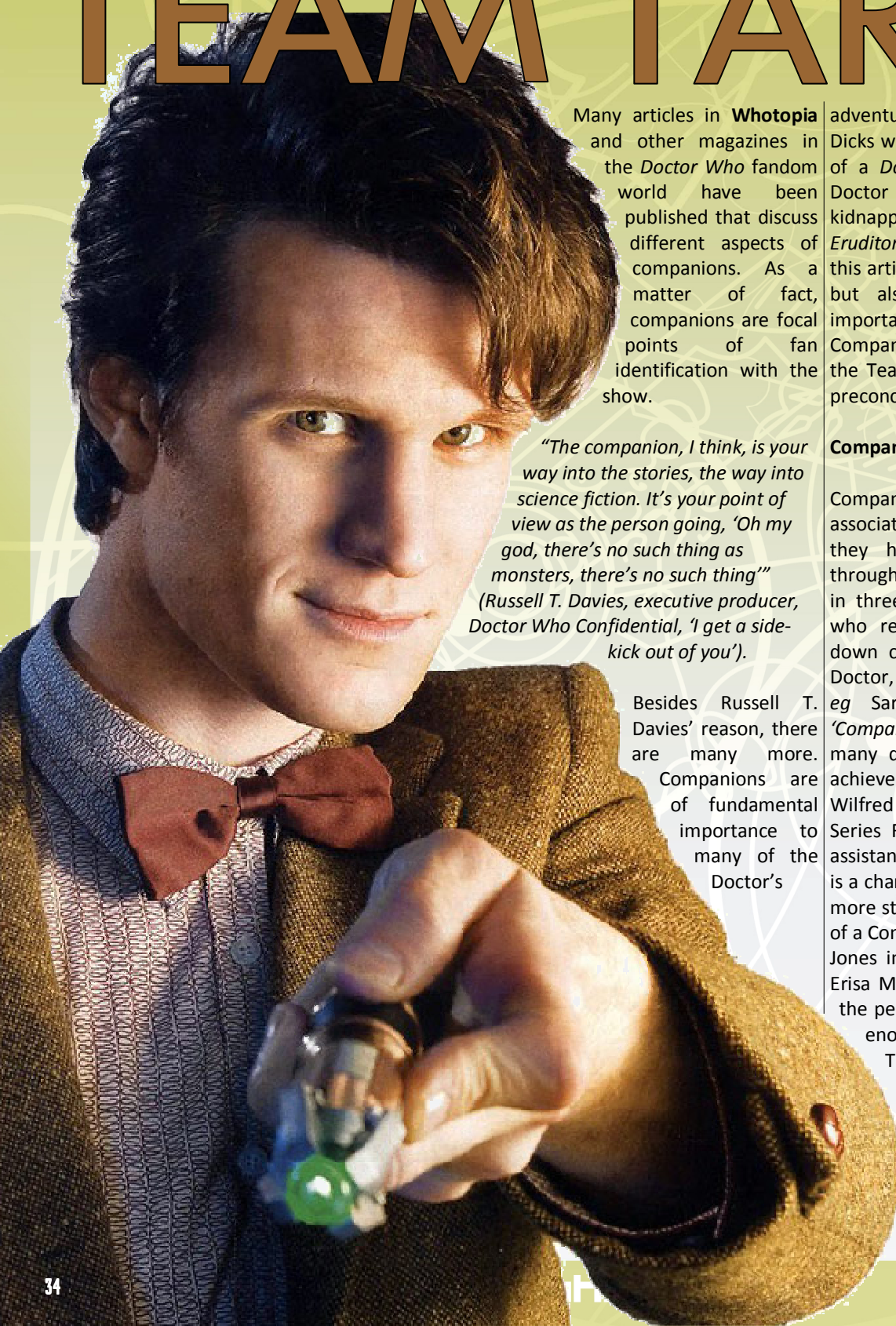


50 YEARS OF TEAM TARDIS



Many articles in **Whotopia** and other magazines in the *Doctor Who* fandom world have been published that discuss different aspects of companions. As a matter of fact, companions are focal points of fan identification with the show.

“The companion, I think, is your way into the stories, the way into science fiction. It’s your point of view as the person going, ‘Oh my god, there’s no such thing as monsters, there’s no such thing”
(Russell T. Davies, executive producer, *Doctor Who Confidential*, ‘I get a side-kick out of you’).

Besides Russell T. Davies’ reason, there are many more. Companions are of fundamental importance to many of the Doctor’s

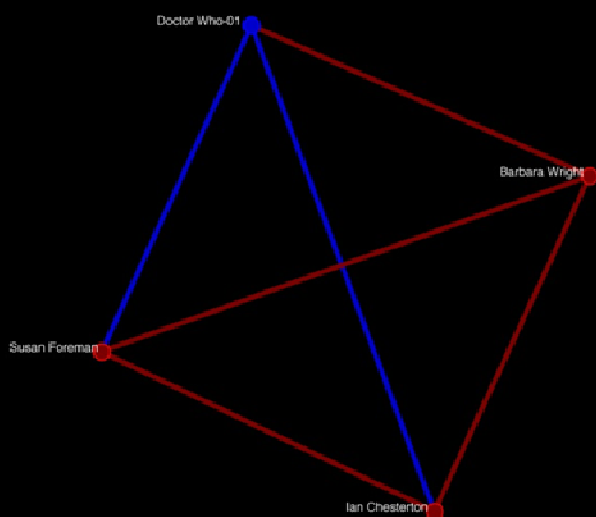
adventures. And not just because Terrance Dicks was said to think that “the only real job of a *Doctor Who* companion is to ask the Doctor to explain the plot and to get kidnapped.” (Philip Sandifer, *TARDIS Eruditorum*, 2012, ‘Terror of the Autons’). In this article, we look at not only ‘Companions’, but also the other characters that are important supporters of the Doctor: Companion-Lite and Associate. After a look at the Team TARDIS network, we will look at a preconception about companion ages.

Companions and Other Friends

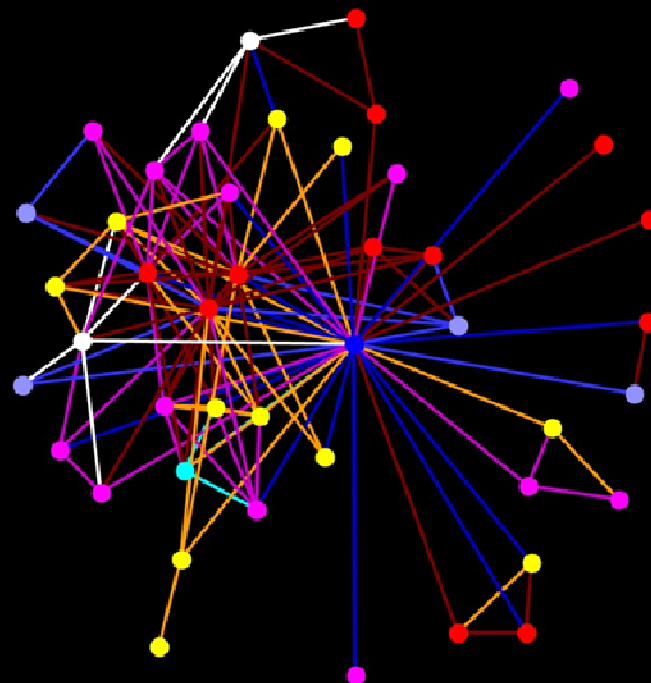
Companion is the most common term associated with the Doctor’s friends, though they have been known by other titles throughout the years. And they actually come in three flavors. ‘Companion’ is a character who regularly travels in the TARDIS, runs down corridors, and is a confidante of the Doctor, mostly done over a series of episodes, eg Sarah Jane Smith and Rose Tyler. ‘Companion-Lite’ is a character that fulfills many qualities of a companion but missed achievements in one of more aspects, eg Wilfred Mott acts like a companion in one Series Four special. We consider all one-off assistants to be a Companion-Lite. ‘Associate’ is a character who assists the Doctor in one or more stories but doesn’t engage in all aspects of a Companion or Companion-Lite, eg Clifford Jones in *The Green Death* (1973) or Captain Erisa Magambo in the new series. These are the people that the Doctor relies on but not enough to invite them for serious travel. These three groups of people are what we call the Doctor’s ‘support-group’ in network analysis parlance. For the purpose of this article, we refer to them all as ‘Team TARDIS’.

In our network charts, every circle

**First Doctor's Network
Season One**



**Eleventh Doctor's Network
Series Six**



(node) represents a character: blue=Doctor (and various duplicate selves), red=Companion, yellow=Companion-Lite, fuchsia=Associate (The other colors represent characters not used in 'this' analysis.) and lines (links) between the circles are drawn indicate these characters collaborated with each other in at least one episode during that season. Looking at the nearly 50 years of *Doctor Who*, we can find some interesting patterns. First, Team TARDIS got a lot bigger as time went on; Team TARDIS has grown as support characters are added. The network from the first season of the First Doctor has only the four main characters: the First Doctor, Susan Foreman, Ian Chesterton, and Barbara Wright. There were no Companions-Lite or Associates at that time. The majority of the interaction was between the four main characters. But in Seasons Two and Three, the network grows and in Season Three we see the first of the Companion-Lite characters: Katarina, Sara Kingdom, and Bret Vyon. We place in the Companion-Lite category not only Sara Kingdom but also Bret Vyon (who actually had more screen time than Sara Kingdom). Both appeared in *The Daleks' Master Plan* (1965/66) Then,

"Companions are focal points of fan identification with the show."

after a closer look, we also classified Katarina as a Companion-Lite since she was more a hasty addition to replace the 'fired' Vicki who was supposed to die in the episode 'Airlock' of *The Daleks' Master Plan*. Five episodes do not a Companion make.

The Eleventh Doctor's network, on the other hand, dwarfs the First Doctor's network. It contains many characters that we class as Companion, Companion-Lite, and Associate. Notice how many characters do not share connections in the network. Many of these characters are story specific and interact only with the core group. In the big visualization at the beginning of the article, we show the networks of all seasons together. The bottom half of the network consists of the 26 years of Classic *Who*. The top right nodes are the four years of Russell

T Davies and the top left are the two years Steven Moffat. The number of characters in New *Who* compared to Classic *Who* is quite a bit larger even though there are both fewer years and stories. That there are many more characters in the network of later incarnations of the Doctor has led to more complicated storylines. The main story narrative no longer needs to be carried by only the main characters. During the Pertwee years, there was often a secondary plotline headed by the Brigadier and UNIT, which connected with the Doctor's plotline in the end. A complex Seventh Doctor story, *The Curse of Fenric* (1989) contained many supporting characters with their own subplots which were all important for the final confrontation.

When looking at the large overall network, one more structural property is interesting: everyone is somehow connected with each other, even though we coded the Doctor's incarnations as eleven different and unconnected nodes in the network. There have been a series of mini-reboots in order to start the series fresh, which should have disconnected the network. Many times when a Companion (or Companion-Lite or

