



405 ALIVE

Recalling the Golden Years of Black & White Television



TEN YEARS OF THE MAGAZINE WITH
ABSOLUTELY NOTHING NEW IN IT!



Technostalgia for the joy of it!

Issue 40 - Fourth Quarter 1998

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No cover price, because it's priceless (oh all right, £4 then)

In this issue:

MALCOLM BAIRD predicts decline of broadcasting
JAZZ ON TELEVISION DOCTOR WHO DISCOVERIES
Missing Believed Wiped 98 THE OCTASCOPE REVEALED
LIME GROVE MEMORIES SPOT THAT CAMERA!

... and much more



405 ALIVE

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

Issue 40, Fourth Quarter 1998

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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. While you read it, you may also feel strangely mellow and entirely unable to face doing anything else useful for 24 hours. Alternatively you may sense 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.



FROM THE EDITOR ...

Malcolm Baird has contributed a thoughtful article on the future of broadcast television, which also has implications for our own hobby. I find myself agreeing with him agree 100 per cent and suspect in twenty years time, people will find the whole idea of 'fooling with' 405-line television and its programming totally out of date and faintly pathetic—or 'sad' to use the idiom of today. Let's face it, I myself would perceive as strange anyone who lapses into raptures at the sound of Edwardian music hall performers on wax cylinder as out-of-touch, yet our own pastimes will become equally dated and pointless one day. Probably.

As you will see in this issue, there's no shortage of new research on subjects old and new, and issue 41 is already shaping up nicely. If your subscription ends with this issue, please make sure you renew in good time for 1999. I know it's so tempting to set this task aside for later but can you be sure you'll remember in time? Thanks to you all for your support during the past year; now here's to the New Year and all the pleasant discoveries to be made keeping 405 alive.

Andy Emmerson.

TEN YEARS OF 405 ALIVE?

Yes folks, it's true! This really is issue 40 and *405 Alive* really did start in the spring of 1989—it all seems so long ago! In those days it was not exactly clear whether sufficient need—or support—existed for a group devoted exclusively to old television and I had my doubts as to whether we could find enough material to fill even a handful of pages. Fortunately that kind of worry was short-lived but the policy laid down in issue 1 has never had to be altered.

Our start will inevitably be modest. At this stage there will be just the newsletter, issued four times a year (assuming the material flows in). Beyond this nothing! No formal society, no red tape, no elected officers, no committee meetings, no formal activities. If people wish to organise these later that's fine by me, but for now the priority is getting the information circulating. Moreover, I personally cannot spare the time to be involved in any more 'committee work'; as some of you

may know I am already involved in far too many spare-time occupations for my own good!

Some things never change...

But perhaps newcomers would like to know how *405 Alive* came into being. That's easy—interest in old television equipment and programmes was growing steadily in the 1980s. Channel Four had scheduled several evenings of vintage programmes, articles on old television technology had appeared in *Television* magazine and the *Bulletin* of the British Vintage Wireless Society, whilst the end of 405-line broadcasting in 1985 was seen by many as a turning point. A few collectors of old televisions felt somebody really ought to 'do something' but nobody knew exactly what should be done – or indeed how. After all, who could tell how much many other people were interested in television or who they were?

The idea for a newsletter to bring together such kindred spirits came from noted collector Bill Journeaux, who announced his intention to form a group or circle of friends called *405 Alive*. In the event, an industrial accident put paid to the idea but one potential member – your editor – became so impatient to see something happen that Bill told him straight, "If you're so keen on the idea, you can take it on yourself!"

And that's what he did. Yours truly took on the editorial role and from a list of twenty names and addresses handed over by Bill, the idea quickly became reality. Such was the interest in the subject, the flimsy newsletters of the first year developed into a quarterly 96-page magazine which now goes out to more than 300 readers around the world, all interested in vintage television history, equipment, programming or pure nostalgia. Out of this has also grown a powerful network and self-help group which has arranged exhibitions, recovered lost programmes for the television archives and secured for the production of standards converters, modulators, test card generators and so on—all to promote and preserve a technology considered obsolete and dead in 1985. Clearly, for these people keeping *405* alive is more than just a hobby!

What is particularly rewarding is the way readers are supporting this magazine—their magazine. Material just rolls in, which is most gratifying, but please don't take this as a signal to stop contributing articles, letters and snippets. These are the lifeblood of the magazine; if your contributions were to stop, we'd just pack the whole thing in. Fortunately there's no sign of that happening at the moment...

Where are they now?

Finally, here's a list of the faithful few who received issue no. 1 of *405 Alive*. Since the editorial and circulation departments were separated I have lost

track of who is or isn't a subscriber but I believe that all bar four or five are still with us. Congratulations if you are!

Peter Ansell, Salisbury.
David Boynes, Blaydon.
Charles Brown, Hanley, Staffs..
Peter Delaney, Wargrave, Berks..
Andrew Emmerson, Northampton.
Gareth Foster, Whitton, Twickenham, Middx..
John Gillies, Hayes. Middx..
Keith Hamer, Derby.
Terry Hayes, Forest Row, Sussex.
Dave Hazell, Witney, Oxon..
Dave Higginson, Misterton, Doncaster, Yorks..
Stephen James, Nottingham.
Bill Journeaux, Poole, Dorset.
Philip Marrison, Alrewas, Burton-on-Trent.
Frank Peplow, Birmingham.
Vintage Wireless Museum, West Dulwich.
Keith Wilson, Haddenham, Bucks..
Wireless Museum, Newport, Isle of Wight.

A few amusing thoughts for the festive season—

I've learned from my mistakes; I can repeat them exactly.

Peter Cooke and Dudley Moore

Digital TV, same desert but the sand grains are now all tiny little perfect cubes.

Roberta J. (Bobbi) Barmore

The television business is a cruel and shallow money trench, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free, and good men die like dogs.

Dr. Hunter S. Thompson

DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY: After 11 years of study, Oxford University Professor Michael Argyle says he knows what makes people happy. It isn't being rich. "Satisfaction and happiness do not increase with income," he says. The key to happiness, rather, is marriage, and the least happy are the divorced and separated. But don't have an affair; that can ruin the marriage, the basis of happiness. "Having two people who give you support and company could be a good thing. But it rarely works out that way," Argyle cautioned. There is an alternative to marriage, though: people addicted to TV soap operas also tend to be happy. "The results on television watching have been most perplexing," he said. "One theory is that through doing it, they are making imaginary friends." (Reuters)

OnDigital—one of the UK's first digital TV channels— had its lavish launch this week in London's Crystal Palace. As part of the understated *son et lumière* spectacular, the company projected its name in massive lettering on the side of the Palace. Which looked fine on one side of the building. Shame that the word ON became NO when viewed from the other side (well, it did if you'd had a couple of drinks). Could this be a subliminal message? NO customers perhaps?

Silicon.com, 20.11.98

LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BACKROOM BOYS!

A new booklet by Paff

Limited
edition

We have reprinted in one handy booklet all of Paff's articles on pre-war television and his wartime escapades. New material added too! Just fifty copies are available, at the bargain price of £4 post-paid. Same format as this magazine, 48 pages in all.

To order your copy send a cheque for £4, made out to Andrew Emmerson, to Paff Book Offer, 71 Falcutt Way, Northampton, NN2 8PH—and do it now!

LETTERS, WE GET LETTERS...

Many thanks to all our letter writers, including those few who didn't make it to this page. We try and fit in as many letters as possible, occasionally editing for space or clarity.

Our first letter raises some interesting points about the editorial policy of this magazine, so we thank George Windsor for submitting it.

This is an observation not a complaint. Why don't we see more TV set pictures in *405 Alive*? Are subscribers not providing pictures for publication? I know I am at fault here as I have yet to provide a write-up for my Philips but even so, if it's not too much trouble please lets see more sets! I will try and help if you like. How about an article on dual standard colour sets? Not many were made and some were rather handsome beasts! I can send some JPEG files on a couple. Lastly, I have heard from Ian Watson that he has just bought a 1956 405-line Pye colour set, do you know about this? I will ask that he send you a picture.

George raises some interesting points here. In general we print everything sent in! It can sometimes take a while for contributions to make it into print, especially if they need typing or editing, but nothing is suppressed. The only editorial influence we exercise is to attempt a balance between technical and non-technical material; a lot of our readers' eyes tend to glaze over when confronted with too many pages of techno-speak. It is true that this magazine started as a purely technical journal and over the 40 issues the coverage has expanded to embrace a broader historical feel for old television, paying equal attention to programming and other non-technical issues. The majority of readers appear to support this and the articles they contribute reflect this broad-brush approach.

Reader feedback is always welcome, in fact it's crucial. There's no point in producing something that people don't like. Fortunately the great majority of comment is favourable and the growing readership figures seem to bear this out. That said, if there's a subject area you feel deserves coverage, please let us know. We may be able to persuade someone to write an article. As for 'receiver profiles' and set restoration features, we'd be delighted to print more of them—if they were submitted!

Lastly, as to Ian Watson's restoration project, he has landed an incredibly rare set and we wish him well in getting it running once more. To this end we have sent him the full specification of the 405-line NTSC system and lists of traders who may be able to help rebuild or replace the failed CRT (perhaps a reader can help; his want ad is at the back of this issue).

From Phil Taylor, 3 Silver Lane, Billingshurst, RH14 9RP:

What I have/might get is a large screen Racal-Airmec 'scope 383-2 — this has a fault on it (short X timebase), so a manual or circuit would be useful. It's quite a thing — four-trace large screen with a TV tube with orange phosphor. Response to some 10kc/s, so I've heard. The Nagard 102 'scope, which may be just pre-war, has an amazing device in it which may be the Y amplifier. Like nothing I've seen before and I've seen most. Tall fat bottle, CRT base, long and fat seal off and top cap on the top. May be an electron multiplier, what with a small cathode at the bottom and multiple anodes or whatever all the way up to the top. The top cap of this "valve" (Nagard SC1 or SCI) is connected to a side cap on the CRT.

❖ Can you help Phil with information? If so, please reply direct.

From George Windsor, by e-mail:

Who is the lady on the inside back cover of issue 39, is it Alma Cogan (I can't read the signature)? Also I bought at a local car boot (you've heard this before!) a good copy with dust wrapper of the **Television Annual** for 1961. It features your previous issue 38 lady, Marion Ryan and her twin sons Paul and Barry, aged 10, who went on to be pop stars as you probably know. Also in this issue is a feature on detective series and mentions one I particularly remember, *No Hiding Place* starring Raymond Francis as Chief Superintendent Lockhart. Do you know whether this has been released on video at any time? Has it been shown in recent years? Does it still exist I wonder?

❖ Yes, it is Alma Cogan and you did well to find the 1961 edition of that book (as Len Kelly says in his latest book catalogue, it's extremely scarce and he sells it for £16.50—you presumably paid less). Yes, I do remember the Ryan twins as being somewhat self-important and living in their mother's shadow. Finally, **No Hiding Place** was probably Britain's most prolific cop show; I seem to remember reading that more episodes of this [ARTV] show were made than of any other and that would appear to be borne out by the number of 16mm prints scudding about. A large proportion of the shows survives but I don't think it has been released on video. An episode of its predecessor, **Murder Bag**, was screened at this year's **Missing**,

Believed Wiped event and if people wrote in, I'm sure they would show other episodes in future.

From George Windsor, again:

Did you see in the October issue of *Television* the write-up from Austin Fairchild (a pseudonym perhaps?) on TV servicing in 1956? (page 890). He mentions replacing an Emiscope tube in a Marconi mirror-lid and that they could only do it due to having a spare Blitz-damaged set to cannibalise. It makes one wonder how many pre-war sets were lost due to air raids and the like, especially as most sets used before the war would have been in the bombers' footprint so to speak. Do you think anyone has ideas on this?

❖ Yes, I always take a quick look at **Television** magazine in Smiths' library and if there's a 'good' article, such as this one, I do of course buy the magazine. I dare say some sets were lost to enemy bombing, although the worst damage was in the inner suburbs, whereas I'd imagine the majority of pre-war sets were further out in the homes of the well-to-do. Somewhere recently I saw statistics for the number of television licence holders for 1939 and 1946; the second figure was much lower, so it must be true that a lot of sets were either lost or not recommissioned immediately. But I'd like to see other thoughts on this.

From Peter Wernham, Cresta Electronics Ltd, Radlett:

Many thanks for your letter requesting the use of an article from the August 1997 edition of *Crestanews*. As both the Editor of the newsletter and writer of the article in question I would be pleased for you to use 'A Trip Down Memory Lane'. With regard to supplying further articles for your magazine, Henry Bird my partner and I both worked in television from the mid-50s until the early 1980s so we have quite a few experiences that might be of interest to your readers. If 'A Trip Down Memory Lane' is well received I am sure we could both produce other articles for you in the future.

❖ Peter's article on producing programmes at the old Hackney Empire studios for ATV and ABC will appear in our next issue. It's well worth waiting for and we look forward to further articles from these writers. Thanks too to Jeremy Jago for alerting us to the original article.

From Dicky Howett, Chelmsford:

Here's something that might bear repeating. It's from a book entitled **Filming For Television**, written in 1976 by BBC cameraman A.A. (Tubby) Englander.

There is one question that every untrained and unprejudiced cameraman should ask himself at the outset of his career in

filming for television. If he were sitting in his own home watching the relatively small picture on a television screen, would he want to see the picture jumping up and down and moving round and round or would he want to see well composed, pleasant shots and quick cutting in order to make the fast moving sections of a drama plot incisive? Alternatively, would he prefer to see the image jumping about and the plot taking a long time to develop because the camera is moving, rather than have instant development by cutting? Which would be the more restful, mentally and visually, in something which is supposed to be entertainment?

Surely, in most instances, the visually and mentally restful is what we should aim for. Too many productions are made for the benefit of the technicians rather than the audience. Too many productions are made for the benefit of the director. Too many film sequences are made for the kudos of the cameraman, because, in both instances, it is thought to enhance their technical standing.

From Andrew Howlett, Dukinfield:

Many thanks for the continuing excellence of *405*, it really is a cracking read every time. I know it is hard work to get it out, but I'm sure I speak for us all in asking you to keep up the good work.

Last night I settled down in front of the telly to watch the 'compiled' version of *Quatermass and the Pit*, which I found in WH Smith the other day. Although now deleted from the BBC video catalogue, it has been taken up by Paradox and is priced at a very reasonable £4.99. What a treat it was! An intelligent story taken at a relaxed pace, it leaves the characters themselves to generate the feeling of mounting horror, rather than using 'shock' shots and expensive effects. Compare this with BBC1's recent over-the-top *Invasion Earth*, a production that promised much (including the latest effects) but delivered almost nothing worth watching. Several scenes rang loud bells, especially the 'it went right through the wall' bit, which sent me to bed with the terrors after seeing a snatch of the repeat in 1960. Well done Jack Kine and Bernard Wilkie for their restrained use of special effects, although perhaps the budget called the tune here! It's a shame that the original captions and credits had been replaced with 'regenerated' ones, as I always think that much of the atmosphere comes from these sometimes shaky items. The tape is Paradox THE20006. Better go now, as the better half wants the computer....

From Bob Netherway, 28 Snowdon Road, Bristol BS16 2EJ:

I cannot begin to tell how much I enjoyed Dicky Howett's article about the more obscure details of how the BBC developed, and experimented with 405-line NTSC colour television in the 1950s. The subject has fascinated me ever since I was a young lad of 11 or 12, and was living on a farm in Devon. More recently, 1973, I came across a large book about BBC television engineering in Exeter Central Library dealing with the first 25 years of BBC engineering, culminating in their work on colour. The colour section was well illustrated with colour plates taken off-screen showing the results of their experiments.

This book was a much expanded version of the BBC Engineering monograph entitled **25 Years of BBC Television—A British Engineering Achievement**, but I cannot say if it was written by Sir Harold Bishop as was the monograph. The BBC confirmed its existence to me in the early 80s, but unfortunately I mislaid the details when I moved house in 1984. I have made numerous enquiries with libraries etc, but because the details are a bit sketchy, nobody else has come across this rare book. So I therefore wondered if you know anything about this book that I have described to you. It is similar in content to the one written by B. Townsend, formerly of Marconi's, and was published at the same time, that is, 1961.

❖ Replies direct to Bob, please.

From Trevor Cass, 38 Mount Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 8PT:

I am working on a Bush TV1 rebuild and have a problem with the Line Transformer. It has been re-wound but it looks as if the capacitance of the re-wound unit is affecting its performance as the line speed is too low leading to wrapping of the l/h edge of the picture and correspondingly affected and therefore low EHT.

Have you any idea whom I should approach who might have a spare unit? Even if its not working 'cos I could get a different firm to take more care to try and match the original spec.) The LT number is BS15103 (in the can, the number becomes CS15104).

❖ Replies direct to Trevor, please. Incidentally, Majestic Transformer Company says it can no longer handle most line output transformer rewinds now; "there's very little demand and we have not re-ordered the special wire as it runs out". Gerry Wells has two coil-winders at the Vintage Wireless Museum in London, also some stocks of wire, but says you'll have to operate the machine yourself. I wonder if anyone will jump in and fill this gap? The same applies to coil winding in general, making standards converters and so on—perhaps sooner or later someone will reckon there's a business opportunity.

From Chris Jarvis, Hove:

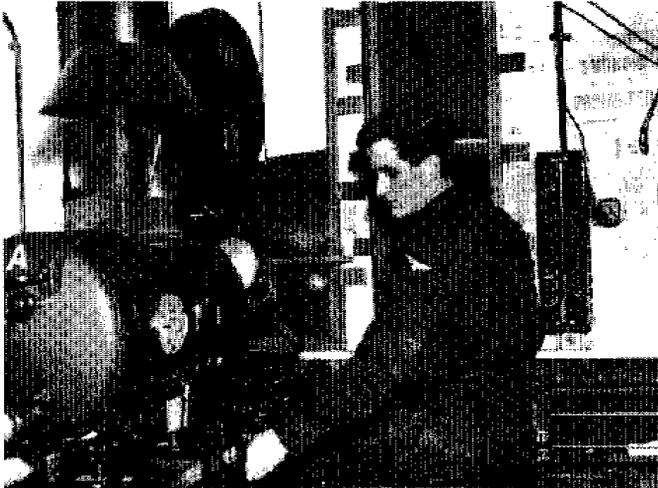
Since subscribing to *405 Alive* I have acquired a Pye VT4 in very nice original condition and find the magazine to be even better than I imagined. The only snag as far as I am concerned is I am not able to connect to the Web as I don't have access to a computer with that facility. I also think it is great that there seems to be such a fine sense of camaraderie amongst other 405ers. Keep up the good work!

From Harold Peters, Oulton Broad:

As a retired TV engineer and contributor to *(Practical) Television* for over 30 years I look forward to issues of *405 Alive*. They bring back many memories of the 'Golden Age' of Television. Congratulations.

My purpose in writing is to ask if you would be kind enough to forward the enclosed letter to Bernard King of Hampton. Early in the war I worked with a Bernard King who shared my interest in things cinematic, and I am wondering if it is the same person. It would be so nice to renew a friendship if he was.

❖ He was—and Bernard's comment: "Fantastic!" We try to please...



At the time of printing Harold and Bernard had confined their reunion to phone calls, so neither knows what the other looks like now! This snap of Bernard was taken in 1945 and bears the caption *Joe Soap checks that tricky little two-hole loop on the take-up, hold-back sprocket. Equipment roster includes Kalee 12, BTH 'D' block heads and BTH 'F'-type arcs with 10-inch mirrors.*

From Steve Pendlebury, by e-mail:

Thanks for another great *405 Alive*; one day I'll contribute, when I have something worthwhile to add. I can't honestly compete with the current contributors and their excellent knowledge. The GEC colour beacon tip was very useful too, many thanks to the writer. I'm working on a massive GEC dual-standard colour set which turned up in a furniture shop in Walton, Liverpool as a 'Potential Drinks Cabinet'!! Some folk just don't know what they have done they? Hopefully nothing will smell like 'rotten stewed cabbage' this time...

From Robert Bothe, Ewaldstr.19, D-53859 Niederkassel, Germany:

As a German member and enthusiast reader of the *405 Alive* I would like to congratulate Dicky Howett for his excellent story about the Pye Mk3. Since I was able to acquire such a camera (model 2014) in an east-German TV-studio, this article helped me a lot to understand the features and functions of this tremendous camera. Dicky estimated a world-wide sale of 250 units—but my camera has the serialnr. 368. Perhaps more cameras were sold...? Anyway, I would like to restore this camera. Therefore my question: Could it be that somebody has the wiring diagrams and/or service manual and would be willing to copy them for me (of course all expenses will be generously paid). Another question (I'm afraid to ask): would anyone swap my Pye Mk3 CCU (camera control unit) for a Pye Mk3 SYNC (pulse) generator? It's probably easier to find a HMV 904!

Here is my weekends-only telephone number: 00 49 2208-73111.

Thank you and best regards.

❖ *Dicky comments:* The 250 Pye Mk3 sales estimate is not mine. Ian Waters suggested that figure and it was only an educated guess. He hasn't any documentation to back it up. I've seen elsewhere a figure of 303 Pye Mk 3 units sold. It's possible that the numbering jumped at some point, perhaps to 'improve' the accounts or sales figures. And then there are the demonstrators, factory rejects and over-runs etc. All adds up, but not necessarily to actual *sales*.

From Andy Henderson, Edinburgh:

I saw a report in the *Guardian* about digital television. The journalist had seen an 'old man' gazing at the digital tv set-up in a London Dixons store. The man looked in admiration; "Yes, I can see what they mean, it's a much clearer, better picture." The journalist didn't have the heart to tell him that he was looking at an analogue-sourced television set!!!

Incidentally the first digital tv picture I saw was an excerpt from the 1956 version of *The Ten Commandments!* Top quality, state-of-the-

art demonstration programmes from Mr Murdoch indeed!!! Since that film had a slight jinx attached to it, I wonder if they shouldn't have picked a different film for the afternoon of their launch?

From Andrew Henderson, again:

Not that for one moment would I imply that a large percentage of the population were thick, but evidently the BBC does. Why do they need on screen branding when the channel is displayed on the digibox's display panel !?!

It is interesting how the know-how to operate a television set has declined from the Baird 30-line days (free D.I.Y. tuning session with every broadcast) through early colour (free colour blindness experiment watching Vanity Fair circa 1967 in shades of plum and green) and finally here we are with digital. I imagine it won't be long before someone invents a digital video recorder which tapes programmes, watches them for you and then wipes the tape.

From Jon Kummer, USA (by e-mail):

I enjoyed reading your article in the November 1998 issue of *The Old Timer's Bulletin*. I am seeking your help in identifying a British TV that I purchased here in New York a few years ago. The manufacturer is True Vue and the model number is A33. It has a license plate on the bottom saying: Royalty has been paid on this apparatus pursuant to a license agreement with the grantors of the broadcast sound and television receiver licence know as "A6" authorising the use of certain British and Eireann letters patent. Serial No. X 68200. There is a circle to the left of the above that says "licence plate" in the centre with the following around the circle - Great Britain Northern Ireland Eire Channel Islands Isle of Man.

The case has a simulated alligator covering. There is also a handle on top indicating it is a portable. The measurements are 11"W x 12"H x 17.5"L. The picture tube is hidden behind a door, which slides out for viewing. There is only one channel. There are five picture controls on the left side and on the right side is the on/off switch, fuse, and what looks like a socket for the external antenna. Any help you can give me on this will be greatly appreciated. Thanks. [Picture is on page 72].

❖Replies to the magazine please; it has got me stumped!

From Gareth Foster, by e-mail:

I've just spent a few days near Valkenswaard, south of Eindhoven around 8km north of the Belgium border. I visited various local towns and around Budel (1km from the border) there are several Antique

shops on both sides of the border. There is usually a big sign ANTIEK outside and the entrance is down a side passage. I didn't actually go into any, but one particular one on the road between Budel and Budel-Schoot has a scruffy K6 outside. It badly needs a coat of paint, has no equipment inside, but does have its instruction panels intact.

In Budel itself I came across a large modern independent TV/electrical retailer. In the windows alongside the microwaves and CD players were several 60s TVs, mostly Philips wooden case 17" ones. One in particular had 6 pushbuttons, 4 of which were labelled 625B, 819F, 819B, and 625. I could imagine the other two which could be dummies being labelled 405 and 525 on another model. I went in and had a chat to the owner and he said the sets were his own and not for sale. Also that they were no longer in working order. They did, however, attract customers to the shop.

From Dave Larky WA6DMO, by e-mail:

One of your notes was forwarded to me. I was on the original team that developed color TV at RCA Laboratories in Princeton New Jersey. I have a number of patents in the field, including the original patent on the color bar test pattern. If you think about it, this was the world's first digital color graphic. Perhaps I can help with specific issues.

From Beth Hamer, Broadcast Organiser, BBC Entertainment, Room 4022, Television Centre [contact no. 0181-576 4970]:

As you may be aware, the BBC broadcast an appeal by David Croft on 9th September to find five lost episodes of Dad's Army. They are all in black & white, and were originally transmitted in 1969 but never repeated. If you think that you may have these episodes in any format, or have any suggestions as to where we should direct our search, I would be most grateful if you could contact me. Attached are synopses of the lost shows, and others with which they are often confused. Many thanks in advance for any help you may be able to give us.

DAD'S ARMY - LOST EPISODES SYNOPSES

OPERATION KILT (b/w, 1969)

The platoon are completing their first PT lesson. Captain Ogilvy of the Highland Regiment briefs the men on the forthcoming manoeuvre. Six of his men will attempt to capture Mainwaring's HQ. The platoon spy on Ogilvy at his HQ at Manor Farm, using local knowledge, and lay man traps to capture the six professional soldiers.

THE BATTLE OF GODFREY'S COTTAGE (b/w, 1969)

Godfrey's cottage is chosen as a machine gun post. He who holds Godfrey's cottage holds Walmington-on-Sea. Mainwaring is in the bank vault and doesn't hear the church bell tolling which everyone else takes to be the

invasion signal. Wilson and Pike head for the Novelty Rock Emporium, while Jones and Frazer inform Mainwaring, and head for the cottage, which is being guarded by the rest of the platoon. Jones nips out to the outside toilet. Wilson and Pike mistake him for a German and start shooting. They all start fighting each other, until Godfrey's sister shakes her tea towel out of the window, which Wilson takes as a sign of surrender. The whole mess is eventually sorted out.

THE LONELINESS OF THE LONG-DISTANCE WALKER (b/w, 1969)

Walker is called up, much to the distress of the platoon, as he is the main supplier of cigarettes, drink, and fudge for Godfrey's sister Dolly. Mainwaring decides that Walker is too important to let go and fights with the War Office on his behalf without success. Walker is called up only to be discharged within days because he's allergic to corned beef. (As back referenced in "Room At the Bottom")

A STRIPE FOR FRAZER (b/w, 1969)

Mainwaring is allowed to promote someone to Corporal. He suggests that instead of automatically giving the job to Jones, he should make up another private to Lance-Corporal and see who performs best. Against Wilson's advice, he appoints Frazer. The men dislike Frazer's hard attitude and desire to impress. Frazer goes too far when he presents charge sheets citing Pike for deserting his post, and Walker for mutiny. When he adds Jones to the list, he is demoted and everything returns to normal.

UNDER FIRE (b/w, 1969)

The platoon are watching for incendiary bombs. Frazer sees a light flashing, and the platoon suspect that someone else is signalling to the enemy. When they investigate, they come across Mr Murphy, who claims to be a British citizen although he was born in Austria. Back at the Church Hall, a fire bomb lands, causing a fire which Mrs Pike puts out with sandbags and also vouches for Murphy, who was married to her Aunt Ethel's cousin.

DAD'S ARMY - EPISODES WITH SIMILAR TITLES OR THEMES

NO SPRING FOR FRAZER (Colour, 1969)

A main spring from the Lewis gun goes missing. Frazer thinks it may have fallen into the coffin of the late Mr Blewitt, and the platoon try to break into the Blewitts's house in the night to check out the coffin before the burial the next day. Frazer eventually finds the spring was in his pocket all the time.

IF THE CAP FITS (Colour, 1972)

Mainwaring gives a slide show on a hot summer evening. Frazer thinks it's irrelevant, and complains. Mainwaring is furious and swaps rank with Frazer for a few days. Frazer's new position really goes to his head. He busts Wilson and Jones and makes up Walker and Pike. A new Scots Major General in charge of the district arrives to inspect and invites Frazer, as Captain, to a highland get together. The exchange of rank ends, and Mainwaring goes to the highland dinner, which was also to involve playing the bagpipes. To the Frazer's, and everyone else's, amazement Mainwaring plays the pipes with ease.

IS THERE HONEY STILL FOR TEA? (Colour, 1975)

Mainwaring is told that Godfrey's cottage is to be flattened to make way for a new aerodrome. Mainwaring, Wilson and Pike go to the cottage to break the news. Having eaten a pile of upside down cakes, they feel that the news may cause Godfrey to keel over, so they don't tell him. As his oldest friend, they nominate Jones to break the news, but when he arrives Godfrey has already received official notification. Frazer blackmails the Minister responsible for the project, remembering him from the Isle of Barra, when he was expelled from school and sacked from his first job for having his fingers in the till. The ploy works, and life at Cherry Tree Cottage returns to normal.

FEEDBACK

From Ray Herbert, Sanderstead (sorry, Ray, this letter was intended for the last issue but went missing in the pile of material awaiting editing... the incompetence is mine, as usual!):

Issue 38 of *405 Alive* is full of very interesting stuff. It would be helpful, however, to have a contents page as locating a particular item for re-reading is rather difficult.

Royal Institution demo date, page 48.

I trust that Dicky Howett will forgive me for correcting two of his 'corrections'. The confusion with the date is understandable as Baird gave it as the 27th in his autobiography. *The Times* were a day late with their account published on the 28th January leading people to believe that it was the day before. The *Daily Chronicle* described the event in their issue for the 27th [see last item in this section for vindication of the 26th date].

Baird used the *floodlight* system for the Royal Institution demonstration and subsequently until 1928. All the photographs show the sitters in front of an array of light bulbs. It was W.W. Jacomb who steered Baird towards the flying-spot arrangement used from 1928 until 1937 (30 and 405 lines).

The First Television Star, page 50.

There is no doubt that William Taynton deserves the credit for being the first person to be seen on a TV screen in October 1925. Baird said so and he must have known! He told William that there would always be a job for him in the Company and he joined the Baird Television Development Company in August 1929, remaining until 1964, when the name had changed to Cinema-Television. I knew William well and travelled home from the Crystal Palace each evening with him during 1938-9. He told me that it was not the whirling disc that frightened him

into backing away and out of focus, as often reported, but the very considerable heat from the floodlamps, 12 inches from his face.

Co-ax Plugs, page 54

This interesting piece on the Belling-Lee components set me thinking about the earliest co-ax cables. I recall using some examples in 1937, manufactured from gutta-percha; just about acceptable for receiving on 45MHz but no good at all for the 300-watt Baird TV transmitter operating on 150MHz. Only a short length was required for connecting to the aerial on the 4th floor of the Crystal Palace South tower and we made up our own co-ax by threading the centre conductor through a series of interlocking beads which then had to be fed into the braid. These items were made by Ducatti, in Italy.

- ❖ David Grant's note in the last issue about the pre-war Belling-Lee connector being larger and chunkier than the post-war product is now confirmed (not that anyone would doubt the word of an expert on connectors anyway...). At the Cowbit swapmeet Andrew Denton produced examples of the pre-war item and whilst they are similar to the connector we uses today, they were about 25 per cent larger in all dimensions.

From John P. Hamilton, London (same excuse for late appearance):

Apropos issue 33, Jim Pople and I both had the same thought about the Hungarian Pye scanner. Could it be our old A-RTV unit—dear old Tweety Pye—which the company donated to Hungarian Television after they lost a lot of equipment in an awful earthquake? But, the date of 1958 would be wrong for the A-R beast. It was one of our four OB units from 1955 and we all hated working in it because you needed a shoe-horn to get in through the only door and if it had ever caught fire we would all have fried! The vision mixing array was horrendous (we directors did our own mixing in those days) and, as I didn't become a director until 1st Jan 1959, and remember having to work in that beast for a couple of years, it would not have got to Hungary until 1960/61. I can't remember when the earthquake was. I do recall their head of OBs coming over to say thank-you to our management and sitting in on a couple of race meetings (or wrestling or something) with me. Jim may have more clues somewhere in his archives.

From Simon Vaughan, Loughborough:

Entry for Puzzle Corner—page 41, issue 39: Could we be looking at a picture of a young Dicky Howett?

- ❖ Yes, we could! Well done.

From Bernard King, by Woolworth envelope:

About the puzzle picture on page 42, issue 39. Well, it's not really a puzzle, anyone can see that it must be our own Dicky Howett! Just look at the neat way the woolly jumper has been inventively tucked behind the lavatorial soil pipe on the right of the picture. But on second thoughts it might not be Dicky. Even at that tender age he would not be working with the tripod arse-about-face (A touch of the RAF No.2 School of Photography creeping in there!)

I don't have any equivalent pictures of my 'tender age', home-made toys—which were all aeroplanes in the thirties (I did do a rather nice AVRO 'Tutor' biplane with two pieces of thin egg-box wood, a short length of broom handle and a couple of long nails for wheel struts). Even the household Ensign box-camera was so primitive, it looked a damn sight worse than the toy camera in the puzzle picture! In fact it was so crude that if it wasn't for my youthful, emergent vigilance, my Dad would have used it to store string!

I'm not too sure but could the tripod in the picture be a Vinten prototype? That's not so improbable. When taking photographs I still use a lighting unit made very many years ago by my twin brother. It was contrived with two aluminium food mixing bowls — one large, one small, When riveted together they took on the appearance of the old, often used, 'basher' lamp. It works very well but my twin brother was a design draughtsman at Mole-Richardson at the time. It would seem that I can claim to have the only Mole-Richardson lighting unit in which one could cook a Christmas pudd'n' ! (Incidentally, Reg also worked, later, for Vinten!!)

Taken from the RTS journal *Television*, January 1980:

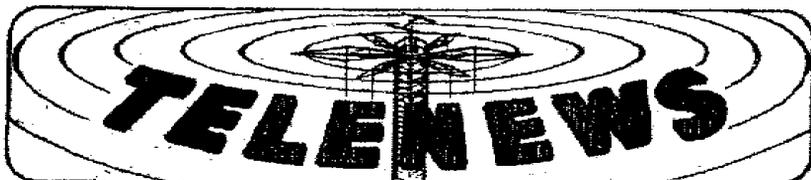
This is an extract from a letter by Mr W.C. Fox, which finally lays this ghost to rest, since he was present!

[The demonstration] was not given on 27th January but 26th January, as *The Times'* paragraph recording the event is careful to point out in its opening sentences. No one seems to have read those sentences. Instead they take the date of publication of that issue of the paper—i.e. 28th January—and then either claim 28th January as the date of the demonstration or do some queer mathematical calculations which lead them to claim 27th January as the date.

As to 'a distinguished body of British scientists, writers and journalists being present', there were only two journalists—the representative of *The Times*, who at that time I had not met, and myself. I was there to help Baird with his demonstration—he had specifically asked me and *The Times'* representative got in on an invitation to a member of the Royal Institution who had forwarded his invitation to the

news editor of *The Times* with the comment that '...the paper might be interested'.

As to the gathering being 'ushered into the attic of a small building at 22 Frith Street', nothing could be further removed from the truth. The demonstration took place on the second floor (Baird had the *whole* floor as his laboratory).



All that glisters....

Tony Statham earned himself some publicity recently when his local paper, the *Welwyn & Hatfield Times*, featured his collection of 36 classic television sets. A photo showed a selection of the sets along with himself and his ten-year-old son, and he steeled himself for the offers of old sets that would doubtless follow. But it didn't quite work out that way! In his words: "I had one phone call, from an old couple who thought their Philips 405/625 TVette portable was worth a fortune—and that they had owned it *since 1952!*"

Philo redivivus

The house magazine of Quantel Ltd, purveyors of television special effects equipment and other delights, reveals a remarkable 'coincidence'. Philo Television, a production company in San Francisco, has just bought a pile of digital editing equipment from Quantel but why the name Philo? You've probably guessed...

The name Philo is in remembrance of Philo Farnsworth, who in 1927 invented a form of television (Quantel's words, not mine); he is a folk hero in American television history circles; for more information see the Farnsworth Chronicles at <http://songs.com/noma/philo/index.html> on the WWW. Much of his work was conducted in a small building on Green Street, tucked away beneath a hillside in San Francisco's North Waterfront 'agency gulch'. Now, more than 70 years later, Philo Television thrives in the exact same building. "We call ourselves digital descendants of Philo," says Evan Stewart, senior editor, "and of course we owe our livelihood to him."

Vintage repair service

Readers in the London area may like to contact

LONDON SOUND (Michael Solomons), 389b Alexandra Avenue, Harrow, HA2 9EF (0181-868 9222). Repair of vintage radio, television and audio equipment.

New CDs

❖ Richard Addinsell

Most connoisseurs of television production music agree that Southern Rhapsody by Richard Addinsell is one of the best pieces of music ever commissioned by a television station. The good news is that it's appearing on a forthcoming CD of Addinsell's work (on the ASV label) and may well be out by the time you read these words.

❖ The Avengers & Other Top Sixties TV Themes (Sequel Records, NEM CD 976, price varies around £9.99 upwards).

This is a double CD featuring 60 themes from the sixties. Many from the Castle Communications catalogue (i.e. all the Pye/Piccadilly ATV owned stuff). Some of the tracks have already been available for some time on other compilations, but there really are some gems on here. The artwork is very nice and gives a real feel of the era with pictures of record sleeves and labels plus book covers from annuals and paperbacks related to the TV shows whose themes are featured. Very detailed sleeve notes to help you remember some of the more obscure TV shows and educate you if you weren't there at the time! Some really rare tracks are featured along with some of the tracks that have been doing the rounds on one or two compilations recently. Here is a listing of the entire 60 tracks featured. [Thanks to Tim on MHP-Chat for this]

DISC 1

The Avengers - Laurie Johnson; Man In A Suitcase - Ron Grainer; Thunderbirds - Barry Gray; Dr Who - Eric Winstone; Who Do You Think You Are Kidding, Mr Hitler? (Dad's Army) - Bud Flanagan; Captain Scarlet - Barry Gray; Z Cars - Johnny Keating; The Saint - Cyril Stapleton; Department S - Cyril Stapleton; Joe 90 - Barry Gray; Crossroads - Tony Hatch; Lucky Stars - Peter Knight; Light Flight (Take Three Girls) - Pentangle; Stingray - Gary Miller; High Wire (Danger Man) - Bob Leaper; The Champions - Tony Hatch; Hancock's Tune - Derek Scott; The Forsyte Saga - Cyril Stapleton; On The Ball (World Cup 1966) - John Schroeder; The Power Game - Cyril Stapleton; A Little Suite (Dr Finlay's Casebook) - Les Reed; Fireball XL5 - The Flee-Rekkers; Maigret Theme - The Eagles; Out Of This World - Tony Hatch; No Hiding Place - Laurie Johnson; The Fugitive - John Schroeder; Who-Dun-It - Tony Hatch; W Somerset Maugham - Cyril Stapleton; Happy Joe (Comedy Playhouse) - Ron Grainer.

DISC 2

Scarlett - Peter Knight; How Soon (Richard Boone Show) - Jackie Treat; The Willow Waltz (Tim Frazer's Theme) - Tony Hatch; Mr Rose - Roy Budd; The Doctors - Tony Hatch; Sam Benedict - Johnny Keating; Ben Casey - Tony Hatch; Sir Francis Drake - The Piccadilly Strings; Perry Mason - Tony Hatch; Our House - The Piccadilly Strings; Who Is Sylvia? - Charlie Drake; Latin Quarter (Riviera Police) - Laurie Johnson; Ghost Squad - Tony Hatch; Echo Four-Two - Laurie Johnson; Our Love Story (Love Story) - Sounds Orchestra; Casablanca (Crane) - Kenny Ball; Oliver Twist Theme - The Eagles (no not those Eagles!); Carlos' Theme (Sentimental Agent) - Johnny Keating; The Deputy - Laurie Johnson; Man Alive - Tony Hatch; Memories Of Summer (Love Story) - Tony Hatch; Lunar Walk (Thank Your Lucky Stars) - Johnny Hawksworth; West End (Whicker's World) - Laurie Johnson; Three Live Wires - Bob Wallis; Quick Before They Catch Us - Paddy Klaus & Gibson; That's Me Over There (Ronnie Corbett's Theme) - Cyril Stapleton; Peyton Place - Jack Dorsey.

New club

A new group called the PPS (Programme Preservation Society) announces it aims to help members lend each other copies of old television and radio programmes. If you would like more information on PPS, then please send an SAE to the club treasurer Richard Berry at 230 Selsdon Road, Croydon, Surrey CR2 6PL. We have received a copy of their magazine, *Radio Telly Scope*, and it looks very good.

By the way, it appears that STARS (Savers of Television And Radio Shows) is either defunct or less active than it used to be.

New tape: Party Political Broadcasts, The Greatest Hits

A compilation video tape of party political broadcasts has just been released by Politicos Publishing. The early broadcasts on the tape are:

- October 1951: First Labour party TV election broadcast (Christopher Mayhew and Sir Hartley Shawcross)
- May 1953: First party political broadcast outside elections—Conservatives (housing crisis)
- November 1956: Leader of the Opposition Hugh Gaitskell's right of reply on the Suez invasion
- September 1959: Labour Party election broadcast (Britain belongs to you)

The price is £19.99 plus £1.50 p&p; Politicos Bookshop is on 0171-828 0010. First impressions of the tape are so-so. The vast majority of the contents are from recent eras; the vintage material amounts to no more than 30 minutes of the 169-minute total. The telerecordings are generally pretty awful (i.e. faithful to the wobbly originals!) and illustrate how wooden and boring the presentation was in general. Most of the early sequences have been edited heavily, presumably to

avoid sending viewers to sleep so early into the tape; they may be true 'programme-as-broadcast' recordings but none is complete, nor do we see any titles or continuity. In addition, each sequence has a garish colour caption superimposed. On the plus side, some of the (much) more recent PPBs are extremely memorable and/or amusing, and these are shown in full.

Other new old tapes

A number of *Avengers* programmes have been re-issued, no doubt to cash in on the big-screen cinema film of the same name. These cost £12.99 each and should be easy to find in the shops. Also released on VHS is *An Evening with Nat King Cole* (£10.99), a live recording of a BBC television show of 1961.

Auction report

The Cowbit sale was a most agreeable affair, despite the efforts of the local highways authority to divert visitors to the other end of the village. Incidentally, what delightful weather Chas always manages to conjure up! The Bush TV22 set with magnifying lens failed to make the reserve price, by the way. Bidding stopped at £100, probably because its innards looked to be somewhat corroded.

Seeking the unfindable

We have been asked to assist in the reconstruction of the original microphone used at radio station 5IT, Birmingham. That's in the days when BBC stood for British Broadcasting *Company*, nor Corporation! What is needed is a 'double button' carbon microphone capsule; I'm not quite sure what it is but I think I saw one at a swapmeet a while back. Generous finder's fee will be paid. Any offers of help to the editor, please.

New websites

Steve Ostler (of Radiocraft and Retrovisor fame) now has a website. Clicking on...

<http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~vytek/vintage%20television.htm>

...will take you to a superbly illustrated paean to vintage television and don't forget to click on the 'More Info' button as well. Well done Steve!

A history of early broadcast video technology can be found at the address

<http://www.dmg.co.uk/libex/museum/>

Contents include Magnetic Recording Development Prior to 1956, VERA: An Experimental Broadcast VTR, The Development of Ampex Quadruplex and Helical Scan: the Early Years.

NVCF report

Three pre-war sets were on offer: all from the HMV/Marconiphone stable. A 7-inch screen table set, without its back, sold for £1,500 whilst two 709 9-inch console sets in pretty fair condition were offered at £2,500. One of these was also to be offered for sale in this magazine but the advert has been withdrawn; the owner says that interest at the NVCF was high and he sold it without difficulty for £2,300 (not long after he was offered the full asking price but had to decline it as the set was by now sold).

Gerry Horrox of Crowthorne Tubes was surprised there was no interest shown in the round CRTs he had brought specially for the show. Several people remarked that antique dealers carefully noting down prices seemed to outnumber the paying customers. As previously, several dealers had priced their wares at ridiculous levels (£2,500 was being asked—but not paid—for a rough turn-of-the-century telephone that would struggle to fetch £500 at a Telecomms Heritage Group swapmeet) and one noticed a large volume of over-priced tat being taken home. The inevitable conclusion is that many of the traders are either dreamers who are not actually serious about converting their wares into money or else happy amateurs who just enjoy sitting behind a stall for a day.

This time pre-war copies of *Television & Short Wave World* were plentiful—good news for collectors trying to fill gaps in their collections—whilst other rare pre-war books on television were spotted *under* a stall (clearly the vendor was unaware of their rarity). Len Kelly had his customary large stand of collectable books and your editor was pleased to buy from him a complete run of the pre-war magazine *Practical Television*. This an extremely scarce title, running for just 15 issues between 1934 and 1935 and the magazines were well worth having, although first glances do not indicate any earth-shattering revelations we didn't already know. In fact I get the distinct impression that by the end the editorial staff were scratching around for material to fill the magazine and relished the opportunity to incorporate the title within *Practical Wireless*. Several photos are used several times throughout the magazine and article themes re-appear, a clear sign of a dearth of ideas! That said, there are several useful articles on topical subjects, such as the Baird electron camera and recording television onto disc, with familiar Baird publicity photos.

New catalogues

One of the companies exhibiting at the NVCF was Old Time Supplies of Banbury, who had a good display of restoration components and newly printed books on radio and television subjects. Their vintage communications catalogue lists a wide variety of valves, switches,

resistors, BA screws, headphones, dial lamps, dial cord, wire and cable and so on—even the felt washers to go under control knobs. Prices are not unreasonable so if you're into rebuilding old sets, you'd do well to send two first-class stamps for their catalogue. The address is Old Time Supplies, P.O. Box 209, Banbury, OX16 7GR.

Also newly published is issue 14 of **Books for the Record Collector**, but don't be fooled by the title. This unique listing also includes books about radio and television broadcasting and is essential for the serious reader (it's 320 pages long for a start!). Ring A&R Booksearch between 8am and 8pm Mondays-Saturdays on 01503-220246 to find out what it will cost you (I believe they charge for postage on this massive book). Titles that might interest you include **Television Musicals—Plots, Critiques, Casts & Credits 1944-1996** and **TV Theme Recordings—An Illustrated Discography 1951-1991**.

How much longer for 625-line analogue television in the UK?

The ITC believes it will likely last more than 15 years, which suggests a close-down date around like 2014, saying: "We believe that switch-off will not occur before the end of the Government's 10-15 year time frame, and it may be several years later still."

Ferguson 941T and derivatives

The Christmas 1998 number of *Radio Bygones* (issue 56) contains another of Ron Weller's detailed technical articles, this time on this popular 1949-model receiver. If you do not buy this magazine regularly you might still wish to have this issue. Post-paid price is £3.25 inland, £3.75 elsewhere by surface mail (see *Radio Bygones* ad towards the back of this magazine).

New book from Paff

Just to alert you to the display advertisement at the back of this magazine. We have collated Paff's fascinating articles and reprinted in one booklet, under the title **Let's Hear It For The Backroom Boys!** No more searching through back issues to find his cartoon history of television or to see those amusing drawings. Just fifty copies are available and we expect them to go fast. Copies have already been sent to Tony Blair, Sir Lew Grade and royalty, so if you feel like joining this élite gang of luminaries make sure you don't miss this once-only opportunity!

Nothing to do with vintage television but...

This was spotted on the Internet and it's quite illuminating!

*You may remember the recent *Millionaire* programme that ran for ten evenings on ITV with Chris Tarrant. How was this

financed? All potential contestants had to ring a premium rate telephone number (In this case I believe it was charged at 50p per minute). At the end of the ten evenings I am told that the programme became completely self financing with a modest profit as well."

Archive news

Looks like the ATV collection is to be sold to Carlton Communications, with or without the rest of Polygram. This move would re-unite the Central ATV libraries [Greg Taylor]. The Granada, LWT and Yorkshire archives are to be combined into one collection, at Leeds [Chris Perry].

I've just had confirmation (via Paul Vanezis) that the BBC has now got a CV-2000 recorded video-tape of the entire moon landing broadcast, which was long thought to be lost forever. *And then...* I have more details on that Moon Landing (which is sadly not as complete as was expected). Here are the main points: Recovery of an hour-long Sony tape which has 45 min of manually edited footage of the night, starting 15 mins into the tape (which has the start of *At Last The 1948 Show*, we have James Burke and a countdown clock about 15 to 20 minutes before Armstrong climbs on to the surface. There follows an edited version of the programme from that point). Also recovered were two children's shows; *Pegasus* and *Trident* and an episode of *Doctor Who*. The latter was ver sought after, but sadly it was an episode which was originally broadcast from 35mm Telerecording and was one of the few already retained in the archives. There are more tapes to be uncovered once they get a new 'sync' head. I can't wait to hear what they'll turn up next! [Andrew Henderson].

RIP Alpha Studios, Birmingham

A friend of mine told me that Capital Radio are to move radio station BRMB out of the old Aston building and into the city centre. This means that the council will finally get their hands on the old Aston building and it will be demolished to make way for redevelopment! [Tim@BlueWorld.co.uk on the Internet]

Video resolution

A reader asks:

Can anyone throw light on a 'rule of thumb' that gives resolution as "80 lines per MHz" of video bandwidth at 625 lines? I have seen this in print a number of times but it appears difficult to justify. If we take the active line period as 52 μ s, then a 1MHz signal would produce 52 cycles or 104 lines, so surely the 'rule of thumb' should be 100 lines per MHz. This ties up nicely with the handbook for my VCR, which claims >240

lines for VHS (2.4MHz) and >400 lines for S-VHS (4.0MHz), and is also appropriate for the 5.25MHz bars on BBC Test Card F.

I queried this with an author who had used it in one of his books and he referred it back to the use of the 1946 RETMA chart in 405-line days, but where the figures come from and what relevance they have to a 1996 book on VCRs escapes me completely. I know that authors are busy people and cannot give much thought to such trivialities but I hope my fellow readers will not be so unkind as to pull my leg like this!

This was posted to uk.tech.broadcast on the Internet, where the real brains hang out! Replies were received as follows:

I recall someone called Mr. Kell, who in the early days (late 1930s) worked out that the end result always came to .75 of the calculation in practice. It seems to work. Sorry I don't recall any more detail.

Mike Blank

Not on my strongest subject here but... if the "80 lines" are actually "80 lines per picture height" (a distinction often omitted in the heat of discussion) then everything fits, since you would have:

$104 \times 3 / 4 = 78$, which is near enough for me!

"Lines per picture height" has always seemed a bit quaint to me, I assume it's an attempt to normalise things to allow meaningful comparison between systems using non-standard aspect ratios.

Alan Hall

"Television Lines" is a way of quoting the detail resolution, X, reproduced across a horizontal scan line as the equivalent vertical resolution given by a raster of Y number of scanning lines on a 4:3 display. (I'm trying to be as exact as I can, please excuse the over-legal English!) It may not make sense as a concept, but...

A frequency of 260 cycles per picture width on 625 TV (52us active line) is 5 cycles per us, and corresponds to a video signal frequency of 5MHz. 260 cycles is 260 black and 260 white vertical stripes in the spatial detail being scanned, i.e. 520 vertical lines in the space across the picture width.

A television system that could resolve the same number of lines per centimetre of horizontal stripes (vertical detail) on a 4:3 display would need to resolve 520/(4/3) lines per picture height. This calculation shows that a 390 active-line raster would carry the equivalent spatial resolution vertically to a 5MHz horizontal resolution video system.

So if 390 lines is equivalent to a 5MHz video bandwidth (and the camera sensor and optics are up to it!) then 390/5 gives approximately 80 lines per MHz of video bandwidth (give or take a per cent or so.)

Note that the calculation will apply to 525/60 systems as well, since their active line period is so close to that of 625/50, and the aspect ratio is the same.

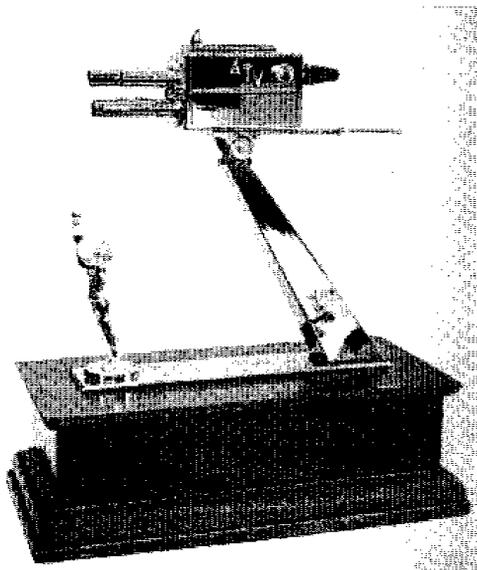
Peter Harris, BBC Training

TUBE remainderd

Andrew Henderson points out that the American hardback book **Tube—The Invention of Television** by David and Marshall Fisher has turned up at a bargain price in remainder bookshops (£6 to be precise). At this price for a hardback of more than 400 pages and a number of photographs, it represents great value (better than the original \$30), although the authors' grasp of event this side of the Atlantic is not 100 per cent. Check out your local bargain bookshop or if completely stumped ring Southside Books on 0131-557 0543 in case they still have copies (expect postage to equal the cost of the book, however!).

Where is it now?

Dicky Howett writes. The silver Pye camera with its ATV logo—not quite so elaborate as BBC's Sports Personality trophy with its tripod and Marconi Mk IB, but still a nice bit of sculpted nostalgia. But where is the ATV Pye trophy once intimately associated with the programme *Seeing Sport?* Is it melted scrap or does it repose in a loft or sports club locker? Answers on a postcard and perhaps a cheque in the post...



BOOK REVIEW

THE GOLDEN AGE OF TELEVISIONS, by Philip Collins. Published by General Publishing Group, Inc. (Los Angeles), 1997 at \$15.95. ISBN 1-57544-019-9. Paperback, 132 pages. Available in the UK at £16.95 from Old Time Supplies, P.O. Box 209, Banbury, OX16 7GR (0973-144041).

I suppose the reason why I read book reviews is to help me decide just one thing—would I want to buy this book? I certainly don't read reviews just to see the critic point out the errors in the book he or she has just perused.

Well, let's start by saying this is a sumptuous book, in the same mould as the author's previous books on radios, smoking accessories and cocktail gadgets. The impeccable photography, the rich colour photography and the heavyweight glossy art paper all put this book in a class of its own. Seeing this book, you cannot fail to be stunned by the work that has gone into it, putting all other picture albums of television receivers into the shade. And the photos are not just of television receivers; the settings include period periodicals, TV-related toys and so on, showing that a great deal of care has gone into the book.

Coverage is broad, both in time—from Baird's Televisor of 1920 (well, that's what the book says!) to 1990—and in the range of makes embraced—American, European and Japanese. All the real classic sets are here: British and American mirror-lids, the perspex-cabinet RCA set shown at the 1939 World's Fair, the Bush TV22, the first Sony, the Philco Predicta, the Keracolour and the JVC Videosphere. Captions generally tell you little about the sets themselves but go into the social culture of the respective periods.

Earlier I said a lot of care had gone into this book and that's right—but not quite enough. Mistakes often occur at production stage, after the author has handed over the manuscript, but there are a number of unfortunate sillies that will fool some readers. We spell Ferguson with one 's', not two, and there is no 'e' in Cossor. More importantly, Teleavia sets came from France, not Italy. The Keracolour is attributed to Decca but that company made only the chassis.

The verdict: there's no doubt that this is the ultimate coffee table book of televisions and mistakes aside, no lover of television could fail to be enthralled by it. Oh yes; the author is not the singer of the same name, or if he is, he's keeping it remarkably quiet!

Andy Emmerson

TEDDINGTON STUDIOS: 40 YEARS OF TELEVISION

Adapted from publicity material

Teddington Studios, recently taken over by Barnes Trust Media, has placed many memorable moments in the archives of British television production throughout its 40 years.

The television production story begins in 1958 when ITV contractor ABC Television leased the site. But as a production centre Teddington was widely known for its film-making in the 46 years prior to 1958.

The annals of film-making at the studios began in 1912 with low budget films made by Bill Kellino's company, Ec-Ko Films, who sold films at fourpence a foot. Following several fires caused by the introduction of carbon-arc lights in the late 1920s, Teddington was among the first studios in the world to adopt the RCA Vitaphone sound recording system and was quickly launched into the forefront of 'talkies' film production.

Many epic films, starring Errol Flynn, David Niven, Margaret Lockwood and Rex Harrison, were made during the period when Warner Brothers leased the studio in 1934 to 1958. But work at the studios came to an abrupt end in 1944 when a German V1 rocket destroyed the site and killed the studio manager.

Reborn and relaunched by Warner Brothers in 1948, the studio was taken over in 1958 by ABC Television, which went on to form Thames Television in 1968. The list of credits for the Thames Television productions is prodigious. In particular, legendary comedy series such as *Robin's Nest*, *Morecambe and Wise* and many other top series of the period were produced at the studios. Thames was launched just on the dawn of colour television and the studios again, as with the talkies, found itself at the centre of technical excellence.

Latterly, the studio, now the home of several leading independent television production companies, has continued to invest in the best and latest technology. The hits continue to roll out, with series such as Hartswood Films' *Men Behaving Badly*, Alamo's *Birds of a Feather*, and Lucky Dog's *Babes in the Wood*.

A £1.6 million investment in widescreen facilities will ensure that the cameras continue to roll at Teddington Studios' accessible, convenient, and modestly underplayed 'production village' beside the river.

MISSING, BELIEVED WIPED 1998

Andrew Henderson relates what you missed—if you weren't there...

This one-day festival screening of archive television long thought lost was presented at the National Film Theatre in London on Saturday 17th October. The majority of recordings shown were found as the result of diligent film collectors offering this material to the BFI.

On the way to this showing I passed the usual tourists walking along the South Bank. The sun shone and people were enjoying the good weather. It would have seemed incomprehensible to the majority that anyone would want to spend the next six hours in a darkened cinema (NFT 2), and enjoy themselves at that. All the same, more than one person told me they thought this the best archive show of its kind. I couldn't agree more.

After a brief introduction by Steve Bryant, the screenings began with a BBC News Bulletin (tx: 26/05/58). This 15 min. telerecording featured a slightly uneasy Robert Dougall. The impressive opening with the 'Nation Shall Speak Peace Unto Nation' crest and emblem brought the background noise in NFT 2 down to a hush. Only a few minutes later, a filmed insert showed President Eisenhower speaking about American health. He then mentioned he had, in fact, a cold! This brought a good many laughs from the audience. The general effect of watching this was highly enjoyable. The recording was of superlative quality.

Next we had *Cool For Cats* (tx: 1958), presented by the formidable Kent Walton (both 'live in person' in NFT 2 and on the recording). Kent explained that he owned this recording as this was a special edition to promote the series for the American market. It is not surprising that the show failed in this respect and bits of it gave the word 'dated' new depths of meaning. One particularly awful song called *I puts the lightie on* and 'sung' by Tommy Steele, matched to crude drawings, remains in the mind. After this appalling rendition we mixed back to Kent who proclaimed Steele "Britain's highest paid entertainer"! This brought forth a huge sustained laugh from the audience. Some of the original dancers on the show were present at the screening and all slipped out at the finish.

The Ideal Home Exhibition programme was a 'large budget' admag with Jimmy (*Jim's Inn*) Hanley along with Kenneth Horne and others as support. This was a perfect Time Capsule of a show. A good example of something that is possibly more entertaining now than it would have been in 1961 (tx: 7/3/61). Jim is keen to show us all the fascinating stalls at Olympia. I particularly appreciated the Police demonstrations with their mock bedroom about to be burgled by a stereotype thief. A twin-tub washing machine gave the audience a good few chuckles too. Those were the days.

Forgive me for saying that I found *Object Z: The Meteor* as the worst item on the menu that afternoon. With its improbable dialogue, improbable acting and improbable production values, the general impression was of a tatty *A For Andromeda*. It was still watchable, but disappointing.

A rather scratchy extract from *The Peggy Lee Show* followed as a brief musical interlude.

This was followed by *Half Hour Story: Robert*; which was shown as the work of the 28 year old Ridley Scott. There was little in this to hint that he would become better known. Some nice perspective shots of a supposedly poisoned glass of water reminded me of Hitchcock. Which perhaps in itself connects with the American *Hitchcock* show in that both shows rely on trick endings. Frank Windsor as the headmaster and Angela Baddeley as the teacher on the verge of a breakdown leave a strong impression. Interesting to see that the whole show was shot as an outside broadcast on videotape (though it now survives on film).

The finale was an episode of *Steptoe And Son* unseen anywhere for 25 years. This was originally the concluding episode of the return of Steptoe in colour (TX: 17/4/70). Only two episodes of this colour series exist on 2-inch videotape. The copy we watched was derived from the reel-to-reel CV-2000 tapes retained by Ray Galton and Alan Simpson. Through the sometimes fuzzy monochrome images the performances sparkled. The script started slowly and built up to a sustained climax of one-liners from Steptoe senior which brought the house down. It is a tragedy that the original videotape is now lost forever.

All in all, the sum total of these showings proved that vintage television has lasting value to our present culture and our heritage. Let's hope there are more undiscovered gems ready to surprise and entertain us.

Because of his long journey home to Edinburgh, Andrew was unable to stay for the second session of this year's event. It was devoted mainly to crime series of the 1950s and was generally judged to be excellent.

LIME GROVE MEMORIES

An anonymous correspondent (we know who you are!) reveals some home truths. His article was nicely timed to accompany Dicky Howett's sketches as well.

In the mid and late fifties there were five working studios in Lime Grove and at one time or the other I worked in them all. Each had their peculiarities but Studio H, one of the smallest was the most fun.

There, a skilled 'racks operator' by tweaking a certain control knob could in the most matronly of figures produce a simulation of great passion. Bosoms, and there's no other description for them, large and bountiful, physically restrained under executive jackets would heave erotically, pelvises would gyrate and bottoms shake.

Racks operators vied with each other for the best effects but one operator whom I will call Ray was the "artist supreme". Working on the most stately and dignified of figures, Ray changed them into vibrant, passionate movers. Imagine turning Hattie Jacques into Marilyn Monroe. Ray could; the man was a genius.

Mind you, he had the right tools for the job. The camera channels were EMI orthicons, low-velocity tubed cameras. To get a good picture from them was a work of art; beam flutter was only one of the problems of many that made it difficult to get good results, but they were great for diversionary amusement.

The cameras themselves were not too bad, but keeping them working was a pain in the rear. However, with experienced operators and a high lighting level, good pictures could be obtained. They needed a lot of skill to set up; if the beam current was set too high, definition was lost. Too low and the picture would disappear into a black hole. Great fun these black holes, couldn't understand the producers' aversion to them.

Star of the show, looking glamorous after long session in make-up and wardrobe, rehearsal behind her, awaits her cue to open the programme. The red light on the camera comes on and she starts to speak. As she does, so she turns slightly and catches a highlight on her face or perhaps on a brooch she is wearing. Then before anyone can react, starting from the highlight, she is rapidly consumed by this black blob.

The producers and directors were a hysterical lot, given to making rude remarks in times of great stress and to protect us from such verbal abuse when a black hole occurred, the 'vision control supervisor' would turn down the talkback speaker, look up to the ceiling, put his hands together and mimic a prayer, then turn the volume back up, key his microphone and say in a matter-of-fact style, "Sorry about that, nothing we could do, caught a highlight."

A statement of the obvious if I'd ever heard one. The show, being live, would continue. Black holes were used deliberately on some programmes to simulate explosions or to offer an alternative to the standard fades, cuts and mixes.

Incredible how difficult it could be to generate a spectacular black hole when you needed one. The racks operators, posh name 'vision control operators', sat in the darkened 'vision control room', more commonly known as 'racks'. In Studio H there were three vision control operators and a vision control supervisor to operate and picture-quality-match three cameras and one German Mechau eight-mirrored telecine. Each mirror was banded in three sections. Three eighths are twenty four, the common frame rate of film, one frame less than the television standard. Slight flutter but acceptable in those days for short programme inserts.

No need to simulate passion in the women producers and presenters on the day Frankie Vaughan was the celebrity guest. In top hat and tails, he had them eating out of his hands and his high kicks had them gasping for more.

A regular performer, the aerobic queen of the fifties if she will forgive me for calling her that, was Eileen Fowler, a lovely mover—slim, graceful and a delight to watch as she exercised to music. A definite highlight of *Women's Hour*. Shirley Abicair, another star of the fifties, a zither player (remember

Anton Karas in *The Third Man*) and singer, had her own show from Studio H, as did Gerald Moore, the accompanist. Freddie Mills, the boxer murdered a few years later, had a keep fit show there.

Tonight, the programme that did wonders for the careers of Cliff Michelmore, Fyfe Robertson, Alan Whicker and others, was also produced for a time in Studio H. Great programme, lots of fun and so too was the drinking that used to take place in the new refurbished bar in Lime Grove immediately after transmission.

Studio H was a busy studio, next door to Studio G, which made it a convenient place to shove the orchestras when they couldn't be housed in G itself. This happened on programmes such as *Music For You*. On one occasion Harry Secombe was clowning around so much in G that he was persuaded to join the orchestra in H. Having reduced the musicians to a state of hysteria, he was soon recalled to G. I have watched many of his shows since—most recently *Pickwick*, a great performance, but his star show for me will always be that impromptu performance in Studio H.

The camera channels in H, we were told, had been used at the Abbey for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. From the general state of them I think it must have been Elizabeth the First. The cameras themselves were bad enough but the camera control units were terrible. I remember several shows where chassis were held in place with pieces of string to stop sliding them off their hinges [according to photographic evidence, these were EMI CPS Mk 1 cameras—no.2 on *Spot That Camera*, coming next on this channel—and in fact the prototypes had been used at the *wedding* of Princess Elizabeth; the BBC used only Pye Mk 3s and Marconi MkIBs at the Coronation].

The camera channels were eventually changed circa 1957/58 to an updated version using cathode potential-stabilised tubed cameras [This was the 4-lens CPS Mk 3, no. 4 on *Spot That Camera* below]. These were an improved version of the cameras being replaced and came complete with diascope that were used to set the beam density at an optimum level to avoid black holes. Personally I thought these new cameras gave the best monochrome pictures of the period but they were insensitive and had but a short life.

From 1955 onwards the production and operational staff moved as required from studio to studio, but each studio had its own maintenance staff, usually a C-Engineer and a technical assistant, who were there on a semi-permanent basis. The maintenance staff worked what was known as the AP shift (AP for Alexandra Palace), which meant working seven days a fortnight as follows—Monday on, Tuesday off, Wednesday on, Thursday and Friday off, Saturday and Sunday on, Monday off, Tuesday on, Wednesday off, Thursday and Friday on, Saturday and Sunday off.

Great shift system, best I ever worked. Take off a working Monday and Wednesday as leave and bingo—a week's holiday.

Shortly after getting the new cameras, Al was the grade C engineer in H and I was the technical assistant. We were shift A and our first task on arrival was to check the day log, especially important if shift B had been working the day before. Both shifts as a matter of honour and respect for the other shift preferred to hand over a working studio devoid of faults but it didn't always happen. If faults had been left they had to be cleared before rehearsal started and sometimes it was a near thing. Fortunately, as was common practice then, a spare camera channel was provided in each studio. Three working cameras and one maintenance camera was the normal allocation.

Al was a lovely fellow to work with, a boisterous fun-loving character, a competent engineer who usually took everything in his stride but on this particular day and for several more, he was not to be the most happy of fellows. Neither was I.

A cathode potential-stabilised camera tube was a cylindrical glass object over a foot in length and, if memory serves me right, about 4 inches in diameter, with a polished face complete with electrical contacts at one end and a set of connecting pins like valve pins on the other. Not as large as the 4½" Image Orthicon used in E but nevertheless quite an expensive piece of equipment. How much did they cost? We were told £600 and that in 1957/58 was a year's salary. No wonder I never put any weight on at the BBC.

You pushed this tube in from the rear of the camera, gave it a twist to bed the front of the tube contacts and then put the tube base on at the rear. Then you would switch on and check the functionality of the tube. Sensitivity, microphony, target defects etc. Was it good enough for transmission? That was the question.

Sometimes, whatever the fault, it had to be good enough; the tubes were in short supply and even an insensitive tube or microphonic tube was better than none. More light and don't knock the camera—you could get away with murder. Mind you, some tubes were so microphonic, you would only have to whistle the first two notes of *Dixie* to produce a ripple effect on picture comparable to chucking a large stone into the local duckpond. I, being easily amused, could spend hours making noises and tapping tubes to see the various ripple effects I could obtain.

There were two problems with putting the camera tubes in and out. One was that during rehearsals and transmissions, the ambient lighting in the vision control room was of a very low level, and the second concerned the putting on and taking off of the tube base. The camera tube was recessed several inches within the body of the camera and it was difficult to see what you were doing; it was a case of feeling your way around (no comments please!). Putting the tube base on was not too bad, you could hold it with the tips of your fingers, shove and as long as you had aligned it OK, on it would go.

But taking it off was a different proposition; the space was extremely limited and to take the tube base off, you had to grasp it. The bigger the hand, the bigger the problem, it was the classic monkey after sweets in the narrow-

necked jar situation—with your hand wrapped round the base, you had a hell of a job to move it (I do love design engineers).

On this particular day, Al—chunky with big hands—had been trying for ages to get the tube base off. In the end he gave up; "You have a try," he said. I did; I got the tube base off OK but when I took the tube out, it came in two pieces. As Frank Spencer would have said, I'd done a whoopsie (break a camera tube and you were on the mat!).

For two days we waited and then we were summoned to the Deputy Engineer in Charge of Lime Grove. We knocked on the door with a total lack of enthusiasm and were invited to enter. We sidled in, looking downcast and pathetic. Al, in a moment of inspiration, had said dismissal was unlikely as so many of our colleagues had already left to join commercial television and we were needed. He hoped.

The deputy was a smallish man with sideburns and he had a companion, 'Q', the senior engineer from EMI—the company who had supplied the camera tubes and cameras.

Q was a larger-than-life character, a loyal and dedicated company man. I liked Q, I think his hobby was acting. On the table in front of them were several camera tubes, including the broken one and several tube bases. The deputy picked up the rear of the broken tube and a tube base and handed them to Q, who then demonstrated how easy it was to put on and take off the base. The demonstration over, we were then subjected to a lecture on carelessness and warned if it happened again, we would be in trouble. On this occasion we were to get off with a warning, our annual increases and promotion chances would not be affected.

The meeting then relaxed, which gave us the opportunity to try putting the tube base on ourselves. It went on as if greased. It's more difficult to do it in the camera, we excused, then stopped as we realised what Q had done. As we had been talking, he had been demonstrating that there was no difficulties with any of the bases or tubes—they were all compatible—but suddenly he discovered they were not. One base and one tube were hard stuck.

It says a lot for our control that Al and I kept serious, concerned faces as we warned Q to be careful not to break the tube. The deputy said the meeting was over and we left the room as they struggled to get the base off with a screwdriver. A few seconds later we were hooting with laughter and relief.

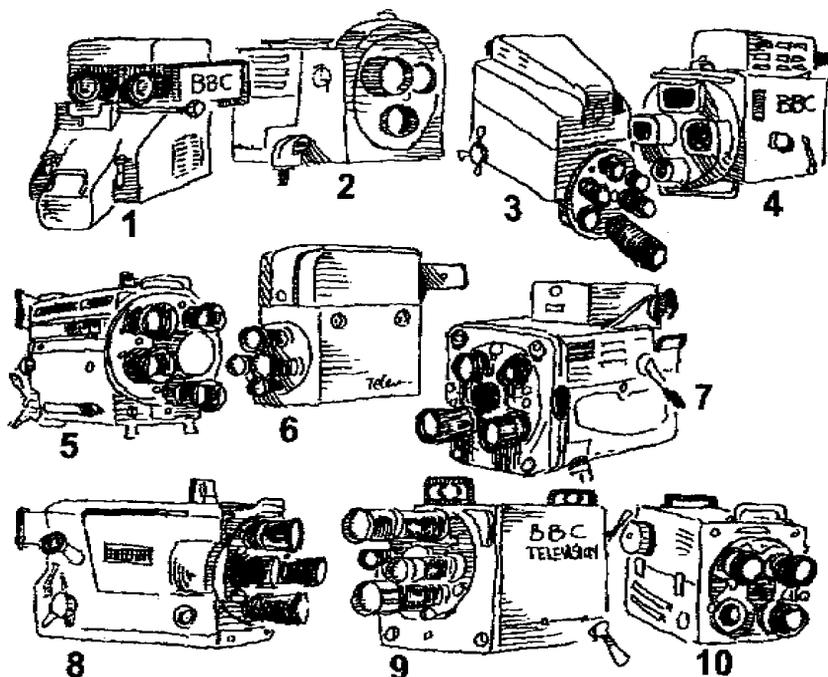
An investigation followed and it was discovered that tubes manufactured at Ruislip had a slightly larger pin diameter than those made at Hayes. We never did discover if they had got the base off OK; Q was always very reticent when asked.

WT, October 1998

SPOT THAT CAMERA!

DICKY HOWETT draws on his memory to illustrate ten old time tv cameras. How many can you identify?

No problem. Let Dicky give the answers.



(1). The EMI Emitron of 1937. Iconoscope-type pick-up, high-velocity picture tube. Needed bags of light. Optical twin lens inverted reflex viewfinder. Lightning reflexes required to operate. Live tv upside down!

(2). Emitron CPS Mk 1. 1947/48. Orthicon type pick-up tube. First used by the BBC on murky OBs. Camera unsteady on highlights. Quite sensitive to insults.

(3). Emitron CPS Mk 2. 1951. Oddball six-lens turret. 'Export' 625-line hopeful. No takers. Rank used three of these cameras at the Odeon, Leicester Square to promote 'big screen' tv. Subsequently, the cameras went to the former Plaza Cinema in Southampton to be installed in studio A for the

opening of Southern Television on 30th August 1958. They were replaced quite soon by CPS Mk 3s. (Trivia fans: The CPS Mk 2 camera can be seen to advantage in the 1956 British movie *Simon & Laura*)

(4). Emitron CPS Mk 3. (10764) 1956. Introduced into Lime Grove studio D, this camera was described by Richard Dimbleby as "the cat's whiskers". A large camera, it produced a softish 'photographic' picture which didn't transfer well to the home receiver. 'Baked Bean Tin' lens cover concealed titchy lenses. Tilting viewfinder. Fingers got trapped often. Beer handle focus knob. This camera ended its days as an optical standards converter and at TWW.

(5). EMI 203. 4 1/2" image orthicon. 1959. The 'green box'. Mistaken often by amnesic cameramen for the 201, which was an EMI vidicon and half the size! But does size really matter, or have you forgotten?

(6). Marconi Mk I. The first Marconi tv camera, introduced in 1949. A 3" image orthicon camera based entirely on RCA blueprints of the RCA TK30 'field' camera. The slightly later Marconi Mk IB was used at various boat races and the odd coronation.

(7). Marconi Mk III. 1954. Successful heavyweight 4 1/2" image orthicon camera with tilting viewfinder and omnipresent beer-handle focus. Camera was the mainstay of monochrome ITV and *Ready Steady Go!*

(8). Marconi Mk IV. 1959. World-beating 4 1/2" image orthicon. Over 900 channels sold world-wide, including 44 in one chunk to CBS in New York and Hollywood. Latterly, all available spares and redundant heads bought by the US Navy.

(9). Pye Photicon. 1949. Clunky old machine with a laboriously slow motorised 4-lens turret. Camera boasted a high-velocity miniature super iconoscope. Photographed *Quatermass II* in studio G. Later versions, called 'Pesticons', used pea lamps in the tube to counteract bouncing electron 'shading'. Mostly successful.

(10). Pye Mk 3. 1951. Well-regarded compact (but not lightweight) 3" image orthicon camera, used almost exclusively by ATV and STV. A lot of remote controls, taking this camera way ahead of its time. Noisy electrical turret. Big focus wheels on both sides. Boon to left-hanging camerachaps.

Further invaluable information:

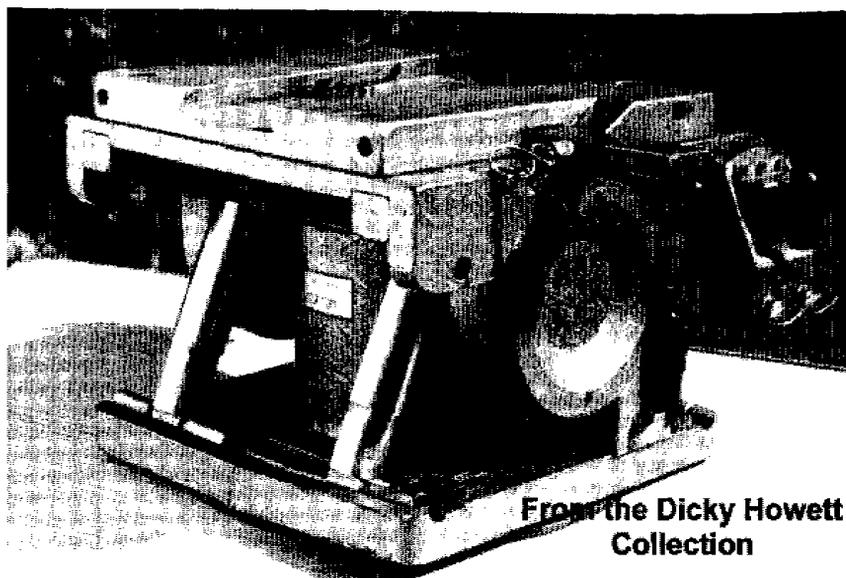
Only one 1937 EMI standard Emitron camera channel exists. There is a further complete head and a few bits and pieces. These priceless items reside at the BBC and the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television. One 1949 EMI CPS Emitron Mk 1 exists down at the EMI Central Research Laboratories.

Nothing seems to remain of the ill-fated 1951 Emitron CPS Mk 2 six-lens turret jobby. A couple of 1956 EMI CPS Emitron Mk 3s remain. The author himself has three green EMI 203s and at least three others are alive and well.

Only one 1949 Marconi Mk I exists, cared for by a BBC engineer. Three other later Mk IB versions exist to delight us all. More than fifteen Marconi Mk IIIs are with us, one in full working order. At least five Marconi Mk IVs are present and correct. Two are running well.

Alas, the poor old 1949 Pye Photicon Mk 1 is extinct. Only one small lens survives and a few working (!) pickup tubes. Nothing remains also of the Pesticon Mk 2 variants, a length of cable is all (although a handful of examples survive in France where they were made, initially from Pye components shipped out, by Thomson-Houston). Happily, the modest Pye Mk 3 is extant and there are at least six examples to amuse and amaze us.

Now it's him again...



**From the Dicky Howett
Collection**

Dicky Howett writes:

Rescued recently, a nice but slightly cracked Vinten Mk II pan head, helpfully marked "ABC 100" and "Alpha A697". This is conclusive evidence of ABCtv use at Aston and perhaps Didsbury during the 1950's? Can any ex-ABC chappies elucidate this numbering system?

The Decline of Television Broadcasting?

Malcolm Baird

My mother was subjected to innumerable press interviews during the 50 years between my father's death in 1946 and her own passing in 1996. Two questions were invariably asked. To the first question "Do you think John Logie Baird achieved proper recognition for his invention of television?", her answer was a definite "no". The second question was "What do you think of today's television programmes?" To this question she did not give a straight answer, but she would smile her charming smile and say something to this effect: "Well, of course television has become a great industry and so many people have found employment in it."

How very true. Since its humble beginnings in 1926 and more particularly since the growth of the mass audience, television has become a huge, world-wide industry. Engineers, producers, performers, retailers, set repairers... the list of TV-related occupations is long. And don't forget those clever folk with their detector vans, hunting for license evaders.

Let us cast our minds back 50 years to Britain in 1948. Television was getting a foothold but many eminent people, including Bertrand Russell, even including senior executives in the BBC, still thought that television would never amount to much.

The most important British industry in 1948 was coal mining. That industry employed three quarters of a million people and was the mainstay of many towns and even cities in Britain. A huge, important industry, but where is it now? I read somewhere that there are fewer than 20 mines operating, with about 20,000 workers nation-wide. In 50 years coal mining has shrunk by 97% in terms of employees. Where will the broadcast television industry be, 50 years from now? Could it go the way of coal mining?

That may seem a preposterous question. More and more channels are available on television, thanks to cable and satellite technology. How can this be a sign of a system in decline? But consider two factors. One is the obvious fragmentation of the viewing audience. The advertising revenue available to each speciality channel is a minute fraction of that of a big network 20 years ago. In the area of Canada where I live, we can get about 40 channels on television, but the programming seems to consist mainly of repeats, or very low budget talk shows and documentaries reminiscent of the BBC's early efforts in the first years of 405 lines.

The second factor is that the TV viewing audience is not only fragmenting, but also beginning to decrease. A recent survey of households in the U.K. with computers has shown that the Internet is having a significant impact on television viewing time. And these households are mainly from the affluent, educated sector of the population that the TV advertisers would particularly

like to reach. At present only one household in four has a computer, but it is likely that in a few years computer ownership will reach 'saturation' just as TV ownership did in the 1950s. Add to that the ever-increasing capacity and speed of computers, which will allow us to receive, store and play sound and vision, *under our own control*.

Note my italics. No longer will there be a captive audience of passive 'TV viewers' for whatever the networks decide to dish up at a certain time. We will be free from the tyranny of the programme schedule, free to watch Shakespeare or ballet or sitcoms or do-it-yourself whenever we feel like it. If we need to have the latest news or weather, that too is available on the net. Historians will look back on the past half-century as the 'golden age' of broadcast television just as the period 1925-1955 is now seen as the "golden age" of radio. Soon it will be goodbye to the regular TV broadcast menu of sitcoms, panel games and the like. Party political broadcasts, if they do continue, may not fare very well in competition with the allurements of the Internet. Although broadcast television will not disappear entirely, just as coal mines and radio have not disappeared, it will decline in relative importance.

As broadcast television declines, there will be increasing nostalgia for its glory days. The older generation who were raised on network television, will want to relive not only the 405-line era, but also the broadcasts of the more recent (post-405) past. The younger generation, hooked on videos and the Internet, will marvel that millions of people could have watched the same programme at the same time. Acclaimed broadcast series like *The Forsyte Saga* and *Brideshead Revisited* will fall into the same nostalgic category as the big-budget American movie 'musicals' of the past. So while the future of broadcast television as we know it is uncertain, the growing nostalgia will at least ensure a bright future and an increasing circulation for *405 Alive*.

THE OCTASCOPE REVEALED!

Dramatic disclosures are made by Dilys Taylor

I've just read Issue 39, and discovered that Proust was right.

Yes, I know that for him, television was a thing of the *future*. But when he put forward the idea that something simple could trigger a barrow-load of memories from the *past*, he was, (as my friend Vickie would say), "bob on". Page 82 had that very effect on me.

Yes, I was one of the thousands of little girls in the 1950s who was the proud owner of that very same "Official 'Emergency Ward 10' Nurse's Uniform"; and just seeing the ad. in the magazine catapulted me back to those heady, happy days when "we'd never had it so good" and rather than playing with 'Disco Barbie', complete with knickers in handbag and essential 'packet of three', we performed the most horrendous operations on our teddy bears and subjected

our dollies to far greater indignities than even the most sadistic gynaecologist could dream up.

If I'm honest, as a *product*, it left a lot to be desired. The "smart blue taffeta dress" probably went down quite well in Tokyo, as it was obviously sized in favour of girls of extremely small proportions. For little girls in Lancashire, being fed on platefuls of potato pie, followed by home-made bread and butter pudding, washed down with a gallon of dandelion & burdock, it was a complete non-starter. But *every* little girl had a candy-striped summer frock, so that had to suffice instead.

The "beautiful blue rayon cape lined with crimson art silk" was *fabulous*— I kept mine for years and it played its part in many other games than "Doctors and Nurses". But the real "pièces de résistance" were the headdress and the pinafore, and if you had a really good mum who could be persuaded to dip them in Robin starch to make them really crisp (just like *real* nurses did), then your cup of happiness really did run over! The big red cross on the apron and the cap was something of a problem; if you went to a real hospital, nurses never had *their* bosoms or foreheads similarly adorned—but that, again, was a minor technicality.

The instrument kit was, on the whole, a disappointment. The watch showed the time to be 'half past three' twenty-four hours a day— (at least it was right for two minutes a day, ho! ho!)— and the sideless spectacles refused to stay on your nose, even when encouraged by a sizeable lump of plasticine. However, you *could* put liquid in the hypodermic and then pretend to inject some unsuspecting toy. Watered-down Tomato Ketchup made quite realistic-looking blood, and it was a wonder that our golliwogs didn't lose all their colour given the amount of blood tests they were forced to undergo. And the stethoscope was quite also good; you could even use that on *real* people, and hear their hearts beating!

But for a mere 24/11 it was the passport to a wonderful land of make-believe, where you could pretend to be Desmond Carrington's invaluable assistant, and sick people always got better to be ill again another day. It may even have spurred some little girls into taking up nursing as a career when they grew up, until they realised that patients talk back, vomit, need bedpans, have to be given blanket baths, and the pay's peanuts.

And the "otoscope"? Well, the trouble with you TV guys is that you're all so painfully keen on *accuracy*. You only had to look at the illustration to see that this was, in fact, an "otoscope", the thing that you shove down someone's ear (pardon?) to decide that it needs syringing or that they've got a perforated eardrum. It didn't work, of course, but a dab of Gloy glue in Teddy's ear soon remedied that!

So, like I say, Proust *was* right if a page in a magazine can transport you back through time and dredge up the happy memories you thought you'd traded in to become grown up. But, after all, that's what *405 Alive* is for, isn't it!

A TRIBUTE TO LIME GROVE

Bernard Wilkie

I am credited with being one of the pioneers of television -an honour I share with many others. Design, costume, props, lighting, production the list is surprisingly long and it's grand to know that so many of we 'oldies' survive. All the more poignant when one of our number passes on.

I'm thinking of a dear friend, Jack Broughton, a property buyer who was so helpful to Jack Kine and me when we set up the first television special effects unit. His reward was to discover huge gas cylinders stacked illegally outside his office labelled for our attention. Worse was when they were due for return—and couldn't be found. I shall miss him, but am so glad that our friendship continued long into retirement.

I associate so many of my fellow 'pioneers' with Lime Grove, the studios where we spent 25 years bringing TV production to a genuinely appreciative (and intelligent) audience. The Grove was a wonderful place and I entered it for the first time in 1954 when I joined television to research fibre glass. Having been a BBC employee since 1948 I was used to visiting other establishments without let or hindrance, but with Lime Grove it was different.

'Who are you? I was asked, and 'What do you want?' Those exquisite ladies who guarded the portals at the reception desk and who were able to reduce even politicians to grovelling wretches quickly overpowered me. One pointed to the chairs and commanded me to sit down.

This, of course, was understandable because BBC, Lime Grove, 'The Television Station' had become more important than any other institution in the country. A reporter who tried to bluff his way in would be tossed into the gutter by uniformed commissioners.

So the 'What did I want?' question was justified, but my reply that 'I just wanted to look around,' brought the entire institution to a shuddering halt. People were summoned from surrounding offices to look at me. 'He just wants to look around!!!'

I did eventually get in and it proved one of the most memorable experiences of my career. As a schoolboy I had spent hundreds of happy hours in the cinema enjoying the laughter and the thrills of those pre-war films. But I never in my wildest fantasies considered that one day I would be part of this magic world. And now here I was in the place where many of the films had been made. I climbed the staircase to the upper floors, stroking the under-side of the iron banister rail believing that gods like Will Hay, Moore Marriott and Grahame Moffat might have left faint traces of their fingerprints there. Some day I might finish these memoirs—the panics, the hilarious situations which could have been 'all right on the night' and the triumphs. But right now I'm tying the beginning to the end.

When Lime Grove became redundant I was invited to the final party—and what a splendid and distinguished evening it was. Drunk with free champagne and emotion, I made the decision to be the last member of the BBC to leave the building. As others drifted off I sat in an armchair in Studio E, surrounded by bottles of booze and plates of vol-au-vent until, eventually, I was the sole remaining guest. The caterers, who had kept me well supplied, were packing glasses and stacking the folding tables. I rose unsteadily from

my chair and with a lump in my throat, tottered downstairs for the last time. The reception desk, stripped of phones and fittings stood eerily un-manned.

I went outside to my patient driver and looked back—I saw ghosts at every window. Unable to speak, I saluted the sign over the door and went away, never to see Lime Grove again. The following day the demolition crews moved in.

REMEMBERING RONNIE SCOTT

Written in March 1997 for JARS (Jazz at Ronnie Scott's) by John

P. Hamilton (ex BBC Radio Studio Manager and ITV Producer /Director)

Reading the Ronnie Scott Discography by Brian Davis in *JARS* 105, kicked off a whole heap of memories for me, especially the notes about Carlo Krahmers *Esquire* label. Your readers may be interested in how at least a couple of the albums came in to being.

I was a Studio Manager—Sound Balancer—in the BBC Variety Department in the early 1950s. I managed to corner the market on *Jazz Club* for a number of years and worked with all the groups, large and small, who performed in that programme for both the Home and Overseas services. The producers that I worked with were, in the main, Jimmy Grant and Donald Maclean.

Carlo Krahmer was often around the studios for live broadcasts and he subsequently did a deal with the BBC to use some of the broadcasts for release on his label. So it was that, on two occasions in 1954, the Scott Jazz Group was booked to play for the Overseas version of the *Jazz Club* series. The first was in May 1954 and the studio was in the basement beneath the Criterion Theatre in Piccadilly Circus. This studio was a hangover from some of the weird places to which the war-time BBC had had to disperse, because of the blitz and so on. Everybody hated working in the lower studio of the 'Cri' because the acoustics were quite dreadful and the area totally the wrong shape, being oblong and, even worse, partially tiled. It had built-in echo and the control box was at the opposite end to stage area and at one side, so that it was impossible to get a direct view of the performance area. Portable seating was put in for the audience. No matter how many acoustic screens you put around—and there were never enough available—or what kind of microphone placement you used, getting a good balance was virtually impossible. Jazz having a low priority in the thinking of the managerial hierarchy of the time, we were frequently lumbered with the Cri as a studio for *Jazz Club*.

So it came to pass that Carlo expressed the desire to record the Scott Group of the day and I recorded the transmission on a Ferrograph ¼" tape machine, as the programme was transmitted 'live' to the world. He was aware that the sound would not be of the greatest standard but the nine-piece had generated the usual excitement from the audience and nobody said how awful the sound had been... so we went ahead and I edited out the announcements and presented Carlo with a copy tape of the musical items. Incidentally, the host of *Jazz Clubs* in those days was a young lad called David Jacobs before he turned to a different kind of music.

Eventually I received a complimentary copy of the 12-inch LP from Carlo and I have it to this day in my collection. It was marketed as *The Ronnie Scott Jazz Club Vol 3, No 32-003* dated 17.5.54. The personnel were Jimmy Deuchar, Derek Humble, Ken Wray, Ronnie and Pete King, Benny Green, Victor Feldman, Lennie Bush and Tony Crombie. Kitty Grimes wrote the sleeve notes and the producer was Jimmy Grant.

The second album for Esquire was from another Overseas Jazz Club in September 1954, transmitted from the more salubrious surroundings of the Paris Cinema studio on Lower Regent Street. There were two changes in personnel with Mac Minshull in for Ken Wray on trombone, and the great Phil Seaman for Tony Crombie on drums. This was Jimmy Deuchar's last blow with the group before he joined the BBC Show Band. We were all much happier with the sound from the Paris, and I did the same edit job for Carlo. The subsequent release became *The Ronnie Scott Jazz Club Vol 4, No 32-006* dated 7.9.54. My free copy of the album still survives.

I defected to ITV in 1955 and eight years after the Jazz Club recordings for the BBC, I managed to sell to the management of Associated-Rediffusion, where I was then a Producer/Director, the idea for a series of programmes as *Outside Broadcasts from the Old Place at 39, Gerrard Street*. Pete King and I got together and planned five programmes featuring the great Tubby Hayes and the quintet. We thought that we would introduce an element of musical education by calling them *Tubby Hayes Plays...*, then adding as a sort of subtitle, *Standards* for Programme 1, *Flute and Vibs* for prog 2, *The Blues* for 3 and so on. The middle show was called *Tubby Hayes plays... and Rehearses*. We did this one to show how the group put together whatever piece Tubby had written and arranged, and all the band contributed to the programme. With Tubby featured on tenor, flute and vibs, we had Jimmy Deuchar on trumpet, Terry Shannon piano, Freddie Logan bass and Alan Ganley on drums. We used two singers. In the first show, *Standards*, Marion Williams sang *Willow Weep For Me*. It was unusual for her to work with a small group, as she was best known for her radio work and touring with big bands. I had worked with Marian in radio with the Eric Delaney big band, for example.

For programme 4, *The Blues*, we brought in Joy Marshall, who did justice to *Ain't No Use*. Ronnie was the presenter for all of them, working to a script that we wrote between us. There weren't many of the famous jokes since, as always, we wanted to get as much music in as we could into our short running time.

Those of you who are old enough to remember how small the Old Place was, will realise what a tight squeeze it was to get the big cameras of those days into the space with lighting and all the other paraphernalia of a television outside broadcast, but we managed it and the audience that Pete had drummed up for the shows joined in to give us a good atmosphere. Which was just as well, as we had to record them around 8pm on the recording dates to allow time to get all the gear out and let the paying customers in for the usual evening performances. We recorded the shows two at a time onto videotape, but straight through as if live. In those fairly early days of Ampex, we were not allowed to record discontinuously and post-edit. So everybody had to be on the ball to get it right, first time.

Sadly, the philistines in management (back then) decided not to run the programmes as a series on a weekly basis, but to slot them in a fairly arbitrary fashion as fillers and at some very strange transmission times, varying from early evening to a couple at late night. This precipitated an angry exchange of memos between me and those in charge but, despite the daft slottings, we got a very good response from the viewers in the mail. I think Pete King must have persuaded every club member to write in and say "more, more, please". *Crescendo* gave the shows a rave write-up and I circulated all this to higher management at A-RTV but, as usual, it all fell on stony ground.

That was all in December 1962 and January 1963. It was two years before we got back into the club to make some more programmes. In 1963/64 I was involved with a musical programme called *Stars and Garters*, which I had devised and produced and co-directed with my wife, Daphne Shadwell. There was not much jazz involved in that, although the band, led by Arranger/MD Alan Braden, bristled with the best of the session men around, including Freddie Clayton and Alan Morehouse (tpts), Don Lusher (tmb), Keith Bird (tenor), Ronnie Price (piano), Terry Walsh (guitar), Frank Clark (bass) and Bobby Midgeley on drums. Not bad, eh, for a show based on updated Music Hall songs and pops of the day? And fronted by a comedian, Ray Martine!

Daphne and I left that series when the format was changed and moved onto other things. In between times we directors carried out audition sessions in the never-ending search for new talent. If ever I spotted someone who was even remotely jazz-orientated, I filed the name and contact number away in the hope of being able to use them somehow, sometime if slots became available.

The first chance came in March '64 when the programme planners suddenly needed some more fifteen-minute filler programmes. I put in a bid for them, suggesting a mini-series called *The Jazz Girls*. Again, I contacted Pete King and our original plan to record in the Old Place was frustrated for some reason I can't recall. However, I included many sports OBs among my directing activities and at Easter, around the end of March, we had a scheduled Ice Skating programme to do from the Silver Blades ice rink at Streatham. So, on Easter Monday we broadcast the skating live and overnight re-rigged the equipment into the exotically named Bali H'ai Cocktail Room which was part of the ice rink building. The first four singers booked for a fifteen-minute programme each were Madeline Bell, Barbara Moore, Joy Marshall and Betty Bennett. Barbara was the only Brit, the other three being American and resident in this country.

Following the good response to the Tubby Hayes programmes some years earlier, we decided to use his quintet as the backing group. The personnel was the same as for the Tubby Hayes plays shows. Ronnie was contracted to present the programmes.

We were scheduled to camera-rehearse and check balance between 2pm and 6pm, break for dinner 6pm to 7pm, technical line-up and make-up artistes from 7 to 8 and VTR four separate programmes between 8 and 10pm. Again, we were recording 'as live', with no stops for retakes.

The bad news came at 1.45 pm when Pete King rang the scanner to tell me that Ronnie had slipped a disc and was, literally, flat on his back! There was no chance of him making the venue and doing the shows. So, come in

Tubby. We rehearsed all the musical items for technical purposes and then used the dinner break to sit down with Tubbs and scribble out some foreshortened links for him to deliver between items. Duly fortified during the line-up period, Tubby coped magnificently and the first three shows went well. During the fourth, Betty Bennett missed eight bars from one of her songs which temporarily threw the quintet for a loop, but they got back on track and we all laughed about afterwards. The audience were very good and Pete, Tubby and I were happy with the end result. I don't think Miss Bennett was, but we were in the era of no re-takes and that was that.

Again, we had a good reaction from the jazz-starved viewing public and a couple of months later, Ronnie had recovered from the disc that slipped and I had managed to get another slot. This time it was a single half-hour and we decided to do another Jazz Girls show with Ronnie's own quintet, and with him doing the presenting. The girls all came from audition sessions held previously and were Kay Garner, later to become well-known as a session singer and soloist, Jean Stevens, Maud Damons and Billie Laine (no relation to Cleo). Each of the girls had two numbers and we mixed them up in a programme that had a centre commercial break and an overall running time of 24 minutes and 35 seconds. The numbers were all standards such as *Lover Man*, *This time the Dream's on me*, *When Sonny gets Blue* and so on. The quintet was Ronnie, Ernie Ranglin (guitar), Stan Tracy (piano), Malcolm Cecil (bass) and Jackie Dougan (drums). We went back into Gerrard Street for this one and although teatime (4pm to 5pm) is hardly the best time for jazz performers to do their thing, the programme zinged along with another Pete King-recruited audience and all the girls performed well. That all took place on the 21st May 1964 and, sadly, that was the last time I directed anything from the Old Place.

For the next couple of years I had the opportunity of using a number of the artistes Ronnie and Pete brought into the club. Amongst them were Mark Murphy, Ernestine Anderson and Joy Marshall but it wasn't until 1968, just after LWT took over the weekend ITV franchise, that I had another chance to work at the club, this time in Frith Street.

Blossom Dearie was the featured artiste and I persuaded the Light Ent. department to give us a fifteen minute slot, early one Friday evening, to do a live programme with her. Ronnie did the announcing again and played, with Martin Drew, I think, on drums and I forget who the bass player was. Blossom was wonderful, as always, and we packed the front seats of the audience with higher management people from LWT. I hoped that we might get a long-running series on the strength of this taster, but as usual— no such luck.

Finally, as they say on ITN, I would like to place on record that the foregoing were some of the happiest programmes I worked on in my many years in radio and television, and that Ronnie and Pete could not have been more co-operative on the many occasions I had the pleasure of working with them. Daphne and I will miss Ronnie as much as everyone else. That has been richly demonstrated in the condolences you have published in *JARS*. We pray that the Club will continue to prosper, and send every good wish to Pete and the staff.



The photographs show Ronnie smiling from the LP covers. He signed them to my wife, Daphne Shadwell, and me 41 years after the event, when we met up at a dinner party at mutual friends. Better late than never!

SPACE PIRATES:2 FOUND! AGAIN!

Or, A Day in the Life of a Doctor Who Episode Hunter
Steve Roberts

Here's a little tale that some of you might find interesting...

About a week ago, Steve Cole at BBC Video took a call from a woman who had been passed from pillar to post around the BBC and finally ended up being put through to him. She wanted to talk to someone about her 'mad Dad', a real boffin who used to record Doctor Who off the TV in the sixties and seventies. Apparently he still had loads of tapes and she wanted to know if the BBC was interested. Steve put her through to Mark Ayres, the Restoration Team's audio expert. Within seconds, it became clear that she was talking about *video* recordings, not mere audio tapes.

When Mark quizzed her further, she said that her father had bought an early 405-line open-reel video recorder made by Sony and had recorded and kept lots of Doctor Who stories — upwards of three hundred reels in his loft, she said. He had also bought an open reel colour recorder in the early seventies and still had the machines. She thought that he had bought the first machine in 1967, thus opening up some very interesting possibilities...!

Anyway, to cut a long story short, Mark, Paul Vanezis and myself met at my house this morning and then drove down to the south coast to meet up

with this guy and his family. He turned out to be a really nice bloke of about seventy, with children and grand-children in tow. He was a real boffin, and showed us various inventions such as pianos that played each other (don't ask!) and a machine for playing a violin by computer.

He had bought his first video recorder, a Sony CV-2000 in the late sixties, followed by the 625-line version, the CV-2100, and then a colour Shibaden model in the early seventies. He took us up into his loft and there were boxes and boxes of tape reels there! He hadn't been able to afford to buy the real Sony tape-stock at the time, so he had got hold of any wide magnetic tape that he could—professional quad video tape, computer data tapes, you name it, he'd used it. He had built a high-speed tape slitter out of Meccano so that he could slice two-inch videotape down to the half-inch required in the recorder.

As it turned out, he had only managed to find about four *Doctor Who* tapes, all with recording dates in the early seventies. However, rummaging around in a box of *Forsyte Saga* tapes, Paul found one that said *Doctor Who*. He took it downstairs to where the machine had been set up and played it. The playback was very poor (although I have no doubt that we would have been able to improve it) but it was unmistakably an episode of *The Space Pirates*. From the conversation going on between General Hermack and Milo Clancy, we guessed that it was episode three! Wow, struck lucky first time! We didn't want to play it anymore, just in case of damage, so we spooled it off and tried the other tapes that we had managed to find in the meanwhile.

They were mostly black and white recordings of things like *Carnival of Monsters*, although there appeared to be some colour recordings, including possibly the earliest known home colour recording of a *Doctor Who* episode—*Frontier in Space*:5. No sign of colour recordings of *Invasion of the Dinosaurs*:1, *Planet of the Daleks*:3, or any of the other missing colour episodes, I'm afraid...

Anyway, back in the loft, we uncovered a recording of the BBC coverage of the first moon landing in 1969, including the vital missing studio scenes. This is on the BBC's 'Top Ten Missing TV Programmes' list, so this is a major find. We also discovered that he had a full set of recordings of the 1973 science-fiction show *Moonbase 3*; up until five years ago, when colour episodes were rediscovered in the States, this would have been a major find!

After a very nice lunch, we came back to the house and decided to check the *Space Pirates* tape again, just to see if there was another episode after it on the tape. We spooled to the end of the episode and played it... at which point the horrible realisation finally struck us. It wasn't episode three, it was episode two! Would you believe it, the earliest known *Doctor Who* video recording and it turns out to be the one episode that already exists from an otherwise completely missing story! Talk about feeling gutted! And there was nothing else on the tape after it!

Oh well. At least we had a very nice day, we found some important missing moon landing footage, and we proved that there really were people out there recording *Doctor Who* in the sixties. Now, if only we can find some more...

PS: We did find some other shows recorded in 405—*Pegasus* and *Trident*, although I don't know anything about them or their archive status at this time.

Perhaps the readers can help? It's ironic that not only is the earliest surviving Doctor Who video recording a copy of the one episode that survives from that story, but also that this episode was one of the few not to be originally transmitted from tape, but instead it was from a 35mm telerecording still held by the BBC!

Many people have asked about the Retrovisor; several have remarked that these sets are more collectable and far rarer than the set that inspired it, and a few brave souls even possess examples. Now the originator unfolds the true story of

A TV22 FOR THE NINETIES

The Retrovisor Story, as told by Stephen Ostler

The Retrovisor was an up-to-date colour television receiver with a difference. It was based on a classic British design—the Bush TV22! Only 48 of these sets were ever made. Most featured built-in rabbit's ears or loop aerials, remote control and on-screen display when adjusting the controls. Various cabinet colours were available. The Retrovisor was on the market between May 1993 and February 1995.

How it all began

In 1986 I founded Radiocraft, a business which specialises in the restoration and supply of vintage radios to the general public. Almost right from the start, it became plain that only a few of the vintage radios available were always the most popular. These were sets such as the 'Ovaltiney' Philips 634A and the 'round' Ekcós. Since the supply of such sets was limited, I found this frustrating. Many sales were lost due to my inability to obtain the exact type of set a customer wanted.

I started to ask myself what could be done. By concentrating on obtaining the few most popular sets I was just helping to push the price levels ever higher. But if I could create from scratch a product that could be just as sought after as these radios, I thought I could be on to something.

Looking back at the regular 'photopacks' detailing my restored radios and which were despatched to all on my mailing list in the 1980s, I see for Christmas 1988 I was promising a new product to be released in the near future called 'RRT'. This 'project number' actually stood for 'Radiocraft Replica Television' and the illustration showed a Bush TV22 with a colour picture inserted (photographically) onto its screen. This was the idea for the product which was later to become the Retrovisor television. And the 'RRT' was later to pop up again, for the new product's model number was to become: 'RRT 1950'

In the following years various studies were undertaken to explore the feasibility of the project. I remember I commissioned one by an associate at

the time called Terry Harvey. Terry was a Canadian engineer working at the time for the BBC here in Britain. His, incidentally was the working 1938 Baird T18 receiver which had the distinction of being shown at the final closedown of the BBC's 405-line service from Crystal Palace. This receiver had earlier passed through my hands but Terry had completed its restoration. In fact it was nearly never shown at the closedown. Following a special reception that evening at the BBC for those who had been involved, the 405-line service was summarily taken off the air. It was then re-opened later that same evening following a special request. But that's another story....

Back to Terry's commission: He studied the feasibility of producing a 14-inch version of the Bush TV22 shape, since 14-inch tube chassis were far cheaper to obtain than 10-inch ones. But we didn't want to change the overall 'look' of the cabinet, which we considered central to the charm of the TV22. Obviously our priorities were different from what Bush's had been, since, presumably seeking to keep the design up-to-date and accommodate a larger tube, they went on to develop in the early 'fifties the TV32 and TV62, which were more 'slab-sided' in appearance. The only way we found it possible to fit a 14-inch tube to the TV22 cabinet was to add 42mm of width and mount the tube well back—just behind the cabinet 'shoulders'. The extra width resulted in a broader frontal appearance which looked impressive but decidedly 'American'. This was not pursued.

I remember in about 1991 I mounted an exhibition of my radios at a craft fair situated in a public shopping mall. This was at the invitation of one of my customers who regularly organised such events. On my stand I displayed a working Bush TV22. The response was fantastic! The public had never seen anything like it. I had crowds of people gazing goggled-eyed at this wonderful working piece of television history. The impact quite put my radios in the shade. There were many requests to buy the TV22 and of course I had to spend a lot of time explaining why such a set would be impossible to use to watch today's 625-line UHF programmes. This event left me with a strong resolve to produce a set with this sort of dramatic appeal and which could be used with today's programmes! And so I started developing the new product in earnest.

In 1992 I started work, hoping to have something ready to show by the time of the following year's national vintage communications fair at the National Exhibition Centre in May. To make a go of this, I needed to be able to manufacture these sets without too much initial capital investment being required. This would mean making the cabinets and buying the modern television chassis in small quantities to start with. I soon learned that it just wasn't possible to buy bare television chassis in the small quantities I required, so it would be necessary to purchase complete sets. In any case I was told that the proportion of value in the cabinets compared with the electronics was minimal and would have barely affected the price. The various manufacturers I approached didn't seem to mind what use I intended to put their sets to, so long as their name wasn't implicated and they had no responsibility for service cover. From their point of view all sales were good news and if I was going to become a good customer, so much the better!

Cabinets

How to get the cabinets made to a good standard at an affordable price was more than a problem than might be expected. Injection moulding would require a mould tool costing fifty to a hundred thousand pounds. Apart from being out of my price range this would be a risky course to follow while the size of the potential market was still unknown. Low cost tooling was essential to start with. I looked at all the options, ruling out nothing.. I first considered pottery. As expected it turned out the finish would be very good but the cabinet would be prohibitively heavy and brittle. The 'toilet-bowl-televisor' was therefore to remain a fantasy! There seemed to be simply one option - fibreglass. But would the quality be up to scratch?

A bakelite-style 'marbled' look would be very difficult (and expensive) to obtain in fibreglass. Indeed, the brown cabinets were to always prove a problem throughout the Retrovisor's production run. Brown cabinets had a tendency to turn out a lot lighter than expected from the colour chart, and unless the brown was very dark they never ever did look right without a marbling pattern. As a result I later tended to more heavily promote the black and cream models, which looked correct with plain colours.

Talking of the colours, I considered all sorts of these as options. To begin with, I wanted to try out all sorts of ideas on this beautiful shape! First, there were the black and there were the cream models. The idea was to supply the black with chrome trim, making a 'black & chrome' format. In fact, because of difficulty in moulding and fixing original TV22-style knobs (which were to be plated) there was only one true black-and-chrome model ever built; the majority were actually 'black with contrasting bright trim'. However the shade of the cream model was made to be an exact match to the Bush cream used at the same time as the TV22—on their DAC90A radio. So if ever there had been a cream TV22 it would have been this colour! I always thought this turned out to be one of the more successful Retrovisor options and this colour was always my favourite.

In November 1992 I took a TV22 cabinet along to a local glassfibre moulder for copying and left it with him. From the start I specified a special fire-retardant fibreglass resin on all the cabinets. Sure enough there turned out to be quality problems. The sharp-ridged profiles of the original wrap-round TV22 grille could not be reliably reproduced in fibreglass gel and suffered from chipping. The only possibility was to soften the corners and mould to a smoother curved profile. Once this was done, the process worked. The finished cabinet now even had the correct dense sound when rapped with the knuckle—similar to bakelite! It felt and looked solid and the finish was pretty good.

But not only the cabinet had to be specially made. A cabinet back had to be specially designed and moulded to protect the tube neck and give easy access to the rear controls. Also the screen mask (framing the picture) had to exactly frame a 4:3 aspect ratio on a modern square-profile 10-inch colour tube while maintaining the correct 'vintage' appearance. And a separate front screen glass

was necessary to complete the illusion. For various reasons, it was also found advantageous to make the cabinet a little deeper than that of the TV22, but the cabinet's back was in turn to be rather flatter. All this meant substantial design and tooling effort.

The first knobs were initially moulded—in the same way as the cabinets. This proved unsatisfactory. There were chipping problems and also difficulties with mounting them neatly and firmly on their spindles. The original TV22 knob had been push-on using a heavily recessed shaft. This was very difficult to achieve in fibreglass gel and in any case there wasn't now enough room to take the recess. All but the very first Retrovisors were therefore to use (modified) bought-in knobs.

Unfortunately the moulder soon started to report problems maintaining consistent results without spending an inordinate amount of time on each cabinet. He now didn't want to go on, and so we parted company. By now the Retrovisor had just been launched. But I had lost the means to manufacture any more cabinets!

We needed to find another cabinet moulder—and fast. I was recommended a young man who was now starting up afresh following recently having left a larger firm. I went along to see him in Marlow. He was busy promoting a new process called 'cultured marble' which was a light-weight ceramic material and which could be moulded into any almost shape. This process also promised the easy replication of a bakelite-style brown marbled finish.

But he proved unreliable, partly due to the many other demands on his time. The cabinets themselves were of poor quality and I repeatedly had to reject them. Since I was by then desperate for more cabinet sets (cabinets, backs, masks) urgently I took him up on his offer to have another go, working in fibreglass. But then there were still more problems—with warpage and colour uniformity. By now I had had enough. So, in December 1993 I sued—for the losses I had incurred due to his incompetence and broken deadlines. In the event we settled before the case came to court.

Following the debacle with the second cabinet moulder it was necessary to find yet another. Fortunately this time I was luckier. Another contact recommended an excellent firm, Cee-Jay Ltd of Great Dunmow, Essex. From my point of view, the only problem was their location. Essex was 140 miles from my home in Sedgeberrow with no major roads running in the right direction. Regular visits were needed to oversee things and the journeys became long-winded and expensive. But they were worthwhile. One of the first jobs Cee-Jay insisted on doing was to make a complete set of new moulds. This meant more money out of the pot but this time the job was done properly. A flange was added all around the rear of the revised cabinet which made it much more rigid and less prone to warpage. Cee-Jay were soon producing excellent cabinets and these cabinets were fitted with the Mk II chassis. This revised Mark II was designated the Mark IIa.

This fascinating article is concluded in our next issue, together with illustrations.

FUNNY PECULIAR

The debate rages on...

Andrew Henderson "Incidentally, Paul Vanezis [of the BBC] phoned me and he told me that Dicky Howett's idea that the 1960s *Dad's Army* has had a laugh track added is rubbish. The 1980s repeats came from optical soundtrack (studio sourced) and the 90s repeats from the magnetic mixed tx [transmission] track (which should have been used in the 80s).

Dicky replies: "I think my case is answered. Adding a 'mixed tx track' sounds awfully like sweetening the sound to me, chum. Also, 'laughs' which aren't on the original were suddenly there in the new repeats. So *this* is the original 1968 sound track? The BBC saved all its original magnetic tracks from the 1960s? I think not. If this was the case why wasn't the complete original magnetic track used on the latest repeats instead of that clumsy 'mixed tx' version. In any case I didn't say a laugh track had been added, just augmented or, to use a well-known technical phrase, 'sweetened'. One only has to listen for God's sake. Last time I attended a BBC comedy show (sometime in 1997) we all had to guffaw madly in advance so the sound man could 'check' the level. Like heck he did. Subsequently, the transmitted show strangely had twice the volume of original laughs. Funny that..."

VISUAL BURPLE

Dicky Howett uncovers more on the vexed subject

The book **Television For The Home** by Ronald F. Tiltman (Hutchinson & Co., 1927) charts the history of television to date and then provides quite a bit about Baird and a mention of the formation of the Television Society. The book is introduced by Professor A.M. Low, D.Sc., A.C.G.I., F.R.A., F.C.S., etc. (yes etc!). They were really plugging the 'scientific' aspect of television!

Tiltman up to that time had written also **Wireless Without Worry** and **Radio Log and Distant Reception Manual**, so you can judge his readership. The bit about visual purple is as follows...

The trouble did not appear to be on the mechanical or optical side of the apparatus, but on the electrical side of the problem, and essentially in the light-sensitive cell. Baird spared no efforts now to improve this state of affairs. Just to prove how careful he was to leave no stone unturned, no avenue unexplored, I may say that I happen to know that in the course of his experiments at this time he constructed a cell made from the visual purple out of a human eye. He, naturally had difficulty in obtaining the eye, but at length was fortunate in finding a surgeon with a particularly keen scientific interest who supplied him with a fresh human optic. This cell, when first constructed, gave a quite appreciable reaction to light.

So it actually worked then? Notice he says: "I happen to know..." Oh yes, told by old John Logie, eh? Make of it what you may.

- ❖ *Judging by the books that Tiltman wrote later for outfits such as pulp publisher Foulsham it might be fair to call him a hack writer, who reassembled material provided for him, rather than conducted primary research.*

It is also notable that early experiments in television had not shown a great deal of success and investigations were made into virtually any idea that might show promise. This may help explain why visual purple was considered at all.

*An interesting insight into early television experiments, carried out from 1923–26 by the Admiralty Research Laboratory, is given by Prof. Russell Burns in his paper **Early Admiralty and Air Ministry interest in the Detection of Aircraft**, IEE conference publication, 1985. Their people examined various television systems and experiments involving selenium cells, also vacuum and gas-filled photocells.*

A demonstration given on 27th May, 1926, with a definition of 40 lines, displayed black and white bars on a screen 1½ inches square. An observer commented that the reproduction was very crude. It seems strange that ARL, with the best brains and very sophisticated equipment, were unable to match the results of J.L. Baird who, seven months earlier, had produced a recognisable image of the human face with correct gradations of light and shade.

THE FIRST TELEVISION REVUE

Denis Gifford

For many years I have been researching all over the place for information which will lead ultimately to the first British Television Catalogue. I hope...

Many of you will know that the small independent one-man publishing outfit called Flicks Books has taken the project on and, despite some rather misleading preliminary advertisements and announcements, will eventually be publishing the book.

There comes a time, however, especially as life begins to draw to its close, when one has to say "that's that", and decide to publish the catalogue so far. Hopefully the unhappily unfinished listing will be published, if not this December as promised, then early next year. Fortunately some lost listings of the Baird weekly programme sheet came onto the auction market, and your editor and I were able to afford to buy some photocopies, if not the originals.

However information continues to pop up in unexpected places, and purchasing a battered but expensive copy of *Radio Times* for 14th April 1933 recently, because of its advertised "First broadcast of an Edgar Wallace

melodrama"—*The Ringer* (Flicks are also publishing my Edgar Wallace 'Films of catalogue in due course)—I discovered somewhat fuller details of what the BBC called 'The First Television Revue'. What they meant was the first television revue transmitted by the BBC/Baird relationship, as I'm pretty sure the earlier Baird company had a go at a revue or two, two or three years earlier.

Although the programme is certainly detailed in my coming catalogue, I discovered for the first time a 'plug' paragraph about the show in Radio Times' famous "Both Sides of the Microphone" feature, giving many more details, especially of the specially written songs, than I would have been able to list. Here's the promo para as written by the anonymous team of 'The Broadcasters':

RADIO TIMES

April 14, 1933



The Broadcasters' Notes on Coming Events

BOTH SIDES OF THE MICROPHONE



The First Television Revue

IN the programmes for Friday next, you will find particulars of *Looking In*, first television revue. This show will be the most ambitious venture of Television Studio BB. It should draw the majority of Britain's 'lookers' to their receivers. Stars are Anona Winn, Iris Kirkwhite, Veronica Brady, Horace Percival, Reginald Purdell—and six of the Paramount Astoria Girls. It will be interesting to see how the producers handle a 'spectacular' show of this kind. Six dancers will be a proposition. Maybe, the producer will emulate Samuel Goldwyn in giving us 'close ups' of these pretty girls. Harry Pepper has written new tunes for *Looking In*; among them *Man in the Moon*, *Say, it's a Beautiful Day*, and *The Lion Tamer*. Sketches, costumes, scenery, etc., had not been decided when we last saw the producers; they were heatedly arguing whether the Paramount Girls would mind having their noses painted blue.

And here is how the show was billed for the night of Friday 21st April 1933, as transmitted on the National Programme, London Region:

11.0-11.30 Television Transmission

by the Baird Process

'LOOKING IN'

The first Television Revue

Specially written by John Watt

With music by Harry S. Pepper

Produced by Eustace Robb

In conjunction with the author and composer

IRIS KIRKWHITE

The celebrated premiere danseuse

ANONA WINN

The famous radio and gramophone artiste

VERONICA BRADY

The well-known character comedienne

HORACE PERCIVAL

The popular musical comedy lead

and

REGINALD PURDELL

The great little comedian

THE PARAMOUNT ASTORIA GIRLS

(Trained by Mrs Rodney Hudson)

(*Vision, 261.1 m.; Sound, 398.9 m.*)

And from the same year...

The Wonder of Television

by

John Logie Baird

Editorial Introduction

We have heard how man has harnessed the sound waves and brought them across the world, at the speed of light, to his own fireside. Is it possible to harness the light waves themselves, and see to the ends of the earth? To-day, it is certain that man can do this. To-morrow, we shall "look-in" to the Test Match in Australia or the towering skyscraper in New York just as to-day we can listen-in to the story of the game from Sydney or the orchestra playing on Broadway. More complicated than wireless, with its wave-lengths, valves and hosts of things with long and curious names, this new science of Television, or "seeing at a distance", is one of

the most wonderful achievements of man. The delicate instruments which make it possible we owe largely to the genius of a British scientist, Mr. John L. Baird, who, after years of experiment, succeeded in 1925 in "looking-in" for the first time to a distant picture. In 1928, he was able to flash a scene across the Atlantic; to-day, the "television nights" are a regular part of the broadcasting programme. Here we have an account, written for us by Mr. Baird himself, of how this wonderful invention works and what it can do.

Electric Eyes That Scan The World

Television can best be described by comparing it with wireless telephony, or better still, with broadcasting. For when man invented the wireless telephone, he made for himself a third ear — an "electric ear" which can listen, not for a few miles at the most, but round the whole world. In television, man has made for himself an extra eye — an "electric eye" with which he can look across an ocean.

[PICTURE OF BAIRD STANDING NEXT TO HIS FIRST TELEVISION TRANSMITTING DEVICE (DUMMY'S HEAD, ROTATING WHEELS, ETC.)]

In broadcasting, as you know, the person whose voice has to be sent over the wireless sings or speaks into an instrument called the microphone which changes the rapidly vibrating sound waves, made in the air by the speaker's voice, into electric currents which vary according to the strength and nature of the sound waves. These electric currents affect the wireless waves, and the wireless waves affect the receiver in your home, where the loud-speaker turns them back once more into sound waves.

[PICTURE OF "FULTOGRAPH", A WIRELESS FAX MACHINE]

How then can we make a picture or a scene affect the wireless waves? The secret lies in a wonderful instrument which scientists call the photo-electric cell. You will have read of the tiny particles called electrons, tinier even than the atom of which they are a part; you will have heard how a stream of these particles moving together in one direction is what we know as an electric current. Now when light waves fall on certain substances, such as the metals sodium and potassium, a stream of electrons is given off from the surface, and this stream, which is really an electric current, varies, of course, with the strength and nature of the light waves themselves.

How A Television Set Brings Pictures To Our Homes

[BAIRD IN FRONT OF TWO LARGE VALVES AT HIS TRANSMITTING STATION, MONITOR LABELLED "THE BAIRD TELEVISOR"]

The photo-electric cell contains one of these substances. It is put in place of the microphone, a spot of light is made to pass very rapidly up and down over the picture or scene to be broadcast, and the light waves thrown back from this moving spot fall upon the cell. The nature of these light waves differs, of course, according to the shape and colour of the part of the scene from which they come, and so they cause varying electric currents in the photo-electric cell, just as the sound waves do in the microphone. These varying currents affect the chain of wireless waves which is being sent out from the acrials of the broadcasting station, and these in turn fall upon the aerial attached to the receiving set in your home.

[THE ULTRA SHORT WAVE AERIAL UPON THE ROOF OF THE BAIRD COMPANY]

What, then do we attach to our receiving set in place of the loud-speaker to turn the varying wireless waves back into light? The television set, as the instrument is called, is really quite simple, and can be made nowadays at home from parts which can be purchased quite cheaply. It consists in its simplest form of a disc of thin metal punched with thirty tiny holes arranged in the form of a spiral. Behind this is placed a small neon lamp, which works very similarly to some of the bright red advertising signs which we see in our big cities nowadays. The lamp is attached to a suitable wireless receiver, and the disc is revolved by a special tiny electric motor at a speed of 750 turns per minute. Then, if the receiving set is properly "tuned-in" to the wave-length of the station broadcasting, the picture which is being broadcast can be seen by looking through the holes in the receiving disc.

A Man Sings In London And Is Watched By People In Denmark

[BAIRD CAMERA IN USE AT BROADCASTING HOUSE] [MIRROR DRUM TRANSMITTER]

Television is going rapidly ahead. At the time of writing, the B.B.C. sends out programmes to which you can "look-in" on four nights a week; and there are thousands of enthusiastic "lookers-in", not only in this country, but also in Berlin and as far away as the Canary Isles. On one occasion, Mr. Carl Brisson, the famous actor, sang songs at Broadcasting House which were received in his native town of Copenhagen in Denmark, and at the same time his image was received on a television screen specially sent out there. Thousands of his fellow-countrymen not only heard but saw him as he sang in London, hundreds of miles away. If you think about this for a while you will see what a wonderful difference television can make to our lives in the future.

The Inventor "Listens In" To The Shape Of His Hand

When I was commencing my first experiments with television many years ago, I was struck by the sound which the picture made if the wireless waves were received by a loud-speaker instead of a television receiver. I found that this sound varied in accordance with the object placed in front of the photo-electric cell; the sound of a hand, for example, was sharp and clear, whereas the sound of a voice was softer and quite different in character. In fact, with a little practice, I found I could distinguish between different objects by the peculiar sound their "picture" made. My next thought, therefore, was: "Why not, then, make a gramophone record of a picture?" I tried this, and made a record of the sound — and found that it was possible, on playing the record, to turn the sound back into the image. I had, in fact, made the first gramophone record of the picture of a living object.

Invisible Rays That See Through A Wall Into A Dark Room

[MR. BAIRD EXPERIMENTING WITH EARLY TRANSMITTER]

In the early days, too, it was necessary to use a very powerful light in order to send a picture successfully by wireless, and to avoid this it occurred to me that I might use, not the light waves themselves, but some of the other similar waves which we know exist in the spectrum. For although we cannot see these waves, the photo-electric cell can, and, indeed, I found that by using the long infra-red waves it was possible to send a picture of an object, even though the latter was in complete darkness. In other words, I had found a way of seeing through a wall into a dark room!

We have now reached the stage when it is possible to transmit two of our senses — sight and hearing — across the world. The only way we know what is going on is by the information conveyed by the senses. Suppose that in due course the other three senses—taste, touch and smell—can be transmitted, then to all intents and purposes we shall have transmitted ourselves across the world without leaving our arm-chair! Where, indeed, will science lead us if it continues to unfold such marvels as we of the twentieth century have been privileged to see?

❖ Extracted from **The Wonder Encyclopaedia For Children** (London: Odhams, 1933) and discovered by John Hayward-Warburton.

A Christmas poem from Paff

Have you ever heard of the 'Battle of the Beams'?
It was so secret, that very few experts knew the means,
By which enemy radar became deadly suicidal aids.
Misleading Luftwaffe pilots into futile bombing raids.
Their planes off course, following signals most strange,
Completely destroying the enemy radar range.

While researching radar at Imperial College,
Measuring wavelengths of enemy beams,
We built a radio 'Black-Box' with electronic knowledge,
Which students on Royal Scholarships called 'The
Queens'.

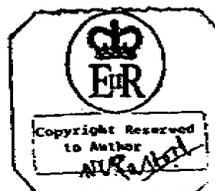
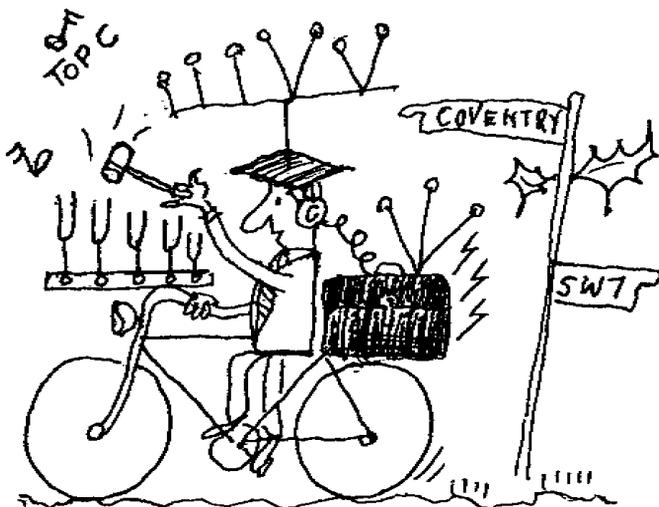
The aerials were knitted with needles of steel,
Top 'C' Tuning Forks were lifted from the Kitty,
Looks like a case of "Beg, Borrow, or Steal,
From the Royal Musee and the School of Knitty ?

Come 'World War Two' and 'Coventry's Night Blitz',
Mistakes at the Top..... X should not be shot,
Nor honoured under cover; which he got,
While little Black-Box told the truth,
Accurate measurements were the proof,
Countermeasures ruined all by ERROR,
National Catastrophe, Night of TERROR.

To this very day, little is ever heard,
Of the Backroom-Boys there is hardly a word,
But where there is ERROR,....TRUTH will prevail,
While Archives thrive on electronic E-Mail ?

So from Wartime Beams to Computer Dreams,
We rediscover Digital means,
And for Peacetime Pleasure we get,
The wondrous nightmares on TV INTERNET.

Television is with us day and night,
SILENCE IS GOLDEN and OFTEN RIGHT.



BRITISH AND US TELEVISION SERIES FILMED IN COLOUR BETWEEN 1950 AND 1960

Compiled by Alan Keeling

ADVENTURES OF A JUNGLE BOY (Kenya Productions), 13 episodes, 1957.

THE ADVENTURES OF LONG JOHN SILVER (Treasure Island Pictures, Australia), 1955.

ADVENTURES OF SIR LANCELOT (ITC/Sapphire Films), 15 b/w and 15 colour episodes, 1956/7.

ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN (Warner Brothers), last two seasons, 52 episodes 1954-57.

BOSTON BLACKIE (Ziv Productions), 1952.

THE CISCO KID (Ziv Productions), 26 episodes, first season 1950 (there were no commercial stations transmitting colour at the time).

DISNEYLAND (later **WALT DISNEY PRESENTS...**), 1955.

DRAGNET, from December 1953.

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF ELLERY QUEEN (NBC), 1956 (live).

GENE AUTRY SHOW (Flying A Productions), 1953.

I LED THREE LIVES (Ziv Productions), 1955.

THE LONE RANGER (Wrather/ITC), final season, 39 episodes, 1956.

MY FRIEND FLICKA (Twentieth Century Fox), 39 episodes, 1956.

NBC's COLOR SPREAD (NBC), 1950s special presentation.

NOAH'S ARK (Universal/Jack Webb), 26 episodes, 1956.

NORBY (NBC), US sitcom, 1955.

NORTH WEST PASSAGE (MGM), 26 episodes, 1957.

SCIENCE FICTION THEATER (Ziv Productions), first season, 39 episodes, 1955.

SERGEANT PRESTON OF THE YUKON (TPA/Wrather), 1955.

WILD BILL HICOCK (Columbia), final season, 39 episodes, 1954.

IN THE WORKSHOP

RESTORING A MODEL 709

Tony Statham offers a progress report on his latest 'baby'

As mentioned by George Windsor in issue 38, the purchase of the Marconi 709 makes it the 35th set in my collection. Its restoration back to working order is being fitted in around my other sets and at the moment is mainly cosmetic.

I purchased a blank back panel from Nigel Pollicot and having traced the cut outs from an original (thank you Gerry Wells) recut all the holes and 400 diamonds. This took three weeks worth of lunch hours, using a small and very sharp chisel. A close match for the back hinges came from a specialist shop in Witney (Oxon.). The missing bakelite surround for the radio tuning dial was salvaged from a scrap HMV radio bought at Harpenden for £1.50. I'm waiting to find a scrap Marconi 855 that will donate its dial glass, as the television one is cracked. Robin Howells supplied the missing knob stamped *Focus* and another set swapped its perfect mains-energised speaker for the dud one in the TV.

The power chassis has been fitted with new electrolytics, one new resistor and wiring, and checks out OK. Before I go any further I will have the Emiscope 3/3 tube tested to see if it is any good. The 709's serial No. is 4 but of how many made in 1938, who knows?

Another project on the go is to fit a Murphy V200 chassis into an incomplete 1937 A42V mirror-lid cabinet. Vacuum Coatings Ltd (0181-520 5353) supplied a new surface-silvered mirror for £30 and I have a quote of £60 to supply and cut a new steel top plate to match the one on Mike Barker's complete original. The black leather binding for the plate will cost a lot more but once finished, unless you looked in the back, the set will look and function the same.

Sets restored thanks to Dave Higginson are an Ekco TS88 and a Bush TV12A. The 12A's original tube had a big ion burn and would not focus so a new Mullard 22/14c was purchased from Langrex for £25. A new 12" Mazda CRM121b was bought at the same time for the A42V project. At the time Langrex still stocked other 9" tubes (CRM93 & 22/22).

Other sets currently being worked on are two model VI34c, V150, V200A, a Bush TSC93 and an early Ferranti chassis fitted with a 12" flat-fronted 12/54 tube. This tube is only showing a faint white disk about 4" diameter with full EHT so it's being replaced with a similar 12/44 from stock. Having recently cured a collapsed frame fault in my Bush T36 a friend phoned from South London to say that he had just bought me one from his local car boot sale.

405-line sets are still turning up away from the usual Harpenden/NEC sources. Last year I walked into a Witney high street television shop and bought a working 17" Ferranti for £5. Odd! Well not exactly, as down a side street in another television shop there sat an unidentified 12" console set (back missing) filled with Mazda octals and EF50 valves. It sat quite at home amongst the shop's old display signs advertising TV makes long since gone. Yet on the counter time had melted away. There sat a Murphy valve radio that had just been brought in for repair. Damn thing had broken its drive cord after 40 years service. The customer went away happy in the knowledge that it would be fixed and ready for collection in two days. What was a shame was that this shop does not now undertake servicing, so the Avo valve tester and signal generators are covered in dust in the rear workshop together with valve radios brought in for repair but never collected.

I'm sure this situation is not unique. Do other 405ers know of shops like these? Or indeed of valve televisions that are still being rented out by high street shops? Last year a old friend of mine who lives in Stevenage was finally persuaded to relinquish her 23" b/w valve telly back to the rental shop. Not because it had gone wrong (they were worried in case it did) but because the firm wanted to get it off their books.

One television of mine that might prove impracticable to repair is the ultimate 405 set ever made—the B&O 3618 26" dual-standard

b&w/colour, valve/transistor hybrid. To look in the back of this teak-clad monster explains why older TV servicemen who knew the model in its heyday have no wish to renew the acquaintance. It has EHT but no raster... and nothing from the speaker unless you turn off then on again when you get a moment's hiss, then silence. Any ideas anyone? I have the circuit diagram for it, which only highlights what a complicated set it is. Even if it was fixed I'm sure something else would go bang before too long.

The next batch of sets awaiting the soldering iron are a Murphy V114, a Decca 131 and a later KB Imperial Deluxe SV30 (twin speakers) from the early 1960s. Well that's what this 405er is doing at the moment. I'd just like to finish with a tip for the others. If anyone else is looking for spares for Russian Vega and Rigonda portable TVs please contact Studio Sav at 17 Bell Street, London NW1 58Y, tel. 0171-258-3448, fax 0171-258-3449.

MEASURING CAPACITOR ESR

Heavily condensed and adapted from an article by Alan Douglas in Antique Radio Classified (May 1998)

A year ago I can honestly say I'd never heard of ESR—equivalent series resistance. Now you can hardly pick up a technical magazine without reading about ESR and the ESR meters being promoted for rapid troubleshooting of recalcitrant electronic devices. Switch-mode power supplies are a case in point; capacitors in these often fail by overheating and drying out, not from low capacitance or excessive leakage, but you'd never tell by visual inspection.

Those of use who prefer to use NOS (new old stock) capacitors in restoration projects can easily come a cropper, installing visually perfect old capacitors that turn out to be less than sound.

Alan Douglas, a regular contributor to *Antique Radio Classified*, notes that in the States there are at least three ESR testers available. Two are from Creative Electronics and Capacitor Wizard, and one from Dick Smith Electronics in kit form. The first two testers apply 25 millivolts at 100kHz to the capacitor under test and read out the equivalent series resistance directly on a panel meter. These testers can be used in-circuit since 25mV is not enough to turn on semiconductor junctions. The Dick Smith model uses 100mV and also works in-circuit.

As Alan says, an ESR meter would be ideal for checking electrolytics in transistor radios or in older tube equipment. What's more, being a certified cheapskate (his words), he determined to find a 'lash-up' that he could make with his existing test equipment that would also measure ESR. The

arrangement he came up with is shown in the block diagram. It uses just a 100kHz test oscillator and a digital voltmeter (DVM).

"With the test oscillator set at 100 kHz, my set-up reads out directly in ohms. A 1 μ F DC blocking capacitor could be added if desired. Since I'm not working on live equipment, I didn't bother. My test set-up depends on the 600-ohm source impedance of the oscillator. To calibrate the set-up, I attach the test leads to a decade box set to 50 ohms and adjust the oscillator's output to give 50 millivolts on the DVM. Then, in theory, a 1mV reading on the DVM equals one ohm ESH ($R=E/I$). Actually the Fluke's frequency response is poor at 100kHz, so it doesn't register much below 10mV, but in practice the bad capacitors show much more than this, and are easy to spot."

He adds: "A run through my junk box revealed more than 60 electrolytics, many new-old-stock that had no business being there. Most of them did check obviously bad on a capacitance bridge, but the ESR test is much, much faster. I tried re-forming some of the high-ESR capacitors to see what would happen, and a few did 'heal' them-selves when DC was applied. Evidently these have corroded internal connections and would not be caught by a conventional test. Some read OK if the terminal lugs were wiggled, and I also found one fairly new electrolytic with an intermittent riveted negative lead that was visually perfect."

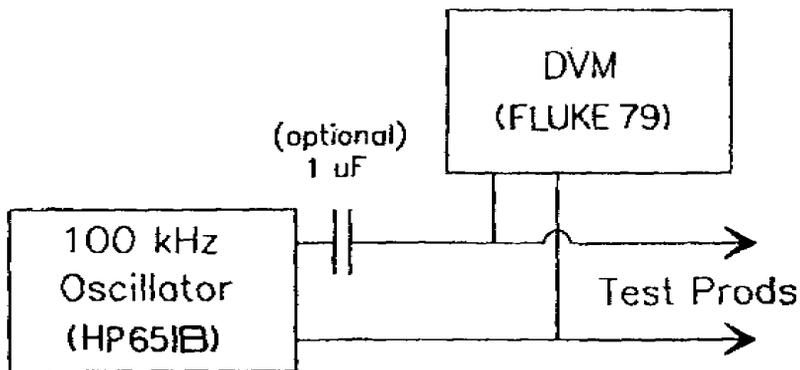


Figure 1. This block diagram shows a hook up for measuring ESR using a HP651 test oscillator and Fluke 79 digital voltmeter.

REBUILDING CAN-TYPE CAPACITORS

Some words of wisdom spotted on the Internet

This is likely not news, but rebuilding can caps is something do-able without great difficulty...

I recently had a 2uF 1000V cap that died, and there was no replacements to be conveniently had. Looking at the minuscule size of 10uF 450V parts these days, series-connecting up three to make a 3uF 1350V unit (with appropriate voltage balancing resistors) was no great trick. Sleeved inside a large diameter heat shrink tube, all fits in the original can easily.

It's a bit of a mess cleaning the oil out of the can (I was careful not to get it all over me....) but un-crimping the can was quite easy with about 10 minutes of time and a sharp set of side cutters to unroll the crimp.

I've heard of doing this (Frontier no longer offers this service) but have never tried it, thinking it a daunting process. Upon actually trying it, I found it quite easy. I'm left with a nice replacement cap that looks identical to the original....

John Brewer WB5OAU/4

Vintage Radio Website at <http://www.mindspring.com/~johnmb/>

OH, I DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE...

OR RATHER, DETAILS OF A HOME CONSTRUCTED TELEVISION DISCOVERED IN WEST SUSSEX

In other words, John Wakely has been acquiring things again!

During one of my visits to the South Coast I paid a visit to an old friend with the strange job title known as a 'totter'. The tern may be better known to readers as a scrap metal dealer. He often comes by items that are of great interest to someone like myself, namely vintage radios, televisions, record players and other items of mid-twentieth century technology.

"Something in the shed for you, John. I bet it's the oldest telly you've seen..."

Can you imagine that? Pure music to anyone born with a 10kc/s whistle in their ears! I dashed towards the shed and burst open its doors to be confronted with a mass of mixed items from a World War II gasmask to parts of a Decca radar. I then noticed at the back a tall narrow console

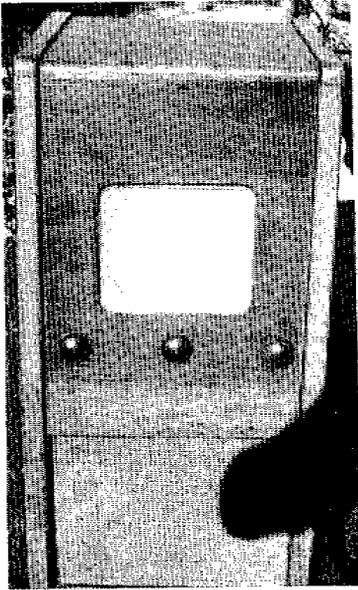
cabinet, its front covered with yet more junk. Yanking away the offending items revealed a tiny 9" screen and below that a neat row of large brown knobs. At first I thought I had unearthed a pre-war model but after extracting it from its hiding place discovered its true identity.

The little set before me was a home-constructed model built around 1949. It was minus the cabinet back (if it ever had one) and a quick nose about inside soon put me in the picture—well almost. The set is constructed on two chassis comprising the power unit complete with RF EHT unit mounted on the cabinet bottom. The RF and timebase chassis, complete with CRT is mounted above this. Readers familiar with the Pye D16T console will recognise the layout; the power unit uses a huge mains transformer to supply HT voltage and the high current required to supply the large quantity of parallel-connected 6.3-volt valves. Mounted on the side of the CRT support is a two stage pre-amplifier using a pair of American Ken-Rad 6AC7 valves. The rest of the line-up is quite conventional for the period except the use of a KT66 as line output. The only commercial model I can recall that used the LT66 was the Ferranti T146 (1946). The RF chassis uses the EF50 in various colours, both UK and American manufacture, plus 6VG6s in frame, sound and EHT generation together with a 6J5G, VR55, VR54, EY51 and a missing HT rectifier believed to be a 5U4G. The tube is a Mullard MW22-18.

Now that pre-amp got me thinking—remember the location on the Sussex coast, over sixty miles from the only television station on air at that time. Television receivers must have been very thin on the ground in that area in 1949. Can you imagine the excitement when dad, demobbed from the services only a few years before, was constructing it? All that work every evening and weekend, buying the expensive parts, not knowing what the results would be at such a remote location. It must have given years of pleasure to its builder and his family. I wonder how many gathered around its tiny screen to welcome in the new Elizabethan age?

The enclosed prints were taken on the morning of discovery and judging by the amount of corn husks covering the chassis, I feel that it has been stored for at least the last 35-plus years in a very dry barn. It has been well constructed and no doubt will restore well.

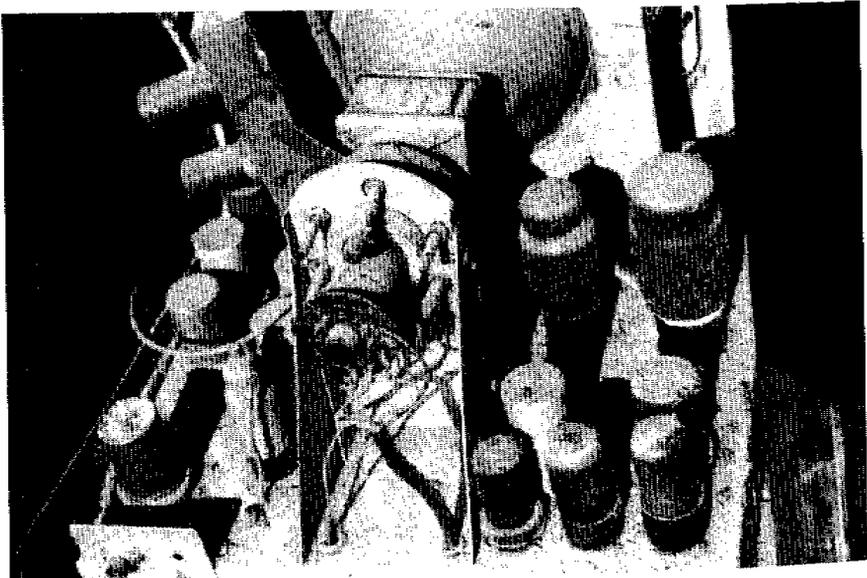
The original builder may very well not be with us but I feel he would be delighted to know that his pioneering project all those years ago is now the subject of an article in a vintage technical journal and his receiver is now in safe hands for a long time yet.



Left: Front view, including John's own shadow.

Right: Full view, showing power supply at bottom. Vacant valve holder is for HT rectifier 5U4G. Pre- amp mounted vertically at top left.

Below: Close-up of timebase chassis, with two-valve pre-amp on left. Everything is covered with dry corn chaff and a few mouse droppings.



Television on Top

GLoucester TO HAVE FIRST EVER INSTALLATION

SIX months from the date of the Postmaster General's licence, the first resident of the City of Gloucester will be able to have trouble-free TV laid on to his home by wire for 7/6d. a week. This charge will include four ordinary radio programmes (three B.B.C. and one special) as well as the TV programme whenever there is one on the air. Seventy miles from Sutton Coldfield, he will get reception, free from all interference, as brilliant as though he were only a mile or so from Alexandra Palace. And there will be no aerial to bother with and only one selector knob to adjust.

Before deciding to go ahead with this progressive scheme, the first of its kind to exist, the Gloucester County Borough Council made a close study of various systems, especially the experimental installation that has been operating on test for a year at Northampton in conjunction with the Northampton Wireless Relay Company Limited.

This equipment, designed and installed by Link Sound & Vision Ltd., a firm owned jointly by Pye Ltd. of Cambridge and Murphy Radio Ltd., was finally approved, and work is now going ahead on the Gloucester installation.

Basically, the system comprises a master receiving station picking up programmes from Sutton Coldfield and redistributing them by wire throughout the Gloucester area. Sets similar to ordinary TV sets in appearance are installed in subscribers' homes, and ease of installation is a great advantage of the system. This is the first time that an entire town or area (as distinct from blocks of flats) has been equipped in this way, and town planning authorities throughout the country are taking a keen interest in Gloucester's pioneer lead.



SHORT WAVE NEWS, April 1950

USEFUL INFORMATION ON VIDEOTAPE HANDLING BY SONY

Particles. Binders. Base films.
Backcoatings. At Sony, we do everything we can to prepare our tape for archival storage. The rest is up to you. To get the longest archival storage, just follow a few simple guidelines. After all, you spent time and money capturing your programs onto videotape. So make sure your footage will be there when you need it!



STORE TAPES AT RECOMMENDED TEMPERATURES AND HUMIDITY.

If you're comfortable, chances are your tape is comfortable, too. Stay within 59° to 77° F and 40% to 60% relative humidity. Because tape can expand or contract, stay away from sudden temperature changes, even within the recommended range.



KEEP TAPE EVENLY WOUND.

Look at the pack of wound tape. If there's "stepping" or other signs of uneven winding, the whole tape should be rewound. Where possible, rewind at slower speeds.



STORE TAPES UPRIGHT AND IN CASES.

Stacking cassettes one on top of the other can warp their shells. Always store cassettes upright, on either their sides or ends.



FASTEN OPEN-REEL ENDS SECURELY.

Use adhesive tape or end-stoppers to hold the loose ends down. Otherwise, changes in temperature can cause the entire pack of tape to loosen.



PUT THE LABELS ON CORRECTLY.

Put labels only where they belong. And don't put new labels over old. Improperly placed labels can interfere with cassette loading, degrade the cassette alignment or even peel off inside the VTR mechanism.



REWIND OR FORWARD TAPE EVERY THREE YEARS.

You don't want tape layers to start sticking together. So "exercise" tapes at least once every three years.



STAY AWAY FROM STRAY MAGNETIC FIELDS.

Tapes get recorded by magnetic fields. They also get erased. So keep your tapes away from loudspeakers, electric motors and other magnetic sources — even toys.



WATCH OUT FOR CONDENSATION.

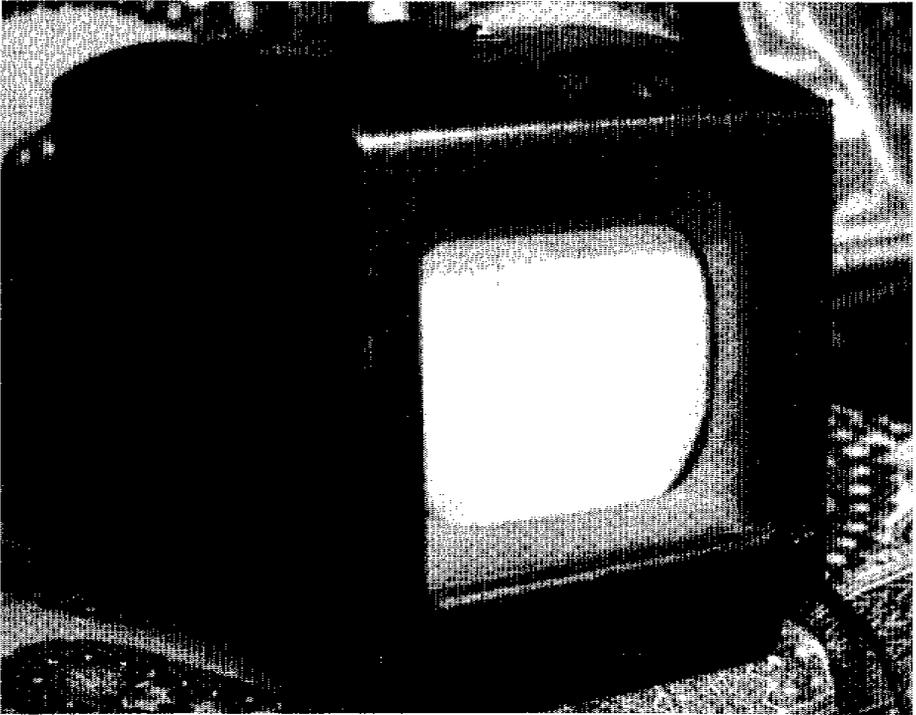
Whenever possible, give tape 24 hours to adjust to climate changes. If condensation does occur, wipe off dew from the case and cassette shell or reel and allow the tape to dry naturally. When it's dry, make a working safety copy.



TAKE SPECIAL CARE WHEN SHIPPING D-1 AND D-2 LARGE CASSETTES

Because of their high mass, D-1 and D-2 large cassettes need special attention.

Before shipping, confirm that there's no slack in the tape and that it's evenly wound on the reel. Ship with plenty of cushioning bubble-pack. After receiving, inspect for cleanliness, tape slack, wind integrity and cassette damage. If you suspect a problem, contact the shipper.



Jon Kummer's mystery True Vue
television receiver (see page 14)

MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE FROM ROY HUDD ENTERPRISES

- 1: ROY HUDD'S very own MUSIC HALL' (cassette).** 15 great music hall songs from the one-man show with the Alfred Ralston Orchestra. "Where Did You Get That Hat?", "While London Sleeps", "It's A Great Big Shame", "The Future Mrs. Hawkins", "Our Neighbourhood", "Two Lovely Black Eyes", "The Hole in the Elephant's Bottom", "When Father Papered The Parlour", "The Spaniard That Blighted My Life", "A Nice Quiet Day", "I Live In Trafalgar Square", "arry, 'arry, arry", "Polly Perkins", "The End of My Old Cigar", "My Old Dutch" £5.00 (including p & p).
- 2: "THE NEWS HUDDLINES" (double cassette) BBC GOLD.** Classic sketches, songs and monologues selected from eighteen years of the record breaking BBC Radio 2 show with Roy, June Whitfield, Chris Emmett, Janet Brown, Alison Steadman and Pete Moss and The Huddliners. "Two hours of pure joy" Daily Mirror. £5.99 (including p & p) * Autographed by the cast *
- 3: "ROY HUDD'S BOOK OF MUSIC HALL, VARIETY AND SHOW BUSINESS ANECDOTES" (book and double cassette).** Roy's collection of over 400 true tales of show business. Funny, sad, fascinating and positively Kabeleisian! Published by Robson Books: "the anthology of the year" *The Sunday Times*. The paper back version is sold out but I do have some hardback copies left at the paperback price: £8.99 (incl. p& p).
- 4: DOUBLE CASSETTE.** Roy reads the book £7.99 (incl. p & p).
- 5: "THE HUDDLINES ANNUAL" (book).** A ripe collection of sketches, songs and gags by the Huddlines' top writers. £7.99 (including p & p) * Signed by the cast.
- 6: VIDEOTAPE: "JOKES THAT WON THE WAR".** A unique collection of the great Variety comics in action hosted by Roy. Nervo & Knox, Jack Buchanan, Will Hay, Scott Sanders, Charlie Chester, Jimmy Wheeler, Tommy Handley & ITMA, Richard Murdoch, Kenneth Home, Sam Costa, Maurice Denham, George Formby, Robb Wilton, Joyce Grenfell, Stainless Stephen, Wilson Kepple & Betty, "Monsewer" Eddie Gray, Bud Flanagan, Tommy Trinder, Frank Randle, The Western Brothers, Sid Field, Richard Hearn, Sidney Howard, Max Miller, Ralph Reader, Old Mother Riley & Gracie Fields. £12.99 (incl. p & p).
- 7: "FUN WITHOUT VULGARITY" (book).** 80 beautiful full colour reprints of Victorian & Edwardian Popular Entertainment Posters in Catherine Hall's new book £14.99. (including p & p).
- 8: "THE PANTOMIME BOOK".** A unique collection of the most famous panto gags and sketches. Invaluable to anyone involved with panto. £12.95. (including p & p). Highly recommended.

ALL CHEQUES/POSTAL ORDERS should be made payable to

ROY HUDD ENTERPRISES, PO Box 8923, London SW4 0ZD.

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■ Covering developments from the days of Faraday, Maxwell, Hertz, Lodge and Marconi to the recent past, **RADIO BYGONES** is edited by Geoff Arnold G3GSR, who is also Editor of *Morsum Magnificat*, the popular bi-monthly magazine for Morse enthusiasts.

■ **RADIO BYGONES** is published six times a year. A subscription costs £18.50 for one year by post to UK addresses, £19.50 to Europe or £23.75 to the rest of the world, airmail.

■ If you would like to see a sample copy, send £3.00 (£3.20 overseas) to the Publishers at the address below. **RADIO BYGONES** is not available at newsagents.

■ Please make cheques or postal orders payable to G C Arnold Partners. (Overseas remittances must be in Sterling, payable in the UK. Cheques must be drawn on a London clearing bank).

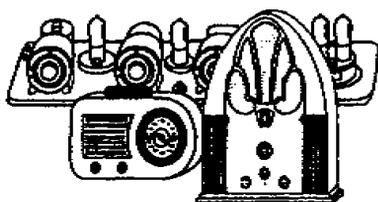
Payment from the UK or overseas by Access/Eurocard/Mastercard or Visa is also welcomed; please quote your card number, card expiry date, and your name and address as registered with the card company.

**G C Arnold Partners, 9 Wetherby Close,
Broadstone, Dorset BH18 8JB, England
Telephone/FAX: 01202 658474**



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Issue No. 36, Autumn, 1998, Edited by Giles L. Miller

ISSN 0267-2846

* Features: "The Echo of the Super" - "Sight, Sound & Smell" - "The Great British"

* "The Great British" - "The Great British" - "The Great British" - "The Great British"

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'ON THE AIR'

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See and hear the story of British Broadcasting in this exciting new museum on the historic Chester Rows

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☞ See what goes on inside a TV studio - with the actual cameras used on those classic programmes.

☞ Browse in the world famous Vintage Sound Shop and choose from its unrivalled collection of carefully restored vintage radios and gramophones.

Whether you're eight or eighty you'll find lots to see and do in this fascinating new museum.

It's the cat's whiskers!



'On The Air'



Opening hours 10.00 - 5.00 Mon-Sat

11.00 - 4.30 Sundays

Before travelling check out of season opening hours

42 Bridge Street Row, Chester.

Tel/Fax: 01244 348468

THE TEST CARD CIRCLE

This society was founded in 1989 with fewer than twenty members. Since then it has grown in membership to well over 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.

If you are interested in this fascinating subject, write to the Secretary, Curtons House, School Lane, Walpole St Peter, WISBECH, PE14 7PA, and if you send a 12.5" x 9" self addressed envelope with a 50 pence stamp, we will be pleased to send you a sample copy of the Circle's magazine.

ASK YOURSELF THREE QUESTIONS...

1. Bored with the same old dreary, overpriced merchandise at collectors' fairs and antique marts?

2. Do you collect any of these?

Stamps and Postal History
Picture Postcards
Cigarette and Phone Cards
Cameras and Photography items
Coins and Banknotes
Military, Naval and Aviation items
Pop, Stage and Screen memorabilia
Autographs
Things to do with Sport and Transport
Old Toys
Ephemera, Documents and Prints
Books
The weirdest kind of Collector's Items

3. Would you like to be offered a selection regularly, often at less than dealers' prices?

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, BOURNEMOUTH, BH1 1YL**

ANTIQUE RADIO MAGAZINE

BIMESTRALE DI RADIO D' EPOCA E DINTORNI

Antique Radio Magazine is a bi-monthly magazine dedicated to the vintage radios and surroundings, published by Mose' Edizioni.

The magazine, lavishly and beautifully printed in art book style, is now entering into the 4th year of life and despite it is mainly addressed to specialised people, it is gaining more and more success world-wide. Articles go from the beginnings of telecommunications until the radio as element of history of customs and culture.

Our aim is to make the wide public aware of this fascinating world which has now become of great interest.

An important landmark was our recent publication of the important book named "Epoepa della radio, storia di un uomo".

We also offer a comprehensive selection of radio books from other European publishers, many of which are hard to find elsewhere. Please ask for our latest Ex Libris catalogue.

I look forward to serving you.

Yours Truly

Mose' Battocchio, Editor

For more information or orders please write or telephone Mose' Edizioni, Via Bosco 4, 31010 Maser (TV) Italy - Tel. 00 39 423-950385; Fax 00 39 423-529049; e-mail: mose@tv.shineline.it

A Notice to all Dinosaur Customers

We recently realised that it's a little over five years since we supplied the first Dinosaur standards converter – this realisation came as a shock to us. What started out as an occasional hobby has grown into something approaching a small business. I can now look back on over fifty standards converters and nearly a hundred modulators and wonder where the time went!

We also look at our collections of early radios and televisions gathering dust for want of attention. Something has to give, and so it is with a heavy heart that we must announce that at least for the time being Dinosaur is closing its doors to new business. This need not be a permanent closure; watch this space for future developments.

In the meantime there are still a few 'Testcard 'U' Like' generators left for sale including the new full colour testcard 'F' generator (available for the ridiculously low price of £160 plus £3 P&P) so get your orders in now. We are (naturally) still open for spares, service and of course extra images for the testcard generators.

We would like to thank all of our customers, many of whom we've come to know and consider as friends – without your encouragement 'Dinosaur' would not have been possible.

Dave Grant & Mike Izycky
Dinosaur Designs, 4 Kemble Drive, Bromley, Kent, BR2 8PZ.

Here's something for your Christmas list (if you can wait that long!)...

ELECTRONIC CLASSICS: COLLECTING, RESTORATION & REPAIR

Only this book reveals secrets such as...

Can broken valves be mended?

Now that obsolete ICs are more difficult to find than valves, where do you get all those hard-to-find parts?

Can noisy volume controls be silenced permanently (without using a big hammer)?

How do you finish off apparatus to museum display standards?

Are fakes easy to spot?

Can you really destroy an item's value by crummy restoration? (You bet you can!)

Why do some collectors have all the luck and what's their secret?

How do you tell the rogues in this hobby and what remedy do you have against them?

Where do people get archive programme material?

Is it worth joining a society and if so, which one?

Can you really make a living out of your hobby?

Are there easy ways of restoring old sets?

Which books and materials do you need?

How can YOU score repeatedly at auctions and antique fairs?

How come the dealers always get hold of the tastiest stock?

... and this book doesn't mince words!

This book will encourage you in your hobby and build up your confidence at tackling those restoration tasks yourself — and save you a fortune in the process.

Published by Newnes at £19.99 and available through all good bookshops.

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.

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, 2098.

Test card music and old TV programmes are is 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 possibly 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 without a plug on it, you are breaking the law. Domestic electrical appliances manufactured in or imported to the UK must be fitted with a correctly fused 13-amp plug. We suggest that our kind of antique treasures are labelled "Collector's item, not to be connected to the mains without examination by a competent electrician" or something similar.

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 have proven to 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 seriously 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. Unfortunately the production of these marvellous devices has now ceased. Note also our two advertisements 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. There was an excellent ready-built modulator from Dinosaur Designs but production has ceased until further notice.

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 loose plus 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** (01403-786559), **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 **Radiophile**, publisher of *405 Alive*, has a huge library of service information which is available to readers at very reasonable prices. Please address your requirements to *Graham* at the Admin. Office, *The Radiophile*, Larkhill, Newport Road, Woodseaves, STAFFORD, ST20 0NP or fax them to 01785-284696.

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

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

Alton Bowman, 4172 East Avenue, Canadagua, 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, 50 Meddon Street, Bideford, Devon, EX39 2EQ (01237-424280). Large library of service data for photocopying.

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, HMV, 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 12-inch table model TV from 1956, 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.

REPAIRS

"We do three kinds of job – quick, cheap and good. You can have any two of the three. You can have a good, quick job but it won't be cheap. You can have a good, cheap job but it won't be quick. And you could ask us to do a quick, cheap job but it wouldn't be any good."

*Adapted from a repair shop sign in Canada,
reported in The Guardian and submitted by Mark Brailsford.*

CONVERSION SERVICES:

N1500 and N1700 tapes converted to VHS or U-Matic free of charge (I can also convert them to 405-line in the process if you require). Please send a

blank VHS or U-Matic tape, your original N1500 / N1700 tape and an adequately stamped addressed Jiffy bag to Mike Bennett G7TRF, 3 High View Gardens, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 2JR. Phone: 01395-279732 or e-mail mdb@permanent.co.uk

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: These offers are most generous and users may care to send a free-will donation towards costs as well. There may be a delay in handling conversions if many people take up these offers.)

Chappel Engineering Workshop. Chappel Station, Colchester, Essex, undertakes most turning/optical threading and fabrications in steel or brass. Most types of soldering work and welding. No job too small. Very cost effective. Contact workshop manager Roger Stewart-Hindley weekdays only on 01787-223057.

Dicky Howett comments: This is worth passing on to readers; even if they don't live in Essex, it would probably be cheaper to drive over from say, Southport, than use a local expensive shop. My turret-mount lens threads worked out at £12 each (other quotes were £60 each!) The Chappel shop is making me a new lens mount for a US ex-RCA TK camera for £25, which is dirt cheap really considering the lens is useless to me without the new mount. The shop can re-make anything, usually from spare bits around the place, which is why they are so 'cost effective'. Also the guys there welcome any 'private' jobs.

REPAIRS to 405-line televisions and radios. For details or advice phone Camber TV & Video Centre, 01797-225457 (daytime). East Sussex (T).

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: London Sound (Michael Solomons), 389b Alexandra Avenue, Harrow, HA2 9EF (0181-868 9222). Repair of vintage radio, television and audio equipment.

BOOKS FOR SALE:

BBC ENGINEERING 1922-1972. Edward Pawley. BBC Books 1972. Rare item. Fully illustrated and comprehensive history of BBC engineering produced for the BBCs 50th birthday. Complete with dust jacket. Ex-college library copy. VGC £30; **BBC YEAR BOOK 1946.** Scruffy d/w. VGC £5; **BBC HANDBOOK**

1958. d/w. Clean copy £5; TELEVISION ENGINEERING. Amos/Birkinshaw. Vol 1. 1953 £5; TELEVISION ENGINEERING Amos/Birkinshaw. Vol 2. 1956 £5; TELEVISION ENGINEERING Amos/Birkinshaw. Vol 3. 1957 £5; BBC TV PRESENTS. A Fiftieth anniversary celebration. Nicholas Moss. 1986. Lavish glossy picture book of BBCTV history. £5; TECHNIQUES OF TELEVISION PRODUCTION. Rudy Bretz. McGraw-Hill. 1953. 1st ed. Swimming in tv production pictures/studios/cameras/OB vans/transmitters/you name it! No d/w. £8; TELEVISION PRODUCTION HANDBOOK. Herbert Zettl. 2nd ed 1968. This American book on tv is absolutely dripping with pictures of cameras, pedestals, lenses, microphones, vt machines. 541 pp. Virtually mint interior. No d/w. £8; ITV colour tv development. Scarce. £8; SEE IT HAPPEN. Making of ITN. G.COX.. Fascinating account of the start of ITN. Illustrated. d/w. £5; WITH AN INDEPENDENT AIR. Howard Thomas. 1977. Illustrated account of the author's broadcasting life at the BBC, Pathé and ABCtv up at Didsbury! d/w, £3. All items in VGC. Postage minimum £1. Contact Dicky Howett, 01245-441811.

FOR SALE: Two transformers surplus to my requirements; they may well be by Ekco. They are cylindrical aluminium canisters, 4.50" long, 2.50" wide. There are three cap connectors, two with black leads, one with white sleeving, and a further 6 leads in the following colours: black, grey, white, red, brown and double cored yellow lead with a large white sleeve over half of its length - looks likely to be EHT connector. All leads between 4 - 7 inches in length. The canister appears sealed with a preformed rubber bung with appropriate holes for all these leads. Both cans have the same number label - 80658. It looks as if they are EHT transformers but with that many leads you may think they are more than that. I paid £30 each and have no wish to make a profit so that is the price. Trevor Cass, 38 Mount Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 8PT or ring 01702-477892.

FOR SALE: Dual-standard (switchable) 405/625-line crosshatch generator by A.I.D.S. Ltd of Richmond. Solid-state, in compact steel carrying case. Tunable Band III + UHF output, £15. Tony Clayden, 0181-361 8881 (North London).

FOR SALE: I have now completed restoration of a Bush TV43, BandI/Band3 model and ask if you know of an enthusiast likely to be interested in purchasing it. Ken Domminney, 7 Chestnut Close, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 0SZ, tel: 01323 500174.

FOR SALE: Philips Tvette portable 405/625 transistor set, complete and working. Mrs Taylor, 01438-716809 (near Welwyn, Herts.) (NS).

FOR SALE: Peto Scott 19" table set of the mid-1950s, looks fine. Offers? Mike Pavely, Tunbridge Wells 01892-822605 (NS).

FREE TO GOOD HOME: Official GEC ring binder of service information, mostly single-standard colour and monochrome sets, and lots of unit audio. Also, quantity of early Thorn colour set manuals (3000/3500/8000) chassis, and a quantity of original instruction books for this era— mostly early 70's. No charge, but "purchaser" pays postage. Mike Izycky, 14 Cedar Close, Market Deeping, Peterborough, PE6 8BD. Tel. 01778 -44506.

FOR DISPOSAL: Many 405-line LOPTS and old TV valves. Philip Gay, 80a Milton Brow, Weston-Super-Mare, BS22 8DE (NS). This was noted in the October issue of *Television* magazine.

FOR DISPOSAL: Breaking Pye VT4 set. Tube, LOPT, scan coils available. Good cabinet and back. Speaker and tuner missing. Tony Statham, Welwyn Garden City, Herts., tel 01707-326127.

WANTED: 1938-model Marconi 855 radio for 709 television restoration project. Would £200 cash offer flush out a new Emiscope 3/3 tube from the undergrowth? Tony Statham, Welwyn Garden City, Herts., tel 01707-326127.

WANTED, to complete 405-line experimental colour set reconstruction: 21AXP22 metal-cone colour CRT. Ian Watson, 35 Moss Road, Tillicoultry, FK13 6NS (01259-750181).

WANTED: Philips VCR and VCR-LP players, recorders, tapes, spares, literature etc. (Philips / Pye N15xx & N17xx, Grundig / IIT SVR, Dynatron TV-VCR etc.) Also wanted: Working or not working IIT / KB CVC1 and Bush CTV25 television. Phone me (Mike Bennett) on 01395 -274227 or e-mail me at mdb2@permanent.co.uk

WANTED: a copy of the book **The Boy Electrician** (sorry I can't remember the author's name), to relive some of my childhood memories. Also, source of supply of ion-trap magnets for a couple of future restoration projects. Colin Guy, e-mail c@guy.freeseerve.co.uk, telephone 01205-480985 or write Hawthorn Folly, The Cul-de-Sac, Stickford, Boston, Lincs. PE22 8EY.

WANTED: One Mazda CRM92 9" tube, two GEC 6501 9" tubes or Mullard 9" tubes e.g. MW22-14 or MW22-18. Good prices paid. Contact Dave Batkin, tel. 01449-766233 (Suffolk).

WANTED: Ex-outside broadcast equipment. Especially source ident generators (Cox or otherwise), colour bar generators and tone generators. Other equipment considered. Clive Berridge, 1 Hastingwood Court, Pembroke Road, London E17 9NQ, tel. 0181-509 3866.

WANTED: Bush bakelite televisions, can collect, locally only. Mr Barber, 0121-783 5627.

WANTED: Canon EP-3 audio connectors (same size as EP-4 mains connector but with three pins), four male and four female for cable (not chassis) mounting. Also two Pye/Power Controls connectors (four female contacts in cast aluminium 'Toblerone' housing). Andy Emmerson, 71 Falcutt Way, Northampton, NN2 8PH. Telephone 01604-844130.

WANTED TO COMPLETE TRANSFER OF RARE TAPES: Sony CV-2000 VTR or spare heads. Simon Ellis, 3c Richmond Road, Staines, TW18 2AA or e-mail simon.ellis@dial.pipex.com

FREE TO GOOD HOME: Baird model 660 22" dual-standard TV (b/w) with minor field timebase fault. Ring Nigel Spencer on 01425-616243 – New Forest area (NS).

FREE TO GOOD HOME: Going spare. Two Telefunken Magnetophon 301, reel-to-reel, 'reporter-type', battery tape recorders. Tape reel capacity: 5-inch. Both have black leather-type carrying-cases with shoulder straps but only one has a microphone. Although mains transformer sockets are fitted, I do not have a spare transformer. They are intended for speech recording rather than music! May need some circuitry attention. Available to anyone willing to collect – for now! Bernard King, 195 Hanworth Road, Hampton, TW12 3ED 0181-979 2568.

FOR DISPOSAL, probably free: Ferguson mains/battery portable model 3816, date unknown but probably mid-1970s. Mrs M. Williams, Windsor (01753-864336).

MESSAGE: Watts Radio (1 West Street, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 7PS, tele: 01458-272440) has been here since the 1920s and in that time has accumulated all sorts of things. It is time I found good homes for some of those things. Of interest to you may be lots of TV service manuals, some TV spares (LOPTXs, valves, scan coils, transformers, two CRTs). I don't want to make money out of these, only find good homes and gain some much needed space. We do have older kit too, to do with radio, including a carboy of sulphuric acid for radio L.T. accumulators. Call Jim Badman to make an appointment to view.

TRANSFER SERVICE: Philips VCR and VCR-LP (N15xx, N17xx etc.) tapes copied, also spares supplied or swapped. All copying and parts supplied free of charge. I have most mechanical spares available for these machines except video heads and N1500/N1501 lacing spools, motors or cord. Just phone me (Mike Bennett) on 01395 274227 or e-mail me at mdb2@permanent.co.uk (Philips VCR web page: <http://www.eclipse.co.uk/mikey/n1500.html>) (NS)



In 1951 it was reported that the BBC was engaged in experimenting with three different types of colour television transmission, from a secret studio, pictured above.

HOW TO GET YOUR NAME IN *405 ALIVE*

The chief glory of every people arises from its authors.

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Articles are also most welcome. We get so many good ones that publication can take sometimes up to a year 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 not a commercial magazine so sadly we cannot pay for material. On the other hand, full-length feature articles do earn the author a place in immortality 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 3.5" PC computer disk are also welcome and your disk will be returned. Please process your words in some popular word-processing format, ideally as an ASCII file. If in doubt please ring first on 07000-405625 – thanks. You can also fax your letters, ads and articles on 01604-821647.

BACK NUMBERS

Some recent back issues are available from the Staffordshire address; send SAE with enquiries. In a few cases the editor can lend originals for photocopying.

FAQ FILES

FAQs are frequently asked questions, so we are keeping three files of FAQs and their answers ready for printing out on request for readers. These files will be updated as new information comes in. The 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. FAQfile 1 runs to 57 pages and covers general points about old TV and how to get old television sets working again. FAQfile 2 is a reprint on all the articles on test card music and ITV station ident themes; it covers 15 pages. FAQ file 1 costs £3.00 and file 2 costs

£1.00 (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 electronic 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.

ENQUIRIES REGARDING SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please write, marking your letter for the attention of the Admin. Office, The Radiophile, 'Larkhill', Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 0NP. We regret we can no longer handle telephone calls. Please *do not* ring the Northampton (01604) number either regarding subscriptions since 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: Mike Barker, 28 Cheney Manor Road, Swindon, Wilts., SN2 2NS.

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): Curtons House, School Lane, Walpole St Peter, Wisbech, PE14 7PA.

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.

ANTIQUÉ RADIO, Mose' Edizioni, Via Bosco 4, 31010 Maser (TV) Italy - Tel. 00 39 423-950385; Fax 00 39 423-529049; e-mail: mose@tv.shine.it

ANTIQUÉ RADIO CLASSIFIED, P.O. Box 802-A12, Carlisle, MA 01741, USA.

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

PROGRAMME PRESERVATION SOCIETY: (aims to help members lend each other copies of old television and radio programmes) Richard Berry, 230 Selsdon Road, Croydon, Surrey CR2 6PL.

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 RADIO PROGRAMME COLLECTORS CIRCLE, Roger Bickerton, 3 Park Edge, Harrogate, Yorks., HG2 8JU (01423-887452). Caters for collectors of spoken word and other radio broadcasts.

VINTAGE LIGHT MUSIC SOCIETY: now wound up following secretary's unfortunate death.

ROBERT FARNON SOCIETY (light music by all composers): David Ades, Stone Gables, Upton Lane, Seavington St. Michael, Minster, Somerset, TA19 0PZ.

MEMORY LANE (78rpm-era popular music): Ray Pallett, P.O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3UH.

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

LAUGH Magazine, 52 Pembury Avenue, Worcester Park, KT4 8BT. In-depth information for people who enjoy old and new TV and radio humour.

GROUP 9.5 (for the 9.5mm cine enthusiast), Ron Price, 4 Higher Mead, Lyckpit, Basingstoke, Hants., RG24 8YL.

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

VINTAGE FILM CIRCLE (for collectors and all lovers of old films): Alex Woolliams, 11 Norton Road, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2EZ.

Memory Lane

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, Memory Lane also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - Britain's favourite vocalist.

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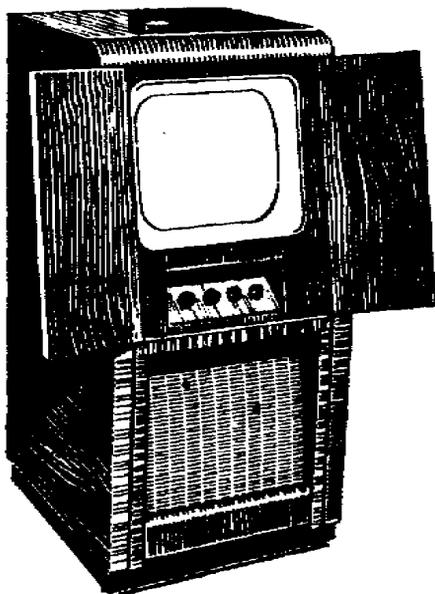
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LEW GRADE

Just as this issue was about to go to print the news came of the passing, at the age of 91, of Lew (Lord) Grade, the father-figure of commercial television in this country. His name will ever be associated with that of ATV, which for many long term viewers was the best of the original independent television contractors and was certainly far superior to any of those that have taken its place. "I know what the public wants," he would say, "because I am one of them, just an ordinary man with ordinary tastes." Certainly, his policy of good clean entertainment without sex, violence and bad language is sorely missed today. The spectacular *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*, filmed series such as *Robin Hood*, *The Saint* and *The Persuaders*, and the long-running serial *Crossroads* might not please high-brow critics but were immensely popular with viewers, not only in Britain but also abroad, where they earned millions of pounds for ATV. It also won the company a couple of Queen's Awards and for Lew himself a knighthood. He is reported to have claimed that he sold abroad every programme made by ATV bar the weather forecast and the Epilogue.

Lew Grade was born Louis Winogradsky in the Ukraine of a Jewish family with show business associations. The family came to England in 1912 and settled in the East End of London, where Mr. Winogradsky senior became involved in the "rag trade". Young Lew joined him for a while but won a dancing contest during the Charleston craze of the early '20s and never looked back; for the next ten years he was a top professional dancer. He developed an unerring eye for spotting talent and gradually moved into the agency side of the business with his brother Leslie, the Lew and Leslie Grade Agency eventually becoming the biggest in Britain.

When commercial television started in 1955 the programme contractor for the Midlands area, of as yet indeterminate name, was headed by another big name in show business, Val Parnell. Lew Grade bought £5,000 worth of shares but initially took no active part in the business. ATV, as it became, got off to a rather shaky start, which made Lew decide to get involved in running the company. He served for a while as Val Parnell's deputy and took over as managing director in 1962, thus becoming for the next twenty years one of the most powerful figures in British television.

Lew Grade ended up as Lord Grade but, alas, his making ATV into a highly successful entertainment medium and exporter, with its output enjoyed by millions of viewers throughout the world was apparently not considered sufficient reason for the company's franchise to be renewed when the time came around. It is said that the powers-that-be did not like the fact that Lew and Leslie Grade, and their brother Bernard Delfont between them owned a sizable chunk of British show business interests. Whatever the real reason, ATV disappeared and with it what to those of us who viewed it from the start was independent television. C.E.M.



THE BACK PAGE

405 Alive (ISSN 0969-8884) is an autonomous magazine within the Radiophile group 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 per 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.

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