



[www.historyproject.org.uk](http://www.historyproject.org.uk)

## **BEHP BULLETIN May 2020**

Dear all,

We have decided to introduce this bulletin to keep everyone up to date with progress at the BEHP during the current health crisis.

### **Latest News**

As you all know we have had to suspend our regular monthly meetings at BECTU HQ which is closed until further notice. All the BECTU staff are working from home at the moment. Our AGM was due to take place on Wednesday June 10th and will be postponed until we know clearly when it will be safe to hold our meetings again. This bulletin is to let you all know that despite the lockdown we are managing to work away behind the scenes improving the information we have in our database. Our aim is to develop our website still further and to digitise all the interviews in our archive.

Mike, Sue and Elaine have been working through interviews we hold in the collection which have restrictions that inhibit access to these incredibly valuable interviews. The plan is to see if the original restrictions are still relevant and whether we can get the necessary permissions to clear them for use on our website.

We have already received positive responses from many of the interviewees or their families – Paul Fox and Kevin Francis have responded giving us permission to digitise and upload their interviews; as have the families of William McQuitty, Richard Attenborough, Anthony Havelock -Allan, Sir John Woolf . As soon as we can gain access to the archive tapes held in BECTU HQ in

Clapham we will digitise these interviews so that they can listen to them and then let us know their thoughts on the interviews.

We are grateful to Linda Ayton (formerly of the BFI) for helping to trace some of the interviewees or their families. We are still trying to contact Mike Hodges and the family of Jill Balcon– **can anyone can help?**

David Sharp has been reorganising information in the database removing “interview notes” to their own data field from the “transcript” data field which has been misleading to users by implying we had a transcript when this was not so.

### **Website News**

Our website and its database is on a system called Drupal. A new version - Drupal 8 is being rolled out this year. It will mean that our website will have lots of new features, an improved performance and will update the look and feel of our website making it even more user friendly. We will have to transfer our existing database to the new system. This has proved an opportunity to review the requirements of the website and database. Mike, Sue and Elaine have been having lengthy and frequent zoom discussions with Alison Bancroft of Redport who will handle the transfer.

### **Our Interviews.**

Alec Hall-Shaw is digitising a batch of audio tapes that we managed to get out of BECTU hours before the building was closed and these will be uploaded to the website in the very near future.

John Harwood has been helping as ever – checking content on his hard drives and uploading to the website when he can.

Emma Feather and Liz Sweeney are working on a couple of transcripts that have been put thru the Speechmatics software we are using. This automatically converts the spoken word to text, but of course still requires human intervention to check and correct.

### **Newsletter**

Derek Threadgall has produced his first newsletter – circulated last week. Derek [dthreadgall1165@gmail.com](mailto:dthreadgall1165@gmail.com) would welcome any feedback and thoughts on what you would like to see in the next edition.

### **Elstree Screen Heritage**

Plan to mark 50 years since 'the men in suits' in Culver City pulled the plug on the MGM British Studios at Borehamwood. The range of planned activities have been deferred, but they have now launched a book written by Paul Welsh on *MGM British Studios : Hollywood in Hertfordshire*. Over 300 pages long and with over 400 illustrations, £20.00

[www.ElstreeScreenHeritage.org/category/news/](http://www.ElstreeScreenHeritage.org/category/news/)

### **Stop Press**

Discussions are taking place with Dr Vicky Ball and Justin Smith, the Director of the Cinema & Television Research Institute at DeMontfort University who are hoping to apply for funding for a Phd student to work with the BEHP collection in 2021. We'll keep you posted with developments.

Prospero the BBC newspaper for retired members of staff will feature an article about the work of the BEHP in a future edition. It will feature details about some of the fascinating interviews we have with BBC personnel in our archive - Sheila Hancock, Shaun Sutton, John Schlesinger, Pete Murray , Jimmy Gilbert, Julia Cave, Bill Cotton Junior, Jenny Barraclough, Johnny Speight , Philip Donnellan, Charles Wheeler and too many more to mention here .

More news in our next bulletin next month.