



BRITISH ENTERTAINMENT HISTORY PROJECT  
(Formerly BECTU History Project)

WWW.HISTORYPROJECT.ORG.UK

## Procedure for Interviews

### Preparing for the Interview

- All interview proposals must be submitted to the Main Meeting and Interview coordinator – David Sharp - email lantern653@btinternet.com
- To assist with research, the interviewer may wish to obtain a credit list for the interviewee prior to the interview from sources such as Sarah Currant at the BFI Reuben Library: BFI Reuben Library, BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XT; BFI telephone: +44 (0)20.7255.1444; Sarah Currant direct line +44 (0)20.7957.4824, fax. +44 (0)20.7815.1436. Sarah.Currant@bfi.org.uk
- Once a potential interviewee has been contacted, give them the introduction letter (BEHP6) which explains about the History Project and that copies of completed interviews are deposited with the BFI National Archive at Berkhamsted for permanent secure storage and made accessible via the British Entertainment History Project website [www.historyproject.org.uk](http://www.historyproject.org.uk)
- Let them know that the Project keeps second masters at Clapham which are stored safely in hard copy or on a hard drive. The BFI Reuben Library holds research copies.
- We aim to transcribe all interviews in order to facilitate access. Therefore some transcripts and other materials are available online via BFI Screenonline, as well as THE BRITISH ENTERTAINMENT HISTORY PROJECT website. [www.historyproject.org.uk](http://www.historyproject.org.uk). Any use of material is strictly controlled by the Project directors.

The interviewee, interviewer and cameraman should be made aware in advance that they will be asked to sign a copyright clearance form (BEHP1). Any interviews in which the project does not hold full copyright will be of limited accessibility and we intend to publicise the existence of the collection to as wide an audience as possible

Please make sure that the interviewee state on camera that they agree to this interview being uploaded, together with any caveat they may have; and that the copyright is that of the BEHP (eventually if not immediately).

## **Recording the Interview**

### **Interview preparation Checklist**

- Recording device(s) and sufficient media
- Tripods, light and reflectors (as available)
- Microphone and spare batteries
- Log Sheet
- Interviewee copyright form
- Interviewer copyright form
- Camera operator release form
- Research materials/list of questions as necessary
- Pen and paper (to jot down any points for clarification, such as spelling of names or acronyms, during the interview).
- Ensure that any clocks or noisy equipment are removed from the room
- Use the unique ID number allocated by Martin Sheffield on all items

### **Editorial/interview questions Guidelines**

**NB. Record the copyright legend at the beginning of the recording – “This interview with ..... conducted on .....is the copyright of the British Entertainment History project”**

Have a plan for the interview, for example, a chronological approach to the interviewee’s career. Below is a list of suggested topics. It is essential to obtain answers to the first six of these questions as the information is required by our database. The interviewer should research the information in advance and use the interview to confirm details. Ideally, once the opening questions have been asked, the interviewer should say as little as possible except to guide the interview along the chosen course.

- Name
- Date of Birth

- Place of Birth
- Nationality
- Awards
- Honours
- Family background – for example, did interviewee’s parents have anything to do with the “business”?
- Schooling
- Further education
- Formal training as film- or programme-maker
- Also worked in television, theatre, radio... other?
- Main areas of work (crafts): producer, director, camera, editor, etc.
- For a few or many companies?
- What attracted the interviewee to the business?
- How and when did the interviewee get started in the business?
- Describe what their job(s) was/were; is/are
- Outline of career development
- Who has the interviewee worked with, and where?
- What has the interviewee enjoyed about his/her job(s)?
- What were the difficulties?
- How does the interviewee see the future of these crafts/professions developing?
- Respond to issues raised in the course of the interview

With luck, the interviewee will be launched into talking about his/her career as it developed, the interviewer only intervening to progress the interview.

The interviewer should ask the interviewee to clarify the spelling of any names, explain acronyms, and expand on any arcane practices or procedures that might be referred to. Always remember that some users accessing the interview may have only limited technical knowledge. Some interviewees may have interesting artefacts, photos, or letters etc., to which they refer: film these if you can.

### **General issues**

- Ensure interviewer hands do not appear in shot

- All clocks are silent
- Ensure that both interviewee and interviewer are miked
- Do not place interviewee in a window. The back light makes it difficult to see the interviewees face clearly

### **Administrative details**

- If, after the interview, the interviewee is hesitant about signing the copyright clearance form, explain that they can, if they so wish, sign the form adding a rider such as “access only with written permission”, or “access only after five years”, or “... after the death of ...”, and so on.
- The interviewer and anyone who makes a verbal contribution to the interview, such as the recordist must also sign a release form.

**The log sheet (BEHP5)** should be filled in as completely as possible.

- Key details about the interview subject and duration of the interview should always be completed.
- Fill in all the required information in the data fields on the database(ensuring that first and surname boxes are filled separately);
- Upload the log sheet and photo of interviewee to website ; or deliver the log sheet to Martin Sheffield either in person or email
- Camera operator must email the hi res files to Mike Dick  
Mike Dick will upload the interview to Vimeo and copy onto the master harddrive
- **Delivery to BFI**  
Nick Gibey (NG) to email intv to appropriate Bfi contact together with the Bfi template to be completed and sent to - [Ros.cranston@bfi.org](mailto:Ros.cranston@bfi.org)

### **File number rules**

All assets uploaded to the website must be numbered in a consistent format as laid out here:

- **Interview Number** (4 digits from 0001 to 9999): behp0001
  - We need a “-“between interview number and code so that the interview number is always the same for search and all sorts easily in the file browser when offline.

## For potential later use

- **Format/**Styling of labelling is as follows: interview number behp000.; *interviewee first name, surname eg behp0001-eric-cross*
  - which should be added to anything uploaded to Vimeo
- **Original Master** Interview Recordings: *behp0001-eric-cross-om* (or if more than one tape: *behp0001-eric-cross-om -1of3* and *2of3*, etc.)
  - This will be held at BFI
- **Copy Master** Interview Recording: *behp0001-eric-cross-cm*
  - This will be held at BECTU
- **Redacted copies ie those edited for access restriction reasons** of both interview and any transcripts will follow the same numbering for all interviews with the addition of “R” at the end of the number
- **Access copy** interview: *behp0001-eric-cross-a*.
  - This will be held at BECTU
- **Clip:** *behp0001-eric-cross-clip.mp4*
- **Photos,Sketches etc:** *behp0001-eric-cross-pic.jpeg*
- **Summaries, intv notes:** *behp0001-eric-cross-summary.pdf*
- **Transcripts:** *behp0001-eric-cross-transcript.pdf*
- **Obituary:** *behp0001-eric-cross-obit.pdf*

***The minimum for numbering interviews on the haddrives must be:***

***Behp00001 first name surname***

## Technical issues

Whenever possible there should be a crew of at least two – the interviewer and the recordist – working on each interview.

If possible record 30 secs of ambient sound from the interviewees position without any voices, breathing noises etc

All BEHP equipment is kept securely and can be accessed via the Archive Coordinator, Martin Sheffield (07415100789). Many cameramen use their own cameras.

Reference packs containing notes for interviewers along with blank log sheets and copyright forms (documents BEHP1-7) are downloadable from the Project website or available from Archive manager Sue Malden [sue.malden@btinternet.com](mailto:sue.malden@btinternet.com).

Currently active CAMERA OPERATORS used by the project are:

Alec Hall-Shaw [hallshaw@btconnect.com](mailto:hallshaw@btconnect.com)

Dan Thurley [danieljthurley@gmail.com](mailto:danieljthurley@gmail.com) [07719 382708](tel:07719382708)

David Smith [digidavey@gmail.com](mailto:digidavey@gmail.com)

Dave Wyatt [dwyatt@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:dwyatt@tiscali.co.uk)

Bob Geoghan [archivefilmagency@mail.com](mailto:archivefilmagency@mail.com)

Martin Sheffield: 07415100789

Steve Brooke Smith [sbscine@icloud.com](mailto:sbscine@icloud.com)

### General Guidelines

- The recordist must ensure that there is adequate material to record the interview. The average time for an interview is around two hours, though some may last much longer and may even require more than one recording session to complete. It is advisable to ensure that there is at least one spare battery with any kit. Always test the battery with the supplied tester.
- Two microphones are required, one for the interviewee and one for the interviewer. If necessary buy any media or accessories needed and retain a receipt for re-imbusement by the Archive Coordinator/Treasurer. Martin Sheffield 07415100789
- When shooting on flash card or memory card please send the card to Mike Dick [mikedick@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mikedick@blueyonder.co.uk) and Nick Gilbey [rndgilbey@gmail.com](mailto:rndgilbey@gmail.com) via a file transfer service eg. <https://wettransfer.com/> or <https://www.sendthisfile.com> then they will upload the file to Vimeo, archive the master on our BEHP hard drive and get the file through to the BFI.
- Any substantial expenditure, e.g., for travel or subsistence, should be agreed with the Treasurer in advance, and will only be paid in exceptional circumstances. Interviewees are not paid a fee.
- Before beginning the interview, record the “opening legend” (it is a good idea to pre-record this before you arrive at the interview). The wording is: “The Copyright of this recording is vested in the BRITISH ENTERTAINMENT HISTORY Project. The interviewee is ----- (*and state discipline/grade*), the interviewer is -----; the date is ----- (*and state*) SIDE ONE (if appropriate)”
- *Repeat this data each time a new recording is made*

- Take a photograph of the interviewee alone and with the interviewer for use on the website
- Write a short (i.e., c.400-word) biography of the interviewee, also for the website. This could be produced from your original research into the interviewee
- During or after the interview, make a list of issues covered – again for the website.
- If you have any queries about the content of these notes, or more generally on conducting an interview, please contact the Archive Coordinator, Martin Sheffield, on 07415100789.

*(March 2012; Updated Feb 2015 Updated April 2016 Sue Malden/David Sharp; Sue Malden July 2016 Updated Dec 2017; updated Feb 2018; updated April 2019 updated Nov 2019; updated July 2020)*  
*BEHP4*