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BRITISH ENTERTAINMENT HISTORY PROJECT

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Dear all

Top news! We are pleased to announce that Sir Sydney Samuelson had accepted honorary membership of the BEHP.

Update from the chair

Despite suffering the effects of Covid, Mike has produced this update. Our History Project members have been utilising their free time this summer to catch up with digitising and transcribing the remaining interviews in our archive of 800 interviews. We've been going through our collection and pinpointing the gaps where an interview appears to have gone missing since the project started 34 years ago. Thanks to our longstanding relationship with the British Film Institute, we have been able to discover some mislaid recordings in their vaults at Berkhamsted. Our thanks go to the BFI staff for providing us with these valuable copies of our original interviews. The recordings are now restored to our collection and have been uploaded to our website where they can be enjoyed by people from all over the world. These formerly believed missing tapes include several important interviews.

Betsy Blair was an American actress of film and stage, long based in London. She pursued a career in entertainment from the age of eight, and as a child worked as an amateur dancer, performed on radio, and a model, before joining the chorus of Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe in 1940. There she met Gene Kelly; they were married the following year when she was age 17 and divorced sixteen years later in 1957.

After working in the theatre, Betsy began her film career playing supporting roles in films such as *A Double Life* (1947) and *Another Part of the Forest* (1948). Her interest in Marxism led to an investigation by the House Un-American Activities Committee. She was blacklisted for some time but resumed

her career with a critically acclaimed performance in *Marty* (1955) for which she was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. She married film director Karel Reisz in 1963. (See BEHP interview number 193) You can hear her interview in 2000 with Stanley Foreman and Manny Yospa at : <https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/betsy-blair>

Rose Tobias Shaw was a Polish theatre, film, and television casting director. She moved to the U.S. with her family in 1933. Her film credits include *Madhouse* (1974), *The Seven - Per - Cent Solution* (1976), *Equus* (1977), *The Wild Geese* (1978), Otto Preminger's last film, *The Human Factor* (1979), *Escape To Victory* (1981) , *Lassiter* (1984), *The Jewel In The Nile* (1985) and Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation Of Christ* (1988) . Her television credits include the British television shows *Danger Man* (1967-1968), *The Prisoner* (1964- 1967) and *The Man In A Suitcase* (1967 -1968) Shaw was affectionately known as the 'Queen of the Mini-series' for her casting of multi-episodic projects in the including *The Bourne Identity* (1988) *Till We Meet Again* (1989) and *Around the World in 80 Days* (1989) She was credited with discovering acting talents including George C Scott, Elliot Gould, Kim Novak, and Pierce Brosnan. Her interview with Roy Fowler and Linda Wood is at <https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/rose-tobias-shaw>

Jan Ziliacus was born in New York on the 18th September 1912. She was the daughter of Louise Trenton, an opera singer and the pioneer American silent film director Laurence Trimble. Her father made 100 silent films between 1908 and 1926. He was the first director to introduce trained animals into the silent movies. His break occurred when the family collie became 'Jean the Vitagraph Dog'. He decided that his little daughter Jan was an obvious choice as a long-shot stand-in being set upon by a pack of ravenous wolves. "I grew up with sixty wolves and if anybody had to be chased by wolves it would be me in the heroine's costume."

Film stars were frequent visitors to the Trimble ranch in Hollywood. As a child Jan sat on Charlie Chaplin's knee and she first met Rudolf Valentino when he came to her father's ranch to learn horse-riding for "The Sheik" (1921).

"Rudolph Valentino was my very special friend and was so nice to me. I was only a child, I mean young, nine, ten. I got to know him, riding with him when he was learning. He used to take me to concerts. I had a lovely time"

In 1989, Jan was the subject of a Radio 4 programme, "The Cashier and the Reluctant Lions", produced by Piers Plowright, about her days in Hollywood. In her last months she was collaborating with American authors on a book about Hollywood's early days. Jan died on 2nd May 1999. Her interview again with

Stanley Forman and Manny Yospa is here

<https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/ian-zilliacus>

Peter Newbrook was an English cinematographer, director, producer and writer.

He began his career as a 14-year-old messenger boy at Warner Brothers' Teddington Studio. By 1937, he had worked his way up to focus puller. After World War II Peter was the focus puller on *It Always Rains on Sunday* (1947) directed by Robert Hamer and photographed by Douglas Slocombe. In 1948 he went freelance and worked with the directors Charles Crichton, on *Against the Wind* (1948) and Charles Frend, on *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948) photographed by Osmond Borrardille, Jack Cardiff and Geoff Unsworth. He went to work at Alexander Korda's Shepperton Studios. His first film was *The Sound Barrier* (1952) with David Lean photographed by Jack Hildyard, followed by *Hobson's Choice* (1954), *Summertime* (1954) and *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957). He worked as second unit photographer with Freddie Young on the classic long shot of Omar Sharif riding a camel as he emerges from a mirage at the beginning of David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962). Later in the 60s his work as cinematographer included *Gonks Go Beat* (1964), *The Sandwich Man* (1966), *The Smashing Bird I Used To Know* (1969).

In the 1970s due to the decline of the British film industry he turned to television. He worked as a freelance lighting director on shows such as *Coronation Street*, *Emmerdale Farm* and the popular drama series *Tales of the Unexpected*.

You can find Peter's 1995 interview with Alan Lawson and Roy Fowler at: <https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/peter-newbrook>

Future interviews

Sue was pleased to report that Heather Stewart had responded positively to the invitation to be interviewed for the History Project - we would get back to Heather when it would be possible to set the interview up safely.

Jez Stewart of the BFI is organising an interview with animator Barriw Merritt
Martin Smith will be interviewing producer Peter Williams in the near future

BFI

Ben Roberts CEO of BFI had responded promptly to our letter to him about BFI projects use of the BEHP collection. and has proposed a zoom meeting with Head Curator, Robin Baker - a most positive initiative

„Missing“ interviews

Here is the list of **Interviews that have not been uploaded**

356 Charles Hamill

462 Ian Rakoff.

541 David Croft

546 Simon Relph

612 Nigel Ostrer

If anyone has any information about these interviews please let Sue know

sue.malden@btinternet.com

83 John P Hamilton on HD1 – need to check if complete interview has been uploaded

Good news! 239 Shaun Sutton has been uploaded.

Transcribing

As far as transcripts are concerned Ros Cranston is working on Margaret Thomson and Emma Feather Dallas Bower – Two very important characters in the project and television history.

Television centenary

In order to enable more use to be made of our interviews in the coming year celebrating the centenary of the BBC Sue has produced a list of all interviews known to have a BBC connection with a note as to whether and how they had been transcribed. If you want access to this list do ask Sue.

And finally...

The book that Andrew Martin of the BBC has been working on for so long has been published by Kaleidoscope Publishing, who can be contacted by post at 42 Victoriana Way, Birmingham B20 2SZ, and it can also be obtained through www.tvbrain.info. People can also email info@tvbrain.info. It's also coming to Amazon soon I'm told...

And don't forget Derek Threadgall's recent publication 'Shepperton Studios - A Personal View' Sir Sydney Samuelson CBE honoured Derek with his brilliant foreword to the book..

Copies available directly from Derek - dthreadgall1165@gmail.com

Mike Dick & Sue Malden