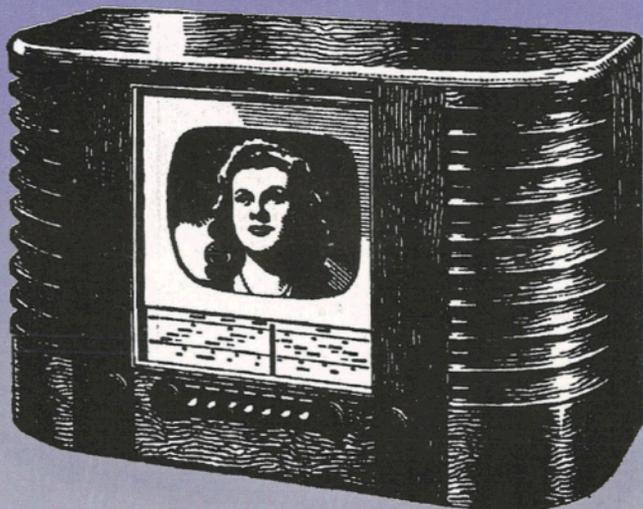


405 ALIVE

Recalling the Golden Years of Black & White Television



Technostalgia for the joy of it!

Issue 41 - First Quarter 1999

ISSN 0969-8884

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

In this Archive Special issue:

LONDON STUDIO MEMORIES DUSSAUD'S TELESCOPE
NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES PLUS MORE DOCTOR WHO DISCOVERIES
RECEIVER SPECIALS: BRC 2000, BEAU DECCA
Ready Steady Go REMEMBERED
... and much more

405 ALIVE

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

Issue 41, First Quarter 1999

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Web page <http://www.kaleidoscope.org.uk/405ally.htm>
(our own website will follow in due course)
ISSN: 0969-8884.

LEGAL WARNING, particularly for New Readers

By reading this magazine you are entering a Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ), where normal values, logic and timescales do not apply. At the least you may feel unable to put the magazine down until you have read it through to the very end. 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 ...

Work, they say, is the curse of the drinking classes and whether that's entirely true or not, it certainly gets in the way of more pleasurable activities. One of those pleasurable activities that I've always wanted to devote more time to has been a companion magazine to *405 Alive* but devoted to radio.

Well, I'm rather excited—it's coming to pass and your publisher and I have high hopes of same. The subject matter inevitably opens up a far wider readership, whilst the successful formula of this magazine—a mixture of authoritative articles on programming, technical and nostalgia subjects combined with personal reminiscences, lively letters and a marketplace section—should reach a ready audience. The only thing this new magazine will not borrow from *405 Alive* is articles on radio servicing; this is already covered in existing titles.

The new magazine will be called *Radio Days* and the first issue will be a trial, by which we (and you) will judge it. Depending on your response, it will continue to appear yearly, six-monthly or more often—or else vanish without trace, ready to become a highly prized collector's item in ten years' time. It's up to you but please give it a try; you'll probably like it!

Back to television and *405 Alive*. Our next issue will contain a simple conversion article for making a Band I sound and vision modulator; like a number of other articles and contributions it had to be held over for want of space. In fact 67 of the 96 pages are already prepared, so don't be too surprised if it appears quite soon. That's also a cue to send in your small ads and other editorial contributions!

Andy Emmerson.

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.

From John Stocks, Roxwell:

Regarding the Pye outside broadcast van (issue 40, page 18): sorry to disappoint Messrs Hamilton and Pople but that Pye van went to Yugoslavia after the Skopje earthquake, and not to Hungary. Oddly enough, I learned in Budapest about 15 years ago that the second MTV Pye van had been given to one of the Far-Eastern countries as a charitable gesture, and I think that too was after a natural catastrophe.

From Tony Duell, by e-mail:

One thing. I noticed somebody in the small-ads was looking for **The Boy Electrician**. I am surprised you didn't know it was still available—new! There is a very useful company called 'Camden Miniature Steam Services' who sell reprints (many of them from Lindsay Publications in the States) of old electrical/engineering books. Their prices are not low, but the information is valuable. I came across the company when I got a small lathe and wanted books on how to use it. They sell books on steam engines (obviously), general engineering, metalwork, electrical stuff, radio (no TV, alas), etc. Incidentally, a small lathe, particularly if set up for screw-cutting, can be used to rewind coils/transformers. Not the fastest way to do it, but if nobody else will take the job, you have to learn to do it yourself.

Camden Miniature Steam Services, Barrow Farm, Rode, Bath, BA3 6PS (tel : 01373-830151).

Other things. I now have the service manual for the PAL version of that VR2022 I picked up (cost me twice as much as the machine!). The SECAM version is similar, differences being on 4 of the plug-in cards: IF strip, Chroma, Tuning and Sync. I was surprised by the last one, but I'll figure out why sometime. I was over at Grandata (London-based company that sells modern TV spares) and I was surprised to find that they list a pinch roller for the VR2020 series. I got a couple for £1.40 each. As this is the only rubber part in the machine, it should be easy to keep running. They also list one for the Philips N1700, but not having that machine, I can't comment on whether it is the right part. The reason

I was over at Grandata, By the way, was to get some SECAM encoder/decoder ICs. Yes, I plan to get this 2022 running again and need something to drive it from. Of course the problem is finding a suitable test signal for the homebrew decoder (I don't know if the 2022 is anything like right...).

From George Windsor, by e-mail:

As a consequence of reading the article in *405 Alive* on long-term tape storage, it reminded me of my tapes being stored in my bedroom (ground floor) wardrobe. Knowing that this was a little damp due to being an outside wall and an old house, I decided to take out the boxes and have a close look. I was alarmed to find small areas of mould forming on some of the tape surfaces when the flaps were lifted. As you can expect, I found this rather worrying to say the least!

I will have to store elsewhere now after a good drying out session, I only hope I have not done long term damage to the 100 or so stored there for the last two years. So the moral is, if in doubt, test with a damp meter or don't store at all!

From Colin Guy, by e-mail:

Once again, thanks for a marvellous edition of *405 Alive*. I thought you may like to know that on the same day I received my copy, I got an email from Tony Duell, suggesting where I could obtain the book **The Boy Electrician**, following my ad in this issue. I have since obtained a copy, thanks to Tony's suggestion.

From Andy Henderson, by e-mail:

Could I recommend three products which will prevent damp and thus mould on tapes and film stock:

- Silica Gel (buy either loose or in sachets from any good photographic dealer).
- Condensation Traps (for clearing condensation) from good DIY outlets.
- Cat Litter (clay or paper-based, but not compressed wood); this is cheap and effective. Fill a small jug and leave in vicinity of affected area. It will trap damp better than many expensive products.

From Wenlock Burton, Melbourne, Australia:

It's long been known that reception of the old BBC1 Crystal Palace ch. 1 transmitter was not impossible on this side of the world. One of the first receptions was by a Mr Norman Burton in Williamstown in the south-west of Melbourne, using a VHF receiver to hear the sound carrier on 41.5MHz. He was reported in *Radio, TV and Hobbies* (Now *Electronics Australia*) to be importing a British TV set in order to receive vision! This was in 1957.

Fellow DXer Robert Copeman, formerly of Sydney, now in the outer east of Melbourne used to know one George Palmer, last heard of in Ayr, Queensland. George also lived in Williamstown in 1957 and also received BBC1, apparently he telerecorded the reception on 8mm film! If only we knew where that film was! Robert himself, saw BBC 1 several times throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s in Sydney. I've never seen it myself, but his photos show the typical 50Hz squarewave test signal.

From Bernard King, Hampton:

It seems there is far more to the 405 ALIVE group than it would at first appear. The frequent and enlightening exchanges of information are one example. But, thankfully, they some times go just a little beyond the strictly technical bounds of '405 lines'; the group stretches into the nostalgic realms of the 405 era.

This occurred in October 1998 when one of those strange, almost weird coincidences happened. The morning mail brought a small selection of newsletters run by the ex-staff members of the government offices I left in 1983 (we were all kicked out by Thatcher!). I had no idea, 15 years later, there was still any link upheld by the sacked staff!

But on the very same day, and more importantly, I received a phone call from our worthy editor, Andy, who gave me some information I had given up hoping for since 1942! Through *405 Alive* a contact had been established between an old chum at another government department just prior to war-time call up! This now-renewed contact has re-established our shared interests.

In May 1942, I went into the RAF and Harold 'Pete' Peters soon followed into the services, but he into the REME. Pete and I became friends during that short 2-year spell before call-up but we both had similar interests in technical matters. I particularly remembered the time we visited the projection room of the Cameo cinema, near the big Metropole, at Victoria. As I remember we should have been on duty as fire watchers at the offices in Catherine Place (I've probably got the details incorrectly but Pete will put me right). That was my very first visit to a projection room and I have never forgotten it!

During the ensuing years I have often wondered how Pete got on; there was the London air raids, the Army service, and so on. In the seventies I even contemplated writing to the now-defunct Charlie Chester show on Radio 2 as they were good at digging up old mates.

With this re-establishment, Andy Emmerson has taken the opportunity—as a good editor should—to invite Pete to contribute pieces to *405 Alive* and, from what I gather of Pete's experiences since World War II, we should see some interesting material. So publicly, I bid welcome to Pete in joining this friendly arena of 'knowledgeable noddles'. In the meantime, as I have given up driving, Pete and I will—

very appropriately — exchange short videos with us painfully speaking 'into camera' with a few accompanying pictures of our environment. However, Pete and I have as yet neglected to include our respective wives into these 'visual videos'. Is this what they call men behaving badly?

From Harold Peters, Lowestoft:

Many thanks indeed for putting me in touch with Bernard King. The speed at which it happened still has me panting. It took me ages to screw up enough courage to write, and what if it wasn't him? There are fiction books by another Bernard King in the library. He has written me a letter it will be hard to beat!

You mentioned doing some pieces about receiver production in the magazine and I would love to have a go. Thirty-odd years of writing for *Television* magazine has left me with a way of expressing things, but if you think it's OK, I will send you some copy, in the form of complete stories you can cut and paste at will. As a production engineer at Pye Lowestoft for 14 years until it closed I was lucky to see all sides of manufacture.

❖ Harold's first article is featured in this issue and more will follow!

From Mike Bennett, by e-mail:

I got my first copy of *405 Alive* this morning. It's marvellous. I was even late for work, as I didn't see the time zooming past as I was reading it in the bath!

From Andy Howlett, Dukinfield, Cheshire:

I wouldn't normally bother *405 Alive* with a matter like this, but I can't get an answer out of the BBC and I was wondering if anyone out there can help. Recently, BBC1 repeated some early episodes of *Red Dwarf* in what they called 'remastered format'. The picture quality was diabolical—it had obviously been treated to the 'make-it-look-like-film' process, but the underlying video was flat and dull, with dark colours showing noise rather like a VHS recording. Does anyone know why these recent programmes had to be 'remastered', and why they turned out so grim? By way of a contrast, on Sunday 21st March, ITV showed a 1956 film *The Big Money*, starring Ian Carmichael, and the picture was breathtaking! Pin-sharp focus, no grain, and an extremely clean look made it a pleasure to watch, despite the thin plot and drooping second half. I am not exaggerating when I say the pictures were better than anything currently on television! Even a friend who knows little about television remarked on the sparkling quality. So what's going on? When a 40 year old film looks better (far better) than a recent video production, someone must be doing something wrong.

From Geoffrey Reid, Ashted:

I placed an advert in my local paper and within a few weeks I have bought three pre-1960 TVs: a McMichael MP14 portable of 1957, a Murphy V210C console (1953) and another console, this time an Ekco TC267 of 1958. It's a shame that Dinosaur are taking a break; I should have got in my order for a modulator sooner!

- ❖ Glad to hear you found some sets; it proves there is still plenty of material out there. All you have to do is put yourself out a bit and hey presto! Yes, I gather quite a few people are kicking themselves for not acting sooner where modulators and testcard generators are concerned. The good news is that we shall have an alternative design of modulator in the next issue of the magazine.

From George Windsor, by e-mail (George_Windsor@case.co.uk):

I wonder if you or someone in the readership can help jog my now-vague memory please. As a youngster I remember watching a Space drama serial (not cartoon or puppets) with spaceships flying across a moonscape, in which the ships looked like two balls joined by a tube, a bit like flying dumbbell!! I seem to remember that it was on the BBC rather than ITV. It would have been late 1950s, perhaps very early 60s. I know it's a long shot but can anyone remember this and what it was called? Do any episodes exist I wonder?

I have also had the good fortune to have been loaned by Tony Statham four issues of *405 Alive* I have never seen before, these being issues 20, 23, 24 and 25. What a nostalgia overload! with great articles such as in issue 25 with 'Technology Lag' and the Videosonic sound system from Pat Hawker, HDTV in 1946 from your good self plus items such as 'Relics on the roof tops' by Ray Pallett, wow, this is what it's all about!

My family have not been able to get any sense out of me with so many interesting articles to read! Current TV programming has taken a back seat, not that there is much worth watching these days anyhow!

One worrying thing that struck me about these earlier issues is the wealth of interesting items offered in the classified section compared to what's on offer now! We are only talking of three or four years back but what a difference! It seems to me that supply is rapidly drying up, and that it is going to get harder to find items of worth according to an exponential curve!

Anyhow, please keep up your good work, all of your hard effort in producing a unique and valuable historic reference for all to contribute to is very much appreciated, after all, with a generation growing up wondering what the hell I am on about (only in black &

white?, 405 lines?, only two stations?) it won't be too long before it could easily have been in the large part, lost history!

- ❖ All these early back numbers were sold out long ago but eventually it is hoped to put the major feature articles on the future *405 Alive* website. This is some months off, however.

Some of the letters we receive from people enquiring about subscriptions are fascinating. Here is one, from Mike Hughes, 2091 Noel Avenue, Comox V9M 1Z1, British Columbia, Canada:

I have seen the advertisement for *405 Alive* in the Robert Farnon Society journal. I lived in England until 1960, when I emigrated to Canada. While in England I was both a viewer and an employee in television. I was a cameraman for Alpha Television Services in Birmingham. From Monday to Friday we produced ATV programmes and on Saturday and Sunday ABC moved in. I worked on many *Lunchbox* shows with Noele Gordon as hostess and on many Carrol Levis talent shows.

ABC produced many drama shows from the Birmingham studios and some musical shows with Joe Loss and His Band. A late night Sunday show was *After Hours* with Michael Bentine, Dick Emery and other comedians. The producer was Dick Lester, who went on to produce the Beatles' films. My father and brother both worked for BBC radio in Birmingham but never in television.

FEEDBACK

From Bernard King, Hampton:

There seems to be something odd about the Teddington Studios piece in issue 40, page 30, paragraph 3. It concerns the introduction of sound. It was always my understanding that the sound-on-disc, Vitaphone, system employed by Warner Bros., was a Western Electric/ERPI invention and not the rival RCA company.

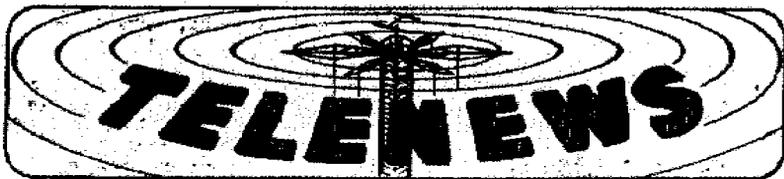
For further information on this I turned to the hefty book **The Classical Hollywood Cinema. Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960**. I will quote from Chapter 23 on the introduction of sound.

“Warners and Fox, both minor firms, saw the technology as a method of product differentiation and a means of appealing to smaller exhibitors unable to afford a live stage program of the sort offered in the first-run theatres. Drawing upon Western Electric's corporate research program, Warner Bros. formed Vitaphone in 1926 and embarked on a strategy of step-by-step introduction of sound films.”

When optical sound later became standard practice, and the disc became obsolete, Warner Bros. did adopt the RCA sound system for their productions.

As I lived near to Teddington Studios in those days we were fairly conversant with local happenings. It was my understanding—and borne out by what an ABC/THAMES camera operator told me—the change from ABC to Thames was a change of franchise from ABC to Thames. The latter company was not, it seems, 'formed by ABC'.

When the studio was rebuilt after the war a plaque was placed on the front wall to commemorate Doc Salamon who lost his life in the rocket attack. I wonder where that plaque is now!



1938-1998: a spectacular find

The final month of 1998 brought a most welcome 'find'—the first find in captivity of live BBC television programming from the pre-war electronic era (the qualification is made to avoid confusion with the fascinating 30-line material restored by Don McLean). This recording is genuine 405-line material and survives for a very special reason—it was filmed at RCA's laboratories in New York thanks to highly abnormal propagation conditions.

The film is mute and lasts four minutes, in which time the announcer Jasmine Bligh can be seen, as well as other, as yet unidentified, performers. The film concludes with a glimpse of a cartoon and a tuning signal. Picture quality is pretty grim, with lots of ghosting as a result of multipath reception. All the same there are some recognisable pictures.

The freak reception during 1937 and 1938 was widely reported at the time; the BBC has a recording of television sound received in New York during this period. It was suspected that a film had been made but attempts over five years to trace this film failed—until last month. An appeal published in the (American) Antique Wireless Association's journal finally bore fruit and thanks to their member Maurice Schechter (now a 405 Aliver too), a copy of this historic recording winged its way back across the Atlantic.

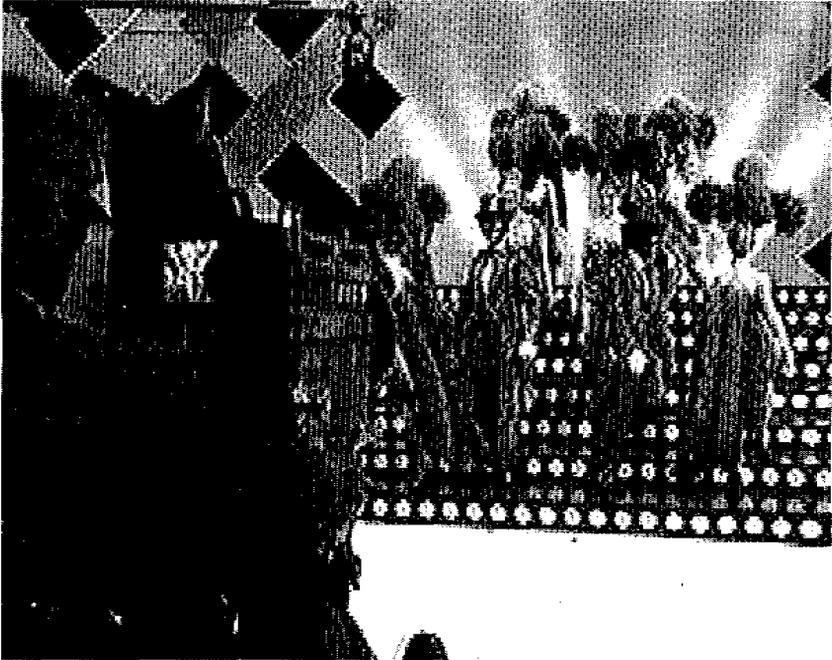
Important talk in London

Don McLean is presenting an IEE lecture entitled RESTORING BAIRD'S IMAGE: The restoration of the world's earliest-known television recordings. It starts at 6pm (tea at 5:30pm) in the IEE building at Savoy Place, London (just off the Embankment near Aldwych) on Tuesday 11th May 1999. Everyone welcome, no charge. Announcement at IEE website:

http://www.iee.org.uk/Calendar/1999_may.htm

Visiting Sussex?

You might care to drop in at Yesterday's World, High Street, Battle, near Hastings (01424-775378). It's described as "a sparkling celebration of shopping and history, from victorian teddy bears to 1960s television sets." Open daily, generally 10.00-18.00 but ring first. Then tell us if it's worth a visit!



Spot the error in this otherwise accurate 1960s Television Centre re-creation of BBCtv's *The Black & White Minstrel Show* during a recent Granada playlet, *The Things You Do For Love*. Answer: the microphone on the boom is redundant. The Minstrels and dancers mimed to a pre-recorded playback! Who is the cameraman though? Could it be our own Dicky Howett?!?

NVCF alert

The Spring 1999 National Vintage Communications Fair will take place between 10.30 and 16.00 on Sunday 9th May. Usual venue, the National Exhibition Centre close to Birmingham Airport. Further information from the organiser, Jonathan Hill, on (01392) 411565.

Early Technology closed

We have mentioned this interesting dealer's shop in the past but we are informed that their premises are boarded up, with a 'To Let' notice. It's business as usual from home premises, we understand; enquiries to 0131-665 5753.

How we spend our time

Despite the advent of the Internet, CD-ROMs and digital TV, new analysis from The Henley Centre published in December says that we are unlikely to spend much more of our leisure time or money on the media in 2003 than we did in 1986. And, although as a nation we spend over 61 hours a week captivated by the TV, books, magazines, newspapers, cinema, radio, CDs and our computers and games consoles, the media only accounts for 4 per cent of our expenditure, or £442 this year.

Says Sian Davies, a director of The Henley Centre, "Although by 2003 we will have more choice than ever of what to do with our time and money, we will only spend just over two hours a week more across all types of media put together than we do today. But while the amount of time we make available won't really increase, how we spend it will change dramatically."

However, she warns that just because interactive media, such as the Internet and digital TV are increasingly popular, we won't be doing away with older media. "Books, magazines and the cinema are here to stay and are likely to do very well in the next few years," she concludes.

End of an era?

One of Mike Bond's suppliers tells him that Belling-Lee has ceased production of their famous television connectors. The imported products are not as good, he remarks.

Kaleidoscope 1999

Here is some advance news about this year's all-day vintage television festival. It will be on Saturday 20th November from 11.00-20.00 at the United Services Club, Queensway, Birmingham. Provisionally pencilled in are a number of ATV items (an advertising magazine, local news and so on), the pre-war BBC film recording of 1938, a load of missing *Tiswas* extracts and much, much more. Paul Vanezis and Steve Roberts of the BBC have agreed to hold a panel about *Doctor Who* restoration as well. The show will be called The Main Event and an accompanying booklet/issue of *Primetime* will feature articles on Boy Dominic, Smallfilms and Sherlock Holmes.

Incidentally, the Kaleidoscope presence on the Internet now has new addresses:

e-mail: post@kaleidoscope.org.uk

www: <http://www.kaleidoscope.org.uk/>

Telly Breakaway 1999

The Cult TV website has changed URL to <http://www.cult-tv.freemove.co.uk> and the site will shortly be updated with all-new info on their next event, 17-20th September 1999 at Pontin's Sand Bay Holiday Centre. After delivering 20 guests last year, we're already in a position to announce four for 1999, subject to work commitments:

PETER DAVISON *** SIMON MacCORKINDALE *** MICHAEL SHEARD ***
FRAZER HINES.

Test Card F

The BBC has taken a decision to stop broadcasting Test Card F on network television. The last broadcast should have been 4th Jan 1999, from 01:15:30 until 06:45:00. The reason for the decision was that they did not want to broadcast a 4:3 TCF on the widescreen service, and they are unable to broadcast different test cards as the DTA (Digital Transmission Area) is unmanned at that hour of the morning. The new policy is to fill the ever decreasing off-air hours with Ceefax and tone.

However, although that decision has been made, and TCF has indeed been missing since then, it made a reappearance early on Saturday morning, from 05:00:00 until the start of programmes. Whether this was a mistake or a sensible decision by a network director remains to be seen. It is possible that BBC Scotland and the other national regions might make use of TCF under certain circumstances, but it seems that TCF is going down fighting.

Darren Meldrum (darren@meldrum.co.uk)

Ron Weller

We are sorry to hear that Ron Weller suffered a stroke just before Christmas. He is making quite good progress and we wish him all the best for recovery. His articles on television restoration in *Radio Bygones* have set a benchmark that others will have difficulty to match.

Political correctness gone mad?

It is reported that the Independent Television Commission (ITC) has upheld a complaint against children's TV character Sooty. In an episode about aromatherapy it is alleged that the little yellow bear and his friends are seen sniffing from what appeared to be medicine bottles. Clearly no innocent interpretation could be construed of this depraved act.

New club for valve collectors

A group of collector-historians has recently formed the "Tube Collectors Association." This is in response to the need for a focused group dedicated to the growing activity of collecting radio/wireless tubes and to sharing historical insight about them. As a tube enthusiast, you'll probably be interested in this development, and may want to help guide the activities of the group from the start. For more information and an application go to:

<http://www.eht.com/oldradio/tubecollectors/index.html>

Hard-to-find components

Mike Izycky recommends this firm highly:

MUSHROOM COMPONENTS, Unit 3 Bradfield Road, Finedon Road Industrial Estate, Wellingborough, NN8 4HB (01933 -275345, fax 01933-

275245). Stocking distributor of electronic components specialising in obsolete semiconductors. Website at www.mushroom.co.uk

Easter Eggs

If you're already familiar with the computing concept of 'Easter Eggs', you might like to know that the idea seems to have spread to Compact Discs—the 'secret tracks'. Take Disc 2 of the Double CD *Cult Fiction Royale* (VTDCD151 7243 8 44896 25). Select the final listed track 23. The listed track ends at about 8'49", but the CD continues. Five minutes later (or spool through of course!) you hear the ATV In Colour fanfare!

Carey Taylor on MHP-Chat

Collecting trends

It looks as if the next style icon in the television world may be the Teleavia. This futuristic French receiver designed by Émile Charbonneaux in 1955 with its tilting screen has something of the style features of the Citroen DS car and dealer Simon Wade was offering one a few months back. Another set turned up in February at Bonhams' *100 Years of Form* auction and was expected to fetch £1,000 to £1,500 (auction result not known but anyone interested can ring Bonhams on 0171-393 3900).



Analogue continues

Extracts from a news release dated 2nd March 1999:

NTL CONTRACTS EXTENDED TO THE END OF (ANALOGUE) TIME

NTL's transmission contracts with the ITV companies and Channel 4 have been extended to cover the remainder of the analogue era in deals valued at over £500 million. The broadcasters have agreed terms with NTL for the provision of analogue transmission services until at least 2012. The government is yet to decide exactly when analogue transmissions will be switched off in favour of digital services.

Peter Douglas, group managing director of NTL's Broadcast & Radio Communications division, said: "Naturally, we are absolutely delighted with the extension of this long-term business. We regard it as a great compliment to have been entrusted with analogue transmission until 2012 and beyond. In

fact, it means that we shall have transmitted ITV and Channel 4 for their entire analogue history which, in the case of ITV, will exceed 50 years—half a century, not out!”

Library news

According to *Broadcast* magazine (22nd January 1999), Carlton has bought the ITC library from Universal for £90.5 million, increasing Carlton's library by 50 per cent, to a total of 15,000 hours of material. Universal's parent company, Seagram, took over Polygram Filmed Entertainment, the previous owner of the library, last May. Carlton chief Michael Green described the ITC library as 'a jewel in the crown' and the acquisition is expected to enhance Carlton's On-Digital channels, particularly Carlton Cinema and Carlton Kids. Also from *Broadcast* and on a related note, GSkyB have done their first deal with Pearson, acquiring the rights to Thames' *The Benny Hill Show* for TX on Granada Plus. 60x60 mins will begin at 20.00 on 1st March. A 53x60 run of *The Sweeney* also starts the same day.

Rory Clark, in MHP-Chat



MEMORIES OF TYNE TEES TELEVISION, by Geoff Phillips.
ISBN 0 9522480 6 9, price £9.95 including postage. Available from
G P Electronic Services, 87 Willowtree Avenue, Durham City, DH1
1DZ.

A 'must have' book, this, irrespective of whether you've ever lived in the North East. Author, Geoff Phillips has encapsulated the essence of 1950s commercial tv—in this instance, the ITV company Tyne Tees Television. The book (published locally) is large format, with copious photographic illustrations, quaint period ads and listings from the pages of Tyne Tees Television's own tv journal, *The Viewer*, plus many reminiscences from TTT technical staff, announcers and artists. Geoff Phillips' evocative introduction, alone had me hooked...

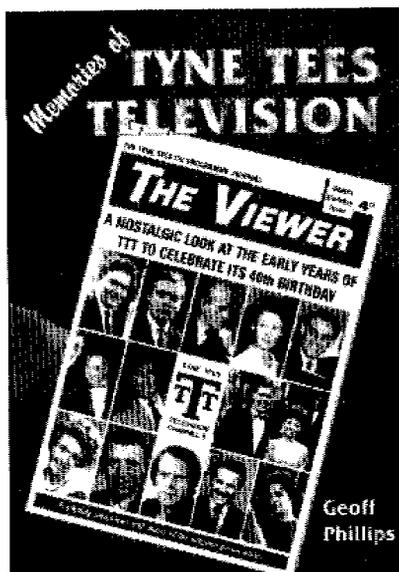
Unless you had a Rediffusion TV which received its signal by cable, the only television station you could receive in the north-east in the mid 1950s was BBC. I remember that the programmes were not all that entertaining for young lads, however, one high spot of the week was Saturday teatime and 'The Lone Ranger'. Every Saturday there would be about six or seven kids from our street packed into our living room to watch the 'cowboy'. I was ordered to bed at 8 o'clock so I didn't see many other

programmes. I remember *What's My Line* was quite good fun and there was the odd variety programme but I'd rather go to bed than watch *The Brains Trust* or *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?* Our TV set was a Vidor with a 12-inch screen. Its case was highly polished wood and just below the screen was a drop-down hinged panel which revealed the controls. As well as volume and brightness, there were the 'horizontal hold' and 'vertical hold' controls. You needed these because once in a while, for no particular reason, the picture would start to roll up or down. There wasn't a channel change control; it would have been a waste of time anyway.

A few years later my dad decided to buy a new telly. Well, it wasn't new but it had a new kind of switch on it which was quite hard to turn and it clicked loudly as you rotated it. It was the channel change switch. I remember the evening my dad brought the TV home. My mam was as excited as I was. I think my dad was playing in the band that evening as it was my mam and I who watched *Wagon Train*. We thought it was great. And then there were the adverts which were as entertaining as the programmes. We watched right through till closedown; we even watched the Epilogue. This was a new era in television.

The book is also a good guide to how ITV started, using technicians from each station and from the BBC, using innovative technology like AMPEX machines and mobile videotape units.

Dicky Howett



THE MAGIC OF SONY, by Enrico Tedeschi. Published 1999 by Hove Books. ISBN 0 9527883 2 2, price £18.00. Spiral bound with laminated covers, 152 A4-format pages. Available at certain swapmeets or direct for £20 post-paid [£22 overseas] from Enrico Tedeschi, 54 Easthill Drive, Hove, BN41 2FD.

Enrico's passion for the products of the Sony Corporation is well known and has now materialised in this remarkable book. There have been a number of books on Sony before now, mostly expensive and/or hard to find, but none as useful to the collector or historian as this one. The author has successfully combined a chronology of the company's history with a comprehensive collector's guide to the firm's consumer products. All radio, audio and television products are here, along with a bibliography and subsidiary chapters on issues such as advertising gimmicks, Sony's premises, museums and catalogues.

For *405 Alive* readers, the question is "Do I need this book?" and the answer for many is "yes". The book claims to show a picture of every collectable Sony product and this may well be true—it all depends on who's making the selection! Certainly the first two TV receivers made by Sony are shown—the 8-inch portable and the 5-inch 'belly telly'—and these are the 'must have' ones for Sony collectors. These two sets were not sold in Britain, however, and the classic TV9-306 and TV9-90 405/625 portables made for the UK market are not shown, although the milestone CV-2000 video recorder does get a look-in. Coverage of radio receivers is more comprehensive and the rest of the book makes up for any shortcomings. All in all, this book is a most creditable effort and I loved it—it brought back many memories (for example the 'Flying Bomb' radio battery that I cannot have seen for 30 years!).

One last observation. As with this magazine, the style of printing reflects the lower-cost methods that must be used to serve a restricted readership at an economic price. A free gift with the book is a 3½" disk that provides additional information readable on PC or Mac computers; another nice point is that updates to the book will be published on Enrico's website. AE

THE RADIO TIMES GUIDE TO TV COMEDY, by Mark Lewisohn. Published by BBC Worldwide. ISBN 0 563 36977 9, price £19.99. Paperback.

You may use some books to relax and enjoy some light reading. It's rather ironic that this new TV comedy guide is light reading material, but happens to weigh 1.5kg and runs to 800 pages. Within those 800 pages stretch the mass of comedy presented in the last 63 years of British Television. I did say last 63 years, as this guide even manages to provide some pre-war programmes too. On the debit side of the ledger, the British element is slightly misleading as regional comedy only appears if it was networked. Strangely there is a profusion of detail on American comedy shows screened here.

Author Mark Lewisohn is best known for his previous detailed encyclopaedia on The Beatles. That book attracted plaudits for the sheer care

and detail that went into it and it's fair to say that this book surpasses his earlier work in both departments.

Looking at random through the entries (which are listed in alphabetic order), a deluge of detail and trivia jumps out of each page. Even on well known shows there are many instances where you will discover fascinating information such as the entries on Morecambe and Wise which reveal that their last ATV series in 1967 was recorded in colour and shown in America as *The Piccadilly Palace*. I had long thought the duo moved to the BBC because ATV would not support a colour series; however, the real reason seems to lie more in the restricted ATV contracts.

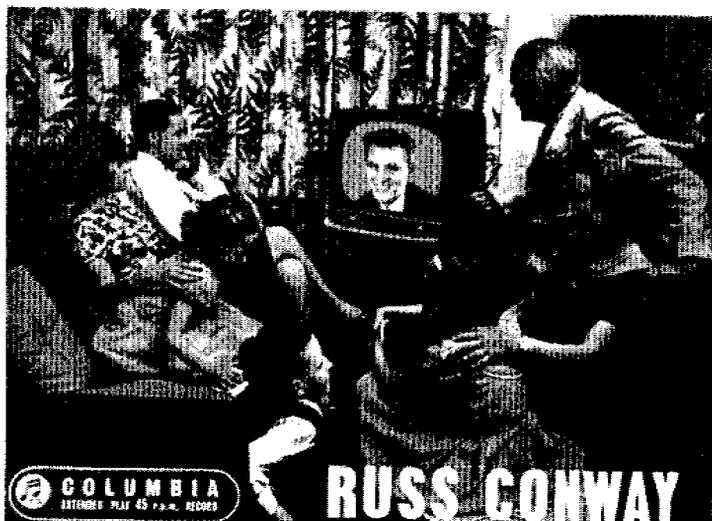
For each entry, details are given on the: TV Station, type of comedy, number of editions, colour or b/w, screening dates and times (and variations), main cast and credits and finally the all-important narrative reviews, which are mostly objective and unbiased. You won't expect too many controversial remarks here. There is also an excellent index and many of the actual entries contain elements of cross-indexing.

There is much to enjoy in this book and it will take a lot to surpass the effort and care that shows in the final product.

Andrew Henderson

Family Favourites (No. 2) + Russ Conway **stereo**

Family Favourites (No. 2)



TV viewing in the 1950s. The parents are ecstatic about Russ Conway, the kids couldn't care less. If you'd heard the EP you'd understand why!
Dicky Howett

With this article we welcome aboard Peter Wernham of Crestanews magazine, in which this article first appeared. We thank Cresta Electronics Ltd for permission to reprint Peter's article, which he promises will not be his only contribution to 405 Alive...

A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

Peter Wernham

An item on the local BBC news this morning, describing how the old Hackney Empire is to be completely refurbished, brought back a flood of memories. This old variety theatre has seen many activities over the years. Most recently it has been the London home of Old Time Music Hall, in many ways similar to the Palace of Varieties in Leeds. Prior to that for some years it was a Bingo Hall. From the turn of the century until the late fifties it was a variety theatre featuring all the top names in the world of vaudeville. But it is from 1957 until the early sixties that I have fond memories of this rambling old building for during this period it was used as a television studio by ATV the company for whom I worked for some thirty years.

At the Hackney Empire ATV produced many early shows, in black and white and all 'live' at that time, including the Sunday afternoon political programme *Free Speech* chaired by Edgar Lustgarten, advertising magazines such as *Send for Saunders* featuring John Warren and John Singer—two bit-part actors still to be seen on Channel 4 in many old wartime films on Sunday afternoons, two chaotic variety shows which we staffed for Associated Rediffusion which featured the *Lady Ratlings* amongst whom was Doris Hare—who later went on to gain fame as the Mum in *On the Buses*, and *The Alfred Marks Show*, which frequently went on air with whole sections unseen by the technical crew. Much more organised was *The Arthur Haynes Show*—which also featured Nicholas Parsons—and quiz shows, including the original versions of *Tell the Truth*—which starred Bill Owen, still going in *Last of the Summer Wine* and *The 64,000 Question* plus many more programmes of that kind.

All these shows hold their memories for me. I had just started working as a sound trainee in television so everything was something of a revelation. When I sat at home watching *The 64,000 Question* prior to joining ATV, I had always imagined that the sound-proof box which held the contestant was powered by some remote-controlled silent motor when it glided forward. Imagine my surprise the first time I worked on the show to discover that it was pushed forward by two burly scene-shifters with a sound man making sure the cables connecting it back to the control room were 'paged' from under their feet. Incidentally, I also found out who the sound man was on that week's show. That's right. Me.

The first time they let me stand on a boom during rehearsals for *Free Speech*, I found that there was just one position in space where the mic could be placed during a wide shot, showing all four politicians and Edgar, where it would not plaster a shadow over some part of the semi-circular set. I also quickly learnt to read Edgar's secret signs. During the latter part of a politician's answer in which he would be in close-up, out-of-shot, Edgar would hold up one, two, three or four fingers to let the director know to which of the four politicians he would be addressing the next question. In my innocence at that time I always found it strange that during lunch at the pub next door the director, Edgar and the four politicians would all spend a happy hour chatting together in a very friendly manner. However, once they returned to the studio, and we went 'on air', in front of the cameras the politicians would slag each other off mercilessly, then return to their previous chatty frame of mind once the red lights went off.

Another show which originated each Saturday from the Hackney Empire in the late 1950s is one that ATV staffed for ABC TV, who at that time were the Midlands and North weekend contractors. This was Jack Good's production of the pop show *Oh Boy!*. As a sound man working on *Oh Boy!*, it meant arriving at the studio at 7.30 in the morning and helping to rig all of the microphones used to cover the orchestra, directed by Harry Robinson, known as Lord Rockingham's XI, the slung mics covering The Vernons Girls, stand mics for vocal groups Neville Taylor and the Cutters and The Dallas Boys and, of course those for the 'stars' who fronted the show. These included people like Cliff Richard, Adam Faith, Marty Wilde, Billy Fury and Don Lang, of Frantic Five fame.

After rigging and the band call, during which each of the artistes rehearsed their numbers with the band, we started camera rehearsal at about 11.00 and, apart from lunch break, went right through until about 5.30 when we lined up all the equipment prior to going on air. About 5.45, Jack Good used to come into the studio and 'warm-up' the audience to such a degree that by the time the red lights went on at 6.00 they were raring to go. When we came off air at 6.30 those of us who had spent 11 hours on the show were all ready for a quick de-rig and home.

One final interesting little point about Lord Rockingham's XI, in the number three position in the sax section was someone who at that time was, if my memory serves me correctly, The Times newspaper music critic, namely one Benny Green [Benny died last year after a long battle with cancer].



KENNETH HUNTER



L. W. SEARGEANT



WINFORD NATHANIEL THOMAS

Another lost *Doctor Who* programme is discovered...

THE CRUSADE EPISODE I FOUND - IN NEW ZEALAND!

Paul Scoones

After a thirty-year absence from the BBC, a William Hartnell *Doctor Who* episode has been found in New Zealand. *The Lion*—the first episode of *The Crusade*—was wiped by the BBC in January 1969. In January this year a 16mm film print was discovered in Auckland, New Zealand, and returned to the BBC.

The complete film print was bought at a film collectors' fair in Napier, New Zealand in June 1998. It was purchased by Auckland film collector Bruce Grenville from another collector who was unaware of its rarity and sold it to Bruce cheaply as an "an incomplete *Doctor Who* story".

Bruce was equally unaware that the episode had any special significance, and regularly screened it for his friends. One such friend, Cornelius Stone, mentioned to Neil Lambess, a member of the New Zealand *Doctor Who* Fan Club, that he'd seen the film of "a Hartnell historical episode set in the time of the crusades".

Neil learned that the episode was apparently *The Lion*, and following up on this lead, he and Paul Scoones, the NZDWFC's coordinator, visited Bruce on 3rd January and viewed the film to verify that it was in fact the long lost first episode of *The Crusade*.

Bruce was surprised to learn of the rarity of his film print, and readily agreed to loan it to the BBC's unofficial *Doctor Who* 'Restoration Team' so that the film can now be cleaned up and a duplicate made. Paul Scoones contacted Steve Roberts of the 'Restoration Team' and handled the safe dispatch of the film to the UK.

The Lion joins *The Wheel of Fortune* (episode 3) as the only other episode of this highly-regarded 1965 four-part historical adventure known to exist.

Although many film clips have been unearthed in recent years, the last discovery of complete lost *Doctor Who* episodes was seven years ago when *The Tomb of the Cybermen* was recovered from Hong Kong in 1992.

Although neither the film or its can provide any clues to the route by which it came to be on sale at a film collectors' event in Napier, it is likely that the print was received by the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation from the BBC around late 1967. Although NZBC records show that the New Zealand censor rated the story suitable for broadcast, it remains one of several sixties stories that were received by the NZBC but never screened.

The Lion is the only lost *Doctor Who* episode found in New Zealand. Although Bruce Grenville (who is a regular visitor to film collectors' fairs in NZ), says he has not yet come across any other *Doctor Who* film prints, this find raises renewed hope that further lost episodes may still exist, just waiting to be rediscovered.

❖ *This story was received by the Kaleidoscope mailing list. Andrew Henderson adds:*

The 16mm print came from a private collector and is a bit scratchy in places and needs to be cleaned up and copied. The print is complete and will be restored with a view to a possible video release this year. Very few people have seen the print. There is also the very slight chance that other material from *Doctor Who* may exist down under too. Of the other possible 11 episodes, some from the 1964 series under the title *Marco Polo* may possibly exist. Nothing has been confirmed or is likely to be confirmed about this for a while.

[Subsequently] The chap who found the missing *Doctor Who* episode has created much negative publicity by offering to auction the print on the Internet! The BBC cannot be seen to be buying back something they once owned.



50 Years of the BBC Television Archive

From BBC publicity material

When Major L G Bill Brabrook asked for £100 back in 1937 to put together a modest collection of stock shots for the British Broadcasting Corporation, he little imagined he was laying the foundations for what was to become one of the largest TV archives in the world.

It's now 50 years since the BBC Film Library came into official existence at Alexandra Palace, its creation coinciding with the launch of the BBC Television Newsreel. But the idea was born more than a decade earlier, as the shadow of Fascism darkened over Europe, and then, as now, the twin drivers were quality of material and cost.

“Using our own camera is the cheapest way to start building up a library”, Bill Brabrook wrote in a memo to the Director of Television in January 1937. “Such shots as clouds, Spring and Summer in the Country, the River and Docks, Farms, Downland, Sunsets, might have a value as background to a programme, and when it comes to digging these out of somebody else’s library the result is often disappointing.”

The response was an agreement to spend up to £100 on acquiring material. By October, however the allowance was almost spent up and more money was being requested. Much of the material had already been used several times meaning, as was pointed out that the library was paying for itself. But how should these costs be allocated?

“The allowance was not intended to cover specific programme requirements, which should be charged to the programme in question, the producer making an allotment to cover costs in each case” admonished the Assistant Director of Television. Nevertheless the budget was increased to £130, and then to £100 per quarter for 1938.

Much of the film consisted of stock shots, but there was also some programme material filmed with the end-of-year retrospective in mind. Still in existence are some of the forerunners of the trade test transmission, the demonstration films which were broadcast outside normal programming hours (only around eight hours of programmes proper a day were scheduled) as a selling tool for the retail trade. They celebrated the advent of this new medium in films like *Television Comes to Town* which featured stage variety acts transferring to television, *Television comes to London* and *Television Goes to the Midlands* [sic].

That the posterity value of the modest film collection was being recognised is clear from the steps taken to protect it during the war years. No further additions were made and in July 1941 an inventory collection of 646 tins “wrapped in tissue paper and sealed with adhesive Camera Tape” was moved out of London, some tins to a mine in Derbyshire and the remainder to film

vaults in Aston Clinton near Aylesbury, the former site of the British Film Institute.

In 1946 the collection of film was reunited at Alexandra Palace but the concept was still very much that of a store rather than a library proper. Two years later the BBC went into news-gathering in its own right, and Newsreel hit the screens. This gave viewers initially four opportunities to see the regular weekly service (Mondays Wednesday, Saturday evenings and Saturday afternoons for children) which generally followed the newsreel pattern of the cinema. It was felt that a more systematic archiving of this weekly output was required. So the BBC Film Library came into being as part of the film department, with Bill Nicklin in charge and in 1949 Alan Richardson was appointed as Assistant Film Librarian.

How has the Film Library developed over the past 50 years since its official birth back in 1948 and its move from Alexandra Palace to Lime Grove in 1951? At the same time as the news was being shot and retained, the BBC was experimenting with recording the studio and outside broadcast output off air. By 1953 the Coronation was archived as broadcast, but this increased availability of material put strains on both space and systems.

By 1959 the Film Library had 20 staff and its 85 vaults, each containing 500 cans of film to capacity, with more stock scattered throughout programme areas. Thought had to be given to a system which would allow the stock to be fully exploited, as David Martin explains in *A History of the BBC's Film Department*.

"Every television station in the world has at some stage in its development had to grapple with the problem of what to do with its post-transmission film, and to hammer out a retention policy that would satisfy the needs of programme planners, producers and researchers not only of the present, but also of future generations." With the professionalisation of the service, under head of the archive Anne Hanford came the introduction of the Universal Decimal Classification scheme developed by library staff. By 1975, when it became the Film and Videotape library, more than 15,000 enquiries a year were being handled, 96,000 cans of film issued and 750 hours of programmes generated.

EYE ON THE ARCHIVES

Cy Young

Beware outside consultants. That was the implicit message in a recent *Private Eye* article on the review being undertaken of the BBC's audio film and video libraries via the firm of Arthur D. Little. Meanwhile, the British Film Institute's stills library is closed for a six month internal audit, with the BFI's latest prospectus **A Time of Change** hinting at some kind of commercial franchise to run the operation from May 1999. So what is

going on? The short answer is that we don't yet know, but since prevention is better than cure let us be alert to a few possibilities.

Although non-moving images are not the prime concern of film researchers, here is an overlapping area of expertise where any of us might find ourselves under the occasional "buy-out" deal for all-media programme research. So if any FOCAL member has thoughts on how access to the BEI Stills Collection could be improved, now is the time to drop a line to 21 Stephen Street.

The good news here is that John Woodward, the new Director of the British Film Institute, is a man genuinely interested in the views of BFI users. If you write to him on any subject, you can be sure of a courteous and considered reply. One might ask why the BFI apparently feels unable to run its photograph library without the help of some media equivalent of Group 4, for instance.

The BFI's absorption into a new, all-embracing Film Commission where it "may well cease to exist as an organisation"—this ominous phrase appears on the last page of **A Time of Change**—hardly inspires confidence. I doubt that Stephen Street is preparing to auction off the family silver, but once absorbed into Chris Smith's brainchild (the Commission) how safe will the mundane, but essential, core functions of the BFI actually be?

If you care about the fate of a primary source for archive-based television productions, do obtain a copy of **A Time of Change**.

Change is also on the cards over at Windmill Road. The *Private Eye* "Media News" column implied plans afoot to wipe tapes, and that such decisions had been farmed out to private consultants Arthur D. Little Ltd., "on the advice of an 'archive steering group' elected by nobody". The sceptical tone of the *Eye* report extended to the "nominated champions" and "invited archive users" asked to give their views; but since these include Christine Whittaker and Krystyna Gray—representing all of us who use the library at Brentford—there seems no occasion for panic. Sue Malden tells me that Arthur Little are merely facilitators, not the decision makers.

However, as with the BFI, now would be a good time to write expressing any views you have on the service provided by Windmill Road, either to Head of Information and Archives Paul Fiander or to Gill Atherton, who always likes to hear from researchers.

Returning to the *Private Eye* article; despite its characteristic “Red Alert” flavour it does raise some pertinent questions. On the one hand, with countless new digital channels being allocated it makes sense for the BBC to look after its visual archives if only as the source of programme material, to repeat or re-package. Alex Cowan has written elsewhere about the finite amount of space available to keep film and videotape on BBC premises, but Thames Television managed to operate successfully from Teddington whilst storing a great deal of its output at Security Archives off Tottenham Court Road; geography is not exactly a problem, although the choice of location obviously has financial implications.

On the other hand, material could yet be junked for reasons other than storage costs. From the stage of the National Film Theatre, at October’s *Missing, Believed Wiped* screening of re-discovered television programmes, actor Frank Windsor spoke passionately of how the BBC had—with the changeover to colour—allowed monochrome episodes of the seminal police drama *Z Cars* to go missing; just as Hollywood destroyed, or abandoned to decay, the majority of its silent films when talkies arrived. History repeats itself. It is more cause for regret that—due partially, I believe, to Equity restrictions on the frequency and time scale of repeat transmissions—there are quite a few BBC TV programmes made around 1970 in beautiful colour which now only exist as black and white telerecordings created for overseas sales, the 2 inch tapes having been wiped. Whatever the reason, it is heartbreaking to find that a series of Ben Travers’ classic “Aldwych” farces, starring Richard Briers and Arthur Lowe, will never be seen in their original, pristine glory.

But at least we’ve learned from all these past mistakes, haven’t we? I wonder. It could still happen that many 4 x 3 ratio television productions get judged unsuitable for repeating in the new 16 x 9 or 14 x 9 formats, and thrown away. Alarmist? Maybe, but exactly this sort of decision has been made before, and could be again.

- ❖ This article appeared first in *Focal International*, the journal of the Federation of Commercial Audiovisual Libraries and is reproduced by kind permission of the author. Its intended audience was professional film researchers but it will appeal to all who have a passion for preserving archive material.

EBU launches digital TV archive project

The European Broadcasting Union launched in February 1999 a two-year project dedicated to preserving and unlocking Europe's television archives for the digital age.

"In most of Europe, the television archives reach back 40 years or more, forming a treasure-trove of news, sports current affairs and entertainment programmes," said project manager Horst Schachlbauer. "We aim to safeguard this heritage for the digital future and to develop ways to retrieve archive material easily and rapidly."

The EBU groups all Europe's national public service broadcasters, whose archives make up the largest collection of television material in the world. Much of the material is currently ill-catalogued or recorded on deteriorating tape or film. Schachlbauer is Head of the Recording and Archiving Department at the Munich-based Institut für Rundfunktechnik, a research body funded by the EBU's German-speaking members: ARD and ZDF of Germany, ORF of Austria and SSR of Switzerland.

The new project, "Future Television Archives, Concepts for Migration and Development", will explore how best to transfer archive material to future-proof forms of digital storage and to develop television archive services for the next century. Areas under investigation will include online access through browsing and search tools; and automatic delivery and billing systems for items selected.

The project will review all the technical aspects of archiving and propose the best solutions for the EBU's members. Its tasks will include:

- defining users' requirements for future networked archives based on mass data storage;
- forecasting the structures needed to support the new services;
- recommending methods to label, index and retrieve individual programme segments. Mr Schachlbauer says that the project, which will co-operate fully with industry and organisations including FIAT and SMPTE, aims to "draw a road map" to guide broadcasters through the complex process of setting up new systems and transferring archive material from obsolete forms of storage.

Founded in 1950, the Geneva-based EBU has 68 active members in 49 countries in and around Europe, plus 50 associate members world-wide. Its activities include Eurovision and Euroradio, negotiation of broadcasting rights for major sports events, co-ordination of programme production, and a full range of technical, legal and strategic services.



END OF AN ERA: Battersea Studios, converted from an old school building in south London to form what was once the country's busiest educational television production centre, is to be demolished. Last used for its intended purpose about a dozen years ago, it afterwards became an independent studio and facilities house. In the last few weeks, word filtered out that all remaining fittings were being sold for a song. The place looked near derelict then but Jim Styles's photo shows it in its heyday (and who cares if the picture looks posed?). Programmes were made on 625 lines from the outset and distributed by Post Office coaxial cable to schools all over London in a grand (but very expensive) scheme.

LOFTY PRINCIPLES

Timing is the essence of show business, essential to all performers. Comics, singers, actors, clowns, acrobats—they all need that sense of timing and the better the timing, the better the performance. This not only applies to show business but to life in general. Some people have an inherent sense of timing, others learn it and the majority of us have more in common with Corporal Jones of *Dads' Army* than we would like to admit.

Arthur Askey had an impeccable sense of timing developed, I suspect, from the many years working as a double act with Richard Murdoch. The first time I saw Arthur was in Studio G in Lime Grove in the mid-late fifties. Arthur was one of the stars of the show being produced there.

The other star had a non-speaking part; she was what you might call Arthur's silent partner. Not a word was to pass her lips till the last programme but nevertheless she, and not Arthur, was the reason why the audience seats normally vacant for run-through and rehearsals were packed with visitors from other studios and departments in Lime Grove. Time and time again staff and performers were paged to return to their own programmes, reluctantly doing so. There were other visitors too from Broadcasting House, Bush House and other such outposts. They were easily recognised; they were the ones that wore suits and dresses that conformed to the higher dress standard that was demanded of staff working in radio and other non-television areas.

Sabrina was that co-star and she only had to lean forward for the audience to start rising to their feet to get a better view. Well, at least the males in the audience; mind you, there were a lot of the other gender too and curiously they all seemed to be involved in deep breathing exercises.

Today I suppose we would say that Sabrina was a role model, a very voluptuous role model with a nice face, good legs and a fantastic forward structure that made Ekberg look like a boy.

In the mid fifties she was a sensation and my first view of her nearly put me off my timing, timing with a difference. What concerned me was electronic timing. All the various television signals that passed from studio to studio, to master control, telecine etc., had to arrive and leave each area synchronised.

Delaying some of the signals that had shorter distances to travel brought this about. Today delay lines and micro electronic circuitry do the trick but back then it was all done by inserting various lengths of coaxial cable, much of which were stored in cabinets in the roof of Studio G.

The problem was that the cable connectors would come loose or become dirty and the signals would be affected. I was in G to check the connection of a particular cable. At least that's what I kept telling myself, but my thoughts

were elsewhere. On any other woman, the dress would be something again, on or was it off her, it was sensational. I gazed and gazed but not at daffodils.

At last retracting my eyes and remembering my oath to maintain Lime Grove in good order, I tore myself away and reluctantly started my climb to the roof. When I got there, the place was in darkness except for the spill from lights below. I switched on the roof lights and became immediately aware I was not alone.

“Shut that bloody light off!”

Without thinking I did what I was told but not before I had spotted the source of the voices. There in the far corner of the roof lay four or five men peering down into the studio below. In the dim light that filtered up I crawled across to where they were and peered down. The sight was hypnotic, there behind a screen which shielded her from the gaze of earthbound mortals, Sabrina was changing and we could see. The sight spoiled me and it was years before I came back to earth and started to accept 34” as normal.

Sabrina was my only aerial view, but I’m was told that Laya Raki and many others entertained the gallery on other occasions. What a pity the applause had to be silent. I’m sure many of them would have appreciated it.

There were two jobs I detested, valve testing on the Mullard and Avo testers and delay line checking. Walking back to maintenance that day I started to get a glimmer of an idea. I awaited the opportunity and it came at the next coffee break in the workshop.

“We’ll need to add more delay in cables to E,” the senior engineer said. “Is there any spare space in the cabinets?”

“No, they are packed tight already, mind you not as tightly packed as Sabrina’s bra.”

I noticed that ears were pricking up... that’s what I wanted. Now to hook them and with luck, no more delay cable checking for me.

I gave them graphic detail of the heavenly view, the jiggling and bouncing, the undressing and dressing, the bending and stretching. You could even see her toes (slight exaggeration that). It was a spectacle not to be missed, should be part of every engineer’s itinerary. In fact to be fair there should be an official rota to check the delay lines and everybody should have the opportunity.

I knew I’d won when my fellow workers took up the idea of the rota and the senior engineer said he better check the cabinets himself.

As I said at the beginning, “It’s all a matter of timing.”

LIVE CHASSIS

Harold Peters recounts a mystery tale of years gone by

Every so often, around 7.30pm, the street lights in Bournemouth (or was it Eastbourne?) would go out. It took the Municipal Engineer some time to associate the phenomenon with instalments of *Coronation Street*, and even then he could not understand why the lights in houses didn't douse at the same time.

Before video, the SCART connector and regulated power supplies, almost all TVs were connected directly to the mains. With half-wave rectification this meant that all the metalwork was either at 240V AC or Neutral. With full-wave rectification the chassis was at 120V AC either way round. No engineer wore leather shoes or studs.

Half-wave rectifiers were cheaper and thus more common, but as Ohm's Law followers will tell you, it means that only the positive half cycle of the mains is used. The negative half cycle is given back to the Board. They don't especially want it—it puts a DC bias on the mains and ends up dissipating as heat in the first transformer in its path, usually the little green box on the street corner.

The township concerned, being seaside, had illuminations and couldn't risk overloading the mains supply, so the street lights were controlled by passing DC pulses through their supply. The man at the desk would carefully spread the load, unaware that later on Ena Sharples would unspread it again.

We got involved because our next range of sets would use a thyristor in place of a rectifier as part of a regulated power supply. The thyristor would take only the chunk of the positive half cycle that the set required to keep the HT line constant. No longer would the picture sides come in when an actor opened a newspaper. In conjunction with the local Electricity Board we made up some dummy prototypes and installed them in a row of cottages waiting for demolition, but still on the grid. Pages of readings and boxes of Polaroids were taken, the Board's engineers went grey overnight and a high official was despatched to prevail upon us not to wreck their waveforms by using the power supply. We told them that all the other manufacturers were about to do ditto and as a result, changes in circuit design came about, leading to the sort of benign supplies we use today.

Ironically thyristors are widely used today by the electricity supply industry in supplies to trains and to pipe electricity to France in their rush hour and vice versa. Because the two nations' 50Hz supplies are not in phase, the mains has to be converted to a high DC voltage, piped through the Tunnel, and reconverted at the other end.

In the factory we sighed with relief when the chassis became 'dead'. Providing isolated mains to flowing belts was always a problem and the leakage capacitance of all the isolators could combine to give an unsuspecting maintenance engineer a nasty kick, adding phrases to the vocabulary that an Anglo Saxon would greet with pride.

A TV22 FOR THE NINETIES



*The Retrovisor Story concluded,
by Stephen Ostler*

Engineering

The launch was scheduled for May 1993. The early months of 1993 were hectic as I kept busy re-engineering the chosen chassis—a Nikkai unit from Taiwan—to adapt it for use in the new Retrovisor cabinet. I had to bear in mind also that everything I did had to be practical and cost-effective to reproduce in a mass production environment. A lot of the work was concerned with ensuring the vital user controls came out to just the two knobs at the front. The chassis was mounted vertically to one side, with the speaker on the opposing side. Since the grille flutes of the Retrovisor cabinet were now smoothly curved, I considered it too unsightly to keep the speaker at the front, since the speaker orifices were now much more visible than they had been when facing downwards under the slats—as in the TV22.

The job was done in time for the launch at the NEC, when five Retrovisors were fielded. But in August 1993, only three months later, a serious problem arose. The Nikkai units around which the Retrovisor had been engineered ceased to become available. I was told that henceforth I would still be able to obtain them, but only in a minimum quantity of one container-load at a time. That would be 700 sets! Clearly this wasn't an option for me. As a result I now had to set immediately to work and re-engineer the Retrovisor all over again. A new Alba/Goodmans unit originating from Malaysia was chosen and this in turn necessitated a re-design on the cabinet-back moulding to give it enough room. Again the following year (1994), another Alba/Goodmans unit (this time made in China) was fitted. Consequently the Retrovisor had to be revised internally every year during its production. It ran to three different editions, designated as Mk I, II and III.

Special editions

While discussing production matters it's worth mentioning the three Retrovisor models where only one of each was ever made. The first was a true black-and-chrome model. The cabinet was black with a coach-line of bright trim and the knobs were copies of the TV22 design plated in chromium. This set was purchased at the May 1993 launch by a well-known dealer from the Midlands.

The second 'special' Retrovisor was maroon in colour. It was manufactured to order—to match the 1930s decor of the room in Harrow which was used to shoot our colour sales brochure. This set was given to the owner of the room in lieu of payment.

The third set was the Retrovisor with an 'all-chrome-look' cabinet. This used a standard enclosure coated with a conducting surface and then heavily plated in nickel over copper. The result was a much heavier cabinet with a mirror finish that looked like it had been carved out of solid metal. The bright nickel finish actually had a slightly warmer tone than chrome so the set looked as if it were hewn from solid silver ! Even if it had been possible, this experimental model would have been prohibitively expensive to produce commercially. I could only find one plating firm in the UK who could handle a cabinet of this size and even then they swore they would never attempt another ! Nevertheless the one they did make turned out to be very fine and I have retained this set ever since for my personal use. This model—the very top of the range—I have called the 'Retrovisor Imperial'.



Marketing

Marketing is a vital part of any business venture and one often overlooked by beginners. This is unwise, because few people will risk buying a product lacking a recognised brand identity, especially when it's relatively expensive. Unfortunately effective marketing and 'brand positioning' costs a lot of money and this can put it out of reach of the smallest ventures. To keep costs under control I realised I would have to link up with friends who were skilled in marketing and who would be prepared to share the risk—with their fees related to actual eventual sales. An old friend of mine, Graham Gosling offered to help. He and a partner, Alan Wood, operated a marketing consultancy operation called DeBray Ltd. They put together a plan for the Retrovisor's launch which was to climax in a celebrity event featuring Linford Christie, the well-known athlete. Their plan was initially aimed at supplying

sets in large quantities to up-market hotels—in order to lend a touch of individuality (and added value) to their rooms. For various reasons this never came to pass and fairly early on DeBray Ltd and I amicably parted company in favour of an association with Bryan Webb who ran—and runs—with his wife Lou, a successful marketing & management consultancy company called Wizard Solutions in Alton, Hants. Bryan was to acquire two Retrovisors and, being a collector himself (and a 405 Aliver), understood very well what the Retrovisor was 'all about'. He had plenty of marketing ideas and was to supply me with monthly progress reports. He remained in charge of marketing throughout the Retrovisor project.

The launch

On May 16th 1993, the Retrovisor was launched at the UK National Vintage Communications Fair at the NEC in Birmingham. The full range of the new sets was on display. Bryan and I had no idea what the response would actually be. In the event there was lots of interest—but little of it was serious. The display did create quite a stir. Nothing of the Retrovisor's like had ever been seen before. There had been no other 'retro-tv' on the market anywhere in the world. Two sets were sold during the day, but both these were to people who had got wind of what was happening before the show and decided to act fast. Virtually everybody to whom we spoke thought it was a 'great idea' but few seriously considered dipping into their pockets, or perhaps thought they would take their time before deciding. The Retrovisor was again displayed at the NEC National Vintage Communications Fair in the following year (1994), but with similarly disappointing results. It became clear that the N.V.C.F might well be an excellent swap-meet for collectors but perhaps was not a suitable venue for selling products such as the Retrovisor. We also had a similar experience at the Art Deco Fair in Greenwich. Bryan and I now were to concentrate on more conventional up-market outlets, initially in the London area..

Part of any marketing effort is the use of effective promotional literature. Following the launch, Bryan and I were soon hammering out the text and design of a new colour brochure. We agreed the image we needed to project should be unashamedly 'yuppie' with more than a touch of 'Dan Dare' early 'fifties space-fiction style thrown in. The computer setting work was carried out by D.V.A. Ltd in Basingstoke. Photography was undertaken by Alan Seawell in London on a recommendation by Bryan. Strangely, I had encountered Alan before. As a boy he had lived with his family in the same house in Ealing where I had had 'digs'. This was back in the early 'seventies when he was about 13.

We now needed a suitable setting for the photographic 'shoot'. I knew someone who had been a loyal Radiocraft customer and who lived in a perfectly restored 1930s semi in Harrow with all the original '30s fitments right down to the carpets. In fact it was through this person I had originally met Bryan Webb ! It was arranged to use his front parlour for the shoot. In payment it was agreed I would supply a special-edition maroon Retrovisor to match this room. This model, the 'Arcadia' is mentioned above as one of the one-off 'specials'. To the best of my knowledge it continues sit in the same room to this day. The shoot went ahead and the brochure eventually was released in early 1994

Moving up market

There was now a big push to get the Retrovisor seen in fashionable and design-conscious venues as soon as possible. Bryan and I covered a lot of ground. Among many prospective or actual retailers, we covered places like the Design Museum on the South Bank, The Victoria & Albert Museum, Harrods Ltd., The Conran Shop, Liberty and others. The Conran Shop, owned by Sir Terence Conran—who early on in our presentations got to examine a set for himself—was perhaps our most successful venue, drawing as it did (and does) a well-heeled clientele interested in furnishing out their homes in high style. Of course, to make money on the small sales volume of any hand-made product, the store had to mark it up quite heavily. Even at a high price they sold reasonably well, sometimes going to design-conscious visitors from abroad who made their purchase knowing full well this set would not receive tv transmissions in their country! At the Conran Shop the Retrovisor was priced at £695 and even so, our initial feedback suggested that the Retrovisor was actually undervalued. At the time we were planning for the Retrovisor to sell as an integral part of an interior design package—and available in a large range of individual finishes. Contemporaneously with the Retrovisor another television set became available—also with a unique style. This was by the French designer Phillipe Starck. The market seemed ripe for this sort of approach!

For UK customers we included 'Golden Arrow' personal service to our customers as part of the up-market package. This involved my personally visiting all customers at their homes to install their new Retrovisor and ensure that the customer was totally happy before I left.

We also considered important continued sales efforts to reach collectors and enthusiasts. In 1994, *405 Alive* carried a two-page advertisement in one issue, then with the next issue gave away a free Retrovisor colour brochure.



Promotions

There was a fair bit of advertising in newspapers and magazines. A typical experience of this was when we mounted a couple of colour display ads in the *Independent Magazine*. Following this exposure we received several hundred inquiries. But not one of them was converted into a sale. The product attracted a lot of attention but seemed just too 'different' for people to try. They would do a double-take; there was a lot of chuckling and "they don't make 'em like that any more". I was forever trying to clarify a common confusion in people's minds : Was this or was this not an 'old telly' I was trying to sell? The concept of a modern 'retro-tv' was very alien to the public and often it seemed they just couldn't grasp the concept. Later on, looking later at the sales which had been achieved, I noticed that most of them were actually made to people who already had a collecting interest of some sort, and whose minds were already receptive to the idea behind the Retrovisor.

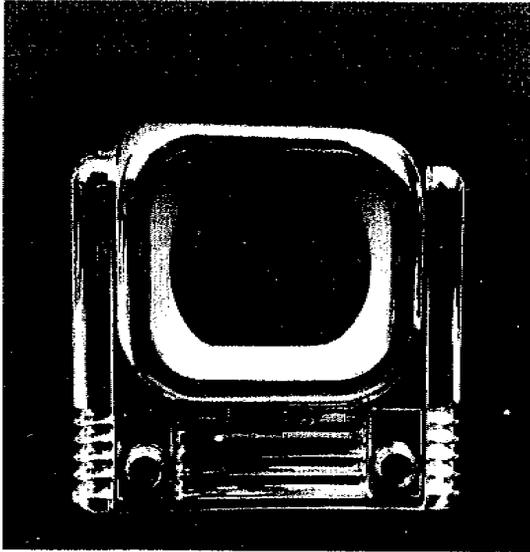
At the start of 1995 we were contacted by Buena Vista Productions, who were the marketing arm of Walt Disney Films in Europe. They wanted a Retrovisor as the top prize in a competition being mounted in conjunction with the *Independent*—to promote the release of the film Quiz Show in Europe. The competition duly took place—and the set, a black 'Metropolis' was won. A few days later I received a phone call from the prize winners. They wanted to sell the set. They had only entered the competition for cash and the set didn't actually interest them at all. So I bought the set back and then happily it sold on to a very appreciative household in Brookmans Park, where it remains to this day.

Problems

Like with any new product there were unfortunately some teething problems which only came to light once the product had been on the market for some time. By early 1994 it was becoming clear that some of the first sets were prone to internal structural problems following a rough journey in transit, even when properly packed. (In passing but not connected to this, we also had some very bad luck when the first sets were delivered to Harrods—they all arrived smashed!) The original material used to bond the four internal tube mounting lugs to the inside of the cabinet was to blame. There was a lot of weight and stress on these lugs and in extreme cases their failure could cause the tube to shift its position inside the cabinet. All the sets suffering from this problem were put right under guarantee at which time the original material was replaced by epoxy. Later on still, things were still further improved by the use of a special polyurethane bonding paste with primers. This final method of fixing the tube lugs was massively strong. Today it is unlikely that any uncorrected sets still remain in circulation.

There was a minor problem with the front knobs, which would often become loose on their shafts. This was easily rectified by re-tightening the grub screw under the bottom of the knob. Unfortunately it never proved possible to source suitable collet-type knobs, which would have provided a complete cure. The 'rabbits ears' aerials (which were fully retractable into the cabinet back) could also be problematical. If they were overextended they had a distinct tendency to 'flop'.

It was important that teething problems like these were rectified before we entered into any agreement with a servicing company to provide national service cover for our customers. Serviscope Ltd eventually were brought in to fulfil this role and they handled service support for all Mk II and III models. I'm pleased to say that their help was then never needed! In general all three variants of these sets enjoyed excellent reliability. One example was the black Mk III Metropolis which ran continuously without problems for three years in the reception area of a central London advertising agency.



Chrome-finish Retrovisor

The final phase

By mid-1994, a year after launch, it was becoming plain that in its present guise, the project just wasn't making money. Even with a relatively good profit margin on each one, the Retrovisor wasn't selling in sufficient volume to permit re-investment to finance growth. In fact it wasn't even paying my household bills! It seemed obvious that the only way forward was to team up with a larger outfit which already had an established position in a similar market and who might be prepared to plough in some capital.

As it happened we didn't have to approach anyone to start with—we were approached. The first occasion was in July 1994 when Steepletone got in touch. Like everyone else (as it turned out) they wanted to field the Retrovisor as part of their range but didn't want to join us as business partners, invest in the product or supply any capital. Basically we found that all our subsequent 'suitsors' liked the concept of the Retrovisor and thought it could add interest to

their product ranges, but they didn't want to share any of the risk. Quite reasonable really, but not much use to us!

The Retrovisor was eventually discontinued in February 1995. Now our whole effort could be concentrated in finding a suitable backer for what was a fully engineered product that already had had some market testing. For a while we had serious discussions with Franklin Mint. But our most hopeful contact was with Bush, who were considering including the Retrovisor (re-badged as a Bush) as part of their 1996 range of 'retro' products. (Incidentally they later told us they originally had been considering suing us because they thought we were 'passing off' the Retrovisor as a Bush. This in fact wasn't true. The whole matter had been caused by clumsy labelling of the product by one of our major retailers—any 'passing off' had been carried out without our knowledge.)

At their headquarters in St Albans, Bush already had a rather lovely showroom devoted to their 'retro' range—consisting of various radios, telephones and other products—but no retro-television! Here they would meet with a wide range of retail buyers from the major store chains and naturally we lent them a Retrovisor to add to their display. This made a very useful sounding board for us. In this way the Retrovisor could be fielded to buyers who really knew their markets—by a firm that already had an established presence and market credibility. Later on Bush also displayed our product at various major trade fairs, including in Hong Kong. But it was hard to accurately rate the response from all this. Retailers seemed happy to try the product, but they didn't get so very enthusiastic that Bush then felt impelled to make us any sort of offer. Eventually we felt the whole business was dragging on without resolution and so we withdrew.

Finally we worked our way through a list, approaching many other well known names in the consumer electronics industry, this time with more emphasis on actual manufacturers rather than straight trading companies. None took us up seriously. And thus rather sadly, in autumn 1996 the Retrovisor project was finally wound up.

Today the project is in abeyance. I still own the rights to the cabinet design, and may one day re-start it if a suitable arrangement can be negotiated. In the meantime details and illustrations can be found on my web site. In this way it can reach interested parties all over the world.

Key facts

All Retrovisors are colour sets having two controls at the front —using spring-return centre-biased rotary switches. The left hand knob controls volume, the right: channel selection. All other controls are accessible at the back. The major functions are also duplicated on the remote control. The internal spring-return mechanism which was fitted to the front control shafts of the Mk II and Mk III models worked better and was more resistant to abuse than the simpler mechanism fitted to the Mk I. The remote control receptor sits discretely just under the screen housing.

Sets sport at the rear a round 'Retrovisor Television' logo over the tube protuberance. This includes an image of the Alexandra Palace mast. All sets bear the designation: Model No: RRT1950.

All Retrovisors were sold with an instruction manual and two-year guarantee. Due to strict quality-control and a rigorous rejection policy, even the early sets (manufactured when there were cabinet quality problems) have

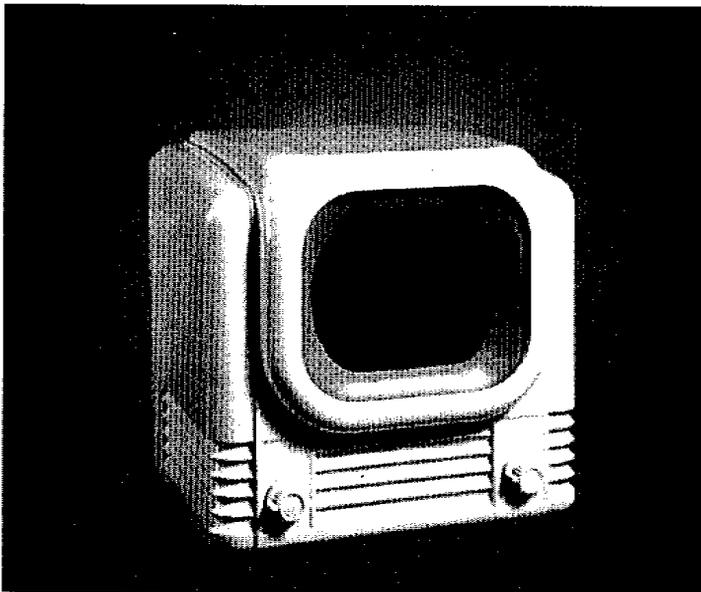
fine cabinets. The standard of finish is normally rather better than that found on bakelite.

Some models were made 'deluxe' to order. These have baseband video and audio sockets included at the rear.

Selling prices varied between £349 and £695 depending on the model, the mark number, and the sales outlet. In addition three sets with slightly inferior cabinets were designated the '60 popular' series and sold at £234.

Inevitably as experience was gained, the constructional methods used to make later sets were an improvement on those used on the earliest ones. However the first (Mk I) sets using the Nikkai chassis always gave the best pictures in my opinion. Any particular set can be positively identified from its serial number by referring to the section below.

Bryan Webb owns the first Retrovisor— a cream 'Festival'. I have the last— also a 'Festival'.



Ivory Retrovisor

Model descriptions:

Mk I: Serial numbers: 8001 - 8009. Vertical Nikkai chassis. Front control switches fixed to cabinet. Flat back with round-profile tube protuberance. Nine sets produced.

Mk II: Serial numbers: 5011 - 5020. Horizontal Alba 100 chassis. Front control mechanism fixed to internal bearer panel. Back exhibits extrusion at bottom and cylindrically shaped tube protuberance. Nine sets produced.

Mk IIa: As Mk II but back exhibits a more rounded tube protuberance. Very solid back fastening. 14 sets produced. Serial numbers: 9021 - 9035.

Mk III: Serial numbers: 4037 - 4051. Horizontal Alba 110 chassis. As Mk IIa but has flat back with rounded tube protuberance. 16 sets produced.

Colour variants were produced in the following quantities:

Coronet (Bakelite Brown): 12

Festival (Devonshire Cream): 11

Metropolis (Jazz Black): 23

Arcadia (Maroon): 1

Imperial (Silver-Mirror): 1

Editor's footnote: Thanks, Steve, for a fascinating article, which for once and for all dispels the myth that you made a fortune and retired on the proceeds of the Retrovisor! It's worth noting that at the National Vintage Communications Fair another trader, Martin Brown Antiques of Birmingham, was offering TV22-style cabinets) in modern materials for housing security monitors, TV sets, fish tanks and such-like. Clearly these are not Retrovisors.

THE FIRST TELEVISION REVUE

*Ray Herbert follows up Denis Gifford's article with extracts from the May 1933 issue of **Television** magazine*

The Television Revue

The first full-dress revue to be televised by the B.B.C., under the direction of Mr. Eustace Robb, has attracted wide attention in the Press. Here are some of the comments —

While demonstrating the remarkable technical progress made in transmission, the reception of this programme clearly showed that stage performances cannot yet be regarded as an ideal subject for television. The most satisfactory numbers were those in which the artists stood still right in front of the 'Televisor.' The spectacular aspect of the ordinary stage revue cannot be transmitted at all. This performance must, in short, be regarded rather as a highly interesting experiment than as an entertainment.

—*Daily Telegraph.*

Television as an entertainment has taken a step forward. The first television revue was a continuous half-hour's performance in which about a dozen people took part, including Anona Winn. At a distance of 6 ft. from the screen the players were clearly recognisable and at times as many as four of them were simultaneously in the beam. The whole performance was vivid

and lifelike, and Mr. Eustace Robb should be congratulated on the rapid strides which are being made in this form of entertainment. There is no doubt that television as a form of entertainment has come to stay.

—*Evening News*.

Six young girls darted about the basement of Broadcasting House and suddenly disappeared into a darkened studio bearing the mystic letters B.B.C.. Mr. Robb explained that they were beginning the first television revue. In a small room adjoining was a television receiver and a loud speaker, where one could both see and hear the rehearsal. I glanced at Anona Winn as she burst through a hoop and then 'looked in' on the television screen. Yes, there she was, just as I could see her out of the corner of my eye. I left the studio feeling that here was a mystery which my great-great-grandfather would have described as reeking of witchcraft.

—*News-Chronicle*.

The first revue to be televised, with all the faults of mechanism still needing perfection, was more exciting than the wireless version of 'The Ringer,' which immediately preceded it. Stage plays want sight as well as hearing. The picture flickered considerably and there was no room on the screen to show more than two, or at the most three, of the four dancers at once, and only two-thirds of a sketch; but at least the average wire-less variety programme would have been more interesting if done by these means. Television moves on, slowly but surely.'

—*Daily Herald*

Just when I was settling down to assess the month's efforts, thinking that all the big excitements were over, along comes the first television revue to upset all calculations. John Watt and Harry Pepper, well-known, combination of author and composer of broadcast shows, put up the sparkling programme that listeners have learned in seven short years to link with the name of Watt. Long may he be spared. Production was in the hands of Eustace Robb, whose experience in Studio BB made it possible to present this ambitious effort. Six Paramount Astoria girls were picked for the show from a team of twelve, trained by Mrs. Rodney Hudson. They all wanted to come along, and selection was difficult. Colouring was the decisive factor, blondes do not show well in an extended picture before the white screen and brunettes were chosen. John Watt had an idea to show them doing physical drill in white swimming suits, but Robb ruled this out, said more contrast was essential in the colour scheme, so we saw the girls in black in their opening number. Their umbrella dance was effective, too. Elsie, who played Harlequin in the black and white harlequinade, particularly impressed me. From thirteen years of age she has been with Mrs. Hudson; but all those

girls know their stuff. I have rarely seen such discipline and the team have six routine dances that they produce at will.

It was a clever notion of John Watt's to introduce his cast in turns, breaking through a paper hoop. [*You can see this on Don McLean's reconstruction, says Ray.*] First Anona Winn, no Watt show is now complete without her; how that girl can sing! Then Horace Perceval, musical comedy lead, and his repeat chorus was the excuse for a skirt dance by two of the girls. Solo steps followed by blithe Iris Kirkwhite, originator of toe tap dancing, and we came to Veronica Brady, comedienne of the Connie Ediss type, that I rejoice to see and hear. In the character of a lion tamer she sang:-

"Its an awful job to make 'em really angry,
they won't get up and snarl to take a call;
If I push them round the place
All they do is lick my face,
Lions are only human after all."

A Well-Balanced Programme

Vision adds one hundred per cent. to the effect of such a number. Reginald Purdell is a force in himself. Contrast his singing the duet "Say, It's a Beautiful Day" with Anona Winn, and his number "That's the kind of guy I am." Altogether a successful well-balanced programme that was all too short. In the concert hall and in church people may be seen with their eyes closed, savouring the music or the sermon, but in the theatre it is different. Only on boat race night can shut eyes be found in the stalls. Humour is often sterile without visual aid, a dance enlivens a song, and for full appreciation musical comedies and revues must be seen. John Watt and his fellow purveyors of light entertainment at the B.B.C. stand to gain more from television than any other programme builders.

Reports from Readers

A Newcastle reader sends some interesting comments on the reception of the first revue to be televised. "I would like," he writes, "to congratulate all concerned. I am glad to say that I saw very excellently the first revue ever televised. The opening title "Looking In" was seen very clearly, and the title of the sketch "Justice Begins at Home" and the final announcement "Good night" came over almost perfectly. In my opinion, the outstanding features of the entertainment were the dances given by the Astoria Girls and the solo dances. In nearly all cases, these were seen extremely well, in spite of the fact that the picture was considerably spoiled at times by the German transmitter which appears almost to sit on top of the London transmitter while television is being transmitted. I can quite imagine that "lookers" in London had some excellent entertainment that evening."

A letter from another "looker" in the Midlands reports excellent reception of the greyhounds televised by the B.B.C. He writes: "The dogs introduced by Brig.-General Critchley were all excellently seen. The General himself televised very well when making his opening announcement. It was pleasing to see these excellent hounds taking what must have been to them a very unusual experience with complete composure. It was good to see the splendid understanding that appeared to exist between the hounds and their attendants and Brig.-General Critchley. The points in colouring of each dog as they were shewn were well seen. If my memory serves me, seven hounds were shewn, and the fourth, apparently thinking it was past his bed-time, lay down on the table during the talk and appeared to resent a playful pat that the General gave him when he was being roused to be removed from the table. The fifth dog also lay down.

"Speech and music accompanying the television picture from the Midland Regional is generally so very badly received, and so much distorted, that frequently I refrain from switching on this part of the transmission.

"In these days when some of the alleged experts are crying down television, if they would bring some of their noise into play and improve the transmission of speech amid music to make it as good as the picture, the combined entertainment would be greatly improved. I am never tired of reiterating that I often receive a very good picture when speech and music are absolutely unintelligible and distorted, and in my case conditions are the same for the reception of speech and music as for the picture.

"Another interesting innovation was the exhibition of Shadowgraphy. This provided excellent and novel entertainment. First a gentleman appeared (head and shoulders) smoking, and later he appeared to smoke too much and seemed to cough badly. Then came a figure (again head and shoulders) doing a shaving act. On the whole this transmission gave excellent results. I had, of course, the usual interference from the Leipzig station on the next wavelength to the London National, but, in spite of this, the quality was still good."

A London "looker" describes the first television revue as "a remarkable new achievement for television which should surprise the sceptics. "John Watt and Harry S. Pepper," he writes, "have long delighted us at the microphone, and we welcome their pep and originality to the 'screen.' The inclusion of the Paramount Astoria girls in their programme was ambitious but eminently successful, and the introduction of the artists through a paper hoop was an effective innovation. Connie Ediss as a lion tamer was, as usual, inimitable, and in the same programme, Anona Winn came over well.

The Pepper and Watt Team

"Eustace Robb is to be congratulated on roping in the Pepper and Watt team: they provide the kind of entertainment which obviously has immense

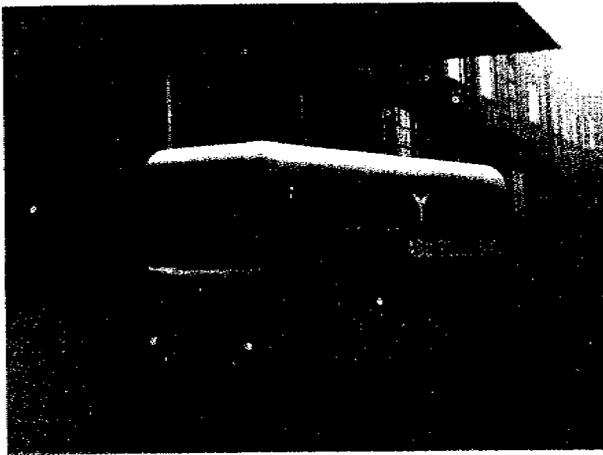
possibilities in television. These programmes are spoiling us for the ordinary broadcast vaudeville. We hope that the day is not far off when all our vaudeville will be televised. 'To consistent 'lookers,' sound without sight lacks kick."

ABC at TEDDINGTON— A PUNTER'S VIEW

Bernard King

Dicky Howett's piece on the old ABC studios at Didsbury was of particular interest to me as it filled-in a gap in my 405 knowledge. At that time I was engrossed in various activities at the long-gone ODEON, Kingston-upon-Thames, including some of those crazy publicity street stunts. Living, at that time, only eight minutes walk from the Warner Bros.' Teddington studios, we were pleased to hear that the studios were to remain 'in the biz' and were not to be demolished for housing. All I knew of ABCtv was that it was operating 'somewhere up north' but I knew not where. Thinking back, I must have missed a good opportunity to talk my way into a job with a TV company that was moving in a few minutes away.

Dicky's article, therefore, clarified for me the background to the ABC move to Teddington. The picture of the three cameras at work in the Didsbury studio caused me to contemplate the possibility that those same pieces of hardware were those we saw at the audience shows in the days when Teddington did not even have a sloping audience area; we just sat on rows of chairs on the studio floor.



Teddington Studios with OB truck, December 1963

In 1962, Weidenfeld & Nicolson published **Anatomy of a Television Play**, an excellent hard back—at 25 shillings, would you believe? (£1.25)—which dealt extensively with the production of two of the *Armchair Theatre* series. Not only that, one of the plays featured in the book, *Afternoon of a Nymph*, by Robert Muller, was held back until the book was prepared and published so that readers could properly comprehend all the information and the reproduced script as the play was transmitted. So that I could take full advantage of this rare opportunity, I recorded the sound on my faithful quarter-inch tape recorder—the Philips AG8109—and I used a cheap paper tape! The recording quality was not all that good but was quite good enough to run through the play several times against the published script in the book. On reading Dicky's article I looked for the 50-min. paper tape but, sadly, I must have disposed of it. Pity, it had the three 'pings' ABC ident on the front. But I still have the book, also the cutting from the *TV Times* dated 30th September 1962 with an ATV emblem at the top of the page.

The book contains some very good 'on the floor' pictures of the two featured plays (the other play was *The Rose Affair*, by Alun Owen, with Anthony Quayle). Also in the book are studio floor plans, a list of *Armchair Theatre* productions, with credits, from Sept '59 to Dec '61, and other goodies such as ratings, story board sketches and even the less important critics' comments.



Dateline 27th December 1963—the author's son Paul, aged 5, at Teddington Studios two days after Santa's visit. He now teaches audio-visual techniques at the Queen Elizabeth College for the Disabled at Leatherhead.

But there were other memorable moments linked to ABC. There was the amusing time when I built a toy replica of the big mobile AEC OB truck which was parked outside the studio. I copied the letting style, the ABC emblem and the van's company colour scheme. Our son was about five years old when he

proudly pushed his new, chunky toy past ABC on a walk to Teddington Lock—as we often did. Unknown to us on this occasion, as we passed the entrance to the studio they were shooting a scene at the gate. The sight of a miniature OB truck being pushed by a small boy caused something of a stir as they were setting-up for a take; I even spotted one of the operators panning his camera on the tiny vehicle as it made its way through the bustle of crew members. So perhaps the director on the desk got a glimpse of our mini-truck.

Another occasion which gave us some amusement was attending, among others, the Hylda Baker show, *Our House*. Considering, in those days, they shot 'as live' to minimise tape editing, the ABC lot pulled some tricky stunts in *Our House*. They were so technically complex that, in films, they would probably have been regarded as... "Get it right, it's going to be difficult to retake!" It shook me!

HYLDA BAKER

●
"Saturday Night and
Sunday Morning"

●
Starring Role in film
"She Knows
Y'Know"

●
Tel: Lougham 9707



From a 1962/63 yearbook

But as we sat in the audience enjoying the comedy lines of Hylda Baker and Charles Hawtrey, etc., little did my wife and I realise that much later, in the eighties, our association with Hylda was to become very close but un-funny, even sad. It was during her later days at the EABF home for retired variety artistes, Brinsworth House. We were aware there had been 'difficulties' for Hylda and a TV company but we were 'friends of Brinsworth' and as such those problems were none of our business. We took the residents of the home as we found them, Hylda included. We were present at a big event at Brinsworth and until then we did not realise the extent of Hylda's isolation by many of her fellow performers. Suffice it to say that after the arrival of many

well known people she walked over to us, as we watched inconspicuously in the corner of the billiard room, and said, "Can I come and talk to you? You are my only friends".

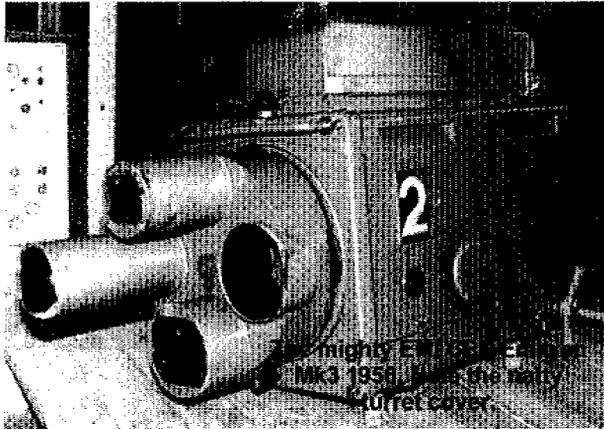
Later, Thames TV took over at Teddington and by the 1970s where we lived, Atbara Road, near the studio, was frequently taking on the appearance of a back-lot with exteriors being shot for such productions as the *Benny Hill Show*, etc., etc. In October '78 we moved to Hampton and the tenuous link with the studio ended although, in the eighties, I did scrounge some timber from Thames TV to help us build stalls and other items for the big Open Day at Brinsworth House. I'll bet Roy, our Patron, will remember those hectic occasions especially, perhaps, that massive bloody canvas banner did that kept the residents awake all night as it flapped in the wind! Roy did a very good job for the EABF but there's not very many people know that! As the saying goes.



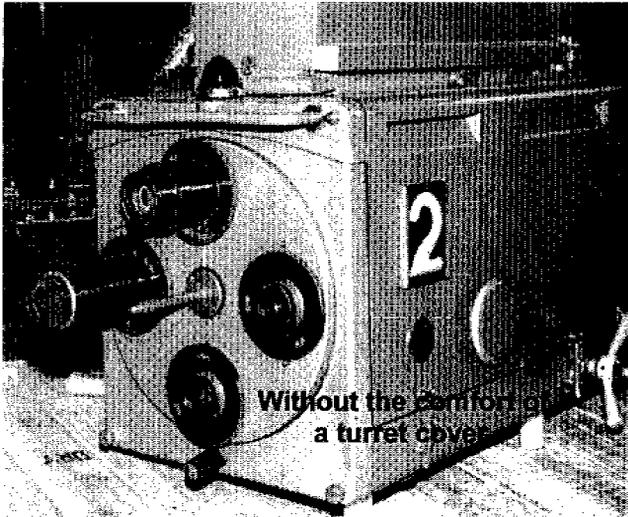
Scene at Brinsworth House, 5th March 1983.

Back row (left to right): Barbara (Red) Stetson, Stan Stafford (Singing Navy), Jean King (the author's wife).

Front row: Frank Cowley (with Water Rat badge), Hylda Baker.



mighty EMI CPS EMITRON
Mk 3 1956 with the mighty
turret cover



Without the comfort of
a turret cover

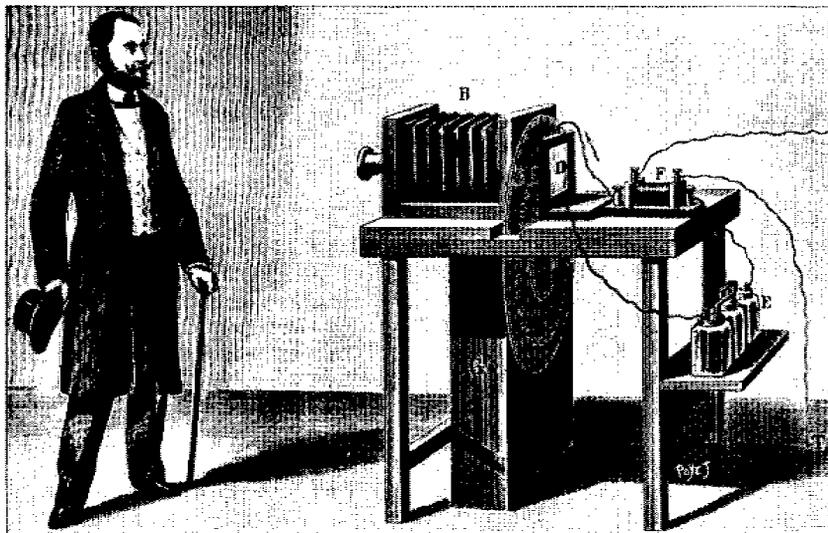
Dicky Howett spotted recently a reclining and mighty EMI CPS EMITRON Mk 3. Dicky says: "This 1956 model must have been the despair of the EMI design staff. The camera was lumbered with titchy Dallmeyer glassware. Not very prepossessing. However, the solution was offered courtesy of Mr. Heinz and his admirable collection of bean tins." He adds that this camera is in the National Collection at NMPFT, Bradford.

Dussaud's Telescope: A slight case of Déjà-vu ?

Andrew Henderson

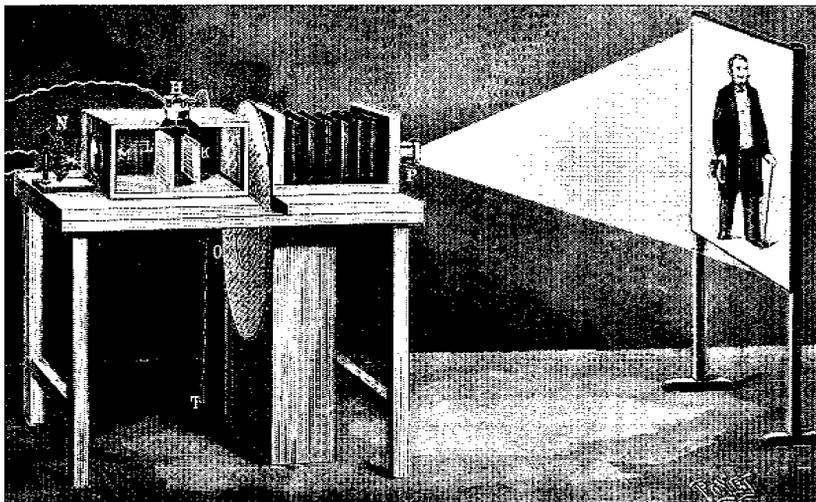
We all know that there are many forms of mechanical television and that many people worked on early principles that were more or less the same types as those that led to the system made commercially practical by Baird. It is something of a surprise to see so many parallels between Baird's early mechanical systems and a system devised by Monsieur Dussaud in 1898. *La Nature* reported that year that one M. Dussaud had developed 'an apparatus for seeing at a distance'.

In the engraving below you can see Dussaud's transmitter:



On the left we see the person who is being televised. A simple *camera obscura*—essentially a bellows and lens with focusing screen which was used before photography to trace the image of scenes from life—(B) captures the image which is broken up by a scanning disk (C) (it isn't mentioned in the original article, but the disk appears to have at least 30 holes if the engraving is to be believed). The power used to drive the disk is clockwork, which is similar to 'the type found in the Hughes telegraph'. The fragmented image is picked up by selenium strips in a frame (D). The strips are connected to a circuit which is powered by what looks like a series of lead/acid batteries. The circuit also contains an induction coil (F) which has a terminal connected to earth and the other to the receiving equipment. The effect of the varying light

on the selenium generates varying currents in the induction coil which are in turn transmitted to the receiving apparatus.



The receiving apparatus takes the varying electrical signal from the transmitter and uses the current to cause a vibration in a type of telephone receiver (H). The article does not explain which type; however, it must surely be a form of moving coil magnet device. The receiver causes two glass plates (L) and (K) to vibrate by means of an attachment from the receiver membrane. The plates are engraved with prismatic grooves in parallel, which act together to vary the light coming from a carbon arc (N). This varied light is passed through another identical scanning disk (O) and focused on the screen by another *camera obscura* (P). The disc created 10 pictures per second.

This all sounds fascinating. However, there is no proof that Dussaud managed to get this system to work or even build it. The comparisons with Baird's methods are interesting. The light valve is many years ahead of its time and Baird of course used one on his commercial projection sets known as a Kerr Cell; though that cell worked on the principle that a high potential can polarise metal plates immersed in nitro-benzene. There is no reason to suggest that Dussaud's light valve shouldn't work; however, it would either let too much light through and not enough variation or good variation, but not enough light to project a scene. The results would never be as good as the Kerr cell Baird employed years later.

No mention is made of how the synchronisation would be achieved. Clockwork isn't the best option for this and the only possibility is that the two disks may have been coupled physically by the same clockwork mechanism.

The selenium strips were well known to be slow to adapt to light changes to the extent that Baird had resorted to a 'light chopper' in his selenium experiments to try to ease the 'lag' problems. It is very unlikely that these raw

selenium strips would have responded at all well. This leads us to the question of the illumination of the subject to be televised. How much light is needed? There is no indication. Clearly a Nipkow disk is used (though the article never mentions this by name, instead describing 'a helix'). Did Dussaud copy his disk from Nipkow? The article mentions that Dussaud plans to perfect his device for the Exposition in 1900.

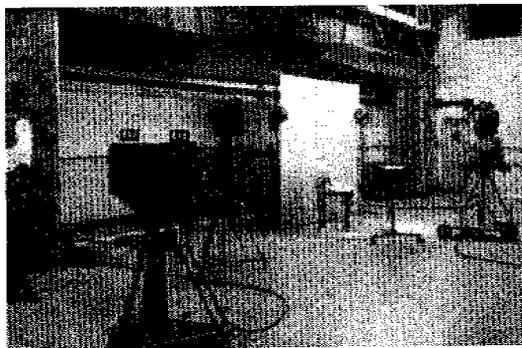
Just some of these points bring into question the practical nature of Dussaud's Telescope. Perhaps it was a part idealised, part invented, part copied idea which looked good on paper, but didn't work due to many factors, not least of which was the lack of amplification (which is another reason for doubt as there is none in the electrical circuit as described).

I can only wonder if a certain John Baird saw the engravings of Dussaud's Telescope article?

There are more questions than answers

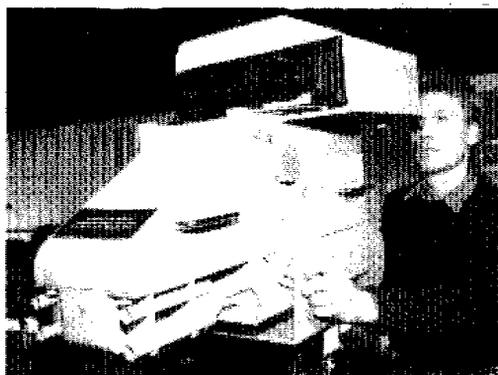
Dicky Howett writes:

Issue 40 of *405 Alive* had on page 90, what purported to be the BBC's 1950s 'secret studio', experimenting with three different types of colour tv (although in my book it says also "higher definition television"). The camera seen on the right of the studio picture is probably the 'Emitron' as pictured in the BBC's staff rag *Ariel* at an Ealing open day in 1989. I'm assuming that this is the same camera judging by the 'fan' at the back and the mysterious tube slots at the front. Also note the large silver wheel just under the viewfinder lens. All these features seemed to be replicated in the enlargement. However, it begs the interesting questions, (assuming my suppositions are correct) what was the purpose of this Emitron camera (625 lines, perhaps) and where is now? Answers on the postcard please...



BBC Experimental Studio

Below: HDF Emitron in embarrassingly low definition!



Above: Experimental Emitron Camera

RESTORATION CORNER:

The BRC 2000 Chassis

Steve Pendlebury

Getting started

One important issue when restoring any old set is to find a set that is a good restoration prospect. The first 2000 I obtained, about a year or so ago, had been stored in a damp environment and resisted my efforts to breathe life into the Line Output and EHT stages, so it was left pending further inspiration. This inspiration came in the form of another BRC2000 that had been stored in better conditions and had been used up until a few years ago. It came from a fellow collector who had found it inoperative and had need of space, so after I had recovered from an incident at work, the set went into the Transit van, then back home into the Bush House kitchen to be worked on. The kitchen workshop is derided in some quarters, but I have to say that it does me fine, all that space to use, quiet, warm, still in contact with the household and near to food and drink supplies...

Initially, all the panels were removed and inspected. The 2000 used those horrible black cylindrical electrolytic capacitors that always dry out, so all these were replaced on sight. It is important to replace one in particular, on the video board, as it has about 200V across it and can go off like a little bomb! All the boards were inspected for track damage and cracks. The convergence board had a beauty, right across, and so the tracks were bridged with copper wire and the board strengthened with a drop of Araldite.

Another problem was with the tuner. The locking bar had come free at the back, and so this was attacked with the heavy duty soldering gun to restore tuning button operation.

Applying the mains

It is very important to resist the temptation to just plug something in, and so the power supply was fitted, the tube base put back onto the CRT and the mains applied gently with a variac. This was done over several hours, in order to spare the main electrolytics on the power supply the traumatic shock of full mains. After a day's in-situ reforming, they seemed to be performing OK and there was no excessive ripple on the various PSU rails. The Regulator board was fitted then, and I set it up as per the manual.

Unfortunately, the 55-volt rail stayed sadly at about 48V; this was due to a high resistance skeleton pot. This was replaced and we tried again. The 55V now came on nicely, and so all the boards except for the EHT generator were refitted. I have to confess to fitting a 625 line-only line timebase board, as this was the one that was in the best condition, and I was of course spared the additional complications of a system switch. Hopefully the purists among our readership will not hate me too much...!

There were no crashes or bangs when the set was powered again. Upon connecting an antenna, I was rewarded, after a few minutes' twiddling, with good strong BBC1 sound. This at least proved that there was life in the tuner and the IF board. There was of course no raster. There was, however, no line whistle either when either of the line hold controls were operated. Checks on the regulator board showed that the 55V rail to the line board was high, which suggested that it was not being loaded down, i.e. the Line Timebase board was sitting there drawing no current. There was a good healthy voltage at one side of the decoupling choke L6, but not on the other side. Close inspection revealed a fine crack in the track, just on the edge of the soldered connections to this coil.

The coil was refitted and the tracks reinforced with another length of copper wire. We now had volts on the two parallel Line transformers but not on the Horizontal Hold controls, nor on VT1/2 Line oscillator stage, as R15 was open circuit. Replacing this rewarded me with a nice healthy line whistle and, joy upon joy!, the A1 voltage came up as well.

Getting a picture

I now refitted the EHT Generator and was rewarded with a healthy spark from its output, to which the tripler was connected. The tripler itself, when fitted, sparked nicely and a blue spark was visible on the back opposite the CRT anode connection. The CRT was discharged and the tripler removed for inspection. The casing was crumbling, and a replacement one from Swindon—thanks Dave!—was fitted. This gave me EHT and Focus Volts, but still no raster.

A look at the tube base revealed that the voltages on the Focus and A1 Anodes were present, as was the 30V supply to the grids. The heaters were all glowing away merrily. The cathode voltages seemed too high, however, and the 2.2K resistors checked OK, so I moved down to the video board. All three video amps were sitting there doing absolutely nothing, as there was no Luminance Drive. This was put right fairly quickly, VT3 Luminance Emitter Follower BF115 was replaced.

We now had light on the CRT. Well, three lines, one of each primary colour. Frame Collapse was not down to the switching on the Convergence Board (I have made that mistake since!) but the Height Control series resistor, 4.7K, was open circuit and the two frame output transistors, BD124s in Push Pull, were in need of replacement. I now had frame scan, albeit impure raster, plus misconvergence, and the Blue Raster was so far out that the picture looked like abstract art. It was, however, a picture!

Right on Black & White!

The old saying 'Get it Right on Black and White' holds very true, and so I set about the setting up procedure. I set up the greyscale by collapsing the frame with the switches on the Convergence Board and following the workshop procedures. Being something of a coward when it comes to EHT, I used a method subsequently explained to me by Dave—thanks again! This showed that we had a reasonable CRT.

The lack of degaussing was traced to a fault in the wiring loom. On the 2000 series, two sets of degauss thermistors are used, and so I wired this small board across the On/Off switch with an extra switch to enable in-use degaussing by swapping thermistors... and started the set up again. After a good degaussing session, I was rewarded with a raster that needed minimal adjustment to create a pure raster on all three primary colours and of course white. Viewing a crosshatch pattern, I set up the static convergence with the magnets on the tube neck. This gave reasonable results, and so I set about the exact setting-up procedure as described in the manual.

Red and Green converged well, but Blue Vertical would not set up! The Blue Vertical control is flanked by two 50 μ F reversible electrolytic capacitors. As the other controls on this stage were OK, I replaced these two capacitors and the control itself. This made some improvement, but I found that this setting could be made to align very well when an extra reversible cap was added in parallel with one of the two!

I then went through the whole procedure again to optimise the convergence. This now looked good. I then went through the grey scaling procedure again and was rewarded with a good Monochrome Picture. With it 'Right on Black and White', I advanced the colour control. No Colour at all.

Getting the colour

The Decoder put up a fight! The first thing to do in this situation is to defeat the colour killer; this is done in the 2000 by applying a bias voltage to the base of the first chrominance amplifier stage. This rewarded me with floating pretty colours that tried to lock as the phase detector was rotated. The Burst Gate and its amplifier appeared to work, and the lack of bias was found to be down to the Killer rectifier diode, an OA91, and the two capacitors across the tuning coil on the 7.9kHz amp stage.

This now gave me colour without the killer overridden, but colour and picture bore little relation to each other! To cut a long story short: two diodes and the electrolytic in the Bistable, the two diodes feeding the R-Y Demodulator, track faults on the 4.43MHz oscillator's emitter follower, the crystal itself (this varied when touched!) were all replaced to give me stable colour.

I then followed the setting up procedure as per the manual again, but the set still had a tendency to misrepresent colour on some picture content. It especially didn't like Blue, however there are a couple of BRC mods for this, involving reducing the value of certain components in the Burst Gating circuit to eliminate Colour Information here affecting the phasing. When these were changed, we had a very good picture off the roof antenna.

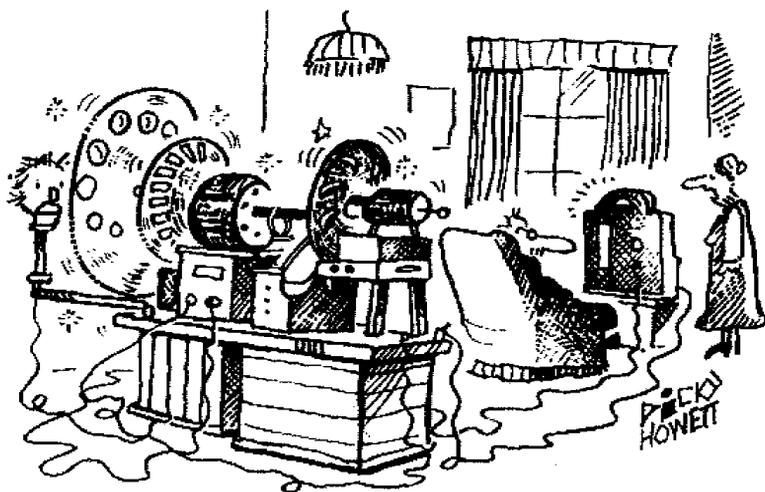
Cosmetics

The set responded well to a good clean and polish. A little meths was used to bring up the wooden finish of the cabinet and all the knobs were removed and cleaned with soap, water and a toothbrush. The brass handles responded well to a quick bath in... Coca-Cola. This brings them up well, and to think how much of the stuff we drink! [Excellent stuff for cleaning metal and glass—it's the high concentration of phosphoric acid in it, I believe. Editor]

In use

The set was then promoted to the lounge, where the only problem I still have is Teletext lines; has anyone got any ideas about how to remove them? In fact they aren't *that* bad, but the more discerning members of my family, especially the less sympathetic to the cause, seemed to remark on them most. There has been one breakdown... this was traced (eventually!) to a high resistance track on the Line Timebase board.

This was reworked and, touch wood, the set behaves well. It gives a very good and clear picture, easily comparable with the nasty modern sets in the local showrooms. The wooden cabinet also makes the set a nice addition in the way of an item of furniture, and the stand, now strengthened by our local joiner, adds to the retro effect. People marvelled at colour in the 1960s and this set gives results that can give any set a run for its money! But, of course, some people say I'm a little biased....



'Isn't it about time we got a new telly, Gilbert...?'

DO NOT ADJUST YOUR TELLY!

Dicky Howett talks to pioneer television directors Daphne Shadwell and John P. Hamilton

The name's are familiar. Think about it. You've seen them a thousand times, reeled out at the end of *World of Sport*, *Hippodrome*, *Five O'clock Club*, *Stars and Garters*, *Cool for Cats*, *Rainbow*, *The Sooty Show*, *Object Z*, *Do Not Adjust Your Set* and *Ready, Steady, Go!*

That's the Hamiltons for you, a husband and wife team responsible for producing some of the most popular commercial television programmes of the 1950s, 60s, 70s and 80s.

Daphne recalls, "On the show *Ready, Steady Go!* the title actually came from me. Most tv directors counted down, 'ten, nine, eight...' etc. I was different. I used to end the countdown with 'ready, steady, GO!' That's how the show got its name. It was an in-joke".

Joke or not, *Ready, Steady Go!* was innovative. Back in the 1960s, the current art form known as 'the pop promo' was then only a vague video notion. Spotty rock bands or solo singers had little recourse but to promote their latest single live, before unsympathetic cameras on 'square' programs such as *Crackerjack!*, *Blue Peter* or *The Billy Cotton Band Show*. Occasionally, a pop group might get full colour exposure on Rank's quirky and sarcastic cinema series *Look at Life*, or be asked to make brief films for a short-lived system that used coin-operated movie juke boxes which played songs and ran films, sometimes in sync.

Originally, Daphne Shadwell wasn't connected with *Ready, Steady, Go!* As a staff director at Associated-Rediffusion she worked on anything that came up, mainly women's and children's shows. "I directed the *Five O'Clock Club*, which had quite a high pop music content. Muriel Young fronted that show and she also hosted a radio programme for Luxembourg called *The Green Room*, which was a pop record show with kids dancing and generally enjoying themselves. And then Elkan Allan, who was head of A-R's Light Entertainment, reported he'd seen the Dick Clark US pop show, *American Bandstand*, and wanted a similar show here. We combined Muriel's show with the Dick Clark programme format and that became *Ready Steady Go!*"

Daphne Shadwell—youngest of four daughters by BBC Variety Orchestra conductor Charles Shadwell—began her life in broadcasting as a humble (they are always 'humble') BBC secretary. Daphne, "That was in 1947 in the Near East & Latin American Service of the BBC which was situated at Aldenham House, Elstree. It wasn't the most exciting of jobs, but in those days we were grateful for anything. However, I constantly applied for other posts within the BBC. I finally went to 200 Oxford Street, where they produced *Forces' Favourites*. That was fun. We used to watch the world go by from our office

(the Peter Robinson building) high above Oxford Street. We used also to go swimming in our lunch hours at the nearby Marshall Street baths. We were reprimanded, however, for hanging our costumes out to dry on the balcony. Not very BBC!"

During 1947 Daphne Shadwell met her husband, John P. Hamilton and they were married in 1954. The long courtship was out of necessity; they couldn't afford to marry on BBC wages! At the time, John P. was a BBC R.P.A. (recorded programmes assistant). He travelled the country with programmes such as *Down Your Way* and *Top of the Form*. Later, he added live spot effects on the *Goon Show*.

Back at BH, Daphne Shadwell still applied for any BBC job going. It was while working in the BBC Duty room that she first entered television. "In 1950 I became assistant to a producer called Pamela Brown," says Daphne. "Pamela Brown also used to write children's books. Anyway, I was sent down to Lime Grove; no training, never even been inside a studio before. I sat there open-mouthed watching a live cartoon show with Kenneth Connor voicing *Simon The Simple Sardine*. Fascinating. Pamela Brown was so busy with writing that I had to do quite a lot of the work, which is a good way to learn. Later, I was assistant to David Boisseau, who directed *Muffin the Mule* up at studio 'A' Alexandra Palace. Studio 'A' had a production gallery that was entered by climbing a steep flight of open stairs. In the room directly below these stairs was the Emitron camera control equipment. I caused a sensation by climbing up the stairs wearing a very short skirt. From that moment I was a big hit with the engineers!"

Daphne Shadwell was soon directing cameras and artistes. She became adept at 'calling shots', adding to her experience. In 1954, during a stint at Lime Grove, she met a male P.A. on *Whirligig* producer (BBC tv production assistants ended up having to direct from time to time) called Lloyd Williams, who was surreptitiously recruiting BBC staff for the new commercial television station, Associated-Rediffusion. Daphne became Lloyd William's personal assistant at A-R with the promise of becoming a tv director herself when A-R started in 1955. Her husband, John P. was made Head of Sound at A-R and after opening night, both Daphne and John forged ahead in commercial television.

John P. Hamilton recalls, "Associated-Rediffusion was a marvellous company, but it nearly went down the pan in 1956. We were re-equipping Wembley and it cost an awful lot. We had to cut back and I got rid of 16 out of 52 of my staff. Although Captain Brownrigg, the M.D., was considered a bit of a joke, 'quarter deck' and all that, he ran the company properly, which helped us survive".

Later, John P. Hamilton worked as a director on the top-rated ITV pub entertainment show *Stars and Garters* and the circus-style *Hippodrome plus World of Sport* for LWT. Daphne continued with Rediffusion, directing the Monty Python progenitor, *Do Not Adjust Your Set*. After, with Thames she directed *Rainbow, Magpie, Splash, Hold The Front Page* and *The Sooty Show*.

Associated-Rediffusion's *Ready, Steady, Go!* was produced live each Friday evening ("The weekend starts here!") from Studio Nine at A-R's Television House in Kingsway, London. The studio itself was tiny, barely 25x35ft, and wedged-shaped with the scene doors orientated at the Bush House end of Kingsway. Daphne Shadwell, "We crammed in about 120 kids—we actually had a ticket waiting list of 6,000—and with four large cameras and lights and everything, you can imagine it was a tight squeeze. But that's what made it so exciting. It was quite chaotic, but Keith Fordyce, who introduced the show, held everything together. It would all have fallen apart without him."

Although RSG was broadcast live, the singers mimed to their records. This simplified technical arrangements on the studio floor. It was only later, when the Musicians' Union insisted on live backing bands that the show moved out of Studio Nine (which had only two high level and five low level sound channels), and came subsequently from the better-equipped Studio One at Wembley.

An unusual feature of *Ready Steady Go!* was that no attempt was made to hide, on screen, the tv cameras. It's fascinating to watch the old recordings (the reason why these live shows were recorded in situ hasn't yet been satisfactorily established. Sometimes, television companies would record certain live programmes for safety reasons. For example, *That Was The Week That Was*, had inexpensive 16mm off-screen recordings made as a production aid or to check on any alleged libel. However, there's nothing libellous or cheap-looking about the RSG recordings, which were recorded directly onto film. This was easier than using tape as VT machines were then scarce and strictly controlled. Demonstrably, *RSG!* was recorded although nobody on the production team were aware of it, including the artistes. These RSG superior-quality recordings surfaced in the late 1980s when Channel Four aired some compilations, courtesy of entrepreneur, Dave Clark).

However, these precious recordings amply display all the frantic pushing and shoving as cameras were manoeuvred across the studio floor. Daphne Shadwell, "It didn't start that way, having cameras in shot. On one show in 1963 we had Jerry Lee Lewis, who was an ungallant creature in the first degree. He didn't arrive until the final rehearsal and when I went onto the floor to check on a few points, he bellowed: "Who is this woman?" We hadn't been introduced, you see.

Come the live show, he was of course marvellous and during the finale he stood up and hammered away at his piano. All the cameras moved in, and to my horror I saw that in every monitor, a camera was visible. I couldn't get away from them. It was a nightmare. So we just let them roll, and from then on if a camera got in shot, it stayed in shot!"

The camerawork on *Ready Steady Go!* was of a very high order. The four studio cameras were Marconi Mk III 4½" Image Orthicons with four-lens turrets and unique tilting viewfinders. These cameras were very heavy and unwieldy. They were mounted on mechanical pedestals, which meant that cameramen had to heave at least 600lb of equipment around the congested studio floor. Also because the playback was extremely loud, cameramen

couldn't always hear the screamed instructions from the gallery. Cameramen were relied on to offer shots. Some cameramen, like Bill Metcalf (who later became a director and went eventually to the Central Office of Information) had a natural gift and were always there when required, with an image correctly framed and interestingly shot.

Adds John: "We used to call him 'Jerky Jim' as he would zoom the lens in and out in exact tempo with the music; you can see this with the Rolling Stones on volume 3 of the *RSG!* tapes you can buy. He probably wore out the lens! Other cameramen, used to discussion programmes or drama, were not so responsive."

The cameras on *Ready Steady Go!* were positioned to a pre-arranged formula. One camera was fixed always on a high rostrum shooting down, usually with a Taylor Hobson Studio Varotal 5:1 zoom. Another camera was mounted on a Vinten Pathfinder dolly, whilst the other two cameras sat on Mole spring-balanced pedestals which regularly rammed the audience. Daphne Shadwell, "We always got injuries. It was the pan handles mainly that caught people in the back. Also feet got trapped.

Ready Steady Go! made stars of Donovan, Billy Fury, Gene Pitney and 19 year-old Cathy McGowan, who chucked in a £10 a week secretarial job to work on the show. "Lovely girl, very easy to work with," recalls Daphne Shadwell, "The young American artistes were also very nice to work with, very polite. Gene Pitney always joked that we tried every sort of entrance for him; outside in the scene dock, down stairs, up stairs, perhaps next he would be suspended from the lights! The studio was quite limited and the sets, quite basic, a few rostrums. Once we had Sonny and Cher, and Cher brought in a dress she was going to wear for the transmission. The engineers wanted to test-light it and got Cher to hold the dress up in front a camera. We actually forgot about her and later we noticed, what seemed like hours later, on the monitor, poor old Cher still standing patiently with her dress. We'd forgotten all about her, but she didn't complain or moan. Very professional".

Now both retired, husband John P. Hamilton, 74, despite recent ill-health continues his interests in television and Daphne is currently organising charity musical events for St Mary's church in Paddington Green. Irrepressible Daphne Shadwell has fond memories of her time as a tv director and especially the show, *Ready Steady Go!* "*RSG!* was jolly hard work. My favourite pop groups were The Hollies and the Troggs. I christened them 'The Trollies', especially when we had a hole in the bookings. See if the Trollies are available, I'd say. Some pop artistes baffled me. I thought Jimi Hendrix most peculiar and one group held up rehearsals once when the lead singer unaccountably disappeared for a whole afternoon. It turned out he'd been at Wembley hospital! I never thought of such things like pot or drugs, although they were around. I was so innocent. But it explained Jimi Hendrix. I suppose people thought I was a bit quaint, especially when I used to hand out lollypop sweets to the crew at the end of transmission".



Above: John P. and Daphne in their Paddington flat.

Below: RSG! cameraman Bill Metcalf peeks around his Marconi Mk III. Floor manager on the left is Tony Annis.





The Beatles sign off!

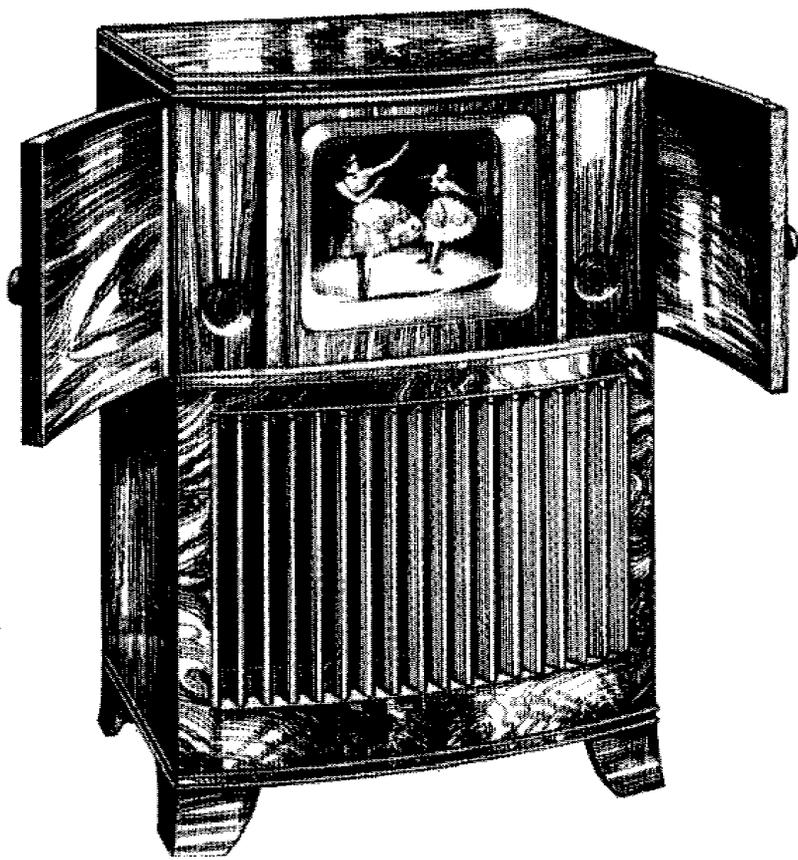
Two other memories of the programme *Ready, Steady, Go!* first printed in issue 22. Originally the programme went out from Studio 9 in Television House (Kingsway) and when the show moved to Wembley there was some general discontent among the staff who had to move there. No particular grievance could be cited, although the staff did complain about the *smell* of the cream of London's youth who packed into the studio every Friday. Management's reaction was simple. Before the show they dumped large quantities of air freshener in the studio's ventilation system!

Amusing incident no. 2 concerned James Brown (Soul Brother No. 1, godfather of Soul, etc.). For some reason he refused to emerge from his dressing room. The show was of course live and poor Cathy McGowan was flanneling for all she was worth, trying to disguise the fact the star of the show was nowhere to be seen. Eventually he did come on stage and when asked afterwards if he was suffering from stage fright, he said it was nothing of the sort—he *always* kept the audience waiting, it was part of the mystique of his stage act!

A DECCA SET OF 1949

George Windsor

I thought you might like to see this beautiful Decca from 1949. I have the manual for it and scanned just the picture. I don't know what the set's model number is as the service manual does not mention it anywhere!





QUERIES and ENQUIRIES

Does anything else ever turn up on these international missing Doctor Who hunts?

There is no such thing as an episode hunt. The BBC don't go out of their way to hunt down material of any description. This would be a waste of licence payers money in view of the fact the material was meant to be destroyed anyway.

What does happen is that enthusiasts do their best to use their own initiative in finding material. People and TV stations offer material back. The sort of material since 1982 which HAS been returned to the BBC is quite interesting and includes such things as:

- 1969 to 1976 *Dad's Army* (PAL from New Zealand) half the missing colour episodes
- 1967 *Vanity Fair* - Colour (NTSC from PAL) complete
- 1970 *Up Pompeii* - ditto complete
- 1958 *A Tale Of Two Cities* (b/w) complete
- 1966 *Till Death Us Do Part* (b/w) 1 episode
- 1962 *The Rag Trade* (b/w) complete

The returning of *Doctor Who* is in fact a minority and in terms of television history many of the other discoveries are more notable, but do not carry the enthusiasm that the missing *Doctor Who* material has.

Andrew Henderson

TRANSATLANTIC RECEPTION

How could BBC television be received in the USA before the war?

The April 1944 issue of *Wireless World* sums it up neatly...

We have experimental evidence, i.e. the reception of the London television signals at Riverhead, N.J. An examination of the Riverhead records shows that during the years when the observations were made reception was only obtained during the winter periods, i.e., between September and March. It will be remembered that it is during winter that the daytime ionisation is highest, and the conclusion is that during the summer months the ionisation of the refracting layers was never high enough to support propagation on these frequencies. So far as the sound channel on 41.5Mc/s is concerned, during the winter of 1937-38

reception was obtained fairly consistently from the middle of September to the middle of March, though there were many days, and sometimes, periods of several days when the signals went unheard. During the next winter—that of 1938-39—no good reception was obtained till nearly the middle of October, and it ceased early in February, so that the period of consistent reception was considerably less than during the previous year. This was no doubt due to the fall in ionisation resulting from the progress of the sunspot cycle, which was, from 1937, proceeding towards a minimum. The vision channel on 45Mc/s was much less consistently well received than was the 41.5Mc/s channel, and reception started later and finished earlier each winter on this higher frequency, while the periods of no reception during the winter frequently ran into many days. In fact, after December, 1938, hardly any reception was obtained on this channel at all. These results appear to indicate that 41.5Mc/s would only be likely to be propagated by the ionosphere during the winter of years near the sunspot maximum, and that 45Mc/s would be very near the extreme high limit for such propagation even at that time.

Could this happen again?

Now that television is no longer broadcast on low VHF frequencies in Britain, the answer has to be no. But VHF low-band television has been received from North America in Britain many times in recent years, as reported in Roger Bunney's Long Distance Television column in *Television* magazine. The same multipath ghosting that marred the pictures before the war is still a problem today of course.

CRT PATTERNING

George Windsor asks: I know this is not strictly a 405 question but my excuse is that it was a dual-standard set used to view BBC1 and ITV on 405 lines so here goes!

I wonder if anyone can remember in the early days of dual-standard colour sets problems with moiré patterning? My 1968 Decca CTV19 did suffer quite badly from moiré. I never really got a satisfactory answer to it or why it was produced. However, I was recently reading a old Decca glossy on the new range of 'single standard' sets being introduced in 1969 (CS1900, CS2500, CS2501 & CS2200, which look the same as the earlier CTV19 and CTV25) and specific mention was made concerning the set's being specifically designed for the 625-line system and that they avoided the patterning effect you can get with other tubes. Now my particular set had an A49-11X tube that was imported from Canada and of course as you will realise, Canadian sets use the NTSC 525-line system. I can't remember if the problem was the same when viewing 405-line transmissions. As might be expected, the set was tuned to BBC2 most of the time because of the novelty in viewing colour transmissions.

From this I have supposed that the number of dots per square inch versus number of scanning lines matter a good deal in the production of moiré patterning and that the later colour tubes produced in this country may well

have been produced with a different number. Can anyone confirm this hypothesis or shed further light on this issue?

Once upon a time most boys wanted to be train drivers when they grew up. Most boys...

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RECEIVER PROFILE

David Boynes describes the BEAU DECCA

The Ekco TSC48 has always been considered the only post-war mirror-in-the-lid television set produced after the second world war, at least in the UK. However, there was another, the Decca company produced a set which was similar in appearance to their Beau Decca record reproducer, that set was the subject of a recent Receiver Profile in the *Radiophile* magazine.

The Beau Decca television receiver appeared in market place in 1948. In common with the record reproducer the set featured high quality audio supplied by a pair of PX4 valves in the output stage; also included in the specification was a radio receiver. The radio was an option in the record reproducer.

The television chassis employed was the Plessey Standard Chassis; this chassis was also installed in two Defiant receivers. In its application in the Decca receiver it was modified to accommodate the special audio signal routing requirements and the push-pull output stage.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PLESSEY STANDARD TELEVISION CHASSIS

Two main chassis units are employed. The power unit supplies all the high tension, extra high tension and the valve and CRT heater requirements for the TV and the radio unit. The valves employed are a Mazda UU8 as the full-wave HT rectifier and a Mazda U22 serves as the mains-derived EHT rectifier. The EHT voltage is 6 kilovolts. The power unit chassis also carries the audio output stage, which employs a 6SN7GT double triode valve as the phase splitter and driver for the push-pull PX4 triode output valves.

The other chassis is the signal and timebase unit. The receiver section is a superhet employing Mazda 6F13 valves; the 6P13 is an all-glass miniature type. The intermediate frequencies for receivers tuned to the London transmitter are 9.5MHz sound and 13MHz vision. Demodulation of the audio and video signals is performed by sub-miniature valves of the Mazda D1 type. The D1 is a tiny all-glass diode valve, which first appeared in television receivers just before the war; it has a 4-volt heater.

The video demodulator supplies a negative-going signal to the video amplifier. The amplified and inverted video signal is then fed to the CRT grid via a DC restorer. The DC restorer clamps the sync pulse tips to ground potential; apart from the desirable advantages to the picture quality, the type of sync pulse separator circuit employed requires a clamped positive-going video signal. Two D1 valves are used as the DC restorer.

The sync separator valve is a Mazda 6F14 pentode. The principle of operation being that the valve remains cut-off on the sync pulses and is driven into

saturation on the video signal. The result is that positive sync pulses appear across the anode load resistor. The sync pulse separator described appeared in many pre-war sets, in particular Ekco and RGD. These were the firms that employed Mazda valves exclusively in their designs.

The sync pulses are filtered and fed to the line and frame oscillators; the valves employed here are gas filled thyratrons, Mazda T41s. Thyratron valves were popular were many pre-war and early post-war TV designers on account of the relative circuit simplicity demanded in their application. The sawtooth voltage waveform developed across the thyratrons is fed to the respective timebase output valve. A Mazda PEN45 is employed as the frame output valve whilst the line output valve is a Mazda 6P28 or the Mullard equivalent, the EL38. Both timebase output stages employ transformer coupling to the scanning coils. For picture display the cathode ray tube is a Mazda type CRM121; it has a 12-inch diameter screen, the deflection angle is 57 degrees and the deflection gun consists of a simple triode gun assembly. The CRM121 first appeared in 1938.

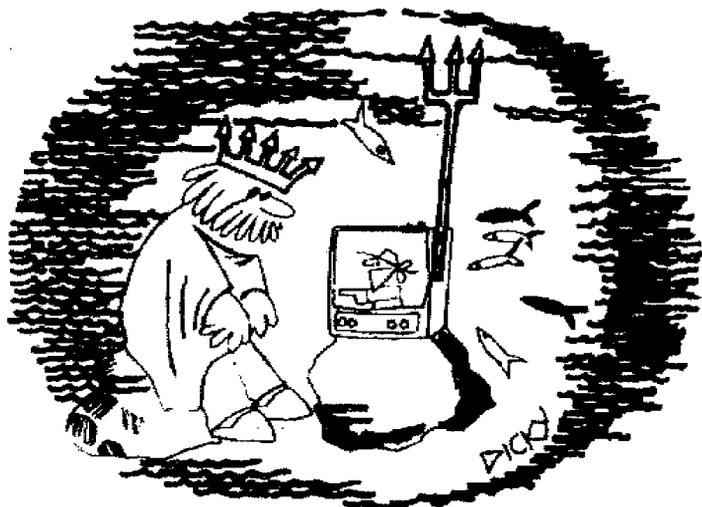
The sound section of the Beau Decca television set deserves some comment. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the set offered above-average audio quality. According to the specification in the service manual the audio output is 4 watts, this is less, however, than the output available from the record reproducer. Three 8-inch permanent magnet loudspeakers are employed.

It is worth remembering all the extra effort improving the sound output quality was certainly worthwhile as the transmitted television sound was considerably better than the normal medium and long wave broadcasts. The television sound frequency response extended up to 10 kilohertz, whilst that for the normal AM sound only broadcasts the maximum was and still is only 4.5 kilohertz.

A selector switch on the user control panel selects television, radio and three tone-compensated gram input positions. The radio receiver is an above-average quality unit employing four valves plus a tuning indicator. The valve line-up includes a Mullard ECH35 as the frequency-changer. The first IF amplifier is a Mullard EF39. The second IF amplifier and automatic volume control rectifier is a Brimar 6B8G. The detector is a Mullard double-diode type EB34. A Mullard EM34 is the tuning indicator.

The radio receives the Long, Medium and Short wavebands. A variable selectivity control is also included, a useful feature to remove adjacent station interference and whistles. The installation of a vertically mounted picture tube in a large cabinet could result in some difficulty performing adjustments and this problem is solved in the Beau Decca TV by siting most of the pre-set controls in a installation control panel, situated on the top panel just in front of the CRT aperture. The only important internal pre-set adjustments that might cause some difficulty are the picture shift controls on the picture tube assembly; however, once these are set they seldom require readjustment except when the CRT is replaced.

Finally before closing this article it is worth passing a few comments on the two Defiant TV sets mentioned earlier in the text concerning the Beau Decca television receiver. Readers should refer to page 21 of issue 33 of *405 Alive*, where Brian Mendham's article on Plessey equipment shows both the Defiant sets that employ the Plessey 'Standard' television chassis. The nine-inch screen set is without doubt a curious looking affair, whilst the twelve-inch screen console was a more conventional looking set. The larger set was offered with or without a radio receiver. The Defiant sets employed a single Mazda PEN45 valve in the sound output stage. All the pre-set controls were chassis mounted and accessible at the back of the set. Nevertheless, both the Defiant receivers are well worth looking out for, in particular that strange-looking table set.



Dicky Howett writes: The 'Neptune' cartoon is my very first published cartoon which appeared in *TV Times* sometime in 1962. I include it only as an historical footnote. Not many people today perhaps would get the connection with the 'ITV' aerial and a trident!

Seen on the Internet

Lost for ever

Oh my, regrets and regrets, but how true! I look back and think "if only I had... ." One of the things I could have "kept" (hidden away) was the "secret" recording of the 1953 Coronation Service, which took place the Saturday morning prior to the actual event. Parts of the 35mm Suppressed-Frame negative went through my hands, and I didn't keep

them... . Wouldn't it be fascinating today to see the Duchess of Norfolk apparently being crowned Queen (if only for three days...)! OK, if I had done so at the time, and had been discovered, I would have been for the chop, as no-one was supposed to know it had taken place... . But today, what a find it would have been!

Alexandra Palace memories

"Were you involved in the 405 colour tests? Any recollections?"

No, I wasn't involved, although they were in progress. They were done from midnight in Studio A at AP using a "modified NTSC" system (which meant using the NTSC system on 405 lines....). The monitors used at the time were not all that good; when I saw some the screen appeared to consist of minute dots (well, yes, that's usual, but these were quite noticeable....). The Producer-in-charge was Atkins (can't think of his first name at the moment) who was the son of the Shakespearean actor/impresario Robert Atkins. The original 1936 EMI equipment had been ripped out and the experimental colour gear installed in its place. The old racks room ("A Racks") was used, and the original Gallery (up those steep suicidal steps....) was used too.

Arthur Dugate (in MHP-Chat)

Mechanical television

Mechanical-type cameras were still in use in 1971 for special applications. I worked on infrared cameras for military use. They used Baird-type spinning mirrors to scan a column of (don't recall how many, maybe 25 or so) liquid-argon-cooled infrared detectors. The same mirror scanned a corresponding column of (equal number) of LEDs to produce a display. It was crude but worked. Signal-to-noise ratio was not too good, the HgCdTe detectors were a limiting factor. Used silicon material for lenses. Units were portable, about shoebox size. One dark and rainy night, we took one for a drive with a hood around it to see if you could drive while looking only through the IR viewer. Well you could, but it was hair-raising, I'm glad it wasn't my car, we asked one of the IR engineers to use his (he did very willingly)!

Those were the days before IR-sensitive CCDs could be fabricated. I remember our senior scientist explaining to me how difficult it would be but of course 25 years later it's a reality. Ah, progress.

John Sehring (11:29 am Mon, Nov 23, 1998 at Custer, SD USA) wb2eag

And Finally...

a chuckle or two, contributed by Harold Peters
and Steve Pendlebury

THE ANTIPODEAN JOKE—a tale from the Pye factory in Lowestoft
We get visitors, and production engineers make ideal guides, being used to walking miles around the site and talking to people on the line.

So it was that I found myself taking a few dealers around the colour factory, and as we approached one of the lines a sharp-eyed dealer noticed a number of receivers going through test upside down. "They are for New Zealand," I smiled; "when they get there, they will be the right way up."

You can set your watch by it. Five seconds later exactly, someone will say, "Pull the other one, it's got bells on." Works every time and to this day they do not know if we were pulling their leg or not.

When PAL colour television was introduced to New Zealand our chief engineer was despatched down under with a set which had been set up carefully to the NZ specification. The trip was uneventful apart from a compulsory haircut in Singapore to bring his features into line with his passport photo, but on switch-on in Auckland the set, so carefully prepared here was totally misconverged and impure. After some thought and refreshment he decided to turn it over to see if any magnets had become loose, whereupon the set sprang into convergence, as pure as pure could be. Which is why we had to set them up over here in an inverted position, and why we got them to assemble their own as soon as we could.

Unpacking instructions for this carton will be found in the manual inside.
[on a box from Taiwan]

To continue your enjoyment outside the house you need to insert 4 x R2 batteries up the bottom.
[radio instructions]

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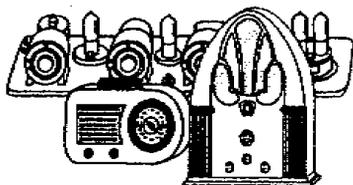
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This is the area for buying and selling all kinds of things to do with television, new or old. Want to join in? Then send us your advertisement: there is no charge, although if space is short we may have to 'prune' out the least relevant adverts or 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), **Mushroom Components**, Unit 3 Bradfield Road, Finedon Road Industrial Estate, Wellingborough, NN8 4HB (01933 -275345, fax 01933-275245).

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, IGI 3EB (0181-554 6631). Thousands of technical manuals and service sheets.

Alton Bowman, 4172 East Avenue, Canadajua, 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:

- Your vintage audio recordings digitally restored and transferred to CD or cassette, from all formats, including 78's. Prices from £4. Telephone David Lane on 01302-321066, or write to 33 Beckett Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN2 4AD, for further details.
- Obsolete format video tapes copied free of charge. I can convert any tapes from the following formats to VHS or S-VHS. Philips VCR (N1500 etc.); Philips VCR-LP (N1700 etc.); Philips V2000; IVC 1-Inch (IVC700,800,900 etc.) and soon Philips EL3400; Philips EL3402; Philips LDL1200; Sony half-inch; Akai quarter-inch. Please phone Mike Bennett on 01395-274227 for details, 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. (T)

BOOKS FOR SALE:

My entire previous list of books has sold out! New list follows:

BBC YEARBOOK 1930. £15. Start a collection whilst it's still cheap.

BBC YEARBOOK 1946. £10. Television starts again.

FANTASTIC TELEVISION. Gary Gerani & Paul Schulman. Titan Books 1987.

Illustrated guide to SF tv favourites including *The Invaders*, *The Outer Limits*, *Superman*. £3

GOOD LISTENING. Elkan & Dorotheen Allan. 1951. A survey of early 50s British broadcasting inc tv. Photo illustrated. £5

THE GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDED SOUND. 1984. Millions of illustrations. Yes tv too! Baird's Phonovision. £5

RUNNING THE SHOW. David Docherty. 1990. 21 years of LWT. The frantic inside story of an ITV television station. £8

GERRY ANDERSON. The authorised biography. 1996. Quite a few photos of model spaceships, surprisingly. £6

IT'S BIGGER ON THE INSIDE. Marvel Books. Dr Who 25th Anniversary cartoon book by Dicky Howett & Tim Quinn. Signed copies, surprisingly. Treat yourself. Only £2.

CLOSED CIRCUIT & INDUSTRIAL TELEVISION. Edward. M.Noll. 1956. Full of cameras, tubes etc. Set up your own b/w studio. Easy! Photo illustrated. £6.

Marconi Manual. 14" Picture & WAVEFORM MONITOR 1965. £5.

Vintage US ELECTRONICS MAGAZINES.

RADIO NEWS June 1947.

RADIO & TELEVISION NEWS July 1951.

RADIO & TELEVISION NEWS July 1955.

All magazines stuffed with old-style electronics/ads/articles. £3 each All VGC. Postage minimum £1.50. Contact Dicky Howett, 01245-441811, e-mail: dicky.howett@btinternet.com

BOOKS, TAPES & EQUIPMENT FOR SALE:

RADAR & CONTROLLED MISSILES, PARIS AREA (Allied intelligence reports of 1944, includes some television investigations, published by HMSO circa 1946, 64 pages quarto). Extremely scarce, £25 post-paid. WORLD

RADIO HANDBOOK 1953, includes short chapter on television, fair condition, £5 post-paid. MARCONI Mk VIII Colour camera, original sales brochure, four

sides of A4, £1.50 post-paid. TELEVISION (volume 2 of the RCA technical series), blue paperback 436 pages, issued 1937, paper getting brittle hence

minor damage to cover, £16 post-paid. IBA TECHNICAL REVIEW—complete your set of this important series of handbooks; I have duplicates of nos. 1, 2, 2

[1977 re-issue], 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 [two copies], 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21,

22, 23, 24 at £2 each post-paid. Discounts for bulk orders. And now three nice little technical books of the early 1970s: TELEVISION MEASURING

EQUIPMENT (Marconi Instruments), TELEVISION VIDEO TRANSMISSION MEASUREMENTS, (Marconi Instruments) and TELEVISION SYSTEM

MEASUREMENT CONCEPTS (Tektronix)—all three for £10 post-paid. THE SIGNAL CORPS: THE EMERGENCY (to December 1941). From the series US

ARMY IN WW2. Hardback, 384 pages, many photographs, including equipment in some European locations, £20. All books in good or better condition unless otherwise indicated.

Two commercial PAL VHS videotapes of obscure 1950s children's programmes: *The Three Musketeers* (US-Italian series of 1956) and Max Fleischer's *Superman* (US, 1941). Both tapes pre-date the content rating

system, so they are pretty early VHS releases. £3 each post-paid. Two volumes of *Catweazle* covering episodes 1-6 in all, brand-new and never even played. £8 the pair post-paid.

Video waveform monitor, made in 1958 by CSF for Associated-Rediffusion (19" wide, 5½" tall, valve circuitry, working, with manual and rack-mount case). Neat showpiece that has a useful function as well—check your video really is 1V peak-to-peak! Utterly unique, £30.

Andrew Emmerson, 01604-844130; please ring first to confirm unsold.

FOR SALE: One (yes, only one I'm afraid) Rediffusion Telebox in used condition. If you can find another one, you've got the basis of a very cheap VHF Band I sound and vision modulator, but you'll have to look around the amateur radio rallies and electronics boot fairs to find one—or else buy one new from Display Electronics (0181-679 4414) for £36.95. My one will cost you £5 plus postage and I'll throw in the photocopied modifications sheet. Andrew Emmerson, 01604-844130; please ring first to confirm unsold.

FOR SALE: Around 170 *Electronic & Radio Trading* service sheets for the period 1957-1965. About 60 of these are for TVs, the rest for radios, tape recorders, etc. Offers to Brian Hemingway, 9 Hitherwood, Cranleigh, GU6 8BN (01483-272331) (NS).

JON'S JOLLY JUNK PILE: Video cameras: Sony BVP34P+C430P but without lenses, officially 'untested' but seem to work, two at £100 each. Two similar with finder/mic at £150 each. Misc. video: C430P control box £85. DC300 battery box £10. VA1VP component/composite adapter £100. Fujinon ES3.2 remote control (three available) £150. Fujinon EPD2 remote control £20. Bracket to fit finder to camera top £10. Rain cover, old-type Sony £10. Vinten mini-wedge £30. Sony early quick-release plate £10. Also a range of Sony b/w cameras with 1" vidicons—ring for details. New old stock Betamax tapes, £3 each. Audio: single Spondor BC1 loudspeaker £50. Tools: Tohnichi torque gauge £50. Tentelometer T2H7UM tape tension gauge £100. Used radio mikes (sold as collector's items): Audio RMS8 radio mike 173.8 tx/rx/aerials £100, ditto 174.1 £100, ditto 174.5 £120 (all above use body-worn tx). Same type but hand-held tx 174.1 £120. Box of 3 spare receivers (working) and 2 tx (not working) £50. Box containing ex-LWT tx/rx/mic/rx aerial, rx OK but tx dead £25. All four working radio mic kits are in original wooden boxes, needing new foam padding. Swintek DB-S Mk3H rx + Mk504 tx (no mic) 174.1 £50. Same 174.6 £50. Sennheiser tx + MH12 mic + mains rx 39MHz £50. Offers considered. Jon Bird, Tankerton, Kent. Phone/fax 01227-273952. (NS)

FOR SALE: Etronic/Cyldon projection television. High-gloss cabinet is very clean. Call Mr Smith on Harrogate 01423-536249 (NS).

FOR SALE: Massive clear out of surplus museum items. Space wanted, so must dispose of 50s TV sets, from £5 to £40, TV studio equipment including ex-broadcast colour cameras (EMI, LINK, Bosch), monitors, other bits and pieces all at very realistic prices. Sorry no detailed lists, just phone, fax or e-mail to make an arrangement, bring a (large) vehicle and some folding stuff. Steve Harris, On The Air, 42 Bridge Street Row, Chester CH1 1NN. Phone/fax 01244 348468, e-mail: steve@ontheair.free-online.co.uk

FOR SALE: Lots of panels, parts and service manuals for 1970s/80s CTV and 1960s/70s mono TB; several unused re-gun CRTs and used colour and mono

CRTs; Ultra 22" CTV (Thorn 8800); Grundig 6010TDGB 26" CTV; Bush CTV 1122 22" CTV (Rank A823A/V); Ferguson 3763 22" CTV (Thorn 9600); several b/w portables and some Goodmans/HMV audio units from the early 1970s. Modest donations appreciated! Dave Hazell, 01793-765390.

FOR DISPOSAL: large quantity of maintenance manuals for Sony Betacam SP, U-Matic SP and U-Matic VTRs, also Panasonic MII VTR AU-650 and Sony cameras in the DXC series. Also for Sony BKU series interface boards, all manner of Sony monitors, consumer camcorders, consumer VCRs plus VPH1272 video projector, CVPG700 colour video printer and XV-Z1000 special effects generator (send SAE for full list). Open to offers on any mixed quantity of manuals but would prefer to sell as a job lot or as a straight swap for a 20MHz 'scope, 1A 30V variable PSU, function generator and 1.8GHz frequency counter. Nigel Phillips, 80 Johnston Road, Oakdale, Poole, BH15 3HT, tel: 01202-670733 or mobile 0468-707999.

HOME WANTED FOR early Ferranti 21" dual-standard colour set, model 21K6, owned originally by Sir Vincent Z. de Ferranti. Working when last used. Price negotiable, must be collected from mid Hertfordshire. Contact Simon Heywood on 01442-872852 or fax: 0171-691 7571. (NS).

SPARES: Philips VCR and VCR-LP (N15xx, N17xx etc.) spares supplied and swapped. All 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>)

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: Ikegami 79D 3-inch top-mounted viewfinder. Must work! Contact Dicky Howett. 01245-441811. e-mail: dicky.howett@btinternet.com

WANTED: Philips VCR and VCR-LP players, recorders, tapes, spares, literature etc. (Philips / Pye N15xx & N17xx, Grundig / ITT SVR, Dynatron TV-VCR etc.) Also wanted: Working or not working ITT / 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@cgy.freeserve.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: Murphy Astra series monochrome TV with VHF/FM radio (models V683, V689, V783, V789, circa 1961-2). Dave Hazell, 01793-765390.

WANTED: to copy (or will pay for photocopy) circuit diagram/manual for Telequipment TV pattern generator WG/4 (not 44!). Ed Dinning, 55 Bryan's Leap, Burnopfield, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE16 6BP (01207-270122).

WANTED: Service manual for IVC 761P Video Tape Recorder. Also wanted, old IVC 700, 800 and 900 series machines. Please phone Mike Bennett on Exmouth (01395) 274227 or e-mail mdb@permanent.co.uk

WANTED: A good friend has asked me to find a VHS recording of a television production of *Goodbye Mr Chips* starring Roy Marsden as Chips. Does anyone have a copy I could buy or borrow? 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: Due to an impending house move, I have the following for disposal:

1. About 20 yrs worth of 'Television' magazine, mainly 60s, 70s, 80s.
2. A 'KB Featherlight' TV from the 60s, dual standard
3. A 'HMV' 14 ins Mono TV, 1975 ish?

Rather than throw the items away, I'd rather pass them on to a good home. Robert Burn, 9 Chancery Close, Bradville, Milton Keynes MK13 7HZ, tel: 01908 -317256 (NS).

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.

MESSAGE: Vintage Radio Times Tel: (01376) 583363. A company based in central Essex, UK, specialising in full radio restorations and sales of restored and non-restored items from the 1930s to the 1950s. We can also locate hard to find sets for specialist collectors. A full list of current stock can be provided

by our e-mail address chris@vintageradio.freemove.co.uk.

MESSAGE: Several people have asked me if I viewed a programme on New Years day called *Are you sitting comfortably?* about BBC children's t/v. Despite scanning the Radio Times when I bought it, and briefly on each day, I failed to spot this one. Did your schedule scanning work better than mine, and if so did you record it? If you did, is there any chance of a copy, please? Ring Phil Marrison on 01283-790747 or e-mail PhilipG@pgmarrison.freemove.co.uk



HOW TO GET YOUR NAME IN *405 ALIVE*

The chief glory of every people arises from its authors.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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

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

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

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

Articles are also most welcome. We get so many good ones that publication can take 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 ONP, 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 ONP. 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 2MS.

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

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

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.

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.shineline.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.

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.

TOLERADIO 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 the secretary's unfortunate death.

ROBERT FARNON SOCIETY (light music by all composers): David Ades, Stone Gables, Upton Lane, Seavington St. Michael, Ilminster, 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, Clwyd, 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), Row Price, 4 Higher Mead, Lychpit, 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.

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*Please note - The next NVCF after the above will be
held on Sunday, 24th. October, 1999.*



**This is how the BBC closed daytime transmissions
during the early 1950s**

We leave you with two thoughts from American humorist Dave Barry:

- There apparently exists, somewhere in Los Angeles, a computer that generates concepts for television sitcoms. When TV executives need a new concept, they turn on this computer; after sorting through millions of possible plot premises, it spits out, "THREE QUIRKY BUT ATTRACTIVE YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN AN APARTMENT," and the executives turn this concept into a show. The next time they need an idea, the computer spits out, "SIX QUIRKY BUT ATTRACTIVE YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN AN APARTMENT." Then the next time, it spits out, "FOUR QUIRKY BUT ATTRACTIVE YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN AN APARTMENT." And so on. We need to locate this computer and destroy it with hammers.

- There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."

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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