

The newspaper for retired BBC Pension Scheme members

# PROSPERO



October 2025



# Understanding the BBC Charter: why it matters

We spoke with Ben Kerry, BBC Head of Policy (pictured left), to demystify the Royal Charter and Framework Agreement – and explain why they’re so important to the future of the BBC.

## So, what is the Royal Charter?

Ben Kerry (BK): Think of the Royal Charter as a licence from the Crown. It’s what gives the BBC permission to exist – and sets out what we’re here to do and who we serve.

The Charter, alongside the Framework Agreement, formally establishes the BBC as a corporate entity. It can only be changed with the King’s approval and is updated roughly every 10 years. Our current Charter expires on 31 December 2027, so we’re now preparing for the next one, starting 1 January 2028. If we don’t renew it, clause 60 is clear: ‘the undertaking of the BBC shall cease.’ So yes, this is a pivotal moment.

The Charter contains 72 clauses, including our core mission: to inform, educate and entertain. That mission, rooted in our first Charter from 1927, is supported by five public purposes:

1. Provide impartial news and information
2. Support learning for all ages
3. Showcase distinctive, creative content
4. Represent and serve diverse UK communities – and support the creative economy
5. Reflect UK values and culture globally.

It also outlines how we’re governed, the role of the Director General, and confirms that we’re regulated by Ofcom.

## And the Framework Agreement?

BK: The Framework Agreement sits alongside the Charter and fills in the practical details. It’s like the BBC’s instruction manual – explaining how we deliver services, behave and are held accountable.

Unlike the Charter, the Agreement can be amended by the Government. Both documents also define how we’re funded. The Licence Fee provides most of our revenue, and the law requires households to pay it if they watch live TV or BBC iPlayer. The Secretary of State sets the fee level and decides how it’s allocated, including funding for the World Service and over-75s’ licences.

## What happens next?

BK: With the Charter expiring in 2027, the review process begins soon. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will publish a terms of reference, outlining the scope and timeline.

This autumn, we expect a Green Paper – a discussion document inviting public and expert feedback. A White Paper will follow next year, setting out the Government’s formal proposals based on that feedback. These are key milestones leading to the drafting of the new Charter.

## How can you get involved?

There’ll be a public consultation later this year, where people across the UK can share their views on how the BBC should evolve. It’s your chance to shape the future of the BBC, so make sure to have your say!

## Celebrations



# Lily Nowak at 100

Congratulations to BBCM’s Lily Nowak, who celebrated her 100th birthday on 25 May!

Born in Bermondsey in 1925, Lily Field and her mother went to live with an aunt in Buckinghamshire in the early days of WWII to escape the Blitz, leaving behind her father, who was working in munitions.

Already working at 14, Lily got a clerical job with the FCO and was then offered a job with the BBC Monitoring Service at Caversham Park in 1943. Married to Tadeusz (‘Ted’) Nowak in 1953, Lily took a career break to look after their two children, then returned to the News Bureau at Caversham Park, working shifts as a teleprinter operator and carrying out office duties until she retired in the late 1980s.

Lily thrived on the multilingual and multicultural atmosphere at Caversham Park. ‘BBCM was a great place to be,’ Lily says. ‘The work was so interesting and the people so pleasant, that if they hadn’t paid me, I’d have worked there for nothing!’

Congratulations, Lily!

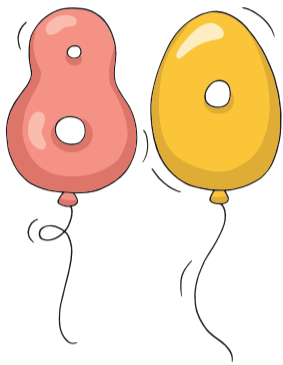
Vickie and former BBCM colleagues



# LETTERS

## You're invited!

My name is Chris Penny, and I am a retired Senior Outside Broadcast Cameraman from Kendal Avenue. I worked there for 33 years, during which time I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of literally thousands of colleagues in the industry.



Now, in the twilight years for many of us, I thought it would be a great idea to create a tempting bucket list trip/occasion to meet up again and reminisce.

I am therefore inviting anyone who knew me to join at my home in Kerikeri, New Zealand, to help celebrate my 80th over the weekend of 21-22 February. There'll be visiting minstrels, jazz and a classical concert, along with dancing and revelries.

Interested? Email me at [rubatocdp@gmail.com](mailto:rubatocdp@gmail.com) for more details or WhatsApp me on 0064 21 1844307.

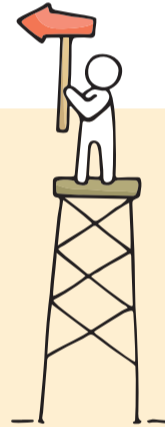
**Chris Penny**

## Pension scheme rules

I feel sure that you will have followed the debate in the House of Commons today [23 April] about a private members' bill regarding the management and the lack of accountability that the HSBC Pension Fund appears to have.

I wonder if this might encourage the BBC Pension Scheme to reassure and perhaps remind its members of the rules that govern the BBC's investments on behalf of its pensioners?

**John Sennett**



## Daniel Farson – can you help?

Did you or anyone you know ever work with Daniel Farson? Whistledown Studios are making an instalment of *The Archive Hour* for BBC Radio 4, about Daniel's television career.

They're looking to get in touch with anyone who may have crossed paths with Daniel during their time working in broadcasting, or if they know anyone who may have.

If you'd like to get in touch or have any questions, please email [leohornak@whistledown.net](mailto:leohornak@whistledown.net)

## Remote studios remembered

I enjoyed Charles Runcie's piece on remote studios previously used widely by BBC Local Radio (*Prospero*, April 2025).

When I was on attachment as a General Producer/Presenter at Radio Sussex in Eastbourne and Brighton in 1987, I often used the studio inside the White Rock Theatre in Hastings. It was right next to the toilet and often live on air you could hear the loo being flushed.

At Rye, the studio was in the Town Hall. Recordings had to be avoided on the hour when the Town Hall bell would chime.

**Jon Kaye**

INTERESTING ARTICLE ON unmanned studios. I can go back to the late 1960s. John Humphreys was the up-and-coming reporter covering Merseyside, and he frequently covered stories for our External Services office in Manchester, using the unmanned studio in Liverpool.

So far as the 'most splendid remote studio' goes, the Radio Suffolk West Suffolk studio in Bury St Edmunds took some beating. Situated in the listed Abbey House, formerly the town house of the Hervey family (Earls of Bristol) of Ickworth House, it was a 'tardis' sitting in the centre of the magnificent drawing room with French doors leading out into the garden and backing onto Abbey Gardens. At weekends this was an unmanned studio and, because of the security issue with the property, I would trot down, usually on a Sunday, to supervise an invited guest's live input to a national programme – very often on gardening.

Sadly, the whole was dismantled in favour of a Radio Car, and I never thought the quality of input was as good.

**Beryl Brennan (née Snape)**



# PROSPERO

*Prospero* is provided free of charge to retired Scheme members or to their spouses and dependants.

*Prospero* provides a source of news on former colleagues, developments at the BBC and pension issues. It is published twice a year, in April and October.

**Please send your editorial contributions, comments or feedback to:**

*Prospero*, BBC Pension and Benefits Centre, Central Square, Cardiff CF10 1FT

Email: [prospero@bbc.co.uk](mailto:prospero@bbc.co.uk)

Please make sure that any digital pictures you send are scanned at 300dpi. Please also note that the maximum word count for obituaries is 350 words.

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Prospero October 2025

The next printed issue of *Prospero* will appear in April 2026. The copy deadline is Monday 2 March 2026.



# Leading credits: reviewing the Graphic Design Department's lasting impact

Ex-BBC Graphic Designers Iain Macdonald and Paula Williams have edited a new book, *Designing the BBC: a History of Motion Graphics*, published by Bloomsbury Academic.

**D**rawing on the unique content of the BBC Motion Graphics Archive, which was compiled by Mark Macey, Head of Archive at the BBC, and Michael Graham-Smith, and the first-hand perspectives of former BBC staff, this book provides a timely overview of more than 60 years of the BBC's innovative practice within motion graphics.

Former BBC staff and leading design and television studies scholars investigate the archive, bring cultural memories to life and reflect on the Graphic Design Department's lasting impact. Through a collection of essays, they consider the graphic design of a range of TV genres, including household favourites such as *Doctor Who*; sports programming such as *Grandstand* and big sporting events like the Olympics; children's television including *Grange Hill*; popular science programmes such as *Tomorrow's World*; news output such as *The Nine O'Clock News*, Election Night specials, the weather and the channel idents of BBC 2 and BBC One. They write from first-hand experience, covering every decade of BBC broadcasting since the Graphic Design Department was formed in 1954 to the present day, and have kindly shared some excerpts with *Prospero*.



## A Play In Themselves: Drama Titles and Graphics

It has been a long-held view that the American graphic designer Saul Bass was the first to define the opening title sequence as an artform and craft of its own merit. Not least because his most widely seen titles were for movies, his influence on television drama was significant, especially in the formative years of the BBC Graphic Design Department in the 1960s. Encapsulating the essence and mood of the drama about to be seen, in order to prepare the audience as well as inform them with the leading credits was what the Designer aspired to.



BBC Senior Designer, Alan Jeapes (1937-2010) took the same view as Saul Bass: 'A title sequence creates a mood and an atmosphere to enhance the programme. It makes you want to carry on watching.'

Bernard Lodge, one of the BBC's great original designers, added: 'This must be achieved while remaining faithful to the programme's contents and spirit.'

### Play For Today

Senior Designer Sid Sutton (who sadly died in 2024 before publication) gave an account of a live action shoot with models for the titles to a series of single weekly plays called *Play for Today*. In 1976 it was an established feature in the schedules, and Sutton wanted to give the brand a refreshed modern look, but had to suffer for his art.

'My idea was that we would film the sunrise and it would come up and it was like come over the top of the lettering and light the lettering from the front...shooting time lapse over a period from 4am in the morning to 1pm in the afternoon.'

**A title sequence creates a mood and an atmosphere to enhance the programme. It makes you want to carry on watching.**

'I'd driven all around London, up and down all the hills, but I couldn't find anywhere where I could get a completely dark sky because of all the orange sodium lamps.'

'Eventually, through a friend, I found a house on the East Coast, looking out to sea and no lights apart from the odd ship, and I thought that's the answer. We managed to get hold of this house for this weekend. It was in the summer of 1976, the long, hot summer where it didn't rain.'

'We didn't see any clouds for about three months and we went to Southwold up to the top of the house and set up the model out of the window with the 35mm time-lapse gear. So we angled the camera, because we started shooting at 4am when it was pitch black and by about 6am it was pretty obvious the sun wasn't going to come up over there, it was going to come up over there. Not only that, the sky was full of clouds, by 8:30 it was pouring rain. So we had sheets thrown over the model...again it was cloudy the next day, no sunrise.'



**We also developed a sweeping camera to achieve the sweeping time-lapses and post in the red News lines.**

'And so now, I'd run out of budget. I had kept in reserve a small amount of money to shoot a sunrise on a rostrum camera...And I thought...I've got to do this. So I got in touch with the owners and they said, okay...So we stayed that night and we got our sunrise. Fantastic. In the middle of it we had a fighter jet from the American Air Force Base fly through shot. And we had to jump in between each time-lapse shot and knock the ladybirds off, jump out of shot, click one frame and carry on like that for about two and a half hours. It was quite exhausting, I can tell you.'

(Sid Sutton 2023)



## BBC News Countdown

In 2003, Designer and Director Mark Chaudoir was commissioned to create four 90-second countdown sequences to precede BBC News 24. He filmed around the UK using time-lapse photography showing wide and far reaching set of subject matter.

In 2005, BBC News again commissioned Mark to produce a new set of countdown films as they wanted to show more of a global reach and news gathering.

'I said, well, the one thing you never see when you watch the news is you never see the camera and you never see the satellite truck. You only see the presenter. Yeah, you only see the news reader saying over to you. You never see what's behind that. I said why don't we just go and film the actual news gathering and use the red and white lines from titles sequence to actually show the news going back to the BBC.'

He then produced a treatment and storyboards with a set of ideas which were generic news stories but seen from a fresh perspective with a correspondent and cameraperson: newsgathering in action. He then briefed numerous BBC News cameraman to gather footage in the more extreme war zones and natural disaster areas, sending them storyboards and extensive direction, and talking to them and their News correspondent. He also set out to get brand synergy with Martin Lambie-Nairn's BBC News titles which featured red lines and Dave Lowe's music.

The joy of the project meant he got to travel the world filming BBC correspondents and worked with each bureau to set up filming and locations, 'for example the Indian Broadcasting set up the correspondent on the BBC bureau roof with satellite dishes, on a busy Delhi street corner; we put Andrew Harding into a boat going through Bangkok canals; we took the African correspondent into a school...'

Chaudoir gathered over 24 hours of footage which he edited into four 90-second countdowns.

'We also developed a sweeping camera to achieve the sweeping time-lapses and post in the red News lines. Clive Norman, the cameraman, devised an ingenious device which allowed the camera to rotate filming time-lapse, rather than the usual static time-lapse. In post house VTR, we put in the red lines.'

The countdown is still on air with a different set of graphics but still in the style of countdowns created by Mark in 2005. The longevity, Mark believes, is that the countdowns have captured the public's interest in BBC News gathering and seeing correspondents out in the field with camerapersons and seeing how news is gathered. A huge part of the success is also the News and countdown music composed by Dave Lowe, which has become iconic and is widely popular.

'For me there's a sense of pride in that 18 years later, they're still going out. Of course it's been upgraded, but countdowns go out 24 times a day, 8,760 times a year, so it's gone out nearly 160,000 times.'

(Mark Chaudoir 2023)



## DESIGNING THE BBC: A HISTORY OF MOTION GRAPHICS

Edited by Iain Macdonald & Paula Williams

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# From long hair to long careers — back at the Langham 50 years later

On 30 July 2025, the Langham played host to a joyful reunion of BBC radio studio managers, who first crossed paths there exactly 50 years to the day in the summer of 1975 on SM training Course 10.



Alongside laughter, anecdotes and plenty of reminiscing, Nigel Hartley (one of the original trainers) joined the group, adding to the spirit of the occasion.

The contrast between the vintage photo and the present-day one couldn't be more charming — long hair and flared trousers

giving way to well-earned gravitas and warm familiarity. Despite the passing decades, the camaraderie from that summer clearly endured. Many have stayed in touch, and went on to forge impressive careers across broadcasting.

It was more than just a reunion — it was a celebration of a shared journey that began in one remarkable summer and resonated across a lifetime of radio and TV.

Jeff Cohen



Left to Right Upper: Jeff Cohen, Victor Van Amerongen, Robert Thirkell, Oliver MacFarlane, Andy Popperwell, Tim Marshall. Lower: Kate Thompson (née Finch), Geraldine Marshall (née Walker)



## BBC Club Lottery

Congratulations to all our monthly lottery winners. The September £10,000 Jackpot hasn't yet been drawn at time of writing but partially anonymised winners' details can be found on the News section of the BBC Club website. It's so important to update BBC Club if your contact details change, especially if you have lottery shares. The lottery is drawn monthly with prizes of £1,000 and 10 prizes of £100. The next quarterly jackpot is in December. Why not join the lottery or increase your shares?

## Connect Clubs — some winter suggestions

The Music Group holds rehearsals in Maida Vale. The BBC Ariel Orchestra rehearses on select Sunday afternoons. These 'scratch' sessions are fun and sociable, open to players grade 7 and above. New members welcome! The BBC Elstree Concert Band (which also now rehearses at Maida Vale — despite the name!) meets on Monday evenings. For more information please see the website:

[bbcclub.com/clubs/connect/music](https://bbcclub.com/clubs/connect/music)

Our Snowsports section is now active all year round with both novice and experienced skiers and snowboarders welcome.

[bbcclub.com/clubs/connect/snowsports](https://bbcclub.com/clubs/connect/snowsports)

The Radio Theatre Group have embarked on a new project — a new serial recording, with each episode being written by different people! Write, act, produce, add effects, edit, get to grips with all aspects of Radio!

[bbcclub.com/clubs/connect/radio-theatre](https://bbcclub.com/clubs/connect/radio-theatre)

The Ariel Wine & Beer Society meets monthly to discuss and taste. So far this year, highlights have been sessions on English sparkling wines, beer tasting, an Ale Trail, Georgian wines and many more.

[bbcclub.com/clubs/connect/wine-beer](https://bbcclub.com/clubs/connect/wine-beer)

For details of all our hobbies and interest groups, please see the website — and check back regularly as more resume activities!

## Prospero Society

We've had some fantastic events already this year, with a great mix of walks, museums, meals and more. The Samuel Pepys City walk and Getty Archive visits were particularly popular. We hope to repeat the Getty Archive trip next year for those who missed out. Although our trips are available to all retired BBC Club members (and their guests), those who are members of the Prospero Society do get a week's priority booking as well as discounted rates. This means, in reality, that anyone who's not a member of the Prospero Society may well miss out. BBC Club's Prospero Society is totally separate from this newspaper and is available for retired BBC Club members to join at a cost of £20 per year.

## Canal Cruising

There is still some availability in October to book before our fully-equipped boat, Savoy Hill, has its annual overhaul. Rates are significantly cheaper than elsewhere. Please visit the Canal Cruising page and perhaps plan for next year?

[bbcclub.com/clubs/connect/canal-cruising](https://bbcclub.com/clubs/connect/canal-cruising)

## BBC Club Contact Details

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## Mike Hoskin – local radio pioneer



Pioneer manager of BBC Radio Cornwall and pioneering News Editor at BBC Radio Blackburn (now BBC Radio Lancashire), initially a reporter at BBC Radio Nottingham, **Michael Charles (Mike) Hoskin** has died at the age of 83.

When the BBC asked Mike to bring local radio to Cornwall in the early 1980s, he turned a construction site on the banks of the Truro River into the most listened-to BBC local radio station in mainland Britain.

Mike was born on 16 July 1941; that December, his 25-year-old father died returning from a bombing mission over Germany. Mike attended Long Eaton Grammar School in Derbyshire. As the devoted husband of Joanna (née Dodd), he had four children.

Mike left an indelible mark on the lives of people he encountered. He will be missed and remembered most fondly by his children Emily-Jo, Edward, Tom and Laurence, brother Chris Shepherd, sister Meryn Hannibal (Shepherd), and many other relatives, friends and colleagues.

In common with fellow journalists at Radio Blackburn, I flourished under Mike's insistence on the highest standards of accuracy, impartiality and commitment to being first with local news. He favoured a questioning mind, individuality, even eccentricity, over conformity.

He regarded the practice of mixing national material with local news as laziness. His dogged insistence that local content should have primacy on BBC local radio, which he saw as an essential service, was not always appreciated by some of his superiors, but the audience figures and the loyalty of listeners justified his approach.

Mike had wanted to be a pilot, like his father, but a vision issue prevented it, though that did not dim his passion for the workings of aircraft. Other lifelong passions were football, cricket, films, listening to the radio, astronomy, 'spirited' discussion, grammar, Bach, food and cookery, wine, bourbon, and especially books.

At his funeral, former colleagues of Mike's described friendships which had endured for more than 50 years, based not only on his brilliance as a broadcast journalist, but also as a man who exuded charm, never a BBC monological mouthpiece, with an irrepressible sense of humour.

**Chris Bates MBE**

## Les Dilley – Academy Award-winning Art Director and Production Designer



World-renowned production designer, **Ivor Leslie Dilley (Les Dilley)**, died on 20 May 2025 from complications of Alzheimer's disease with his wife and family by his side.

Dilley worked on 100 film and TV projects in various capacities over his 60-year career, alongside the likes of George Lucas, James Cameron, Steven Spielberg and Ridley Scott.

Dilley won two Academy Awards for Best Art Direction for his work on *Star Wars* (1977) and *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* (1981). He was also nominated for Best Art Direction for *Alien* (1979), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), and *The Abyss* (1989). In 2020, Dilley was honoured with a BAFTA Award for his Outstanding Contribution to British Cinema at the BAFTA CYMRU awards.

Dilley was born in 1941 in the Rhondda Valley of South Wales. At the end of WWII, he and his family moved back to London, where he was raised in Wembley Park. At 15, Dilley started his film career in a five-year plastering and construction apprenticeship at the Associated British Picture Corporation while simultaneously studying architecture and building construction at Willesden Technical College. He worked his way up the Art Department ladder, becoming a Draughtsman and then Assistant Art Director on films including *Kelly's Heroes* (1972) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973), and then Art Director on Richard Lester's *The Three Musketeers* (1973).

In 1985, Dilley moved to Hollywood to continue his career as a Production Designer, where he worked on many films including *The Abyss*, which he considered one of his proudest accomplishments. For the film, he transformed an abandoned nuclear power plant in South Carolina into one of the largest underwater filming sets ever created.

His last project brought him back to the UK for the BBC's children's TV series, *The Teacup Travels* (2013-2015).

In addition to his incredible work ethic, quirky British humour and love of life, he was a dedicated and loving husband, father, grandfather and friend to many. He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Leslie Lykes Dilley, five children and four grandchildren. He will be greatly missed.

**Leslie Lykes Dilley**

## Tom English – Head of Negotiations



**Tom (Thomas Hubert Francis) English** joined the BBC in the late 1950s and stayed with Auntie until 1987.

He had a career of two parts. He started on the studio floor with a stint with the World Service in radio, putting his bilingual ability that came courtesy of a French mother to good use with some French language announcements. But he found his calling in television and was producing and directing news programmes during the 1960s, notably directing Michael Aspel in the long-running London and the Southeast current affairs programme *Town and Around*. The French connection was put to good use again in the late 1960s with a secondment to Paris with his young wife, in time to provide coverage of the 1968 Winter Olympics in Grenoble.

In 1971, he moved into the commercial side of television. He joined the co-production department and travelled extensively to raise finances to support BBC television productions, rising to the position of Head of Negotiations. During his time, the department helped make iconic productions like Sir David Attenborough's *Life on Earth*, *Smiley's People* and *Tender is The Night* possible.

He forged especially strong links with his peers in the Antipodes and often claimed some credit for introducing a generation of British viewers to Australian suburban culture as depicted in the *Neighbours* soap opera.

Tom retired early from the BBC in 1988 and continued to work as an independent consultant with English Television Consultancy, eventually finding his way back to the studio floor by capturing a niche market for 30-minute, documentary-style videos promoting some of England's finest hotels and recording the weddings of the rich and famous.

Thomas Hubert Francis English died peacefully in his sleep on 30 March 2025, aged 90. His wife of almost 60 years, Bettina Ann predeceased him by 15 months, and he is survived by his four children and 11 grandchildren.

**Luc English**

## Chris Blount – BBC Radio Cornwall presenter



When an 18-year-old Cornish lad booked into a BBC hostel in London in August 1961, he had no idea he would go on to make BBC history.

Twenty-two years later, his was the first voice heard on BBC Radio Cornwall as it opened an innovative local service, including a programme teaching the Cornish language and the use of communication link-ups around the world to communities with Cornish links.

In between those two events, he had a distinguished career, first operating disc-cutters and new-fangled tape recorders in Bush House for World Service, and then working in the pioneering days of regional television and radio in Plymouth.

In London, Chris transferred to Television Centre as a trainee camera operator as Operations were expanding to cope with the new BBC2 channel. From there, he went on to other studios, including Riverside and Lime Grove.

He could sometimes be seen off-shift with his future wife Kay, also from Newquay, in audiences for shows at the Television Theatre, including *Juke Box Jury*. After a few years, with marriage in sight, he applied for a transfer to Plymouth.

The head of the BBC in Plymouth, Tom Salmon, found slots for Chris on the West of England Home Service. Later, when the BBC experimented on a new opt-out from Plymouth called *Middy Parade*, Chris was an early recruit. Then the West Region's morning radio programme *Today in the South and West* programme was axed. Such was the public outcry, the BBC created a Plymouth programme for Devon, Cornwall and the Channel Islands, *Morning Sou'West*, with Chris among the driving forces.

After many years of early shifts and with a young family – Joanne, Jonathan and Andrew – Chris and Kay decided on a new direction, running a Post Office at Helford on the Lizard. But it wasn't very long before BBC management asked him to come back and present the new breakfast programme in Truro.

After retirement, he became an active member of the now-disbanded Volunteer Visiting Scheme, meeting retired staff around the county, including the Isles of Scilly, where he helped sort out one pensioner's television set problems.

**Tony Byers**

## Alan Russell – Producer/Director Children’s TV

**Alan Russell**, who has died aged 87, entertained generations of children with his distinguished work on some of the BBC’s most popular and successful children’s programmes.

During the 1960s and early 70s, he directed more than 700 live editions of *Blue Peter*, before becoming the founding producer of the long-running hit *Record Breakers* and the *All-Star Record Breakers* singing and dancing Christmas spectaculars, featuring the top children’s celebrities of the day. His many other credits include well-loved series like *Vision On*, *Take Hart*, *Star Turn*, *Beat the Teacher*, *We Are the Champions* and the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures.

Alan was born on 17 September 1937 and set his heart on showbusiness from an early age, studying music, singing and dancing and winning the All England Championships for his skill at tap. After completing his National Service in the RAF, he joined the BBC in 1958 as an electronic engineer, working in Transmitters in Dorset and then at Alexandra Palace. He transferred to the newly built Television Centre, where he became a vision mixer in studio management. Children’s programmes offered him the chance to direct, and he joined the department in 1968, becoming a Producer in 1971.

Alan was one of the great characters of his generation – an ebullient, forthright and ambitious producer, able to make things happen with the force of his personality and the technical skill and attention to detail he brought to every production. His work on the lavish *All-Star Record Breakers* was recognised with a coveted BAFTA, an award for which he was also nominated many times.

He left the BBC in 1986 to become the Editor of the *Guinness Book of Records*, before setting up his own video production company and working as a lecturer and trainer for a range of BBC production courses, including the Open University.

Alan married Jennifer White in 1978 – they had met at TV Centre a few years earlier when she was looking for a researcher job and he had a vacancy on *Record Breakers*. He is survived by Jenny and Anieka, his daughter from his first marriage.

**Richard Marson**

## Anandhi Suriyaprakasam – Eastern Service mainstay

**Anandhi Suriyaprakasam** was a recognisable figure around Bush House because of her bubbly personality and because she always wore a colourful sari.

She was born in Jaffna in Sri Lanka in 1938 and came to London to study at the LSE, just over the road from Bush House. She became a regular contributor to *Tamilosai*, as the BBC Tamil Service was known to its audiences, Tamil speakers of India and Sri Lanka, and in 1983 became a full staff member.

It was a time when tensions were rising between Sri Lanka’s two ethnic communities, Sinhala and Tamil, as a result of government policy favouring the Sinhala language of the majority, making Tamil speakers second-class citizens, or so it seemed. That inevitably increased listenership to the BBC in a divided land where political rivalry grew into a fierce civil war in the north of the country. *Tamilosai* became a beacon of objective reporting and Anandhi, one of the best known members of the Tamil diaspora, by her voice if not in person. She was helpful in explaining to colleagues the significance of events in the war, and in tracking down dissident Tamil leaders for interview, before herself securing a ground-breaking, in-person interview with the leader of the Tamil Tigers militia at his jungle hideout.

She managed to suppress her instinctive support for Tamil Eelam, autonomy for the Tamil homeland, when in front of the microphone – but her sympathy for the cause nearly got her into trouble with her BBC bosses in a story that may be apocryphal. A photo of her at a Tamil protest in London appeared in the *Guardian*. When her boss called her in for a potential disciplinary interview, she told him: ‘No, that was my twin sister, who is visiting from Jaffna!’

At work or at play, Anandhi was a lot of fun to be with and will be missed by former Eastern Service colleagues and community members.

She suffered personal loss when her elder daughter, Poorani, was killed in a car crash, and is survived by her second daughter, Sakthi, and her much loved grandson, Cheran.

**Nick Nugent**

## Ken & Vanessa Wright

**Ken and Vanessa Wright** were tragically killed in a road traffic accident on 9 July. Ken was 85 and Vanessa was 77.

Vanessa joined Television Accounts in 1966 and progressed through the ranks to head up the Artist Payments Department of Accounting Services Television. They met when Ken was appointed as Head of Accounting Services Television.

Ken joined the BBC in 1969 from his native Kidderminster, where he had qualified as a cost accountant. He started in BBC Central Finance and Central Directorates, where he managed to combine his love of drumming and performing with quarterly trial balances. Ken was in various local bands before joining Cliff Ward and the Cruisers; he would go on to play the drums on Clifford T Ward’s first four albums, enjoying much chart success, including ‘Gaye’, which reached number 6 in the charts. Ken was still performing in bands as recently as 2019 – a drumming career spanning 60 years.

After a long courtship, Ken and Van married on the tax-efficient date of 30/3/1983. By then, Ken had been appointed Finance Director of BBC Enterprises Ltd, where he was instrumental in turning around the company’s fortunes.

Vanessa left the BBC when their son, James, was born in 1986. Ken decided to leave Enterprises when it was restructured to form BBC Worldwide Ltd. The family moved to a converted church in the Cotswolds, complete with a huge garage converted into a music studio so that Ken could play most days throughout his retirement.

Vanessa was an exceptionally kind person, always going the extra mile to help and support others. Ken was respected by his colleagues as an exceptional manager: wise, fair and very hard-working. As a couple, they were totally devoted to one another and to their loving son, James.

On a personal note, my family has lost two very special friends. We’ve been through so much together. Our families have sat next to one another at QPR for the last 40 years, the empty chairs a constant reminder of how suddenly life can be so cruelly snatched away, just driving home, gone in seconds.

**Dave Lee**

## Clair Dean – Floor Manager, TVC



**Clair Dean** died on 11 December 2024. She was a Floor Manager in Studio Management, TV Centre. Her husband John was a Lighting Director – they kept within the BBC family.

She was the greatest gas, with a deep tract of theatricality. Her aunt was actress Kay Kendall, and her grandmother was Music Hall star, Marie Kendall. Before telly, she stage managed *The Black & White Minstrel Show* at London’s Victoria Palace – ‘The Camp Town ladies sing this song...’ They wouldn’t be singing it these days!

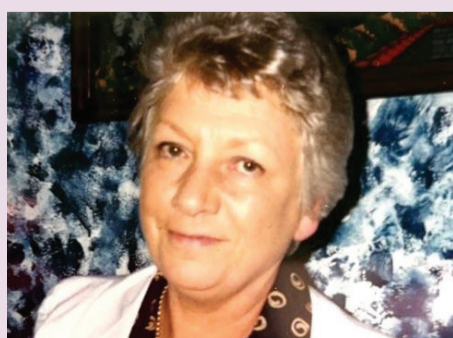
She met John in BBC Dickenson Road, Manchester Studios on a show called *Whoosh!* (Less said...)

I was the PA and John was a cameraman. Then she became Floor Manager, as AFMs do. Clair and John lived in a big house on Clapham Common, near me, with their children, Rupert, Alexander and Sofia. They threw great parties. I’d introduced them to a posh couple who’d moved to Clapham from Fulham. ‘Well,’ declared Clair, ‘the Rutters will certainly lift the tone of the area!’

A summer garden party in Clair and John’s lovely walled rear space; new friends the Rutters couldn’t come. On the other side was St Mungo’s, a charitable institution. There was a somewhat loud fracas bellowing over the wall. A ton of effing and blinding! The Deans’ guests froze, rigid with their Pimms, in shock. ‘Ah,’ announced Clair. ‘The Rutters have returned from their walk on the Common!’

After her funeral in Putney, her children all gave us a jolly party in Cannizaro House. Clair would have enjoyed it.

**Jeremy Swan**



## Beryl Hobbs – TVC telephonist

It is with great sadness we have to advise you of the passing of our dear friend, **Beryl Ann Hobbs**, who worked with us at the Television Centre as a telephonist for over 20 years.

Beryl took early retirement and for a short time worked at BBC Enterprises. She was a popular member of staff while at the BBC and will be sorely missed by many.

Beryl had been suffering ill health for some time and sadly passed away on 25 November 2024.

**June Lloyd**

## Obituaries

### David Butt – Flautist



**David Butt** (1936–2025), a distinguished flautist and piccolo player, was Principal Flute in the BBC Symphony Orchestra for 38 years from 1960.

Born in Salisbury in 1936, David's love of music was nurtured by his family, his school and the vibrant musical community of the Salisbury Orchestral Society. While still at school, he was invited to join the National Youth Orchestra as First Flute, returning as a coach years later.

He studied at the Royal Academy of Music, where he won several prestigious prizes. Later in his career, he received the Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music (FRAM) award, an honour bestowed on alumni who have distinguished themselves in their field.

His studies were interrupted by a year of national service in the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Band, and it was during this time that he met his future wife, Valerie, who he gave flute lessons to.

After completing his studies, David joined the Royal Opera House, performing under the baton of Rudolf Kempe. In 1960, he joined the BBC Symphony Orchestra, where he would go on to become Principal Flute. He toured extensively with the orchestra and performed in 38 Last Night of the Proms. During his time with the BBC he played under many of the world's most renowned conductors including Sir Adrian Boult, Rudolf Schwarz, Günter Wand, Pierre Boulez, Gennady Rozhdestvensky and Andrew Davis.

Outside the BBC Symphony Orchestra, David was in high demand, performing as guest principal with the Philharmonia and the London Philharmonic orchestras and playing at Glyndebourne and the Aldeburgh Festival. He was also a sought after session musician, taking part in recordings with The Beatles and Kate Bush, and film soundtracks including *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Oliver!* and *The Virgin and the Gypsy*.

David was a long-standing Professor at the Royal College of Music and was awarded an Honorary RCM in 1982.

David was a much loved family man and was married to Valerie for 63 years. He died aged 89 after a long illness and is survived by his wife, three children, four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Catherine Acton

### Margery Gray – Manager Network Television



**Margery Gray** joined the BBC aged 17 in 1953 as a clerk and then, when old enough, joined the Secretarial Reserve. She retired in 1996 as the much-respected Manager of the Music and Arts Department in Network Television. Between the two, she worked across the BBC in various departments in central administration and radio, but the larger part of her career was spent in Religious Programmes Television in Kensington House and then the East Tower of TVC.

She was a consummate producer's assistant, equally at home filming on location, sitting in a studio gallery, or ensuring an OB ran like clockwork. She took an interest in everything and used her role not just to oversee and manage the production process but to learn.

Networking came as second nature to Margery, who was a dab hand at squeezing what she could from planning and finance. As a former colleague put it: 'How she dealt with overbearing producers or directors who thought she would be a pushover; that was a mistake that few made twice! She was held in high regard and her skill at managing people (often without them realising they were being managed) was second to none. Always diplomatic and fair, firm yet caring, she was a wonderful mentor to an aspiring, if inexperienced, manager.'

Her retirement was spent in the concert hall, following the Ring cycle, and enjoying exhibitions and galleries. But Margery was also a great traveller, up many a dale and across oceans to the Galapagos and Antarctica, and a near-death experience between Tibet and Nepal.

Those networking skills were put to good use, too, as she sat at the centre of a web of former managers who met regularly and who remained firm friends.

Ill health dogged her final years, but she kept up connections and contacts. In her last months, it was that network that supported her in hospital and in the care home. It says much about Margery that 30 years after retiring from the BBC, her friendship group was still so large and so strong. It was a life lived to the full.

Stephen Whittle

### Mary Husband – Costume Designer



**Mary Husband (1934–2025)** had been my good old friend since the late 1950s. She was born in Frodsham, the only child of dotting parents. She attended the local grammar school followed by Chester Art School, and got her first taste of the theatre while working for Bermans Costume Hire Company.

Mary's next employment was as trainee Designer with BBC TV Cardiff, progressing to the role of Permanent Costume Designer before then transferring to TVC in Shepherd's Bush, where she worked from the early 1960s onwards on such assorted productions as *The Terrorists*, *Compact*, *Marriage Lines* and *The Liver Birds*, all the while steadily building an impressive reputation within the industry.

Following maternity leave for the birth of her daughter Clara in 1970, Mary returned to work on a wide range of programmes, starting with *The First Lady* starring Thora Hird, then notably forming a lengthy and creative association with *The Two Ronnies* between 1972 and 1987. Her intuitive sense of conveying visual comedy was outstanding, and much of the huge success of those shows was certainly to her personal credit.

Mary's versatility led her to work on countless David Croft and Jimmy Perry productions, including *Dad's Army*, *It Ain't Half Hot Mum*, *Hi-de-Hi* and *You rang M'Lord*, but also on rather different genres; shows like *Doomwatch*, *Doctor Who*, *Val Doonican's Music Show* and *Wild Wild Women* with Barbara Windsor. She also developed a good working relationship with choreographer Flick Colby and her troupe of dancers, Pan's People.

Mary was liked by all for her good nature, quick wit, ready sense of humour and her considerable charm. Her breezy, energetic, confident entrances into meetings and fittings were legendary.

She had a long, loving and very happy relationship with Jimmy Perry until his death in 2016, but slowly showed signs of needing care, spending her last years contentedly in the Denville Hall Home for Theatricals. Her daughter Clara was present when she died.

Prue Handley

### Patti Sennett – Senior Dresser



**Patricia (Patti) Sennett** (08.06.35 – 01.06.23) was adopted by Gertrude and Jack Ashworth. Their love of amateur dramatics no doubt deeply influenced the young Patti, with Gertrude producing many local shows and pianist and organist Jack providing the music.

Having passed her Royal Ballet exams aged 13, Patti joined the Sadlers Wells Ballet School aged 15. Within just a few months, she was accepted by the Rambert Company Student School, making her debut on stage at Scarborough in January 1952.

What Patti lacked in stature she more than compensated for in ability to tell a story emotionally through dance. Her first solo role was in 'Love Knots', touring in May 1954 in Dublin and the North of England, followed by 'Laidrette', a ballet created by highly acclaimed choreographer, Kenneth McMillan.

In 1955 Patti married choreographer and fellow dancer Ronald Yerrell, and they set up home in Notting Hill. In 1957, as a member of the Rambert Corps de Ballet, Patti then toured China, thereby arousing a lifelong fascination for Chinese culture and Buddhism.

Daughter, Amanda, was born 1958, the earliest part of her life being spent with the Ashworth grandparents, thus enabling her parents to continue their dancing careers.

In the 1960s, the Rambert Company was struggling and moved from uniquely classical ballet towards the development of contemporary dance. Patti and Ronald left to join the cast of the Drury Lane production of *My Fair Lady* as chorus members. Following a long run in the West End, this production then went on tour, but sadly the marriage suffered and they went their separate ways.

Patti joined BBC TVC as a dresser, working on such classic shows as *The Forsyth Saga*, *I Claudius*, *Black and White Minstrels* and *Seaside Specials*. In 1972, while filming *Thursday's Child*, she met and fell in love with Camera Assistant John Sennett. They settled in Ealing, before moving later to Oxfordshire.

Patti adored her cats, and was renowned for her beautifully handwritten letters and cards, collected and treasured by family, friends and colleagues over the years.

Maggie Partington Smith

## Stuart Williams – Programme Services Manager



**Stuart Williams** (1935–2024), who worked for the BBC from 1962 to 1991 was died, aged 89, at a nursing home close to his home in Looe, Cornwall, after a fight with Alzheimer's.

Born in Birkin, Yorkshire, Stuart signed up for National Service with the Army in the 1950s, in Wiltshire, becoming a champion rifle shooter and winning many Army tournaments.

It was in Wiltshire that Stuart found the love of his life: Jean and Stuart were married in July 1958, going on to have four children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Stuart took up a post at BBC Broadcasting House, London, in 1962, followed by promotion to BBC Television Centre, where he became Manager, Programme Services.

Stuart thrived in the world of television, working alongside giants of TV such as Biddy Baxter, Morecambe & Wise and Frank Muir in his role, which involved allocating services to programmes.

After many years in London, Stuart became Manager, Programme Resource Operations at BBC Bristol TV, running a multi-million-pound budget for departments including camera crews, sound recordists, scenery, design, costume, make-up and the innovative *Casualty* TV drama series studio.

Colleagues who have contacted the family remember Stuart's enthusiastic professionalism – and how he went out of his way to nurture up-and-coming colleagues.

Ian Pitch worked with Stuart as a young BBC film editor in the early 1980s: 'Stuart's recognition and robust encouragement of the talents and creative potential that existed within his BBC department helped to make the organisation the international success it is today. It was an honour and privilege to have known him.'

Former colleagues have recalled how Stuart was respected and admired for his professionalism, dynamism and energy, developing Programme Services into a 'vibrant and dynamic department'. He was a 'kind and considerate boss'.

Stuart and Jean retired to Cornwall in the mid-1990s. They joined the BBC pensioner-visiting rota, while Stuart took up golf and began shooting again, representing Cornwall into his 80s. His family is proud to remember Stuart as a decent, honest, hard-working gentleman who always wanted to do the 'right' thing.

**David Williams**

## Michael Fage – Newsbeat Deputy Editor and Ariel Orchestra conductor

**Michael (Mike) Fage** began his BBC career in 1962 at the age of 18 as a Technical Operator at Bush House.

In 1965 he became a Studio Manager, marrying fellow SM Judith Walton in 1967. His first job as a Producer was with Overseas Regional Services in 1968.

In 1973, he joined the foundation team at Broadcasting House of *Newsbeat*, an innovative programme aimed at a younger audience, becoming Deputy Editor in 1976, appreciated for his mentoring of new producers. *Newsbeat* soon became a major ratings success for BBC Radio News.

In 1982 he moved to Television Centre as a Presentation Editor, then Senior Editor, responsible for editorial and transmission operations and contact with BBC Regions and Radio. Joining the management team as Assistant Head, he led the creation of a new, computerised Network Transmission Suite for the transmission of all BBC TV's UK output. Mike oversaw much creative thought to make it as 'future-proof' as possible and, indeed, the project's innovative scheduling system, known as PICS, with a budgeted lifespan of seven years, lasted for nearly 17.

In 1994 Mike took early retirement, and for 25 years pursued his ambition to become an orchestral conductor. Music had always been his passion, and he had played cornet, trumpet and French horn from his teens. After training in the Czech Republic (he became a fluent Czech speaker), he conducted in Colombia, the Czech Republic, France, India, the Netherlands and Switzerland, in addition to regular roles in the UK.

His proudest achievement was as co-founder and conductor of the revived BBC Ariel Orchestra, for BBC staff and associates, which has become a high standard orchestra with a flexible membership of excellent amateurs.

Mike retired in 2019, and he and Judith moved to West Yorkshire to be near their family. He returned to his first instrument, the cornet, and played with great joy in two local brass bands, until his final illness.

He is sadly missed by Judith, their daughters Alice and Cecilia, their beloved grandchildren Dylan, Laurence and Evelyn, his wider family, and many many friends.

**Judith Fage, Rob White, Warwick Cross and Liz Holden**

## Genevieve Eckenstein – Head of Topical Tapes, World Service

**Genevieve Eckenstein** died in September 2023. She had no immediate family but her close friends still remember her fondly, and in the shock of her loss no obituary was published.

She started her career on *Woman's Hour* on Radio 4 but moved to BBC World Service where she became Head of Overseas Regional Services and then Head of Topical Tapes in the 1980s, a department which supplied original, recorded BBC programmes to FM stations all over the world.

Her pioneering work paved the way for satellite distribution and built close relations with other important national broadcasters on which the BBC relies to this day. She also oversaw vital live output such as *Calling the Falklands*, the influential BBC Caribbean Service, and *Gulf Link*, which provided lifeline services for civilians caught up in the Gulf War conflict in 1990.

Genevieve was a much-admired Departmental Head who nurtured many who went on to have prominent careers in the BBC and beyond. While the BBC's editorial standards require a cool focus on Accuracy, Objectivity and Impartiality, Genevieve provided a warmth and humanity that brought the value of Fairness to life. She is much missed.

**Caroline Collyer**



Sally receiving her BAFTA from HRH Princess Anne in 1979.

## Sally Hulke – award-winning set designer

Sally was born in Reading in 1939. She was evacuated to Cornwall at age two and a half, where she thrived under the care of former Norland nannies. She could read and write by age three and a half. She later won a scholarship to Brighton and Hove High School and discovered a lifelong love of theatre.

At 15, she enrolled at Brighton Art College and later joined the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. By 19, she was Resident Designer at the Theatre Royal in Lincoln, followed by work at the Welsh National Opera and Glasgow's Citizens' Theatre—where she was the first woman on staff.

A bursary to study design in East and West Germany almost ended in disaster when she was arrested crossing the Berlin Wall during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Returning to the UK, she joined the BBC in 1963 on a pioneering design training course led by Stephen Bundy. She stayed for 30 years, designing major dramas like *Testament of Youth* and becoming Head of Design at BBC Bristol, where she led an award-winning team and championed regional production. Sally said that the Bundy Course was, in its own way, as revolutionary in the UK as the Bauhaus movement in Germany. Richard Levin's genius was to gather a group of artists together at the most productive years of their lives, working in a new medium of visual expression that was constantly evolving.

She declined a last-minute offer to design *Chariots of Fire* to support her husband Barry, head of the BBC Props Department. They retired to Bristol and later Spain. After Barry's death and her mother's passing, Sally battled autoimmune illness but launched an agency for young designers and volunteered for 20 years at St Peter's Hospice.

In retirement, she travelled widely, including her final cruise to Normandy for the 80th D-Day anniversary – despite a broken femur.

Sally was a BAFTA and RTS award winner, a Fellow of the Chartered Society of Designers, and a beloved mentor and pioneer in theatre and television design. Her creativity, strength and generosity inspired generations.

**David Privett**

Austin Ruddy has also paid tribute to 'this respected, remarkable woman', who had 'a remarkable eye for detail, and tenacity tempered with a warmth'.

## James 'Jock' Gallagher – Head of Network Radio at Pebble Mill



**Jock Gallagher**, who died on 27 May 2025 at the age of 87, was born in Greenock, Renfrewshire. He was training to be an accountant when he was called up for National Service. He became a photographer in the Army and was posted to Sutton Coldfield, where, due to boredom, he started taking photos of local events and sent them in to the *Sutton Coldfield News*. When Jock was discharged, he was offered a job as a reporter.

After eight years in the newspaper industry, he joined the BBC in Birmingham as a news producer on 6 June 1966. It was hectic and a great experience, but just as he was getting the hang of things, the job disappeared under the Broadcasting in the Seventies reorganisation.

Following redundancy, he applied for anything relevant on the jobs board and ended up as the Network Radio Editor, which developed into Head of Network Radio. That made him responsible for Pebble Mill's entire radio output of music, drama (including *The Archers*), talk shows and documentaries.

In 1969, he met his wife, Sheenagh, who was working on *Woman's Hour* at Broadcasting House. They married in 1970 and settled in the riverside town of Bewdley.

Jock was told, only weeks into his new job, that *The Archers* had run its course, but he felt it was the jewel in the Birmingham crown and represented not only huge emotional capital but also a substantial number of jobs. He argued the case strongly and won a six-month stay of execution.

Over 20 years in the job, Jock created several long-running series, including *From the Grassroots*, *Voice of the People* and *The Press Barons*, and dozens of one-off documentaries. During that time, the radio group collected a number of Sony and other awards.

Following his retirement from the BBC in 1990, he set up his own production company, and also wrote several books, including three novels, about *The Archers*. He became increasingly patriotic the longer he was away from Scotland, which resulted in another book: *Scotland's Global Empire: A Chronicle of Great Scots*.

**Sheenagh Gallagher**

## Malcolm Hickman – Engineering Development and Information Manager



**Malcolm Hickman** spent his early years in Hartlepool. He applied for a position in BBC Engineering and was initially offered a position at the Monitoring section at Caversham.

He later moved to BBC Birmingham, where temporary engineering support was needed for the Pebble Mill build. Malcolm was involved in testing the new Communication Centre to be sure that when it went live everything was working as it should. Having seen his potential, he was later offered a permanent post in Engineering Comms & Services.

In 1976, Malcolm met a young lady, who was a receptionist in Radio Birmingham. Jenny became Malcolm's wife, and they stayed together until his death over 42 years later. During their time together, they bought a narrow boat and spent a lot of years and money on it, enjoying many social occasions on board with friends.

Malcolm initially worked as a Technical Assistant – this often meant providing microwave radio links to enable the broadcast to be sent to the nearest studio centre. This was a period that Malcolm loved, where stories and tales were endless, and the unexpected a regular occurrence.

Malcolm applied for full engineer status, which involved time at Wood Norton, and he soon found himself promoted to Senior Engineer on both Radio Links and in the Communications Centre. He continued there for many years, where his ability to accept new technology and pass this knowledge onto others led him to be promoted to 'Engineering Development and Information Manager'.

Unfortunately, the BBC looked for redundancies. They concentrated on non-operational posts and Malcolm left after 26 years. He continued as a freelance engineer, working in Stockholm, Holland, Central TV, Euro Disney and the BBC.

Malcolm unfortunately became ill with chronic leukaemia, followed by acute cancer. This stopped him working but also prevented him from socialising due to the risk of infection. For a man so friendly, this must have been very hard. We will remember one of his well-known statements – 'Well it's OK leaving me.'

Our thoughts are with Jenny at this very sad time.

**Mike Day, Graham Hewitt and John Malby**

## Robert 'Bob' Tapsfield – journalist addicted to news



When **Bob Tapsfield** was demobbed in 1946, he decided against returning to Oxford to finish his degree, opting instead to give journalism a go. After nine years on local papers, he joined BBC Radio News as a sub-editor.

Bob had a great love for the newsroom and its pressures. The pinnacle of his career – or so he said – came when a tape went missing as the *World at One* was going out. His despairing cry was transmitted into the nation's homes – and made page 3 of *The Sun*.

In 1964, Bob took his tape recorder on a private visit to St Helena. His items on Napoleon's exile were well-received by listeners to *Today*, and his letter to *The Times* regarding the age of Jonathan, a giant St Helenian tortoise, instigated an amusing correspondence.

In 1969, Bob went to Guyana for six months as news adviser to the local broadcasting service. He returned in 1980 to report on the tenth anniversary of the nation's becoming a 'co-operative republic', a mission complicated by the theft of all his equipment. But Bob got the job done: his broadcast duly went out on FOOC.

That journalistic resourcefulness was tested many times. In 1984, he was in Brighton for the Conservative conference when the IRA blew up the Grand Hotel. Bob's work on that dreadful night was acknowledged by the Radio News Editor, who thanked him for his 'outstanding service over many confusing and turbulent hours'.

In the latter part of his career, Bob moved into parliamentary broadcasting, for which he and his colleagues won a Sony Radio Award in 1986.

Bob played for the BBC South East News cricket team for several years, enjoying the sport and the post-match socialising with colleagues and friends.

On retiring, Bob spent a few years maintaining the 'biogs'. It suited his good humour, flair and meticulousness. His addiction to news endured into old age, as did his affection for the BBC.

Bob married June Grantham, a fellow journalist, in 1950. June died in 2021. They founded a large, loving family that included 10 great-grandchildren. They are greatly missed.

**Phil Tapsfield**

## Ralph Wilton – Associate Producer, Drama Department



**Ralph Edgar Wilton** (31.05.1939 – 06.07.2025) said that he had 150 close friends, many ex-BBCers, and it turned out that he had – most of whom affectionately knew him as 'Ralphie Baby'.

I knew Ralph for over 70 years. We grew up in Whitley Bay, both went to drama school and then the theatre. He progressed in the theatre and I joined BBC Drama Department. In the early Seventies, I was asked if I knew anyone who could come in as an AFM – I recommended Ralph. He joined the team of *Dixon of Dock Green*. He progressed swiftly, finally becoming an Associate Producer.

He worked across Drama Series, Serials and Plays Departments. He loved every minute of the production process, working on many memorable dramas, including Alan Bennett's *Talking Heads*, *Blake 7*, *The Tripods*, *Colditz*, *Sons and Lovers* and *Theatre Night*.

He recalled Sir Alec Guinness giving him a silk tie as a thank you present at the end of a production. 'Thank you, Sir Alec,' said Ralph. 'Dear boy, we have known each other long enough – you can forget the ennoblement.' He treasured that tie.

However, the series he most enjoyed was *Doctor Who*. When asked 'What do you think of when you think of Ralph Wilton?', former *Doctor Who* Peter Davison replied 'Champagne!'

After retiring, Ralph became Chairman of Westminster Senior Citizens' Forum and was regarded as one of the best they had ever had. He was super efficient and hard working and had such enthusiasm for the work he was involved with. He had a zest for life. He adored music, both classical and musicals, especially Sondheim! He would burst into song and knew all the lyrics, even latterly when he was so frail, he would still sing to people who telephoned!

Of all his many gifts, the most enduring was friendship. He always said that the years spent at the BBC were the best years of his life. Over his 20-plus years there, he made many lifelong friendships that endure to this day.

**Ruth Caleb**

## Ray Targett – Despatch Rider



**Ray Targett** joined the BBC as a Despatch Rider in 1964. His love of motor bikes meant he adored the job.

His most memorable day in his BBC career was the day England won the World Cup in 1966 as he was sent to work at the BBC studio which had been set up at Wembley Stadium. He watched the match from there and then went off on his motorbike to Heathrow Airport with several tins of film to be sent overseas. In those days, of course, transmission wasn't like it is now, and the various TV networks around Europe that wanted the World Cup Final footage had to be sent films by air, so their audiences didn't get to see the match live as we all can now. He spoke about that day throughout his life.

After he'd come off his bike a few times, mainly in icy conditions, and the novelty of driving through London in freezing winters (which they were then) wore off, he opted to work indoors. He ran the post, messenger and despatch section at the newly opened Villiers House in Ealing Broadway. He also worked on *Grandstand* on Saturday afternoons, collecting the football results from the telex machine as they came in and passing them over to the commentators, who would read the results out live on air. He also worked on *Sportsnight*.

I first met Ray in 1971 on my first day as a secretary, fresh from college, at Villiers House. It was love at first sight. We married the following year.

In 1976 we moved to Milton Keynes, and Ray commuted to Ealing for five years, until the new BBC Milton Keynes studio opened. He transferred there and remained until the studio was closed down in 1998. He was made redundant. That was the saddest day of his career.

In 2016 we moved to sunny Eastbourne on the south coast. Shortly after, Ray began showing early symptoms of Lewy Body Dementia. He passed away on 11 May 2025 in a nursing home, aged 79. We had been married for 52 years.

**Lynn Targett**

## Malcolm Davis – Head of Appointments Department

Many people have interesting careers. **Malcolm Davis** could safely claim his was unique, taking him from research in the UK's Explosives Research Establishment to Head of Appointments Department at the BBC.

Working at Waltham Abbey, now the Royal Gunpowder Mills Museum was, he said, great fun involving nitro-glycerine and explosions. But then he spotted an advertisement for the BBC. He moved to the Corporation and studied hard to become a qualified Television Engineer. He enjoyed working in programme transmission. He reminisced on output ranging from *Tales of the Riverbank*, *Dixon of Dock Green* and David Attenborough's early programmes.

Then he gained a place on the Personnel Training Scheme, undertaking several attachments, including in particular Design and Scenic Services, before moving to Appointments.

Initially his roles included chairing boards and running the annual News Trainee Scheme. When he became Head, he managed the significant external recruitment advertising budget and, as his key priority was to attract diverse applicants, he initiated the BBC's presence at UK-wide careers fairs and county shows and involved local radio, TV production staff, make-up artists, sound technicians etc so potential candidates could see for themselves what the jobs involved and question the practitioners.

The Eighties were a time of re-organisation and decentralisation, so Malcolm was the last Head of Appointments and, as such, had the unenviable task of closing it down. He set about this in his usual empathetic manner, seeking suitable resettlement opportunities for those who wanted to stay and ensuring leavers got the best possible deal. When this was completed, Malcolm left the BBC in 1989.

Afterwards he set up and played a major role in Hurst Associates Europe, a very successful career development consultancy with a broad list of clients including the NHS and The John Lewis Partnership. He went on working into his 80s and then devoted a lot of time to enjoying the countryside and photography, a life-long interest.

Malcolm's wife Anne, daughters Jenny, Carolyn and Linda and families will miss him, his caring nature and sense of humour.

**Mike Lucas**

## Polly Carter – Graphic Designer and Studio Director

**Pauline (Polly) Carter** (07.04.1944 – 09.07.2025), award-winning BBC Motion Graphics Designer and later Production Director for BBC Children's TV, died suddenly on 9 July 2025 at her home in France.

She was cremated, and her ashes were scattered on the Thames from the private riverside garden at Ballast Quay, her Greenwich home of 45 years, with its tides and view of Canary Wharf she cherished at all hours.

Polly was a devoted mother to her daughter and two step-children, and a loving grandmother. She was lifelong companion – and later wife – to

Michael Graham-Smith, whom she met when both were Graphic Designers for BBC Open University productions at Alexandra Palace. Colleagues remembered her as intelligent, cultured, vivacious and approachable, with a smile that lit up a room. Her analytical approach and sharp design eye made her a valued member of this pioneering creative team.

Her BBC journey began at the London College of Printing, where a visiting lecturer's showreel convinced her this was where she belonged. While still a student, she took holiday jobs in the Graphics Department to immerse herself in the craft. On graduating, she became a Design Assistant – the first step in a distinguished career.

In 1975, after several years with the Open University team, she moved to Television Centre, creating landmark title designs for *Tomorrow's World* and *Match of the Day*, both earning D&AD Awards and industry acclaim.

Always seeking fresh challenges, she later moved into Children's Drama production as a Studio Director, working on *Jackanory Playhouse* and many episodes of *Jackanory*.

In the early 1980s, after becoming a mother, Polly reinvented her career – gaining a teaching degree and inspiring pupils at James Allen's Prep School. As a lecturer and course leader at Kingston University, Central Saint Martins and the Royal College of Art, she nurtured generations of students, many of whom credit her with shaping their creative journeys.

In retirement, Polly supported Michael's creation of the BBC Motion Graphics Archive, reconnecting with the design world she loved. Generous with her time, talent and knowledge, she leaves a legacy of creativity, mentorship and friendship. She is deeply missed.

**Margaret Harvey**



## Don Shaul – BBC TV Senior Graphic Designer

**Don Shaul** (1930–2025) was on the British Olympic Cycling team back in the 1950s and remained a keen cyclist throughout his life, regularly cycling from Barnet to work in Shepherd's Bush.

I first met Don when I was interviewed for a job at TVC in 1981. At the time, he was Senior Designer in charge of Current Affairs programmes, based at Lime Grove and TV Centre: *Newsnight*, *Nationwide*, *Panorama*, *Money Programme* and all the General Election results programmes and other specials.

TV graphic design was rapidly evolving, providing new challenges and opportunities as we navigated our way from cardboard captions, pots of paint and Pantone paper to film animation, motion control and computers.

In 1983, the pressure was on to launch BBC Breakfast Television in direct competition with the rival launch over on ITV. Don oversaw and co-ordinated all the graphic design effort. He was a people person: his specialism was hiring talent – putting together teams of creative individuals, giving them space and licence to grow and develop.

Don's regular attire would be a narrow tie and loose fitting sports jacket. In the days before emails, spreadsheets and mobile devices, he could always produce whatever crumpled scrap of paper he needed from somewhere tucked away in an inside pocket; the jacket was his mobile office and had the same ability to defy the constraints of physical space as a Tardis.

After leaving the BBC he took an industrial liaison role at Middlesex Poly, but soon found himself at odds with college administrators, who had splurged on state-of-the-art computer facilities, leaving shortfalls in budgets for teaching staff.

When Chris Fynes and John Speirs set up Infynity Graphics in Soho, Don had a non-executive role on the board, and semi-retirement with a pied-à-terre in the beating heart of TV design and post-production facilities.

Don's funeral and celebration of life on 2 May was packed with friends and former colleagues. As in Don's lifetime, we enjoyed music, laughter and even some dancing – hosted by Don's wife Jill, sons Matt, Ben and Leo, daughter Hanna, and six grandchildren.

**Roderick Ellis**

The attached photo (BBC Copyright) shows Don, somewhat obscured centre left of frame wearing trademark 'Mad Men' tie, surrounded by the creative team he assembled at Lime Grove.



## John Gilbert – Sound Recordist

**John Gilbert** passed away in January at the age of 87. He had lived in Alicante, Spain for several years.

We had worked closely together, him on sound, covering all Pebble Mill's output – topicality, documentary, drama and more. He was such a cool character; professional, thoroughly reliable, always there when wanted and a wonderfully wry sense of humour.

In 1981, John and I were given the chance to film the Falkland Islands and join HMS Endurance on her way down to the Antarctic, visiting research bases and telling the story of Ernest Shackleton. This was after we'd shot a story in Argentina on a hacienda the size of Wales and immediately before the Falklands War. The Argentines flew us down on the air link they were using at the time. It was a wonderful trip, but concerning, as all the islanders were convinced the Argentines were about to invade.

We had this on our minds as the Argentines flew us back to Buenos Aires, and it was here that Gilbert showed his true colours. Halfway through the flight, we ran into a violent electrical storm. It was the most vicious I'd ever seen – we couldn't go below, we couldn't fly above – the aircraft was tossed around like a rag-doll, with the flight deck doors flying open to reveal black clouds and forked lightning everywhere, plus two pilots desperately fighting to keep control. With overhead lockers flung open and flashes of lightning illuminating the whole aircraft, it was not a happy place! The lady sitting next to me had bent her head and was muttering Hail Marys, holding her rosary. John Smith was wide-eyed and ashen. I was the same, but there was Gilbert, cool as a cucumber, reading a book! We are here to tell the tale.

I think that just about sums up JG, as we called him – what a great person to have by your side. Not someone to take fools seriously, but someone to trust and never let you down, that's the person I remember.

### John Williams

Photo caption: The Endeavour Film Crew. L-R: Roy Carne, Lighting Electrician; John Gilbert, Sound; Bob Langley, Presenter; Peter Hercombe, Producer; John Smith, Director/Producer; John Williams, Lighting Cameraman & Steve Saunderson, Assistant Camera.

## Julian Hogg – Radio 3 Manager, Planning

I first met **Julian Hogg** in 1988, when I'd started work on a PhD and was looking for a part-time job. After a brief interview, Julian offered me a post in the Orpheus Office.

Orpheus was Radio 3's database, very new at that time, and its function was to store details of all programmes recorded and/or broadcast on the network. Orpheus had many purposes, but primarily it allowed clash checks to be carried out, ensuring that broadcasts of the same piece didn't happen in quick succession.

The work was exacting but tedious. This is where Julian's managerial genius came into play. He welcomed a range of creative and musical people into the office and in return for the drudgery of uploading countless details of pieces onto the computers, he fostered an atmosphere of enormous warmth and fun. All manner of personal quirks were accepted, and I can only imagine that we were like a family of very annoying children.

Because of Julian's fatherly managerial style – firm but fair, and always good-humoured – the team gelled like no other and stayed in touch long after the office had been disbanded due to cuts. He took a positive interest in everyone's life, from the health of their cat to their musical ambitions, and when I was invited to audition as a presenter initially for Radio 4 and later Radio 3, Julian was understanding of my occasional absences. Without him, I would not be a Radio 3 presenter today: his encouragement and flexibility made those important early experiences possible.

It's perhaps fitting that the last time I saw Julian was at one of the team's regular get-togethers, an 80th birthday celebration in July 2024 – over 30 years after the heyday of Orpheus. He had been unwell for some time but was clearly delighted to be with us.

Julian earned respect from his colleagues and devotion from those of us who worked for him, and being a member of his team is for me a source of great pride and happiness.

**Dr Sarah Walker**

## David Powell – Producer and Editor, Radio 4 Current affairs

**David Powell** was in many ways the quintessential BBC Radio producer. Having joined the BBC in 1961 – when Radio 4 was still The Home Service – he rose through the ranks to become Duty Editor at *The Today Programme* and then at *The World Tonight*.

A highly experienced journalist with a prodigious knowledge of current affairs, and a deceptively diffident manner, he could be dogged in pursuit of a story. One night as overnight producer on *The Today Programme*, he needed the home number of a cabinet minister. Those were the days when the BBC Current Affairs Department was not one big happy family and programmes competed with each other ruthlessly. *The World At One* (WATO) – a mere three offices away – had a legendary contacts file which contained the precious phone number, but it was closely guarded behind locked doors. Undeterred, and possibly fortified with a glass or two of red wine from the hospitality trolley, in the middle of the night, David climbed out onto the ridiculously narrow third floor balcony of Broadcasting House, climbed through an open window and found the number. The interview with the minister duly went ahead. The WATO team was not amused and thereafter padlocked their Rolodex files.

David himself was rather more generous. At the end of a six-month stint as the BBC's producer in New York, he let his successor Harry Schneider copy the whole of his substantial contacts book. Harry said no other colleague was ever so magnanimous. He remembers David as funny, sensitive, loyal, occasionally annoying, and an endless source of great gossip – sometimes exaggerated – but always worth hearing.

Other former colleagues remember David as a highly original thinker – well-read, curious, open-minded and often surprising.

I'm sad to say we lost touch in later years; I saw him only a couple of times after he retired and moved to Norfolk with his wife Therese.

On hearing of his death at the age of 86, I'm reminded of a BBC that was very different from today, and enriched by unique, unconventional talents like his. It was a privilege to have known him.

**Janet Cohen Mayne**

## Contacts

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Prospero Society is supported by BBC Club funds so as to make events affordable. If you would like an application form, please contact:

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