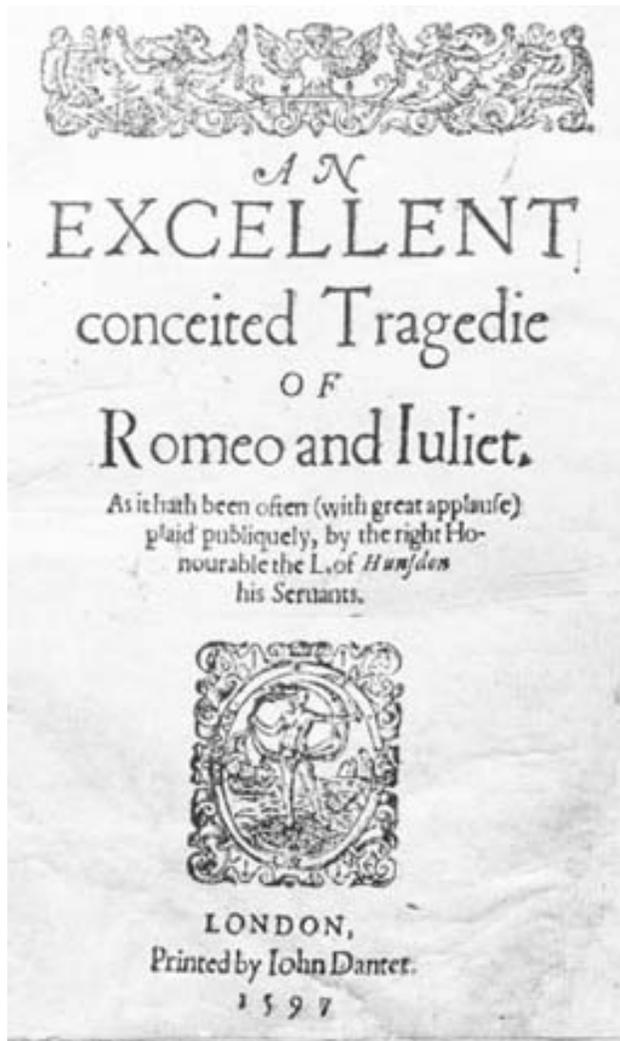


Charles Parker Archive

Annual Report & Accounts 2015-2016



**What has Shakespeare got to do with Charles Parker?
The 2015/16 Report reveals all.**

Thanks to the Library of Birmingham 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.

**Mary Kalemkerian, Trust Chairman,
Ian Parr: Hon. Secretary
Matthew Parker, Hon. Treasure, maker of musical instruments
Pam Bishop, musician
Andy Cartwright, university lecturer and programme maker
Peter Cox, author
Simon Elmes, Radio Documentarist and Creative Consultant
Jimmy Ewing, feature maker and Charles Parker Prize winner
Alan Hall, radio producer/feature-maker
Helen Lloyd, oral history consultant
Sara Parker, radio producer/feature-maker**

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.**

The Charles Parker Archive is held in the Archives and Heritage
Department of the Library of Birmingham

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 people from any background. Individuals interested in topics such as radio, political theatre, trade union and racial politics and folk culture will find the Archive of particular interest.

Mary Kalemkerian; Chairman of the Trust reviews the achievements for 2015/16

One of the many interesting things about being involved with the CPA Trust, as a Trustee or fellow enthusiast, is that there is always something new to discover, celebrate or commemorate.



Last year it was the centenary of the birth of Ewan MacColl, and in 2014 we celebrated the last of the Radio Ballads, **The Travelling People**.

This year, in the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, I wasn't aware of any connection between Charles Parker and Shakespeare, but thanks to our Archive Consultant, Fiona Tait's, research we discovered from the Library of Birmingham's **Our Shakespeare Exhibition**, that not only did Charles produce a two-part Radio Ballad for schools based on **Romeo and Juliet**, performed by members of The London Critics Group with music and songs written by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, but this year is actually the programme's 50th anniversary. It was broadcast on the BBC Home Service in April 1966. Fortunately it has been preserved by the BBC Sound Archives. I have just listened to it and it is a captivating programme. There is a possibility that Radio 4Extra will be able to broadcast the entire two-parter later this year. We will keep you informed via the CPA website.

Trustee Pam Bishop has written an excellent item on the Ballad, with a wealth of information on the making of it, pages 26 and 27.

Pam is also Editor of the CPA website, and this year, following CP Day in Bristol, she asked attendees for feedback on the sessions. She has posted their interesting and varied responses on the website.

The highlight of our year is, of course, Charles Parker Day. In 2015 it was held for the first time in Scotland, Glasgow, and this year we travelled down the coast to the West of England, where Charles Parker Day was hosted at the University of the West of England in Bristol. And what a splendid venue it was.

Trustee Andy Cartwright planned an amazing day, his sixth as organiser. Each year Andy never fails to bring together a top drawer selection of radio practitioners and devotees to deliver great sessions, audio delights and discussions. This year was no exception. Andy himself chaired every session, each of which was utterly fascinating. Next year we will be heading "Up North" again, for Charles Parker Day 2017 in Sheffield. Unsurprisingly, Andy is already planning the programme! You can read his detailed report on CP Day Bristol, on pages 8 and 9.

An important element in keeping Charles Parker's legacy alive and looking forward is the **Charles Parker Prize for the Best Student Radio Feature**. John Goudie, BBC Editor in the Radio Documentaries Unit, was this year's Chair of the judging panel. The standard was exceptionally high. You can read John's report on p10 with details on p11

Trustee Jimmy Ewing is very involved in the **Student Radio Prize**, and in 2015 he launched a website to help students who are interested in making radio features, to access information. Jimmy has been monitoring and developing this initiative, and you can read his report on page 12.

The **Friends of the Charles Parker Archive** are core to the Trust, and are tremendously supportive in preserving and publicising the Archive. We'd like to encourage and increase the number of Friends, so Trustee Helen Lloyd took on the task of setting up a Recruitment Drive, which she launched with great enthusiasm on Charles Parker Day in Bristol. You can read Helen's account of the results on pages 21 and 22.

There was a very special treat on Radio 4's **Archive Hour** in June this year when, in celebration of her 50 years of writing professionally for radio, Gillian Reynolds, one of the original CPA Trustees and the longest serving Chairman, presented **Gillian Reynolds – Audiophile**, illustrating her life-long love affair with the medium of radio. Former CPA Trust chair, Tim Blackmore, reviews the programme on page 23

At the time of writing you can still catch the programme on the BBC iPlayer <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07g8rg6> . Don't miss it!

2016 has also been a year of Farewells; Matthew Parker, who originally helped to set up the Charles Parker Archive in 1982 has been consistently involved with the Trust since, and for the last five years has been our Treasurer. Matthew has decided that this will be his final year of balancing the Books. Thank you Mathew for juggling numbers and keeping that balance in the black. So we have a vacancy for a Treasurer. If you would like to assist the Trust and enjoy working with figures please contact our Secretary, Ian Parr, for more information.

In June, the death of fantastic fiddler Dave Swarbrick was announced. While working in Birmingham, he met Charles Parker, and played in a number of Radio Ballads. Trustee Peter Cox, author of "Set into Song" pays tribute to Dave Swarbrick on pages 24 and 25.

Just as I began drafting my Report, I heard news of the death of John Pidgeon. John was a multi talented music journalist and producer who created his media company Gilmore Productions, was Head of BBC Radio Comedy for six years and a Fellow of the Radio Academy. John was a close friend and colleague of our former Chairman Tim Blackmore, who looks affectionately at his working years with John, page 14.

A former BBC radio producer who is a devotee of Charles Parker's work and attends many of our CP Days, is Phil Maguire, now the Chief Executive of the National Prison Radio Association. Prison Radio offers training in skills to help prisoners make their own radio programmes. You can read more about the background, aims and work of the NPR from Phil himself, on page 13.

At the CPA Trustees meeting in March this year, it was proposed that Phil should be invited to become a Trustee. I am delighted to report that Phil has accepted, and I look forward to him joining us officially at the AGM in October this year.

My huge thanks to all who continue to support the Trust, the Library of Birmingham staff and our ten Trustees who worked tirelessly throughout the year, helping to keep the Charles Parker Archive alive.

I am very grateful to you all.

I will now hand over to our dedicated and knowledgeable Honorary Secretary, Ian Parr to give you his update on events.

Secretary's Report for 2015/16

Ian M Parr

Since publication of the last Annual Report the Trustees' committee has met three times, the first being the 2015 AGM in October. Draft minutes of the Friends AGM can be found on the Trust website. The other two meetings were in March 2016, a short time before Charles Parker Day. A further meeting, following Charles Parker Day, was held in May to review the event and progress the 2017 arrangements.

The AGM for both Trustees and Friends of the Trust reported on the Trust's continuing development. Apart from the promotion and developing greater use of the Archive, concern has been for the increase and retention of Friends of the Trust. Not only do subscriptions form an important source of income which helps us mount Charles Parker Day and consider other projects but "Friends" represents a group of people who share many of the objectives, interests and values of the Trust. It is increasingly important for Trustees to reflect the demography of this group. It's well demonstrated by attendances at Charles Parker Day. But we also need to increase recruitment. Thus we embarked, in 2016, on a trial which we put into effect at Bristol aimed at offering CP Day attendance and membership of Friends as a package.

Last year we reported on a sub-committee of Trustees which met Travellers' representatives to discuss use of the Archive. There is more detail elsewhere in this Annual Report. However, as Hon Secretary, I visited the offices of Rural Media in Hereford to make myself more acquainted with their activities. A report was submitted to Trustees outlining further potential. The Archive was also used by Cast Iron Radio and Recording for material in relation to a Radio 4 programme for Archive Hour broadcast on 5th December 2015 commemorating the Racial Equality Act.

Following an enquiry to the Library, my fellow Trustee Peter Cox and I were involved in a commemoration event at Buxton in which Chris Ellis and his colleagues provided the music and researched The Ballad of John Axon. Whilst Peter provided the narration I supplied copies of the original LP sleeve and notes, also adding my voice to the musical landscape. The exhibition which featured artefacts from the John Axon story continued into the spring of 2016.

In addition to these substantial applications of the Archive material, during the year I have handled three academic responses to enquiries from the Trust website.

Data Protection Act: In accordance with a report submitted to the 2009 Annual General Meeting, and for all subsequent reports, the Trust's compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and related government guidance for organisations such as ours has been reviewed. New subscribers to Friends of the Trust are added to our contacts list for post and emails. The lists are revised annually usually prior to the publication of the Annual Report. There are no significant changes, special recommendations or observations beyond those noted in previous Reports.

The past year has been notable for successes described above or elsewhere in this Annual Report. At the same time Trustees continue to be concerned at access to the Library, its facilities (for which we are now required to go through a formal booking process and to pay for certain meetings) and the reduction in Archive personnel with

direct knowledge of the Parker material and its background and significance. However, we do not believe the major activities we have worked on so far have been adversely affected by the situation. So we're immensely grateful to Corinna Rayner and her Archive Department staff at the Library (most of whom we no longer know) for their continued dedication.

At the 2015 AGM our Honorary Treasurer, Matthew Parker, announced his desire to step down. Thus there is a vacancy. Trustees hope that the position can be filled from amongst those who read this Report.

As always I extend my thanks to the Library staff and I am indebted to my fellow Trustees who have covered for me as various domestic demands have affected my availability.

I am always delighted to hear from Friends of the Trust and I heartily thank them for their support.



Treasurer's Report 2015/2016

Matthew Parker

The main event of the year was the Charles Parker Day. We are again grateful to the BBC for financial support for the Day. We currently have a total of just over £5,000 (current and savings a/c) mainly arising from the generosity of Friends over the years. This balance is available for new initiatives when opportunity arises.

I have included a summary of the Income and Expenses for the CP Day as the receipts and payments usually cross into two financial years, although this year's CP Day has had all payments and receipts within the current accounting year. However last year's CP Day, as you see, has expenses paid in this year.

This is my last set of accounts as I am standing down as Treasurer and Trustee, so if there is anyone who is able to take on this not too onerous task (there is nothing involving tax havens or complicated accounting!) please make yourselves known to Hon. Secretary Ian Parr or Chairman Mary Kalemkerian.

Financial Statement for the year 29.04.15 to 28.04.16

RECEIPTS	£
Friends' subscriptions and donations	412
Tax refunds on gift-aid contributions	159
Grants from BBC for Charles Parker Day 2016	500
Bank interest	1
Ticket sales	1030
Total	2102
PAYMENTS	
Printing, postage etc.	286
Website	72
Charles Parker Day expenses 2015	700
Catering costs	1760
Charles Parker Day expenses 2016	358
Catering costs	1211
Total	4387
Excess receipts over payments	2285

Balance statement at 28.04.16

Opening balance (current a/c) in Barclays Bank at 29.04.15	4577
MINUS excess receipts over payments	2285
Closing balance (current a/c) in Barclays Bank at 28.04.16	2292

Summary of the 2016 CPA Day Receipts and Expenses

Income		Expenses	
Tickets sales	£1030	Catering	£1211
Donations	£500	Expenses	£358
Total	£1530	Total	£1569
	<u>Net Income -£39</u>		

The Charles Parker Day 2016

Andy Cartwright



Friday 18th March 2016 - The University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol

Bristol played host to the Charles Parker Day for the first time in 2016 in a day that celebrated the telling of stories – in words, in music and through multiplatform technologies.

The day started with ‘Stories Re-Told’ as Nic Millington, the CEO of the Rural Media Company, gave us an update on their project which uses original stories from *The Travelling People* in the Charles Parker Archive to help the travelling community connect with their heritage through oral testimony. The

Trust is very encouraged by this project which will find the untold stories not used in the original Radio Ballad. This year BBC Radio 4 launched a new series called ‘Untold Stories’ and the Bristol based executive producer of the series, Miles Warde, explained the concept behind the programme presented by Grace Dent. They are looking to unearth compelling stories for contemporary Britain and Miles challenged us to find them and get in touch!

There were two related sessions during the day – one concerned with turning ‘Stories into Songs’ with Peggy Seeger and composer Jennifer Bell and one turning ‘Songs into Stories’. BBC Bristol is the home of Radio 4’s popular award winning series *Soul Music* which explores the emotional heart of a piece of music. We were joined by producers Karen Gregor and Mair Bosworth who demonstrated practically how a particular song inspires them to find a powerful set of interviewees and how they used their interviews to explore deep emotional responses to the music. It was especially wonderful to hear Mair, as a former Gold Charles Parker Prize winner in 2011, talking about programmes.

In the other session Peggy Seeger demonstrated how they worked in the Radio Ballads and read us an exclusive extract from the chapter on Charles Parker in her autobiography. She told us a series of fascinating stories about how they made the ballads and how Charles changed over time. She also shared with us a practical demonstration of how she turns an interview into song in the ‘Ballad of Frances Crowe’. Bristol based composer Jennifer Bell also turns interviews, actuality and sounds into song using new technology and compositional techniques to create astonishing choral music which, like the Radio Ballads, explore a different way of turning ordinary voices into extraordinary musical storytelling.

Ellie McDowall, from Falling Tree Productions, fascinated the audience with her new project *Radio Atlas* - a new way of experiencing ‘International Stories’. Her website uses new technologies to enable listeners to hear radio features from around the world - difficult to explain in a report but experience it for yourself at www.radioatlas.org

Later in the afternoon we explored user generated content in ‘Community Radio Stories’ with the University of Sunderland’s Caroline Mitchell who was one of the founders of Bristol’s FemFM. She talked with Peter Lewis from the University of North London and author of *The Invisible Medium*, and Diane Gray from Hive Radio in South Shields (also a former Charles Parker Prize winner). The discussion explored how community radio’s appetite for stories is fundamental to each station’s identity. And we even had a practical illustration of this in action as we linked in ‘live’ to an interview on one of Bristol’s community stations – BCFM.

Miles Warde returned again later in the day to talk about ‘Listeners’ Stories’ and how with just a mobile phone, an app and a story to tell you can get your own content on the BBC as part of a new programme produced in Bristol - *Outsourced Radio*.

We also explored ‘Stories in the Mind’ as Bristol based radio drama producer Alison Crawford and senior audio supervisor Iain Hunter guided us through the making of their radio drama *Cavity* by deconstructing and reconstructing the production process with the help of the original SADiE digital editing session.

Finally we looked to the ‘New Storytellers’ as John Goudie, Editor, Documentary Unit, BBC Radio, announced the winners of The Charles Parker Prize 2016. (John writes about the winners elsewhere in this report)

The University of the West of England were excellent hosts and a special thanks must go out their technical team and Abigail Davies for helping co-ordinate the event. All of which helped make it one of the most successful Charles Parker Days.

Join us again next year in Sheffield on Friday April 7th. Tickets will be on sale through www.bookwhen in January.





The Charles Parker Prize Winners 2016 discuss their entries and answer questions from the Charles Parker Day audience.

John Goudie, Chair of the Judging Panel 2016 reports:

Early in March forty short audio features – ‘a good round number’ in the words of Andy Cartwright – arrived in my inbox. My fellow judges were Simon Elmes, for many years the Chair of the Prize, and until recently a much-valued colleague, and Kate Chisholm, radio critic for *The Spectator*, with a ready appetite for something new. I thank them both for lending their ears and their thoughts.

The forty features quickly revealed lots of original ideas, some very distinctive voices and barely a bumpy edit or rushed fade across hours of audio. We had sado-masochistic sex, addictions, the politics of transphobia, the tensions of the caste system, homelessness, birth, life as a refugee – big subjects, often told with ambition and a willingness to get out and talk to people. And we had features about simple pleasures: tea, Christmas, a well-made pair of shoes, access to a piano, along with travellers’ tales, and even a couple of well-recorded original songs – although nothing which could be called a ‘radio ballad’.

Our entries came from thirteen institutions. Entrants ranged from first-timers to graduate students.

As judges, we reached some reasonably unanimous decisions. Sometimes a bold idea needed an equally ambitious structure or sound-design. Occasionally it was clear that hours spent gathering interviews seemed to leave little time to work out how best to edit them. And sometimes we thought that a piece was more an illustrated interview – one or two voices mixed with sound effects - than a feature.

Writing in *Radio Times* in 1967, Charles Parker himself reflected on what he called ‘the electrical revolution’ of radio and TV, and identified how the broadcast documentary can ‘give that extraordinary intimacy of shared experience, which, paradoxically, is the strength of mass media.’

I think that ‘extraordinary intimacy’ is strongly evident in this year’s winning entries.

THE CHARLES PARKER 2016 PRIZE CITATIONS

The Charles Parker Prize 2016 for the Best Student Radio Feature was announced at the annual Charles Parker Day held at The University of the West of England on 18 March 2016.

The winners featured in a special programme, which was presented by Sara Parker, on BBC Radio 4 Extra. You can hear the winning features and the presentation of the awards on the [Charles Parker Prize website](#)

The Judges for the Charles Parker Prize 2016 were:

John Goudie – Chair of the Judges and Editor, BBC Documentary Unit

Kate Chisholm – Radio Critic of The Spectator

Simon Elmes – Former Creative Director, Features and Documentaries, BBC

GOLD Award

Chris Delaney of Goldsmith’s College, University of London for:

In Memory of Ayrton Senna

This brilliant piece of intensely personal radio took the listener on a wry, ingenious journey of discovery and challenge. Acoustically dynamic and impeccably recorded and mixed, the programme did what only the very best features do which is to play with the listener, engaging her or him in a haunting switchback of story and emotion. An immensely mature, confident piece of professional work that challenges the standards of much regular broadcast output.

SILVER Award

Mariana Des Forges of Goldsmith’s College, University of London for:-

Behind the Door

Unputdownable listening is rare in our hyped, click-away world, but Behind the Door was both theatrically gripping in its use of sound and utterly rivetting in its narrative tug. A genuinely frightening story told in simple and graphic manner – a classic.

BRONZE Award

Eve Conlon from the University of Sunderland for:-

Student Gamblers

This was a serious and important piece of journalism sourced from and brilliantly relevant to its susceptible young audience. It neatly used dramatic and documentary technique to make its point, and the power of the interviewees’ testimony was overwhelming. A significant piece of work on an under-discussed topic.

Charles Parker Prize Website and Social Media

Jimmy Ewing, 2012 CP Prize Winner and Trustees

In February 2015, following a discussion with fellow CPA Trustees, I launched the Prize website (www.charlesparkerprize.com/) to serve as a place for young student feature makers to access information regarding entry details for the Charles Parker Prize and to introduce a younger audience to the Archive. I also added new content to the website, such as an audio archive of past winning features and details/photographs of previous Charles Parker Days.

Over the past year I have monitored use of the Prize website along with the affiliated Prize FaceBook page (www.facebook.com/charlesparkerprize) and SoundCloud page (www.soundcloud.com/charlesparkerprize). In brief our data shows 600 individual visits to the website and 60% of visitors are aged below 34 years. This shows that the website is being used by our target audience and gives a figure to improve on next year.

The Prize Facebook page (launched with the website) has grown in followers to 64, a growth of 24 on last year's figure. Fellow Trustee Pam Bishop has been added as an administrator to the Facebook page to help with renewed content and posts. We have identified a need to consistently add fresh material to the Facebook page in order to enhance engagement. I hope that the Facebook page will serve as a tool to promote the Charles Parker Prize and act as a platform to encourage dialogue between young feature makers, radio professionals, members of the CPA Trust and, importantly, anyone interested in the Charles Parker Archive.

The Charles Parker Prize Soundcloud page was launched in February 2015 along with the prize website. It holds the audio for the past winners archive, which links to the 'Past Winners' page on the website. The Soundcloud page has accumulated 555 individual listens in the last 12 months (double last year's 264). This shows an incredible amount of interest in the winners of the Charles Parker Prize, which we hope to grow this year.

Ahead of this year's Charles Parker Day 2016, we decided to modernise the way in which entries are submitted for the Charles Parker Prize. In past years students would post their entries to the University of Sunderland, where Andy Cartwright would collate the CDs and accompanying paperwork. This year we asked students to 'file transfer' their entries along with the application form via digital file transfer tool www.wetransfer.com. I was allocated the responsibility for collating the entries, as the administrator of the Prize website and email address. For me, the new way of entering the Prize makes sense, this is the way we all work in the industry these days. We didn't have any problems other than the one student who hadn't uploaded a file correctly. The only drawback I hadn't accounted for was the time it took to download the entries and organise the files ready to distribute to the judges. However, it's great to have a digital archive of all our entries without having to spend hours copying CD's. After enthusiastic discussions at the last Charles Parker AGM meeting, Andy Cartwright and I are discussing developing an online prize entry collation tool for 2017.

Looking forward to the coming year, I am very keen to add a wider variety of content to the Prize website, including photographs, audio and possibly video. I also plan to create an annual podcast about Charles Parker Day, contextualising the relevance of the host location and guest speakers. This podcast would be distributed to the members of the CPA Trust, posted on our website, itunes and could also be sent via email to CP Day ticket holders ahead of the event. We hope to include radio students and universities in the creation of this content, which would encourage more use of the Archive and entries for the annual feature competition.

Prison Radio: Its beginnings and its programmes

Phil Maguire its founder and newly nominated Trustee

I couldn't be more delighted, excited and honoured to have been invited to become a Trustee of the Charles Parker Trust. The Charles Parker Day has been a highlight of my calendar for several years. It is the perfect way for me to indulge and celebrate my joint passions for folk music and narrative audio storytelling.

Ten years ago I set up an innovative new charity, at the BBC in Birmingham – where I believe another, perhaps more familiar initiative found its home a few decades earlier!

I was a BBC radio producer and reporter when I applied for the opportunity of a lifetime. I moved to Birmingham to take up the temporary post of BBC Prison Radio Project Manager. During this pilot project I was charged with developing and professionalising prison radio. I spent nine months setting up a radio project in HMP Birmingham (better known to many as Winson Green Prison - where I believe Charles Parker himself spent time volunteering with the Workers Educational Association). I produced a series of radio programmes for the BBC featuring people in prison telling their own stories, in their own words.

In June 2006, at the conclusion of the nine-month pilot, I left the BBC to set up a charity, the Prison Radio Association.

Today we run the world's first national radio station for prisoners – National Prison Radio. We have helped set up radio projects in prisons across the world. We run PRA Productions – a respected and multi award-winning production company that specialises in making radio documentaries for the BBC that tell tough stories from the margins of society. We tell stories with great care and sensitivity – we are incredibly aware that we are dealing with people's most personal thoughts. Our programmes have been honoured on numerous occasions, including having won 10 Sony Radio Academy Awards.

But most importantly, we have given a voice to many thousands of people in prison, and helped them to make positive changes to their lives.

The main aims of the Prison Radio Association are to support prisoners through

their sentences and to help reduce reoffending. Our research tells us that 99% of prisoners know about National Prison Radio and that 76% listen regularly, for an average of 10.4 hours each week.

The reason our programmes have such impact and our audience is so loyal is because we put prisoners at the very heart of production. Serving prisoners present National Prison Radio's programmes and they drive our direction of travel.

Prisoners telling their own stories in their own words is what makes National Prison Radio work.

The debt I – and indeed all of those involved in documenting life in audio – owe to Charles Parker, Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl is immeasurable. Their work formed a solid foundation upon which so many of us have built our programmes, our passions, and indeed our careers! Those of us who use audio to craft the important and powerful stories of the voiceless are standing on the shoulders of giants.



The values Charles Parker took up in his professional life were not new. He was part of a tradition dedicated to specific values in radio (and nowadays audio in general) that are still applied, as we often see in the Charles Parker Prize awards. It is therefore important we record the contributions made by programme makers, not always people who would have agreed with everything Charles Parker did but still people who recognised standards of excellence and worked to maintain them.

In the following obituary past Trust Chairman Tim Blackmore, recalls his friendship with John Pidgeon.

John Pidgeon was an extraordinary man whose talents covered an exceptionally wide range of creative endeavours: Film, Music, Radio features and especially radio comedy. Perhaps best known as the Head of BBC Radio Comedy (1999-2005), he launched series such as 'Little Britain' and 'The Mighty Boosh' on radio long before they were adopted by television.

I first met John in 1973 when he was Editor of a music magazine called 'Let It Rock' and I hired him as a writer on the BBC series 'The Story of Pop' which presented by Alan Freeman, was broadcast in more than 70 countries. When I went to Capital

Radio I asked John to move with me and as well as writing several documentary feature series, he championed comedy on the station with the Sunday morning series 'Brunch' starring among others, a young Angus Deayton.

On leaving Capital he was one of the very first producers to establish an independent production company; it was 'Gilmore Productions', starting with the series 'Classic Albums' for BBC Radio One and continuing with productions for Radios 2 & 4 such as the innovative 'Talking Comedy'. In 1999 he was invited to apply for the job of Head of BBC Radio Entertainment and he loved the opportunity to encourage the many young talents then emerging through the UK comedy circuit. He was less enamoured of the BBC's bureaucracy and often spoke disparagingly of the seemingly pointless meetings he had to attend. Like so many of his creative colleagues he felt meetings simply got in the way of making great radio. John really cared about radio and when the Radio Academy launched its 'Hall of Fame'. It was John who volunteered to curate biographies for the inductees. Much later he was particularly proud to receive a Fellowship of the Academy.

By the time his cancer was diagnosed, he'd established himself as 'Petitjean', one of the team of compilers of the Daily Telegraph's 'Toughie' crossword. It was a skill he used to repay the debt he felt he owed to Macmillan Cancer Care. In return for donations to that worthy charity, John would compile a personal crossword - I and others lost no time in taking up his offer.

One of John's more private skills was as a brilliant lunch companion, his analysis of contemporary affairs was always entertaining, as was his love and knowledge of the many wines we discovered over the more than 40 years in which we worked and played together. I still have two bottles of his favourite wine and I look forward to opening them both and to celebrating our friendship and his career, in a style he would have so appreciated.

Tim Blackmore

Charles Parker Archive Update 2015/16

The Archive, its preservation and use are the reasons for the existence of the Trust. In the following pages, in three contrasting articles we review some aspects of these requirements, the challenges and progress.

In the first, Corinna Rayner, Archives & Collections Manager, Library of Birmingham, updates us on progress with the many changes that have taken place in the last couple of years; a time of exhausting and at times unpleasant upheavals. In the second article, Ian Parr, looks at people associated with the Archive in different ways and asks how much we know and how much more we might learn.

Finally, Trustee, Helen Lloyd describes how Trustees are responding to the changes in demography of the Friends of the Archive.

Charles Parker Archive at The Library of Birmingham

General

As you will all know 2015/16 has been and continues to be a period of significant challenge and change for the Archives & Collections service, and for the Library of Birmingham (LoB) as a whole, with the recent and well-publicised restructure involving a significant reduction in staffing levels. As a result, our focus was and is necessarily concentrated on developing a long-term sustainable service for our customers and stakeholders that is both fit for the future and feasible with our reduced resources.

As a direct result of the changes, in October 2015 we needed to undertake a consultation regarding our opening hours. We had an amazing response, with people getting in touch via email, in person, and via social media, with responses from a wide range of customers from our weekly visiting local, subject, and family historians, those who travel a distance, from depositors, academics, community groups, and students.

It was heartening, that whilst a change in opening hours was not what anyone wished for the service the understanding demonstrated by so many of the challenges we face, and the sincere concerns for the service and the collections were evident in the many supportive comments that accompanied the responses sent in.

The result of the consultation was that the Archives & Collections department as a whole, (operating two counters on level 4, the reading room - Wolfson Centre, and the Heritage Research Area - HRA) remains open for the same opening hours as the rest of LoB, with the HRA being open as follows:

Mon - Tue: 11am - 7pm

Wed - Sat: 11am - 5pm

And the Wolfson Centre as follows:

By appointment only

Tues: 11am - 7pm

Weds - Thurs: 11am - 4.30pm

Sat (1 in 4): 11am - 4pm, see website for details

Storage and Security

The archives continue to be stored in archive quality packaging, in high specification

strong rooms which have a hypoxic fire suppression system together with controlled humidity and temperature.

The Wolfson Centre continues to be staffed by a qualified archivist at all times, with customers consulting material under constant supervision and invigilation.

The Library of Birmingham has 24 hour security.

Access to the collections

Whilst we have needed to reduce the opening hours of the Wolfson Centre, we can reassure customers that the same set of staff operate both the HRA counter and the Wolfson Centre counter, so whilst opening hours for both differ, customers remain able to ask them for advice, consult catalogues and knowledgeable staff, arrange appointments, and request archives for those appointments.

For more details on access to the collections as a whole please see:

<http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com/archives>

The CPA catalogue is still available on our online catalogue and continues, too, to be available on the Connecting Histories website where there are associated learning resources and packages:

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/>

<http://www.connectinghistories.org.uk/collection/charles-parker/>

<http://www.connectinghistories.org.uk/learning/campaigning-for-social-justice/resources/>

<http://www.connectinghistories.org.uk/learning/performing-resistance/>

Use of the archive Apr 2015 – Mar 2016

During 2015/16, 24 different researchers used the CPA in the reading room, and we served over 300 items from the collection. We also logged 13 enquires about the collection (i.e. not general enquiries).

Promotion

We continue to promote our collections, including the Charles Parker Archive through various means:

Social media

This is via social media including Twitter, Facebook. Connecting Histories (via Birmingham Images) and our weekly blog:

[@TheIronRoom](https://twitter.com/TheIronRoom)

www.facebook.com/Birmingham-Archives-Collections-120724551367002/
theironroom.wordpress.com

Exhibition

We have also been trialling and successfully running pop-up exhibitions such as the Explore Your Archive 2015 campaign and our last pop-up on the 23rd April featuring all things Shakespeare. Items from CPA featured in both of these : <https://theironroom.wordpress.com/2016/04/25/humbly-sir-i-thank-you/>



Old meets new. Listening to a radio ballad of Romeo and Juliet from the Charles Parker Archive [MS 4000]

See Page 26

Additions to the archive

There have been 2 additions to the CPA. These include:

2015/079: 'Singing the Fishing'; Actuality telediphoned file, 1960.

2016/002: Papers relating to Cecilia Costello, 1972 – 2014.

File list:

1. Handwritten letter by Charles Parker to Edward Costello 11/8/1976
2. BBC Letter (Anne M Yonge) Talks Booking Manager 20/6/1977
3. BBC Letter about copyright to Messrs. Eyre & Co. 14/2/1972
4. Eyre & Co. letter to Edward Costello re: above 16/2/1972
5. Leader Records agreement letter, 2 pages
6. Eyre & Co. letter to Edward Costello re above 21/11/1972
7. Recorded programmes permanent library accession register
8. Traditional Music magazine no. 6, early 1977
9. Transcription (14 pages) of BBC Radio programme One
10. BBC letter (Tony Trebble) Sound Archives Librarian re above 16/8/1976
11. Extract from the Folk Magazine
12. St. Michael's Messenger magazine. (The church where Cecilia Kelly married Thomas Costello in 1904)
13. Extract from The Harp by Carl Chinn, July 2014
- 14 Extracts (4 pages) by Brian Dakin & Dr. Esther Asprey, 9/8/2010. (Biographical information about Cecilia)
15. English Dance & Song magazine Sorin 1971, vol. XXXIV, no. 1
16. Folk Monthly magazine August/September [20]10

17. Folk Monthly magazine February 2014

18. Double CD set and booklet "Old Fashioned Songs" 86 recordings for the public

19. Test LP pressing of "Cecilia Costello" "Recordings from the Sound Archives of the BBC" LEE 4050 mono 1973 Leader Sound Ltd.

Corinna Rayner
Archives & Collections Manager
Library of Birmingham

Influences from the Archive

Three people; Meredydd Evans, George Bruce and Dilip Hiro are known well enough to warrant a brief Wiki biography. Hence you can get a pretty good idea of what they did in their lives. But there seem to be no links to Charles Parker. Yet George Bruce and Dilip Hiro certainly have connections with Charles and you can study them in the Archive.

Meredydd (Mered)Evans is another matter.

In these notes I will suggest why in all three cases their relationship with Charles Parker needs further work, perhaps to reward and surprise us.

I'd been describing to a close friend Charles Parker's life in Birmingham, folk music, his links with Philip Donnellan and the way the BBC Midlands Home Service spread across the width of England and Wales. And I was asked if I'd heard of Meredydd Evans who had died a few months before.



A little research: Mered had indeed sung and recorded Welsh folk songs which are available from the Smithsonian Folklife Center in Washington DC.

I became familiar with Charles' association with Moses Asch when I met Jeff Place, senior archivist at the Smithsonian, when chasing up recordings of the Radio Ballads Charles Parker sent to Mo Asch for safe keeping during some of those turbulent late 1960s and 70s.

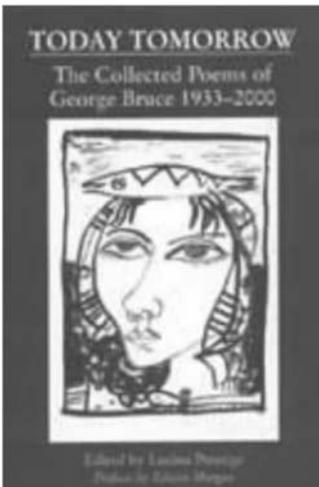
Moses Asch also knew Mered. Folkways Records, run by Asch, issued songs Mered recorded for Folkways in 1954 when Mered was at Princeton University.



See the Smithsonian YouTube site www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogDIc0242KI&list=PLB391BB7FC117D149 . Some recordings are also available elsewhere.

Meredydd Evans: singer of folk songs, (in 2015 awarded posthumously a BBC Good Tradition Award), was from a Welsh family of slate quarry workers, becoming head of television light entertainment for Wales from 1963 to 1973; a conscientious objector in the Second World War and a peaceful but militant upholder of the Welsh language.

It seems inconceivable that this special character could not have crossed paths with Charles Parker. Both were born in 1919. In one obituary Mered's "*..... militancy, and his support for language-campaigners in court and jail, almost certainly cost him the job of Controller of BBC Wales, for which he was hotly tipped, and made him something of a bête noire in Establishment circles.*" You'd think certainly by 1970 he'd be amongst Charles' circle of contacts! But I have no evidence of this. Was he, if so what evidence? If not why not?



George Bruce; we know something about in the Archive and elsewhere, although information connecting him with Charles Parker appears slight. Bruce was probably involved in obtaining interviews for "Singing the Fishing". Archive documents suggest Charles had been informed by Ewan MacColl of his own contacts. But David Gretton, Assistant Head of Midlands Region Programmes and Charles' boss, warned of the sensitivity which might be found in some fishing communities along the Moray Firth. Thus, Charles turned to George Bruce.

George Bruce was, in 1959, a features producer with the BBC and based in Edinburgh. He was a national figure, one of Scotland's greatest 20th century poets, a friend of Hugh MacDiarmid, also a close colleague of Ewan MacColl, (although they disagreed over the importance of folk song).

Bruce came from the northeast of Scotland, Fraserburgh, from a family with a herring curing business. My belief is that in working with the fishing communities of the area he was Parker's advisor, probably influencing some aspects of "Singing the Fishing". Two or three memos in the Archive provide this admittedly limited evidence for the links between Parker and Bruce. However, it leaves me wondering if "Singing the Fishing" was their only contact.

Towards the end of 2015 Trustees approval was requested for copying of some Archive recordings. The request by Cast Iron Radio arose from a BBC commissioned programme on the Race Equality Act.

Much of the material used Charles gathered as background for programmes. Ideas

evolved as he made, I think, five programmes towards the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s with Dilip Hiro in which they explored issues of race and immigration. There's a full list of programmes on the Library website. See <http://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=MS+4000%2f6%2f1>

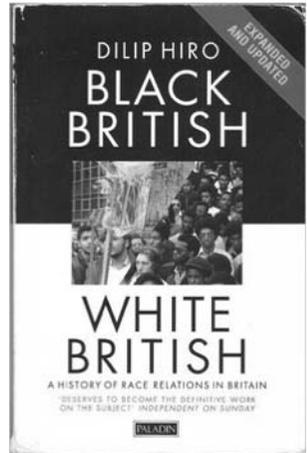


Dilip Hiro and Charles made the programmes, mostly about people of Asian origin in the UK. But “Siege in Ceylon” and “White Settlers”, (later re-named “A Place Way Out”) were both controversial and dealt with racial community issues beyond the UK.

Charles' involvement in these programmes and others made for the Open University, together with general recordings of interviews with people of Afro-Caribbean and Asian and Irish background are worthy of study. Dilip Hiro is now a well-known journalist. These programmes may give us an accessible route into understanding how Charles' advanced views of race relations developed.

Three different people, different impacts and we know little. Yet opening a few doors could lead to some interesting programmes relevant even in 2017.

Ian M Parr



Friends of the Charles Parker Archive – update

I first met the Friends of the Charles Parker Archive in 1999 when Gillian Reynolds – then Chair of the Archive Trustees – invited me to give a talk to the Friends' AGM about a radio series I'd just produced for the BBC Millennium oral history project, *The Century Speaks*. Most of those present seemed to be friends of Charles or people who'd worked with him in the BBC or Banner Theatre and were an ideal audience for a talk on radio oral history. After that I regularly attended the Friends' AGM and enjoyed talks by Friends – most memorably one by the late Mary Baker about the challenges of editing such complex programmes as the Radio Ballads with a chinagraph, razor blade and sticky tape. I'd edited my *Century Speaks* series on the latest SADiE digital software and reflected what a different (less communal?) experience it would have been for all those involved, had digital editing been available when the Radio Ballads were made.

In 2009 I was invited to become a Trustee and since then I've attended some

fascinating Friends' AGMs, as described by Pam Bishop in last year's Annual Report. However, the number of people who knew Charles in person has dwindled and though new Friends have joined from time to time we decided it was time for a recruitment drive! At the last Charles Parker Day on 18th March 2016 we made a special offer to anyone who joined the Friends on that particular day – of a reduced fee for the Charles Parker Day 2017, plus a reduced fee for one friend. We were very pleased with the take-up and will send all those who joined on that day a special code to use when booking opens. We hope that those who were already Friends, or who have joined subsequently, won't mind too much that they missed out on this offer and will regard their subscription as a small donation to a very good cause!

In the past, Friends have made huge contributions to preserving and publicising the Archive, including supporting its digitisation. Now the digitisation has been achieved, three major tasks remain: one is to make the Archive known and used by as many people as possible, whether they're interested in the history of radio, folk music, or the vast range of social history covered by the Archive. The second is to bring together people with these diverse interests, at the annual Charles Parker Day, to inspire each other with examples of past work and learn about the latest developments in the use of audio. The third is to encourage the next generation of feature-makers through the Charles Parker Prize. All suggestions from Friends and offers of help to achieve these aims will be gratefully received!

We plan to increase our presence in social media and alert Friends to any new postings on our website, as well as sending them a copy of the Annual Report.

Helen Lloyd



‘Gillian Reynolds – Audiophile’ Tim Blackmore

Broadcast on June 18th and produced by the much respected Simon Elmes, that was the title given to an edition of ‘Archive on Four’ devoted to the thoughts of our former Chairman, Daily Telegraph radio critic, Gillian Reynolds. Gillian has a rich store of tales of radio folk including the time she witnessed Sir David Attenborough dropping to one knee when introduced to David Davies: “You are the voice of my childhood” he said still holding David Davies’ hand. The programme treated us to a clip of “Uncle David” reading from Kipling and we were reminded again, just how seductive a real radio voice can be.

It was the impact of “Pirate Radio” that according to Gillian “changed everything”: The likes of Ronan O’Reilly showed that it was possible for radio to reach audiences that the BBC couldn’t – or perhaps didn’t even want to, but then they worked out ways to fight back. When the Conservative opposition embraced the prospect of local commercial radio, the BBC, by what Gillian calls “a not very curious coincidence”, announced its own local radio plans. By 1973 the UK not only had Radios One, Two, Three and Four, but also its first land based commercial radio stations. In between writing for the Guardian and then the Daily Telegraph, Gillian became a radio programme maker herself. She was appointed the first Programme Controller for Liverpool’s Radio City during which time she met Nick Pollard and Jimmy Gordon who were among her guests for this programme.

Also included were Jenny Abramsky and Sue McGregor, who along with Jimmy Gordon and Nick Pollard, all testified to their belief in Radio and shared stories from their own listening, as well as their varied careers in broadcasting. For me, their input was less compelling than Gillian’s own contribution and I’d have liked even more of the programme to have concentrated on her acute and distinctive perceptions of radio. As she herself makes clear, in our multi platform world we must acknowledge that increasing amounts of audio are now available through more media than just the one we call radio. “The making of audio is almost irresistible because the producer, the reporter, holds the means of production in their own hands for the listener, whatever is sung, said or played, goes straight to the ear and then to the imagination”.

Although the writing of criticism can reveal aspects of the individual writer’s life and times, Gillian’s many years spent so very close to the heart of the radio industry deserve a more substantial outlet than this Archive on Four was able to grant. Maybe we should try to persuade her to publish an autobiography, because whenever anything significant has happened in the last 50 years of the UK’s radio history, you can bet Gillian Reynolds wasn’t very far away.



Dave Swarbrick

Peter Cox, who interviewed him for his book on the Radio Ballads “Set into Song”, recalls his impressions

Dave Swarbrick, who died in June aged 75, was the most inspirational violinist of the folk revival. Brought up in Birmingham, where he trained to be a printer (with increasing reluctance) he won a talent contest with a skiffle band. At that point he came to the attention of Beryl Marriott, in whose ceildh band he played the guitar. She persuaded him to return to the violin, the instrument he'd first learnt, and which he now took to with gusto, though he told me he'd always had a 'flat hand', and held the bow half or even three quarters of the way up. He was only 18 when he took the train up to London in 1959 to try and blag his way on stage for the St Pancras town hall concert in aid of Pete Seeger's battle with the US authorities after he'd been blacklisted during the McCarthy witch hunt. The late lamented Ian Campbell takes up the story:

'We were billed to appear at the concert and were practising some numbers in the carriage when this scruffy little lad turned up with a violin and asked if he could join in. Initially dubious, we came to realise he was a self-taught genius. Amazing. No matter what key we were playing in, he'd just listen to one verse and then he'd come straight in like the clappers. It was a revolutionary idea to have a fiddler then. It was the days of skiffle, the three-chord trick, rudimentary stuff really. After the concert's rehearsals he asked if he could play with us on our set. We agreed eventually, and we tore the place up, got a standing ovation.'

Swarb immediately joined the Ian Campbell folk group, then the most popular in England – a fact neglected by all the recent programmes about the early British folk scene, much to Ian's irritation – and featured on their many successful albums. After Ian had appeared on the third of the Radio Ballads in 1960, he recommended Swarb for the following programme, *The Big Hewer*, for which rehearsals started on his 20th birthday. Peggy Seeger said he had his shoes removed when playing because he couldn't help tapping his feet, and had to be forcibly separated from his fiddle whenever Charles Parker called a break in rehearsals, because 'it wouldn't stop playing'. It was an extension of his arm and personality. He appeared again on *The Fight Game*, notably in Peggy's delicious orchestration of the relatively unknown *Skipping Song*, one of so many Radio Ballad songs due for rediscovery.

In 1962, he took part in Charles's hectic six-city Centre 42 event, when he was told off for playing half the night, though Eileen Whiting told me she rather enjoyed the sound of his fiddle drifting into her bedroom. Next year Swarb was initially the fiddler on *Traveling People*, the powerful last Radio Ballad, but went awol during rehearsals, which led to a fusillade of letters and telegrams between Dave 'caught my little finger in the car door, boss...' and Charles Parker. Charles eventually gave up on him (Dave had got a gig that paid more and was too intimidated to admit it) and recruited Danny Levan.

He played with the Ian Campbell group for five years, a period where his life was somewhat anarchic, to put it mildly: Campbell recalls redeeming Swarbrick's pawned fiddle three times. But he was young and harum scarum, better suited perhaps as a rock

musician than a sober folkie. After Swarbrick left the Campbell group by the classic ‘mutual agreement’ route he teamed up with Martin Carthy, and in 1969 joined the electric folk group Fairport Convention as they recovered from a terrible van crash. There he played among others with Richard Thompson and Ashley Hutchings. Later, Swarbrick’s health deteriorated rapidly and he finished up in a wheelchair with chronic emphysema, out of which he eventually and surprisingly sprang after a successful double lung transplant, defying his premature obituary in the *Daily Telegraph* in 1999.

Back with Martin Carthy, they won the best duo award at the 2007 Folk Awards, and later that year he joined a re-formed Fairport to play the whole of their famous *Liege and Lief* album at the Cropredy folk festival. When I interviewed him for *Set Into Song* he recalled the enjoyment of playing on the *Radio Ballads* at a time when:

‘I was earning two pounds seven and nine [c £40 at 2016 prices] doing 44½ hours a week at something I hated. Then the *Radio Ballads*, being paid musicians’ rates. Marvellous. When I look back on it now I can’t believe I was that young. I was an apprentice printer, would have been the worst in the world. It kept me from the call-up, though, and when they abolished National Service. I jacked in the printing a fortnight later.’



Dave Swarbrick with Ian and Lorna Campbell from a FaceBook posting by Pete Heywood www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1026778300683187&set=a.102170799810613.4807.100000530815451&type=3&theater

And if you think Swarb looks about fifteen, then so did Simon Fury.

The Ballad of Romeo and Juliet

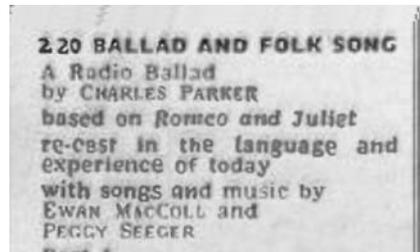
Pam Bishop explains the mystery(?) behind this year's front cover

In this 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, it's good to remember that 50 years ago a Radio Ballad was created based on "Romeo and Juliet". The play was re-cast in the language and experience of the time by members of the London Critics Group, with songs and music by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, and production by Charles Parker. The story of Romeo and Juliet was set in the East End of London, with the Montagues and Capleys (Capulets) as rival garage proprietors.

The programme was broadcast in two parts on the BBC Home Service as "Ballad And Folk Song", part of the series Books, Plays, Poems. There is a copy in the Charles Parker Archive, and it was included in the Library of Birmingham's pop-up exhibition "All Things Shakespeare" on 23 April 2016.

Here's the original Radio Times entry for Part 1, broadcast on 18 May 1966.

An article by Charles Parker in the same issue reads:



The Ballad of Romeo and Juliet

"LEAVE the Classics alone!" may well be one response to this work – "in your earlier radio ballads you confused documentary by entangling it with folk music; must Shakespeare, too, suffer this trial by tape-recorder?"

Well, this is a calculated risk we take, although I submit that such a response can only come from one either extremely fortunate if, in his experience of formal theatre, Romeo and Juliet has ever sprung to life in devastatingly contemporary terms, or extremely foolish if he denies that such was Shakespeare's intention.

Certainly Ewan MacColl's intention was to present the young folk singers who constitute the London Critics Group with the play as Shakespeare and company wrote it, and then challenge them to re-create and record it in their own words, and in specific situations. These recordings were then used in the same way as the documentary recordings of previous radio ballads, and from them he wrote the songs for Peggy Seeger to set, the Group to sing, and me to produce.

And so the radio-ballad team re-enters the narrative form and the wheel comes full circle. For we began with the real-life story of a railwayman – John Axon, which interestingly enough has just achieved commercial LP release – and now, with Romeo and Juliet, we are again telling a story, only this time in the attempt to achieve real-life experience from great art. I have a feeling that Shakespeare would approve.

Sandra Kerr was a member of the London Critics Group at the time and took the part of Juliet. She spoke about the making of the programme.

“It was a very exciting project, and a huge responsibility. The Group had been applying Stanislavski theatre methods to folk songs and ballads for some years – looking at the given circumstances of the text and imagining how the characters would respond imaginatively to their situation – and of course those situations included arranged marriage, family feuds etc. Now these methods were to be applied to the strong scenario featured in Romeo and Juliet.

“Our first brief was to become very familiar with the play and to discuss its given circumstances within the Group. Then we began to improvise the whole script – this was very exciting. Improvisation sessions under Ewan’s direction were really interesting and creative. For example, taking the circumstances of Juliet’s parents – what if they were a middle class couple with upper class pretensions? – what would they think? what would they say?

“Charles would interview individual members about the play, their attitudes towards it and their individual characters – this formed the actuality on which the final script was based. Most of the dialogue was recorded at Ewan’s flat (the balcony scene on the fire escape in a howling gale!), but some in outside venues to give atmosphere – particularly in Angel Lane market. The whole play was set in the East End around Angel Lane, near the site of Theatre Workshop, although the songs were recorded in the studio.”

Apart from Sandra as Juliet, the cast included Ted Culver (Ron/Romeo), Terry Yarnell (Montague), Bobby Campbell (Benny/Benvolio), Denis Turner (Wizz/Mercutio), John Faulkner (Capulet), Brian Pearson (Tim/Tybalt), Jim O’Connor (Uncle Larry/Friar Lawrence) with Brian Byrne as narrator.

On the North side of London’s great river
Through the City and East of Mile End
Lived some folks called the Montague family
And the Capley’s who once were their friends ...

The songs written by Ewan MacColl for this ballad may not be as well known as his others, but they do include “Sweet Thames Flow Softly”

I met my girl at Woolwich Pier
Beneath a big crane standing
And O the love I felt for her
It passed all understanding

The language of this song is really beautiful, anchored in 400 as well as 50 years ago, and it can be seen as a love song to London itself.

Thanks to Kevin Gordon, BA/Researcher at 4 Extra, for providing background info on this programme. This is also available at <http://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/schedules/bbchomeservice/basic/1966-05-18>

It seemed appropriate to follow up Pam's article with this photograph and memories from Brian Pearson. Brian was a member of the Critics Group and performed in the Romeo and Juliet Radio Ballad.



Great weekend with old friends from the Critics Group - Sandra Kerr, John Faulkner, Frankie Armstrong Jim and Sal O'Connor and Richard Humm. A shedload of memories, a load of laughs and an immoderate amount of wine. Wonderful to meet up after all these years. Love to you all and to the ones who couldn't be there and thanks to Sal and Jim for hosting it! Xx

We continue to number other members of the Critics Group among Friends of the Archive, see the previous pages.



The A to Z of CPA

Matthew Parker

The Archive began one windswept, miserable, East Anglian day in January 1981.

I had picked up a hired box van to embark on the collecting of Charles' tapes and papers which he had distributed across the country, depositing it with any willing soul with space. Many years before he had, in an 'artistic' moment tried to burn it all in the garden at Park House and my Mother and I had to restrain him. Our actions then were to haunt us now.

Battling into a head wind, which caused a dramatic reduction in top speed, I headed into Suffolk to collect lecture notes and tapes left with Tony Schooling. My first pick up was disappointing, a modest box placed in the cavernous van. Next, to Herefordshire, to collect Phyl, my Mother. Then, to Birmingham, a rather better volume there, still not justifying my choice of van however. We then returned to Herefordshire rather late to unload and prepare for the next day.

Nottingham was the last pickup. When we arrived we were shown a garage, nicely shelved by Charles, which was full, with only very narrow walkways between the shelves. This took a few hours for my Mother and me to load into the van. We must have arrived back in Herefordshire around 7pm and, after the essential cup of tea, started to unload the van and store the tapes and papers on the back landing of my Mother's 16thC rented house. By about 1am we had moved it all and were now exhausted. It was only then, when we stood back to admire our work, we noticed the landing was rather lower than when we started, but there was nothing we could do about it. Luckily it did hold for the few months it took to find a home for it

That weekend was probably the most tiring I have ever experienced, it was also charged with emotion for obvious reasons, which was added to by the suspicion and hostility we sometimes encountered. I can understand this: people were entrusted with a life's work and were suspicious of our motives, but if it had not been gathered together the creation of the Archive would not have happened and the riches it contains would have been gradually winnowed away over the last 25 years.

My Mother and I then set about forming the Trust, something we knew nothing about, but with the help of Phillip Cox, a lifelong friend of Charles and our Family, we were directed to Bettinsons Solicitors and the invaluable help of Paul Pharoe.

With a Trust deed we, Phyl, Sara and myself, then had to appoint trustees. Richard Groves was, as friend of Charles and Phyl, the Chairman, and similarly Phillip Donnellan, the Secretary. We were lucky. The Trustees we had then and in the following years have proved to be hard working, committed, knowledgeable and enthusiastic towards Charles' work and the Archive. I should also add patient, since we had a few false starts with venues until the perfect and most appropriate place, Birmingham City Library, stepped forward.

I would like to thank everyone who has over the years given a lot of time and effort and money to create the Archive and fulfil its goal of making Charles' work available to all. Whilst there is still and I suspect will always be more to do and to overcome to fully

achieve this, great progress has been made.

Over the years so far we have had four very effective chairmen with Gillian Reynolds being chairman for the lion's share. The Trust owes a lot to Gillian's competence, vision, determination and hard work, and she deserves special thanks. I would also like to mention Pam Bishop who over many years has worked tirelessly as a trustee and manager of the website and Ian Parr who as secretary has managed to make sense of the meetings, sometimes no mean feat.

Most of all the Trust owes a debt of gratitude to Phyl, Charles' wife who even after his death supported Charles and his work by setting up the Trust and providing the backbone of material for the enlightenment of future generations.

I have been involved with the Trust for 35 years, initially as Treasurer for the first 7 years and recently another stint of 5 years but always a Trustee. I now find my location makes attending meetings difficult and so I am standing down as Treasurer and Trustee and allowing others (more involved with Charles' work and the details of the Archive than I) to continue the work of making the Archive accessible and visible.

Sara Parker

Sara has edited the Trust Annual Report for the last six or seven years and we hope for seven more.



This issue she has not been able to edit due to work commitments and the sickness of her friend (and Friend of the Trust too) Claire Longley with whose help she assembles the Report.

However, it gives us the chance to acknowledge Sara's part in the Trust as Trustee and supporter for a good slice of her life. The link to Charles through Matthew

and Sara has always stimulated those of us who knew Charles, as well as those who have known him only through his work and his children.

Sara's enforced absence as editor has highlighted the amount of work required to produce this report, which has grown from a dozen or so pages to more than twice that last year and with a further four added this year. We hope she will continue as editor for some further issues, although the range of topics now covered may well require changes to our methods of production.

Thanks Sara.

FRIENDS OF THE CHARLES PARKER ARCHIVE

Enclosed with this Report you'll find a loose-leaf sheet with an application and subscription form for Friends' of the Archive.

We'd love it if you were to apply or renew your subscription this year. And you'd be most welcome at the Friends AGM, the agenda for which is part of the same sheet.

Friends subscriptions continue to provide the financial base for the Trust. We don't lightly draw upon them. The main financial outgoings continue to be Charles Parker Day and production and distribution of our Annual Report, (this report). The Financial Statement on page 7 explains where the money comes from and, just as important, where it goes.

The Trust's reserves are necessarily held for major projects and to provide for extraordinary items as well as financial back-up for our Charles Parker Day activities.



For further information about using the Charles Parker
Archive

<http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com>

<http://theironroom.wordpress.com>

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

The Charles Parker Archive Trust

www.cpatrust.org.uk