

THE BRITISH ENTERTAINMENT HISTORY PROJECT

Bulletin No 12 February 2022

Website www.historyproject.org.uk

Dear all,

Good news. The board has finally been able to hold our first face-to-face meeting in two years. We met at New Prospect House in Waterloo. We hope it will bode well for getting us altogether with you in the near future – please watch this space.

As we wrote last time, the most important issue facing us is the marking of the BBC Centenary celebrations in 2022.

To prepare for this momentous milestone in the history of radio and television, we have searched through our archive to find all the interviews with the men and women who have worked at the BBC over the past 100 years. Our list issued in the last Bulletin gave you some idea of both the number - now well over 200 and the range of the interviewees is wide. Every craft is there.

We're hoping to shoot several interviews over the next year with key people who have worked for the BBC. For example Nick Gilbey has just completed our latest interview with Will Wyatt, former BBC Director of Television. We are delighted that Will has agreed to become our next History Project honorary member, joining Sir Sydney Samuelson.

We're also planning with the help of a colleague who suggested we interview Philip Hinchcliff who produced the Doctor Who series in one of its most popular eras from 1974 to 1977 to research our coverage of those who have worked on Dr Who as part of our celebration of the BBC centenary.

Following our appeal to all of you to help us in this ambitious BBC centenary project, we have had many suggestions for the top 10 names that in your opinion are important figures in the BBC's history. Here they are

5 Dallas Bower – being proof-read. Such a significant person in the history of the BBC!

142 Anthony de Lotbiniere

144 Kenneth Griffith (with MD being transcribed by Otter)

145 Sydney Newman (with MD being transcribed by Otter)

146 John Read

147 Tony Bridgewater (with MD being transcribed by Otter)

158 Royston Morley

162 Leslie T Jackson

164 Stephen Hearst

239 Shaun Sutton

247 Geoff Baines

260 Leonard Miall (with MD being transcribed by Otter)

276 Sydney Lotterby

289 John Elliot

314 Alan Prior

330 Charles Wheeler

336 John Ammonds (with MD being transcribed by Otter)

We want to put this list on the home page of the History Project with direct links through to the interviews, transcripts and biographies.

We need to ensure that all these interviews are digitised and transcribed so that they will be easily discovered by those interested in the BBC history over the last 100 years. Mike has been busy digitising and uploading key BBC related interviews from this list– Tony De Lotbiniere, Philip Gilbert, Shaun Sutton, Dallas Bower, Tony Bridgewater and David Croft.

Interview 599 is with Muriel Pavlow, one of the earliest actresses to work at Alexandra Palace in 1937.

Intv 144 is with Kenneth Griffith who took part in an early BBC production at Alexandra Palace when he was 17/18 in 1937. Alec and Linda have transcribed the first two sides of this important interview.

We are extremely grateful to Simon Vaughan of the Alexandra Palace Society for supply the names of all those who worked in Ally Pally in the early years - we will then compare this list with our interviews to build up a detail record of work in the original home of BBC television.

So, again we appeal for volunteers to proof-read these interviews as they are put through the automatic speech-to-text system - Otter.

Furthermore, we are seeking ways to “curate” our collection by researching BBC personalities, events or productions. So, Mike has finished transferring and uploading the David Croft (an important BBC one) interview to the web site. The interview was recorded on HDCam tapes which we are arranging to be converted for upload to our website. Now a volunteer can begin researching David Croft to find how many interviews we have related to his work, and we can then promote this value of the collection.

Sue has worked with some experts in Dr Who output and is collating all the interviews we have with people who have worked on this iconic series over the years . We already have a volunteer proof-reading the director, Waris Hussein’s interview and an offer to interview Philip Hinchcliff, producer of some of the best. The output could be an article for publication or lead to a video production All this intensive research into the archive is highlighting many concerns about the database and its search capability which we must address with IT support.

Of course there is the BBC/Sussex University project ,recently launched that the BEHP has contributed to. The BBC have requested our interview with Hazel Adair. For the next stage of their work.

On other matters, Mike has written an article for the Veteran magazine on the life and work of Dallas Bower. His interview is one of the most important and unique in our collection. It was recorded in June and November 1987 and features a key pioneer in the development of both film and television in this country. From the late 1920s to the early 1960s Dallas crossed and re-crossed from film to television, to radio and back again. He participated both in the birth of the talkies, and the birth of BBC Television. In 1929 he was sound recordist on Alfred Hitchcock's "Blackmail" Britain's first talking picture. In 1936.

During the television trials at Alexandra Palace Dallas was responsible for directing the opening day broadcast on the 2nd November 1936 .He went on produce and direct many ground breaking live plays, ballets and operas and the first BBC television demonstration film in 1937.

You can find the interview with this remarkable man on our website at:

<https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/dallas-bower>

Another BEHP interview featured on the latest Powerhouse release "Girl Stroke Boy" (1971) which includes our interview with the film's composer John Scott.

The team working on a recording with Peter Williams had been very well organised by Martin Smith with support from Ken Rowles at the Swale Media Centre.

Nick Gilbey has written an article on editing for the Camera Guild magazine, based on interviews in the BEHP archive Sue has written an article, based on interviews in the BEHP archive with people worked on it on the film "Let My people Go", a shocking and brave film about the Sharpsville massacres in South Africa in 1960.

We are very appreciative of the contribution from our volunteer camera operators. But we do need to make sure that they are all given clear details on how to record and deliver to us. Mike and Nick will trial this with a forthcoming interview with Paul Collard.

Similarly, our voluntary digitisers have been so productive that virtually every interview has been digitised and if cleared uploaded to the website, so now they are turning their hand to speech to text automatic conversion. But the transcripts still need to be proof-read!! **So here we need more volunteers!!**

Finally, we want to promote the value of the British Entertainment History Project collection of interviews with people who have worked in film, Television, Radio and Theatre to all of those interested in learning about the BBC history in its centenary year.

Many thanks.

Sue and Mike.