



## Associated-Rediffusion: The UK's First Groundbreaking TV Franchise

### **Comedy 1: Ronnie Barker and the Pythons**

+ intro by season curator Dick Fiddy

Tue 2 Sep 18:15

### **Drama 1: The Entertaining Mr Orton**

Sun 7 Sep 17:25

### **Comedy 2: The Fred Shows**

Fri 12 Sep 18:10

### **Drama 2: Harold Pinter**

Sat 13 Sep 17:30

### **The Lost World of Children's Programming**

+ intro by Elinor Groom, Curator of Television

Tue 16 Sep 18:20

### **Drama 3:**

#### **The Classics at Associated-Rediffusion**

Sat 20 Sep 14:15

#### **Object Z** + intro by writer Jon Dear

Sun 21 Sep 14:35

#### **Captive Cinema** + intro by Lisa Kerrigan,

Senior Curator of Television

Tue 23 Sep 18:20

#### **Ready Steady Go!**

Fri 26 Sep 18:00

#### **Missing Believed Wiped:**

#### **Associated-Rediffusion Special**

Sat 27 Sep 12:15

#### **The Precious Things – Oddities and Rarities from the BFI National Archive**

Sat 27 Sep 15:20

#### **Tackling Racism** + intro by Chantelle Lavel

Boyea, BFI Assistant Curator of Television

Fri 3 Oct 18:10

The Associated-Rediffusion collection is preserved in the BFI National Archive

With thanks to Archbuild

#### **With thanks to**

BFI colleagues Xavier Pillai, Lisa Kerrigan,  
Chantelle Lavel Boyea and Elinor Groom

The Associated-Rediffusion season has been made possible with help from colleagues from across the BFI including the BFI National Archive; the Rights and Contracts Department, the Events Department, the Cinemas Office and the Content Remastering Team

Please note that some of the programmes in this season contain racist language, attitudes and other content that reflect the views prevalent in its time, but will likely cause offence today (as they did then). For specific content warnings, please visit [bfi.org.uk/whatson](https://www.bfi.org.uk/whatson)

## Associated-Rediffusion: The UK's First Groundbreaking TV Franchise

# Missing Believed Wiped: Associated-Rediffusion Special

## Studio 5

The opening of Associated-Rediffusion's Studio 5 was a BIG deal. So big that the opening itself was televised and we were given a guided tour of the studio and a look at the rehearsals for that night's magnificent opening extravaganza. That ambitious production has sadly not survived but the surviving launch programme gives us a tantalising glimpse at the preparations for – what was then – the largest TV performance ever staged.

The TV Studio History Website [[tvstudiohistory.co.uk](https://tvstudiohistory.co.uk)] has the following illuminating entry:

[The enormous Studio 5] opened three weeks before Television Centre on June 9th, 1960 with a spectacular play involving music and dance entitled *An Arabian Night*. This certainly made full use of the space. It had a cast of 300 together with 10 horses, 8 camels, 6 donkeys, 4 goats, 2 mules, 2 snakes, 1 performing bear and an elephant. Imagine the mess in the car park. According to one source, as well as the obvious technical requirements one of the specs for the studio floor was that it should be able to withstand the weight of an elephant. This proved to be useful on at least one further occasion. Planning for the programme had begun six months before. The director Mark Lawton's brief was 'to produce a show of bigger dimensions than anything ever televised in this country.' By all accounts he certainly succeeded. The show was designed by John Clements and was lit by David Motture. In one corner of the studio was built a raised area for an orchestra – the space beneath being used for quick-change dressing rooms.

Bob Hart was an extra working on the show. He was training as a vet at the time but found himself looking after the liberty horses on this unique programme. He has sent me his recollections...

'The animals were from Chipperfield's circus. I honestly don't recall the elephant. Our version was that the floor was accurate to 1/8th inch in 100 ft so that the camera dollies would run smoothly, not that it should support an elephant.

The only warning we were given was to watch out for cameras because they would not stop. Every second Arab was an asst. director with walkie-talkie directing 'traffic'. The liberty horses were unshod but the studio insisted they be shod with rubber shoes to prevent damage to the floor. This was done by the Royal Vet College farrier. Quite an experience since they had never been shod before. They were housed for the week of rehearsals in a marquee in the open space behind the entry doors (behind the market set). The horses were all Arab stallions. I spent a couple of nights in there with them. Add to the production schedule the logistics of caring for that many animals!

There were also at least three stunt horses, two were to be jumped over a market stall, a 19 sec sequence which was unfortunately lost, or at least not broadcast, due to a timing glitch. Martin Benson rode another.

The sets were so realistic that we sunbathed on the dock set between rehearsals. Makeup calls were at 7am I think. Took hours to get 300 people made up.

TV folk didn't understand that animals did not need a three-hour call. 15 minutes was enough. The animals got bored being walked around outside. In fact, a mounted Martin Benson, a brave man since he didn't ride, backed into the bear. Oops.

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Camels are awful on a set, or anywhere. Pull them forward and they stretch out their necks. Push them back, and they fold them. Then they spit. Thank goodness none of this was evident in the production.

At one time we got so bored we decided to take the animals on set and stage another caravan. The director was delighted and wanted the sequence kept. A few minutes later it was rescinded – timing would be thrown out!

We were told the production would be live, although the final dress had been recorded, and it was our belief that it would be running simultaneously in case of disasters. I think that show generated more ulcers than any previous production.

Today no sane director would attempt a 3-hour live show of that magnitude involving so many unpredictable animals. It was a wild experience.'

## Boyd Q.C.

Film is Fabulous! and De Montfort University's Cinema and Television History research centre are pleased to announce the recovery of three episodes of vintage Associated-Rediffusion television, which are missing from the official archive:

The Balance of Her Mind (Broadcast: 30 April 1958)

Findings Keepings (Broadcast: 6 July 1961)

Sunday's Child (Broadcast: 20 July 1961)

*Boyd Q.C.* was a British legal drama that aired from 1956 to 1964. It was produced by Associated-Rediffusion for ITV. Of the 80 episodes aired, only 6 are known to have survived in their entirety. 5 of these are held by the BFI (which is the official repository). A further 5 incomplete episodes also exist. Therefore, the three complete episodes recovered by the Film is Fabulous! team represent a major addition.

The missing episodes were found in the private film collection of the late David Moore. They are among a number of missing and rare items of 50s and 60s television that have been discovered. Digital copies will be lodged with the BFI for preservation purposes.

## Tell Your Own Tale

Film is Fabulous! and De Montfort University's Cinema and Television History Research Group are pleased to announce that films from the private collection of Max Robertson, the late BBC radio and television commentator, presenter, and author, will be catalogued and preserved.

Several items within the collection relate to Max's wife, Elisabeth Beresford, the creator of *The Wombles*, and their shared activity. There are early films from Elisabeth's career as a writer and storyteller. Among these is an episode of *Tell Your Own Tale*, from September 1956. This was shown as part of *Jolly Good Time*, which was an Associated-Rediffusion children's programme. During the episode, Elisabeth told a story based upon five objects. The story was illustrated by the television artist, Tony Hart.

## ITV Playhouse: Each Wind That Blows (Broadcast: 15 April 1960)

Starring: Michael Gwynn, Margaret Tyzack, Ronald Leigh-Hunt, Stratford Johns  
Based on the play by Pamela Llewellyn, the tense drama tells the story of a man who, having been acquitted of murdering a young woman, returns to his wife, family and friends, and their suspicions of his guilt.

With thanks to Archbuild and to many BFI colleagues, especially the Rights and Contracts Dept, the BFI National Archive, the Southbank Tech Team, the TV Curators and the BFI's Restoration Team. Also thanks are due to Paul Vanezis, Film is Fabulous! (John Franklin) and Kaleidoscope (for providing the A-R continuity compilation).