



The 2010s The Golden Age

The 50th anniversary, the *Doctor Who* Experience and a world tour are just some of the fan highlights of the current decade.

Feature by **EMILY COOK**

N

ew decade, new Doctor.

On 1 January 2010 David Tennant's Tenth Doctor regenerated into the Eleventh, played by the relatively unknown Matt Smith. The Tenth Doctor didn't want to go – and viewers were sorry to see him leave.

Of course, Matt Smith's casting was a masterstroke and by the end of his first episode fans were once again fully

on board the TARDIS for a brand-new run of adventures.

The Eleventh Doctor proved to be something of a fashion icon as his trademark retro-academic tweed jacket, bow tie and fez combo quickly became a cosplay favourite. A spokesman for fashion retailer Top Man even told *The*

Daily Telegraph that "since the new *Doctor Who* aired we have seen a dramatic rise in bow tie sales; in the last month sales have increased by 94 per cent." Fezzes and bow ties were cool. And so was being a *Doctor Who* fan.

In 2013 *Doctor Who*'s popularity hit fever pitch as the series approached its 50th anniversary. BBC entertainment correspondent and devoted *Doctor Who* fan Lizo Mzimba recalls the excitement of the occasion: "As a journalist I'd covered a few 50th anniversaries – *Coronation Street* in 2010, James Bond in 2012 – but this felt even bigger. There was a huge sense of anticipation in the weeks and months leading up to this celebration of something that felt so unmistakably British, but which had also been embraced by the whole world. I was lucky enough to visit the recording of *The Day of the Doctor*."

Above: The new stars of *Doctor Who*, Matt Smith and Karen Gillan, posing with young fans during the UK promotional tour in 2010.

Below: The BBC's entertainment correspondent Lizo Mzimba has fond memories of meeting both Matt Smith and David Tennant on location for *The Day of the Doctor* (2013).





"It was such an exciting time to be a fan. A show I'd loved as a child was now more successful than ever." LIZO MZIMBA

I'd interviewed David and Matt many times before, but both of them on set together at the same time? Fanboy heaven!"

The Day of the Doctor, the 50th Anniversary Special, earned a Guinness World Record for the largest ever simulcast of a TV drama when it was broadcast in 94 countries across six continents on Saturday 23 November 2013. Thousands of fans went to cinemas to see the episode in 3D. "I had a ticket for the 3D screening at the BFI," says Lizo, "but I had to put together a piece for the late news on BBC One so ended up watching it on a small screen in an edit



suite. That didn't make watching the Special any less exciting, though.

"It was such an exciting time to be a fan," he continues. "A show I'd loved as a child was now more successful than ever. Plus, as a journalist, I had a front row seat to so much that was happening. The 50th Anniversary Celebration at [London's] ExCeL was the first time I met Tom Baker, which had been a lifelong dream; I got to play with a Dalek voice modulator; and throughout the day I chatted to dozens of fans about what we all love about the show. I remember thinking, 'That's what *Doctor Who* does. It brings people together.'"



While the 2000s saw the opening of various new *Doctor Who* exhibitions and museums, in the following decade the *Doctor Who* Experience took the interactive fan experience to the next level. Arriving at the Olympia Exhibition Centre in West London on 20 February 2011, the Experience remained there for a year before moving to Cardiff, where it reopened on 20 July 2012. The 3,000-square-metre attraction, designed by theme park company Sarner, was a huge hit. Fans from all over the world flocked to Cardiff Bay to visit, including a group of university students from the USA who study *Doctor Who*.

The 'Fifty Year History of *Doctor Who*' course was established at Chicago's DePaul University in 2014 by Professor Paul Booth. "The course explores *Doctor Who* through academic lenses, guided by fans' views of the series," says Paul. "Students come into the course with different levels of *Doctor Who* knowledge. We explore topics on campus for ten weeks, and then go abroad to the UK, to London and Cardiff, for two weeks, to see filming locations and fan sites." →

Above left: The *Doctor Who* tour bus in the grounds of BBC Television Centre in 2010.

Left inset: A promotional poster for *The Day of the Doctor*.

Above right: Showrunner Steven Moffat, Matt Smith and Jenna Coleman (who played Clara Oswald) with the Guinness World Record for the largest ever simulcast of a TV drama. The award was presented at the *Doctor Who* Celebration event in London on 24 November 2013, shortly after the broadcast of *The Day of the Doctor* achieved the record.

Left inset: A backstage pass from the 2013 *Doctor Who* Celebration.

Below left: A promotional poster for the Celebration.

Below right: Nicholas Briggs interviews Peter Davison, Sylvester McCoy and Colin Baker at the Celebration. Tom Baker would join the panel later.





Top left: Concept art of the Eleventh Doctor and his predecessors' costumes, designed for the Doctor Who Experience.

Above left: A ticket wallet from the Doctor Who Experience.

Top right: The exterior of the Doctor Who Experience in Cardiff.

Above right: Fans pose with Daleks in the foyer of the Experience in Cardiff.

Below: Peter Capaldi, Jenna Coleman and Steven Moffat in Cardiff on 7 August 2014, prior to the world premiere of *Deep Breath*.

→ Paul says it would have been “unthinkable” not to visit the *Doctor Who* Experience as part of their study abroad programme, describing it as a “major ‘fan-pilgrimage’ destination” for the class. “We spent a lot of time there on our trip to Cardiff. Having learned about the history of *Doctor Who*, the students – particularly the aspiring filmmakers and television creators – really enjoyed spending time in the museum, seeing the costumes and props and looking at behind-the-scenes information about the origins of the series.”

The Experience also featured an immersive and interactive walk-through adventure. “The students particularly enjoyed piloting the TARDIS and taking selfies at the console,” says Paul, adding: “For me, the best thing about the Experience was the feeling of

celebration, fun and excitement that it fostered in the people who visited.”

The *Doctor Who* Experience closed its doors on 9 September 2017. “I’m very sad that it’s not there any more – it was a great place to take my students,” says Paul. “There are other places to visit but there was something special about the Experience being in the place where *Doctor Who* is made.”

By 2014 there was a new Doctor in the TARDIS. That August, ahead of Peter Capaldi’s debut series as the Twelfth Doctor, BBC Worldwide organised a *Doctor Who* World Tour. It was brand manager Edward Russell’s job to oversee all the publicity, marketing and photography for the event. “It was pretty intense,” he recalls. “We visited Cardiff, London, Seoul, Sydney, New York, Mexico City and Rio de Janeiro to meet with fans and to show the first episode of Series 8.”

Edward says the aim of the tour was to “engage with the fans by creating a buzz – especially on social media – and allowing them to feel ownership of the show. The fans overseas were so openly enthusiastic. Everyone was particularly taken aback by the people in Seoul, who practically glued themselves to the team as soon as they touched down at the airport.

“But you know which location was the most exciting? I’d say Cardiff. We

“We closed the city centre and ran a red carpet up the main street. The local police reckoned we had nearly 5,000 people.”

EDWARD RUSSELL



Teenage Kicks

Peter Capaldi was a fan from the first episode and followed the series as intensely as the readers of this very magazine," says Edward Russell, who worked alongside Peter on *Doctor Who* from 2014 to 2017.

"He stopped watching around 1977-78, though. He told me that punk music and girls were taking up his time. Of course, when the show came back in 2005 he was hooked again. He probably thought he'd had his 'Doctor Who moment' when he appeared [as Caecilius] in *The Fires of Pompeii* [2008].

"Occasionally he'd ask for me for DVDs of the 80s episodes; he



hadn't watched them at the time but wanted to be able to answer fans' questions. Peter isn't someone who can quote huge chunks from episodes; I don't think he'd know production codes or be able to list the various producers in order, or anything. However, he completely understands what makes us fans."

Edwards says that "Peter's manner with the fans was incredible to watch. He would make time for everyone and wouldn't be rushed. I bet everyone who got to meet him felt he'd given them all his attention. He'd ask them their favourite memories or monsters and when signing, he'd often doodle a picture of a Dalek!"



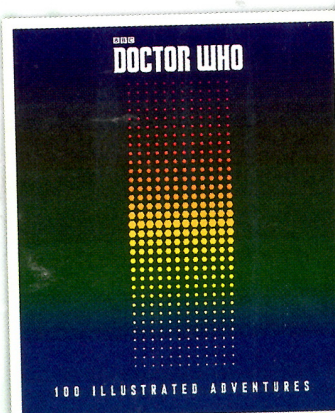
closed down the city centre and ran a big red carpet up the main street for the cast – and some Daleks – to stop and meet fans. The local police reckoned we had nearly 5,000 people. We then gave 1,300 fans the opportunity to be the first in the world to see the Twelfth Doctor in action by watching *Deep Breath* with Peter and Jenna [Coleman, who played companion Clara]. It never gets boring seeing fans get excited about *Doctor Who* – especially children."

As *Doctor Who* fandom has continued to grow, it's diversified. Social media has connected people like never before, facilitating specialist fan subsets: from cosplayers to TARDIS-builders, LGBTQ+ and feminist groups, animators, writers, artists... the list goes on. Many use the internet as a platform to share their *Who*-inspired creative work – some of which has been noticed by creators of official merchandise. Budding artists, for example, could contribute their original fan art to *Doctor Who Magazine's* letters page and BBC Books' *100 Illustrated Adventures*, a pictorial guide to the series published in November 2017. Since 2016, writers have had the opportunity to submit their story ideas to Big Finish's annual 'Paul Spragg Memorial Short Trip Opportunity', commemorating the audio drama company's late employee.

In this WiFi-dependent decade, rewatching episodes of *Doctor Who* couldn't be easier. DVD/Blu-ray box sets are no longer

a prerequisite as viewers can now watch the series on Netflix, with episodes from 2005's *Rose* onwards always available. In the US, from September 2017 older stories became accessible at the press of a button, courtesy of BritBox. Meanwhile, Twitch's seven-week viewing marathon of *Doctor Who's* original 1963-89 run was live-streamed from 29 May to 23 July 2018.

Thankfully, modern-day fans are not completely stuck behind screens, with social gatherings such as the Quiz of Rassilon gaining momentum. The quiz was started by Mike Williams and Ioan Morris in Cardiff in 2010, and initially ran for three years. "We then restarted it in January 2018 in the Sebright Arms in East London and have been running monthly ever since," says Mike. "We set a list of stories for people to watch and revise then ask questions about them at the quiz. There are general and observational questions; quotes, sounds, music and picture questions; and the legendary production code round. We've attracted a lot of special-guest contributors and hosts: we had a question by Russell T Davies and rounds



by Paul Cornell, Andrew Cartmel, Rob Shearman, Gareth Roberts, Gary Russell, Clayton Hickman and many more."

Even in this digital age, it's clear that fans still enjoy meeting up in person. "Most people use the quiz as a *Doctor Who* social, to hang out with fellow fans in a place where they don't have to suppress their enthusiasm or feel afraid to talk about their favourite show for hours," says Mike. "The internet can be a lonely and serious place where everything is constantly scrutinised; we feel the quiz has given people the chance to cut loose a bit and meet people they've been talking to online for years."

Mike says that the quiz attracts "hardcore 'classic' and new-series fans of all genders, sexualities and religions, societies, cosplayers, and former and current people involved with the show and DWM. When Jodie Whittaker's Doctor is on our screens we expect an influx of entirely new fans, too."

So the saga of the greatest fandom in all of time and space continues... **DWM**

Top left inset: Caecilius (Peter Capaldi) in *The Fires of Pompeii* (2008).

Top right: Peter Capaldi signs autographs on 7 August, the first day of the 2014 *Doctor Who* World Tour.

Above: The cover of *Doctor Who: 100 Illustrated Adventures*, published by Puffin in 2017; plus a page from the book depicting *The Pilot* (2017), with art by Dan Green.

Left inset: Pearl Mackie in costume as Bill Potts, signing autographs during the shoot for *Smile* (2017).

Below left: *Doctor Who*-themed cup cakes, prepared for the Quiz of Rassilon contestants.

Below right: The Quiz of Rassilon is a popular event at the Sebright Arms in East London.

