

## The British Entertainment History Project Bulletin number 6



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

March 2021

Dear all,

Much had been achieved during the Covid times. The Board of Management has been meeting regularly via zoom to keep track on developments and move forward with the work of the History Project, with great success – sorting out the archive database requirements – moving towards making everything more accessible and encouraging appreciation of the archive; but unfortunately, not able to conduct more interviews.

The History Project has now reached a new milestone. We've just assigned interview number 800 to Paul Collard (one of the Eastmancolor Project interviews). Mike has uploaded all the Eastmancolor interviews (789 -800) – Chris Menges, Alan Masson, Brian Pritchard, Colin Fight, Evangeline Harrison, Kieron Webb, Peter Lamont, Peter Suschitzky, Simon Lind, Tessa Idlewine, Tim Emblem-English as well as Paul Collard.

Mike has commented on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “Flash Gordon” reporting that we had interviews with some who had worked on it, including storyboard artist Bill Stallion -

<https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/bill-stallion>

and director Mike Hodges who was so complimentary about the HP.

<https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/mike-hodges>

### **Bibliography** of use of HP interviews.

We have decided that it would be useful to record on the website both as a general Bibliography on the Home page and specific usage to be logged against each interview record. We welcome any knowledge about books or articles that have featured the HP – please send any that you know about to [sue.malden@btinternet.com](mailto:sue.malden@btinternet.com).

**ACTION:** All please let Sue know of any publications, articles, or projects you are aware of.

### **Digitisation**

We have virtually completed all 800 interviews in the archive thanks to the efforts of John Harwood, Alec Hall-Shaw and Mike Dick. Mike pointed out that many of our interview webpages would benefit by the addition of individual biographies, photos, job and company details and useful website links

**ACTION:** Any volunteers to do this to contact Sue [sue.malden@btinternet.com](mailto:sue.malden@btinternet.com)

### **Help with Tapes**

We have a few interviews done for the Read My Lips event some years ago on large size HDCam cassettes

**ACTION:** Can anyone help with this HDCam format?

### **Restricted Interviews**

We now have a very short list of restricted interviews to be reviewed. Linda Ayrton has been most helpful helping us to trace family members. Sue had been working hard on these interviews and had made good progress contacting the relevant people. The list is now down to:

414 Jill Balcon

452 Paul Watson

612 Nigel Ostrer

596 Tony Palmer

627 Terry Nunn

631 Jamie Scott by Will Fowler

**ACTION:** Can anyone help to make contact with any of these interviewees or their families.

### **Transcripts**

Mike has been trialling the transcription system OTTER, which has the facility of inserting timecodes in the transcripts as well as a multi-user capability. Ros Cranston of the BFI is making a very useful contribution by proof-reading the Otter transcripts for Sarah Eruklar, Penny Woolcock and Mary Orom. Ros has raised good points about the need for guidelines when proofreading a transcript. Sue will review the BEHP guidelines for Proofreaders/transcribers

If the Board agrees it is wise to push as many interviews as possible through Otter, there will then be several interviews needing to be proof-read and corrected. At this stage we will encourage as many volunteers as possible to work on these transcripts.

**ACTION:** We will need VOLUNTEERS to proofread these transcripts

When access is possible, DS will check with BFI Reuben if they hold any transcripts that we are missing.

SM reported that Viavision, an Australian company releasing films on Blu – ray have just made a donation of £500 for the use of the Karel Reisz interview on their Blue-ray release of the “Gambler”. They have

some interesting film and Tv releases in Australia, so she has encouraged them to make more use of our collection

### **Methods of Shooting Interviews**

Nick Gilbey has raised several points which will help to set standards for filming, he will write up key points, discussed with the camera operators, that would set standards for interview recording.

Recording would be on a camera card in parallel with a 'monitor'.

The cards should come to the archive to be stored on hard drive before any processing or uploading to the website so that the source material is future proofed/archived. This will be incorporated into the Information for Interview recording.

### **News from Members**

- Congratulations to Board member, Derek Threadgall on the publication of his book SHEPPERTON STUDIOS – A PERSONAL VIEW, with a foreword by Sir Sydney Samuelson CBE  
This new book on Shepperton Studios lifts the lid on a traditional British independent studio operating before CGI, Video Assist and other modern film making technology. The author worked in management at the studio (1960-65). In 1972, the author returned to the studio to run the successful public campaign to prevent the studio being demolished by City 'asset strippers' of the day.

Signed copies at £9.50 (inc. p&p) and unsigned copies at £8.50 (inc. p&p) are available from: Derek

Threadgall, 10, Robjohns Road, Chelmsford CM1 3AF

[dthreadgall1165@gmail.com](mailto:dthreadgall1165@gmail.com) 07712378320

- **Cinema Museum update**

The Cinema Museum has battled for a sustainable future in Lambeth (London) for 35 years and were hoping that 2020 would see them safe at last. Unsurprisingly 2020 was a tough year; due to COVID the Museum had to close last March and social distancing and the layout of its Grade 2 listed home,

means they still cannot safely open. Bad as that sounds, it's still not the biggest threat to the Museum's survival. Their landlords (property developers), Anthology (now renamed LifeStory) had agreed to sell the Museum their home for £1 million pounds and develop the larger site they own, around the Museum. However, Anthology/LifeStory have just lost a planning appeal lodged with the Planning Inspectorate and there is real and immediate danger that they will soon try to sell the Museum's home on the open market, to the highest bidder - effectively ensuring that the Museum's temporary closure, due to COVID, becomes a permanent closure, due to the search for financial profit. The Anthology/LifeStory site purchase is funded by the Greater London Assembly (GLA) and the planning authority is Lambeth Council.

The Cinema Museum says "We have never been in such a perilous position; after 14 years of hard work by our volunteers, it seems the end of The Cinema Museum is now likely. We are not giving up - the Trustees are in discussions with Anthology/LifeStory, Lambeth Council and the GLA - we have been patient, honest, fair, flexible and realistic in all our dealings with them, but the reality is that the future of The Cinema Museum rests entirely in their hands".

So, how can you help? Well, it's important that politicians understand just how valuable this museum and its collections and activities are - locally, regionally and nationally - so please sign their online petition to 'Save The Cinema Museum' - and share and tweet the link (that way you will get direct email updates on the Museum's future and will know how to continue to be part of the ever-growing 'Save the Cinema Museum Army')

here is the link <https://tinyurl.com/y9jgubrv>

- **Swale Media Arts Centre.** BEHP Board member, Ken Rowles is heavily involved in the plans for the Swale Media Centre working with local universities that due to the lockdown and

plans set by No.10 that Swale Media Arts Centre will open after 17 May and will be working with various Media and Arts students within the South East. They will be holding another Film Festival in September having held them since 2008. With our new Light 8 screen cinema now completed and opening to the public in the Summer.

This is the venue in Sittingbourne, Kent with plans to have links with other Media outlets in South East ie museum in Deal and Lambeth. The media art centre art studio has been named Ardizzone room after Edward Ardizzone and his family including Nick who is one of the BEHP early audio recordings. Edward was a well know, war artist with his work is in Imperial War Museum. The family have a house in Rodmersham a local village.

They hope to name our library and museum after Albert E Smith who on 4th June 1875 was born in Faversham. In 1890's Albert producer stage magician founded Vitagraph Studios presenting touring magic lantern performances and developing early silent films. In 1925 he sold his company to Warner Bros and in California he went on to direct and produce many films between 1897 and 1948 when he received an Oscar Award. Our museum will also feature the work of Terry Nation (Dr Who writer producer) he lived in the village of Lynsted; the Film Producers Guild (Merton Park) on Tribute to Stirling Moss and Donald Campbell's Muloorina. Other names that have links with Swale ... actors Bernard Lee (M in early 007 Bond movies) lived in Oare near Faversham, Bob Todd (Benny Hill), Eric Barker and wife actress Pearl Hackney (Eric was in many Carry On Films).

Ken intends that the History Project will be an integral part of this centre through activities such as Workshops led by academics on the work of specific Film/TV Directors, producers,

editors, cameramen etc, or specific aspects of film making. This could lead to some useful awareness raising of the History Project among academics and students as well as some financial donations

Mike had offered to talk with attendees and students about the History Project.

- **Living Memories.** <https://livingmemories.imagencloud.com/>

Living Memories together with Abbeyfield Care homes is developing a service to help memory and address isolation of older people. The project uses archive film to help trigger memories and to generate pleasant memories from the past. A lot of the film they are using is from the Green Park Production archive which includes film shot for BP. Brian Norris would like to look at any interviews we might have in the BEHP with people who worked for the BP Film Unit.

Please let Sue or Brian [brian.norris@outlook.com](mailto:brian.norris@outlook.com) know if you worked in the Unit or know of anyone who did.

A question from Sue – “we do have interviews with people who had worked for Shell – would this have included BP?”

Latest news from Brian

- <https://www.positive.news/lifestyle/the-online-archive-that-helps-elderly-people-through-lockdown/> and

<https://therooftop.news/2021/01/27/new-online-film-service-transport-elderly-people-back-to-the-past-with-archive-films-from-1930s-to-1970s/>

- **THE GOLDEN AGE OF BRITISH FILM LABORATORIES**

Andrew Dawson and Sean P Holmes have finished their documentary, The Golden Age of British Film Laboratories and are awaiting the abatement of the global pandemic before setting a launch date. For those impatient to get a sneak

preview ahead of the red-carpet day, have a look at the trailer <https://vimeo.com/485117365/73d68ff12f>

Please leave comments! As many of you will know, we have worked on the project for a number of years. The core of the documentary is the interviews conducted both by us and the History Project. In addition, we've included rare archival footage.

- **A.C.T. Films Ltd**

As far as we know ACT Films was the only film company owned by a trade union. It was established in 1950 & over 36 years produced the following films:

- 1986 [Cue for Change](#)
- 1985 [Nowhere to Hide](#)
- 1982 [Together We Can Stop the Bomb](#)
- 1981 [People's March for Jobs](#)
- 1972 [One in Five](#)
- 1970 [We Are the Engineers](#)
- 1962 [Dilemma](#)
- 1961 [The Kitchen](#) *with Canal Plus*
- 1961 [The Piper's Tune](#)
- 1960 [Dead Lucky](#) *with Canal Plus*
- 1959 [Don't Panic Chaps](#)
- 1958 [The Diplomatic Corpse](#)
- 1958 [The Man Upstairs](#) *with Canal Plus*
- 1957 [Second Fiddle](#)
- 1957 [Suspended Alibi](#)

- 1956 [The Last Man to Hang](#)
- 1955 [Room in the House](#)
- 1955 Stolen Assignment *with Canal Plus*
- 1954 [Dangerous Cargo](#)
- 1954 [Burnt Evidence](#)
- 1954 [Final Appointment](#)
- 1953 [House of Blackmail](#)
- 1953 [The Final Test](#)
- 1953 [Alf's Baby](#)
- 1953 [The Blue Parrot](#)
- 1952 The Final Test (not in BFI Filmography)
- 1952 [Circumstantial Evidence](#)
- 1952 [Private Information](#)
- 1951 [Night Was Our Friend](#)
- 1951 [Green Grow the Rushes](#)

We have decided that it would be useful to know who holds copies of these films and the distribution rights as it is likely that many of the History Project interviewees worked on these films. We are talking with Roy Lockett about his involvement in the early days. David Sharp knows about the holdings in the BFI, Canal Plus who hold a few of the films, and Talking Pictures who are broadcasting some of the films. Tracey Hunt has confirmed there is a file on ACT Films in BECTU Head Office.

**ACTION: If you have any information about ACT Films, please send it to Sue.**

**GOSTA GREEN – BBC BIRMINGHAM.**<sup>1</sup> When BBC Birmingham outgrew its first base on Broad Street, television production moved to the old Delicia Cinema on Gosta Green. So In 1959 the BBC acquired the Victorian era ex-boxing booth/cinema/theatre at Gosta Green and this was completely internally altered to become a fully equipped TV Studio and TV film unit with canteens, offices, green room and editing suite. Network television was based at [Gosta Green](#) just north of the city centre. Regional television and some radio productions were in Broad Street. Other radio studios were located at Broadcasting House in Carpenter Road, Edgbaston, and at the Walker Hall in Ampton Road, Edgbaston. The Carpenter Road site also housed the administrative offices.

Sue is hoping that academics Lez Cooke and Vanessa Jackson will be able to help to gather recollections of those who had worked at, or knew BBC Gosta Green