

THE ASCENT OF FAN

SFX subjects Russell T Davies and showrunner elect Steven Moffat to the merciless memory probe

Russell T Davies

"I used to alternate between UFO and Doctor Who..."

What's your first memory of Doctor Who?

My first memory, honestly, is the regeneration of William Hartnell to Patrick Troughton. I don't really remember him changing on the floor though - what I absolutely remember is them walking into the TARDIS, and all the controls of the console moving on their own. That was the most terrifying thing to me. I don't know what was happening. I was three! Then I remember the end of "Power of the Daleks", which must have been six weeks later. As the TARDIS faded away there was a Dalek robot and the eyestalk went up and down, I absolutely remember that, crystal clear.

When did you realise you were a fan?

3:01, that's hard... The first time I came across fandom was in the *latter sixth*. There was someone else in school who had all the fanzines, which I'd never seen before in

my life. He lent me a whole stack of them. *Marvelous!*

What made you a fan?

➤ I remember really getting into it, and drawing it all the time, when Jon Pertwee became Tom Baker. I loved that. I didn't just love the new Doctor. I just loved what was going on. I think that's when I really started consciously thinking 'I must watch this'. When regeneration comes along, that's when you start

becoming a fan... it's not just the story that does it, you get into the process, seeing actors instead of characters, appreciating the production of it, because that's what fans do. That big production decision cemented it for me.

What in Doctor Who still makes you cry?

➤ I never cried at the old series. Not even the much touted farewell of Jo Grant in "The Green Death"... it's not



Steven Moffat

"I was too frightened to watch after 'Tomb of the Cybermen'"

What's your first memory of Doctor Who?

➤ Asking my Dad where Doctor Who had gone, and my Dad explaining that the dark haired man (Patrick Troughton) was him. So I must have already been watching quite keenly, but that's my first proper memory.

When did you realise you'd become a fan?

➤ I was too frightened to watch after "Tomb of the Cybermen", and only rejoined with early Pertwee.

"Inferno" part one was the first Doctor Who episode I ever watched on my own!

Terrified, I was. I was so proud of my courage, I became a fan on the spot. It made me feel brave.

What in Doctor Who still makes you cry?

➤ Deadlines.

What in Doctor Who still makes you laugh?

➤ Deadlines.

What's your most shameful Who-related confession?

➤ Available 50 years after my death.

Which story do you wish you'd written?

➤ There's a two-



Steven Moffat's Oscar Award-winning "The Get in the Ring"

partier I really wish I'd written, but I'm not sure of the title.

...and why?

➤ Cos it's due in in two weeks.

What's your vision for the future of Doctor Who?

➤ Coming soon.

20 Dec 1961

Who gets its first air-off as A-9 and (early) teams lead Jess Smith with the fox dog. Owners fail to be impressed, despite the game-grounding in the sequence, so the series is taken off the air, and reading to the end.

4 Jan 1962

➤ After a year's worth of ratings savings by Buck Rogers, the series moves from its traditional Saturday afternoon home to a twice-weekly weekday slot.

Oct 1963

➤ Who hits home video with the release of the seasonally-titled "Revenge of the Cybermen". Fans are justifiably ranked: the wrong type of Cyberman is on the cover. To

25 Nov 1963

➤ The BBC follow April's 20th anniversary. Longest gathering with "The Five Doctors" (though "Three Doctors, A Stand-In, And Some Old Clips" would have been more accurate).

16 Mar 1964

➤ Peter Davison's Doctor asks it is "The Cases of Andrew" episode, shortly after appearing some milk out of a giant but... That's not the cause of the regeneration, but it annoys us.

22 Mar 1964

➤ In his debut prep: "The Pain Division". Colin Baker's temporary, unloved Sixth Doctor attempts to struggle companion Paul. To be fair, she was annoying.

28 Feb 1985

➤ "Carcillon". Dr Who After the Plot by the BBC? versus The Story's front page, prompting furious back-peddling by BBC One controller Michael Grade, who assures viewers it's just being given "a good name", and will come back even better.

24 Jan 1986

➤ Bonnie Langford is unveiled as new companion Helen. Bush, a computer programmer from Pease, a nation wept.

DR WHO AXED IN PLOT BY THE BBC

45 DOCTOR WHO YEARS!

Tom Baker in 1977's "The Talons of Weng-Chiang".



exactly *Love Story*, is it? Fans invest it with a lot more than it's actually got, though it's very nicely played. What always gets me is that bit in the book of *Doctor Who and the Zarbi*, where that little Optera shoves its head into the wall to stop the lava coming through, and kills itself. And it doesn't really get mourned, that little creature. It doesn't even have a name. But I felt really sad. Of course when you see it on telly it's terrible - it's just a grey blur and someone screams!

What in Doctor Who still makes you laugh?

» Still those early Tom Bakers with Harry and Sarah Jane. Just the dialogue between the three of them. 'Harry only works on sailors...' - I was laughing out loud! The first episode of

"The Talons of Weng-Chiang" is really funny. Yes, there are racist jokes flying about, but they're beautifully done, really clever. They're not racist at all, they're *accurate*. But I don't laugh at it - I don't do that postmodern viewing thing of "Oh, it's so terrible, let's put on 'The Mutants'". I still find bits to really enjoy in those stories.

What's your most shameful Who-related confession?

» I remember HTV used to show UFO at the same time as *Doctor Who*, which was a really hard choice. I used to alternate between *UFO* and *Doctor Who*, which was criminal.

What's the one Doctor Who story you wish you'd written?

» "The Ark in Space". I just think it's perfect; brilliantly done and such an exciting climax. If you made it into a



Russell T Davies and, inset, Tom Baker in 1975's "The Ark in Space".

\$150 million movie today it would be wonderful. The first episode doesn't have more than three people in it, and it's so claustrophobic. And there's the huge idea of the human race having all been put into cold storage. Everything works in that one.



Stephen Fry "A magical and unimaginably wonderful time machine..."

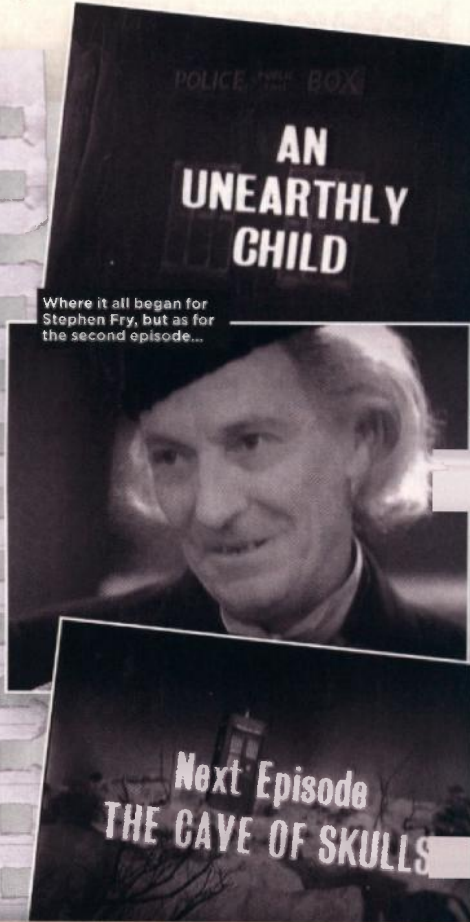
The Greatest Living Englishman remembers the birth of a TV legend

When I was seven my parents moved house. Well, we all moved as a family, I don't mean my parents left me behind, though who would blame them if they had? We owned, in those days, a television that disguised itself as a mahogany drinks cabinet, in the way they did - and they were never called just televisions, by the way, they were television sets. This one's screen was, of course, black and white, it boasted one channel, the BBC (what we'd now call BBC1) and had a knurled volume knob in dark brown Bakelite. The set smelled the way dust always did when it was cooked on Mullard valves as they warmed up. It slid about on castors and had doors that closed with a satisfactory snick as a ball bearing rolled into its slots. The



week before we moved, the BBC started a new drama, starring William Hartnell. An old man, whose name appeared to be Grandfather or the Doctor, had a police phone box of the kind we saw in the street all the time in those days. It turned out to be a magical and unimaginably wonderful time machine. My brother and I watched this drama in complete amazement. The first

ever episode of *Doctor Who*. I had never been so excited in all my life. A whole week to wait to watch the next instalment. Never have seven days crawled so slowly by, for all that they involved a complicated house move from Buckinghamshire to Norfolk. A week later, in that new house, my brother and I turned on the good old television set in its new sitting room, ready to watch episode two. The TV had been damaged and was never to work again. We missed that episode and nothing that has transpired in my life since has ever, or could ever, make up for that terrible, terrible disappointment. There is an empty space inside me that can never be filled. It is amazing neither of us were turned into psychopathic serial killers from that moment.



Where it all began for Stephen Fry, but as for the second episode...

- 6 Sep 1986**
» *Who* returns from the so-called "hiatus", putting Colin Baker in the dock for 14-week saga "The Trial of a Time Lord". It's not better.
- 7 Sep 1987**
» After Colin Baker's unceremonious sacking in December 1986, Sylvester McCoy is forced to don a curly blonde joke-shop wig for his regeneration in all-time-low "Time and the Rani".
- 12 Jun 1988**
» The Timelords (aka The KLF) hit number one with "Doctorin' the TARDIS", a mash-up of the *Who* theme with "Rock and Roll Part One" by Gary Glitter - who's as popular now as *Who* was then.
- 6 Dec 1989**
» The original series quietly fizzles out with episode three of "Survival". The Beeb fobs off f... sorry, reassures fans that it hasn't been cancelled - honest! They just have no firm plans to make any more. Ever.
- Jun 1991**
» *Timewyrm: Genesis* by John Peel (sadly, not/that John Peel) launches Virgin Books' series of New Adventures, "stories too broad and deep for the small screen" (translation: there's shagging and potty talk).
- 26 Nov 1993**
» Proof that charity isn't always good comes in the shape of "Dimensions in Time", a mind-boggling *Who*/*EastEnders* crossover for Children in Need. Frankly, we'd have preferred to let the kids go without.
- 12 May 1996**
» He's back, and it's about fucking time. For one night only, Paul McGann is the Doctor. Canada gets the US TV movie first; the UK waits 15 days. Fans are outraged when the Doc kisses his companion, little realising that one day it'll be happening weekly...
- 12 Mar 1999**
» Rowan Atkinson is the Doctor (and so is Richard E Grant. And Jim Broadbent. And Hugh Grant. And Joanna Lumley) in Red Nose Day spoof "The Curse of the Fatal Death". Writer: some bloke called Steven Moffat. Whatever happened to him?



Clive Barker "It was chilling, but never scary..."

Britain's premier writer of horror fiction looks back on the UK's foremost small screen sci-fi series

Doctor Who never terrified me. You hear all of these tales about that now - especially since the new series has been so successful, it seems that a lot of people have come out of the Doctor Who closet and said, "Oh, I used to hide behind the couch when the Daleks came on." Well, bollocks to that! Maybe I am too fucking twisted but, as a child, I just loved it all. To me, it was chilling but never scary. Doctor Who was too much fun to be creepy! You'd go to school on a Monday and everyone would be jostling around with one arm extended saying "Exterminate! Exterminate!" I think it is a testament to how original Doctor

Who is that 25 years later they can still make the series feel fresh. Now you see metaphysics and philosophy in there. I know that sounds horribly fucking pretentious but then that is the point of SFx - it is about popular culture. Your magazine is about what is popular and also what is taking place in our culture. I think each of the Doctors had their strengths. My least favourite would be Peter Davison - a bit too wimpy for my tastes. I never liked the more jokey episodes. I think there is a place for humour but I'd say David Tennant has it pretty right. Now, when it's serious it is very serious and when Tennant needs to play it for laughs he does



it very well. However, I'd have liked Christopher Eccleston to have gone on a bit longer. He was getting a lot better as he went along and I thought he blossomed in the role. He brought an obsessive, manic quality to the role - almost as if he was going to have a breakdown!

The Tenth Doctor, Game before his time, Clive Barker reckons.

David Tennant's Doctor balances humour and villainous.

You can almost smell the Tardis on the Krivon.



Mark Gatiss found the Axons "curiously sexy".



Mark Gatiss "I found the Axons curiously sexy..."

The League of Gentlemen star recalls a lifetime spent in the space-time vortex

Who novelisations: essential reading for young Gatiss.

DOCTOR WHO
THE NOVELISATION



Forty-five is a fairly random anniversary. So... some random memories of Doctor Who. As I will, I hope, explain themselves, having a wee in a dream and looking over my five-year old shoulder in case the Auton troll came to get me. Thinking it had all become real when Professor Homer opened the Davd's pump. The terrible fear of Bink the gargyle. Crown Court. Oxtail soup and countless re-readings of Terrance Dicks's novelisation of "Planet of the Daleks" - in my large-format Marks and Spencer "Dalek Special". Irripetently finishing the novelisation of "The Daemons" (purple spine) so I could start The Abominable Snowman (icy blue spine). Crying like a baby when Jo left at the end of "The Green Death" (1973). Crying like a baby when Jo left at the end of "The Green Death" (1996)

and every subsequent re-viewing). Somehow knowing that Captain Yates' "romantic feelings" for Jo didn't convince. Finding the Axons curiously sexy. Watching the end of "Planet of the Spiders" round my cousin's house and not knowing Jon Pertwee was leaving. Not No! No! Being vaguely embarrassed by the model tank in "Robot". Resenting Tom Baker but knowing he was brilliant. The cardboard and tee smell of my Tenth Doctor who waitress. The picture of the Krivon. It took me three weeks to get "knowing" "The Caves of Androzou". Was the best thing the BBC made in the 1980s. Christmas 1991 and a letter from Virgin Books saying they loved my Doctor Who novel Nightshade. Getting a phone call from Russell T Davies at Christmas 2004 asking me to write for the show. Getting goose bumps when

Christopher Eccleston's hologram turns to Billie Piper at the end of "Parting of the Ways". Actually finding "I Blink" in shops lost in happy wonder at the displays of Daleks and new monsters. Waking my dog and seeing two speedy kids walking by (me, 30-odd years ago, really) and... one saying to the other "Do you think there could ever be a Ten Doctors?" Looking forward to a new season of Doctor Who. Doesn't get any better than that.

Black Butterfly, Mark Gatiss's new Lucifer story novel, is available from 3 November



The Tenth Doctor's new Lucifer story novel, is available from 3 November

Jul 1999
Audio producers Big Finish become the latest keepers of the flame, missing their first officially licensed Who audio, "The Sins of Their Fathers"



26 Sep 2003
Just when everyone had given up, those purveyors at the BBC announce that Doctor Who will be returning to BBC One in 2005, with critically acclaimed Guver as 2005, with Russell T Davies at the helm. Ha ha ha, as it is. Good one, BBC.

13 Nov 2003
Turns out that we were serious. Fear for Paul Cornell: the announcement retrojects the Richard D Grant Ninth Doctor of Flash-animation and serial "Screen of the Shalka" to footnote status.



26 Mar 2005
Believe it or not in "Rose" gets Celebrity Wrestling in a cheeky and faces a submission. Some of them are even watching it for the first time (the ones who don't have brainfunds).



18 Jun 2005
Christopher Eccleston's brief tenure comes to a close as the jurgard Saffordan represents him. My Sexy Hair, occasioning nationwide guesstimation of tautum proportions.

25 Dec 2005
Christmas
"The Christmas Invasion" is Doctor Who's first ever Christmas Special. No, we're not counting 1965's "The Feast of Steven". Shut it.



25 Dec 2007
An astonishing 11.8 million viewers are too stuffed with mince pies to move from the sofa as "Voyage of the Damned" airs.



5 Jul 2008
Doctor Who goes from strength to strength as "Journey's End" is the first episode in the show's history to be the most-watched TV show of the week. Meanwhile, a man called Steven Moffat is making plans...
Ian Brennan

45
DOCTOR
WHO
YEARS!



"The Family of Blood" is a scariest horror story



Christopher Eccleston in Cornell's "aspirating Father's Day"



Paul Cornell "For me the show was home and hearth"

Hugo-nominated *Who* scriptwriter Paul Cornell reveals how the Doctor saved his universe

Doctor *Who* was waiting for me. I was too scared to watch it, so when I did, to be "grown up", when the Doctor won, in "The Brain of Morbius", I was so surprised, so exorcised of something, that of course I was going to love it forever. I was the bullied kid saved by it. So were you. Probably.

It's a children's horror show. There is no other. It's vital. It shows kids that the things that scare them are laughed at and intellectualised by the rest of the family in the room, and now it's all over and it's time for tea. That's where horror is in real life too.

In my own life, it was the sonic screwdriver that got me past social horror. I was the kid with the lists who played board games by himself. Doctor *Who* connected with my useless school essays and made me start writing stories instead of lists. That felt possible because I'd read Doctor *Who* stories, in fanzines, that were sort of lists, that were just there to fill "continuity gaps". It turned out that my stories

were there to express my own fears, to write Doctor *Who* the way it came to me, through the love and fear of my parents as they read me Terrance Dicks's novelisations when I was ill. For me the show was home and hearth, and all the pain that came with that. So that was the sort of *Who* I made.

And from there, society and culture. The world of 45 fanzines in the 1980s, from *Cygnus Alpha* to *Shada* to *Frontier Worlds*. They were all competing to win the Doctor *Who* Appreciation Society Fanzine Poll. My first toe into civilisation was in as small a pond as that. I heard rumours from the production office from DWAS executives. I was slipped my first pirate ninth-generation video tape ("The Monster of Peladon") at the 1993 Longleat Doctor *Who* Celebration. I went in my cricket sweater. My parents came with me to producer John Nathan-Turner's after show party, and from that point worried about me.

The next discovery was: things change. I went to the Fitzroy Tavern, the *Who* fan pub, drinking sweet

cider. I made a family with other fans. To my amazement, the family changed. Some are here and some are missing. I cared only about DWAS politics, then the Doctor *Who* Bulletin, a fanzine that criticised the producer personally, was in. The fandom became involved in the politics of the show. Disaster.

And then we were hipper than that: fanzines that didn't mention the show, events that didn't invite actors. "The scene that celebrates itself". We continued the series, with great success, in book and audio play and comic form. And all those forms were at first united and then at war. We were so sure the show was never coming back that we were the whole thing, the audience and the spectacle.

And then the show came back, and instead of rewriting everything, taking back everything and imposing everything, it was made by one of us, who was as generous and as ruthless as he could and had to be and got that balance exactly right. He made sure it was the biggest show in Britain. Which takes getting used to. He kicked us out of our closet and made us contemplate kissing. But he also made everyone a geek. Then he handed it on to another of us.

Because of fandom, I got to achieve my lifelong dream and write for it. How? Because throughout those years, fandom was open source creativity. As soon as anyone achieved anything, everyone else was sure they could do it too. So they tried. And they were often right. We had no "canon" to hold us back. And thankfully we haven't had one imposed since. That's why Douglas Adams and the writer of that new fanzine story are peers. Only in *Who* do you get that.

And now there's that most wonderful development of new *Who*: a whole new fandom. *Who* are at war and kissing and thinking "I could do that!" I follow them with as much interest as the show.

I met my wife and almost every girlfriend before her through fandom. I became a TV writer so I'd be ready if the show ever came back. I became a novelist and a comics writer because fan fiction and *Who* novels and Doctor *Who* Magazine taught me how.

To take on the cliché: if it wasn't for Doctor *Who* I'd now be unemployed, single and socially awkward. It has been both hearts of my life. **SFX**

The Paul Cornell-scripted *Doctor of the Strain* under attack



Martha and the Doctor in Paul Cornell's "The Family of Blood"



"The Brain of Morbius" proved a big influence on Paul Cornell