

# Charles Parker Archive

Annual Report & Accounts 2009 -2010

Celebrating more than Fifty Years of the Radio Ballads  
with the Prix Italia-winning “Singing the Fishing “



*“ The steam drifter DD “Violet and Rose” from a watercolour  
by Ronnie Balls -reproduced with thanks to his son Lionel”*

*Thanks to Birmingham Central Library  
and all the help from our friends.*

The Charles Parker Archive  
is owned by the Charles Parker Trust  
established by Mrs. Phyl Parker as grantor  
on 3rd March 1982.

It is a registered charity, No. 326082.

The Trustees are

**Tim Blackmore MBE: Trust Chairman, producer**  
**Ian Parr: Hon. Secretary**  
**Robert Whitworth: Hon. Treasurer**  
**Gillian Reynolds MBE, journalist and broadcaster**  
**Pam Bishop, musician**  
**Philip Cox, QC**  
**Catherine Mackerras, community arts worker**  
**Helen Lloyd, oral history consultant**  
**Matthew Parker, maker of musical instruments**  
**Sara Parker, radio producer**

The Objects of the Trust are:

**The advancement of education and knowledge in folk language, lore and music.**  
**The collation of the material and its maintenance and preservation**  
**The administration of the material including the making of it available to those members of the general public indicating an interest therein.**  
**Any other purpose consistent with the first item above.**

The Charles Parker Archive is held in the Archives Department of the  
Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3 HQ  
(telephone 0121 303 4217)

It holds some 5000 tapes, Charles Parker's files and papers and a small library of books on folk culture, music and politics. The Archive is open for research by individuals, especially Trade Union member interest in radio, political theatre and folk culture.

## Chairman's Report

**Tim Blackmore MBE**

This year we set ourselves the task of encouraging greater use of the archive and to that end we've started the process of re focusing our online presence. Thanks to Pam Bishop we now offer direct links to sites such as Birmingham Library's Connecting Histories as well as the National Archive itself. We've also added the opportunity to hear an edited version of a lecture in which Charles Parker describes his work, and more changes are planned.

In March BBC Radio Two commissioned a new radio ballad from the Independent production company Smooth Operations – it was the collective work of John Leonard, John Tams, and Vince Hunt. As we go to press, rumours emerge that Radio Two intends to commission yet more contemporary radio ballads from this highly successful and award winning team.

In April Andy Cartwright of Sunderland University organised and hosted this year's Charles Parker Day, a report of which appears elsewhere within these pages. After visiting cities including Bournemouth, Bradford and Sunderland, the Trust is now hoping to encourage other institutions to host the annual event at a different location each year, covering the whole of the UK.

I am grateful to the Trustees for their continued support for our objectives and especially to Ian Parr, who as secretary bears the heaviest burden, but also to our Treasurer Robert, Pam who maintains our website and Sara who edits the annual report. We also owe a tremendous debt to Sian and Fiona of Birmingham Library without whose input our job would probably be impossible.

If you have ideas as to how we can extend the ways in which the archive is used, then we would be delighted to hear from you. In the meantime I offer the Trustees' grateful thanks for your ongoing support of the Trust whether in person or by donation.

If you believe you may have identified further ways in which we can expand the use of the Archive then do please contact our secretary Ian Parr [ianmparr@gmail.com](mailto:ianmparr@gmail.com) and share your thoughts with us.

\*\*\* Thank you. \*\*\*

## Secretary's Report for the 2009/10 Annual Report Ian M Parr

Since publication of the last Annual Report the Trustees' committee has met twice, the first being the 2009 AGM in September 2009. In addition a teleconference of Trustees took place in March 2010 to discuss steps towards development of the Trust website and increased use of the Archive.

The immediate effect was circulation of a specially prepared leaflet to attendees at the Charles Parker Day event at Sunderland University in April 2010.

Dissemination, Education and Use, (DEU) topics which arise from the objectives of the Trust, continue to be at the forefront of our thinking and future plans. It was this which led to both the special teleconference meeting and the desire to raise awareness of the importance of the "Friends" of the Trust to the Trust's work. Trustees will continue to develop policy in this area of activity.

In accordance with this policy, where events or material is known of which relates to the Trust or to Charles Parker's work, directly or obliquely, updates are made to the website and if necessary publicised through emailing "Friends" and contacts.

This was the case in relation to information on the Radio 2 Radio Ballad on the 1985 Miners' Strike which was publicised, as indicated above, both through the Trust website and through email to "Friends" and contacts. The programme was broadcast on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010. Details were placed on the website and circulated in mid February. Responses were received from a fifth of those circulated. Many had a sense of anguish that they had not been consulted and that they had material that may have been useful.

Data Protection Act: In accordance with a report submitted to the 2009 Annual General Meeting the Trust's compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and related government guidance for organisations such as ours has been reviewed. Addresses both postal and electronic of Friends of the Trust, supporters and contacts have been revised where necessary. There are no other changes or special recommendations or observations beyond those noted in the aforesaid 2009 Report.

My thanks to the Library staff for their help this year as in previous ones. Also, I'm grateful to the Trustees and members of the committee for their support.

## Treasurer's Report - year ending 28 April 2010 Robert Whitworth

In the current year we received subscriptions from only half the number of Friends who subscribed last year, and there were fewer donations. Fortunately there has been no significant expenditure except to support the Charles Parker prize, so the finances have more-or-less broken even. We are grateful to those who have contributed, and hope that others will resume their support in the coming year to deal with future initiatives. Forms for renewal of subscriptions are enclosed with the Annual Report.

### Financial Statement for the year 29.04.09 to 28.04.10

RECEIPTS	£
Friends' subscriptions and donations	307
Tax refunds on gift-aid contributions*	-
Bank interest	1
Total	<u>308</u>
PAYMENTS	
Printing, postage etc.	160
Website	22
Charles Parker prize	250
Total	<u>432</u>
Excess payments over receipts	126

\*A refund of about £80 is due and will appear in next year's accounts.

### Balance statement at 28.04.10

Opening balance in Barclays Bank at 29.04.09	£4,141
LESS excess payments over receipts	126
Closing balance in Barclays Bank at 28.04.10	<u>£4,015</u>

**Charles Parker Day 9th April 2010,  
University of Sunderland  
Professor Seán Street**

Chair, Radio Academy, South Branch,  
Director, Centre for Broadcasting History Research,  
The Media School, Bournemouth University



The 7th Charles Parker Day was hosted by the University of Sunderland and organised by Andy Cartwright at the National Glass Centre. Marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Prix Italia-winning *Singing the Fishing*, the day started appropriately with Professor John Storey, Head of the Centre of Research into Media and Cultural studies welcoming delegates on a bright spring morning as fishing boats were coming in with the tide up the River Wear.

In the absence, through illness, of the Charles Parker Trust Chair, Tim Blackmore, Gillian Reynolds began proceedings and Andy Cartwright talked to Gillian Ford, one of the studio team who had worked with Parker, MacColl and Seeger on *Singing the Fishing* and *The Big Hewer*. Gillian's faultless memory gave fascinating insights into the process of making the programmes, with technologies now long gone in the digital age.

This was followed by Ian Parr, Honorary Secretary of the Charles Parker Trust, who discussed the effect that being a part of *Singing The Fishing* had on one of its key characters, Ronnie Balls. Research showed that Balls was quite a broadcaster in his own right, beyond his involvement with this iconic programme.

Ken Hall examined Philip Donnellan's television 'ballad' *The Shoals of Herring*, giving us an extremely useful comparison between sound and vision. The theme of *Singing the Fishing* continued with Matt Thompson, who discussed his own response to the programme, in his feature, *Gone Fishin'*. This linked to the work of Sheffield community musician and Sony Radio Award nominee Sally Goldsmith, who played extracts from the feature she made with Matt, *Now Wash Your Hands*, about Izal toilet paper.

The afternoon began with TV journalist Chris Jackson taking us on a detective trail, to explore the origins of a cylinder recording by American sound recordist James Madison Carpenter, of a sea shanty, made in 1926, possibly within yards of the very spot where we were sitting.

Then Piers Plowright and Alan Hall treated delegates to a masterclass in "Transcendent Radio", with headings cleverly beginning with letters which spelt out the words "CHARLES PARKER".

My own contribution this year was a discussion of the correspondence between George Ewart Evans and Charles Parker, drawn largely from material in the Charles Parker Archive itself. The afternoon continued with producer Vince Hunt, reflecting on the making of the new Radio Ballad, *The Ballad of the Miners' Strike* recently broadcast on BBC Radio 2.

The day concluded with the announcement of the winners of the 2010 Charles Parker Prize for Student Radio Features. This year the winner was Edwina Pitman from Goldsmith's College, University of London for her short feature, *Memories of a Marriage*, a portrait of a relationship breaking down as the result of alcohol abuse. Edwina's prize was £500 jointly from the University of Sunderland and The Charles Parker Trust, a SADiE 6 Sound Suite and a two week placement in the BBC's Radio Documentaries and Features Department.

For the first time since the prize was inaugurated, there were also two "Silver" awards, to Danielle Wilmot of Sussex University for *Insomnia*, and Adem Waterman



## Shore Saints & Sea Devils?

Ian M Parr

Ken Hall's presentation for Charles Parker Day this year was about Philip Donnellan's film for the BBC in 1972, "The Shoals of Herring", which is based on "Singing the Fishing". It's listed on the website of the British Film Institute, stating "traditional folk songs are used throughout"!

Was it surprising, then, to find "Shoals of Herring" and two other songs from "Singing the Fishing" called "traditional songs"? This was in a recent BBC TV documentary, "Shanties and Sea Songs with Gareth Malone". A singer from Gamrie (the presenter using the English form of the town, "Gardenstown", throughout) said the songs tell us of the lives of fishermen and of fisherwomen, proving that they are part of a social history of women's songs. One thing is true, fisherfolk of Gamrie were important voices in "Singing the Fishing". But that was not mentioned in the programme.



Maybe Ewan MacColl would not have been unhappy with his songs labelled "traditional". He may, though, have been less pleased by the BFI reference. Being absorbed in the folk process is one thing. It's quite another when credit is not paid where it's due, as Peggy Seeger

once sharply reminded me.

"Shore Saints and Sea Devils"; was Ewan MacColl's last play. I've found only one reference from Google against that title and it takes you to Ewan's archive at Ruskin College. There you'll find the same play, "The Shipmaster". And that is the title according to all the books and all the literature. They are wrong. So what has this to do with Charles Parker? And does it matter anyway?

It seems to me that we ought to be clear about the difference between academic inaccuracy and cultural absorption in the manner of the folk tradition. Pete Seeger once quoted Woodie Guthrie as saying "They steal their songs from me. But I steal my songs from everybody". However, where information comes from and how it is used is too important to leave to chance.

Can it be that we really are leaving so much of value as hostage to fortune? And what about the Charles Parker Trust objectives of promoting Charles' work through use of the Archive?

Inaccuracies in the public domain relating to Charles' and Ewan's work clearly exist and, I think, require explanation and correction. If copyright limitations mean we cannot reproduce material from the Archive, including programmes like "Singing the Fishing" then the opportunity for public examination and development of interest in and knowledge of such work is denied. It's also essential we correctly attribute contributions and iron out misleading nonsense of the sort to which I've already referred.

Here are two examples contrasting the previous negatives ones. In "Shoals of Herring"; people usually sing, "Oh we fished the \*Swarth (or Sward) and the Broken Bank, I was cook and had a quarter sharin'..... " You might live with not knowing what a quarter share was. But knowledge of the payment system for herring fishermen helps explain the economic iniquity that kept many in poverty.

And Swarth Bank? Well it should be "Swarte". In Dutch it means "black". Black Bank; part of our inheritance of Dutch culture in East Anglia, an historic bond tying communities to the herring fishing.

*\*The script in the Archive also shows "Swarth" but is corrected to "Sward" written in Charles Parker's hand. Both are wrong!*

## Fast Forward - the Future of the Radio Feature

Alan Hall

The radio feature has never been so hip. Granted - my trend-conscious teenage children would question that anything genuinely 'hip' can ever bear that label.

The evidence gathered at *Falling Tree Productions* – and through initiatives such as Nina Garthwaite's *In the Dark* - points indisputably to radio feature-making being a desirable pursuit for informed young people. They want to make programmes, discuss documentary styles and compare experience with other media in a way I've not seen before.



The feature is more than desirable – it's fashionable. From my vantage point, running a small independent production company based in Greenwich, within the 0208 outer ring of the capital, this verdant radio-scape seems to be irrigated by a number of sources.

First, audiences are now just as literate aurally as advertisers have long believed they are visually. Film makers know that the impact of a scene is as much in what's heard in the soundtrack as in what is seen. Viewers, as well as listeners, are also now more sophisticated musically. We're exposed to diverse sounds. We're open to and appreciate a wider range of musical expression.

The recent spotlight on documentary film has also cast light on work in sound, including audio adventures online (notably, the Sony-winning Hackney Podcast), and radio from abroad – downloads of English-language radio features from the US, Ireland and Australia fill a vacuum not met by British broad/podcasters.

I'd suggest there's a niche demographic of young people, aged roughly student-to-forty, that values 'crafted speech' radio, just as they appreciate documentary film and music across genre and generation. And they're open to new ways of experiencing and sharing what they come across.

I see this 'hip' constituency in the requests *Falling Tree* receives every day from young professionals wanting work placements in documentary-feature radio. I see them among the students who invest in MA courses, such as those at Bournemouth University and Goldsmiths' College, London. And I see them in the audiences attracted to *In the Dark* events – young people willing to pay money to sit in a darkened room and listen to radio features by distinguished producers and unknowns, in English and in foreign languages.

Radio is in fashion. It wasn't always so. I started work as a BBC producer twenty years ago this autumn. Clinging to the fabric and fittings of Broadcasting House you could still then sense the presence of the 'poets and anarchists dressed as accountants' who'd struggled to make the journalistic documentary and the more elliptical radio feature into forms to be celebrated. But the institution of the BBC itself seemed reluctant to acknowledge their achievements.

Slowly, however, a new era has emerged. Having survived the 'accountants dressed as poets', the BBC has rediscovered the value of crafted feature-making: the World Service aspires to be the 'home of the international radio feature'; Radio 3's showcase for adventurous production, *Between the Ears*, comes of age, 18 next year; and Radio 4 still broadcasts more 'built speech' programmes in a week than some small countries do in a year!

Elsewhere, online and in unlikely venues, people gather to discuss great radio from home and abroad. The medium is beginning to find its memory and a generation of twenty-somethings is now carrying forward a belief in the art and the potency of the radio feature. But let's not get too carried away with being mode-ish. The essential integrity, modesty and marginality of the medium should ensure, as it always has, that being in – or out – of fashion matters hardly a jot.

[www.fallingtree.co.uk](http://www.fallingtree.co.uk)



*In the Dark* was founded in 2009 to 'celebrate and enrich the culture of radio documentary in the UK' and it stages public listening events in a range of venues – from a hotel cinema to private homes. The driving force behind these radio happenings is Nina Garthwaite, a filmmaker in her late 20s! To find out more about In the Dark, contact [nina@inthedarkradio.org](mailto:nina@inthedarkradio.org)

## The Big Hewer

was first broadcast nearly half a century ago.  
**Miners' Leader and Author David Douglass**  
 measures its impact.

I was ten years old when I first heard the Big Hewer. Nobody in the street had a TV and the family, my Ma and Da and sister would sit in our posh new council house living room and listen to the big radio. Journey Into Space was my concession at 9pm. Later, as an older lad, I found Quatermass utterly terrifying.

We lived not in the old colliery village any more but the brand new council estate (The Ellen Wilkinson), a place my Da thought of as half way to their socialist endeavour, an inside upstairs toilet, a bathroom, secondary mod education and the health service. No damp and a big garden. A nationalised coal industry.

Despite that, all the miners still came home black, there was no pithead baths, and the miners tramped in their muck through the new municipal streets as they had done the old cobbles in the village.

I think every miner and miner's family on the estate and in the old village, who wasn't on the wrong shift listened into the *Big Hewer* ballad. We sat round in silence and my Da was ecstatic. '*That's deed right*' '*that's reet mind*' he cried out regularly like a born again preacher to an evangelist congregation. He laughed himself to tears at the pit humour, and *nie* burst to add to the programme with tales and stories the whole way through.



David Douglass at Hatfield Colliery during the 1984/85 Miners' Strike

It is perhaps impossible to tell people today what an impact that programme had on the workers it related to. Miners were despised and hated in many parts of Britain, isolated and misunderstood, always with a legacy of injustice and betrayal, which went back centuries. This programme, to a large measure set the record straight, told it as we'd seen it ourselves.

The greatest two gifts I ever gave my Da was a mint condition edition of the left book clubs, *A Town That Murdered* by Ellen Wilkinson a book which profoundly struck him as a boy - he being a Jarra lad bred and born; the other was a Topic edition of *The Big Hewer*. He carried it round to workmates and clubs like a teenager with the latest Elvis single. It was his story, their story, our story.

By the time I heard it rebroadcast on the radio, I was into the City (Newcastle) beat scene, the blues and anarchism around 1964. I had tried double somersaults to escape going down the mine, bit jobs, low paid, long hours, anti union. The broadcast wrote a line in the sand for me, and from then on, not entirely without romantic notions, I was going down the mine - in part it was a surrendering to an inevitable force, a facing up to my fate. But for better or worse the final kick up the arse through the time office door came from *Big Hewer*.

When I moved from the Durham coalfield to the Doncaster coalfield, a culture shock of hippy beat city pitman, hitting the still rock'n roll teddy boy motor cycle Doncaster pit village occurred. We ended up inviting a load of the pitmen bikers back to a bottle party at my house and in among the disputed R&B versus Rock n Roll, *The Big Hewer* was put on. Never have so many ravers fell utterly silent, and entranced. This was somebody, somebody with access to media, talking about us, talking about pit work and who we were/ are.

The record went the rounds of the village, time and time again. I guess in brief, that's my memories of the impact and significance of *The Big Hewer* and all who launched and sailed in her. An inspiration of class witness.

<http://www.minersadvice.co.uk/dave.htm>

## Recording oral history for public use

Since Charles Parker pioneered the use of portable recorders to interview people whose lives might otherwise go unrecorded, there has been a huge growth of interest in oral history.

Recently, I've been asked to train volunteers to record African people in Birmingham, New Forest Commoners, London canal workers, Belbroughton villagers, and people who've danced in Wolverhampton!

These projects have been funded by several sources including the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Cultural Olympiad. Unedited recordings will be deposited in local archives and extracts will be used in books, exhibitions, museum installations, CDs, DVDs and websites.

The current interest may partly be attributed to nostalgia in a time of rapid change and partly due to minorities wanting to make their history known. It's certainly due to the development of digital technology, which makes it easier both to record people and to make recordings accessible.

Oral history interviewers now use small digital recorders, with sound cards from which long interviews can be transferred to a computer in seconds. Computer software makes copying and editing very rapid, with instant timings. People who've only known this technology may fail to appreciate Parker's skill in creating radio programmes from quarter-inch tape which could only be edited with a razor blade and timed with a stop-watch.

## Helen Lloyd



*'Photo: Jasroop Grewal'*

Some interviewers use small lapel microphones to help the interviewee forget the microphone. This wasn't an option for Parker, who used a large hand-held microphone. I too use a hand-held microphone because although people do appear to forget my microphone, it seems unethical to encourage them to do so, if the interview is for public use. It's perhaps also naive to assume that the interviewee won't reflect consciously on the interviewing process, even if the microphone is invisible.

Interviewees are likely to be more self-conscious than in Parker's day, because nowadays they sign recording agreements. Although I recorded interviews for Radio 4 in the 1980s and 90s, I was never asked to use an agreement until I was appointed in 1998 as one of the producers on the BBC's oral history project, *The Century Speaks*, when interviewees signed forms assigning to the BBC the copyright, "and all other rights...for use in all media now known or which may be developed in the future". Some *Century Speaks* producers criticised these forms for deterring interviewees, but consent forms are now mandatory for both radio programmes and oral history projects.

I've written about treating the interviewee as a partner in the Methods section of the Oxford University website, *Diabetes Stories*. This website contains unedited recordings of 100 interviews, plus edited extracts, transcripts, summaries and search facilities as well as photos and documents. Terms of Use on the Home page attempt to guard against abuse, but so far there has been no misuse and most interviewees have welcomed the opportunity to make their experiences widely known. I like to think that Charles Parker would embrace this technology, as he embraced the latest technology in his own time.

Website addresses:

Helen Lloyd's own website: [www.oralhistoryconsultancy.co.uk](http://www.oralhistoryconsultancy.co.uk)

Diabetes Stories: [www.diabetes-stories.com](http://www.diabetes-stories.com)

Digital Handsworth: [www.digitalhandsworth.org.uk](http://www.digitalhandsworth.org.uk) (Search 'Helen Lloyd Gallery')

## Memories of Charles Parker 1919 -1980

It is 30 years since my father, Charles died and he has never been so alive to me since I listened to the recordings of his lectures in the Archive for a programme I was making a few years ago. His advice about interviewing and editing inform much of what I do as a programme maker – as does his integrity and humanity.

Like my dad did all those years ago, I now give lectures to young and up-and-coming feature makers who always appear captivated when I play extracts from the Radio Ballads, whilst Charles' words of wisdom on programme-making seem as relevant today as they did half a century ago.

Charles' skills go hand in hand with the development of portable recording equipment. On the BBC yacht during the heaving seas of the Fastnet race, he managed to record actuality so vivid that according to one of his bosses, 'all who heard it turned green themselves.'

The real breakthrough came however in the early 1950s when Charles arrived to work at the BBC in Birmingham, to find they had just purchased the new technology of the time, a midget tape recorder. It was not perhaps as midget as the name suggests but at least it was portable.

Archive recordings of former colleague Philip Donnellan, who died in 1999, document Charles' early forays into recording with some amusement including a day with the local Territorial Army where he was determined to use the equipment to 'overhear conversations' rather than do direct interviews.

The results relied on a microphone attached to his lapel. As Donnellan remembers: "It was a very good little mic, the secret weapon of the recording department, mounted on a pin which Charles stuck on his left lapel and then with his left breast forward, he would advance and try to stick his chest into the conversation."

The result wasn't particularly successful but Charles' conviction that the best interviews came from a special empathy between interviewer and interviewee was born out as he started recording for the Ballad of John Axon. Melanie, granddaughter of John Axon, remembers hearing railwaymen recalling the Parker interviewing technique.

"He had a real way of getting people to open up by almost becoming one of them and was quite eccentric at times in some of the things he'd come out with to do so... He never talked down to anybody – and when he put the recordings together they came across as so natural."

What I remember is my father's genuine interest and concern for people which extended beyond his recording forays. He influenced so many lives including that of 16-year old schoolboy Andrew Johnston who wrote to him in the '60s saying how much he liked the Radio Ballads.

"I was still at school and never thought I'd hear a word from him – and then in the post was a great envelope full of scripts – and a lovely letter from Charles – the gist of which was that a letter like mine made his work worthwhile."

He invited the young Johnston to visit him in Birmingham and involved him in a nativity play he was staging at a local church, getting him to play in the recorded inserts from the tape machine.

"It was this extraordinary mixture of singing and tape recording being played in through speakers with slides on a screen – a real multimedia show and in the early 60s it was a very radical approach to theatrical performance," says Johnston who went on to work in BBC television.

Trustee Pam Bishop also has her memories: "My first encounter of Charles was as an after-dinner speaker at a dinner in hall when I was a student at Birmingham University in the early sixties. I can vividly remember him telling us how much more powerful than "I don't know" is the Geordie "I divver naa", but little else from that evening.

"However, it must have made a deep impression on me, since I committed to spending every Wednesday afternoon thereafter working in his study helping to catalogue his book collection and transcribing tape recordings onto Gestetner skins for duplication purposes. This was the beginning of the second part of my life, and I still feel his inspirational influence today."

**Sara Parker**

## Project Archivist's Report 2009-2010

Sian Roberts

The full catalogue of the Charles Parker Archive is now available to search online as part of Birmingham Archives and Heritage's new online catalogue which went live during the year on <http://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk>. Although part of the Parker catalogue had previously been accessible online via the A2A website this is the first time that the catalogue of the whole collection has been available. The new site currently includes catalogues to some 334 collections in addition to the Parker Archive (representing about 18% of Birmingham Archives' collections). This means that doing a simple search will retrieve results from across all these collections.

For anyone who wishes to restrict their search to the Charles Parker Archive, or who wants to view the collection overview, this can be done by using the *Advanced Search* option and entering MS 4000 (the collections' reference number) into the *Ref No* field. Clicking on MS 4000 on the results page will then bring up the collection overview description. Clicking on MS 4000 on the collection overview description will bring up the collection structure which can then be interrogated in more detail.

We continue to receive enquiries about the archive and during the past year these have included queries relating to Luke Kelly, the experiences of workers building the M1, the experiences of people living with visual impairments, the experiences of black and Asian migrants to Britain, and Parker's work on *The Colony* with Philip Donnellan. Séan Street also used the archive in preparation for his talk about Parker and George Ewart Evans for the last Charles Parker Day.

During the year work began on the related archive of Philip Donnellan which contains material relevant to Parker and the projects on which they collaborated. This particular piece of work was funded by Screen West Midlands and undertaken by Ieuan Franklin, Freelance Film Archivist, who previously used the Parker Archive for research into his PhD on the relationship between oral history and radio. Ieuan supplied the following paragraph about his recent project:

“The film component of the Philip Donnellan Archive consists of unused footage, outtakes, rushes, and master material from sixteen of Donnellan's documentaries. An interesting aspect of the collection is that several films contained therein were never broadcast or never finished, due to the fact that they were not approved by BBC management. Due to the rare nature and critical status (many films within the collection are suffering from chemical deterioration) of much of the collection, funding is being sought for their preservation and digitization. This will create opportunities for access to the collection

“For example, one unfinished film from the collection, *The Jolly Potters* (1964), is a filmed production of the late Peter Cheeseman's play about 19<sup>th</sup> Century industrial relations in the Potteries. This was one of several collaborations between Donnellan and Cheeseman, the pioneer of 'theatre-in-the-round' who celebrated regional and vernacular culture on the stage as Donnellan and Parker did in TV and radio. Cheeseman, who sadly died in April of this year, has left behind a sizeable archive at Staffordshire University, which has been partially catalogued by volunteers and a new fund is currently being established to continue this work and realise Cheeseman's vision of making it accessible to future generations

“The strong links between this and the Donnellan and Parker Archives will emerge in time and there is potential for further work in this direction, to fulfil the intentions of Parker, Donnellan and Cheeseman that these 'local history' productions should be documented and exhibited, especially to local and regional audiences. “

For further information about using the Charles Parker Archive contact 0121 303 4217,  
e-mail [archives.heritage@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:archives.heritage@birmingham.gov.uk)  
or see [www.birmingham.gov.uk/archivesandheritage](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/archivesandheritage) and  
[www.connectinghistories.org.uk](http://www.connectinghistories.org.uk)

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[www.birmingham.gov.uk/archivesandheritage](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/archivesandheritage) and  
[www.connectinghistories.org.uk](http://www.connectinghistories.org.uk)

**Post Script: David Douglass' Ghost Dancers is now available to buy**

**£12.95**      ISBN: 9781873976401

The final volume in Dave Douglass' mining trilogy, Stardust and Coaldust, published to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the end of the miners' strike. A first-person, insider's view, of, probably, the last generation of miners and their union. Following on Cameron's description of 'a broken Britain' this book comes close to describing who broke it and how.