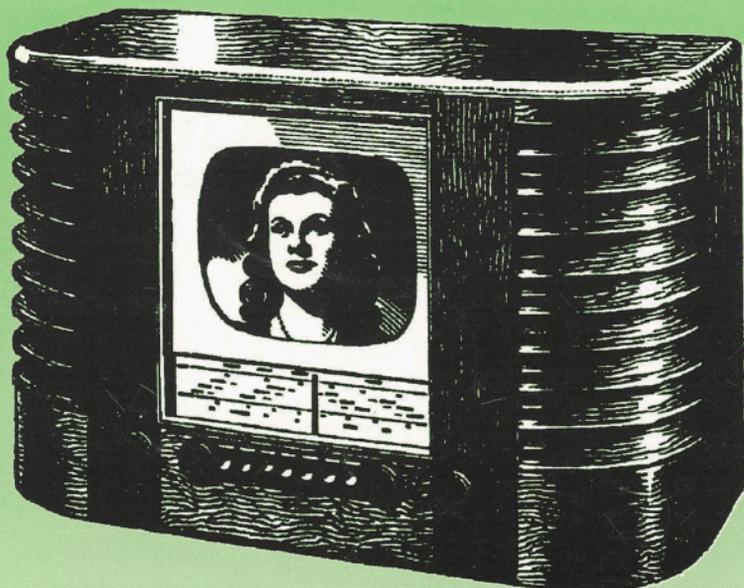


405 ALIVE

Recalling the Golden Years of Black & White Television



Issue 32 - Winter 1996

ISSN 0969-8884

**IN THE MAGAZINE WITH ABSOLUTELY
NOTHING NEW IN IT...**

Auricon Camera Recalled

Product Review: Dinosaur Modulator

Baird at Brentwood

Cleaning Up Videotapes

Three Receiver Restoration Stories

... and much more

405 ALIVE

Founded 1989 by Andrew Emmerson, with title and inspiration by Bill Journeaux.

Issue 32, Fourth Quarter 1996

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ISSN: 0969-8884.

LEGAL WARNING, particularly for New Readers

By reading this magazine you are entering a Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ), where normal values, logic and timescales do not apply. At the least you may feel unable to put the magazine down until you have read it through to the very end. As you read it, you may also feel strangely mellow and entirely unable to face doing anything else useful for 24 hours. Alternatively you may feel a sudden urge to have money extracted painlessly by one of our advertisers. Anything may happen and at the very worst you may enter a Permanent Autonomous Zone (PAZ) of your own creation.

We describe 405 Alive as *Your Escape from Ordinary Literature*, but be warned that unwary neophytes have been known to degenerate into hopeless wrecks gibbering meaningless phrases such as 'modulator', 'open reel', 'image orthicon', 'tefererecording' and '10 kilocycle line whistle'. Sadly there is no cure, only deeper addiction.

DO NOT PROCEED FURTHER if you are unsure of your ability to handle hard-core old technology. You have been warned. This magazine should not be left out where children or people of an unsympathetic disposition may find it.



FROM THE EDITOR ...

A reader refers to our 'double whammy' when issues 29 and 30 were sent out together (see LETTERS). Well, it's happened again but please rest assured that having two at once is not intended to be a regular occurrence.

The fact is that publication of this magazine had been slipping and slipping to the stage that the 'official' cover date bore no resemblance to reality (a bit like the content, perhaps?). Desperate moves were necessary to bring things back into the discipline of respectable publishing. Well, that's how we explain it. Long-term supporters can probably see the logic of the out-of-season cover dates but it must have been very confusing in the past when newly signed-up subscribers received a magazine with an ancient cover date.

Talking of subscriptions... is it time to renew? For most people it is, although it may not be because our publisher now accepts subscriptions at any time of the year (previously we backdated all subscriptions to start with the first issue of any given year and all subscriptions ended with the fourth quarter's issue). Anyway, please check the label on the envelope and if it says "expires with issue 32", please do something about it. We don't want to lose you and you'd kick yourself for missing an issue. Why not do it right now?

Back to the future. We're fired with confidence for things to come and look forward to bringing you a publication which should improve with every year. I have said this before, but the standard of contributed articles is still improving (in my humble estimation) and with your continuing support, things can only get better.

Look forward to seeing you here again in 1997. Enjoy Christmas and the New Year festivities, then have a great 405 year in 1997. Happy scanning!

Andy Emmerson.

TECHNICAL NOTE

This magazine is produced on the 405-line system. Please make allowances for occasional reduced definition in illustrations.

LETTERS, WE GET LETTERS

From Alan Keeling, Warley:

Regarding the *Martin Kane* television series filmed in London described in issue 29. Yes, the series was screened on ITV around 1959 on Southern Television during the week and Midlands and North (ABC) at weekends. The production company was **ZIV-TV Programs**, who were responsible for *Cisco Kid*, *Sea Hunt*, *Dial 999*, etc. and the series was produced in 1957. I do have an 'awful' video copy of an episode.

❖ *Fascinating. Now, does anyone know if the original, American-made, **Mark Saber**, was shown over here?!? And what was the background of the English-accented star of the show, Tom Conway? There is a glaring need for a comprehensive book on imported serials on British television. How about it, Boxwood Books?*

From David Boynes, Winlaton:

Here's a progress report on the Murphy A58V. There's a very dull horizontal line on the screen – that's all! I've contacted Mauritron for service information. More progress reports to follow...

From Mike Izycky, Market Deeping:

Public Information Films (mentioned in issue 30). Gosh! I remember these! As I recall they used to be *guaranteed* a slot before *Grandstand* on Saturday mornings some twenty-odd years ago; the ones I recall were someone putting their Austin 1100 on its lid because they'd mixed crossply and radial tyres on the same axle, likewise various 'not recommended' ways to kill yourself, like trying to gas yourself in an electric oven, or lying across a disused railway track – then (or maybe this was the same one) someone jamming the wires of their electric drill into the wall instead of using a plug, with the earth wire dramatically creeping its way towards the six-inch nail that our victim had used to provide the live pin.

Little did I realise as a small boy that twenty odd years later, the few minutes before *Grandstand* would be spent with my fingers poised over the 'record' buttons to run the PasB tapes in the *Grandstand* studio...

Regarding the Philco 'Predicta' set I saw in Atlanta; I can now confirm it was the model 3410 'Princess' that I saw for sale for \$200.

From Stan Wootton, Letchworth:

Two more great issues, 29 and 30, are now in my hands! Marvellous! Although, I'm lucky to have them because they were addressed to – and had been to – 16 Western Way. Fortunately the postman or

someone had written "Try 86" on them and they found me. I'm planning to advise your publishing office.

I was pleased to see Roy Hudd mentioned in the issue 29 as Patron. I was a *Huddlines* script contributor some time back. Before I became ill and had to stop that and was also medically retired from my day job. One reason why **405 Alive** is so good for me... it fills time well. As does my archiving of sound/vision and collecting of relative books.

A while back someone mentioned the caption for the BBC North of England News. A good print of it appears in **Television Graphics** by Douglas Merritt, published in 1987 by Trefoil Publications. Great illustrations in the book, although it is very inaccurate about the first ITV franchise holders.

The history of ITV (*Shuffling the Pack*) in issue 30 answers a lot of my blank spaces. I will refer to that often. Thanks. *Wiltshire Words* (p. 59 of issue 29) is also good food for the mind of an ATV worshipper!

Amos 'n' Andy show was a BBC-shown series. The last time I recall it being repeated was on Saturday afternoons in the 'before *Grandstand* days. *Stranger than Fiction*, with that marvellous Bert Weedon theme and *Fabian of The Yard*, I recall, were repeated too on Saturday afternoons around the same time.

When I look through the ads it is good to see the current value put on books which I have treasured and kept in mint condition. Most notably **ITV 1963**. Mine *does* have spine intact (!), I'm glad to say.

Going back, an afterthought, on *Amos 'n' Andy*. it does seem strange that people take an anti-racial view of that show. Sammy Davis Jr. always kept the 'Kingfish' catchphrases in his act: "Holy Mackerel!" and "We's gonna have a meet'n at the lodge hall!" and he had, according to what one has read, suffered racial taunts. A documentary a while back even claimed racial discrimination over Rochester in the Jack Benny Program. Having some of those shows on video, I detect no signs where that could be upheld.

The 'Thames' link questions. I seem to recall that the white word **Thames** on black background was animated with the famous musical notes which accompanied the 'skyline' ident. The word Thames would appear when the blank screen split horizontally rather as it used to divide at the start of Thames advertising breaks. The end caption said **From Thames**. Also, I think it must have been done to match up on the 'Network' with the 'no ident, just the name' early policy of London Weekend Television. Although, the Thames skyline in monochrome was the station ident from the start. Not seen on the Network for introducing programmes until colour arrived in 1969. **From London Weekend Television** was seen at the start/end of programmes and was also shown on the company stationery. 'This is London Weekend

Television' was the simple station ident used on still caption and also appeared on company vehicles. Clever. Well, I'm easily impressed!

Anyway, another batch of memories which I hope are useful to 405-ers. Again thanks for the fine books. Anyone who questions value for money.... silly. *Invaluable*, that is my opinion.

From John P. Hamilton, London:

Congratulations on the New Look to the magazine. How pretty they are in their His and Her colours. Very fetching ! And what a feast of memory-evoking articles and letters in numbers 29 and 30.

Delighted that our old friend Roy Hudd has consented to be our new patron. Did you see that he was also honoured by being Six Down in the Daily Telegraph crossword number 21,991 on Sept. 30th.? That's a hell of a long time to wait for true fame.

I was glad to see that Julian Levene had contacted you in his painstaking search for the Buddy Holly footage. He rang Daffs and me some time ago and came round for a long chat about *Cool for Cats*. We put him in touch with Joan Kemp Welch and her husband, Peter Moffat who, in the fifties was stage manager on the show. They confirmed from Peter's logbook that Holly had appeared on *Cats* as a late addition to one that Joan had directed. The group rushed straight from London Airport to the Wembley Studios and mimed an item from an LP. Holly also did a brief interview with Kent Walton – that being very unusual – which Kent remembered well when Julian rang him.

And – talking of *Cats*, thanks for the belated piece about the show. Since meeting Julian and after digging out my two year's worth of scripts and associated memorabilia, I'm thinking of doing a longer history of the show. [*Yes please!*] I have quite a few pictures taken in the studio and the gallery during my spell with it.

We used many talented dancers and choreographers and they deserve to be remembered. We also had a great range of guest artistes miming their latest releases, many of them 'first plays' of Top Ten material. Brian Taylor, who was one of the number of directors who had a bash at *Cats*, mentions his experiences in his autobiography *Grandfather's Tales*, published two years ago. Nobody else seems to have chronicled what was a very innovative programme. I've been telling Kent Walton for years that he ought to write his story but so far he hasn't made the effort, which is a pity because he has a very good memory and a lot of memorabilia, as he proved when we contacted him with Julian Levene. If I get round to my version, it will be a long story and may have to be serialised.

I found the two pieces about HDF at Highbury very interesting indeed. In the early fifties, although at the BBC, a number of us had worked on our off-duty days for Harry Alan Towers as he churned out his shows for the continental commercial [radio] stations. I did effects

on grams on many of them at 35 Portland Place, in the International Broadcasting Company studio. Actually, some of the productions were quite spectacular with good scripts and all-star casts. I recall *Captain Homblower* with Olivier in the lead, and a very exciting treatment of *A Tale of Two Cities*. The three guineas or so that H.A.T. paid us almost doubled our BBC pittances in those days. But, they were hard work as Harry expected value for his money. One series, narrated by Orson Welles, and based on tales from Scotland Yard's Black Museum, had to be recorded in the middle of the night because Welles was, at that time, a refugee from the Inland Revenue of the USA and led a clandestine existence in London earning a crust from Harry. He was fortified, as I remember with many a bottle of brandy. [*These radio serials have recently been released on compact cassette under the Hodder Headline banner.*]

Anyway, that connection with H.A.T. took me to HDF at Highbury in the summer of 1954, where they were making pilot commercials for the rapidly approaching ITV and cinema market. I was hired to do spot effects on some early commercials for Schweppes tonic water. The star was Richard 'Mr. Pastry' Hearne as a mad explorer in the African jungle. The director was Quentin Lawrence who sadly died much too young, but was a very good drama man from the BBC. He later came to Associated-Rediffusion and did a few plays. Other BBC friends involved were Bimbi Harris and the late Audrey Starratt, who were both there because of their vast knowledge on the video side. It was like old home week, as I have known Bimbi for many years together in BBC Radio, A-RTV and later at LWT. We remain good friends to this day.

It will be interesting to see if anyone out there knows the reasons for the sudden demise of HDF. Where's Harry? Does anybody know? Is he still with us, or gone to the great studio in the sky? Someone must know. [*He's still making films, as he recounted last March to Sheridan Morley on BBC Radio Four. The occasion was to plug these new radio programme tapes.*]

Moving on to Issue 30, I was glad to see that old friend Pip Wedge has renewed his subs from far-off Toronto. He and I keep in touch via cassette letters and exchange music tapes at intervals. I thank him for his kind words about the 40th Anniversary knees-up at the Langham Hotel last September. We may do it again for the 45th in Centennial year – or not in Centennial year if you are a believer, as I am, that it won't arrive until 1st January 2001. [*Quite right... we're stickler for accuracy here! Who said pedant?!?*] And I forgive you, Andy, for losing my piece about the do in your machinery.

Re Tony Currie's addition of David Hamilton (no relation) to the list of Continuity Announcers. For reasons too long to go into here, I directed the last three programmes of *Take Your Pick* with Michael Miles for the about-to-lose-the-franchise Rediffusion in the summer of

1968. We had to take them out of Wembley studios to let LWT in, to start stockpiling programmes for their August start-up. We did two *TYPs* as OBs, one in Birmingham and one in Blackpool at the Winter Gardens. The very last of all was recorded in Tyne-Tees's studio in Newcastle. Michael Miles was taken ill on the first day in the studio and we had to hold over for three days until he recovered. I remember meeting David Hamilton in the pub across the road from the studio. We had a long chat – we had never met before – and I understood that he was working there in continuity. We have the pleasure of hearing him here in London as he currently works for Melody FM, usually on the daybreak shift. He is as good as ever.

What an excellent condensation of the history of ITV in Simon Coward's *Shuffling The Pack*. Really first class, and will save days wading through the – so far – four volumes of *Independent Television in Britain*, the official Macmillan publication. All the nuggets are in the Kaleidoscope piece. Well done.

You ask, in your own piece, Who Remembers Ad-Mags ? The answer from Jim Pople, Daphne Shadwell and myself would supply a chorus of "We do!". Many of us trained on them as sprig directors because the fully-fledged directors thought them beneath their dignity. And they were damned difficult and, therefore, excellent training material. Most of the ones we did at A-R were live with limited rehearsal times and the absolute necessity for accurate timing when six or seven items were packed into the average 12½ minute running time.

We also had a tough time with our own company Sales Department staff who were trying to impress the client's agency reps in order to get more business, and the reps themselves all thought they could direct their own one or two minutes' participation better than the director assigned to the job. The crews all thought they were a bit of a bore (except for the occasional 'Lovely to Look At' type ad-mag with lots of lissom models drifting about the set) and rated them not much higher than the Epilogues as being worthy of their expertise.

I quite enjoyed some of mine in a masochistic sort of way. Amongst them I can remember such gems as *Mainly for Men* with Mac Hobbly, Elizabeth London and Howard Pays (the male star lead of *Sixpenny Corner*, and still an active agent) as presenters. Another was *Storegazing* with Anthony Dawes, Lillian Grassom and Reginald Marsh. The narrator of that one was a very distinguished super voice, Manning Wilson. Peter Haigh and Jane Maxwell co-presented *Shopping For You* and Sheila Matthews, star of the Opening Night Variety show in 1955 and of her own 'Friday's Girl' programme, was the presenter for *On View*. We even managed to work in a song a week from Sheila in that one with Tommy Harrison at the piano. My longest run was with the comedian who read from the newspaper, the late George Martin. That

one was called *By George* and he carried the whole show himself. And without auto-cue!

I don't think any of the directors was too upset when Harold Wilson put the block on the format after Pilkington. The in-house Sales Dept. staff missed them because they lost their trips to the studios where everything was happening. Most of them spent the rest of their lives selling space on the telephone. Nearly all of us had a bash at *Jim's Inn* at some time or other. The camera positions hardly ever changed as the characters, Jimmy, Jack, young John Sherlock and girls fell into their places automatically at the bar or in the kitchen and, apart from the pack-shots, the show practically shot itself. And they were all very nice people to work with.

From Bob Netherway, Bristol:

A friend and I were discussing the pace of television in the 1960s and how we used to have these short public service information films during programme breaks instead of all this visual mush that there is today. Why oh why does there have to be such a dreadful rush to go from one item to another, when there could, on occasions, be a Radio 3-type pause before the next programme is due to start? Perhaps I will write to the BBC and pose the question to them. Yes, it is always nice to look back and appreciate the way in which we used to make use of time in between programmes. I am looking forward to the next issue of the revamped *405 Alive*.

- ❖ *Yes, someone once explained to me that the pauses on Radio 3 are to let the tunes carry on going round in your head and come gracefully to a stand, rather like letting the record stop gently instead of whisking it off. It's a nice thought and the pause adds dignity to the music.*

From Brian Renforth, Sandyford:

Well done to the Radiophile team for doing a great job and many thanks for the as usual superb issues! The highlight for me was Simon Coward's article *Shuffling The Pack* on the ITV contractors, superb stuff indeed. My own tribute in issue 28 was from published information so I'm delighted to see that someone has really dug deep for the info we want to read about! I had no idea regarding the 1964 renewals for instance, nor, as Tony Currie mentioned, the 1970 ITV colour strike!

The 405-line (etc.) **transmitter list** was another corker. One correction I can give was that Belmont VHF (and UHF colour) transmitted Anglia Television programmes from 20.12.65 (VHF) and 24.5.71 (UHF) until being reallocated to Yorkshire Television on 30th July 1974. From that date Belmont transmitted YTV on both VHF and UHF transmitters.

When did the BBC open their last 405-line transmitter? We all know that the ITA's Newhaven relay, opened on 3.8.70 was *their* last. Apparently I believe this transmitter was scheduled to open in 1969, but was delayed as priority had to take place at Emley Moor.

Three Rivers Television? Well, Tyne Tees Television, 37 years on became 'Channel 3 North East' from 6pm on Monday, 2nd September 1996!

Those of us who knew 405-line VHF television will know that it was possible in some locations to receive different ITV contractors (e.g. Membury ATV/Central at VHF and Southern/TVS from Hannington at UHF). I remember when BBC1 North East and Cumbria divided around 1985 so that the Cumbria region was served by Manchester, this caused some letters of protest. One such letter read out said that the writer was prepared to rig up an old channel 5 aerial to see Mike Neville after the change took place! A little too late of course unfortunately. From the early 1990s parts of the Cumbria region were re-allocated to the Newcastle area. Mike now works for TTT, sorry C3NE...

From Dinosaur Dave Grant, Bromley:

Anyway, there are some good articles in the mags. [*Only some? - Editor*] I found Mr. Howett's bit about Bill Vinten particularly interesting (he is after all something of a folk hero around these parts). Why have most Vinten products been named after birds? [*Good question*] I almost feel I should write an article on the last days of the TV Theatre!

❖ *You have just let yourself in for something!*

From Brian Renforth, Sandyford:

Got some time to give some feedback on some older issues, having a re-read of them recently. They're a few things I've missed!

Terry Martini on the **ILEA Educational TV System** (issue 22): The Decca receivers he recalls sound like the Schools' Monitor/Receiver as described by Nick Lyons in the September 1978 issue of *Television*. Both dual and single-standard versions were available, whilst a similar set was also available to the public as the Decca 'Professional' 23 in 1967/68. Some of the single-standard models were fitted with turret tuners covering bands I & II, the latter to suit certain Post Office relay equipment. They apparently functioned well, the weak point being the line output transformer. I've never seen one of these sets so perhaps others who remember/serviced them would like to comment?

VHS Video Recorders suitable for 405-lines: Another model to add is the Hitachi VT17/19 twin-speed Dolby stereo machines available

around 1984. They were also available as the Granada VHS AH3 and may still be available ex-rental. They handle 405-line playback well with no ghosting though the servos go haywire on picture search. As another tip, the infra-red remote control for the Ferguson 3V32/DER-Baird 8941/2 works perfectly with this model and vice versa!

The superb JVC HR7200/Ferguson 3V29 machines have been mentioned before. Many are around on the second hand market at excellent prices. Grandata, who advertise in *Television*, stock overhaul kits for just £10. What we've all overlooked, however, is that later versions featured modifications, such as a combined servo/MDA panel. I recently purchased a JVC HR7200 with the combined panel (and other modifications such as the pre-setter board which is not compatible with earlier versions) which unfortunately produces ghosting on 405 lines, although not as severe as on some VCRs I've seen. Have others come across this? Excellent servicing features on these machines can be found in the January and February 1992 issues of *Television*.

From Philip Wedge, Toronto:

Thanks for the latest (and very good-looking) editions of *405 Alive*.

I hate to disagree with the fountain of (most) ITV wisdom, and a very good friend into the bargain, John P. Hamilton, and the whole business is really quite trivial, I guess, but the Associated-Rediffusion children's programme into which we inserted the **Mickey Mouse Club** segments (*405 Alive* #30, Summer 1996) was definitely *not* titled *Disney Wonderland* when it started, though it may have been given that title later.

It was a Friday afternoon programme, at 5 o'clock I think, and the whole point of my previous letter was that, in the face of Disney's demands for their company identification to be associated with the name of the show, preferably by our calling it *Mickey Mouse Club*, we were able to negotiate a deal for the material to be used in segments within a show whose title had *nothing* whatever to do with the Disney organisation or any of their cartoon characters.

John Rhodes was Head of Children's at the time, and would perhaps remember if he's still around. Marc Miller was directing children's programmes at around that time, but whilst I know he did the Tuesday 5pm show, I don't remember if he also did the Friday edition.

To settle the matter perhaps old copies of *TV Times* for the 1958-1960 era are accessible in the archives, if anyone really cares?

I much enjoyed the Simon Coward piece "Shuffling the Pack", on the awarding of the first ITV licences in 1954. His mention of the amendment of the name of the London Monday-to-Friday licensee to Associated-hyphen-Rediffusion reminded me of an incident during my days in 1955-56 as General Manager of Musical Facilities Ltd. This

music company was formed by Sir John Barbirolli to service all A-R's music needs, after he had been contracted to act as Music Adviser to A-R, in addition to conducting the fortnightly Halle orchestra concerts from the Walthamstow Town Hall, which were directed by Kenyon Emrys-Roberts.

In addition to Steve Race, and Halle Orchestra General Manager Ken Crickmore, the fourth Director was lawyer Arnold (later Lord) Goodman, who during the early, trying days of horrendous financial losses, was heard to comment wryly that sometimes it appeared that the hyphen was the only thing holding the company together.

And your piece about Admags in general, and **Jim's Inn** in particular, reminded me of a story which may be apocryphal, but may still be worth repeating. When a newly-hired secretary in the Jim's Inn production office wanted to send something to Jim, she said to a colleague: "Now, Jim lives in Uckingham, doesn't he?"

"No, dear," came the answer. "Effingham".

And finally and apropos of absolutely nothing at all, I was going through some old 78s the other day and came across an FDH Mood Music record of *Flowing Stream*, by Jack Payne's piano-playing wife Joyce Cochrane. This was the theme tune for a very good weekly soap called *Mary Britten, M.D.* which was produced by Southern Television and seen on Saturday afternoons from the start of their service in 1958. The series starred Brenda Bruce, the wife of Southern's first Managing Director, Roy Rich, but never to my knowledge made it onto the network.

Continued success in your much appreciated efforts.

From Jim Pople, Lyme Regis:

Enclosed a few comments on ever on-going subjects for your consideration. The magazine goes from strength to strength so congratulations.

Pan and Scan was perfected and in use at Associated-Rediffusion certainly by early 1958. At the time I was directing weekly cinema programmes called *Close-Up* and *Spotlight* (by alternating what was basically the same programme under differing titles, it got over the quota for clips). At the time, A-RTV was the only company that 20th Century Fox would allow to screen Cinemascope clips. It was necessary to rehearse and cue the telecine operator at TVH Kingsway [TVH= Television House]. Usually it worked unless two people were sitting at opposite ends of a large dining table! For those interested, the theme music used was *Lights of Lisbon* by Tony Osborne.

Small Time 'Tum' was devised, drawn and presented by Patrick Boyle.

Mickey Mouse Club. I have a hazy memory of directing Mickey Mouse Club at A-RTV under *that* title in Studio 8 at TVH Kingsway, but it was presented by an avuncular actor named Royston Tickner. Was this before it changed its name and was presented by Howard Williams? Perhaps Pip Wedge or someone can confirm.

I think Dicky Howett has me mixed up with someone else. I can find no reference to correspondence from me in Issue 26, although I do fully concur with the comments ascribed to me.

From Vaughan Stanger, Wealdstone:

I very much enjoyed issues 29 and 30. The new covers look very slick and the idea of having Roy Hudd as our patron is an excellent one.

From Andy Howlett, Dukinfield:

Still reeling from the recent double whammy of 405 – it's good to see that the combined operation with *The Radiophile* is helping things along.

I was talking to a friend the other evening, and as we are both ex-TV engineers, the conversation inevitably turned in that direction. Once we'd dealt with the usual stories of incandescent Philips G6 sets, buzzing Thorn 1400s, etc., much hilarity was raised by the memories concerning the horrors to be found under customers' carpets, namely the infamous twisted-wire mains lead joints insulated (if that is the right word) with Sellotape, Band-Aid, parcel tape and even brown paper. The extended lead would snake its way diagonally across the floor, to emerge in the opposite corner behind the pile of newspapers and magazines. But the thing that really got us laughing was this: why was there always a collection of shoes under the telly? Sometimes neatly arranged in pairs, sometimes a seemingly random selection, usually men's. Of course this situation had to change in the early eighties, when the video recorder filled the space under the set. Perhaps it was just a local phenomenon, or just maybe it was nation-wide – perhaps other readers will tell us of their experiences.

Just a final question, this time serious. In the mid sixties, when we were trying to decide which colour system to adopt, the alternatives were NTSC, SECAM and PAL. Apparently, two 'new' systems were put forward, namely QUAM and NIR – does anyone know anything about these? Incidentally, the Internet correspondence concerning the 'pedestal' was most interesting, but nobody actually answered the question. Why does the video sit on a slightly raised black level?

❖ *Good questions! An urgent plea went out to our technical brains and this answer was received from Jeffrey Borinsky...*

QUAM = QUadrature Amplitude Modulation

This is a generic term that encompasses PAL and NTSC and possibly other proposed systems (but not SECAM) where the colour information is carried by both the phase and amplitude of the subcarrier.

Pedestal

My belief is that it existed to help the rather dubious flyback blanking on early receivers. The idea is to push the whole blanking interval below black level, thus making it invisible. It does not save transmitter power; it actually uses power that could otherwise be employed on the video or sync! It survives in NTSC as a historic and useless remnant.

The 405 system had pedestal at some times in its history. At the end of 405 there was definitely no pedestal in the spec.

❖ *Many thanks Jeff! We also posted the question on the Internet and had an amazing response....*

Early receivers did not have any flyback blanking. The pedestal allows a bit of leeway in adjusting the brightness without seeing the flyback lines. The frame flyback lines were the most obvious as lines angled to the horizontal whose spacing and angle depend on the flyback speed. I'm sure the 405-line system had a pedestal originally. I don't know how big it was or when it was abandoned.

Eric Putt / putte@argonet.co.uk

I thought the Pedestal was put there to clearly define a difference between black in a picture and CRT cut-off defined by blanking level. This was to eliminate any possibility of horizontal retrace lines while providing control of what low levels looked like in the picture. It is also my understanding that horizontal retrace turned out not to be as big a problem as originally envisioned especially with modern receivers.

Lloyd Ferguson, CBC Engineering, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

The explanation that I always heard was that when TV signals were relayed over phone links and UHF links, the risk was always there of damaging the black level to due the blanking level DC restorer circuits which were vacuum tube circuits then. This only applied for the days of B&W TV. When color was added, the set-up was retained for brightness and contrast compatibility, but by that time more new equipment was solid-state and the need for set-up was decreasing, but it stayed.

I assume that the early color systems that you referred to were either higher bandwidth 50Hz versions of NTSC, or versions of PAL without features like swinging burst and Bruch sequences.

Gary L. Sanders, V.P. Engineering, Sanders Media Adventures, Inc.

From **Television Engineering Handbook** (Revised Edition 1992) by Benson revised by Whitaker, in section 5.3.2 –

"...A small amplitude range between the black level and a higher level, the blanking level, is used as a guard interval. This is the set-up. It

facilitates the separation of video modulation from synchronizing and also avoids distortion in the blacks from the circuits – limiters or clamps – which maintain the blanking level."

The original **Television Engineering Handbook** edited by Fink (1st ed., 1957) notes that "...in monochrome transmissions it is the United States standard to maintain the set-up as near to zero as possible" while later in the same chapter, it acknowledges that the "Luminance-modulation Standards, American Compatible Color System" [i.e., M/NTSC] has a 7.5 unit set-up. From this, I suspect that the concept of set-up between black level and blanking level was introduced about the time of the US NTSC color TV system development, i.e., post-WWII early 1950s. That is just a guess. I have no idea whether the competing CBS color system had a non-zero set-up level.

In a SMPTE Journal article of February, 1980, Pritchard and Gibson ("Worldwide Color Television Standards - Similarities and Differences") note that a system referred to as NIR (or SECAM IV) was developed in the USSR. It consisted of alternating lines of (1) an NTSC-like signal using an AM and PM subcarrier, and (2) a reference signal used for demodulation. There was a linear and nonlinear version. According to the article, NIR were never implemented or used for commercial broadcast. Hope this is helpful.

M. Baker (who misses this stuff a lot), AT&T, Holmdel, NJ.

>And in the mid sixties, when we Europeans were trying to decide which
>colour system to adopt, two 'new' systems were put forward, namely
>QUAM and NIR does anyone know anything about these?

I believe you mean SEQUAM. this was a flavour of SECAM with FM carriers in quadrature.

SECAM-4 which was similar was invented by the Russians, I believe it was used in anger at one time. I have a business card somewhere from the then head of the Russian TV Institute who I believe said he was responsible for it.

NIR was a German proposal involving FM PAL. There was also a system that was essentially similar proposed by Peters of the BBC. This was described in *Wireless World* must have been around 1966-68. I think Mike Cox also played around with it, he built test rigs for nearly every system at the time. He'll probably have answers to all these questions.

Richard Crosoer, Greenway UK.

NIR alternates lines of 'standard' NTSC-style QAM-modulated chroma with lines of reference carrier as a 'chroma' signal with the same amplitude modulation as the NTSC line but of constant phase. At the receiver a one-line delay is used to alternately delay the NTSC and reference lines so that the reference line subcarrier can be used to demodulate the NTSC line. The idea was that the reference line would suffer the same transmission path phase distortions as the NTSC lines and thus when demodulated the chroma phase errors would be cancelled and hue errors not be seen. It

suffered from noise problems in low chroma areas. Hope this is of interest. My own views and not necessarily those of the BBC.

Bill Bulford, BBC.

And the last word...

I have found a printed handout I was given long ago while attending a course at the BBC's Engineering Training Department. I quote a part of it.

Television Fundamentals 1 - The television waveform

Significant amplitude levels occurring in the complete television waveform are as follows:-

Sync. level	is at zero amplitude
Blanking level	is at 30% of the complete signal amplitude
Peak white	is at 100% (i.e. peak amplitude).

Until recently a margin of 5% of the complete signal had been allowed between blanking level and black level of the picture signal, this margin being termed 'Pedestal'. The purpose of the 'pedestal' was to allow a slight variation of black level at the receiver without flyback lines (which are at or below blanking level) becoming visible on dark pictures.

At the present time definite 'Pedestal' has been discontinued and black level may coincide with blanking level. [9.11.64]

Eric Putt / putte@argonet.co.uk

TECHNOLOGY

MODULATORS, AN APOLOGY

We unwittingly caused offence in a 'help' panel at the back of the last issue where we said that a particular modulator design published some while back in *Television* magazine gave only moderate results. The author of the design, who is a reader of this magazine, feels this remark may be misleading and suggests any poor performance could arise from faulty construction. We agree and are happy to publish this clarification.

TEST PATTERNS ON THE INTERNET

There is a web site that has 11 downloadable test patterns, as well as a number of inline images. The URL is:

<http://www.ping.at/users/staytuned/ROOM1.html>

Alan Betz

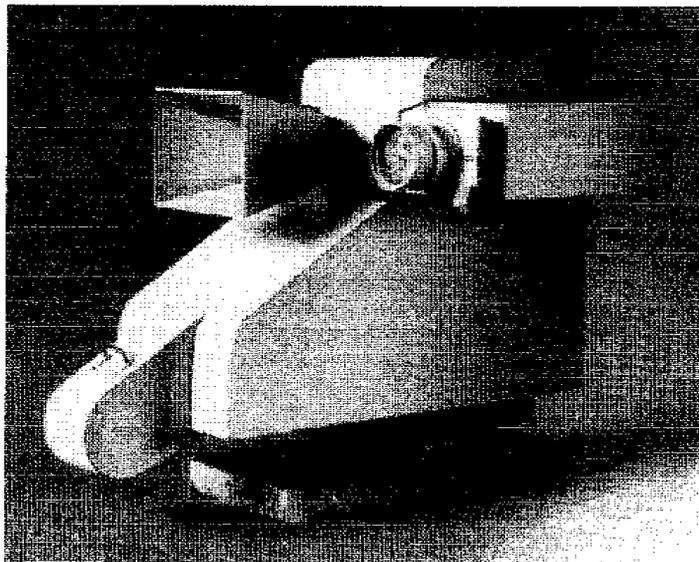
WINDOWS 95

Tired of the boring opening and shutdown messages that come with Windoze95? How about some genuinely charming views of glowing valves?!? Use the Internet to download them from

<http://www.megabaud.fi/~jtolonen/ga/tubelogo/tubelogo.html>

Folks not using Windows95 can save these in .GIF format, by clicking on the image using the right mouse button within Netscape 2.01 or better, and selecting "save image as...".

Many thanks to Ross KB9JJR and Roger A. McCarty for these pointers.



It looks like the real thing but in fact this Emitron camera is a scale model made by Bernard King, just 8 inches long. Amazing!



GOOD NEWS

Tony Clayden advises that Alexandra Palace has been granted Grade II listed building status. And not before time! Now all we need is some lottery or millennium money...

MARGARET BAIRD

Margaret Baird, widow of J.L. Baird, has died at her home in Hamilton aged 89. A professional pianist, she had a lively personality which she had retained into old age. [From *NBTV News*, vol. 22, no. 1]

PERCY EDWARDS

Percy Edwards, famed for his animal imitations, died around the 7th June 1996. He was 88 and born at Ipswich, Suffolk. He could impersonate realistically some 500 different animal and bird calls, and appeared many years ago on Ted Ray's radio show, *Ray's A Laugh*, and *Educating Archie*, which starred Peter Brough and Archie Andrews. Percy Edwards first appeared in public at the age of 12 doing his impressions in a local village hall. He first broadcast in 1929. [From *Vintage Light Music*, Autumn 1996.]

DAVID DAVIS

We also note the death of David Davis on 29th April, 1996 at the age of 87. Not a television personality, he was, however, known to millions of radio listeners to the BBC's *Children's Hour* programmes. He started on the programme in 1935 as a piano accompanist but it was for his cultured and beautiful speaking voice he was best known. He retired from the BBC's Drama department in 1970. [Condensed from *Vintage Light Music*, Autumn 1996.]

IVOR MILLS

Ivor Mills, to the public known best as an ITN newsreader, died earlier this year. He worked as a producer, editor and presenter of programmes first for the BBC and Irish radio as well as for Ulster Television. After work with the BBC World Service and Southern Television, he achieved his ambition to join ITN in 1965. He shared presentation of the early evening programmes and became the main presenter of the weekend programmes until he returned to ITN's 'hard news' team in 1972. There he remained until 1978, when he embarked upon a new (and equally distinguished, if less public) career with the Post Office (later British Telecom) as head of public affairs. A very kindly and human person, he was also a marvellous raconteur and to be in his company was unalloyed pleasure. [AE]

COMING EVENTS

Ray Herbert invites you to watch out for the following:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 2nd November | BBC TV <i>Horizon</i> programme on early television. |
| 6th November | BBC TV 60 <i>Watching the Box, Tomorrow's World</i> . |
| 18th November | Talk at the IEE, Savoy Place, London on J.L. Baird by Ralph Barrett G2FQS. Starts at 18.30 (tea at no charge begins at 18.00). Visitors welcome. |
| Date not fixed. | BBC TV <i>The People's Century</i> programme on pre-war television. |

(All television schedules subject to last-minute change.)

BRITISH POP SHOWS

An urgent plea from Kaleidoscope...

Kaleidoscope researcher Richard Down, co-editor of the entire range of this highly regarded series of reference books, is currently working on a Kaleidoscope File covering classic British music shows from the sixties to the present day, which is due for publication later this year. Containing the definitive guide to every single edition of *Top of the Pops* and many other music programmes, listing artists, songs, untransmitted appearances and other matters of note, the research is almost complete and the volume looks like it will prove hugely popular. However, there are still some small gaps, so we are publishing this appeal in an attempt both to fill them and increase the existing range of the guide. If you have any information of any description on any *Top of the Pops* edition, or any other music programme and wish it to be included, please write to Richard at the address below:

Richard Down
Kaleidoscope Publishing
47 Ashton Road, Ashton Gate
Bristol.

Any contributions would be gratefully received and will get full acknowledgement in the published guide. Richard looks forward to hearing from you.

BUY THEM NOW!

According to *Which* magazine, (September 1996, page 27) banana plugs are to be outlawed in the EU. The reason is they fail electrical safety standard EN60065 because the plug could be inserted accidentally in a European two-pin mains socket, which could lead to electric shock. Of course our shuttered flat pin sockets prevent this potential tragedy occurring in Britain.

This is a courageous decision on the part of the EU; no doubt as well they will ban the sale of nails, small screws and instrument screwdrivers, which can also be inserted in Continental mains sockets (and in nostrils, ears, eyes and other more fundamental orifices of the anatomy). Please tell me I'm dreaming this... or is it just poor research. Thank goodness I have a modest stock of banana plugs already.

COLLECTORS' FAIR

"We would like to announce Euro Collectors Festival on 7 and 8 December 1996, which takes place in Belgium, Gent, Flanders Expo in different halls.

This is one of the largest Collectors fairs in Europe. More than 1,000 participants are expected to take part in the Festival. Almost everything that is collected will be there. This event is supported by the most important collectorsmagazines in Europe!

Because the theme or collectibles you are interest in will be offered at this Mega event, we thought this information could be of any interest to you. At the moment we have received applications from Holland, Germany, Great Britain, France, Luxembourg, Danmark, Sweden, Portugal, and even from the Ukraine. At the same time we organise a very prestigious election: The European Collector of the Year, chosen by an International jury of professionals. The winner gets 1000 dollars. If you know important collectors in Europe, please tell them. We send info via E-mail or a dossier by post. Hoping that this information will be of interest to you."

Robert Koesharto, Organiser EURO COLLECTORS FESTIVAL,
KRUGERSTRAAT 213, B-2660 ANTWERP, BELGIUM.

HUNTING DOWN THOSE PRE-WAR SETS

Collectors searching for an elusive television receiver from before the war normally make the assumption these will be found only within the service area of the London television station, and this is a very reasonable assumption to make. It is, however, wrong.

A recent conversation with Howard Parker, who worked immediately after the war in GEC's regional radio trade sales office in Birmingham, relates that despite bombings and other catastrophes, GEC and other manufacturers emerged from the war with considerable stocks of television receivers which had been unsold when the war started in 1939.

These sets were brought out of the warehouses in 1946 and refurbished for sale. Many were in fact shipped up to Birmingham ready for the start of the Midlands television service in 1949. Howard had the task of retuning them from the London channel to the new Sutton Coldfield frequency. In view of this, collectors would be mistaken if they assumed pre-war TVs would only be found in the London area or aligned only on channel 1.

NEW BOOKS

The second edition of the **Guinness Book of Classic TV** is out. It's a heavyweight paperback and would be worth sizing up at W.H. Smiths or your favourite bookshop. Another new book announced at the Antique Wireless Association (AWA) Meet in Rochester, NY concerns valves (vacuum tubes). Authored by Ludwell Sibley, well known expert on tubes and writer of many articles in the Old Timers Bulletin (OTB), Antique Radio Classified (ARC) and in many Radio Club newsletters across the USA and around the world.

"Tube Lore" A Reference for Users and Collectors by Ludwell Sibley.

For serious tube users, collectors and admirers: a new look into tubes, 1920 to now. Here's what it contains:

- ❖ Trends in Tube Design: History of major styles that shaped the industry – acorns, metals, loktals, miniatures and subminiature, lighthouse, nuvistors, compactrons. Includes odd design variants and special 'reliable' types.
- ❖ Receiving and Audio Tubes: 'Prehistoric' types from 25 tiny manufacturers as well as the big guys - information on a lot of collectable tubes in one place. Basic tech data on lots of later types, both common and little known, and on early CRTs. Includes many types not found in ordinary tube manuals.
- ❖ Military Types: A researched and insightful list of Signal Corps 'VT' tubes; the biggest list yet seen of early Navy type numbers; coverage of Canadian 'REL' tubes.
- ❖ Unique Types from major makers: De Forest, Eimac, GE, Raytheon, RCA, Sylvania, Westinghouse. 13-page chapter on Western Electric, with new information.
- ❖ User's Guide: Ideas on testing, adapting, repairing, reactivating, identifying, the faint-marked ones, reading date codes, detecting the real maker of private-brand tubes, turning random lots into usable repair stock.
- ❖ Special-Purpose and Transmitting Types: Covers the familiar ones and lots of unknown types. 'Regular' tubes, plus magnetrons, klystrons, thyratons, ignitrons, camera tubes, etc. Capsulized characteristics on 2300 'specials' from 5512 to 9019. Helps identify that just-found 'whatzit'. (Everybody knows a 6922 is a premium 6DJ8, but what about the 7308?) For many types, identifies the equipment – civilian or military – that used the tube.
- ❖ Relates specials to their regular prototypes.
- ❖ TV Sweep Tubes: Eight audio amps and 78 amateur transmitters/linears that use them; tech characteristics; hints on substituting as the originals get scarcer and more expensive.
- ❖ Auction Prices: For collectible and audio tubes, from six major sales (Rochester, Dearborn, Highstown).

Contains 186 pages, 8-1/2" x 11" softbound. Price, postpaid: \$19.95 in North America; \$24.95 elsewhere. Discounts available to clubs on group orders. Shipment starts September 30, 1996.

Send your name, address and a check made out to: Ludwell Sibley, 44 E. Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822, USA.

OLD BOOK

If you remember:

- ❖ The Tingha and Tucker Club;
- ❖ The Stylophone;
- ❖ The National Anthem after every film at the cinema;
- ❖ The Magic Robot Game;
- ❖ K-E-Y-N-S-H-A-M;

- ❖ Eight-track cartridge car stereos;
- ❖ ... and a further 247 long-gone pieces of our lives.

...you will enjoy owning a copy of *Buygones*. Originally published in 1988, this was the book that kicked off the media nostalgia boom. Having quickly sold out its original print run, it was thought to be out of print until last month, when about a hundred copies were unearthed in a warehouse. First come, first served, at £8.99 including postage and packing. *Buygones* is available from:

A.R.T.V. Ltd
P.O. Box 6
Millom
LA19 5GA.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to ARTV.

NEW BOOK

"On a recent trip to Portland I picked up a real nice book at Powell's Technical Bookstore. It's called *The Cathode Ray Tube: Technology, History, and Applications* by Peter A. Keller. Published by Palisades Press, ISBN # 0-9631559-0-3. It's a hard cover book that amounts to a collector's guide to CRTs. I don't really collect CRTs but I was so impressed that I had to pick it up. I think it was about \$30. I highly recommend it."

Chuck Penson, WA7ZZE.

I concur with Chuck Penson about *The Cathode-Ray Tube* by Peter A. Keller; it's an outstanding book. I picked up my copy mailorder from Tektronix O'Scope guru, Stan Griffiths. The price was \$30.00 pp. Look for it. 73, Michael A. Burke.

NEW CD

From today's *Daily Telegraph* (Saturday, 27th September 1996):

A compact disc of music from the BBC test card that featured a girl and a rag doll playing noughts and crosses is selling at the rate of 300 copies an hour.

Richard Lamont

- ❖ *That sounds like good news. The CD is on the Chandos label and was compiled by 405 Aliver Tony Currie and edited by 405 sympathiser Lucy Reeve. Reviews by Malcolm Batchelor and Tony Clayden can be found deeper inside this edition. Editor.*

NEW TAPES

Two new tapes released on the BBC Video label are *Hancock's Half Hour* and the 1960s *Sherlock Holmes*. It's good to see these rare Hancock recordings available; there are three on the tape, which is good value for money. The first of the three episodes is presented absolutely 'raw' (good!), whereas the other two have been stigmatised with overlaid captions and copyright dates (when will they learn?).

CQ CQ de GB60BBC

On the 2nd November 1936 the BBC started the world's first regular high definition television service from Alexandra Palace in North London. The Ariel Radio Group is celebrating this by holding a QSO party on the HF bands over the weekend of the 2nd / 3rd November 1996. Anyone involved in any aspect of broadcasting (i.e. TV, radio, cable, satellite, facilities houses and support companies) is encouraged to take part. We hope that during this event a station from the group will be active using our special call for this year GB60BBC, possibly from Alexandra Palace.

This is not a contest but participants are invited to submit logs showing date, time, station worked and broadcast affiliation of station worked (i.e. BBC, Granada, C4, NHK, ABC, Sony etc.) a certificate will be awarded to anyone sending in an entry. Entries may be sent either by mail to: Brian Bower, 19 Chapel Road, Flackwell Heath, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP10 9AB or by e-mail to qsop@xdinet.demon.co.uk to arrive by January 1st 1997.

The QSO party will start at 00:01 UTC on 2nd November and finish at 23:59 UTC on 3rd November, call CQ TV60 to attract attention. Suggested centres of activity are 3.72MHz, 7.06MHz, 14.38MHz, 18.16MHz, 21.38MHz, 24.96MHz, 28.38MHz on SSB and 3.53MHz, 7.03MHz, 10.135MHz, 14.055MHz, 18.075MHz, 21.075MHz, 24.905MHz and 28.075MHz on CW.

Information about the Ariel Radio Group, newsletters and details of the current GB60BBC operation are available from the group's web site at: <http://www.xdinet.demon.co.uk/ARG/>

Chris Packman G6XDI, chris@xdinet.demon.co.uk

THE NEW CHANNEL 5

This station, scheduled to start broadcasting early in the New Year, will broadcast 24-hour popular general entertainment in a schedule that is promised not to clash with similar programmes on other channels, and contain similar types of programs at the same time every day, every week. So if you like quiz shows you can always guarantee to find one at the same time every day, the shows will be different ones but it is hoped that a consistent scheduling policy will help build viewer loyalty.

The schedule will include News and Current affairs, Drama , Religion, Sport, Arts and Children. The Sports channel will specialise in covering sports not currently available on other terrestrial channels. Channel 5 will jointly commission popular educational programs with the Open University.

The channel has a large library of existing material through Pearson who own Thames Television (*The Bill, Minder* etc.) the former holder of the London ITV Channel 3 franchise and Grundy Television (*Neighbours*). However it will not all be repeats as the licence decrees that initially at least 40 per cent of the programmes must be originally made or commissioned for Channel 5, and within 5 years 65 per cent of programme content must be original output.

YOU READ IT HERE FIRST

Are you wondering which 'modern antique' is set to grow in value? The answer is first-generation video games! Mark my words, now is the time to scour the Sunday boot sales for tele-tennis (or 'Pong' as the Americans called it) and that odd black-and-white stunt motorcycle rider game (yes, I've still got mine in the garage!). Brandnames include Sportel and CompShop. The proof lies in the next two announcements.

PRESS RELEASE: Re-Play, The Greatest Gamer Exhibition

29 November 1996 - 15 May 1997

The story of videogames zaps into life at the Museum of the Moving Image from 29 November 1996. The exhibition is the first of its kind, especially designed to appeal to all ages, gamers and non-gamers alike. Visitors can play a variety of old and new games from 'bat and ball' to 'beat 'emups'. Video displays are used to demonstrate the development of video gaming over the last 30 years.

Re-Play tells of the software and the hardware; the hits and the misses; the people and their inspirations. The first videogames were created on huge mainframe computers in the 1960s. Discover how a few years later in Japan, the arcade release of Space Invaders caused a shortage of 100 Yen coins. Learn why military technology influenced video games, and how a game designed at the Soviet Academy of Science caused an international struggle for its world-wide release.

Are videogames dangerous? Are they turning our children into gaming addicts? Or are they simply fast, furious and fun? Re-Play explores the increasing influence of video games on people's lives. It shows the importance of interactivity and offers a chance to examine the physiological effect of game playing on the body. Plus, the exhibition looks at the links between videogames and other forms of entertainment such as films, TV programmes, books and arcade games.

VIDEO GAMES APPEAL by the British Film Institute

Can you help? In conjunction with Re-Play, the National Film and Television Archive (the arm of the British Film Institute that preserves film, video and television programmes) has launched an appeal for videogames from the 1970s and 80s. Games, hardware or any relevant information is sought in order to produce an archive of equipment and a CD-ROM Interactive Encyclopaedia. Please write with details to Tony Hetherington, Videogame Researcher, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 2LN.

Product Review:

THE *LI'L DINO* BAND I MODULATOR

Brian Renforth

To enable playback of 405-line recordings or viewing via a standards converter on a 405 lines-only or dual standard receiver, a VHF *System A* modulator is required. This is because the output from today's VCRs is designed to suit today's 625-line televisions, in other words the UK *System I* UHF with 405-line scanning.

Briefly the main differences between the two systems is that *A* has positive vision modulation with AM sound, whilst *I* has negative vision modulation with FM sound, not forgetting VHF and UHF respectively of course. It is possible to view 405 direct at UHF after modifying a dual-standard receiver so that only the timebases work at 405; this is OK as an emergency, yet is hardly an attractive prospect for the long term.

So we really need a System A modulator. In the past a few designs for these have been published, notably David Looser's version in 1984. Superb stuff for the technically minded, but for the less confident such as myself a daunting prospect. There could also be difficulties getting the parts required of course.

Thankfully Dave Grant and Mike Izycky at Dinosaur Labs, following their highly acclaimed 625-405 standards converter, have come up with their *Li'l Dino* Modulator. This comes ready made on a PCB measuring around 3" x 4", the usual connectors, power supply and box being required for mounting (a metal box is recommended). It is also ready aligned, the only 'user' control being the 'audio volume' output, which need not be touched again when adjusted to suit. The double sided PCB is beautifully constructed with the surface-mounted components on the underside – altogether a highly professional job.

On connecting up, the result obtained on *all* my sets was superb with no alignment being required. Despite very careful observation, it was impossible to fault the unit in any way. I was also highly impressed with the lack of interference it causes to the other services, even when checking VHF radio with the modulator connected to my Decca DM2/C 14" TV/VHF radio. Screening is also good: it was found impossible to achieve results using a high gain T-Vette portable's whip aerial with the modulator in the same room, direct connection being required. If desired a splitter can be used to feed two or more sets. All the information you'll need to know is provided by Dave together with the modulator.

A 12-volt stabilised power supply is required but this doesn't have to be big or special; in fact the modulator draws a miserly 50mA at 12 volts. I use a cheap and cheerful unit, which remains cool even after several hours use, thus you can expect operation to be very reliable.

In conclusion the modulator, together with the *Dinosaur* standards converter both come highly recommended. Only a few years ago the thought of a very professional and compact combination to view 405-line television properly seemed a lifetime away. Now a complete and professional-standard system can be obtained for around £350! The *Li'l Dino* modulator is available separately for £80 plus £3 postage. This might seem a little pricey at first but don't forget the time and effort that went into designing and producing such an excellent unit more than justifies the cost.

Together with the *Dinosaur* converter I would go as far as to *insist* on their purchase if one wishes to view pure 405 but lacks the technical know-how (which must count for most of us!).

For more information contact Dave Grant, 4 Kemble Drive, Bromley, Kent BR2 8PZ (01689-857086) or Mike Izycky (01773- 344506).

Compact Disc Review

TEST CARD CLASSICS: THE GIRL THE DOLL THE MUSIC

Chandos/Flyback FBCD2000, £13.99.

Previously Unreleased Original Recordings.

Playing time: 60 minutes, 43 seconds.

Test Card enthusiasts take note. Here for the very first time is an album of the best of the music that accompanied the Test Card in the late 1960s and early 70s. Twenty-two tracks covering a wide range of orchestral, instrumental, big band and jazz styles. Original pieces remastered in glorious stereo from the likes of composers Syd Dale, Alan Moorhouse, Gordon Langford and Ernest Tomlinson to name but a few. Muzak or elevator music this most certainly is not. Here is a collection of melodic mini masterpieces beautifully performed that if released as singles thirty years ago would daresay have made the Top 20. A fine taster of the 3,500 tracks that were regularly used during the day on BBC's Trade Test Transmissions between 1947 and the late 1980s. For 405 Alivers this is a must to have on hand when radiating pictures of the Test Card. There's even 20 seconds of 440Hz tone at the end... CD quality, of course!!!

[Malcolm Batchelor]

I fully endorse Malcolm's remarks about this excellent new release and would like to add a few more background details. Chandos has long been

established as a leading UK label for classical music, but in the late 1960s the company also built up a library of 'mood music' for films and television use. This included compositions and arrangements by, among others, Ernest Tomlinson, Gordon Langford and Brian Couzens (who happens to be MD of Chandos), and several of these appear here; there is also material from the archives of Southern, Berry, C. Brull and Parry.

Most of the tracks feature a happy combination of British composers/arrangers and German session recordings, in many cases employing musicians who have played on million-selling albums of Bert Kaempfert, James Last, Werner Müller and others. The results are, in the majority of instances, spectacular (only a few items are mono), and offer a precision of performance and quality of recording which would be difficult to surpass.

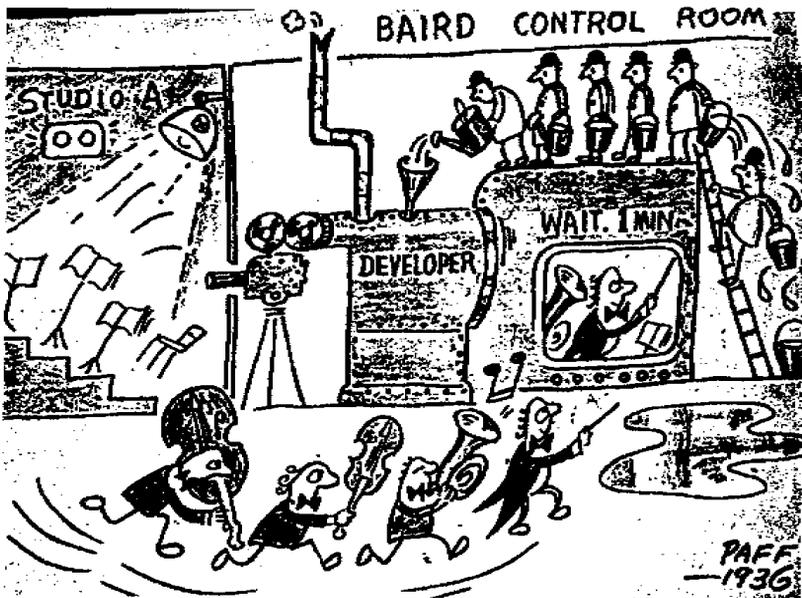
The name of the new label (Flyback) is an ingenious and inspired *double entendre*; it obviously alludes to the flyback lines visible on a poorly adjusted television set, but it also paves the way for Chandos to introduce other nostalgia-related material in the future and this is hinted-at in the informative booklet, with notes by Tony Currie. There has already been a massive pre-release press and publicity campaign, and this highly recommended CD deserves every success. [Tony Clayden]

FROM PAFF'S

SCRAPBOOK - 2

We continue this series of extracts from Paff's personal Cartoon History of television with his arrival at Alexandra Palace in 1936.

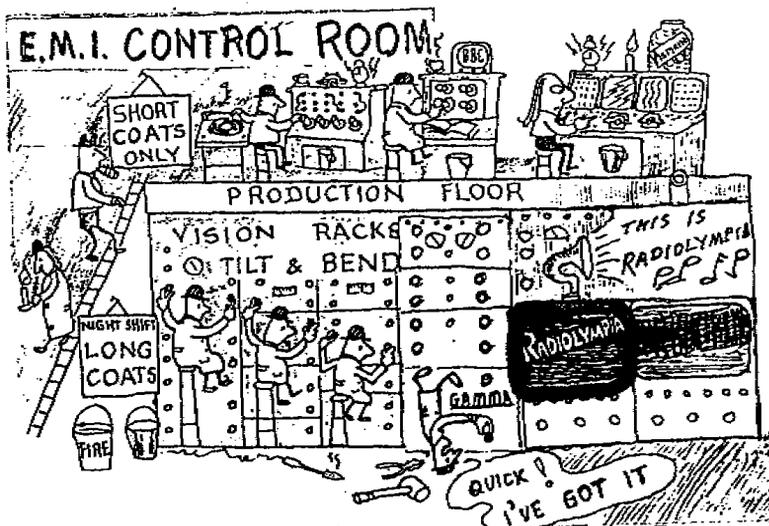
Back in London for the opening of television at Alexandra Palace in 1936. The first picture shows the old Baird mechanical system using a fixed film camera with delayed developer, mechanical scanner with pumps, fans and buckets of water. On one occasion the roof water tank started leaking but it did not stop the musicians dashing round to see themselves on the screen one minute later. All rather Heath-Robinsonish. Eventually of course the Baird system was replaced by the new EMI electronic system.



The EMI control room was full of complicated equipment and during our one-hour long live programme, it took at least four skilled engineers to manipulate the knobs continuously to get an acceptable picture. Nowadays with microchips and computers everything is automatically

controlled. At Ally Pally in 1936 it was basically 'Upstairs, Downstairs'. Upstairs for the programme producers in short white coats, downstairs for long white-coated technicians to get the best possible pictures.

Technical jargon became fashionable... 'Tilt and Bend' meant adjusting uneven scanning and shading. 'Black Level' meant holding signals down to base line. 'Gamma' meant holding contrast down to prevent flares off white shirts and bald heads, usually aide by Wardrobe and Make-Up Departments.

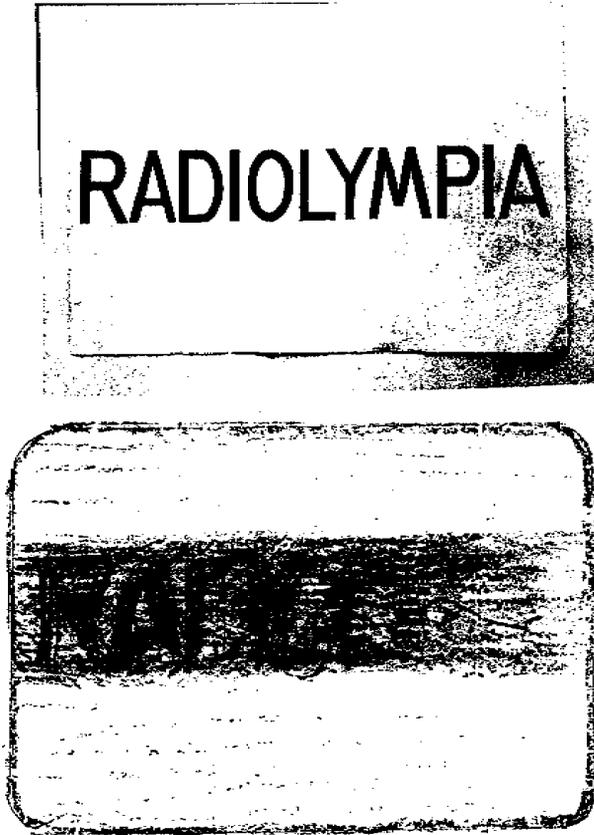


This was our very first television programme, *Radiolympia*. There was something of a panic... Gerald Cock, our television boss wanted a caption urgently, with the word 'Radiolympia' painted in large letters. Could I draw or paint it by 3pm?

Without thinking, I said 'yes' and dashed over to W.H. Smiths, Muswell Hill, to get a large white card, ink and brush. It took me all morning doing large black letters on the white board. We hadn't even looked at print on cameras, so we took a chance. Five minute to go we switched on... panic! All we got on the TV screen was a long black smudge!

Suddenly I remembered a special switch marked 'Phase reverse', so we tried it. Success! It did the trick: perfect white letters on a black background.

But why? The answer was 'gamma'. The contrast of the black letters on a white card was much too high. On a black card it was many times lower and the Emitron tube in the camera was happy at that level. Besides it was an artistic improvement too.



Upper: The 'Radiolympia' caption as drawn.

Lower: An impression of the effect on screen before video inversion.

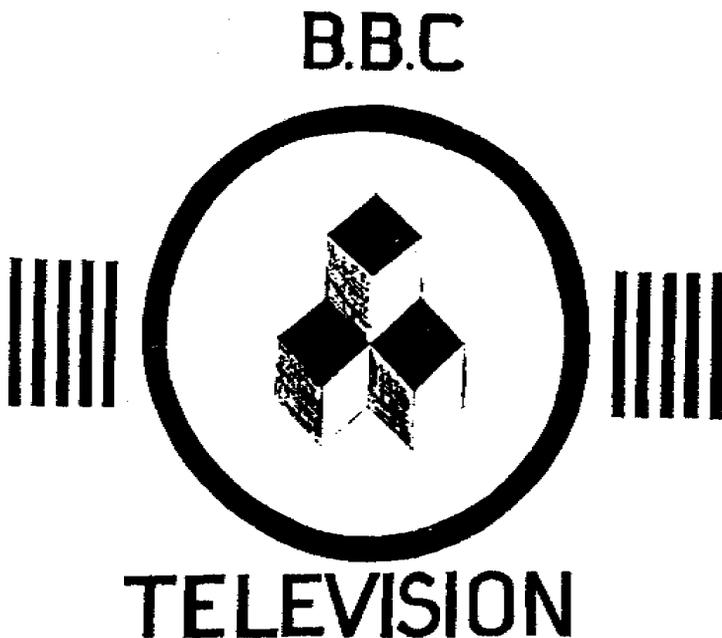
Nothing like success. I was then asked to design our very first 'Tuning Caption' for lining up our cameras five minutes before each programme transmission. Being the first of its kind, it got a write-up in the *Sunday Observer*, which I still have. I quote:

"The new tuning signal picture, which was brought into use last week, looks as if a BBC artist had tried to out-do the most

modern of the moderns. Actually its grouping of cubes and circles is designed to allow the picture in the receiver to be correctly proportioned. It is transmitted for five minutes before each programme.”

Sunday Observer, 26th September 1937.

In addition of course it allows control room engineers to check camera focus on the vertical lines, contrast on the cubes and geometry on the circle, which was often more like an egg or an ellipse.



BIRDS OF A TV FEATHER

Dicky Howett drags up for your delectation a few little-known telly facts...

In A Spin

The search for a viable colour television system during the pioneer pre-war years produced a wealth of novel ideas. Baird plugged away with his tea chest full of whizzing wheels and then, post-war, CBS and the British Pye company refined the process with a 'sequential' spinning disc colour system. Eventually, RCA hit the spot with their all-electronic monochrome-compatible dot-matrix shadow-mask tube system which resulted in the American FCC adopting in 1953 the familiar NTSC standard.

And then in 1955, for reasons which might remain obscure, the American-based electronics outfit Du Mont Laboratories Inc. announced a system of colour television that had a familiar ring to it.

The Du Mont system was named 'Vitascan'. This is how it worked. The 'Vitascan Color Studio Scanner' was a cathode ray tube which was constructed to throw a beam of light, directed onto the studio subject by a system of mirrors and lenses. (This, in essence was a flying spot that 'scanned' the scene). The reflected light was then collected by clusters of photomultipliers hung in the approximate places to that of lights in a conventional television studio. So far, this system is little more than Baird's old 1936 blackout studio 'Spotlight' arrangement.

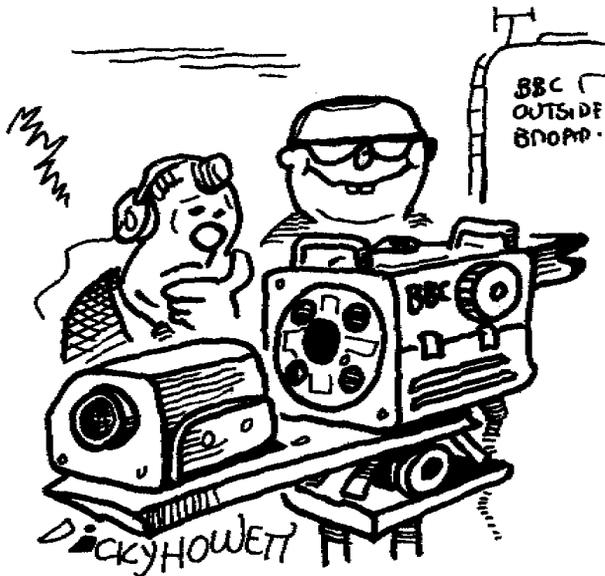
However, Du Mont added a refinement. Instead of a pitch black studio, strobe lights were installed. These were linked to the field blanking of the 'camera' so that the lights were 'off' during a scan and 'on' during blanking. This gave the impression of a continuously lit studio when in reality it was in darkness for half the time to allow for the 'camera' to 'take' the picture. Of course, this system could only be used from a fixed position inside a small studio, and so was inflexible and quite useless for 'proper' television. Apparently Du Mont developed 'Vitascan' as a cheap (if rather late) alternative to the RCA system. Cost notwithstanding, 'Vitascan' found few commercial applications.

Pye Squared

In the olden days, TV cameramen had to be, at times, resourceful. Such was live BBC Television with intractable apparatus and slim budgets.

This tale was related to me by Peter Robins, who latterly became Head of Cameras at BBC Wales in Cardiff. In the late nineteen-fifties Peter was doing an o.b. from Bristol using a Pye Mk 3 camera equipped with a Watson 5:1 zoom. Peter was assembling the kit when he noticed that a vital tube which connected the zoom (mounted on a sledge) to the camera was missing. But Cliff Michelmore had the answer. He'd seen it all before.

"We had this problem last time," said Cliff. "All you need to do is go and buy a tin of Ajax, empty it and cut it down by 2½ inches. You'll find it'll fit perfectly between the camera and the zoom". And it did.



Getting The Bird

Finally, it's well-known that Vintens have a propensity to name their wonderful pedestal products after various feathered fowl. They have also a Product Hire Department from whence one can, on a daily basis rent a Teal, a Tern, a Hawk or a Fulmar. The man who runs this valuable section is called Mr. Finch.

WRIGHT'S REPLAY

Jeff Wright tests your memory again

Criss Cross Quiz

It first began in June 1957 and was basically noughts and crosses with questions chosen from 98 categories asked by Jeremy Hawke. Each correct answer was worth twenty pounds, and if you kept winning – you kept collecting the twenty pounds.

There was no prize limit in those days and one contestant walked away with £2,360. Today that would be worth over twenty five grand. They soon changed the rules and set the limit at one thousand pounds.

In 1959 the producer complained that he had trouble finding women – to play the quiz. "As more women go out to business these days, I thought it would be simple to find lady contestants, but they seem to lack good general knowledge."

Jeremy Hawke left the quiz in 1962 and more or less disappeared from our screens, but he reappeared recently in a commercial. Did any of you spot him in the Babycham commercial, wooing a lady at a tea dance?

The quiz itself continued to roll its 98 categories until 1967, when after ten years Granada TV finally rolled it away for good.

Confessions of a Videotape Restorer: or How Come These Tapes All Need To Be Cleaned Differently?

Jim Lindner

This article has appeared in the AMIA newsletter, and is reprinted with permission.

I would like to share a few of my observations that have been gained through restoring several hundred videotapes. These tapes have come from a wide variety of sources and include many different formats including 1/2" reel to reel, 2" Quad, 1" Types A, B, & C, 3/4", and many other obsolete formats too numerous to mention (or remember). These tapes have been stored in a wide variety of conditions, some in pristine climate controlled vaults, and some in the top of closets in Florida or in the flooded basements of houses along the Long Island Sound. All of these tapes had one thing in common – they cannot be played by the user – and, perhaps most importantly, many things that were different.

The scant literature on videotape degeneration primarily discusses binder breakdown or what has been termed the 'sticky shed syndrome'. While many of the tapes that we have restored have exhibited this problem to various degrees, I have come to learn that many of the tapes have compound problems that do not fit the 'classic' profile of sticky shed syndrome. In addition, while I have heard that many are looking for a 'holy grail' solution that cures all tapes of their illnesses at least long enough to get a decent transfer, my personal observation is that such a single cure all is highly improbable, and that there is no one solution to the various maladies that have come my way.

This realisation is quite important because it means that the general application of a single solution 'cure' can actually make the tapes much worse than they were before the cleaning process was applied. As an obvious example, a tape that has a physical fold could be severely damaged by a cleaning machine that scrapes the surface of the tape with a razor or similar 'burnishing' station. Similarly, baking a tape that does not have sticky shed syndrome but does have serious chemical contamination due to its sitting in contaminated water for a couple of weeks is not a good idea.

In fact, we have seen tapes that are of the same format, shot approximately at the same time, and stored next to each other exhibit

different problems. More often, we are greeted by exasperation on the part of the client when one of two tapes that have been stored identically does not play when the other is fine.

A single cure solution actually seems silly when one considers some of the differences in the design of videotape itself, the requirements of the machines that the tapes were recorded on, and the handling the tape received during and after production. As the technology of videotape recording changed over the years, so too did the characteristics of videotape, because the demands of the equipment required different performance on the part of the tape itself. Indeed, videotape engineering is a crucial element in recorder design because what good is a fantastic machine without the tape to record the image on?

In many cases, the design of the recorders required radically different types of videotape performance, and, as a result, the chemistry of these products and the manufacturing techniques used to make them are very different. 2" Quad videotape, for example had to withstand severe abuse from the heads every time that it was played due to the deep head penetration that this format required. As a result, this tape is much thicker than the tape used in current digital videotape recorders whose heads barely touch the tape but require a much higher recording density than quad technology. Optimal abrasivity of the tape is also different for different formats, and the 'stiffness' of the tape which was optimal for proper head to tape contact in one format could be very different for another format. Many other characteristics of videotape vary significantly from format to format, and in some cases from magnetic tape supplier to supplier.

The importance of maintaining a proper environment for tape storage has been discussed, but some of the worst problems we have encountered are caused in production... long before storage has occurred. What single restoration solution could handle the unintentional abuse given by a well-intentioned crew member who placed a tape inside a sandwich bag (that apparently previously held a sandwich) where it remained for 20 years?

Some of my personal favourites include the tape that broke in production and was taped together... with duct tape, and the tape that had paper 'bookmarks' to mark where an important scene started. And of course there have been tapes that have been visited by living creatures over the years, some microscopic, and some generally characterised as 'vermin'.

I have seen old Quad tapes that have the problem of oxide literally flaking off the base, but I have never seen 1/2" reel to reel tapes have a severe shedding problem where the oxide literally separates from the base in a large section. Similarly, I have seen 1/2" tapes that needed to be cleaned eight times before the adhesive could be removed for playback (classic sticky shed syndrome), but I have never seen stickiness quite this bad with Quad tapes.

Unfortunately the end result of these videotape problems may appear to be the same... clogged heads which do not allow the video to be viewed. Jumping to the conclusion that the malady that caused the clogged heads is the same problem for different tapes is most often incorrect, and the theorem that one cleaning solution will work for all tapes is similarly incorrect.

Jim Lindner is the President of VidiPax, a videotape restoration service bureau that specialises in old, damaged, and obsolete videotape, and are associates of the National Media Lab. They provide a toll-free help line +1 800-653 8434 (calls charged from UK, however).

And now another professional angle on the subject, reproduced with acknowledgement from the bulletin of FOCAL International...

TV / Video Preservation

The video format obsolescence problem is frequently cited these days as the major concern in preserving broadcast history. While this is essentially true, another major problem remains largely unheralded and neglected.

As most of you are aware, the first 20-30 years of television history were often created or recorded on film – in either kinescope form, or in the prebroadcast film elements that comprised the news or current affairs documents of the day. The broadcast 2" Quad tapes for much of the 1960s and 70s were erased and recycled as that expensive tape stock was often considered more valuable than the information recorded therein. While many of those complete 'as broadcast' records may never again be found, the film inserts often survived long after the tapes were wiped.

Virtually without exception, all broadcasters – public and private networks, as well as individual stations – have horror stories to relate about their film libraries. Most television film libraries have been retired when the last 'film person' left the station. Some have been 'preserved' on video. The earliest television film-preservers did this on formats like 3/4" U-Matic, one of the video preservation burdens that now confronts today's archivists. In many cases, the actual film library itself was destroyed after the transfer to video. This unfortunate practice still continues today as many broadcasters struggle with budgets and expediencies that have little to do with preservation. This is

not even yesterday's news after all. It is a cumbersome and awkward pre-history that most stations will not transfer back to video anymore, because they don't have the time, inclination, equipment or personnel required.

It is true that the film libraries are a broadcast anachronism today. They are a pain to service, cost money to store, are not easy to access, and are often in poor condition. Some of the worst examples of acetate deterioration I have seen have come from television film. Much of it was considered ephemeral and never meant to be preserved. Processing was often rushed, wash time reduced, all in the interests of getting the show out on deadline. Tapes splices were used instead of film cement. Film materials were hastily canned, badly catalogued, and stored in bleak crawl spaces or basements. Double-system, mag and pix materials were stored in the same cheap stock cans, with the result that the (expensive to preserve) picture elements are now contaminated by deteriorating (and much cheaper to preserve) 16mm full-coat magnetic or rust from the cans. These choices, while necessary at the time of production, have severely aggravated the deterioration problems. Worse still, they have intensified the scope and costs of salvage or restoration. So, the easy choice is still the expedient one. Throw the stuff out.

The good news is that some of these libraries continue to survive. Where these libraries exist, they often are some of the best surviving links to reconstructing early broadcast history. The under-resourced television-film archivists know this to be true. They are truly on the front lines fighting to save this material, often while trying to deal with a constantly expanding video problem. The depressing news is that they aren't getting much help, recognition or resources – and these records continue to be lost and destroyed in spite of their best efforts.

Many of the recommendations in the recent Library of Congress Film Preservation study can be applied – the most basic being need for improved storage conditions. The most urgent problem is to try and prevent the destruction and address the deterioration of the libraries which remain.

There is no doubt that the preferred access, distribution, research and cataloguing medium for television records, at this time, is some format of video. However, most reels are not getting transferred to video, and those that do get to join in that preservation dance, the video-format obsolescence-shuffle. That isn't to suggest that film-to-film copying doesn't come with its own set of problems. Either way, keeping those original television film libraries around a little while longer is the best possible scenario.

William O'Farrell - Chief of Audio-visual Copying at National Archives of Canada

Television Inventor at Brentwood Hospital

Simon Vaughan

"Mr J L Baird, the famous inventor of television, brought sunshine into a ward of the Brentwood District Hospital this week when he officially presented to the hospital a radio television set." So began an article that appeared in the Brentwood Gazette for 27th November 1937.

It transpires that the set had been installed at the hospital for some months as those unfortunate enough to be unwell and patients in the hospital in May 1937 were able to watch the Coronation procession of their sovereign, King George V, on 12th of that month.

Present at the official ceremony on the afternoon of Monday 22nd November were Mr F J Jackson, Chairman of the hospital, Mr J F Hough, Hon. Secretary of the hospital, Miss B Hedley, Matron, Mr P C Harrop, organiser of the television presentation fund, Mr H J Barton Chapple, associate of John Logie Baird, and John Logie himself.

Mr Hough, during his welcome to Mr Baird, expressed the opinion that he was "the most famous inventor of the age. They knew him as the inventor of television, which enabled objects at a distance to be seen on a screen." He continued that "in years to come the name of Baird would be classed with that of other famous inventors like Galileo."

During his speech Baird made specific reference to the fact that the hospital was the first in the country to be equipped with a television set. He hoped it would not be the last, and he believed that the time would come when television sets would be as universal in hospitals as radio sets were now.

Mr Harrop, the owner of an electrical shop in Brentwood High Street, displayed the Baird Model T5 set in the window of his shop and arranged for a public collection to raise the money required to present the set to the hospital. The public response was such that the money required was raised in a few months.

Mr Harrop as well as arranging the collection, had installed the set and arranged to undertake the maintenance of it, free of charge to the hospital.

Although Brentwood District Hospital was the first in the country to have a television set, another in the district had a set installed prior to the official ceremony at Brentwood.

Mr Jackson expressing thanks on behalf of the hospital commented that Mr Baird had conferred a great honour upon the hospital by his visit. During the course of his scientific work Mr Baird must have had nay failures and they at the hospital could

appreciate how much sympathy he deserved in those failures. Fortunately, however, Mr Baird had been successful in his experiments, with the result that they today had television, and they in the hospital had the full value of it.

What happened to the Baird set is not known, and I have been unable to trace anyone who remembers how long it remained in use at the hospital.

The *Brentwood Gazette* article concludes: "The set was afterwards switched on and those present were enabled to hear and watch the programme for nearly an hour", expressing the wonderment that surrounded the whole concept of television.

Should any readers have any information pertaining to the presentation of the television set to the hospital I would be most grateful to hear from them. Please write to me at 30 Firsgrove Crescent, Brentwood, Essex, CM14 5JL.



Standing (left to right) are:

Mr J F Hough (Hon. Secretary of the hospital); Mr F J Jackson, JP (Chairman); Mr T F Dyer; Mr P C Harrop (organiser of the television presentation fund); Mr H J Barton Chapple; Mr Baird and Miss B Hedley (Matron).

ELSTREE - REMEMBER ME?

*Adapted and condensed from WWW pages compiled by
Graham Lewis*

The history of film-making at Elstree began in 1914, not long after the history of cinema itself. Percy Nash and John East two early British filmmakers decided Elstree was their ideal location to build a film studio, the two main criteria being close access to London and far enough away from the London smog – the Hertfordshire countryside was an added bonus for outdoor shooting.

Nash & East built the Neptune studios which opened its doors for business in 1914. The site of the Neptune studios is now where the BBC's Elstree centre stands. This studio was short-lived with the First World war claiming the lives of many young actors and technicians, and closed in 1917. Later the studio re-opened and over the years has been named by its various new owners as Ideal Studios, Blattner Studios, Leslie Fuller Studios, Rock Studios, British National Studios, then in the 1960s it became ATV Television Studios.

In 1961 Lew Grade's ATV acquired the studios on the Neptune site. They were turned into what was for many years the most modern TV studio centre in the UK. Latterly ATV held the franchise for commercial television in the Midlands of the UK, but the Elstree studios were the production base for many TV series that sold world-wide – Robin Hood, Sir Lancelot, The Saint (starring Roger Moore), The Persuaders (Roger Moore & Tony Curtis) and TV specials with big stars such as Shirley Bassey and Tom Jones.

Through his American sales company ITC Lew Grade personally pre-sold many of these series to American networks making his organisation cash rich, which enabled him to move into the movie business big time via ACC Associated Communications Corp. At the same time The Grade entertainment empire built by the three brothers Lew, Leslie and Bernard (Delfont) owned West End theatres, Pye records, overseas TV stations, entertainment management agencies, whilst ATV music continued to generate huge amounts of cash by virtue of owning publishing rights to the Beatles songs.

Eventually the Independent Broadcasting Authority insisted that ACC, Lew Grade's film empire, reduce its interest in ATV as it was felt to be monopolistic, and finally when the ITV franchises were up for renewal the Midlands licence went to Central TV and the ATV facility became Central Television's.

Central continued productions at Elstree before selling the studios to the BBC. Today the site is the BBC's Elstree Centre.

Lew Grade later became Lord Grade of Elstree, and at the grand age of 88 is still wheeling and dealing. Lew's one liners are as famous as any of his deals. Lord Grade's wife Kathie had a variety of rose named after her, the Lady Grade Rose. The rose still grows in the gardens of the Elstree Centre.

In the 80s the site became the BBC's Elstree production centre. Still on the site of the original Neptune Studios dating back to 1914, the Elstree Centre is a live working studio that is rarely opened to the public, although occasional open days are held.

Today the studio is the home of *Top of the Pops*, where once a week the great and the good of the British Pop Music charts visit to film the longest running Pop Music show on TV. This causes some not inconsiderable hassle to local residents who dread a Take That appearance as fans start arriving early in the morning and hang around the entrance gates until after the band have left.

Eastenders and *Grange Hill* are both filmed at the Centre, with occasional location shoots in the surrounding Borehamwood area. *Eastenders*, a twice weekly soap opera set in the fictional town of Walford E20, started its as yet unbroken run in 1985. The back lot of the Elstree centre looked like a building site when the BBC moved into their new premises in 1984, and deliberately so – the previous occupants, Central TV, had used the backlot for filming *Auf Wiedersehen Pet*, a TV series based around a group of British men working on a building site in Germany. So work began turning a German building site into a fictional East End town, and this was done with considerable attention to detail.

The railway bridge that runs through the set was supposedly for tube trains, but these are not very frequent in Walford because the mocked-up trains have to be pushed by hand by the stage crew across the bridge – the London Underground system does not stretch as far as Borehamwood. In a recent episode to coincide with VE day celebrations a steam train ran over the bridge – but this time the less strenuous method of letting a computer take the strain was used.

Occasionally the cast and crew are let loose on nearby streets to film, at one time or another local shops, hotels and even the Borehamwood FC ground have been used in episodes. Whenever the *Eastenders* go 'up West' they rarely travel more than a few miles from the set – this cuts down on transport and overtime costs.

Newsroom South East – local news bulletins are produced daily from the Centre for insertion into the National programming schedule. The BBC intends to re-locate this facility into central London this year.

Elstree's latest television connection is with Channel 5, the new (and last) terrestrial TV broadcasting channel to be licensed in the UK. The licence was awarded to Channel 5 Broadcasting by the Independent Television Commission in October 1995.

The Channel 5 Broadcasting Centre will be based at Elstree, leasing existing facilities at the BBC Elstree Studios. The Broadcast Centre will incorporate studios, offices and transmission facilities.

MISSING, BELIEVED WIPED 96

Two tales of programme recovery in the real world by Vaughan Stanger

Try Hard

At the beginning of the year, fellow 405 Aliver Brian Hemingway, who had already provided me with the Apollo 11 films that I described in an earlier letter (issue 29), wrote to me about a curious television-related 16mm film which he had acquired, entitled *L.E. Auditions Series No. 23*. After some discussion he generously agreed to lend it to me on the basis that I would pass it on to the British Film Institute for further examination. Steve Bryant, Keeper of Television at the BFI, received the film at the same time as the two Apollo films, subsequent to which it was transferred to D3 format and archived at Berkhamsted. Steve Bryant stated that he had not seen anything similar before, and tentatively dated it as "mid-sixties".

So what does this apparently rare, half hour film contain? As its title suggests, it consists of short filmed auditions of various performers who aspired to a career in Light Entertainment television. The film presents six performers in all, with details as follows:

- Margaret Wells - singer (somewhat in the Mary Hopkin or Dana 'songbird' mode).
- David Cumming - stand-up comic (much wit, short on laughs).
- Trevor Gordon - singer (light jazzish style, rather vapid voice).
- Milo O'Shea - mime (over-long but stylish mime of an orchestra conductor).
- Peter Quinn - vocal impressions (energetic but inexpert impressions of pop singers).
- O'Dwyer Family - singing troupe (one woman and four sinister-looking men in close harmony).

Of the six performers, only Milo O'Shea is familiar to me. He had a fairly successful career in the second half of the sixties and early seventies. He played a villain named Duran Duran in the 1967 SF film *Barbarella* (Yes, that is where the name of the eighties pop group comes from). I understand that he starred in the BBC 1 comedy series *Me Mammy* (1968-71) and, perhaps more interestingly, had the lead role in the 'Come Buttercup, Come Daisy, Come -' episode of the prestigious BBC2 SF anthology series *Out of the Unknown*. As the latter was transmitted in November 1965, and one of Peter Quinn's cover versions is *It's Not Unusual*, which was first a hit for Tom Jones in February 1965, the film most probably dates from the middle of that year. Looking at the performers' clothes and the minimalist, vaguely Pop Art stagings, the candidate date does seem plausible.

I have been unable to find out anything certain about the other five performers. Malcolm Chapman of S.T.A.R.S. thought that he recognised the name David Cumming, and suggested that he was a scriptwriter for radio shows. Can anyone confirm that hypothesis? Brian Hemingway thought that Peter Quinn seemed a little familiar, but perhaps had changed his name. Certainly, other than Milo O'Shea, he seemed the only remotely plausible candidate for a future career in Light Entertainment television shows. If anyone recognises the names of the performers, and knows whether any of them did eventually enjoy successful careers, I would be interested to know more.

The film contains few other details which can be used for identification purposes. Apart from the performers' names, the only titles are: 'L.E. Auditions Series No.23', 'Orchestra under the direction of Roger Webb' and 'Presented by the Auditions Unit'. Christine Slattery of the BBC Broadcast Archives has confirmed the existence of a BBC Auditions Unit and that the recovered film was one of a series intended for the producers of the L.E. shows. Presumably, BBC L.E. staffers had the unedifying task of trawling through what was evidently a lengthy series of films, searching for the occasional Milo O'Shea amongst the job-lots of O'Dwyer families and the like.

Of course, it is easy to mock the shortcomings of aspiring performers looking for their big break in television thirty years ago. Many similar acts did make a splash, and contributed to many well-remembered L.E. shows from the fifties to mid-seventies. This film, although not in any sense important in terms of television history, is nevertheless an interesting example of the back room aspects of the industry. As this one is 'No.23', and presumably not the last one in the series, there could well be others in private collections. If so, I'd be interested to hear about them, and in particular to find out whether they contain the first appearances of any future stars. Likewise, if any 405 Alivers can shed some light on the work of the BBC's Auditions Unit, that would also be of interest.

I should register my thanks to Malcolm Chapman for his helpful suggestions, Steve Bryant for showing an interest in this oddity, and especially to Brian Hemingway for making the film available. Good on you Brian.

Apollo 11 Films - An Update

In my letter printed in Issue 29, I gave details of two 16mm films I had obtained which contain excerpts from the BBC's coverage of the Apollo 11 mission. Since that time there has been a further development. A fellow 405 Aliver mentioned the name of someone he thought might have the other Apollo 11 film advertised by Brian Hemingway, one which I had failed to obtain at the time. Strangely enough, and proving conclusively that it is a small world, the name was a familiar one: I had corresponded with the person concerned on a quite separate matter a year or so previously. A

friendly letter yielded a positive, if slightly bemused reply. He did indeed have the film, which in outline description seemed similar to mine, but with the considerable advantage of a separate magnetic soundtrack.

It eventually transpired that the collector – who does not wish to be named – had already tried to return the film to both the BEC Archive and the BFI without success. Given my recent positive experience with the BFI, I asked the collector to make one last effort, which he agreed to do. The film was passed to Steve Bryant; a video transfer was made and archived at the NFTVA at Berkhamsted. The print was returned to the collector in under three months – a standard that I hope the BFI will maintain in any future arrangements of this nature with private individuals.

As I had expected, the film proved to be visually identical to my first film (as detailed in my letter in issue 29), and is of generally similar picture quality. Fortunately, the accompanying magnetic soundtrack matches the pictures exactly and is quite clear throughout. Therefore it has been possible to identify the film's sequences more accurately than was possible before. Thus we now know that in the third sequence James Burke is signing off the broadcast, as the NASA feed which forms the second sequence comes to an end (scenes of the astronauts in the LEM). He then reminds the audience of the time of the next transmission – just before *Grandstand* on the next day (Saturday, of course). The fourth sequence is not as described previously. The commentary, from the astronauts, Mission Control and Patrick Moore in the BBC Studio, makes it clear that Apollo 11 had only recently attained lunar orbit; the pictures are hand-pointed shots of the prospective landing site.

The content of the two existing films, which cover the pre-landing and post 'One small step...' phases of the mission, point very strongly to the existence of a further film, one which bridges the obvious gap. If anyone has that film in their collection, or knows someone else who does, please get in contact with me, either through the editorial address or at 87 Archery Close, Wealdstone, Middlesex, HA3 7RX (Tel: 0181-861 5553). It would be good to complete the set of films held by the NFTVA.

The interplay zone between of film and television is now explored by Jeremy Jago, as he describes

AURICON CAMERAS

What is an Auricon? It sounds like a television camera tube, like plumbicon or orthicon. Actually Auricon is a trade name for American film cameras of unusual design whose main use was in television news. The word is made from bits of words for hearing and image: one of those dubious mixtures of Latin and Greek (like 'television').

The traditional way to put sound on film is as an optical sound track – a narrow sound waveform printed alongside the frames of picture. It is normally photographed on special film in a separate 'sound camera'. The 'married print' for showing is then made by printing both negatives, picture and sound, in succession onto a third film.

Auricons, however, did things differently. They photographed the sound track and picture on the same 16mm film. If this was a reversal film, it didn't even have to be printed after development – it could be edited and loaded straight onto a telecine machine for transmission. 16mm could be rapidly processed in a plant at or near the television studio. There were drawbacks – both technical and creative – in this so-called 'single system' method, but in its day it was the quickest, most direct way possible to get urgent newsreel stories on air.

The manufacture of Auricon systems goes back to the early 1930s and they were also used during WWII, but they came into their own when television blossomed in the late 1940s. There were several models over the years: the Cinevoice, taking 100ft of film; the Auricon-Pro (200ft), the Pro-600 (600ft) and the Super-1200 (1,200ft). Remembering the linear film speed of 36 feet per minute at 24 frames per sec (US television) or 37½ft/mm at 25fps (European television), one can understand the possible duration per loading: around 2½ minutes for the smallest, or over 30 minutes for the largest camera. US television, of course, televises film by running it in a telecine machine at 24fps while scanning it at the transmission rate of 30Hz.

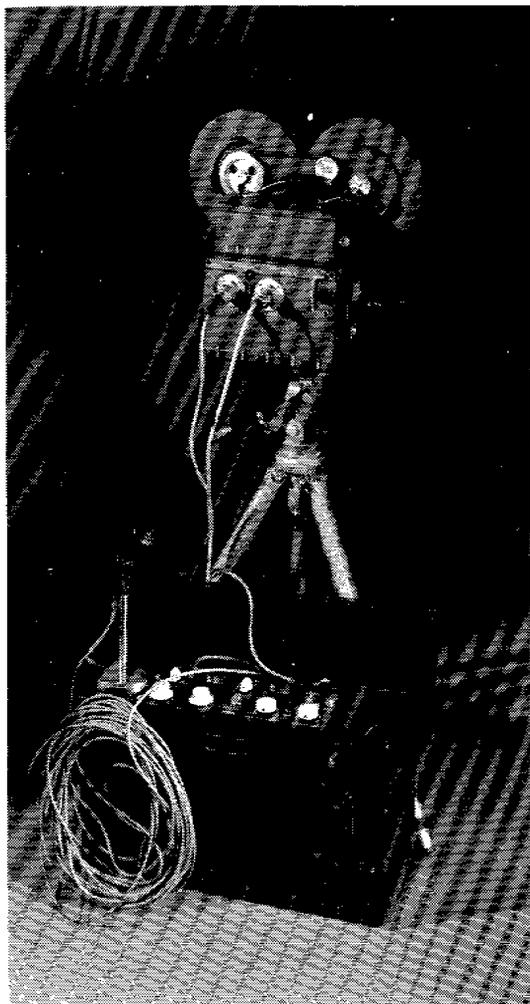
A complete Auricon system packed into transit cases: the camera itself, with detachable lightproof film magazines for the 600 and 1,200ft models, and the sound recording amplifier and microphone. The camera contained a recording galvanometer lit by a filament bulb, and was linked by a multicore cable to the separate amplifier case.

The amplifier was no bigger or more complex than a tape recorder, but in some cases both camera and sound system had to be operated by the same person! There were different sorts of amplifier, too – some, like the camera, were mains driven. Others used battery valves, with several batteries of various voltages packed into the case – similarly to the contemporary EMI portable tape recorders. Using batteries saved the weight of a mains power supply unit, which, to avoid hum, had to be in another case. The camera motor's mains requirement was sometimes irksome, though indoor reportage often needed a mains supply for lights anyway. A frequency-regulated DC to AC inverter would turn the motor from a (large) vehicle battery when required. All in all, a formidable assembly of gear – but much lighter than 35mm kit.

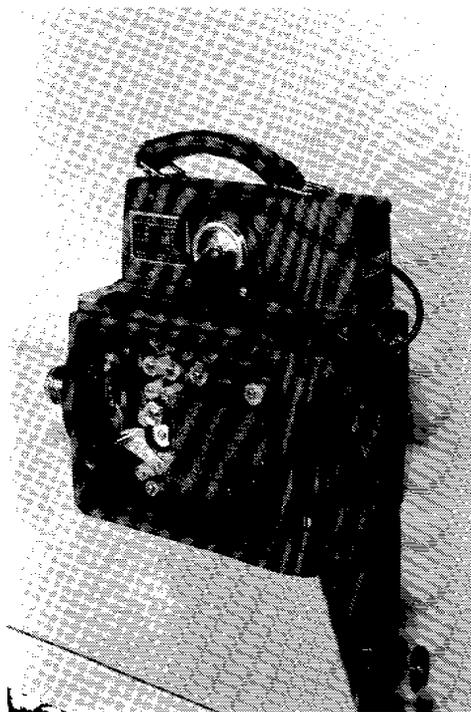
There was another use for Auricons – telerecording! Some models were put out with a Television Transcription or 'TVT' shutter (144 degrees), an Auricon patent which enabled the filming, at 24 fps, of a standard 525-line, 30 fps US television screen. In Britain a standard shutter was used at 25fps, resulting in a suppressed field telerecording. Alternatively a tube of suitable persistence, with intensified drive during the obscured field, could record a stored field, full definition UK signal. The 600 and 1200 models already had synchronous motors, run from mains if the television signal was mains-locked, otherwise from a sinewave derived from the station frame pulse. When videotape arrived, with its initials VTR, Auricon countered with the initials VFR – video film recording!

In 1955 another innovation was introduced: magnetic stripe sound. Despite the operational convenience of optical sound on film, sound quality control was a headache. Film fast enough for newsreel use was grainy and had modest definition. 'Single system' sound tracks thus suffered noise, distortion and loss of 'top'. Careful lab control could minimise these troubles, but newsreel work demands speed, in both senses. The advent of stripe, a waterproof magnetic oxide coating in the track position, solved these problems. Once recorded in the camera, this time by a tiny magnetic soundhead, it passed unaltered through the processing chemicals, and could again be played on a suitable telecine.

As the fifties unfolded and news reportage progressed, broadcasters began to demand lighter, more convenient cameras. Converted Auricons appeared – the BBC used the small Cinevoice, but with the top lopped off and a 400 ft (10 minute) magazine fitted. Stripe sound and a governed 12-volt motor (EMI tape machine-type) were used in a bid to combine quality and lightness.



1



2

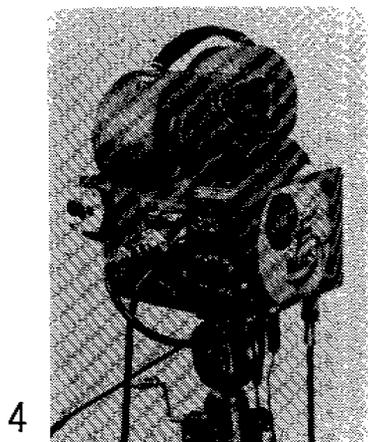
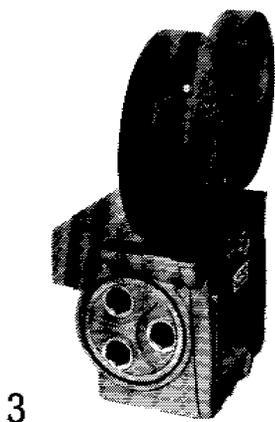
1. Auricon Pro-600 with 400ft magazine and battery amplifier.

2. Pro 600 camera. Oblong unit on top is a take-up 'torque motor' designed for silent working. The grey internal oblong is the sound recording device.

British broadcasters saw a more serious drawback which kept Auricons out of the forefront of UK television: the inflexibility of editing single-system sound. The standardised 26-frame separation between the picture and its relevant track-point ruled out the simultaneous or independent cutting of picture and sound. British news staff favoured recording sound on a separate magnetic film – enabling a versatile editing style and easing dubbing and commentary addition. If transfer to mag film was wanted anyway, the original recording might as well be on a separate tape recorder.

To this end, BBC, for instance, began to use portable tape recorders equipped with 'pulse sync', a means of recording timing pips derived from the camera and enabling later accurate transfer to magnetic film. On return to 'base' this didn't have to wait until the picture film was processed.

Further demands for mobility arose during the Vietnam war and other makes of camera excelled. There was even wild talk in the early 1970s of striped Super 8 supplanting 16mm newsfilm, but by now Electronic News Gathering was on the horizon. Auricon cameras had their heyday during the 20 years after the war and earned an enduring place in television history, both as bringers of news and as the source of many archival film telerecordings.



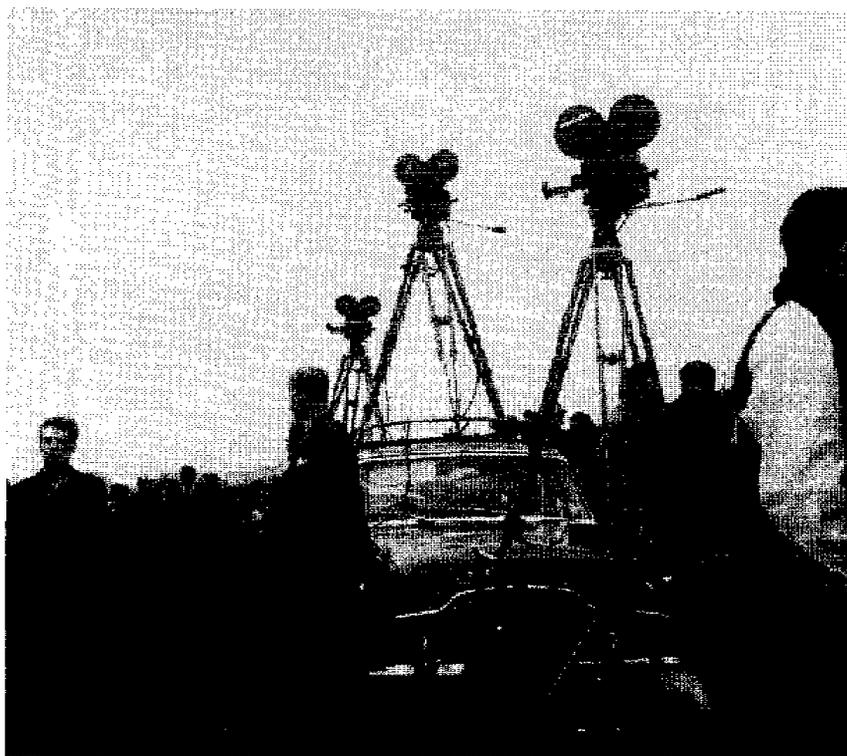
3. BBC-modified Cinevoice for 400ft magazine.

4. Cinevoice modified by WLAC-TV for transistor amplification.

NOT ELECTRONIC NEWSGATHERING

The ever camera-snappy Dicky Howett caught this trio of Auricon Super 1200 16mm television newsreel cameras in Hyde Park circa 1964. Manufactured by the US company Berndt-Bach of Los Angeles, California, this camera type was unique at the time (1950) in that it could record a direct optical sound track (later converted to magnetic stripe) *within* the camera. For this purpose the camera had a compact modulating unit and sound track exposure lamp positioned 26 frames after the picture gate. When developed, the film could be projected immediately with full synchronised sound. Auricon cameras were a favourite with TV news crews (BBC, ITN, Southern Television, Granada Television and others) and their use was curtailed only by the introduction in the late 1970s of electronic newsgathering (ENG).

Classic car fans might note that the BBC Auricon is perched on top of a Ford Zephyr, the grey standard BBC camera car of the period. It has a turret for three fixed focal-length lenses whereas the other two cameras are equipped with zoom lenses.



The Auricon camera was also light enough to be hand-held. The cameraman 'crouching' is the late Peter Beggin of BBCtv news.

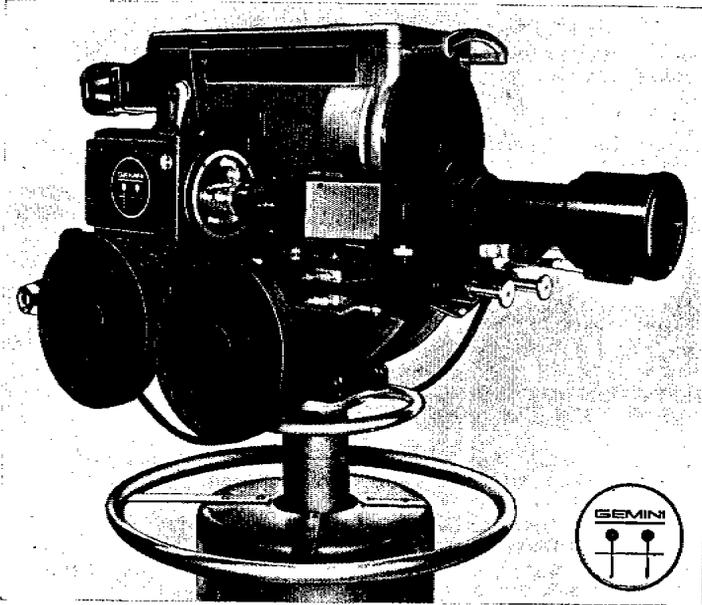


Late postscript

Jeremy Jago writes: The excerpt on the next page is from *Kemp's International Film & Television Directory, 1967*. The upside-down film camera is plainly an Auricon, whilst the television camera is a Marconi Mk IV.

GEMINI TAPE/FILM SYSTEM

A low-cost method of recording TV on 16mm film



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- GEMINI provides means of producing film and video recordings simultaneously or individually.
- GEMINI provides high quality film, superior to that obtainable from the telerecording process.
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- GEMINI film costs less to make, to store, to ship.
- GEMINI enables production of high quality colour film from your present black and white video equipment.
- GEMINI makes editing simpler and quicker with the exclusive Edilite system.
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For fear of scaring our non-technical readers, I have tucked these three 'oily rag' articles at the end of the proceedings. If you want to skip them, do feel free. Otherwise let's all revel in them!

First are two articles of the kind we always enjoy receiving because they encourage readers to take off the back from old sets and roll up their sleeves. Both are very 'accessible' articles and their step-by-step approach should make it easy for others intending to 'do up an old set'.

WHY AM I SPENDING TIME AND MONEY ON OBSOLETE JUNK?

asks Chris Garnett

I noticed it three years ago under a pile of 'stuff' and a layer of dust in our local junk shop; now you think I am going to say it was a pre-war set in immaculate condition and I managed to pick it up for a tenner! Not quite; it was an early 1960s set, very chunky and in diabolical condition. What is more I gave £20 for it so I undoubtedly overpaid by about... £20. A couple of double hernias later it was home – then it was in the attic.

The Christmas before last, a friend gave me an article on vintage TV equipment and my thoughts turned to the set in the attic. What had prevented me progressing further with it was the lack of a 405-line video signal. The article mentioned a weird bunch who were dedicated to all things 405... Ah, I thought, maybe they can help me find a standards converter. I made contact, received a sample copy of the magazine, became hooked and joined.

I was, however, still no further forward with the standards converter. At this time both the vendors of standards converters (Pineapple and Dinosaur Designs) had ceased producing for various reasons. I was lucky enough to obtain a surplus printed circuit board from Pineapple and various bits and bobs that they had lying around from their venture. Most of the other components needed were standard types and available from RS / Electromail. However the ADC and DACs were special Sony types.

I duly wrote a letter to Sony. Eventually I received an airy reply to the effect "We don't deal with the public " but they did suggest a third party

who would supply me, enabling me to finish the construction of the converter. I took the finished article to work and stuffed a 1-volt 625 colour bar signal into it, and with a minimal amount of jiggery-pokery, I managed to get a reasonable signal out that looked 'feasible' on the 'scope and seemed to have about 405 lines per frame! I even found a scrapped disc drive box with a PSU; this along with a Test Card 'C' generator, a modulator (supplied by Dinosaur/Test Cards 'r' Us) and an old UHF tuner I had in my junk box completed a viable Standards Converter / Test Pattern generator box.

Oh dear, it seemed I'd just blown my excuse. However, not wishing to do anything hasty, it was last Christmas before I decided to lower the monster in the attic down the stairs. The set is a Dynatron TV 35, walnut veneered – with doors on! Unfortunately the woodworm had made a meal of parts of it; anyway that was the least of my worries, the inside looked even more derelict than the out, webs, dust and rust. This beast would need a lot of work before the mains could go anywhere near it.

What I did notice however was that the set had '62 stamped on it, if this was the date of manufacture, we shared the same birth year and Dynatron was a Maidenhead company, where I was born – spooky (must remember to contact Carol Vorderman!). The set had to come to bits, so I also took the opportunity to dispense considerable quantities of woodworm treatment into the case (I wish I'd looked more carefully before consigning it to the attic, I do hope rafters aren't as tasty as 60s TVs!). Much wire wool and meths later, the chassis looked cosmetically better. The HT smoothing condenser was removed and reformed, it seemed to respond well and was re-fitted. A smaller metal can condenser had obviously seen better days and so I carefully scooped out the dry contents and fitted two modern electrolytic caps inside and sealed the end with black cardboard reinforced with a layer of epoxy resin. The three terminals protruded through.

It was now time to try to obtain a circuit diagram, but try as I might, I could not get hold of one for the model. The best I could get was circuits for a TV 34, and TV 36; the TV 34 was the closest. This was a radio-TV model whilst mine is a TV only, also the sync separator and timebase circuits varied considerably – still, better than nothing. I noticed all the gooey wax-covered tubular capacitors and despite knowing the problems these have given to other restorers, being basically lazy (and tight!) I left them in, after all I'm a great believer in authenticity.

I switched on. Instantly the 5-amp fuse blew in the plug, um, why didn't the 1.5-amp mains fuse blow in the set? Easy, someone had replaced it

with a 10-amp! The reason the fuse blew was that the wax monstrosity across the mains had a resistance of 2 ohms and smelled like bacon frying. Right! Replace all the wax tubular stuff (15-odd caps); authenticity is well overrated anyway in my opinion!

Switch on again... this time nothing happened. I checked that the mains was arriving at the set – it was but it was getting through the mains switch but no further. This time it was the mains dropper. A power resistor was obtained from RS and 'bodged' across the open circuit segment of the dropper. Switching on resulted in half the valve heaters shining like light bulbs and half not alight; hastily switch off. The problem was due to a small bead-shaped capacitor (1000pF) short circuiting the heater chain to chassis half way along its length. This may have been related to the open-circuit dropper segment. Switch on again, all filaments were now alight and of reasonable brightness.

I decided to connect the standards converter, the set was tuned to the correct channel and I was rewarded with faint sound. The line output transformer was also 'whistling a happy tune' but no picture or raster was present. A high voltage meter was borrowed from work and showed that the EHT was only 9kV; it should have been 16kV (according to the wrong circuit diagram! However, the tube on the circuit was the same as mine so the EHT voltage is probably the same). The EHT rectifier valve was replaced and 14kV was then present, still no signs of life from the tube... The tube cathode voltage seemed high but the grid and anode were correct, whilst temporarily taking the cathode low through a resistor resulted in a flash of luminance on the screen.

The 'problem' was actually very simple and just required the adjustment of the ion trap magnet on the base of the tube; slight adjustment made the difference between full luminance and nothing (my excuse is that I'm not used to fixing this old technology).

I was left with no picture and a very unstable raster. The hold controls did not enable stability to be achieved. I decided to investigate the lack of video. The voltages around the first vision IF seemed OK; the vision detector was a pin contact diode on the secondary of the second vision IF transformer. Time to wheel the 'scope out. I have no isolation transformer so I have to remove the earth connection from the 'scope and 'float' the 'scope to the chassis voltage, hopefully only a few volts, assuming you have the mains applied the right way around to the set (note: this is an extremely 'naughty' practice and not recommended, I have to say this in these safety-fanatical times).

Anyway, there was no video present on the cathode of this diode but 'stuff' was present on the anode. The meter revealed that the diode was open circuited. A replacement gave me a picture of sorts. I decided to switch in Test Card 'C'. Careful adjustment of frame locking control enabled the frame to be manually adjusted to be correct, but it refused to 'lock' adjustment in either direction resulted in rapid rolling. The line lock was also behaving strangely; the picture would lock in two places, both wrong, two partial pictures, or three. The range on the control was phenomenal, the whole picture would fade after the three locked pictures – presumably because the line frequency was so out of whack the EHT dropped!. Unfortunately my circuit diagram diverged from the circuitry on the timebase section so it was time to dive in with the meter. Several high value resistors (above 100k) were up to 70 per cent out of tolerance so these were duly replaced with their metal oxide equivalents.

Switching on again revealed... absolutely no change. As I had measured all the resistors in sight and they were OK or replaced, and also swapped the relevant valves, this left transformers and capacitors. None of the transformers were open circuited or dead-shortened, so this left capacitors. As I had already changed the waxy tubular types, my eye was drawn to a pair of waxy flat types across a transformer not shown on my circuit. Dabbing a small value capacitor across the larger of these resulted in a small electric shock (!) and a marked change in line frequency, unfortunately the value of the original had been erased. I noticed that the smaller capacitor was slightly less than half the size and marked 300pf. The original capacitor measured 150pf on a capacitance bridge. A 1000pf 600V cap was obtained and the line lock control enabled me to obtain a correctly line locked Test Card 'C'; however the frame still slowly rolled.

An accidental knock to the first video IF valve locked the picture; this would not be the first place I would have looked for this fault so I was thankful for the piece of luck. (I assume that the field sync was being corrupted within the IF stage although I couldn't get my ageing 'scope to trigger to the field group at the output of the video detector either in the fault condition or when it was OK). I attempted to clean the valve socket but one of the inserts fell to bits so the socket was changed.

I now had a good stable picture with reasonable linearity, once the requisite controls had been adjusted. The contrast available from the tube was excellent (better than the 'proper' T.V actually). I switched the standards converter on and obtained Bob Monkhouse in glorious 405. (I wonder if he's been hiding in the set since the early 60s!). Unfortunately (or fortunately !), Bob was rather quiet; this was

remedied by changing a further 1000pF bead capacitor coupling the second sound IF stage.

The final component count was 23 changed (mainly caps). At this stage the TV suddenly died completely, yet another segment of the dropper resistor had gone open-circuit. Another resistor was 'bodged on'; the original dropper was now looking like a weird modern techno-sculpture. Bearing in mind the chances of finding a new mains dropper for the set is to all intents and purposes zilch, I decided to replace the whole thing with 4 aluminium-cased power resistors bolted to a lump of aluminium and screwed into the mains dropper cradle – hardly original but a lot neater. I don't suppose I will ever want to run the set from 200 volts DC or any of the other weird and wonderful voltages the original arrangement facilitated!

I'm afraid I 'copped out' on the case and got our friendly local furniture restorer to do it. The finished article looks great and I'm sure I couldn't have obliterated all those worm holes. All I have to do now is to work out a feasible story why I have spent quite a bit of dosh and time on degrading perfectly good colour 625-line signals to black and white 405 lines and renovating a piece of equipment that:

- a. has a whistle louder than Roger Whittaker;
- b. displays a picture that is grainier than Farmer Giles' field at harvest time;
- c. dissipates more hot air than a party conference;
- d. weighs more than Cedric Brown's wallet.

Anyone got any ideas?

And now here's another article which really does show you don't have to be an 'expert' ...

SEVEN LINES ON A PYE V2 (or Don't forget the ion-trap)

Dave Bathin

Issue 27 contained a hugely entertaining and informative article by a pair of experts on the restoration of a Pye B18T. I found the article far from discouraging and immediately set about the half dozen sets I have acquired which have been gathering dust. It will come as no surprise after reading this that I had no experience of TV servicing or handy mentor available. I relied on what I had read and my experiences with radio restoration. By way of contrast with the earlier article, the following depicts a complete novice groping his way through.

Before tackling any sets important to me I considered it prudent to practise on a couple of late fifties sets. This taught me a great deal, much more than I could hope to learn by reading about servicing. As with radios, traditional servicing of a set which has been operating satisfactorily within the last day or two is not the same as tackling something which has been unused for decades and acquired multiple faults.

I deliberately did not undertake mass capacitor replacement - this would have defeated the educational purpose of the exercise (a point often made by the editor of another, now associated, magazine). I did, however, snip out anything directly across the mains and bring the sets back very slowly on a variac, thereby effecting at least some reforming of the electrolytic capacitors. Throughout the task I took lots of voltage measurements and hooked the 'scope in to get familiar with what was going on. Incidentally I did not have a modulator available at this stage and was relying on a very basic pattern generator to display horizontal and vertical stripes.

Getting the sets going involved the replacement of a succession of leaky capacitors, resistors which had gone too high, and dodgy variable resistors, primarily in the timebases. Notable problems, in both sets, were the boost voltage capacitor being dead short, and non-linear frame timebases. Getting the frames linear involved the tedious replacement of most of the capacitors in the frame linearity circuits (and of course the cathode by-pass). I see that this problem also arose with the Pye B18T restoration and does appear to have been widespread. I've heard that in the early days of television people got accustomed to watching people with short legs and long faces - it was just a feature of early TV.

Having finally got a decently linear raster displaying reasonably distinct stripes on these sets I felt confident enough to tackle an older set - a Pye V2. This is a bakelite set with a 12" circular-faced CRT, allegedly inspired by the Dan Dare comic strip (the version with a switch tuner, the VT2, is featured in *TV is KING* page 38). Being bakelite I suppose it might be considered to be a 'yuppie antique' - I still like it though. My

example looked fine from the outside with no cracks or chips but was very sorry looking inside (and still is) with a heavily rusted chassis and cans. The vital transformers, coils and tube heater all tested OK but I was very concerned about the LOPT – one leg of the EY51 was detached and quite a lot of insulation was missing. However, all the winding resistances tested spot on with the published figures in *Radio & TV Servicing* (Vol. IV page 534). I decided to press on regardless and squirted silicone sealant over the LOPT where the insulation was missing – I had some left in the tube after doing the shower tray. Is there something else I should have used?

I cleared the rust from the chassis with a liberal application of *Jenolyte* (are we allowed to advertise? No! – *Editor*) but not being fussy, as is now obvious, I left it rather rough with the unlikely to be fulfilled intention of doing the polishing later. With my impatience to get sets working I seem to adopt the "I'll come back to it later" approach rather a lot.

The next task was to reform, if possible, the electrolytics, this time taking more care and doing them individually through an old thirties battery eliminator supplied by a variac. This way it is possible to watch and control the leakage. All the high voltage electrolytics (C23, C24, C35, C44, C49), including the HT smoothing and reservoir, reformed nicely with leakage at under half a milliamp at the operating voltage. This was very fortunate because I wouldn't know where to get suitable replacements for these large caps. The low voltage electrolytics (C36 and C48) did not reform well at all but it was an easy matter to put small modern replacements under the chassis and leave the originals physically in situ.

Next I had to decide on which capacitors to replace – I by now accepted it was sensible to replace certain wax paper rubbish prior to switch on. I followed the approach of Messrs Izucky and Grant with the Pye B18T and changed the V2 equivalents of those they identified. Initial changes included C21, C22 (RF filters), C34, C37, C39, C40 (sound area), C41, C46, C50, C52, C53 (timebase area). I did not initially change all the frame linearity capacitors. Having made the changes I scanned the chassis to see a couple of wax paper capacitors and about a half dozen Hurts brown plastic types remaining. I decided to leave them – I was getting impatient.

A couple of segments of the mains dropper and the vertical hold (R57) were replaced and it was time to power up. I was really excited and I suppose I expected it to work. The valves lit and sound came through with the signal generator but there was no sign of a raster. I was immediately convinced that the problem was with the LOPT or EHT rectifier.

I hadn't done a great deal of screwdriver poking at EHT on the other two sets so didn't really know how to approach this crude method of EHT testing. Anyway the EHT on this set is only about 7.5kV and large sparks shouldn't therefore be expected. With a floating screwdriver I got a nice blue glow on the EHT anode but not much at all at the cathode. This convinced me that the EHT rectifier was at fault. In anticipation of entering this silly pastime I had acquired a good selection and quantity of spare TV valves but could not find an EY51 (I suppose when valves are recovered from scrap sets it's not considered worth the hassle of unsoldering them). I was lucky however because I saw from the data that the EY86 is electrically similar – the heater is anyway

– and I had a known good one of these. So I recovered a B9A base and suitable anode cap and soldered these to the silicone sealant covered LOPT and suspended the EY86 over it. This really wasn't very pretty and there was still no raster. The screwdriver responses were the same as with the EY51.

I became determined to establish whether the EHT was as it should be. It occurred to me that I have a digital electric fence tester which might be suitable. The normal operating voltage of the fence is 7kV but in short pulses – I wasn't sure if a continuous EHT voltage would blow-up the tester. Anyway I risked it with a quick touch and got a reading of 5kV. I felt encouraged but not convinced. I next made a chain of my whole stock of 10Mohm resistors and put them in series with my multimeter – I got a reading which implied an EHT again of about 5kV. I was now almost convinced there was reasonable EHT. The low readings could no doubt be explained by weaknesses in the measuring methods. Feeling gradually braver about EHT I next put a flying lead to chassis on the 'well-insulated' screwdriver and approached the CRT anode. This time a convincingly healthy spark jumped. This finally convinced me that the EHT was OK.

So why no raster? I had at an early stage checked the other tube electrode voltages and found them to be of the right order. I was beginning to think there could be an internal open circuit in the tube. I even stopped the frame time base in hope of seeing a horizontal line. I increased the tube heater voltage but still no raster. However, looking again at the grid and cathode voltages it seemed the grid was just a little low and the cathode a little high. So I joined them and with my head and the screen buried under cloth I could see a half-height raster. I needed a break to enjoy the moment and have a drink.

The CRT grid-biasing components (R23, R24), including a dodgy brilliance control, were replaced with values which would allow a little greater positive bias to be applied. A weak raster could now be obtained. I then turned to the ion-trap. Just moving this back about an eighth of an inch solved everything. The brilliance control had to be turned back! I suppose the ion-trap had at some time taken a knock forward. Another moment to enjoy and stop for a drink. In a way I'm glad I hadn't identified this at the outset – I learnt quite a lot on the way.

The pattern generator indicated the seemingly inevitable cramped bottom on the frame. Yet again the remaining original linearity capacitors (C45 and C47) had to be changed. With the set displaying seven equal and distinct horizontal lines I felt a great achievement and called my wife to the workshop to witness the event. Strangely she didn't seem to be too impressed with "just lines". Maybe we 405 Alivers really are nuts. [Maybe?!? Definitely!!! – *Editor*]

Next in line for the treatment are two much more serious sets – a Murphy V114 and GEC BT7092 (the 405 *Alive* cover set) - with rather different EHT arrangements. You don't think I should even think about it, do you?!?

A TALE OF TWO TELLIES

The Editor confesses...

I am often asked if I have a large collection of televisions. Strange to relate, I do not – just three old ones in fact. For some reason (well, it's not surprising really) I do get offered rather a lot of sets, which I normally decline. The phone rings and a voice says: "We've been referred to you by the Vintage Wireless Museum/by MOMI/by the Bradford Museum and wondered if you'd be interested in this old set which we really don't want to scrap..."

I normally offer these people a free advertisement at the back of this magazine but some callers are not that easily silenced. Earlier this year one such caller insisted: "But you really must come and see the set. It's not too far from you and we have to clear the house within a week."

The set in question was a Defiant console of 1948, a monster of a set and a phone call soon revealed that it was quite scarce, it would contain a Plessey chassis (quite desirable in itself) and that David Boynes wanted it! On this basis I grudgingly agreed to drive forty-five miles in the dark at 20 minutes' notice and inspect said set.

It was pretty dirty but it just managed to fit in the car. I had come to collect one set but here was another. "Yes, the next-door neighbour noticed I was making trips to the dump and asked if I would take this one as well," was the explanation. In fact this second set was a little beauty – a 10" HMV table set of 1950, the model 1807A in virtually mint condition. With it came a magnifier lens on a perspex stand. To have condemned this set to the tip would have been the supreme crime, so I willingly accepted it and offered a small gift.

The big floor-standing Defiant was the first to return to life. David Boynes is a wizz at reviving old tellies and within a week of taking delivery had it working again. Not bad for a write-off set which had been stored in a damp garage for so many years! The cabinet will need some tender loving care but the electrical work is all done.

Now, the delightful little HMV table model which the callous neighbour wanted taken to the tip. In my innocence I imagined it would be an easy job to get going, and indeed vintage TV technician Dave Higginson and I soon found the key fault which had led to the set's condemnation all those years ago (or so we imagined). The picture was rolling vertically and we soon fixed the frame fault. I treated the set to new valves all round and waited with bated breath.

But then the real reason why the set had been given the heave-ho became visible. The picture tube was as 'flat' as a pancake... in other words totally and utterly worn out. All you could see was a pale grey picture with no contrast. In fact the 1807A was notorious for this fault, simply because the tubes soon failed. The trade hated these sets and few have survived. Apparently the people who made the picture tubes had problems on the metal-to-glass seals where the pins emerged from the base of the tube and this was the set's Achilles' heel.

But this set was as clean as a whistle otherwise, a little beauty, so the search was on for a replacement CRT. I must have rung round every dealer in the country but nobody had one for this set. I even investigated having the tube re-gunned but the only firm doing this work today, Sherwood Tubes in Nottingham, said it was a risky process on 46 year-old glass and they could not offer any guarantee that the tube wouldn't collapse during the baking process. The job would cost £50 and they would have to graft a thinner neck on the tube because they could only obtain narrow guns these days. Not very promising and not very authentic!

My luck appeared to change when I learned that a retired TV dealer had one of these tubes in his loft, unused, and I could have it for £50. This sounded a better deal and the tube was brought here with great care from Doncaster. The disappointment was considerable when it was fitted: just a blue glow in the neck of the tube. It was soft – air had got in. Another faulty air-to-glass seal... no wonder the 1807A set had a poor reputation!

These things rested for a couple of months until I heard another collector and 405 Aliver, Leslie Hine, had just bought the complete stock of old tubes from a dealership in Manchester which had closed. Yes, he did have the right CRT and it would cost me £30. To cut a long story short, this tube was brought down from the Lake District and it has now been fitted. And guess what? The picture is the brightest, sharpest picture I have seen on an old telly in years! It's a cracker!!!

So it was well worth waiting for and this set is certainly not going to the tip now, even though I was several times close to consigning it there. If the story illustrates anything, it has three morals: never assume a set is not worth fetching, never give up hope and never overlook what a great resource we have in our own midst of 405 Alivers.

WHO REMEMBERS..

PUBLIC INFORMATION FILMS from The CENTRAL OFFICE of INFORMATION?

Bob Netherway does for a start.

There are many things to be recalled from television of the 1960s and early 70s, especially when it comes to those short films that were mentioned in issue 30 of *405 Alive*.

One that has been mentioned is the one about the cartoon couple sitting on a clifftop somewhere in the UK, making observations about that chap in his little sailing dinghy.

“Oh loo-ook Petunia, I think he's splicing his mainbrace.”

“Yes Joe.”

“Now he's waving to us, Petunia.”

“What about that couple on table no.6, Joe? They seem very nice, don't they?” (Licks at ice cream.)

Then there is the one about road safety done in still drawings, with Frank Muir providing the voiceover, which goes something like this:

Flapping canvas, brakes that squeal,
a careless movement of the wheel.
To all you drivers on the road,
use signals of the highway code.
Slow in advance, drive with care,
don't give us all a sudden scare.
For flesh and blood like you we are,
but we' re out here, not in the car.

Then there are the ones that remind us about car theft. The first that springs to mind is the one where tow-rag is walking along a row of parked cars, and gives us his reasons for not bothering with this one, or that one.

“Crafty devil, put a padlock on the steering wheel”, then the next one he comes to, he says “Uh oh, not with a doggy in it.” At last, the one he has been looking for, a Triumph Herald. “He's left the quarterlight open, in we go, key in the ignition, and we're away. Some of em won't never learn.”

House fires were always being warned about in these films. The earliest one I recall is a cartoon called *Guard That Fire*. It featured some guardsmen of course and used to be shown just after *Watch With Mother*, before Test Card C came back on. Another more recent one was the famous Shaw Taylor film – he even had a telephone box in the studio, how very convenient!

One of my all-time favourites is the one about Reginald Mowhusband, The Safest Parker in Town. Reginald tried and tried to park his Austin 1100, but what he missed hitting at the front, he was sure to make up for at the back. People would come for miles just to watch. Bookmakers gave odds on his performance until the day Reginald got it right. "Well done Reginald Mowhusband, the safest parker in town!"

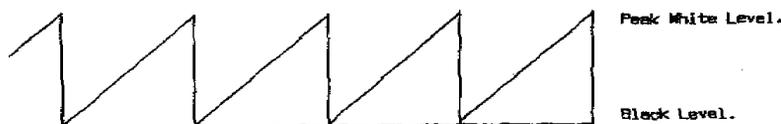
ALIGNMENT ALERT

Kelvin Mallett

Last time we looked in depth at the 'Art Bars', as used by the BBC Television Service, and found that it was a very basic test signal indeed. Despite this, however, it fulfilled many functions and was very useful in the early days of television. It was also noted in passing, that other signals were used at the same time, but only very rarely. One of these was the 'sawtooth'.

The 'sawtooth' was an even more basic signal than the 'Art Bars', but that didn't stop the ITA using it right up until the introduction of colour. If information about BBC Alignment Signals was scarce, details of ITA signals are practically non-existent. It has been noted though, that ITA Anglia, ITA London, ITA Midlands and ITA Southern all used sawtooth and tone for alignment prior to the daily trade test periods. From this it may be inferred that all ITA channels used the sawtooth and tone in this way. Unlike the BBC, the ITA also used sawtooth and tone at the end of trade test periods, prior to the tuning signal.

Below is a diagram of the sawtooth.



Basically the visual effect should be a smooth transition from black level to peak white from left to right across the screen, but due to the 'transfer characteristic' of the picture tube, it was more like a third black, transition to peak white, and the final third peak white.

As far as can be ascertained, the sawtooth was never meant to be a test signal of the type of the Art Bars, and was certainly never meant to be used to set up TV sets or diagnose fault conditions. The only real purpose was for checking links between the studio and the transmitter, and between transmitters. Just about the only things you could check on a TV receiver using the sawtooth would be contrast and RF and IF gain. If your contrast was too high, you would lose just about all the transition from black, through grey, to peak white, and you would see a very poor quality Line

Bar. If your contrast was set too low, you would not get peak white, or full black, and the display would look 'washed out'. If, for some reason, very little signal was getting into or through the receiver, if you were able to lock the signal, you would have an almost even grey display.

If the sawtooth was no good for the TV trade, what was the point of using it every day? Well, the alignment period was always for the broadcasters to ensure that everything was well with the landlines, microwave links etc., and the sawtooth is quite acceptable for this purpose. The way it was used was to compare oscillograms of the transmitted signal with oscillograms of the studio signal. If the two were radically different you had a problem. Because an oscilloscope display shows any degradation in signal far more accurately than a picture tube display, the sawtooth was a very adequate black and white alignment signal.

As was remarked above, the sawtooth lasted up to the introduction of colour on ITA. The Art Bars didn't fare quite so well. When the BBC television service split into BBC 1 and BBC 2, the Art Bar machine was relegated to the Crystal Palace transmitter. Here it continued to be used for the morning alignment period, until the standard colour alignment sequence was introduced in November 1969. Whether or not the Art Bars were also transmitted to other regions by way of the transmitter network is uncertain, as the only record is likely to be eyewitness account.

It was mentioned in passing, that sawtooth appeared like a poor quality Line Bar when viewed with the contrast set too high. What, you are all asking, is a Line Bar?

A Line Bar is basically a split screen, being black on the left, and white on the right. This signal was not used during the alignment period, however, but on rare occasions during the trade test period on the BBC Television Service. When a transmitter had to be on reduced power, Test Card C or D was used by the transmitter to notify the trade of the condition. Well, this was fine if your transmitter was the only one fed by the regional centre, or if the transmitter was equipped with a slide scanner. By the 1960s, however, there were many low-powered relay transmitters, which were unmanned, and were fed from the main transmitter. Here, if the transmitter needed to go on to reduced power, the Line Bar signal was used. Unlike the sawtooth, the Line Bar could be used as a test signal, in that the sharp edge of the black to white transition could be used to detect poor high and low frequency responses in the TV set, or ghosting caused by poor aerial siting.

Very closely related to the Line Bar is the Pulse and Bar. Readers will be familiar with the pulse and bar signal used today prior to test card/Ceefax transmissions, but the black and white pulse and bar was a very much more basic signal. The Pulse and Bar of the 1960s and early 70s was a Line Bar with a needle pulse in white in the black portion of the Line Bar. The term needle pulse is used to describe the characteristic of the additional white signal, which like a sewing needle, is extremely thin in terms of display on

the screen. In addition to being thin, a needle is long, and the needle pulse is peak white compared to black, which shows up like a needle when displayed on an oscilloscope. As the Pulse and Bar was transmitted for the benefit of the broadcasters and not for the TV trade, the Pulse and Bar was a very useful tool indeed for checking the quality or the links between the studio and transmitters etc..

When was the Pulse and Bar used for alignment? This is uncertain, owing to records not being available for this activity; however, it appears that the Pulse and Bar was used in the Midland region, during the usual colour alignment sequence. As it was used in the Midlands, it may have been carried up the transmitter chain to other areas, but in view of the lack of information about this, it must be treated as speculation in respect of being transmitted by other areas. The timescale involved is between 1964 and 1976 or thereabouts. The Pulse and Bar was never transmitted by London and it must be considered a local signal.

It has been stated earlier in the history of this magazine, that when the Midland area was setting up the new colour transmitters and studio facilities, the Pulse and Bar was transmitted from 07.00 to 08.30 with sound from Radio 3. This adds weight to the view that the use of the Pulse and Bar was purely regional.

The only other black and white alignment signal was the 50Hz square-wave, known by some as 'night and day'. Here the signal is peak white at the top of the screen and black at the base of the screen, basically a Line Bar turned through 90 degrees. The only purpose of this signal was a low frequency check on the links between studio and transmitters etc. and an oscilloscope was required for this check to be carried out. The 50Hz square wave was part of the regular colour alignment sequence from 1964 till the end of alignment in favour of Ceefax pages.

Next time we will take an in depth look at the Colour Alignment Signals.

RECOLLECTIONS FROM THE TRADE

*Ray Turner recounts his involvement with the
radio and television trade in Northampton*

Northampton Wireless Relay Ltd was formed in 1933 by Raymond George Turner, technical director, and William Thomas Cooper Smeathers. At that time, the Northampton Electric Light and Power Company's area had about 57,000 households, 28,000 of which were not on mains electricity and 1,500 were on DC. The Relay

service was in great demand as it supplied two radio programmes via 8-inch moving coil loudspeakers, and at good quality and volume. The cost of the service was 1s 3d per week, which worked out much cheaper than buying a battery set and getting the accumulator (for LT) charged at a wireless dealer, garage or cycle shop, plus the need to buy a new High Tension battery every three or four weeks for about 17s 6d. The Relay could be left on from 06.00. to midnight, without it costing any more.

In 1937, Wireless Rentals (Northampton) Ltd was formed to rent out mains radio sets to those customers who wanted more than two stations. The sets offered were the Philco People's set, Ace and Armstrong, and a few other odd makes. The cost was 2s 3d per week

When the 1939/45 war started, the government gave priority of materials supply to wireless relay companies, because many were fed direct from the BBC by landline, and Air Raid Precaution messages could be sent out over the networks. Most ARP Wardens' Posts were connected to the service, as were most factories and many offices. Air raid warnings were put out, and the hours of the service were extended to 24 hours per day. Every factory canteen in the town had the service, and amplifiers were installed in many factories to provide Music While You Work. I remember going into a clothing factory making military clothing, and the girls were all singing to the music.

As the war came to an end, R.G. Turner and his then partner turned their thoughts to television. They had run the Pye/Murphy experimental wired TV service, and they realised the potential for TV in every home. Initially, the TV sets were sold, not rented. The mains-transformerless Pyes in 9" and 12" form were the favoured models. In 1952 it was decided to rent Pye 12" TV for 12s 6d per week, which covered all the maintenance. The sets went out like hot cakes and the biggest problem was getting hold of enough sets. Invicta (a Pye relation) sets were also hired out. Other makes tried were GEC BT5145, a 12" set with GEC cathode ray tube. We had 81 of these, and, in the first 18 months had to change 140 CRTs, under guarantee, after which GEC offered these tubes at half price, but we declined, and changed the sets to take the Mullard MW31/74, by taking a first anode feed from the boost rectifier, and strapping the focusing magnet with three steel bars. These sets were not as reliable as the Pyes, and they had N37 frame output valves, which did not last very well, also the alignment seemed to go off.

We also tried 200 McCarthy 12" sets which had totally unscreened Line Output Transformers and no mains filters. Result – obliteration of the radio reception for yards around. We had to stick aluminium foil inside the cabinets and fit mains filters. These sets also had myriads of bad contacts and the CRTs got dirty very quickly, due to the mask not fitting well. Other makes tried during the 12" era were Peto-Scott, Cossor (pre-Philips), a few of those awful Philips sets with U-series B8A valves, some Ace and various other makes. We avoided Marconi/HMV and any sets with Mazda CRTs as these were not as good as Mullards.

The biggest event in the TV world was the advent of the Pye V4 14" BBC-only set, later with a tuner for ITV, and still later with a higher IF frequency, properly screened coils and a better tuner. The V4/VT4/VT17 had flywheel sync, black-level AGC and

good audio. The series had its stock faults: unreliable LOPT, PCF80 line oscillator valves developed grid-to-cathode shorts (we found that every PCF80 needed to be tested in the Avo Valve Characteristic Meter before use). We used Siemens or Sylvania PCF80s, or German Dario, as these were better. Other frequent faults were EY51 EHT rectifier, frame output valve going low-emission, and odd tuner faults. The Pye Service Manual, as usual, was superb, and their service department was extremely helpful. We did not like Hunts decoupling capacitors, which suffered from cracked mouldings, especially where there was some heat.

We would repair any make of TV and we generated a lot of sales by lending a brand-new Pye to anybody whose set was in for repair. When ITV was established, we added RGD/Regentone to our rental stocks. We found the 19-inch dual-standard model very reliable and a good performer.

In the early post-war days, it made sense for the majority of viewers to rent their monochrome TV receivers. We had a good service department, and there was never any problem about repairing rented sets – if the thing needed two PCF80s and a PL82, then in the parts went. I remember having an Invicta 14" brought in with the complaint that the Test Card C was always on. This really intrigued me, but when I connected the mains, I found that the Test Card was imprinted on the tube. The customer was an elderly person who left the TV on all day – she told the TV serviceman that she did it for company.

Another complaint was of muffled sound. The set was a 12" Pye BBC-only console. I went to this one myself. The old boy who rented this one lived in a farmhouse. I opened the back and found the set was completely full of straw and hay – a magnificent mouse's nest which muffled the sound completely. Removal of the stuffing restored things to normal. A very common problem with the Pye FV1 12" was that the Westinghouse metal rectifier gradually became poorer and poorer – the cure was to fit an Automat equivalent – these never went wrong.

A well-known early post-war TV kit was the Viewmaster. One of my father's friends made one, fitted it into a very nice console cabinet, using a Mazda 12" CRT (he worked for Mazda) and got quite a reasonable result. One day, while he was at work, the phone rang, and his wife went into the hall to answer it. There was an almighty bang, she dropped the phone and rushed into their sitting room to find that the picture tube had imploded. There was glass sticking into the wooden furniture, into the pictures, and the curtains were torn. The tube must have been under some strain, and it was lucky that the lady had been in the hall.

When the BBC-only 405 line sets were returned off rental, we had about two hundred, which we dropped out of the first-floor window of our storeroom, then took them to the tip. There was absolutely no demand for these, apart from a few which had converters fitted. The Pye FV1 sold in 1953 at 73gns., and, for this price a few years later, you could get a 19" dual-standard 405/625 set. TV really was very good value for money.

A customer bought an Invicta 12" (T120, I think) and we installed the set and an H aerial – excellent picture as the customer lived high-up. About two weeks later, we had a telephone call from the customer's wife, who said the set had made a nasty mess on her table. I went up to see it, and that the lady, who was very house-proud, had made a thick felt cover, tailored to fit completely over both sides, back and front, with a flap which could be lifted with a press-stud, so the picture could be viewed. I had to explain that the set needed to have ventilation. We had to replace various waxed-paper capacitors, but there was no other apparent damage.

A customer in a village near Daventry complained that his Pye 12" FV1 had awful Daventry pattern, sometimes, but his next-door neighbour had no such problem [*this pattern, notorious in the district, was caused by the high-powered radio transmissions from Daventry*]. I went to see this one – there was pattern, but I asked the lady of the house whether she had actually seen the neighbour's TV. She said she hadn't, so I popped next-door, and asked if I might view their set. It turned out to be an old 12" Bush console. The proud owner drew the curtains, closed the door into the hall, switched on and we waited. After about five minutes, a faint picture appeared, with a massive ion-burn. I explained to our customer that the neighbour's set needed a new tube.

The shop phoned us to say that a rental set at Queen Eleanor Road was in need of repair. The outside serviceman read the card; it said key under door-mat. He fetched the set in – it was truly poor and I had to replace frame output valve, line output valve, sync separator, volume control and PY82 rectifier. When I had finished, it was perfect. Norman took it back, mid-afternoon. About 5p.m., we had a phone call from the shop; no-one had been yet to repair the rental set at Queen Eleanor Terrace. Norman went immediately and did a couple of valve-changes, result good. We realised that some lucky TV owner had had a free repair, thanks to the girl in our shop getting the address wrong.

We used to repair two old sets for the Egg-Man. We called him this because he kept dozens and dozens of hens (free-range) and he sold eggs from his old van, going all round the villages in the Daventry area. He always paid us in eggs – never seemed to have any cash – and the workshop and outside service staff had a generous supply of eggs, about every two months.

Another local dealer had an outside serviceman who was a very kind-hearted soul. One day he was out in his van and picked up a dead dog and took it to the police station. On entering the yard, he suddenly felt a moist, warm tongue on the back of his neck – the 'dead' dog had come round and was expressing its gratitude. The same man was driving up a slight hill, when he had to stop for a pedestrian crossing. The walkers having crossed, he accelerated off and heard a bonkety-bonkety sound behind him. Looking in his rear-view mirror, he saw a television set that had fallen out of his van and was turning over and over behind him.

We had one 12" Pye (rented) in for repair. Everything was wrong with it; it was absolutely filthy inside, needed five new valves. I suspected the obvious – customer's payments in arrears, otherwise they would have complained long before. Much to my

surprise, I found the payments were up to date; this customer had become accustomed to constantly adjusting frame hold, line hold, etc..

When some people wanted to *buy* a TV set, they would insist upon our taking a brand-new, boxed set and opening it up and demonstrating it on the spot. We used to dread this because there was a time when one in every four or five sets needed repairing before it would work satisfactorily. Our normal practice was to unpack the new sets, set them up on Test Card C, then run them for an hour or two. Some quite remarkable faults were found; one set had a wire missing (so no sync), some were so bad that we sent them back to the manufacturer, some Cathodeon CRTs (made by Pye) were impossible to focus correctly. In the early days of television, sets did vary quite a lot. Whenever my father, or I, or one of the staff wanted a new set, we used to pick one out of four or five of the same model – there was usually one which was just that little bit sharper or with the best resolution.

Mazda CRTs were not anywhere near as reliable or as long-lived as Mullard. We experienced cathode/heater shorts on Mazda, and many Mazda tubes had to be over-run by 25 per cent on the heater voltage. Mullard tubes sometimes needed heaters boosted, but a cathode/heater short was very rare. They only seemed to get grid/cathode shorts, which a judicious sharp knock sometimes cleared, although we had one MW36/24 which we could not clear, so I packed it up in the Mullard box, and rolled it down the workshop stairs, having nothing to lose – it did the trick. The very best CR tubes we found were the Telefunken.

We used a lot of replacement valves in servicing our rented sets, and we used originally to put the duds in the dustbin. However, we had a visit from an odd sort of trader who had a stall in a London street-market, and he would buy any old valve for sixpence (old money) so we kept them for his regular visits; he would also buy any part-exchanged set, no matter how old or in what condition. He explained that he could sell used valves and old TV sets to what he called the 'kitchen-table mechanics'. I once paid him a visit, at his home. I found he had a large family and he had a TV room for them, with one set at one end of the room, permanently tuned to BBC, and another set at the other end, permanently tuned to ITV. The sets were switched on all day, from the start of transmission to the end. There were about a dozen chairs to cater for everyone. He ran an enormous American car which could swallow up large numbers of sets.

We used to smash up defective CRTs, but when the reconditioners got going, they would buy any tube with undamaged glassware. We found the reconditioned tubes a bit variable, but when Mullard started to offer the service, their reconditioned tubes were indistinguishable from new, could be perfectly focused, and, apart from the label looked just like unused ones.

One of the silly things that people used to say, in the early days of 405, was that " nine inch sets are enough for most rooms, twelve inch for bigger rooms". Those little screens were very tiring to watch, and people with tired eyes soon found that, as the CR tubes became larger, so their eye-strains diminished. The 16" Pyes seemed to give a particularly sharp picture. We did sell a few Philips projection sets, but they needed a totally dark room and were not nice sets to service, as, if anything went wrong, their

built-in protective devices shut the thing down. Also, the little CRTs did not last very long, and replacement was fiddly.

The first colour set I saw used three Mullard MW36/24 CR tubes with dichroic mirrors, and had to be viewed from very limited angle. However, the pictures were truly breath-takingly good, even though on 405 lines.

We had a very busy time one winter, and the weather was absolutely foul. It was raining and thundering, so the three of us working in the workshop felt uneasy about running the sets off-air. Accordingly we went onto the pattern-generator. A few minutes later, there was a loud crack, and I actually saw the spark fly between two aerial outlet-sockets, about an inch apart – one aerial was fifty feet above the ground, and the other thirty feet above. The sockets were those gold-coloured Belling Lee diecasts, and each had a little black mark. Several rental customers' sets were struck that day, and the two isolating capacitors on the aerial input panels were blown apart – no further damages.

I think the thing that really got television in Northampton off to great popularity was the televising of the Coronation in 1953. At that time, there were still ten cinemas in the town. If an ordinary working man wanted to take his wife and two kids to the pictures, they had to brave the weather, get a bus, or go by car (not all that common, car-ownership), pay, at the cheapest, about half the cost of a rented TV set for a week, plus maybe an ice-cream each. The ordinary bloke soon realised that TV was very good value for money: not the best of programmes, no feature films, but very convenient, and a great novelty. Cinemas spent very little improving their seating and their decor... the furniture industry was producing more and more comfortable chairs and settees, and people set about improving their homes and their furnishings after the wartime and early post-war years of austerity and making-do. In wartime days, most people found that the cinema seats were more comfortable than their own chairs, but things were now changing.

The cinemas had the advantage of being able to offer colour, and big screens, but those TV salespeople could see big changes coming, for example ITV, and, later, colour TV. A few attempts were made by the cinemas to offer novelties, such as stereoscopic films, for which the audience had to wear rubbishy, throw-away spectacles, one green, one red lens, but, inexorably the cinemas began to die. The final nails in the coffins came with 625 and colour TV. Maybe if it had been possible to have 405 with sequential scanning, rather than interlacing, it might have continued longer, but American and German technology won the race.

A TECHNICAL TALE

Robert Casey first wrote:

I remember seeing a description of a product for TV repair shops: it was a splice with some solder paste already provided. Slip it over the new lead and the stub of the old lead, and heat with soldering iron. It looked like a small tightly wound

spring. One probably could make your own by taking some say 24 gauge bare tinned wire and wrapping it around a jig (which would just be some #22 wire) and using that as the splicer. Probably better than just doing a pair of loops with the leads to be spliced.

Sprague made these. They sold them separately as well as including them with some of their capacitors for the replacement market. They were actually a solder-coated hollow spiral of wire, or you could visualise them as 'copper wire core' solder wound in a spiral. There was a catchy name for them when they first came out, which I've forgotten. You would slip one lead into each end and heat with a soldering iron. They seemed to work OK, but never really caught on. Too crude for the purists who would remove the old lead completely and attach the replacement part to the lug, too much work for the 'cut and splice' crowd. [Jay Hennigan].

THE BIRTH OF CABLE TV?

The Fall, 1996 issue of *American Heritage of Invention & Technology* contains an article titled "The Birth of Cable TV" by George Mannes, a reporter for the *New York Daily News*. The article relates the history of the world's first commercial cable television system, located in Astoria, Oregon.

The Astoria system was constructed in the 1940s by Ed Parsons, a local TV dealer. Like many other TV dealers of the day, Parsons figured he'd be able to sell more TV sets if his potential customers could receive TV signals.

I'd like to add a few personal reminiscences about Astoria. Astoria is located at the mouth of the Columbia River, about 60 miles northwest of Portland (95 miles by public roads, according to my Oregon State map).

My wife and I visited Astoria a few years ago. We made the obligatory trip up Coxcomb Hill to visit the Astoria Column, a 125-foot lookout tower offering a spectacular view of the surroundings, including the Columbia River, the Pacific Ocean and Mt. St. Helens.

Thinking this might be the site of Parsons' original headend, I looked around for some evidence of its presence. If there was ever a headend there, it's gone now. But I was delighted to discover a prominent granite monument near the entrance to the tower. The monument bears the following text:

A bronze plaque on top:

SITE
OF THE FIRST COMMUNITY ANTENNA
TELEVISION INSTALLATION

IN THE UNITED STATES
COMPLETED, FEBRUARY 1949
ASTORIA, OREGON

Engraved into the vertical front face:

CABLE TELEVISION
WAS INVENTED AND
DEVELOPED BY
L. E. 'ED' PARSONS
ON THANKSGIVING DAY
1948. THE SYSTEM
CARRIED THE FIRST TV
TRANSMISSION BY
KRSC-TV CHANNEL 5
SEATTLE. THIS MARKED
THE BEGINNING OF
CABLE TV.

KRSC-TV is now KING-TV, Seattle's NBC station.

The bronze plaque states pretty clearly that Coxcomb Hill was the site of the first 'installation' – presumably the headend. But according to the *I&T* article, the original headend was on the roof of a building down in the valley, in Astoria itself. So maybe I was looking in the wrong place.

Astoria is also home to another important historical site: Fort Clatsop National Memorial, a reconstruction of the original fort constructed by Louis and Clark in 1805. Having successfully discovered the mouth of the Columbia River (and having established that the legendary 'northwest passage' didn't exist), they built Fort Clatsop as winter quarters, and returned to St. Louis the following year.

For readers not familiar with *American Heritage of Invention and Technology*, it's a fascinating magazine. Published by Forbes, it is sponsored by a single advertiser, General Motors. The title says it all: it covers the history of invention and technology in the United States. The editors at Forbes are solely responsible for editorial content: articles about the automobile industry get equal billing with articles about any other industry.

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This was posted on the Internet. It sounds good but as is so often the case, it's wrong. There were commercial community antenna (cable) installations in London as early as 1936 [K]. Easton: THIRTY YEARS IN CABLE TV. 1980: Pioneer Publications,

Mississauga, Ontario] and also during the second world war in Berlin and Hamburg. According to Easton's book, the first cable TV system in the USA was established by John Watson in Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania in 1948, although he did not start charging for service until the following year. [AE]

WEIRDNESS and more weirdness

Quote of the day: "A critic is a legless man who teaches running."
[Channing Pollock]

"There are too many people in the information technology business who think you can get a baby in one month by making nine women pregnant. however often you try it, it doesn't work. People have got to be realistic about the time it takes to do things." [Philip Colling, head of systems, Railtrack]

Maxwell's Maxim: "Trust is like virginity – you can only lose it once"

ALL WET: Drought has caused Falcon Lake, created by a dam on the Rio Grande near Laredo, Texas, to drop more than 60 feet. Officials are now concerned that people are 'looting' the 18th-century towns that are now above the water line for the first time since they were flooded when the dam was completed in the 1950s. "These looters, grave robbers and artefact collectors are destroying the cultural heritage of Texas and Mexico," state historian Jim Bruseth says. "We are making an assessment of the magnitude of the problem to see how bad the looting is." (UPI)

...*Flooding with 60 feet of water is 'conservation'. Collecting for display is 'destruction'. Got it. (courtesy of This Is True.)*

SMALL, MEDIUM OR LIAR? A Rhode Island game manufacturer has delayed distribution of a new CD-ROM computer game in order to remove a scene. *The Music In Me*, designed for ages eight and up, has a sequence where the viewer can see a TV set in a living room. The TV shows a commercial for cereal where the announcer says "Hey kids! Don't forget the surprise in the box." A small boy reaches in and pulls out a wrapped condom. "Gee whiz," the lad says, "it's my size!"

ReadySoft, which was to distribute the game for the Tune 1000 company of Toronto, said the commercial wasn't noticed in testing because reviewers were looking only for technical problems. "We weren't looking for anything like this," the company's spokeswoman said. "This is a family-oriented... game." (Reuter)

...*Family-oriented, family-planning-oriented, what's the difference?* (courtesy of *This Is True.*)

One of the best quotes I have ever heard came from an auctioneer when asked if an item was in working condition. His response was... "the last time it worked, it worked perfect". I about fell out of my seat when I heard that one. [Bob Wood]

Beware the TV Trance

Americans spend 40 percent of our precious free time – between 15 and 18 hours a week – in front of a flickering TV screen. Why? People's lists of reasons start with "relaxation."

But they've got it only half right, says Rutgers University psychologist Robert Kubey, Ph.D., co-author of *Television and the Quality of Life*. Kubey and his colleagues acknowledge that their research confirms that TV-viewing increases alpha activity and other indicators of calmness. Indeed, so sedating is the tube that Kubey draws a parallel between television viewing and hypnotic states.

The catch is that after you turn off the TV, relaxation seems to vanish with the picture. Viewers report that on arising from the couch, they feel sluggish, guilty, sapped, lonely, or drained, rather than relaxed. The more TV watched, the worse the feelings of dissatisfaction.

The key to really relaxing in front of a TV set is to watch shows, not mindlessly stare at the screen. Don't turn on the set unless you've planned what you want to see. Schedule the family's favorite programs each week, watch only those, and turn the set off immediately. [*Popular Mechanics* (USA)]

Can anyone make out the full words to the theme tune of the *Top Cat* cartoon show?

Created by Hanna-Barbera, Top Cat and his scruffy band of cats – Benny, ChooChoo, Spook, Brain and Fancy-Fancy – have occupied the heart of Manhattan's business district, watching out at all times for Officer Dibble, since their TV premiere in 1961. The theme tune words and music were written by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera as follows:

Top Cat, the most effectual/Top Cat, who's intellectual/Close friends get to call him TC/Providing it's with dignity.

Top Cat, the indisputable/Leader of the gang/He's the boss, he's the VIP/He's the championship/He's the most tip top, Top Cat.

Yes he's the boss, he's the King/But above everything/He's the most tip top, Top Cat!

Laurel Chamberlain, TNT and Cartoon Network, London.

Top Cat was based on Phil Silver's reprobate Army sergeant Bilko and his character was voiced by Arnold Stang, a good lookalike for Phil Silvers. Podgy Benny The Ball was based on Private Doberman, and for Bilko's

long-suffering senior officer Colonel Hall, see Officer Dibble. When Top Cat was first shown in the UK there was a popular brand of catfood called Top Cat and someone in the upper echelons of the BBC insisted on changing the main title to Boss Cat, lest it be deemed as advertising, despite the fact that every other word in the show was Top Cat.

Nick Mays, Cats Magazine. [Daily Mail, Friday, 22nd March 1996]

Quote of the day: "Experience is what enables you to recognise a mistake when you make it again."

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The Radiophile



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Issue No. 36, Summer 1993 Edited by Chris Kitchin

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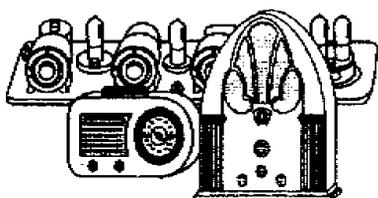
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7/95

THE TEST CARD CIRCLE

This society was founded in 1989 with less than twenty members. Since then it has grown in membership to almost one hundred, and has certainly grown in stature. The various broadcasting authorities acknowledge the wealth of information and expertise possessed by the membership, and regularly refer inquiries direct to the society.

All aspects of television trade test transmissions are included within the interests of The Circle: Test Cards and patterns, accompanying music, slides and still pictures, Service Information bulletins, Trade Test Colour Films, and, of course, the dear old BBC Demonstration Film.

A quarterly 48-page magazine is issued which contains lively and interesting articles on all of these topics. Each Spring, a convention is held in the little market town of Leominster, where members can meet for a delightful weekend of wonderful music and pictures, good companionship, and pure nostalgia. It is also a great deal of fun. There are usually guest presenters at the convention, and in 1994 these were Andrew Emmerson, of 405 Alive, and broadcaster Tony Currie, formerly of Scottish Television and Radio Clyde. We also had the honour of the opening announcement being specially recorded for us on video by Sylvia Peters, Sylvia, and BBC continuity announcer David Allen also recorded in-depth interviews for us on video.

Previous guests have included Steve Ostler, John Ross-Barnard and David Allan. John and David were the two men responsible for compiling all of the BBC trade tests tapes used between 1959 and 1977, and we were delighted when they accepted Honorary Life Membership of The Circle two years ago. We were also highly honoured when Roger Roger, the French musician and composer, whose music has been used during BBC trade tests since the mid fifties, agreed to become Patron of The Test Card Circle in 1992.

If you are interested in this fascinating subject, write to the Secretary, Doug Bond, 98 Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 5JP, and if you send a 12.5' x 9' self addressed envelope with a 43 pence stamp, Doug will be pleased to send you a sample copy of the Circle's magazine.

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**3. WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE OFFERED A SELECTION REGULARLY, OFTEN
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Yes? Then it's time you got in on the secret and discovered DALKEITH AUCTIONS, an established company in Bournemouth who hold auctions of all these items every month and issue detailed 56-page catalogues in advance. Can't get down to Bournemouth? No problem! Just fill in the bid form and send an open cheque or give us your credit card number. You set an upper limit for your bid and we don't abuse your trust (proprietor is a 405 Aliver!). The system does work! Contact us too if you wish to sell items to a broad range of interested and motivated people.

Enquiries to Philip Howard on 01202-292905. The catalogue of the next auction costs £2 (annual subscription by post £22) but you can phone or write for your first copy FREE.

**DALKEITH AUCTIONS, DALKEITH HALL, 81 OLD CHRISTCHURCH ROAD,
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The Dinosaur Labs present...

The LIL DINO Band I Modulator

You can buy one now! Due to popular demand (at least three or four people have asked), we have designed a modulator worthy of the Dinosaur name. You might expect this product to have one or two performance enhancing niceties not found on other similar designs and if so, you will not be disappointed. All this comes on a PCB 120mm x 80mm. The power requirements are modest, namely 12 volts at 50mA. The price for the completed board and leads is £80. Customers who have bought a standards converter from us may deduct £5. The modulator is designed to be a stand-alone unit but we can build it into new standards converters (details on request)

NB. Sorry we can't fit a modulator inside our original converters (the connectors are in the wrong places). We can however modify them to power an external modulator.

Please include postage & packing; £3-00 for modulators. Alternatively we can deliver to most vintage wireless swap meets, or the Vintage Wireless Museum (by prior arrangement) free of charge. Ask about our Test Card C generator too.

STANDARDS CONVERTER NEWS

The provisional cost for a kit is £275 and the completed version will be £370 (or £445 with modulator). Place your order now!

WARNING: Owning a Dinosaur product can seriously extend your choice of vintage viewing. And note... we are, like you, enthusiasts. We are not a business. Please confirm price and availability before ordering.

**Phone: Dave Grant 01689-857086 or Mike Izycky 01778-344506.
4 Kemble Drive, Bromley, Kent. BR2 8PZ.**

Treasures in Transition

This is the area for buying and selling all kinds of things to do with television, new or old. Want to join in? Then send us your advertisement: there is no charge, although if space is short we may have to 'prune' out the least relevant adverts or hold them over until next time. Advertisements are normally inserted for two issues: please indicate if you wish your ad. to run longer. There's no extra charge but we try to avoid repeating 'stale' material.

WHAT'S IN AND WHAT'S OUT

These advertisements are primarily for private sales but traders are also welcome. The Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires people who are commercial dealers to make this fact clear in their advertisements. The letter (T) at the end of an advertisement indicates that the advertisement is 'trade' and (NS) that the advertisement has been placed by a non-subscriber. Any job advertisements are bound by the Sex Discrimination Act, 1975 and the Age Discrimination Act, 1997.

Test card music and old TV programmes are subject to the same rules of copyright as other recorded works and it is unlawful to sell amateur or professional recordings of same. Swapping same for no gain is probably not illegal but 405 Alive does not want to test the law on this subject so we will only accept advertisements from people who will indemnify us in this respect.

PLUGS NEEDED

If you are selling any electrical appliance after 1st February 1995 without a plug on it, you are breaking the law. The Department of Trade and Industry has announced that domestic electrical appliances manufactured in or imported to the UK must be fitted with a correctly fused 13-amp plug.

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMERS

1. Whilst care is taken to establish the *bona fides* of advertisers, readers are strongly recommended to take their own precaution before parting with money in response to an advertisement. We do not accept any responsibility for dealings resulting from these advertisements, which are published in good faith. That said, we will endeavour to deal sympathetically and effectively with any difficulties but at our discretion. Fortunately we have had no problems yet. In related collecting fields, replicas and reproductions can be difficult to identify, so beware of any items 'of doubtful origin' and assure yourself of the authenticity of anything you propose buying. And try to have fun: after all, it's only a hobby!
2. Much of the equipment offered for sale or exchange does not conform to present-day safety and electric standards. Some items may even be lethal in the hands of the inexperienced. This magazine takes no responsibility for these aspects and asks readers to take their own precautions.

STANDARDS CONVERTERS. Building your own is not a realistic proposition unless you already have advanced design and construction facilities. It's not a task for amateurs, not even for gifted ones. Many of the parts needed are available only from professional sources and not in one-off quantities, whilst some previous designs for converters can no longer be copied because the custom chips are no

longer made. We recommend the Dinosaur Designs/David Grant product, which was reviewed in issue 19. Pineapple Video have ceased production of their converter. Note also David Looser's advertisement in this section for a conversion service.

MODULATORS. Two designs for modulators have been published in *Television* magazine but we don't recommend either today. One uses hard-to-find components, whilst the other one is good but requires you to make your own printed circuit board and wind your own coils very accurately. The good news is that you can buy an excellent ready-built modulators from Dinosaur Designs (see ad in this section).

COMPONENTS. Here is a brief list of suppliers; you can have a much extended two-page list by asking for FAQ SHEET 3 and sending one first-class stamp and a SAE to the editorial address. Most valves and other components are not hard to find: we can mention **Billington Export** (01403-784961, £50 minimum order), **Colomor Ltd** (0181-743 0899), **Kenzen** (0121-446 4346), **Wilson Valves** (01484-654650, 420774), **Sound Systems of Suffolk** (01473-721493) and **PM Components** (01474-560521). A good non-commercial supplier of hard-to-find types is Phil Taylor, 3 Silver Lane, Billingshurst, Sussex, RH14 0RP. For hard-to-find transistors we have heard of – but phone numbers may have changed – **AQL Technology** (01252-341711), **The Semiconductor Archives** (0181-691 7908), **Vectis Components Ltd.** (01705-669885) and **Universal Semiconductor Devices Ltd.** (01494- 791289). NB: Several of these firms have minimum order levels of between £10 and £20. For American books on old radio and TV, also all manner of spares, try **Antique Radio Supply**, (phone 00 1-602-820 5411 , fax 00 1-602 820 4643). Their mail order service is first-class and they have a beautiful free colour catalogue (or is it color catalog?). Would you like to recommend other firms? If you think a firm gives good service please tell us all!

SERVICE DATA. The following firms are noted, and don't forget the annual volumes 'TV & Radio Servicing' at the public library.

Mr Bentley, 27 De Vere Gardens, Ilford, Essex, IG1 3EB (0181-554 6631). Thousands of technical manuals and service sheets.

Alton Bowman, 4172 East Avenue, Canadaville, NY 14424-9564, USA. Schematics for all USA radio, TV, organ, etc. equipment 1920-1970.

Mauritron Technical Services, 47a High Street, Chinnor, Oxon., OX9 4DJ (01844-351694, fax 01844-352554). Photocopies of old service sheets, other technical data.

Savoy Hill Publications, Seven Ash Cottage, Seven Ash, Combe Martin, Devon, EX34 0PA (01271-882665). Large library of service data for photocopying. Fixed price means you may get a lot – or not a lot – for your money.

Technical Information Services, 76 Church Street, Larkhall, Lanarks., ML9 1HF (01698-883344/888343, fax 01698-884825), 'World's largest selection of manuals, 1930s to current date, British and foreign'.

In addition, 405 Aliver **Bernard Mothersill** has offered to photocopy (at cost) items from his own extensive collection of service sheets for 1950s and 60s TV sets. There are dozens and dozens, mainly Alba, Ekco, Bush, Ferguson/Thorn, GEC, Murphy, Perdio, Pilot, also a few Decca, Defiant, HMY, KB, McMichael, Peto Scott,

Philco, Regentone and Ultra. Write with international reply coupon plus unstamped self-addressed envelope to him at 3 Cherrywood Close, Clonsilla, Dublin 15, Eire.

HOW TO WRITE CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS THAT WORK

1. Start by mentioning the product or service you are selling or want. By doing so, you make it easier for the reader.
2. Always include the price. Research has shown that 52 per cent of people who read classified ads will not respond to ads that fail to mention a price.
3. Keep abbreviations to a minimum. Will the reader know what a NB207 is? If it's a 1956 12' table model TV, say so!
4. Put yourself in the position of the reader. Is all the information included?

NOTE: Thanks to referrals and mentions in the press we are now receiving a fair proportion of advertisements of sets for sale from members of the public. We print their descriptions in good faith but their descriptions may not be as accurate or as well-informed as those made by, say, a keen and knowledgeable enthusiast.

A PLEA! When sending in your advertisement please do put a date on it. We don't normally type in your advertisement on the day received and instead all small ads go into a file ready for typing later. But what happens then if I come across three undated ads all from the same person and one of them says 'This is my new ad, please cancel previous ones'? It does happen, so please be kind enough to date your ad.

IS IT VALUE FOR MONEY?

It's unwise to pay too much but it's also unwise to pay too little.

When you pay too much, you lose a little money, that is all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing you bought it to do.

The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot. It can't be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it's well to set aside something for the risk you run. And if you do that, you will have enough to pay for something better. [*Attributed to John Ruskin, 1819-1900.*]

STANDARDS CONVERSION: Available soon, the latest version of our professionally designed unit for 405 enthusiasts. A high-quality **MODULATOR** is available now, also a **TEST CARD GENERATOR** for 405 or 625-line use. For more information send SAE and mention which products you are interested in. Dave Grant, Dinosaur Designs, 4 Kemble Drive, BROMLEY, Kent, BR2 8PZ.

STANDARDS CONVERSION SERVICE: I will convert your 625-line tapes to broadcast-standard 405 lines on my digital line-store standards converter. Free of charge to subscribers of **405 ALIVE**. Please send blank tape (VHS only) for output and return postage. Input tapes can be accepted on Philips 1700, EIAJ, Video2000, Beta or VHS. David Looser, Maristow, Holbrook Road, Harkstead, IPSWICH, Suffolk, IP9 1BP. Phone 01473-328649. (*Publisher's note: David's offer is a most generous one and users may care to send him a free-will donation towards his not insubstantial construction costs*)

as well. There may be a delay in handling conversions if many people take up his offer.)

REPAIRS: vintage TVs, radios and testgear repaired and restored. Personal attention to every job and moderate prices. Estimates without obligation – deal with an enthusiast! (BVWS and BATC member) Please include SAE with all enquiries – thanks. Dave Higginson, 28 High Street, Misterton, Doncaster, Yorks., DN10 4BU. (T). Tel: 01427-890768.

REPAIRS: vintage TV and radio repair service in the South East by engineer with 23 years in the trade. Contact Camber TV & Video Centre, Lydd Road, Camber, Sussex or telephone Peter on 01797-225457. SAE with enquiries please. I also wish to buy early BBC-only TVs. (T).

SALE: Kenzen is having a sale of valves. Most TV types available at £1 each. Send wants list and SAE for a quotation. Kenzen, Unit 9, 16-20 George Street, Balsall Heath, BIRMINGHAM B12 9RG (0121-446 4346). For our latest free lists please send A4 SAE with 36p stamp. We also supply video monitors, computers, test gear, oscilloscopes, etc. at bargain prices for callers. Please telephone first if you wish to pay us a visit. (T)

FOR SALE: Solartron Solarscope dual-beam oscilloscope with leads, adapters and manual, colour 18-inch CRT 470DLB22 for Sony Trinitron KV-1810, mono 20-inch CRT 120WR, Ultra Junior 16-inch 405-line TV, Ferguson 19-inch dual-standard TV based on 950 chassis, Philips set made in 1960, **Television** magazine May 1981-November 1991, lots of TV valves. Offers? D.J. Price (NS), 65 Chedworth Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 9RX (0117-969 0880).

FOR SALE: three head assemblies for Ampex Mk 10 VTR machines, as new. Plus large quantity of brand-new U-Matic tapes by Ampex, Sony and Kodak. 10,20,30 and 60 minutes. £2.50 each, quantity discount. Andrew Alden, 01484-605935 (NS).

FOR SALE: a real pre-war rarity! Official service sheet and circuit diagram for HMV 900, 902/Marconiphone 701, 703, 705 models plus updates and original factory blueprints for scan coils and mountings (labelled The Gramophone Company Ltd), £20 plus £1 recorded delivery postage. Also available **official service sheets** for Thorn 850 series dual-standard sets (1963/4), HMV models 1824A-1829A (1955 sets), models 1828-1831A (also 1955), models 1814/1816 (1952/3), preliminary sheet for models 1840-1846 (1955 again), spec. sheet for models Marconiphone VT56DA/VC56DA, full book for Marconiphone VT59DA/VC59DA. VC60DA/VC61DA/VT62DA, user instructional for HMV 2609 19-inch dual-standard set. All these are £1.50 each *post-paid*. Please ring first to confirm availability before sending money. Andy Emmerson, 01604-844130.

FOR SALE: pre-war radios. Two German *Kleinempfänger* small People's Sets, domestic model with swastika and rarer export model without. Both

clean, glossy and untouched inside (speaker cloth appears to have been replaced at some time), £200 the pair. Emerson (USA) small MW/LW table set like Bush DAC90 but 2/3 size. Very glossy and clean, £75. Please ring first to confirm availability. Andy Emmerson, 01604-844130.

FOR SALE: Tandberg colour TV, type CTV 2-2-105, screen 48 x 37cm, beautiful wooden cabinet (believed teak), good working order. One of the best colour TVs ever made. Very modest price. Call Joanna (NS) in central London, 0171-580 1299 or fax 0171-580 1244 (sorry, we gave the wrong numbers last time this advertisement appeared).

FOR SALE: big broadcast camcorder/ENG camera, over-the-shoulder type. Ideal conversation piece or ruse to gain entry to prestige events. Appears to work, need to clear it! £30. John Gomer G8UNZ (NS), 55 Hythe Hill, COLCHESTER, Essex, CO1 2NH. Phone 01206-794656.

FOR SALE: Hitachi FP-7 colour video camera, in good condition, in a superb fitted plastic case, with full service and operating manuals. Works fine but the colours are poor. £50. Harry Woodhouse G3MFW (NS), Trenoweth, Porthpean, St. Austell, Cornwall, PL26 6AU. Phone 01726-73608.

FOR SALE: Bush TV62 bakelite bands I/III set, good condition, no cracks in cabinet, original back and power cable, never plugged in since bought. £150 or nearest offer. Peter Altman (NS) in Edgware, daytime and answering machine 0171-410 6913, evenings 0181-958 7765.

IN-DEMAND BOOK FOR SALE: INDUSTRIAL TELEVISION by H. A. McGhee (Newnes, 1957). 120 pages, 104 illustrations, ex-library copy. £12.50 plus 75p postage. L.V. Kelly Books, 75/77 Chapel Street, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 6BU (01884-256170).

FOR DISPOSAL: Ekcovision television. My wife and I have inherited a 1950s television. It is housed in a wooden cabinet, with doors. Built into the top of the cabinet, underneath a flap/lid, is a Garrard record deck. The certificate on the back of the television provides details on it as follows:

"Licence Plate, Serial number DL55249. ECKOVISION. Type TGC337 Television receiver/gram. Mains AC200/250 volts, 50 cycles, 160 watts. A product of EKCO Cole Limited Southend on Sea, Essex."

We have tried to give this record player to the Science Museum but they have failed to reply to correspondence. We are looking for a good home for the television/record player. We have recently advertised it in our local paper and had at least six calls on the first evening. We are not particularly keen to see the set go to a dealer but rather to a special interest group or Museum. We look forward to hearing from you. Jane and David Holmes (NS), 01275-851850 (Bristol area).

WANTED: I'm desperately looking for Douglas Adams' *Hitchiker*... (radio broadcast or television). I know it's a bit younger than the normal wants but

maybe someone collects them too... Michael Niermann, Hörder Str 21, 58455 Witten, Germany (phone 00 49 2302-26441).

DATA WANTED: Circuit diagram for a Philips TX-1421A/90. If you can supply a photocopy, please fax the cost of copy and postage. Thanks, Noriyoshi Tezuka, fax 00 81 3-3440 8396.

WANTED: Pye 8.5-inch video monitor (valve-type, model 2823/C4Z) or the line output transformer for same. Monitor has a 'perforated' metal case. Top price or good swaps offered. Andy Emmerson, 01604-844130.

VIDEO TAPES: I've just added a TON of new additions to my web site of rare and classic TV shows available on video including Terry and the Pirates, Whirlybirds, Hey Landlord!, Love on a Rooftop, The Mothers-In-Law, Nanny and the Professor, Room 222, Sergeant Bilko, TV Bloopers, Ugliest Girl in Town, Your Show of Shows, Checkmate, Hawaiian Eye, 77 Sunset Strip, Surfside 6, Ben Casey, Bracken's World, Ivanhoe, Medical Center, Peyton Place, Captain Kangaroo, Shindig, Captain Video, Doctor Who, Red Dwarf, Red Dwarf Bloopers, X Files, Tonight Show, Bat Masterson, Have Gun -Will Travel, Sky King, Sugarfoot , Classic commercials, TV show promos and MUCH more! Oh, and the Black and White Original Dragnet as well! The address is: <http://www.tvdial.com>

COMING UP IN ISSUE 33

... a veritable feast of articles, photos and letters held over from previously.

Yes folks, you have done us proud with your contributions and we have had a field day preparing them for the next issue. The next issue is not due until the New Year but we'll make sure it goes out as soon as the Christmas postal rush is over – something to look forward to in those grey days of early January.

That is, if your subscription is paid up, of course! You have remembered, haven't you?!?

This Christmas, the N.V.C.F. comes to London!

announcing a
NEW Christmas Venue for the
**NATIONAL VINTAGE
COMMUNICATIONS FAIR**
WEMBLEY • LONDON
Sunday December 1st 1996
11am - 4pm • Stalls @ £35



(NB: The Spring N.V.C.F. will continue to be held
as usual at the N.E.C. in B'ham every May)

N.V.C.F. • 2-4 Brook Street, Bampton, Devon EX16 9LY. Tel: (01398) 331532

HOW TO CONTACT 405 ALIVE

The chief glory of every people arises from its authors.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Letters are always welcome and nearly all of them (unless marked *Not For Publication*) get published. Lengthy screeds may be edited for clarity. Electronic mail is also welcome. Address this to midshires@cix.compulink.co.uk

Advertising rates. Classified: free. Display ads, using your artwork: £5 per half page, £10 full page. Charges must be pre-paid.

Notes & Queries (for publication in the magazine). Keep them coming... and your answers to them.

Enquiries requiring an individual reply. These are answered when time permits. You **must** include a stamped addressed envelope **and** preferably also your telephone number (in case it is quicker to telephone a reply). Please be patient - thanks.

Articles are also most welcome. We get so many good ones that publication can take up to two years or so, but don't let that deter you. They can sometimes be held back when we group two or three together when they support a common 'theme'.

Payment. We're a not-for-profit magazine so sadly we cannot pay for material. On the other hand, full-length feature articles do earn the author a year's free subscription once published so that's an incentive. You retain copyright of your article so you are free to offer it - probably in a revised version - to other, mainstream periodicals to earn some money. At least one of our contributors does this very successfully.

But I can't write like the big names do! Don't worry. We can sort out your grammar and spelling. It's the facts and your ideas that count.

How to submit material. If at all possible, please **TYPE** your contributions using a dark, black ribbon. This enables them to be read straight into the word-processor by a document scanner. Magic! Contributions on computer disk are particularly welcome and your disk will be returned. We can handle most variations of IBM PC and CP/M disks in 3.5' and 5.25' size but please process your words in some popular word-processing format, ideally as an ASCII or WordStar file. Through the good offices of Radio Bygones, we can handle Amstrad PCW and Macintosh disks, but not BBC format. If in doubt please ring first on 01604-844130. Thanks. You can now also fax your letters, ads and articles on 01604-821647.

BACK NUMBERS

Virtually all stocks of back issues have been sold now, including combined edition reprint. Copies of issues 25, 26, 27 and 28 are available at £2 each post-paid from the Staffordshire address (cheques payable to The Radiophile). In a few cases the editor can lend originals for photocopying.

FAQ FILES

FAQs are frequently asked questions, so we are keeping two files of FAQs and their answers ready for printing out on request for readers. These files

will be updated as new information comes in. These two files are already quite lengthy and contain material already published, so it would not be fair on established subscribers to reprint them in the magazine. FAQ file 1 runs to 24 pages and covers general points about old TV and how to get old television sets working again. FAQ file 2 is a reprint on all the articles on test card music and ITV station ident themes; it covers 11 pages. FAQ file 1 costs £3.00 and file 2 costs £2.00 (both post paid). These prices cover just the cost of copying and postage plus the horrendous cost of banking your cheque (68 pence!). FAQfile 3 covers suppliers of hard-to-find components and service data; for this one send one first class stamp and a SAE. (Available from 71 Falcutt Way, Northampton, NN2 8PH; cheques payable to Andrew Emmerson.)

WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR OWN COPY OF 405 ALIVE?

Perhaps you are reading a friend's copy - now you can't wait to receive your own copy four times a year. Send a cheque for £16 (inland and BFPO) or a Eurocheque or sterling banker's draft for £20 (all other territories) **made out to The Radiophile**, which will pay for a year's subscription (four issues). We regret credit card transactions can no longer be handled. Send money to 'Larkhill', Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 0NP, not to Northampton.

TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES REGARDING SUBSCRIPTIONS

You can call the Staffordshire office on 01785-284696 between 09.00-13.00 or 14.00-17.00 Mondays to Fridays. At other times you will reach an answering machine. Please *do not* ring the Northampton (01604) number as all business details are now handled from Staffordshire.

EXCHANGE PUBLICATIONS

You may wish to contact the following allied interest groups and publications (please send SAE with all enquiries).

BRITISH VINTAGE WIRELESS SOCIETY: Gerald Wells, Vintage Wireless Museum, 23 Rosendale Road, London, SE21 8DS.

VINTAGE RADIO CIRCLE: Geoff Williams, 4 Sunnyside Park, St Ives, Ringwood, Hants., BH24 2NW.

BRITISH AMATEUR TELEVISION CLUB: Dave Lawton GOANO, Grenehurst, Pinewood Road, High Wycombe, Bucks., HP12 4DD.

NARROW BANDWIDTH TV ASSOCIATION: Doug Pitt, 1 Burnwood Drive, Wollaton, Nottingham, NG8 2DJ.

TEST CARD CIRCLE (TV trade test transmissions and test card music): Stuart Montgomery, 2 Henderson Row, Edinburgh, EH3 5DS.

BBC TEST CARD CLUB, Keith Hamer, 7 Epping Close, Derby, DE3 4HR.

SAVERS OF TELEVISION AND RADIO SHOWS (S.T.A.R.S.), 96 Meadvale Road, Ealing, London, W5 1NR.

IRISH VINTAGE RADIO & SOUND SOCIETY: Henry Moore, 9 Auburn Close, Killiney, Co. Dublin.

RADIO BYGONES (vintage radio technology): Geoff Arnold, 9 Wetherby Close, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 8JB.

THE RADIOPHILE (vintage radio): Chas. E. Miller, 'Larkhill', Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 0NP.

TELERADIO NEWS (current radio and TV transmitter news, long-distance reception): Keith Hamer, 7 Epping Close, Derby, DE3 4HR.

TUNE INTO YESTERDAY (Old-Time Radio Show Collectors Association): Membership secretary: John Wolstenholme, 56 Melbourne Avenue, Dronfield Woodhouse, Sheffield, S18 5YW.

VINTAGE LIGHT MUSIC SOCIETY: Stuart Upton, 4 Harvest Bank Road, West Wickham, Kent, BR4 9DJ.

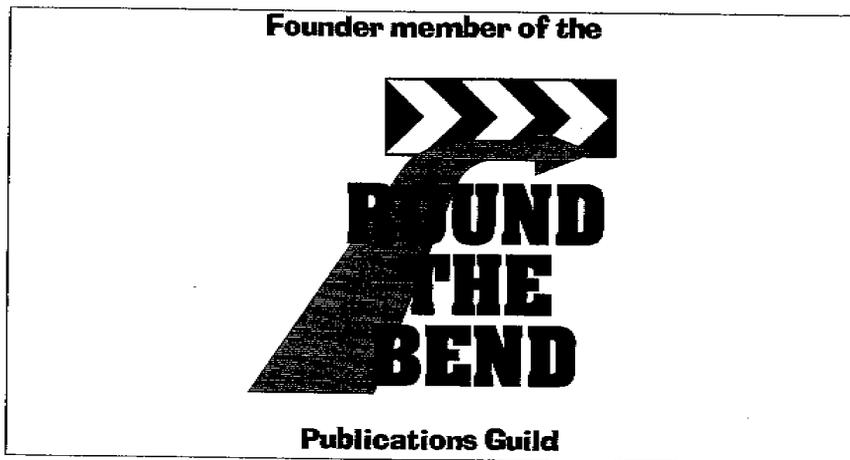
ROBERT FARNON SOCIETY (also light music): David Ades, Stone Gables, Upton Lane, Seavington St. Michael, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 0PZ.

MEMORY LANE (78rpm-era popular music): Ray Pallett, 226 Station Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3BS.

IN TUNE INTERNATIONAL (music of the years 1935-1960): Colin Morgan, 12 Caer Gofaint, Groes, Denbigh, Clwyd, LL15 5YT.

PROJECTED PICTURE TRUST (cinema history): Harold Brown, 2 Eleanor Gardens, Aylesbury, Bucks., HP21 7LT.

VINTAGE FILM CIRCLE: Alex Woolliams, 11 Norton Road, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2EZ.



FORTHCOMING RADIOPHILE EVENTS

The next Radiophile Teaching Workshop will take place on Sunday, 17th. November, 1996. Places are limited for this event so please book early. You may use the form printed below, or, if you do not wish to mutilate your magazine, either photo-copy it or apply on plain paper. Send with cheque for £25 made out to The Radiophile to "Larkhill", Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 0NP. Please note: due to demand, applications are restricted to Radiophile and 405 Alive subscribers. Can I bring a 405-line television set? Yes, provided that you let us know in advance, and we will arrange to have a suitable pattern generator available. But, please, do not expect us to be able to replace items such as mains transformers, line transformers and cathode ray tubes!

The next Radiophile Auction will take place in January, 1997 - see panel below for more details.

FORTHCOMING SPECIAL AUCTION.

Radiophile's next Special Auction, to take place in January, 1997, at Sambrook, will offer for sale upwards of 300 lots, including the contents of a large collection of transistor radios spanning the late 1950s to the mid 1970s. This collection was built up by an enthusiast who started at a very early age and who bought as wide a selection of sets as his pocket would allow. No one who is interested in transistor receivers should miss this sale. There will, in addition, be a good selection of good old valve vintage receivers and equipment. The exact date of the sale and other details will be announced in *The Radiophile* Christmas issue. Catalogues, price £2 including postage, are in course of preparation and will be available approximately 10 days before the sale.

405 LINE T.V. ENTHUSIASTS PLEASE NOTE:

A number of interesting vintage TV receivers will be sold by private treaty. If you would like details please write to Dept. T2 at *The Radiophile*.

RADIOPHILE WORKSHOP.

Sunday, 17th. November at
Sambrook Village Hall.

I wish to book a place at this workshop:

Name.....

Address.....

Post Code.....

Telephone No.....

I enclose a cheque for £25 made out to The Radiophile.

You are invited to bring along two of your own receivers to be repaired under supervision. Tea of coffee and biscuits will be served on participants' arrival at the hall at 9.30. There will be another break for refreshments at approximately 11a.m., lunch will be served at 1.00p.m. and there will be a mid afternoon tea/coffee break. Nominally the workshop will finish at 5.00p.m. but it has been known to go on until after 7p.m. if there are sets of great interest being repaired!

*** Don't forget to make out cheques to
The Radiophile**



No need to worry about what polish to use on your prized bakelite radio or television set - gentle, effective **BAKE-O-BRYTE** is the answer.

Only from *The Radiophile*
Use on chrome, too

Available in handy tubes, **BAKE-O-BRYTE** costs only £2 (£2.50 by post) Refuse harsh substitutes, use only the best!

SEND YOUR CHEQUE TO THE USUAL RADIOPHILE ADDRESS

A WORD OR TWO ABOUT THE DISPOSAL OF COLLECTIONS.

It may happen that you, or someone you know, is anxious to dispose of a collection of radio sets, etc.. What do you do? You could, of course, advertise them on the open market, but all too often this leads to a time-consuming and perhaps distressing number of visits to your house by people who may or may not genuinely be interested in buying, and who at best are likely only to take the "cream" and to leave you still saddled with the rest. Fortunately, there is an alternative:

RADIOPHILE VINTAGE RADIO AUCTIONS

at which you may dispose of vintage radio receivers in large or small quantities at one clean sweep and with complete confidentiality. Please write or telephone for a friendly discussion of your needs. Transport to the sale venue can be arranged if required at reasonable rates.

THE BACK PAGE

405 Alive (ISSN 0969-8884) is an independent, not-for-profit magazine devoted to the study and preservation of old television technology and programming. It has no connection with, and is not subsidised by, any other organisation. Publication is four times a 12-month subscription period but not at set times.

Editorial policy. This magazine acts not only as a forum for research, the republication of archive material and as a monitor of current developments but also as a means for all interested in this field to keep in touch. Readers are encouraged to submit articles, photographs, notes and letters.

We print readers' addresses only in small advertisements or when otherwise asked to. We are always happy to forward letters to contributors if postage is sent. All work in connection with *405 Alive* is carried out on a voluntary unpaid basis – sorry, it's only a hobby! – but writers retain copyright and are encouraged to republish their articles in commercial publications.

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Produced in

MIDDLE ENGLAND

✉ IMPORTANT POSTAL INFORMATION ✉

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