

PROSPERO

The newspaper for BBC pensioners – with highlights from Ariel

A future plan

Delivering Quality First – Page 2



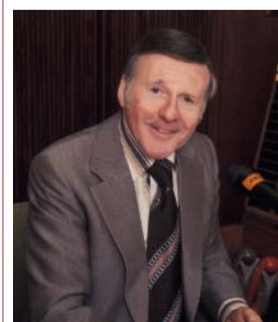
Photo courtesy of Jeff Overs

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Delivering Quality First

Mark Thompson sets out 'a plan for living within our means' as he reveals job losses, output changes, relocations, structured re-investment in a digital public space, and new content and programmes on BBC services.

Fewer staff, a flatter structure, more jobs shifting to Salford and more output from outside London, these are the conclusions of the Delivering Quality First process.

In a ringmain broadcast (the BBC's internal broadcast network), Mark Thompson and BBC Trust chairman Lord Patten announced the headline decisions from months of debate, discussion and number crunching.

Delivering the broad outlines the DG said: 'By 2016 the BBC will be significantly smaller than it is today; employing fewer people, occupying less space, and spending less money.'

Explaining that he could not go in to all the changes in depth, he said staff will be briefed by their managers as to how they are affected. And he explained that the focus of the changes was to concentrate spending on peak programming.

'This is a plan for living within our means,' Thompson said. 'It's also about making sure we don't accidentally cancel the future.'

The cutbacks

The following list is not comprehensive, but highlights the key points.

- Two thousand jobs will go.
- One thousand more posts will go to Salford.
- The Sports rights budget will be cut by 15%.
- BBC One's spend on films and bought-in programmes will reduce.

- All new daytime programming will be on BBC One.
- BBC Two's daytime output will focus on repeats and international current affairs.
- BBC Three will move to Salford.
- The BBC HD channel will close – BBC Two will be solely HD.
- Local radio afternoon output will be shared across regions.
- Some news bureaux will close.
- White City will be emptied out and sold.
- The BBC's orchestras and performing groups will be independently assessed, with the possibility of reductions.
- Asian Network's budget will be cut by 34% and the service will be 're-focused.'
- Comedy on Radio 2 and 5 Live will be reduced, there will be fewer lunchtime concerts on Radio 3.
- Factual programming for TV and Radio 4 will move from Birmingham to Bristol and Cardiff.
- More content will be shared and more programming from the Nations will be broadcast on network.
- The News Channel will focus on breaking news, with more repeated material during off-peak hours.
- BBC Four will be more 'complementary' to BBC Two, and BBC Three will be more of a test bed for BBC One. In both cases

commissioning and scheduling will be closely aligned.

- Job grading, redundancy terms and unpredictability allowances will be 'modernised' and reformed. A consultation process on those proposals begins immediately.
- Production will be streamlined into a single UK production economy.
- Radio and TV commissioning for Science and Music will be brought together.

Reinvestment

At the start of the DQF process, Thompson said last year's licence fee settlement necessitated savings of 16%, but because the BBC needed to invest in output, he set the organisation as a whole, a 20% savings target. He explained how the surplus savings will be re-invested.

The key priorities are to unite channels, networks and online content on 'four screens' – TV, tablets, mobiles and computers.

Money will be pumped into:

- Drama and comedy for BBC One, factual genres on BBC Two and BBC Four.
- Children's programming, which will also gradually wholly move onto CBBC and CBeebies.
- Newsgathering in 'core' areas around the world, as well as local and regional coverage of the UK.
- An increased investigations fund for Panorama.

- More landmark output for Radio 4 (which sees its overall budget hardly changed).
- More money for the Proms.
- The further rollout of HD and DAB.

Union response

The National Union of Journalists issued a swift response to the announcement, calling for the licence fee negotiations to be re-opened and 'a proper public debate about BBC funding'.

In a statement the NUJ said: 'The BBC will not be the same organisation if these cuts go ahead. You cannot reduce budgets by 20% and pretend that everything is the same. It won't be... The quality of journalism and programming will inevitably be diluted.'

Gerry Morrissey, general secretary of media and entertainment union Bectu, said the proposals should have been called 'destroying quality first'.

'They are destroying jobs, and destroying the BBC,' he said.



Print edition of Ariel to close

The *Ariel* newspaper is to close, 75 years after its first edition, in a DQF restructuring that will see the Communications division shed 30 posts.

Ariel Online, which was revamped in February and now uses the BBC News content management system, will continue to carry BBC staff news and views.

Four posts will be lost from the existing bi-media *Ariel* team along with comms jobs across the division, as it seeks to make 25% savings.

Communications colleagues in the nations are not affected by the news.

Mark Thompson acknowledged *Ariel*'s contribution: '*Ariel* newspaper has been an important part of the BBC's history for 75 years and like many of you I will be sad the paper version has to close as part of DQF savings.'

'However I am pleased that it will live on online, reflecting the lives, issues and challenges that we face every day.'

Candida Watson, *Ariel* editor for the last two years, admitted that compared with the pan-BBC savings through DQF, the end of the newspaper 'pales into insignificance'.

'That doesn't make it any less of a shock to the long-serving staff who produce *Ariel*, to our regular correspondents who make the letters page a thing of occasional joy and frequent conversation, or to those of you who like to pick up the paper and read it quietly in a break, or take it to read on the journey home,' she said.

'As Editor of *Ariel* for just over two years I am sad to be presiding over the end of the most recognised form of a BBC institution, and sad that the post I hold is also closing.'

'But as the BBC prunes back frontline staff and output, it is hard to argue that it should devote licence fee income to publishing an internal newspaper, particularly when it has an intranet on which *Ariel* has an established

presence, and when the news in the newspaper has already been reported on that site.'

She adds: 'I know staff will be sad to see it go, and that the online version is different to the print issue; I know some people will see it as a none-too-subtle way of diminishing internal criticism of BBC management.'

'It is true that the current *Ariel* online site has no comment facility on stories, but that is something we are working to address. We still have a letters 'page' and readers can still comment on any issue that they want to raise, and in the online only *Ariel* you won't have to wait a week to see your letter printed.'

The *Ariel* website would contain more audio and video in the future and would welcome readers' suggestions on content, Watson said, promising: '*Ariel* will still bring you news about the BBC, interesting features and opinion, and will still endeavour to be the BBC's concerned and impartial friend.'

The final printed *Ariel* will hit the presses at the end of December. You can view the online *Ariel* at www.bbc.co.uk/ariel

Et tu, Prospero?

News of *Ariel*'s demise may have our readers asking: 'What about *Prospero*?' We asked Jan Killick, Head of Pensions, for a response.

Jan says: 'There are no plans to stop *Prospero*, although as explained in this year's summary report, we are conscious of the need to ensure the Scheme's services deliver value, particularly at a time when the BBC is going through significant change and the Scheme is in deficit.'

'Over the last year, we have made changes to the way we produce, design, print and distribute *Prospero*. We believe these have helped to improve *Prospero* as well as reduce costs. Looking ahead, we will examine whether any further changes are necessary and will keep pensioners informed.'

Remember that you can also download a copy of *Prospero* by visiting bbc.co.uk/my pension



PROSPERO

Prospero is provided free of charge to retired BBC employees, or to their spouses and dependants. Prospero provides a source of news on former colleagues, developments at the BBC and pension issues, plus classified adverts.

To advertise in *Prospero*, please see page 12. To view *Ariel* online, please visit www.bbc.co.uk/ariel.

Editorial contributions: Write to: Prospero, BBC Pension and Benefits Centre, Broadcasting House, Cardiff CF5 2YQ. Email: prospero@bbc.co.uk

Please make sure that any digital pictures you send are scanned at 300 dpi.

The next issue of *Prospero* will appear in December.



Hundreds of News jobs to go

Up to 800 jobs will be lost in BBC News over the next five years as the division cuts costs and re-shapes itself, Helen Boaden has announced. The director of News explained the level of post closures was high 'because 70% of our costs are people.'

News spending will be focused on peak output, while audiences will hear from a broader range of correspondents as network news draws on staff from World Service and the nations and regions. Senior manager numbers will reduce by at least 25%.

Boaden said: 'This change will be difficult but we owe it to our audiences to manage it properly...we need to harness all our resources as 'one BBC News'.'

Explaining that there would be 'some change' everywhere in the News group over the next five years, she laid out the details.

The News Channel

The News Channel will focus on breaking news, with back half hours and off-peak output featuring repeats or nations and regions output.

Correspondents covering a breaking news story will file a few sentences of text for all platforms first, then appear live on either the News Channel or World News, depending on whether the story is domestic or international. Their first answer should be structured in such a way as to be usable on other output. The newsdesk will have an established order of priority for 2-ways.

Spend on presenters will be reduced, with some double headed shifts reducing to one person.

Dedicated business slots on the Channel will be dropped.

5 Live

News funding for the network will be cut by 20%, with the station concentrating on breaking news. News production staffing and the number and spread of dedicated 5 Live reporters will be reduced.

5 Live *Investigates*, in its present form, will be cut.

Politics

The money spent on covering party political conferences will be halved, with programme presentation from such events reduced and broadcast from the BBC stand.

The Daily Politics will be relaunched, broadcasting every day except Saturday, and for an hour on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Presented by Andrew Neil the programme will retain its national and regional opt outs and also feature a new strand, *Politics Europe*.

Radio 4's *Beyond Westminster* and *Taking a Stand*

will be cut.

£2m will be spent on completing the roll out of local radio political correspondents.

Local radio and TV

Some local radio stations will share off-peak programming.

A weekday evening programme will run across ALL local radio stations, with opts for news and sport.

Spending on local sports rights will be reduced.

Budgets for the regional TV documentary strand *Inside Out* will be reduced, with some programmes shared across regions at times.

Other changes

Nine hours of ad hoc Current Affairs output on BBC Two will go, and the number of dedicated reporters for Radio 4 sequences and *Newsnight* will be reduced to around 20.

The news teams of Radio 1 and sister station 1Xtra will merge.

Red Button multi-screen will close and BBC School Report will move to BBC Learning, with BBC News providing active support.

The World Service long form Current Affairs team will move into the Radio Current Affairs department.

Newsgathering

Newsgathering will integrate World, English Regions and network. Its priorities will be to deliver to the Six o'clock news on BBC One, the 6.30 regional programmes, the Ten, Today and the 1800 on Radio 4, Newshour on World Service and the news website.

'Other programmes and services shouldn't assume any kind of priority,' Boaden said.

There will be a single, multilingual, multiplatform product from World Newsgathering, which will see local and bilingual staff recruited. This will mean the closure of 17 sponsored reporter posts, a reduction in the number of posts with overseas conditions of service and a change in the staffing of a number of existing foreign bureaux. The Colombo bureau in Sri Lanka will close.

In the UK there will be closer collaboration between the centre and the regions on sharing resources, crews and reporters. There will be a single News truck fleet and joint planning and deployment.

News material will be shared across all outlets, regardless of origin.

On this point Boaden said: 'In all of this we must not lose our editorial focus. Even as we use and re-use material we will expect editors to be creative about giving their audiences something special.'

Re-investment

Boaden was able to announce some re-investment. Aside from the money for local radio political correspondents already mentioned, £3m will be spent on output for new devices, and £0.5m is set aside for investigative journalism. Most of that will go to *Panorama*, but Boaden said she hoped to fund one-off pieces of work as well.

As she concluded she reminded her audience: 'Even after these cuts we will still be one of the biggest news organisations in the world. We will still be unique in having a portfolio of services that delivers news locally, nationally and internationally on TV, radio and online.'

Patel sets out risks of DQF plans

The BBC's plans to save money and implement its DQF proposals could be scuppered by factors outside its control, Zarin Patel has warned.

In a ringmain session, the group finance director pointed out that various 'risks' were attached to the radical strategy for the future set out earlier by Mark Thompson.

'Inflation could blow us off course and we could have a bad economy,' she said.

'We're very lucky that licence fee evasion hasn't gone up in the recession. We're lucky that there seems to be a desire to stay at home and cleave to what you know, and that we've kept our [licence fee] income. But that could change. The recession could still hit us.'

Patel also expressed her fears over the pensions situation, explaining that the next evaluation of the BBC Pension Scheme was due in April 2013. 'The thought of another deficit [if it came to that] horrifies and terrifies me,' she said.

Things were tricky, she added, but: 'We've thought hard about the risks and we have reserves.'

Flexible working

She expected that within Finance & Business division, between 50 and 75 posts would be lost as a result of DQF, although this was 'a high level estimate'.

There would be changes in the way work was carried out, she explained, with greater automation and routine processes 'performed only once'.

Finance & Business staff would need new financial, commercial and operational skills and a willingness to work flexibly, she added.

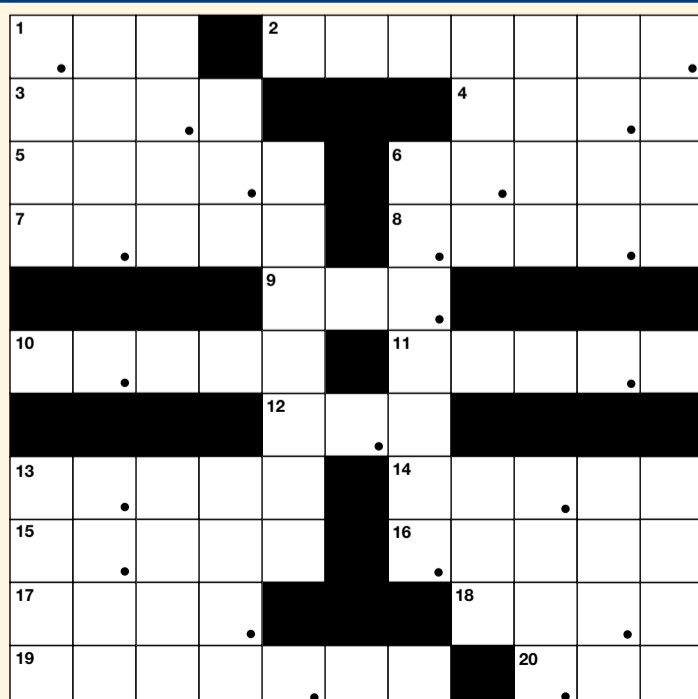
In addition, they should be prepared for a move out of the W12 Media Village. 'Our priority locations are likely to be Cardiff [already the home of some finance staff], Salford, the three nations and London,' said Patel.

She recognised that people would be concerned about career development, particularly as the financial services industry was largely concentrated in the south-east, but pointed out that the exit from White City would not be fully realised for a decade.



CROSPERO 161

devised and compiled by Jim Palm



Complete the square by using the clues; these apply only to words running across. Then take these words in numerical order and extract the letters indicated by a dot. If your answers are correct, these letters will spell out a film and a BBC series.

Please send your answers in an envelope marked Crospero to The Editor, Prospero, BBC Pension and Benefits Centre, Broadcasting House, Cardiff CF5 2YQ by Friday, 11 November 2011.

CLUES

1. Reddish colour (3);
2. Australian shrub (7);
3. Very old (4);
4. Infuriate (4);
5. Harmonises (5);
6. Tropical plant (5);
7. Representative (5);
8. Beneath (5);
9. Be in debt (3);
10. Car (5);
11. Outspoken (5);
12. Big cooker (3);
13. Obscure (5);
14. Byways (5);
15. Repent (5);
16. Quadruped (5);
17. Ploy (4);
18. Draw or paint (4);
19. Controversy (7);
20. Horse (3).

The solutions and winning entry for Crospero 160 will be published together with those for Crospero 161 (this issue) in the next edition of *Prospero*.

CONTACTS

Visiting Scheme

If you would like a visit or information on how to become a volunteer visitor, please ring 0845 712 5529. You will be charged only as a local call.

Queries

For benefit and pension payroll queries, call the Service Line on 029 2032 2811.

Prospero

To add or delete a name from the distribution list, ring the Service Line (number above). *Prospero* is provided free of charge to retired BBC employees. On request, we will also send it to spouses or dependants who want to keep in touch with the BBC. *Prospero* is also available on audio disc for those with sight impairment.

To register, please ring the Service Line on 029 2032 2811.

BBC Club

The BBC Club in London has a retired category membership costing £30 a year for members and £39 a year for family membership. Pre-1997 life members are not affected. Regional clubs may have different arrangements.

Please call BBC Club London administration office on 020 8752 6666 or email member.relations@bbcclub.co.uk.

Benevolent Fund

This is funded by voluntary contributions from the BBC and its purpose is to protect the welfare of staff, pensioners and their families. Grants are made at the discretion of the Trustees. They may provide assistance in cases of unforeseen financial hardship, for which help from other sources is not available. Telephone: 029 2032 3772.

Prospero Society

Prospero Society is the only section of the BBC Club run by and for retired BBC staff and their spouses. Its aim is to enable BBC pensioners to meet on a social basis for theatre visits, luncheons, coach outings etc. *Prospero* is supported by BBC Club funds so as to make events affordable.

The only conditions (apart from paying a small annual subscription) are that you must be a BBC pensioner and a member of the BBC Club. For an application form write to: Graham Snaith, 67 Newberries Avenue, Radlett, Herts WD7 7EL.

Telephone: 01923 855177

Mobile: 07736 169612

Email: graham.snaith@yahoo.co.uk

BBC products

BBC retired staff are entitled to a 30% discount off the RRP of most products in the BBC TV Centre shop. There is a postage charge of £2.95 per order (not per item). Pensioners must quote their BBC pension number when ordering. Contact: BBC Shop, Audience Foyer, Television Centre, Wood Lane, London W12 7RJ. Telephone: 020 8225 8230 Email: tvc.shop@bbc.co.uk

Other ways to order (quoting your pension number when ordering): By phone: 08700 777 001 8.30am-6pm weekdays. By post: BBC Shop, PO Box 308, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8LW. Email: bbcshop@bbc.co.uk.

Or visit BBC Shops in Eastbourne, Brighton, Leicester, Birmingham or Liverpool. UK postage £2.45 for telephone, post and email orders. Overseas: £4.50 for one item and £2 for each additional product for telephone, post and email orders.

BBC PA

For details of how to join the Pensioners' Association, see panel on page 5.

What's in a name?

'Young at Heart' – the name that retired members have been given by the BBC Club. (October, *Prospero*). It nearly made me vomit! How utterly patronising can you get?

Will the Commissionaires be patting us on the head murmuring 'there, there'? What are the Club going to name current employee members? Answers on a postcard please.

Bill Chesneau

SORRY, BUT I'M NOT PREPARED to be referred to by the patronising euphemism 'Young at Heart', rather than the factual term 'retired', so I will now be leaving the BBC Club. Clearly it is no place for grumpy old men such as myself.

Tony Woolf

Prospero sent Mr Chesneau and Mr Woolf's letters above to BBC Club, who replied: **BBC Club apologises for any offence caused by the name. We have been using the name for the last 18 months and have had no other negative feedback. In no way have we ever meant to sound patronising but had wanted to shrug off the 'retired label' for something slightly more up beat. If there is a resounding desire to change the name, please send your comments and name suggestions to bbc.club@bbc.co.uk and we will be happy to look into other ideas.**

The folly of The Hour

Thanks Albert (Barber) for bringing up the lack of authenticity of *The Hour*.

Comparing it to *Mad Men* was a mistake; *Mad Men* is high colour with brilliant reconstructions, *The Hour* was muted and looked as if penny pinched.

I am sure that all efforts were made to be accurate but obviously not enough. A little research would have done wonders!

I worked at Lime Grove from May 1960 and I remember it well. Nothing in *The Hour* reminded me of Lime Grove, even faintly like Lime Grove, inside or out!

On the exterior the only thing that was accurate was the brickwork, the main entrance in the wrong place and Smith's Yard a total fabrication. As for the hospitality rooms, corridors and canteen, well, no resemblance to the real thing at all – and where did they think the staircase was? Total realism stopped when it came to the studios and gallery and a finger countdown by a producer!

At this point I suspended belief and said welcome to the world of make-believe.

I would have been more than happy to accept *The Hour* as being in a fictional studio and even allowed for some of the very strange idiosyncrasies that took place, like the appearance of a showgirl as a token 'hey people – it's showbiz'.

However, with its connections with the Murdoch Empire through the Shine Group, well, I mean, ask yourself, a pedigree of integrity?

As for being a faithful and accurate picture of Lime Grove, no way! Alas, this does reflect on those in the BBC who allowed this folly to slip through and be marketed as accurate. Sometimes the marketing hype can do more damage than good.

Points for drama content – 9

Points for accurate reconstruction – 0

Chris Cherry

Three-in-one

Donald MacLean, former head of Popular Music at the BBC, responded to three of the letters published in the October issue of *Prospero*:

Ladies first...

During my training as a TV producer, my chum was fellow-student Ned Sherrin.

One day he and I sat with another budding

producer, Alasdair Milne, in the office of the legendary Grace Wyndham Goldie. The three of us listened attentively to this brilliant lady's thoughts as she talked, gazing at the ceiling, her feet inelegantly parked on her desk. Alasdair was a dour Scot – so I kept my gaze firmly on him, not daring to catch the eye of the mischievous Ned, who I knew would inevitably voice some clever double-entendre about the traditional bloomers that were clearly in view.

Ned later created the ground-breaking satirical series *That Was The Week That Was*, introduced by newcomer David Frost. After producing some *Dixon of Dock Green* episodes and the initial *Come Dancing* programmes, I returned to Aeolian Hall to head the new popular music production group through 'the Beatles era'. Alasdair created the *Tonight* series and the wondrous *Yes, Minister* programmes. In the eighties he became the BBC's Director General through a challenging period before being ousted by political pressure.

JFK

If you might be thinking of compiling a piece from folk recalling where they heard of JFK's assassination, here's my contribution: I was producing an episode of *Dixon of Dock Green*; after a disastrous rehearsal (scenery 'flats' stacked in the wrong order were the least of it), I was leaving Riverside studio when my car radio brought the news – the dense traffic in Hammersmith slowed to a halt.

The Hour

When TVC was being built, we producers had offices in caravans among the contractors' lorries – two of us per vehicle. I shared one with Russell Turner. The 'period' atmosphere of *The Hour* sets fitted quite well with my memories of Lime Grove.

Sort out sound with a panel of retired dubbing mixers

Having read the article on page 8/9 in the October issue of *Prospero* entitled Points of Interest, my attention was drawn particularly to the final paragraphs regarding the contentious issue of sound levels with the heading 'Sounds like...'

It seems that an Executive Producer, BBC Vision (!) had reported back regarding the results of surveys on sound carried out with, allegedly, '90% of respondents having no problem'. With the increasing numbers of older people in the population nowadays (most of whom suffer from at least some degree of degradation in aural perception), I find this very hard to believe.

Sound annoyance perceived by older people listening to broadcast programmes can generally be broken down as follows:

- Music or effects (particularly the former) being held too high in the mix, sometimes obliterating dialogue intelligibility.
- Used correctly, music is powerful stuff, setting moods and enhancing the pictures, but inappropriate music, sometimes used in annoying short bursts, is very distracting and often an irrelevance.
- Why use music bursts at all? Kick the music out unless it is really adding something vital to the production.

What are the causes of the copious complaints of poor sound balance?

- Current producers seem to think that every

available space must be filled with (often inappropriate) music. It doesn't. Let your programme 'breathe' and it will benefit.

- Poor, or no, proper training in the correct balancing of the components (especially older people in the population nowadays (most of whom suffer from at least some degree of degradation in aural perception), I find this very hard to believe).
- Test your final mixed sound tracks by playing them to non-programme makers before TX.

The BBC should consider having a panel of older (i.e. over 60 years of age) retired professional dubbing mixers on which to call to judge the aural intelligibility and balance of prepared programmes prior to transmission. After all, their hearing will have suffered a degree of age-related impairment and yet they will have the previous experience to analyse and advise the producer of appropriate action.

The article states: 'One of the actions arising from the project has been to make executive producers responsible for the audio mix. They have to sign off the audio, and if the programme generates complaints they [the producers] have to pay for the remix out of their own budgets.'

This, in my view, is an absolutely ridiculous management 'get out', for at least two reasons:

- 1 How is it that executive producers will have acquired the expertise over a relatively short period of working life to be able to make them 'responsible for the audio mix – a skill which has historically been acquired over many years of mixing a wide variety of programmes in various formats that a career dubbing mixer has had?
- 2 Surely, as now, complaints about sound mixes will ensue after the programme has transmitted. It therefore seems a pointless exercise to 'fine' an executive producer by enforcing a remix when the only benefit will be for the repeat transmission!

Although there can be no better way than having your final sound track mixed in the correct acoustic environment of a dubbing theatre, complete with an experienced dubbing mixer, it has to be said that a very good, well balanced soundtrack can be produced in an edit suite – as long as the editor can exclude extraneous machine noise and has the expertise to manipulate sound in a professional manner. I know, as these days, at 68, I produce an interesting and intelligible soundtrack to accompany my documentary DVDs daily in my own edit suite here in South Dorset – and I have had zero complaints from the many hundreds of customers purchasing my DVDs over the last decade!

John Hale

Boosey recollections...



I am not at all sure that the tape recorder in the photo on page 5 of the October issue is an EMI L2. I owned one of these machines in the 1960s and mine certainly didn't have a winding handle on the front; rewinding the tape was done via a geared handle on the top which was linked to the feed spool. The machine shown also appears to have a small loudspeaker at one end, when the only

monitoring possible on the L2 was by means of headphones.

I think the machine shown is of a type marketed in the 1950s by Boosey & Hawkes; this was spring-driven and required regular winding – hence the handle on the front. The spools shown are of an early 3M pattern. I still have one or two of them!

Yes – the L2 did weigh a ton (about 22lb actually) but it was capable of making superb recordings; the later Uher weighed-in at 9lb. As Allan Rogers says, 15 minutes (full-track) was the maximum you could record on the L2 on 600ft of tape but this reduced to seven-and-a-half minutes with the 15-inches-per-second models. As well as the eight HP2 torch batteries for the valve filaments and motor, you also needed a pair of 67.5v batteries for the HT supply. The L2 series was later replaced by a transistorised recorder which simplified the battery requirements but by now Uhers and Hagras were taking over.

Ah – you needed to be tough in those days...

Jim Palm

Corrections and recollections – Holme Moss



Holme Moss transmitter

On receipt of *Prospero*, today, my wife read me the letters. The inaccurate information, by Mr Tordoff, about Holme Moss prompted this response. Some of the letter from Mr Tordoff is not correct. I spent the last 31 years of my career as a BBC engineer at Holme Moss, and Peter Sherdley was a colleague if mine and we were never involved with any opt-out switching.

In the early years this switching was the responsibility of Post Office engineers based at Burley Road in Leeds. I understand the switching was moved to BBC premises in Woodhouse Lane. During the Post Office involvement, it became a joking matter when the switching errors became frequent. When Holme Moss was built, at 720ft above sea level, the television aerials were over 2,000ft above sea level and the coverage covered from Hull in the East to Liverpool and North Wales.

Holme Moss became a target because the Welsh viewers thought programmes should be in the Welsh language. One night the Welsh Nationalists smashed windows to gain entry and some equipment was broken. The culprit was arrested and prosecuted.

Apart from not ever transmitting colour TV, Holme Moss has other interesting events to remember, being, as far as I am aware, the only transmitting station to have an open day for the public, in the 60s. This event attracted over 1,000 visitors.

In 1952 the station and staff featured on a live TV programme. The show was part of a series called *Other Peoples Jobs* and titled *Top O't Moss*. The presenter was Richard Dimpleby. Richard interviewed staff members, including the E.i.C Charles Buckle, A.E.i.C. Donald Hinchliffe and S.M.E. Lionel (Fred) Allen. I was interviewed on duty at the control desk. The station electrician Will Harper and rigger Frank Dobson were also featured. The Manchester Outside Broadcasting unit used three cameras and the show producer was Derek Burrell Davis. Sadly this was before video recordings were available and there are no recordings of this programme. These facts will probably be of limited interests but, at least, are true, and we transmitter engineers must fly the flags as part of the TV chain between the studios and the public.

Peter S Pearson

It weren't our fault, Guv!

Once again I find myself metaphorically putting pen to paper in defence of the honour and integrity of Holme Moss. Having brushed aside Graham Hare's accusations of interference, I now find Courtenay Tordoff blaming us for a mis-switching operation causing incorrect material to be radiated.

Not so! At no time did we at Holme Moss have any responsibility for any network switching. We could only broadcast whatever was sent to us on the circuit from Leeds.

I would suggest he looks outside the BBC for the culprit in this case. My suspicions would lie with the Post Office Network Switching Centre.

I repeat, it weren't our fault, Guv!
Peter Sherdley

And examining the peel effect...

I must respond to the patronising letter from Rosalind Dallas concerning the 'Howl Round Effect' of the *Dr Who* titles, in which she seems to assume that all the correspondents in these pages must be 'VT engineers who took credit for other's work' (were any of them VT engineers?)

I am sure that most people who have worked in television for many years will understand that a graphics designer will have been charged with and credited for the provision of a title sequence for the original *Dr Who* but all the correspondence in these pages has been about the creation of the electronic effect that was used and which was a central feature of the titles. To create this required a detailed understanding of the engineering and operation of an image orthicon camera, not something one would expect to find in abundance in the graphics department.

In spite of my 'fading memory', an age-related problem I no doubt share with Rosalind Dallas, I distinctly recall being in studio G Lime Grove in the early 1960s as a cameraman when Norman Taylor came in during, I think, a lunch break and 'borrowed' a pedestal-mounted camera and a studio monitor. Much as described by Peter Jarrett, the camera was set up looking at the monitor and the camera output fed to that monitor. Then the electronic beam was reduced until the picture became very 'laggy', the effect of which was to make the image follow camera movement very lazily. What I can add is that once the camera was set up and locked off, Norman flicked a cigarette lighter in front of the monitor. Once the flame had appeared and was removed, the now-familiar '*Dr Who* howl round effect' was created and was self sustaining. I don't know if this was telerecorded at that time but it certainly would have been recorded on film for the titles to be later assembled.

Incidentally, there seems to be a lot of confusion about the so-called peel effect. This was an extremely undesirable feature of the early cameras in studio H and possibly D when

a very bright object or reflection would cause the image to become unstable and the white area would expand rapidly across the screen to leave a totally white raster, very much like film burning in the gate of a projector. Once started, this was swift and unstoppable and very embarrassing because the camera, one of only three in the studio, was then lost to the usually live production for a few minutes while it was re-stabilised. I don't recall it ever being used as an effect, even for the Dalek zapping sequences. On the *Dr Who* productions I worked on, this was simply achieved by a rapid crossfade to a negative feed from the same camera. I think that the later CPS Emitrons, the ones that vaguely resembled first world war tanks, were more stable and did not suffer from the peeling problem.

Alan Horne

Responding to Rosalind...

Well, I thought that '*Dr Who* Titles' was exhausted but Rosalind Dallas's letter requires an answer.

One (or more) of the sets of *Dr Who* titles may well have been the work of Bernard Lodge (a very well respected graphic designer – even by 'VT engineers!') but I would be intrigued to know how anyone got a film camera to 'peel off'.

The crack about VT engineers taking the credit for others work (examples please) is both revealing and erroneous. Videotape was merely a recording medium for the unedited studio output.

As such we took a great interest in this new venture and had been able to monitor the experiments going on at Lime Grove Studios.

However, the opening titles background effect was produced by 'studio engineers' and recorded by 'film recording engineers'. There is nothing mythical about those.

I have no doubt that Doug Adamson (BSC) did splendid work on some *Dr Who* titles but are we talking about the titles for the very first series?

Geoff Higgs

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Manchester Studios: Nan MacDonal, Muriel Levy, Violet Carson and Wilfred Pickles



Jimmy Young

Musical memories

Trevor Hill (Originator, 'An Oral History, BBC North – 1922 to 1986' for the BBC's Recorded Archive), writes with some memories and recollections of music at the BBC.

Back in 1936, Henry Reed was a pianist at Manchester's renowned Midland Hotel. It was he who suggested to then BBC producer, David Porter, that a talented young person formerly used as a pianist to silent films should come to the BBC Piccadilly studios. She also possessed a talent as a singer (having taken that up when the 'Talkies' began in 1929).

So it was that 'The Riddle Song' was to be performed by a lady called Violet Carson. Henry Reed not only formed an orchestra, he also got two already established stars of radio, Muriel Levy and Doris Gambell, to join Vi and to form 'The Three Semis'. As from January 1938, North Region was to commence a 'Nursery Sing Song' for Children's Hour Still in the post-war period, a postman named Denis Decibel now delivered the children's' postcard requests whilst the same chap sang duets with Ms Carson. She'd ask: 'Soldier, soldier, won't you marry me, With your musket, fife and drum?' To which I'd reply: 'Ah no, sweet maid, I cannot marry thee For I've GOT a wife of my own!' (Vi knew that, as she'd not only attended my wedding to Margaret in 1952 – but skilfully knitted a set of table mats as a present!)

Dancing round the Baltic

I mention Ms Potter since, as Corporal Potter, she had met me ('Sergeant' Hill) when joining the British Forces Network in Hamburg 1947, when we began writing plays and serials together. Major Barney Colehan had sent me to announce a concert in Germany given by the then Thirty Corps Stage Band, formed and conducted by a Sergeant in the Pioneer Corps called Ray Martin. He and I got on rather well together, and with the aid of the strings of the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra, we soon went *Dancing Round The Baltic*. Then, with the encouragement of both Barney

(whose popular Hamburg series, *A Melody A Memory*, I had always announced), and now with the co-operation of Manchester's Light Entertainment producer – the splendid Ronnie Taylor – Ray was to have his own Manchester orchestra which I was to announce for the BBC Light Programme. The programme was also to include a vocalist by the name of Jimmy Young.

Ray was a perfectionist. In order to put

“I in turn would encourage a future knight of the realm with what had been wartime Victory signs.”

echo on just the vocalist's microphone he had me announce between the inner and outer doors of Studio 1, Piccadilly. Sharing a BBC 'Ribbon' mic, our vocalist would perform on the one side, myself on the other. He'd sing songs like: 'Just to possess you, my heart's desire, just to caress you, my heart's desire..!' whilst I in turn would encourage a future knight of the realm with what had been wartime Victory signs. (It was probably in order that I learn to behave myself that Ray and his then wife Muriel invited me to become godfather to their son!)

Post-war music

After demob I'd written the theme music to accompany Desmond Hawkins's production of my adaptation of *The Odstock Curse* in May 1949 for BBC West. It was described by Cliff Michelmore as 'a pastiche to end all pastiches!' despite the fact that I had not only given him his first broadcast from a BBC radio studio but also his first appearance from the BBC's television studios at Lime Grove!

Thanks to Cliff and other officers, especially those in BFN Music Department, I was encouraged to use German musicians. It was the leader of the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra who, at the end of a recording we did from the Musikhalle, beckoned to Sergeant Martin as we finished a live performance: 'Er, diss 'Night und Die' is so very goot, Sergeant. You get it published, no?' Both Ray and I explained that if we did as he suggested, Cole Porter would not be very pleased!

Cameo cartoons

What both Ray Martin and Henry Reed were to do for me in later times – and now for the BBC – was to compose a wide range

having been given BBC leave of absence to make a film for Royal Doulton, having made one for the BBC on Norwegian pottery, Henry's score was to be paid for by this commercial firm – as were members of our Northern Orchestra.

We had truly brilliant Studio Managers, not only for Balance and Control but, for my cartoons, in making all the required 'Spot Fx'. David Fleming-Williams, Chris Webb and Charles Rogers, to name a few, were outstanding. On the occasion we were making the very first BBC programme ever to be recorded in Binaural sound for Radio 3 – my having listened to Dr James Crabb's experimental work at Manchester University – I heard David explain to those we were recording on existing 1930s trains, buses, etc. 'We are part of the TTT Team'.

'Sounds of the City'

We recorded the sounds of genuine trams and buses after artist Harold Riley had sent me a talk on his childhood in Salford in the 1930s and which he entitled, 'Sounds of the City'. After recording trams, buses, and passing fire engines, Angus McKenzie then wrote in the Technical Press of 'the remarkable sense of realism; the impression that sounds were projected in front, at the sides and, in many cases, behind me, in a quite extraordinary way which I found enthralling!'

What became 'enthralling' to me was that this BBC North team, together with the creative talents of Ray Martin and Henry Reed with BBC North's in-house Orchestras, were now to be heard throughout the English-speaking world. What a 'family' team we were in those BBC days – and just how fortunate we were to be employed BY the BBC!

of musical scores to accompany a series of 'Cameo Cartoons', including *Adventures in Wonderland* (commissioned especially for the 1951 Festival of Britain) and later, *Beauty and The Beast* for television. Such music, thanks to the BBC's Transcription Service, was often to be recorded at their splendid London premises, or for the BBC Northern Orchestra, in Manchester. The Northern Variety Orchestra (NVO) was now to be heard by NBC and CBC listeners in America, Canada and in many other English-speaking countries – which meant additional repeat fees! I was even more delighted when,

Northern Variety Orchestra CD

Thanks and congratulations are due to Ian Reed and others, for ensuring a variety of the NVO's orchestral talents will now live on in CD form, with kind permission of the Musicians Union. As well as employing his creative and technical skills over countless hours, Ian has made sure that due credit is given to the BBC staff in the North of England for the creation of both the NVO in 1951 and then the Northern Dance Orchestra in 1956.

If readers would like any information regarding when Ian Reed's CD will be available, please email him at ndoinfo@tiscali.co.uk

Will the real Grace Wyndham Goldie stand up?

It is strange to be history, writes John Grist. People are talking about what you know about, but you don't know them. They were not there. Not only that, they were not born at the time but have the impertinence to make judgements.



Grace Wyndham Goldie

I refer to *The Hour*. The woman on the telephone said it was 'based on' Grace Wyndham Goldie. What a brilliant idea. Might I appear in a crowd scene?

All through the first programme I was waiting for Grace. She should come in small, determined, urgent, with an armful of papers, disturbing to all men present, who would shift uneasily in their seats and wonder what she would say. That was her strength. She might be brilliant, incisive or ridiculous.

Near the end I realised there was no Grace. Just the lovely lissom Bel.

She could not be Grace or even 'based on' Grace, who was as old as the century. Educated abroad, then Cheltenham Ladies' College, a first at Bristol, two years at Somerville College Oxford doing the new PPE. History teacher, married an actor who never quite made it to the top, play reader for the Playhouse Theatre Liverpool, radio and the first television reviewer for the pre-war Listener. Joined BBC radio in 1944, outstanding talks producer, seduced into television in 1948 which she thought a mistake until she grasped the basics of directing cameras in a studio.

She disliked Alexandra Palace intensely; only came into her own when she went to Lime Grove and became Assistant Head of Talks, the most important Assistant Head of anything in the history of the BBC.

Leonard Miall, who was Head of Talks, said that when he accepted her as Assistant Head he did not realise she could never be Assistant Head of anything.

Except for Grace, Lime Grove was totally a man's world in the mid-50s. We had one woman – Cynthia Judah (later Kee) – who was a proper journalist. She had been on a smart magazine and wore a hat to work until Donald Baverstock made a fuss. Katy Dove (later Freeman) was the one woman graduate.

Grace preferred men. Any connection between her and feminism was a laugh. She treated her secretaries with disdain. For her they were there to get her coffee and her cigarettes.

In the department as a whole, the secretaries were numerous and essential; no

gutsy, ambitious, brilliant, argumentative, noisy creative genius could put out a programme by himself. Most of the secretaries were extremely able, and worked long hours. Those who ran the major programmes were called princesses. But it was a long time before their work was acknowledged by the BBC.

Most men were frightened or anyway apprehensive of Grace. To protect himself from being frightened, David Attenborough got an office in the Film Studios in Ealing, way out of shouting distance from Shepherds Bush.

Grace would start the day, before coffee, by eating some self-satisfied, ex-President of the Oxford Union and spitting the bones out.

“She treated her secretaries with disdain. For her they were there to get her coffee and her cigarettes.”

Luckily for some of us, she liked men who had been in the war.

Grace was brilliant at seizing on a programme idea, giving it life, boxing the ears of the man she chose as editor. Her great achievement was fighting for resources, studios, film crews, producers for her editors. Nobody before or since could claim to have taken three great programme ideas and seen them on the screen: *Panorama* and its American copy *60 minutes* are still running today; *Tonight's* unique intelligent daily programming, only to be equalled by its successor *Nationwide*; *Monitor* with Huw Wheldon opened up for television the whole realm of the arts. There were many other formats and ideas – some flourished, others were thrown out with contumely.

She was damning to rosy ideas. 'What am I going to see on the screen?'

In the homes of the elderly around Britain since *The Hour* started, the question has been:

'Would Grace have appointed Bel?' Was she nasty, thick skinned and devious enough? She did, after all, have a double first from Somerville. Could she make Grace laugh? Could she go without sleep? Did she prefer staying in the office to going home? Could that lovely hair be a sign of lack of moral fibre?

I started off with negative views, but Bel did bring off the interview with the Nasser man without shouting. That would be noted at every coffee break in West London. Having it off with the front man, in programme three, was a good way to bolster his screen ego.

The jury is out. I have a suspicion she may rate a BAFTA for her first season.

I took *The Hour* to my heart from the start, when a young man with a lot of hair (I thought he must be Donald Baverstock) gave his mirror a short, brilliant address, explaining that the pretty pretty television news that he directed was worthless and he wanted to do more with television than sunny afternoons at Ascot.

That was exactly what Lime Grove was about. It was obsessive. Whether it was news, current affairs, music, art, science, archaeology or the natural world, television must do something positive.

Most only that, it all had to be of the highest standard. 'Excellence' became as important as 'Reithian'. The audience deserved nothing but the best.

It was the time when the television producers in West London lead the BBC. Lime Grove, with their colleagues in Drama and Light Entertainment up the road in the Television Centre, created public service television at its very best. It was a national achievement of importance. Nowhere was the dodgy word 'profit' ever heard.

Lime Grove attracted an amazing group of talented producers and editors: Micheal Peacock, Donald Baverstock, Alasdair Milne, Huw Wheldon, David Attenborough, Ned Sherrin, Antony Jay, Paul Fox, Derrick Amooore, Tony Smith, Tony Whitby, Humphrey Burton and Stephen Hearst, to name a few.

By the time Grace left the BBC in 1965, practically everything had been invented and developed in factual television, except humiliating nice ordinary people for public display.

I do have one minor complaint about *The Hour*. The gentle, present day set designers could not understand or even imagine that Lime Grove really was a dump. The BBC decided in the early 50s that Lime Grove was unfit for human occupation and must be torn down. You don't spend money on a condemned building, so they looked the other way for at least 20 years.

It was odd. All the great and the good came there to broadcast. They only saw the studio and the reception rooms on the front corridor. In a way we were isolated from the rest of the BBC. Nobody complained. It was a great place to work. Pay was very poor. Well done *The Hour*.

Grace Wyndham Goldie – *First Lady of Television*, by John Grist, published 2006.

BBC

Club



Club News

We have been totally rebranded and redesigned, and we hope you like our new look. We understand there has been some confusion regarding the sending out of membership cards. We apologise for this; if you would like us to send you a card, please contact Sachin (email: sachin.gangwal@bbc.co.uk or tel: 020 875 26549).

Young at Heart lunches

West One has been primed and perked and is now looking posh and ready to extend a very warm welcome to you all. Every Tuesday Young at Heart can enjoy a main, dessert and a cup of tea or coffee for £5. Please call 020 776 50971 to book.

The Club is coming to Salford

With the BBC's migration up north, the Club will be extending its services northwards to ensure that BBC staff continue to reap the benefits of being a Club member. There will be no physical premises but the Club has arranged preferential rates and bespoke offers with a number of local businesses.

We have a Club Ambassador in Salford whose sole purpose is to co-ordinate local events and activities.

You can contact the Club Ambassador by email (bbc.clubsalford@bbc.co.uk) or telephone 079 030 86002. Watch out for our regular roadshows.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Peter Colson, our lucky Club lottery winner, who scooped the £10,000 quarterly jackpot. Peter had been a member of the Club lottery for 17 years and is over the moon about his win. It couldn't have gone to a more deserving person – we hope he enjoys spending it! To sign up to the Club lottery, please email sachin.gangwal@bbc.co.uk.

Christmas is coming...

The Club has a wealth of offers with Westfield (Shepherds Bush) retailers – all you need to do is show your Club card: Bose: 10% Discount on all Multimedia Speakers and Personal Audio Headphones (offer does not apply to QuietComfort Headphones).

Cards Galore: 20% discount.

Foyles: 15% off in store until 24 December.

House of Fraser: 10% discount on most merchandise.

Octopus: 10% discount.

So Chic: 10% discount.

Shirtstream drycleaners: 10% discount on all dry-cleaning, shirt service, laundry, suede & leather and alterations.

Whittard of Chelsea: 10% discount.

Vodafone: 20% off monthly line rental on any contract £40 and above. This is an ongoing offer which continues, month after month on their contract.

Got a question or comment?

Email us at bbc.club@bbc.co.uk or call 020 875 26666.

Recording Lord Louis



Lord Mountbatten

Memories of Lord Mountbatten's connection with BBC Radio Solent 40 years ago, from Solent's first Chief Engineer, Paul Gouldstone.

Lord Mountbatten had much pleasure in opening BBC Radio Solent some 40 years ago. I went over to his family home at Broadlands in Romsey with Dave Challis (Solent's programme organiser) to record several versions of his speech for us to edit together on our opening night.

I met Lord Louis many times in his capacious drawing room overlooking the River Test, as he would always support any request from our staff to provide a witty and thoughtful few words for us to use prior to broadcasts from, say, the Isle of Wight, where he had direct family connections.

Our pre-recording conversations, sitting with him on one of the very large settees in Broadlands, were, to say the least, full of technical humour and searching questions on any subject that was in the news at the time.

When I recorded Lord Louis, he would always sit at a small table in the drawing room, with a microphone on a table-stand. After a short pause to collect his thoughts (as he did not use any notes), he would turn to me and say 'Are you ready?' and off we went... He would often give me three 'tries' so that we could edit them together to get the best composition. All he asked was that I send him a cassette copy of the finished

recording to file away in his own archives.

Lord Louis praised our pre-opening broadcasts covering the national power cuts in 1970, as he reminded our new audience in his opening speech, especially as he was directly concerned with Broadlands losing power on selected days and hours. I remember discussing with him ways and means of providing electricity back-up facilities for selected areas of his home.

Radio Solent covered a very large area of Southern England, including Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and acres of West Sussex and Dorset, all from one VHF/FM Transmitter on 96.1.

We made arrangements to provide automatic power back-up facilities for both the studios in South Western House, Southampton, and the Post Office under-sea cables to the IOW (using two separate routes via Portsmouth and Lepe beach). We arranged with the local Post Office for the two separate routings as it was not unknown for large fully laden oil-tankers to drag their anchors when waiting to enter the Fawley Oil Refinery and slice-off one of our main transmitter links. In later years, we used PO radio links for the transmitter with one sea-link as a back-up and we added extra transmitters for both VHF and Medium wave.

Sadly, I was involved in providing broadcast coverage of Lord Louis's funeral at Romsey Abbey for both Solent and Network Radio. The Vicar of Romsey Abbey, Rev David Shearlock, was very helpful. Although the BBC was not allowed to broadcast the 'private' committal service in the Abbey itself, he did allow me to eavesdrop through one of the Abbey windows to get some 'Abbey effects'. He also gave me the use of his Vicarage bathroom overlooking the Abbey West Door as a commentary point for both Solent and Network, by positioning each commentator seated on the edge of his bath and toilet... Unfortunately, I did not have my camera to hand on that day but we covered the large waiting crowd with suitable f/x microphones in the trees.

Later, I was given an exclusive tour of

equipment is even more versatile.

Solent also covered the late Lord Mountbatten's Remembrance Concert with the Band of the Royal Marines and narration by Solent's Lawrie Bloomfield live in Southampton Guildhall on 2 December 1979. When I arrived at the Guildhall early on the Sunday, I was greeted by the state manager telling me that all the Guildhall's public address system had been electronically wrecked by a boisterous band the previous evening and so no hall equipment was working. We knew that Prince Charles was coming to the evening concert, so I contacted my London OB colleagues and, by luck, the OB storekeeper was actually on duty that Sunday morning and organised a complete set of PA with stands and loudspeakers to be despatched...by train...to Southampton. We

“the OB storekeeper organised a complete set of PA with stands and loudspeakers to be despatched by train to Southampton.”

the Vicar's train-set in the roof space of the Vicarage and was allowed to put my own control over his hobby!

BBC Radio Solent has covered very many local and national events over the years, as we set up studio and OB facilities for Naval Fleet Reviews, coverage of the Falklands Fleet leaving and returning to the UK, including live broadcasts from the QE2, Canberra, Hermes and Invincible en route to Southampton and Portsmouth from mid-channel. For these broadcasts, I was flown out to the ships by helicopter, and I also climbed the Rowridge transmitter mast to set up the necessary aerials some 1,000ft above sea level. These Radio Car aerials are still in use and will soon be re-sited' onto a new mast nearby when new national transmission facilities come into use next year.

Our sports coverage was, and still is, very comprehensive, especially with the use of self-operated OB equipment to cover tennis, football, rugby etc. We made our own version of the BBC COOBE and christened our equipment 'ROOBE' (reporter-operated OB equipment). The 2011 BBC version of this

collected the kit in the afternoon and set up in the hall. That concert was recorded and made into hundreds of double LPs by BBC Transcription Service in aid of charity.

Solent has also been broadcasting many concerts by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, including special live Saturday morning children's programmes with items such as *Peter and the Wolf*, with our own presenters relaying the story. Some of those broadcasts were challenging, such as the time when the orchestra arrived just minutes before transmission, due to 'road hold-ups'; on that occasion my only balance-test was two verses of the National Anthem just minutes before the red light went on!

Lord Mountbatten's 'shadow' has steered us all over the past 40 years, ensuring our broadcasting standards were always up to scratch in all respects... long may that continue. Some of 'our' past and present staff and assistants, helped on with two 'birthday cakes', came together for an anniversary three-hour broadcast compered by Julian Clegg at the beginning of this year and you may recognise some of us in the photograph.



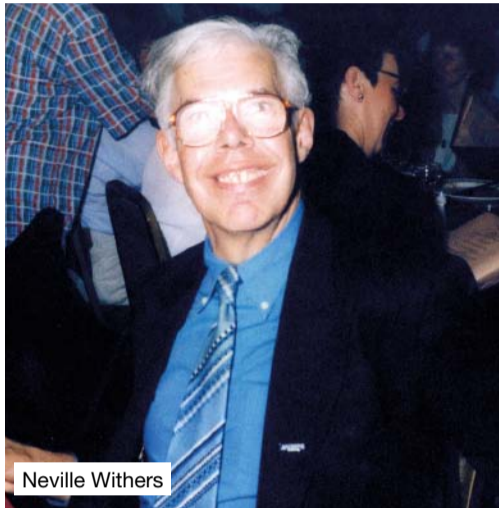
Life's rich pattern: film-making in retirement

It's now 48 years since I joined the Film Department at Ealing – working in the Film Dispatch – and my love of all things film still hasn't waned.

I am a member of two film-making groups, 'Ealing Video and Film Makers' and 'Partners Productions', the latter being my main 'work'. Over the last few years I have been on locations as far apart as Brighton, Beaconsfield, Chalfont St Peter, Hindhead (in Surrey) and a two-day shoot in Llanberris, North Wales – which meant I had to pick our actor 'Ben' up at 05.30 and Karen (continuity and shot logging) at 06.00 with an RV in Betsy Coed at 10.45.

My main responsibility is 'Transport Coordinator', i.e., collecting the actor(s) from their homes or the nearest station and taking them to the location and obviously returning them after filming is finished. During the actual 'shoot' I become a GDB (general dogsbody): 'Neville, can you get my spare headphones from my car?' (this from John, on sound – throwing me the keys)... or 'Neville' (from the director) 'can you turn that Redhead off' – pause – 'on' – pause – 'ok, leave it on thanks', or it could be something mundane like handing round the sandwiches when we have a break.

The longest day I've had (so far) was on 17 March 2001. We were working on a film



Neville Withers

about me – I'm the one who beat you up!

I didn't realise until I got involved in film-making that there are places that specialise in props. For instance, there is a place in Southall where we were able to hire night vision goggles, a tilley lamp, dummy corn sacks, ammo and prop firearms for one of our films, *The Release*.

I discovered this when I needed a revolver for a film called *Partners*. After making various phonecalls, I was pointed in the direction

“The revolver was put in a wool stocking with a Velcro top and we were told not to wave it around in public”

called *Dirty Style Blues* (which incidentally won FIVE awards in an international competition). I was up just after 06.00, and we started filming at the first location just after 09.30, in Ickenham in Middlesex. We wrapped at 20.30 in Dean Street, Soho, having squeezed in eight locations in between. By the time we'd returned to base and had a debrief and I'd returned home, it was gone midnight. And I do this for fun?

Still, as my mum would have said, it all adds up to life's rich pattern.

It's the little things I enjoy, like the time (again, working on *Dirty Style*) we were filming at a flat in Clapham and our leading lady Claire had been doing a scene in which she returns to her flat after having been beaten up. Claire had done her own make-up and she really looked the worse for wear. We finished filming at about 22.00 and Claire was eager to get off. We stopped off up the road, me to take on petrol and Claire to buy something to eat. When I went to pay for the petrol, I noticed Claire had not removed her make-up. Under the lights we had been using, she looked bad; under fluorescent lighting she looked ten times worse. The faces of the men behind the counter had to be seen to be believed. When we got back to the car, I pointed out to her that she still had her make-up on. Claire burst out laughing; when she recovered she said 'What they must have thought of me!' My reply was, 'What

of Bapty, in a huge warehouse in Kensal Green, where the security was tighter than Fort Knox. They had everything from the smallest pistol to AK47 replicas, plus swords, muskets and rifles. Before we entered the warehouse, the director and I had to provide a complete copy of the script, proof of our identities and proof that we were members of a recognised film-making group. We both had our 'IAC' (Institute of Amateur Cinematographers) cards which proved we were genuine film-makers. Once we were inside the warehouse (under CCTV surveillance), the door was locked and bolted. The revolver was put in a wool stocking with a Velcro top and we were told not to wave it around in public, otherwise we would have an ARV (Armed Response Vehicle) turning up.

When I left the BBC in 1992, I wondered how I would spend my time. Apart from the two film groups already mentioned, and membership of various societies, I often get involved with other film-making projects which can involve locations up to 70 miles away.

Ask me if I'd rather stay at home and put my feet up, instead of getting up at some ungodly hour to be on location at 09.00, and the answer would be a resounding NO... which reminds me, I'm filming tomorrow morning RV 08.30.

Neville Withers

A day in the life of Britain

Want to be in a film? Now's your chance. The BBC is joining forces with Hollywood director Ridley Scott's production company to make a film using material shot by members of the public.

Britain in a Day will be part of the BBC's contribution to the Cultural Olympiad accompanying next year's London Olympics. It will provide what the BBC is describing as 'a unique glimpse of contemporary British life.'

On November 12 this year people will be able to film something that encapsulates their own lives and upload the material to a special YouTube channel. The material will then be trawled for images for a feature-length documentary which will be produced by Morgan Matthews and broadcast on BBC Two in 2012.

Ridley Scott said: 'Our aim for this new project is to get everyone behind the lens and give us a window onto one day in Britain.'

Charlotte Moore, BBC commissioning editor for documentaries, will spearhead the project, which she said the BBC was uniquely able to deliver, adding: 'The Cultural Olympiad feels like an ideal opportunity to take a mirror to ourselves and capture something of the kaleidoscope of life that thrives in Britain today.'

Tales of our times at TVC

Have you got a story about TVC? Then the makers of a new documentary would like to hear from you.

Tales of Television Centre (working title), due to be transmitted next spring, first on BBC Four then BBC Two, will chart the history of the building through the anecdotes and memories of stars and staff, past and present.

'Our aim is for the programme to be a nostalgic, amusing, entertaining, occasionally critical, sometimes poignant and thoughtful celebration,' says producer Richard Marson.

Various themes will be explored, he adds, such as the sheer size and geography of the site, what it means to work there, and the big events it has witnessed, from general elections to *Children in Need*.

'We also want to look into some of the urban myths which surround the place – like the famous unused swimming pool in the basement, the real reason the Helios fountain never worked and the room containing a mysterious machine which no-one knows anything about.'

It is not just personal stories that are of interest, but photographs, cine and video footage – 'all of which, if lent, would be carefully looked after and much appreciated'.

If you can help, please contact Jax Rohen on 0208 576 9539 or write to Jax Rohen, *Tales of Television Centre*, Room 3100, BBCTV Centre, London W12 7RJ.



Beware of scams

Police are warning the public to be aware of a particular scam involving landline telephones after a number of incidents were reported.

The scam begins with a call to an individual's home from a person claiming to be a BT employee. The caller then states that there is an outstanding sum to be paid on the telephone bill, which must be paid over the phone immediately, by credit card, otherwise the line will be disconnected and a reconnection fee will be charged together with the arrears at a later date.

If the caller is asked to prove their identity, they will ask the individual to hang up and try calling someone else. On doing

so, the scammer will press their mute button and stay on the line; thus giving the impression that the line is dead, and that no outbound calls can be made. It is this part of the deception which is causing particular concern, as some may indeed be led to believe that the caller is a genuine BT employee who is able to access their telephone line.

It should be noted that this scam is not about obtaining the sum requested in the call. Instead, the credit card details taken by the scammer will be used to make far larger purchases.

Please remember never to give your credit card number, or other such personal details, to unsolicited callers. If you are suspicious about a call, you should contact the Police.

North 3 goes 'Professional'

The privately owned BBC 'heritage' OB scanner CMCR 9, which at various times since 1969 was London Unit 5, the Midland Unit and until retirement in 1982, the first 'North 3', has recently taken part in shooting for a feature film.



The truck was used in filming for *Theatre of Dreams*, a drama about Sir Matt Busby. Shooting took place at a football ground in Salford in the recent very hot weather and fortunately Steve Harris, the owner, was able to deploy some of the original air conditioning system for the first time. At one stage there were about 12 people, a camera and lights all working inside the vehicle.

The only hitch occurred just as the scanner arrived on location on a low-loader, when Steve discovered he had left keys at home! With his usual innovation, he proceeded to 'hot-wire' the starter, and North 3 was able to disembark to start shooting on time. The scanner usually makes its way under its own power, but this was a long way and a very early start.

This was the fifth outing for North 3 this summer. The others were Kelsall Steam Fair, Wilmslow Show, Astle Park Steam Fair and a presentation to the Rolls Royce Enthusiasts Club at Northop. As usual, visitors were really interested to inspect this 1969 vintage technology. Thanks to Steve Harris and retired BBC vision engineer Steve Jones, both of whom have spent many hours at their service benches, much of the old electronics is now operational. That includes the BBC Designs Department vision mixer on which Steve 'cut his teeth' many years ago.

Forthcoming projects include firing up the sound desk and comms equipment. To this end, four heavy duty 12V batteries have been acquired to provide the 48 volts needed. Steve has even mentioned... in hushed tones... the possibility of an external respray next summer!

Theatre of Dreams will be in cinemas next year.

Jerry Clegg

Calling retired VT engineers

I am a member of the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA). I joined IASA in 1985 when I was Manager Audio & Cameras at the BBC Open University Production Centre at Milton Keynes and have been active in the association ever since. In 2005, the members of the IASA Technical Committee collectively wrote a book about how to digitise analogue sound recordings and manage the digital files. A second, and updated, edition of the book, *Guidelines on the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects*, was published in 2009 and can be viewed on the IASA website at <http://www.iasa-web.org/audio-preservation-tc04>.

The purpose of the book was to offer guidance to people in the many institutions around the world that hold collections of audio on cylinders, discs and tape. Many of these institutions have little or no technical support and lack information about how

to preserve the sounds in their care. This advice is needed particularly for quarter inch tape recordings which are increasingly endangered by a combination of tape decay and disappearing machines. The book has been widely accepted as being of value and has been endorsed by UNESCO.

Work has now started on an equivalent publication covering video. The writing team seeks help from people with knowledge of the earlier analogue video formats who are willing to provide information about the 'tips of the trade' – the practical knowledge built up over the years and rarely, if ever, written down. If the project is of interest to any retired VT engineers, can they contact me in the first instance and I will explain a little more of the project and its background. I can be contacted by email at keynes2@ntl.world.com or by telephone at 01827 700 173.

George Boston

Appreciation from retirees



BBC Visitor Anne Bristow wrote in to tell us about Moira Leece and Diane Lowden, the two longest-serving receptionists in the

BBC, who were presented with certificates from the Corporation's retirees in appreciation for their hard work and warm welcomes over the years.

Moira and Diane received their specially created certificates from the present HRLP Jason Horton on 28 September.

They were particularly thrilled to have photos of both South Western House and Broadcasting House, Havelock Road Southampton incorporated in the frame.

Moira and Diane have worked together for 41 years.

Switchboards have become a lot smaller since they joined the Corporation. 'It was

quite an upheaval to change a noisy line in the early days; we had to physically pull the switchboard out of its cabinet so the GPO engineer could get in behind it. Once we even put a mousetrap inside the desk, which was a bit of a shock for the engineer. Now all repairs are done from the exchange.'

Diane and Moira say they love their jobs. 'I like meeting people and enjoy the challenge of finding something out when needed,' remarks Diane. Moira adds that one of the job's best aspects is the thanks they get. 'Visitors say we look after them and sometimes even write to say so.'



Diane (left) and Moira in the old days

Reunions

BBC Scotland Retired Staff Reunion

Once again the Christmas reunion will be held in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Glasgow, commencing 12:00 on Friday 25 November. The cost is £15, payable in advance. Anyone wishing to reunite with 'old chums' should contact Stewart Shearer (stewart.shearer@ntlworld.com; 0141 942 3039; 07860 338 843), or Bryce Lamont (01505 703 092).

London Tel Rec Christmas Lunch

Thursday 1 December will see our 2011 attempt at holding this event at our usual location of the Masonic Hall, Surbiton. Following the deluge of snow in 2010, we suffered a 50% reduction

in attendance, so fingers crossed we are luckier this year. Details will be posted (or emailed) by early November to our known colleagues, but if anyone new would like to come along, the details and contact information will be available on our website www.40sand50sreunion.co.uk

Roger Martin

BBC RELCs

The BBC RELCs are celebrating Christmas this year on Thursday 8 December at the Miramar Hotel overlooking the sea at Bournemouth, starting in the Bars from 10.30am with our grand lunch from 1pm in the restaurant. The 'Hotel-Cook' will parade the usual flaming Christmas Pudding around those of us at the tables when crackers will be pulled... if you

would like to join us please book your seats with Russell Horne on 01590 624389 or russell@the3hornes.com

A reminder that you are eligible to attend the RELC's if you have been in the BBC Broadcasting Chain at some time in your career.

ACED reunion

Members of Structural and Transmitter Building Section of ACED (Architectural and Civil Engineering Department.) got together recently in the Ship Inn in Wardour Street.

Those present were Mike Leach, Eric Finlayson, Ray Ralls and Malcolm Reid. They are all enjoying an active retirement: Mike holidays regularly in France, Eric teaches sailing through the BBC Club, Ray has taken

up sculpture and Malcolm plans to visit Venezuela later in the year.

Any old colleagues wishing to attend next year would be welcome.

Email: Finlayson2@aol.com



The ACED reunion

Eastern Service producer who helped raise standards in vernacular programme-making

Former Eastern Service senior producer **Heather Bond** died on 16 July at her home in Ibiza after a short illness. She was 68.

Her BBC career spanned 42 years, from when she started – as Heather Rosie – as a trainee studio manager in 1964, to her last freelance assignment for the BBC in 2006. She had retired from the BBC in 1999 and pursued a further very successful career as a trainer and teacher of Radio Production at Goldsmiths College.

Heather played a leading role in starting the BBC Nepali service and guided it closely for many years. She got to know the country well. As colleagues recall ‘she was like the local guide who knew everything and everybody knew her.’ It was not easy to write a job description for her; she did her own thing. Her ‘fixing’ role, making sure Eastern Service languages got the Wimbledon or other sporting coverage they wanted, was specially appreciated.

Before her BBC career she had taught English and music at secondary schools in Birmingham and she had not found teaching fulfilling. But she was a brilliant teacher, and a generation of broadcasters in the BBC Eastern Service as well as fledgling foreign correspondents for the World Service as a whole, owed much to Heather’s practical support and guidance. A colleague writes: ‘I saw her rescue many a programme, and a producer, from disaster. She contributed hugely to the general raising of ambitions and standards in vernacular programme-making during the 1980s.’

She developed her gift for languages with a degree in Spanish from Birkbeck College. She and her late husband, broadcaster and BBC announcer Peter Bond, constructed a magnificent roof garden in their flat in Hampstead and nurtured it for some years before it irrigated the downstairs neighbour’s carpet once too often and had to be removed. In her short time in proper retirement, Ibiza became her first home.

There is a warm tribute to her on the Goldsmiths’ College website <http://www.ma-radio.gold.ac.uk/bond.htm> ‘In memory of an elegant lecturer who taught her students how to make good radio.’

William Crawley

Cecil and the studio stiletto

Cecil Korer started his career in the BBC as a scene hand in TV Centre before being promoted to floor assisant. He moved to Manchester in 1959, promoted to production assistant in OBs and worked for Ray Lakeland on Sport and with Barney

Colehan on *It’s a Knock Out* etc.

When *Top of the Pops* came to Manchester, he was involved as a PA and saved the Beeb a lot of money when, after the very first production, the studio floor was ravaged by thousands of small holes from the stiletto heels of the girls cavorting on the studio floor. He bought a stock of rubber ferrules to cover said heels. Typical of him.

This charming, delightful showman – you took his comments with a pinch of salt, he sometimes ‘overegged’ his tales – was very well known to so many different staff in Manchester. I was once sitting on a small knoll halfway down the outlook at Lands End in Cornwall when I saw a pretty girl walking down towards me. She asked if I was Cecil Korer! She soon left after hearing that I wasn’t; a music secretary who had seen me with Cecil in the offices. We were all disappointed when, in 1969 he left to join Channel 4 as a commissioning editor responsible for the very first programme that channel aired: *Countdown*!

Cecil died at home on 24 September and a service was held on 6 October at Kingston & Surbiton Crematorium.

Those who knew him will be pleased to know he finished an autobiography a few days before he died: *Name Drops Keep Falling on my Head – recollections of a life in Television*. His wife Jean (55 years married) and daughter live in Surrey while his son runs their media business in the US.

Ralph Hill

World Service newsreader



Allan Newman, who has died aged 83, spent his 40-year career entirely at the BBC. He was an only child, born in east London in 1928, and left school at 16 to join BBC Radio Engineering. He transferred to train as a studio manager and worked in sound effects before becoming a radio announcer. Following a brief stint in television announcing – a medium he didn’t particularly enjoy – he returned to radio, his passion, finishing his working life in the World Service.

Allan made many lifelong friends in his early years at the Corporation, and is described by one, John Amos, as ‘one of the best newsreaders you could want’ and an inspiration to younger readers. The 1950s and ‘60s were an exciting time in radio, and Allan often recalled working with the famous names of that era on the Light Programme. The developments in sound recording were

of intense interest to him as well, both at work and at home, where he experimented with different recording techniques and effects.

Allan was renowned for his uncanny ability to repair anything, even – or perhaps especially – things others had thrown away, and at home he spent many happy hours with the soldering iron in hand. Photography was another hobby, and he liked to develop his own photographs and screen his slides and cine films.

He was also a very skilled self-taught pianist, and became a great cinema organ enthusiast in his fifties. His retirement allowed him to concentrate on playing and recording, performing for members of the Cinema Organ Society and restoring theatre organs. When arthritis made playing less pleasurable, his delight in technology of all kinds meant he turned to the computer. The freedom of the internet was a consolation in his later years when poor health restricted his life.

Allan is survived by his wife, Audrey, two daughters, a stepson and five grandchildren.

Kate Quarry

Influential actor turned award-winning director



On Wednesday, 12 October 2011, **Peter Hammond**, the multi-talented television and film director, died aged 87.

Peter was a man of many careers. He was born in London on 15 November 1923 as Peter Hammond Hill. Inspired by his father, a picture restorer and water-colourist, he started work as a scenic artist at Sheffield Repertory Theatre before turning to acting, as he put it ‘To earn some cash’. Aged 17 he began to star in West End plays, including *Reluctant Heroes*. ‘Soho was my village,’ he’d say, educating himself in the bookshops off Charing Cross Road, letting novels seep into his brain. He made his debut as a screen actor in *Waterloo Road*, followed by such movies as *Morning Departure* with John Mills and *The Huggets* series of family films, when he found himself doing a live double-act around the Rank cinema circuit promoting the series with co-star Diana Dors.

He went on to star in such early BBC TV series as *The Buccaneers* and *The Adventures of William Tell*, before embarking on a BBC television director’s course at a time when fashionable people boasted they had never watched, let alone owned, a television set.

He was one of those first actors to become TV directors, which is when Peter’s wide knowledge of drama and art came into focus. ‘We created the medium,’ he said of

working in the Alexandra Palace studios. This was a time when actors were lined up in a row, with one camera per face, and another in reserve for wide-shots. Technical requirements ruled. Engineering was paramount, when achieving a decent picture seemed almost miraculous.

Back at BBC Television Centre Peter saw everything freshly. As a lover of art he expressed himself through images; painting with ideas. His innovative approach had a wide influence across the whole television spectrum. He thought in visual terms, often quoting Marshal McLuhan’s ‘The medium is the message’. He was always popular with designers and cameramen, inciting radical solutions to achieve dramatic effects. The crews loved him as much as the audiences rejoiced in his productions. You can always recognise Peter’s style.

He directed several iconic episodes of *The Avengers* for ABC TV, helping create its distinctive new aura. Peter was a fund of energy and ideas. Everything was a challenge. When offered work he had a simple formula: ‘How much does it pay? When does it start?’

He directed episodes of *Rumpole of the Bailey*, starring Leo McKern with verve, followed by several classic dramas for the BBC including *Aubrey* about the painter Beardsley, the Dickens’ classic *Our Mutual Friend*, *Treasure Island* (1968), *Count of Monte Cristo* (1964) and *Hereward the Wake*, for which he won the Drama Director’s Bafta Award in 1965. Also, *The Three Musketeers*, then later *Dark Angel* based on *Uncle Silas*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Cold Comfort Farm*, and many, many others.

He was a great fan of the late producer Rosie Hill, in an era when the BBC encouraged daring and experiment. The use of angles, reflections, and inserts were some of his recognisable trademarks, always used to subjective effect. He invented his own multi-adjustable glass screen for elaborate mirror effects which travelled with him everywhere. He knew every shot in advance, all achieved with minimum takes. It is not by chance *Kilvert’s Diary* was nominated for a 1978 TV Lighting Bafta.

In latter years he directed outstanding episodes of ITV’s *Inspector Morse*, based on the Colin Dexter detective stories. He then worked on the *Sherlock Holmes* series for ITV, starring his good friend Jeremy Brett, before being forced to retire after signs of ill health.

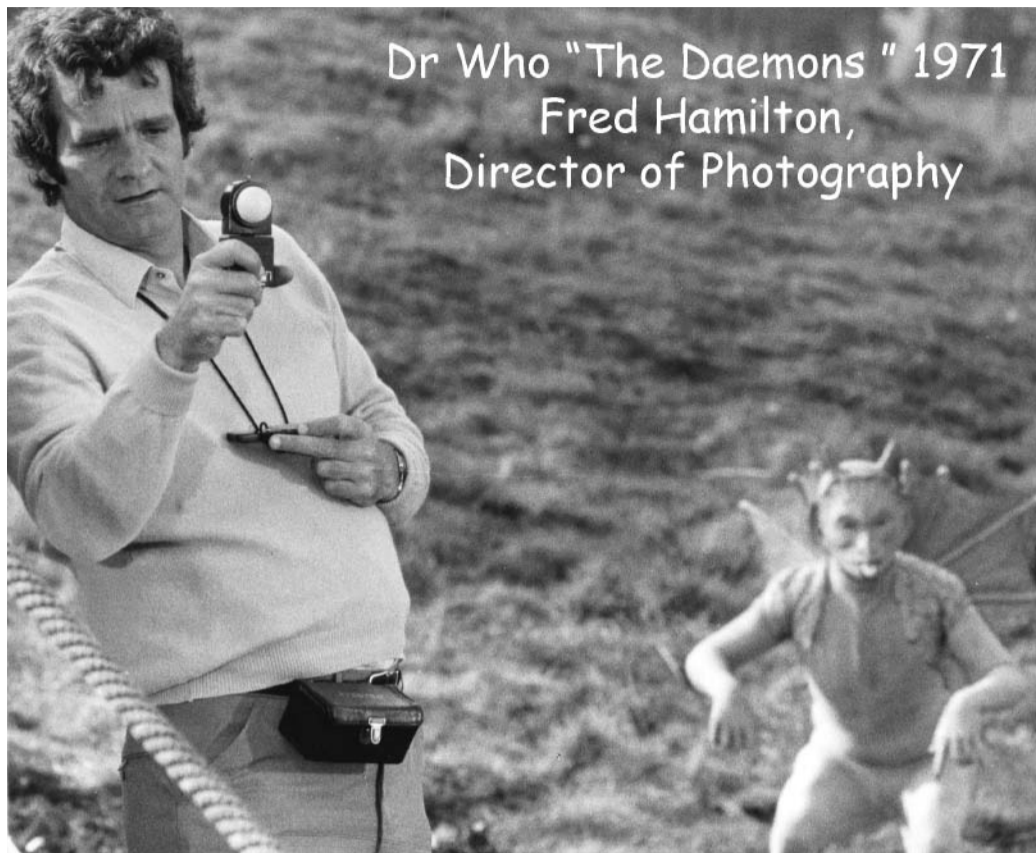
Peter was a great character. Witty. Dry. Anarchic. Loved. He will be remembered fondly by the many who have been influenced by him, but most of all by those who continue to watch the many DVDs of his work.

He is survived by two daughters, three sons, and four grandchildren. If people wish to they can send flowers and/or make a donation to The Woodland Trust, Woodland Dedications, 0800 093 8466, quoting Peter Hammond and/or ref. no. 6732915. For people who prefer to post a cheque, their address is The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL.

Oliver Bayldon

Zoom in When You See the Tears

The Memoirs of Fred Hamilton, ex-BBC film cameraman. Reviewed by Bill Chesneau



Dr Who "The Daemons" 1971
Fred Hamilton,
Director of Photography

Former BBC film cameraman, Fred Hamilton, was an eyewitness to the rise and fall of the BBC Film Department, disbanded in the 1990s. He saw it grow from a handful of crews to become the largest and most prestigious film unit in the world, with more than 50 active crews.

Fred's autobiography, *Zoom in When You See the Tears*, is a powerful tribute to the department, now no longer in existence. It leaves behind a

tradition of a dedicated workforce producing many of the most memorable programmes on television. He describes being an assistant on sports programmes to filming current affairs abroad and filming major plays and serials in the 1970s and 1980s and the introduction of electronic video cameras.

The author adopts an undisguised point of view: that of a dedicated member of a team. He frequently emphasises the

physical demands of the job and sometimes appallingly dangerous locations. A page on which Fred gives details about his contribution usually carries praise of the 'team' as well. Working closely with directors, actors, assistants, recordists, gaffers, sparks, grips, everyone inspiring one another, has a direct influence on the quality of a programme. This 'corporate' attitude is also reflected by his choice to include guest contributors of different vocations. Fred is generous in his praise, but not slow with the other side of the coin when professionalism is less than adequate!

Fred won several awards for current affairs, but his list of 'cult' series credits is just as impressive. It is a fact that the BBC's programmes of the 'golden age', of which more and more come to life, these days, on DVD, were loved by audiences and respected by critics worldwide. Fred points out one of the reasons why: the people working on them were skilled AND dedicated.

Full of (mostly) amusing anecdotes, the book is well illustrated with pictures taken on assignments around the globe. The author implicitly claims that many others probably could have written something similar.

The book brings back memories of my career in the department and the very many folk and programmes I was privileged to work with. It will also fascinate readers who do not have an 'inside knowledge' of a BBC department which contributed so much.

I wish I had kept a detailed diary...

Fantom Publishing £14.99
ISBN 978-1-906263-67-7

Publishing on Kindle

Alan Taylor submitted this article to *Prospero*, as he thought it would be useful to many BBC pensioners who have written or are about to write a novel, biography or autobiography and are concerned about the publishing process.

When, as a young man, I worked at the BBC, I was surprised at the number of people who were looking forward to their retirement so that they could write a book.

I address this to the many pensioners with similar aspirations but who have not yet got around to setting pen to paper or fingers to computer keyboard.

When I eventually retired, I too decided that I had a book to write and I set off on that difficult path. I found, as so many authors have also found, that the writing was the comparatively easy part. Getting read, however, was not so easy.

After my cupboards overflowed with rejection slips, I eventually went down the path of 'self publishing' with a company who produced a very good but too expensive end product. Unfortunately, the next hurdle to negotiate was the promotion of the book. Self publishers do not promote your book, that part is left up to you.

This attempt to publish my book occurred about five years ago, and already in that short time things have changed dramatically for authors. On the Internet, Amazon grew and developed. Suddenly the 'Kindle' was born, and publishing took on a new lease of life

with the 'e-book'. Using the Kindle, and with a great deal of very helpful information from Amazon (which is totally free), it is now possible to publish your own book within hours. You can set your own price and establish the sum you wish to be paid in royalties.

For those who have not yet approached the Kindle, it is an electronic book with an enormous storage capacity of over a thousand books. One of its other great advantages is that one can change the size of the type and even change the distance between lines. It is no bigger than a paperback and much slimmer. There are still many who say they prefer to hold a normal book in their hands, but having used one



for several months now, I am convinced that it is here to stay.

For those who are still not convinced, I am living proof that it can be done. Let me say that it is an incredibly satisfying experience to write and then to professionally publish yourself. I re-published my original novel, *One Day as a Tiger*, and three more books of short stories on the Kindle.

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Please enclose a cheque made payable to: **BBC Central Directorate.**

Rate: £5 for 20 words. In a covering letter please include your pension number.

Stolen identity

Roy Curtis-Bramwell was dismayed to find that his name has been used for a publication entitled *Blatant Bias Corporation*, which criticises the BBC 'for constantly taking an anti-British line'.

He says: 'This disturbs me, particularly because my days working for the Corporation were amongst the happiest of my life.'

Roy, who now lives with his extended family in Australia, is very keen that no-one thinks he has contributed to or is in any way associated with this book, which he considers a slur on his reputation. Having previously co-written a book about the BBC Radiophonic Workshop, he is especially concerned about this new publication being linked to his own.

Designed and produced by Wordshop