SeaWorld in San Diego and it was great. We went to see the campest, most cheesy dolphin show in the world. Everyone was in this kind of all-in-one. They almost looked tie-dyed, kind of suits and it was almost like a musical with dolphins and people dressed up like, [sings] ‘all the creatures of the world swimming side by side’. It was really brilliant, really great and we sat in the splash zone so we got absolutely soaked...”

Getting soaked seems to be a theme – some weeks after our shoot, amid excitement over Arthur’s new (fully alive, non-stuffed and amazing) cat, Prince Philip, he offers to bring something further to our chat. An email dutifully arrives with a ping.

“Just wanted to add a thing about skirt wearing as I wore one in the photo shoot (still one of the most bizarre experiences of my life so far).

“The only other time I’ve ever worn a skirt for any significant period of time is when I used to visit my dear friend Jeremy Donovan aged about 11 or 12. We used to dress as elderly women on board the Titanic and spent many a day reenacting the whole event. From the iceberg hitting, to trying to persuade ourselves onto lifeboats. True story.” ■

Doctor Who is on BBC One, Saturdays, and BBC iPlayer. *Our Boys* is at the Duchess Theatre, London, until 15 December, ourboystheplay.com, @rattyburvil



Arthur wears jacket by **Filippa K**, filippe-k.com





Opposite, Arthur wears necklace by **Thomas Sabo**, thomassabo.com
Shirt and trousers by **Percival**, percivalclo.com
This page, Arthur wears suit by **Christian Lacroix**, christian-lacroix.fr
Shirt by **Holland Esquire**, hollandesquire.com
Belt by **American Apparel**, store.americanapparel.co.uk