

Issue 3: Spring 2020

Dear All,

I hope that you, your family and friends are safe and well during this difficult time. I'm writing this message from my kitchen table on a sunny Easter Sunday morning. As most of you will know we took the decision to cancel our regular monthly History Project meeting at BECTU Headquarters. We felt the safety of our members at

This is the third issue of the British Entertainment History Project newsletter. The website is one of our proudest assets. Through the website many people from some 90 countries have found their way to our unique collection of nearly 800 interviews our industry colleagues working in film, television, theatre and radio.

Chair, Mike Dick, has made his presence felt on behalf of the BEHP in colleges and universities, drawing interest in the BEHP especially from their media departments. Digital technology can open the Project in ways that were never possible before. To achieve this we need to digitise and transcribe our interviews.

Our ability to produce accurate transcripts is improving thanks to Speechmatics voice recognition software. Our website is constantly being up dated with more interviews coming online all the time. Our partnership with the University of Sussex's "Connected Histories Of The BBC" continues to develop. You can find out more details on their website at <https://connectedhistoriesofthebbc.org>

We continue to have a close relationship with BECTU and we're grateful for their commitment and ongoing support to our project.

Editor: Derek Threadgall
dthreadgall1165@gmail.com

Contact the BEHP secretary: Sue Malden
sue.malden@btinternet.com



Roy Fowler (Left) the founder of the History Project in conversation in 2017 with Mike Dick (Right) the current Chair

that point in early March was of paramount importance and subsequent events have supported that decision. Since then we have been staying at home and reorganising our lives. This enforced break has given some of our Board members the opportunity to devote some more time to the work of the History Project.

This includes producing this Spring edition of the Newsletter and I'm grateful to the editorial team led by Derek Threadgall who have put it together. I'm also grateful for the work that John Harwood has been putting in over the past few years helping to digitize upload our archive to our website. We been joined by one of our members - Alec Hall- Shaw who has offered to help with this mammoth task- we're close to 800 interviews in our collection.

I'm busy catching up with digitising the backlog of History Project interview tapes which has been building up over the past few weeks on my desk. I've just finished working on one of the major interviews in our collection. It's the one with the renowned BBC documentary film director Philip Donnellan which was recorded in June 1991. The interview is one of the largest in our archive and consists of 21 sides of tape and has a duration of 15 hours. You can listen to the interview and find some useful links to more information about Philip and his achievements on our website at:

<https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/philip-donnellan>

We have been given the go ahead to upload the interview and transcript to our website by Philippa Donnellan who is Philip's daughter. We hope to be able to organise a celebration of his work at the Cinema Museum when the current difficulties are over. It will be quite a celebration!

Take care.
Best wishes,
Mike Dick



PUBLIC STATEMENT 17 FEBRUARY 2020: STILL TIME TO DO THE RIGHT THING

Dates of meetings

History Project meetings usually take place at BECTU Head Office, 373-377 Clapham Road, London SW9 9BT.

Meetings usually start at 2.00pm on the second Wednesday of every month.

All members and supporters are welcome to attend. Please contact the Secretary, Sue Malden (admin@historyproject.org.uk) if you would like to come along And give a brief outline of your online skills and experience and let us know how you would like to be involved.

Meetings are temporarily suspended due to Coronavirus

The BEHP has always appreciated the support we have received from colleagues at the Cinema Museum, so we are eager to help them by promoting their current appeal for survival.

The Cinema Museum (TCM) has battled for a sustainable future in Lambeth for 35 years. It has spent 22 years on short/one yr leases at The Master's House (on the wider Woodlands site).

TCM covers all its own core costs via earned income and public donations. We open to the public 40-50 hrs a week for: tours/screenings/public events/meetings/study sessions/projects/wellbeing initiatives. Annually we draw in 20,000+ visitors; have 60+volunteer opportunities; donate free tickets to the value of £5,000; give 1,000 hours of free/subsidised space to local schools, charities, community groups and Lambeth and Southwark Councils and 1,000+ hours of volunteer's time.

For over a decade our plan has been to secure ownership, so we can raise the funds for urgent repairs to the Master's House, rescue the Male Receiving Wards & Lodge and cover over/bring into use the walled yard at the Museum's rear. Our plan evolved over the years, with help from local people and stakeholders, and was shared in our 2018 'Our Future' booklet. We plan to continue sharing our resources and assets with the community but ownership will also provide the basis for a sustainable business plan to ensure TCM's financial future and create 25+ local jobs.

Short leases make us vulnerable; we are financially stable, but we can't plan ahead and we rely on the grace of our landlords and the planning authorities for our short-term survival and long-term future. This precarious position, along with a lease that requires us not to make formal objections to any Woodlands planning applications, means that to date we have remained neutral on the matter of the developer's planning application. However, despite two years of assurances from various players involved in this development scheme, TCM is at serious and increased risk - and our local community's lives remain blighted by uncertainty and anxiety. We love our Museum and we love our community so despite having just weeks remaining on our lease we feel its time to speak – we all need a fair and timely outcome that works for everyone and ends uncertainty.

To find out more about the Museum's background and current situation go to <https://tinyurl.com/vleoay9to>

Kennington will be changed by our landlords (Lifestory) and the planning powers that shape our built environment (Lambeth Council; The Mayor of London and the GLA). We will write to them all asking that they bring their expertise and superior power to design a solution that respects the future of our home and those of our friends and neighbours. In the meantime TCM remains open to approaches from/discussions with anyone who can help us all reach a fair and timely resolution.

The Museum's background and current situation can be found on :

<https://tinyurl.com/vleoay9to> . To add your signature to the 50,000 plus signatures already decorating the Cinema Museum's petition supporting their Public Statement go to: <https://tinyurl.com/vleoay9to>

The British Entertainment History Project's group of volunteers have been working over the past few months before the current lockdown, filming several new interviews and digitising our old interviews which date as far back as 1987

The Board was elected at the AGM in May, and meets monthly. Members have a range of skills and experience and varied reasons for getting involved with the Project.

FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

The BEHP Newsletter will be sent out twice yearly. If you have suggestions for future articles, please contact the Secretary.

Registered address:
British Entertainment
History Project,
BECTU Head Office,
373-377 Clapham
Road, London
SW9 9BT.

Company No:

10490000

www.historyproject.org.uk

Recent interviews include:

Peter Ferrari, Grader at Technicolour/Rank

Gavrick Losey, producer (743)

Mike Bradsell, editor (745)

Peter Kerridge, Director of Capital Radio

Twenty Interviews acquired in partnership with the team at Scottish TV Staff recordings

Recently digitised interviews include:

Constance Cummings, (413), born in Seattle and made her stage debut at the age of 16. She graduated to Hollywood but came to England after marrying (1933) British playwright Benn W. Levy and continued her career both in films and on stage.

Among many notable film performances were those in *Busman's Honeymoon* (1940) and *Blithe Spirit* (1945).

Her theatrical work ranged from *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* (1938) to a 1971 revival of Eugene O'Neil's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, opposite Laurence Olivier. Her most notable performance was on Broadway as a stroke victim in *Wings* (1979), for which, at age 68, she won a Tony Award for best actress.

She was made a CBE in 1974. AUDIO

Lusia Krakowska (427) born in 1924 in Danzig. She and her Jewish family fled from the Nazis in 1938. Lusia and her sister Jankay escaped to Warsaw in September, while their parents had managed to leave for England before the outbreak of war. Now they seemed trapped in Warsaw. Later however, their parents paid someone to smuggle the two sisters out of Poland. Travelling through Austria and Hungary, they were reunited with their parents in England in the summer of 1940. Lusia went on to join the Polish Film Unit at Denham Studios. She became a documentary film editor. In 1953 she worked with director on Anthony Simmon's the Venice film festival grand prix winning documentary "Summer By The Sea" which captured working-class Londoners' ritual of taking the train to Southend for a cheap and cheerful summer's day out. AUDIO

Arthur Evans (156) a movie stills photographer from 1935 to c 1970, with experience at Denham, Pinewood, MGM etc., and worked on many big films including *The Drum*, *The Four Feathers*, *Bridge Over the River Kwai*. He created some memorable poster shots including David Bradley in Ken Loach's "Kes" and David Lemmings and the model Verushka in "Blow-up". AUDIO

Ray Herbert (450) a television engineer. He worked at Baird Television Limited, joining the company after it had moved to the Crystal Palace in South London and suffered in the disastrous fire that destroyed the building in 1936.

While Ray was not directly

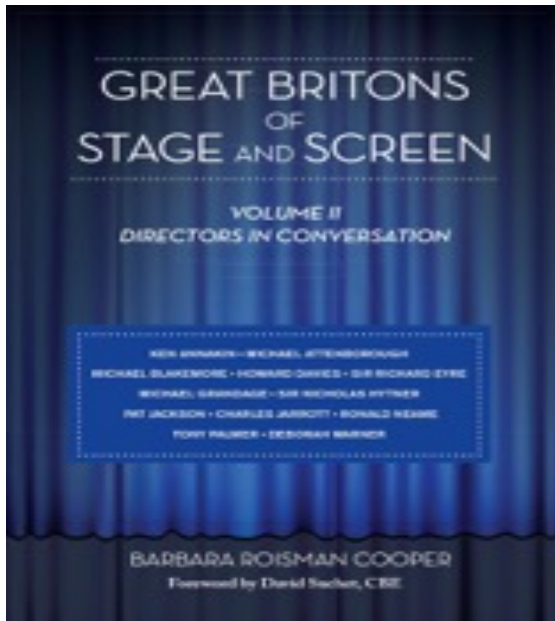
involved in Baird's 30-line experiments in the late 1920s and early 30s, nor in the development that proceeded on 240-line transmissions for use by the BBC Television Service in 1936

(alongside the EMI-Marconi system that succeeded it early the following year), he helped to develop the Intermediate Film technique for additional applications, including installing a system in a French military aircraft for reconnaissance, and the transmitters and other equipment used by Baird for his large-screen, colour, high-resolution and stereoscopic television experiments. Like many television engineers, he worked extensively on radar development during the War.

During Ray's years of active retirement he became a leading historian of the life and work of John Logie Baird. He was uniquely qualified for this through his early experience with Baird Television Ltd. and his network of contacts with former Baird employees. AUDIO

Peter Davis (571) film producer and director he became deeply involved in the anti-apartheid movement and filmed important documentaries in South Africa. He founded Villon Films in 1970. Davis has written, produced, and directed more than 70 documentaries.

His work has been shown on major television networks including CBC, CTV, BBC, CBS, NBC, Swedish Television, German Television, and NHK Japan. VIDEO



The British Entertainment History Project (www.historyproject.org.uk) is pleased to have provided resource material for Barbara Roisman Cooper's newly published book, *Great Britons of Stage and Screen, Volume II, Directors in Conversation*, her fourth book on British film and theatre.

Film directors Pat Jackson and Ronald Neame from the BEHP collection, are key interviews in the new publication, and Roisman Cooper also consulted a number of other BEHP interviews, including Ken Adam, Norman Spencer, Peter Newbrook, Bryan Langley, Kevin Brownlow, Christopher Challis, Anne V. Coates, Guido Coen, Phyllis Dalton, Clive Donner, Gerry Fisher, Freddie Francis, Oswald Morris, Muriel Pavlow, Sydney Samuelson, Wolfgang Suschitsky, Wendy Toye, and Cornel Lucas.

In recognition of the assistance provided to the author in the preparation of her book, the publisher, BearManorMedia, is offering a 50 percent discount (plus shipping) to members of BEHP who order the book through the BearManorMedia.com website, using the order code **BMw15bkst**. *Great Britons of Stage and Screen: Volume II, Directors in Conversation* is available in both hardcover (£29.30) and softcover (£21.63) editions. Place code in coupon box at cart checkout online. Contact: Penink1.com

Great Britons features personal interviews with some of the leading film and stage directors of the last seventy-five years. The directors Roisman Cooper

interviewed during more than twenty visits to the UK, include: Ken Annakin, Michael Attenborough, Michael Blakemore, Howard Davies, Sir Richard Eyre, Michael Grandage, Sir Nicholas Hytner, Pat Jackson, Charles Jarrott, Ronald Neame, Tony Palmer, and Deborah Warner. Renowned actor David Suchet wrote the Foreword. The in-depth conversations with these leading directors are preceded by a short introduction and followed by the director's significant credits. A comprehensive Index is included in the publication.

Designed as a resource for those studying or interested in the worlds of theatre and film generally—and the art and craft of directing, specifically—*Great Britons of Stage and Screen, Volume II* is also for those wishing to understand the multiple talents necessary to be a successful director.

Sir Christopher Frayling, former Rector of the Royal College of Art and Chair of Arts Council England, said of the book, "Barbara Roisman Cooper has had in-depth conversations with an extraordinary range of distinguished British film and theatre directors. The result is this remarkable collection, which is not only a welcome source book, it is also a terrific read." Roisman Cooper has more than fifty credits in various periodicals, including: *The Baker Street Journal*, *Biblio*, and *British Heritage*. Her three previous books are: *Straight from the Horse's Mouth*, the autobiography of Ronald Neame (Rowman & Littlefield), which she wrote with him; *Anna Lee: A Life on General Hospital and in Film* (McFarland & Co.), the actress' autobiography, which Roisman Cooper wrote with her; and *Great Britons of Stage & Screen: In Conversation*, a collection of 22 interviews with British actors (Rowman & Littlefield), including those with Dame Eileen Atkins, Stephen Fry, Jeremy Irons, Sir Derek Jacobi, Dame Angela Lansbury, Sir John Mills, and Jean Simmons, among others..

For further information about Roisman Cooper and her publications, contact: PenInc1@aol.com; telephone: 001-818-789-4764.



The BEHP (British Entertainment History Project) is really pleased with the most successful partnership with Powerhouse Films, powerhousefilms.co.uk, that has developed over the past year.

We are digitizing and making available a number of our interviews to accompany Powerhouse Film's release of a range of British films, for example the Chris Challis interview to accompany *Dandy in Aspic*; Anthony Simmons for *Black Joy*, and Brian Forbes with the wonderfully funny *The Wrong Box*.

Interviews with such luminaries of the British film industry as Val Guest, Charles Bennett, Freddie Francis, Walter Lassally, Charles Crichton, Douglas Slocombe, Jimmy Sangster and Lindsey Anderson have also been aired by Powerhouse as part of our partnership.

The trend continues - already this year we have supplied our interviews with Freddie Young, Sidney Gilliat, Jeremy Summers, Don Sharp, Ernest Steward and Ron Goodwin.

Powerhouse Films pay a regular monthly amount to BEHP which is a great financial help to keep this volunteer-run collection afloat and able to continue our work preserving, digitizing and transcribing all these amazing and historically important recollections of past-masters from the film industry.

Powerhouse Films' **INDICATOR** series offers an extensive collection of classic and criminally overlooked films mastered from the finest available materials before being expertly encoded for optimum results on Blu-ray - from Limited Edition box sets and single-title releases to standard edition reissues of Limited Edition titles that have sold out (including *10 Rillington Place*, *The Collector* and its Ray Harryhausen box sets, such as *The Sinbad Trilogy*.)

They also contain lovingly assembled extra features, include new and improved English subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, and come packaged in full-front cases which contain exclusive booklets featuring newly commissioned essays and contemporary materials.