

THE  
TELEVISION  
AWARD



# DOCTOR WHO

We celebrate *Doctor Who*'s diamond jubilee  
by selecting the standout episodes from six  
decades of time travel

BY Richard Unwin

**F**ROM THE TARDIS to the arrival of the Cybermen, via the multiple incarnations of its Doctor – including its first female and first Black and queer person – *Doctor Who* has been as intrinsic to British identity as tea and biscuits and Paddington Bear. As the BBC prepares to celebrate *Doctor Who*'s diamond jubilee, it is the rightful recipient of The Television Award at the first in-person Rolling Stone UK Awards, in collaboration with Rémy Martin. Here, we mark six decades of time travel by selecting some standout episodes from the legendary series.



## 1960s

### 'An Unearthly Child' 1963

In the very first episode, broadcast the day after the assassination of JFK, viewers see two concerned London schoolteachers follow a mysterious pupil to her home – which turns out to be an old police box standing in a junkyard. When they push past the girl's unhelpful, cantankerous grandfather and into the box, they find themselves in a strange gleaming control room that is somehow bigger on the inside!



### 'The Dalek Invasion of Earth' 1964

The Daleks had proved an instant hit when they first appeared in only the second *Doctor Who* serial and were quickly booked for a return appearance. Only this time they were terrorising our own planet with a full-scale invasion. Location footage in the second episode of this story shows the metal monsters gliding around Trafalgar Square and over Westminster Bridge, having truly become the masters of Earth.

### 'The Tenth Planet' 1966

Not only did this story feature the first appearance of iconic villains the Cybermen, but it also found a very novel way to deal with the fact that the lead actor (William Hartnell) was unable to continue in the role of the Doctor, due to ill health. At the end of the adventure, the character collapses onto the floor of the TARDIS and, before our very eyes, his features morph into those of character actor Patrick Troughton. The first ever 'regeneration' had taken place. (But was yet to be referred to as such.)

### 'The Highlanders' 1967

The final scene of this Highland fling originally sees the TARDIS crew bidding a fond farewell to Scottish guest character

Jamie McCrimmon, played by Frazer Hines. However, the young actor's performance so impressed the producers that the scene was specially re-shot to show McCrimmon joining the TARDIS travellers on board the time-ship, where he would go on to become the longest-running *Doctor Who* companion of all time.

### 'The Web of Fear' 1968

This story was the prime reason that many children steadfastly refused to travel on the Tube in the late 1960s, featuring as it does one of the most memorable sequences of the Patrick Troughton era. Great hairy robotic Yeti – controlled by the Great Intelligence – swarm through the tunnels of the London Underground, spraying deadly web guns and massacring the soldiers of the newly formed United Nations Intelligence

Task Force. Apparently, the Tube station sets were so convincing that London Transport made a complaint about unlicensed filming on their premises.

## 1970s

### 'Spearhead from Space' 1970

A new decade and a new format. Now in colour, the show sees the Third Doctor – played by comic actor Jon Pertwee – permanently based on Earth and attached to paramilitary group UNIT as their scientific advisor, serving under Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart (Nicholas Courtney). The climax of this first adventure of

### DOCTOR'S ORDERS

(From top) The First Doctor (William Hartnell) confronts a Dalek in 1965 serial *Galaxy 4*; the Daleks create trouble for the Third Doctor Jon Pertwee; Pertwee with Second Doctor Patrick Troughton

the new era features shop-window dummies coming to life and shooting down the innocent pedestrians of Ealing Broadway.

### 'Terror of the Autons' 1971

The debut serial of the 1971 season sees the introduction of a new character created by producer Barry Letts and script editor Terrance Dicks – an evil Time Lord designed to be something of a 'Moriarty' figure for the Doctor. 'The Master' (Roger Delgado), as this meddling jackanapes introduces himself, would go on to be revealed as the 'surprise' villain in every single story of that year.

### 'The Three Doctors' 1973

The tenth anniversary celebrations kicked off a little early with this celebratory story actually beginning transmission at the end of December '72. The first three Doctors join forces to defeat Omega, an ancient villain trapped within a black hole. Sadly, William Hartnell was prevented by his deteriorating health from participating fully but does appear on a monitor screen opposite his

successors Troughton and Pertwee. The Time Lords reward the Doctor by ending his exile and restoring his control of the TARDIS.

### 'Planet of the Spiders' 1974

Now travelling with journalist Sarah Jane Smith (Elizabeth Sladen), the Third Doctor visits the famous blue planet Metebelis Three, where he is forced to face his fears. This Buddhist-inspired tale ends with Jon Pertwee falling out of the TARDIS and regenerating into Tom Baker's Fourth Doctor. "Well," says the Brigadier, "here we go again..."





### 'The Invisible Enemy' 1978

The title here is in reference to a deadly space virus, but the story is more well remembered for introducing a true *Doctor Who* icon – robot dog K9. Originally created by one Professor Marius of a galactic medical outpost to replace a flesh-and-blood mutt that he had to leave behind on Earth, the canine computer made the TARDIS his new permanent kennel at the end of this story. Much to the irritation of star Tom Baker.

### 1980s

#### 'Shada' 1980

With extensive location filming in Cambridge and a script by the legendary Douglas Adams, 'Shada' was all set to become a classic... until strike action at the BBC led to the studio sessions being cancelled and the story abandoned in a half-finished state. The adventure has now been released in possibly more formats than any other, with Tom Baker recording linking narration for a 90s VHS of the completed material, a Paul McGann-starring audio version, novelisations and animations. Pretty good for a 'lost' story.

#### 'Logopolis' 1981

After a record-breaking seven years of playing the Doctor, Tom Baker's departure from the role was announced as a major story on national news. The Fourth Doctor's demise was to come after a tussle with the Master (now played by Anthony Ainley) on top of a radio telescope. Following a fatal fall, the Doctor merges with a mysterious figure known only as 'the Watcher' – who turns out to be a version of his future self – and regenerates into a very youthful Peter Davison.

#### 'Earthshock' 1982

Peter Davison's Fifth Doctor was by this point travelling with a trio of young assistants, so when producer John Nathan-Turner decided to



#### TIME AND SPACE

(From the top) Peter Davison is David Tennant's favourite Doctor and also happens to be his father-in-law; Tom Baker remains the longest-serving Doctor; Colin Baker (no relation to Tom) is the only Doctor who has not truly regenerated; (opposite) Paul McGann and Daphne Ashbrook in the 1996 TV film, *Doctor Who: The Movie*



'thin the herd' a little, the unthinkable happened. Young boy-genius Adric – played by Matthew Waterhouse – is killed while crash-landing a spaceship onto prehistoric Earth and wiping out the dinosaurs. A generation was traumatised as silent credits played over an image of Adric's badge for mathematical excellence, now shattered into pieces.

### 'The Caves of Androzani' 1984

Regularly topping fan polls as the greatest *Doctor Who* story of all time, this gritty tale of corrupt politicians and grimy gun-runners was a spectacular finale for Peter Davison's Fifth Doctor. Poisoned by some alien flora, he gives up the last of the precious antidote to save his companion Peri (Nicola Bryant). Thus his life flashes before his eyes – and he turns into Colin Baker. "You were expecting someone else?" the Sixth Doctor asks a bemused Peri.

### 'Vengeance on Varos' 1985

A corrupt and rotten government tortures and films its political prisoners and broadcasts the video nasties as a form of entertainment for the goggle-eyed masses. Pre-dating the concept of reality television, this at-times-disturbing serial was ahead of the curve. Complaints about the levels of violence from the likes of BBC1 Controller Michael Grade seemed to rather miss the point – that the story itself was a critique of the bloodthirsty state of TV.

### 'The Trial of a Time Lord' 1986

After an 18-month hiatus imposed by Mr Grade, the show returned with a truncated series that makes a deliberate effort to tone down the violence. The 23rd season consists of a single 14-episode serial – albeit one broken up into four distinct





stories. The Time Lords have once again put the Doctor on trial, mirroring the real-life situation – which the fans perceive as the future of *Doctor Who* itself hanging in the balance. There were campaigns. And a charity single.

#### **'Survival' 1989**

The ironically named 'Survival' was the last episode of the original 26-year run of *Doctor Who* to be transmitted. The makers of the show suspected that this might be the case, and so a hastily scripted final scene was added, depicting the Seventh Doctor and his companion Ace (Sophie Aldred) walking off into the distance, while a voiceover from Sylvester McCoy lets us know that their adventures would continue: "Somewhere there's danger, somewhere there's injustice,

and somewhere else the tea's getting cold. Come on, Ace, we've got work to do!"

#### **1990s**

##### **'Search Out Space' 1990**

Although no new series appeared in 1990, viewers did get to see what the Doctor and Ace got up to next. A special episode of a BBC educational programme had the characters competing in 'The Ultimate Challenge', the biggest gameshow in the universe. This was mainly an excuse to explain various aspects of astronomy and geometry, but by this point fans were happy to devour whatever scraps they could get.

##### **'Dimensions in Time' 1993**

For a short while it seemed as if the 30th anniversary would be celebrated with a special

feature-length drama called *The Dark Dimension*. But then that was cancelled, and we ended up with a pair of mini episodes that crossed over *Doctor Who* with *EastEnders* and were broadcast as part of *Children in Need*. They're magnificent in their own way, however, and all the living Doctors took part. Where else can you see Pat Butcher sharing screen-time with a Cyberman?

##### **Downtime 1995**

With *Doctor Who* having been off the air for six years, fans were becoming so desperate for new material that some of them began making it themselves. A few dozen semi-professional fan-films were produced over this period, and *Downtime* – by Reeltime Pictures – is one of the slickest of the lot. Producer Keith Barnfather

persuaded several stars to return to their TV roles, including Elisabeth Sladen as Sarah Jane Smith and Nicholas Courtney as the Brigadier.

#### **Doctor Who: The Movie**

1996

The second coming! Seemingly from nowhere, it was announced that *Doctor Who* would be returning to BBC1 in a US TV co-production, with Paul McGann as the Eighth Doctor. Sadly, this turned out to be a one-night stand, with just one 90-minute special being produced, but for one glorious night the show was back. Fans were outraged by the Doctor being revealed to be half-human, and – even more shockingly – by him kissing a woman.

#### **The Scarlet Empress 1998**

For various reasons, the Paul McGann-led production





had not been made into a series, and in the minds of many, the TV show was now dead. In the literary world, however, the Doctor Who brand was thriving, with the BBC having taken the licence back in-house. They published two novels per month: one featuring the ongoing adventures of the Eighth Doctor, and one focusing on a past Doctor. *The Scarlet Empress* by Paul Magrs is an excellent example of the former. Full of outlandish imagery and magical realism, it reinvented Doctor Who for a bit.

#### **'Curse of the Fatal Death'** 1999

When future show-runner Steven Moffat was tasked with writing a comedy drama for Comic Relief night, he chose to produce a *Doctor Who* script. This saw the 'Ninth' Doctor – played by Rowan Atkinson – burning through his remaining regenerations. The various incarnations were

**10/10**  
(Above) A *Doctor Who* fan from an early age, David Tennant won a bit part in a *Doctor Who*-themed audiodrama and then graduated to become star of the show. He is widely considered the most popular Doctor; (below) the newly rebooted *Doctor Who* returned with Christopher Eccleston as the Ninth Time Lord

played by Richard E. Grant, Jim Broadbent and Hugh Grant, before finally a female version (gasp) was portrayed by Joanna Lumley.

#### **2000s**

##### **'Storm Warning'** 2001

There were jubilations when Paul McGann agreed to record audio adventures for Big Finish Productions as the Eighth Doctor. Starting with 'Storm Warning', a derring-do tale of airship disaster, we suddenly had ongoing episodes performed by the incumbent Doctor again. This was as good as things were ever going to get now, surely?

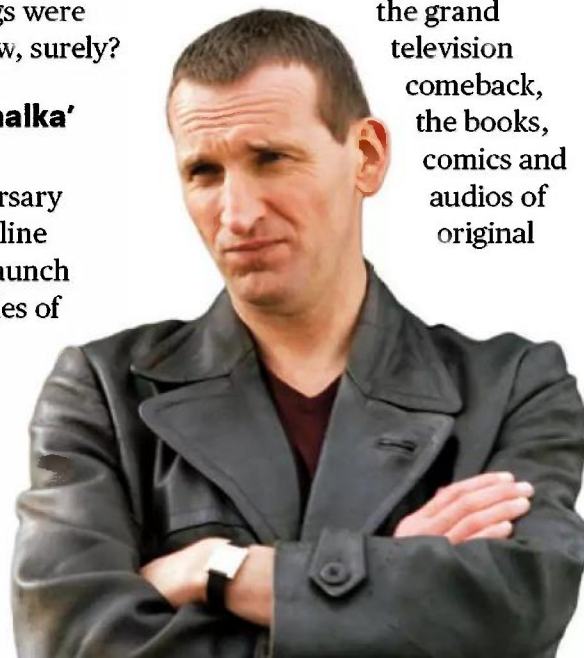
##### **'Scream of the Shalka'** 2003

For the 40th anniversary in 2003, the BBC online team decided to relaunch *Doctor Who* as a series of animated webcasts starring Richard E. Grant as the Ninth Doctor,

with 'Scream of the Shalka' the first thrilling instalment. Unfortunately, it seems that no one told the people developing this idea that behind the scenes, other plans were being made... And on 26th September fans got the best present ever, as it was announced that *Doctor Who* would return to BBC1 with a new live-action series in 2005. 'Scream of the Shalka' was largely ignored and further webcasts were canned.

##### **Medicinal Purposes** 2004

In this, the last of the 'wilderness years' before the grand television comeback, the books, comics and audios of original



adventures continued to be produced in vast quantities – their publishers were perhaps nervous that their days in the spotlight were numbered. The audio drama *Medicinal Purposes*, which dealt with infamous body-snatchers Burke and Hair, is now notable for one of its cast members. Appearing as relatively small guest character 'Daft Jamie', there was a young actor and hardcore *Doctor Who* fan by the name of David Tennant...

#### **'The Parting of the Ways'**

2005

*Doctor Who* made a triumphant return and became an instant hit with a whole new generation overnight. Christopher Eccleston was the Ninth Doctor and pop star Billie Piper proved her acting chops as companion Rose. Eccleston would only feature in this single series – due to some backstage bother that was never fully disclosed – and in the final episode he kisses Rose to absorb the time vortex from her... and then regenerates into David Tennant.

#### **'Doomsday'** 2006

Amazingly, the Daleks and the Cybermen had never met each other on screen, but they finally do in this episode scripted by Russell T Davies. The two big baddies come faceplate to eyestalk during the Battle of Canary Wharf, at the top of the iconic tower. "Daleks, be warned. You have declared war upon the Cybermen," growls the Cyberleader. "This is not war," declares a bitchy Black Dalek, "This is pest control."

#### **'Voyage of the Damned'** 2007

*Doctor Who* has often been accused of veering towards camp, and is sometimes is guilty as charged. But perhaps never more so than when a guest-starring Kylie Minogue sacrifices herself to save a space-faring version of the *Titanic* on Christmas Day.



The tradition of a special episode being broadcast at Christmas very quickly became a permanent fixture that was as keenly anticipated as the Queen's Speech. (the late Queen Elizabeth II is in this as well, by the way, voiced by Spitting Image veteran Jessica Martin.)

## 2010s

### 'Vincent and the Doctor' 2010

After regenerating into Matt Smith on New Year's Day, one of the Eleventh Doctor's most memorable adventures this year was a trip back to 1890 to meet Vincent van Gogh. Written by romcom supremo Richard Curtis, the adventure deals with themes of depression and mental health as the Doctor and Amy Pond (Karen Gillan) help the troubled artist to defeat an invisible monster.

### 'The Doctor's Wife' 2011

A delicate and beautiful script from fantasy giant Neil Gaiman had the Doctor's only constant companion – the TARDIS – transformed into human form, meaning that he could finally converse with what the title playfully refers to as his 'wife'. A spellbinding performance from Suranne Jones as the personification of the space-time machine really has us believing that she is infinitely complex and most definitely 'bigger on the inside'.

### 'The Angels Take Manhattan' 2012

Living statues the Weeping Angels are probably the biggest monster hit of the revived era of the show, and this episode sees the ultimate expression of that as the Statue of Liberty



is transformed into a giant ravenous monster. The story ends with the 'lonely assassins' sending companion Amy Pond and her husband Rory (Arthur Darvill) back into the past where – for complicated script reasons – the Doctor can never visit them again.

### 'The Day of the Doctor' 2013

The 50th anniversary was a big deal, and the centrepiece of the celebrations was a special feature-length episode filmed in 3D. 'The Day of the Doctor' was screened

in cinemas as well as being broadcast on BBC1 and saw three Doctors teaming up to put an end to the Time

War between the Daleks and the Time Lords. While David Tennant

was more than happy to return, Christopher Eccleston unsurprisingly declined, and so a new 'hidden' incarnation was created – the War Doctor, played by John Hurt.

### 'Heaven Sent' 2015

While he was showrunner, writer Steven Moffat liked to set himself challenges, and this episode is one of his absolute masterpieces. It's a one-man show, with Peter Capaldi performing the entire piece alone. There's a shuffling, hooded creature that pursues him, and some fleeting memories of companion Clara (Jenna Coleman), but otherwise he carries the entire story singlehandedly. Magnificent.

### 'Rosa' 2018

Jodie Whittaker smashes through the TARDIS glass ceiling and becomes the first full-time female incarnation of the Doctor – much to the

**WHO ARE YOU**  
(From the top)  
The Twelfth Doctor Peter Capaldi;  
Eleventh Doctor Matt Smith is the only Doctor to have been nominated for a BAFTA for playing the role; Jodie Whittaker (centre) broke new ground as the first female Doctor; John Hurt as the War Doctor in 'The Day of the Doctor'

fury of some of the fandom. One of her earliest adventures involves travelling back to Alabama in 1955 and meeting civil rights hero Rosa Parks in a sensitive script co-written by new showrunner Chris Chibnall and popular children's author Malorie Blackman.

## 2020s

### 'The Timeless Children' 2020

This season finale takes the dramatic step of revealing that the First Doctor hadn't been the first Doctor after all, and that there were in fact goodness knows how many of them. It turns out that the Doctor wasn't even from the planet of the Time Lords and had been found as a child, abandoned by a portal to another dimension. The mystery of *Doctor Who's* title is restored!

### 'Flux' 2021

Due to the limitations of filming during a pandemic, this series was scaled down to only six episodes, all of which made up one big storyline. But making the most of the hand that they'd been dealt, cast and crew pulled together to make an enormous and gripping adventure that threatens the destruction of the entire universe. One of the best seasons of the modern series.

### 'The Power of the Doctor' 2022

Not only was this the grand finale for Jodie Whittaker's magnificent Thirteenth Doctor, but it also served as a celebratory party for the 100th anniversary of the BBC itself. Author Chris Chibnall threw everything into the mix – Daleks, Cybermen, the Master, old Doctors and old companions. It was a spectacular end to the era and ended with Jodie regenerating into... David Tennant. Just in time for this year's 60th-anniversary specials. ®

The full list: '60 iconic moments from 60 years of Doctor Who' can be found at [rollingstone.co.uk](http://rollingstone.co.uk)

