

ACTUALITY



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The Magazine of
The Charles Parker
Archive Trust

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Welcome to the *2018 Actuality*, our second edition. This issue has a marked inter-generational feel to it. The word *doyenne* may be an overworked one, but it applies genuinely to Gillian Reynolds and to Peggy Seeger, both going as strong as ever - neither will see 80 again. Not so as you'd notice. Alongside her regular columns for *Radio Times*, Gillian had been the Radio critic of *The Daily Telegraph* for over 40 years. Retirement? Not a bit of it. A better job offer recently came along from *The Sunday Times*, to write an expanded radio column for their redesigned Culture section. She accepted it, and the Queen of Radio is in as perceptive a reviewing form as ever. She kicks off this edition on the opposite page by describing her lifelong love of Radio.

Peggy Seeger, who sixty years ago this spring had - at the age of 22 - just orchestrated the music for *The Ballad of John Axon*, last year published her memoir *First Time Ever*. On page 12 our own reviewer adds to the praise already heaped on her book. Peggy's recollections of that first Radio Ballad start our March 23 conference, held for the first time (ever) in London at the British Library.

Sixty years younger than Gillian and Peggy will be the contestants for this year's Charles Parker prize for Radio Features. On page 10 Simon Elmes, chairman of the judging panel, as he has been since 2004, describes the best nine entries for the 2017 award, when the standard was higher than ever. On page 4 we look at a moving documentary film inspired by the last Radio

Ballad, *Travelling People*, and on page 16 Seán Street, who organised the first six Charles Parker Days, describes why his Bournemouth, Charles' birthplace, is the perfect setting for our Parker centenary conference in 2019.

On pages 8-9 is the compelling programme for this year's Charles Parker Day, run again by Andy Cartwright, preceded by the biographies of the participants. If Charles were alive today he'd be captivated by the talent of all those taking part, and heartened that the legacy of his groundbreaking work is a proliferation of radio features of great range and ingenuity. Then he'd want to try out the astonishing equipment his successors are using, and probably get no sleep for several days...



**Gillian Reynolds -
My Love Affair with
Radio**

Job offers don't come often when you're in your eighties, but after over 40 years as radio critic of The Daily Telegraph Gillian is now working for the Sunday Times in the same capacity.



My first memory: a lady singing on the radio. Sun shining, me eating my breakfast... It must have been 1938. I would have been about three. We were living in my Grandma's council house in Liverpool. Three bedrooms: my Grandma and three aunts in one; Uncle Bud and Uncle Harold in the smallest one; my mother, father, brother and me in the other. I asked my mother why the lady on the radio sounded so sad. She told me: this Japanese lady, Madame Butterfly, was in love with a sailor. He was American and he'd gone away; she thought he would come back. That's what she was singing about. But he never did and that's why she sounded so sad. "Stop," I said to her, in words that my brother never lets me forget, "I'm crying on my sausage." Ah, the power of radio. The wireless that came next for me was wartime wireless: Lord Haw-Haw's "Germany calling... Germany calling..." *ITMA* with Tommy Handley and his cleaning lady Mrs Mopp: "Can I do you now, sir?" Dance bands. Arthur Askey and Richard Murdoch in their imaginary flat on the top of Broadcasting House. All the family listening together. Everyone in the house waiting for news bulletins, coming into the room where the radio was, crowding round, listening, silent. Radio was always there when you came back into the house after the air raid shelter.

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APPEAR
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which doesn’t mean I don’t watch
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and concerts, see films. In a way,
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know as much about any of them
if it wasn’t for growing up with
the wireless.”

Bombs fell on Broadcasting House of course, but the voices and the music never stopped. Bombs fell on Liverpool and my mother took us out to look at smoking ruins. It never occurred to me we might have been under them. I took it all for granted. Those radio sounds were part of feeling safe. It was part of belonging.

So, you could say, I was “imprinted” early, when the BBC was the nation’s only broadcaster and radio reigned supreme to educate, inform, entertain. I have listened all my life, which doesn’t mean I don’t watch tv, love Netflix, go to theatres and concerts, see films. In a way, now I think of it, I wouldn’t know as much about any of them if it wasn’t for growing up

with the wireless. I started writing about the radio over fifty years ago, first for *The Guardian*, then *The Daily Telegraph* and now for *The Sunday Times*. Over that time radio has gone from being thought of (not least by the BBC) as something elderly and past it to, now, being the toast of the new media age, under its new name, Audio. This, *The Financial Times* informed us not so long ago, is the golden age of audio. Who’d have thought it?

When I went to university we’d crowd round a bulky portable radio powered by a car battery to listen to The Goons. When I was married and living in America in the late 1950s I listened in amazement to phone-ins. Later, when we lived in

London, my best friends Maureen Cleave, Sally Bishop and Sarah York gave me my very own brand-new transistor radio. It was turquoise blue, a constant and wonderful companion. I listened a lot. Life as a young mother is lonely. But there was Val Doonican on the Light Programme every Friday afternoon. And *Beyond Our Ken*, the show that moved the boundaries of radio comedy then turned into *Round the Horne* and, through the writing partnership of Barry Took and Marty Feldman, widened many an eye. Maybe they got away with it because radio, by this time, was considered a backwater. Hooray for backwaters, say I. There’s room to grow there.

The big game changer for British radio came in 1964, with the birth of Pirate radio. Ronan O’Rahilly’s *Radio Caroline* showed radio could reach audiences the BBC did not, could not: young listeners, devoted new listeners. Before long the BBC, as always, struck back with local radio in 1967 then, not long after, Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4. When commercial radio became legal in Britain, in 1973, I became part of it at one of the earliest stations, Liverpool’s *Radio City*. At *Radio City*, we cherished our sense of being different from London, sharper than Manchester. Above all, we were determined to do the news better than the BBC.

As the 1980s rolled into the 1990s, BBC bosses came and went. The Gulf War ushered in the notion of rolling news, quickly dubbed ‘Scud FM’. Following that came a whole new AM network, BBC Radio 5 Live and, not long after, the very early days of digital broadcasting. Those who

declared the future was digital were thought of, not least by me, as slightly barmy. At a Radio Festival in Birmingham, towards the end of the 90s, I changed my mind. The BBC invited us all to a bus ride. We got on, sat down, put on headsets. The bus drove around, the engineer switching between FM and DAB, (Digital Audio Broadcasting,) on our headsets. FM faded and cut out when we went down underpasses. The DAB sound stayed. Perfect. Clear. The sets to receive it weren’t in the shops yet. As soon as they were I got one.

And today? We’re in the global internet age. The phone in your hand is the key to a universe of listening. The choice is vast, bewildering. In my less Luddite moments I choose podcasts, discover radio stations thousands of miles away. I sometimes imagine myself standing on a bridge into audio’s golden future. But in that future, what will make me, and you, continue to listen will be - as it’s been throughout my life - laughter in the air, music that transforms the spirit, voices that make pictures in the mind, other lives, people we have never met but think of as friends, programmes that come out of the air and set the heart free.

Searching for the Travelling People

Pam Bishop, a founder member of the Trust, and Ian Parr, Secretary since 2004, are two of the Trust's longest-serving members. Here they introduce Rural Media's project 'Searching For The Travelling People.'



With the encouragement and support of the Charles Parker Trust, and funded by the Heritage Lottery, Rural Media have been running workshops and oral history sessions, and conducting interviews with volunteers from the Gypsy and Traveller community, as part of a major heritage project. Here's their brief account of the process:

'We used the original radio ballad - The Travelling People - plus archive footage and photography to spark the interest of young Gypsies and Travellers. We created a documentary film fronted by Travellers' Times Editor-at-Large, Damian Le Bas, which reflects on the themes raised in the original ballad and finds out what those themes might be if the programme were being made today.

'Music and song were essential elements of the original radio ballad. The documentary builds up to the recording of a contemporary folk song with lyrics by Damian Le Bas closely based on quotes from the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed for the project. These words were then set to music and performed by Irish

Traveller folk singer Thomas McCarthy, with violin and female vocals from Charlotte Andrews, one of Charles Parker's granddaughters.

'The full documentary, plus lots of extras including audio interviews with participants, photographs and archive materials are all available on the Travellers' Times website in the heritage section. We've been delighted to connect with Jess Smith, a writer, campaigner and Scottish Traveller - who remembers the programme makers visiting sites in Scotland when she was a young girl - and Travellers Liza Mortimer and Riley Smith, whose grandmother Minty Smith featured prominently in the original radio ballad.'

The documentary is superb, and the online resources will be of great value to the Gypsy and Traveller community. We also think the Trust has lessons to learn from the project: as a consequence we plan to provide copies of all the digitised recordings to the British Library, hoping at least some will be published online, so that everyone, settled or travelling, can to listen to their own oral heritage.



Mary Kalemkarian, the immensely experienced Chair of the Trust, began her radio career in Scotland, making a daily series for pre-school children. Later in London she was appointed Chief Producer, Youth Magazine Programmes, launching the original BBC Radio 5. Following a stint with BBC Worldwide as Senior Commissioning Editor for Comedy and Drama, she returned to broadcasting in 2000 to launch the new digital archive station which became Radio 4 Extra, where she was controller until her retirement.



Andy Cartwright has organised the annual Charles Parker Day since becoming a Trustee in 2010, and had given it his trademark unstoppable energy, as well as the ability to persuade Radio feature makers to come and talk. He worked originally for the BBC in Birmingham, as Charles had done, before becoming weekend editor at BBC Radio Sheffield. In 1993 he founded Soundscape Productions, creating programmes for BBC Network Radio, and now combines that with running the MA Radio course at the University of Sunderland.



Peggy Seeger was born into a prodigiously talented musical family in the USA. Arriving in England in 1957 she immediately met her future partner Ewan MacColl and embarked on a life in folk music and radical politics, beginning by orchestrating Ewan and Charles Parker's Radio

Ballads. She has just written an autobiography, the compelling *First Time Ever*, reviewed on page 12 by Peter Cox, author of *Set Into Song*, which tells the story of the Radio Ballads and their three begetters. Peggy lives in Oxford and winters in New Zealand, and still gives concerts, increasingly with her sons Neill and Calum, which are illuminated by her wit and wisdom.



Fi Glover presents The Listening Project for BBC Radio 4, *My Perfect Country* for the BBC World Service and the *Fortunately* podcast for the BBC with Jane Garvey. She trained with the BBC as a Local Radio Reporter in 1993 and has worked across most national networks since then. She has won five Sonys of varying colours for various shows since then, has written a book about her love of local radio called *I am an Oil Tanker* and says that if she could live inside a radio set then she would.



Marya Burgess produces *The Listening Project* for BBC Radio 4 presented by Fi Glover. She produced the psychology series *Mind Changers*, and Paul Gambaccini's *For One Night Only*, and *A History of the Brain*, as well as many other features and documentaries. She came back to producing after reporting for *Woman's Hour* and *The Food Programme*. She has won three Sony awards. She has fond memories of editing with razor blades and sticky tape...



Helen Lloyd, the Trust's Membership Secretary, is now an oral history specialist, providing recordings for

archives, museums and websites; and training for Heritage Lottery funded projects. For many years she had been a reporter for BBC radio programmes such as *Woman's Hour*, and it was working on the BBC series *The Century Speaks* that convinced her that recording people's memories was the perfect job. She is now Regional Network Representative for the Oral History Society, has lectured all over the UK, Europe and the USA, and runs a busy oral history consultancy.



Simon Elmes is chairing the Charles Parker Prize panel for the thirteenth consecutive year. A programme maker and

writer, he worked at the BBC for four decades before retiring in 2015 as Creative Director of its Radio Documentary unit. He was responsible for such BBC documentary series as *Voices* in 2005 and *The Routes of English* at the millennium with Melvyn Bragg, and supervised the long-running Radio 4 magazine *Word of Mouth* from its inception. Among his books are *And Now on Radio 4*, *A Celebration of the World's Best Radio Station*, and *Talking for Britain*, about the nation's dialects.



Dr Matthew Linfoot worked at the BBC in a variety of roles before joining the University of Westminster in 2003. While

at the BBC he produced the sixteen part series of oral history programmes about London, *The Century Speaks*. He won a SONY Gold Award for Best Music Documentary, producing and co-writing *You've Got To Hide Away*, with Tom Robinson, which explored hidden gay sexuality in popular music. Later he was the editor of the BBC London website before moving to BBC Nations & Regions to work as a senior producer on two exciting major projects, *A Sense of Place* and *Voices*.



Lewis Atkinson, alias **Broadcaster**, is a musician and producer who in 2008 took samples from the Radio Ballad series and gave

them a radical makeover on his debut EP *Primary Transmission*. By blurring musical genres, Broadcaster jumped through time to bring this music to a fresh set of ears, and it was played on BBC Radios 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6. The single *England* immediately became Colin Murray's Record of the Week on his BBC Radio 1 show.



Calum MacColl, the younger son of Ewan and Peggy, is a prolific music producer and performer. He described himself

when working with Broadcaster as the Charles Parker to Lewis Atkinson's Ewan MacColl. 'When you grow up with something, you take it for granted. I was always aware of the *Radio Ballads*, but I'd never thought of them as being this great, groundbreaking thing. I like the way Lewis has put them into a narrative with a modern context and an overall flavour. It's not just a case of taking a flat-capped northern voice and putting beats behind it. He's made something completely new out of it.'



Alan Hall has been a radio producer since 1990 and has built a reputation for long-form documentaries,

music features and 'impressionistic radio'. Since leaving the BBC in 1998, having received two Prix Italias and Sonys, he has worked independently, establishing Falling Tree Productions as one of the world's leading radio production companies. Programmes have received further awards from the Sonys, Prix Europa, Prix Marulic, Prix Bohemia and the Third Coast Festival.



Hana Walker-Brown won the Charles Parker prize in 2013 while studying on the MA in Radio course at Goldsmiths

College. She has since gone on to produce short and long form

features and documentaries for BBC Radio 3 and BBC Radio 4. Now at Falling Tree, Hana has in parallel worked as a freelance sound designer working with theatre companies associated with several theatres and Arts Festivals, and created sound installations and film scores. She currently presents *The Sunday Comedown* on Hoxton Radio.



Ami Bennett is an Executive Producer at Somethin' Else, where she has managed the productions of

shows across BBC Radio 1, 1Xtra and the Asian Network. Ami has also been responsible for a number of acclaimed Radio 1 documentaries such as the '*Extreme Festivals*' series, and is about to begin producing a new series of documentaries across a range of topics for Radio 1's new '*Life Hacks*' show.



Damian Le Bas is a writer and filmmaker who is now the editor of *Travellers' Times*, the website and magazine for

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. He is a founder member of the International Romani Film Commission, a native Romani speaker, regular broadcaster, contributor to several books and a published poet. He runs the nomadic film house Notown Productions with Phillip Osborne and Charles Newland.

The Charles
Parker Day
2018:
The Radio
Ballads and
Beyond

Friday 23rd
March 2018

Knowledge Centre
The British Library
96 Euston Road
London NW1 2DB

10:00

Registration and Coffee / Tea

10:50

Introduction- Mary Kalemkerian Chair of The Charles Parker Trust and Andy Cartwright organiser of the Charles Parker Day 2018.

10:55

The Ballads Begin- Peggy Seeger, one of the original creators of the Radio Ballads, joins Peter Cox to tell the story of the making of *The Ballad of John Axon*, the first Radio Ballad, in 1958.

11:30

Beyond the Ballads: The Authentic Voice- In the spirit of Charles Parker, chronicling the lived experiences of ordinary men and women, we reflect on two major BBC projects which capture such voices in the years since his death. *The Century Speaks* was a millennial enterprise to record the history of the 20th century by those who lived it. *The Listening Project* continues to bend an ear to ordinary pairs of people with something different to tell us. And in each case, those unique pieces of personal oral history have ended up for posterity in the British Library. With contributions from its presenter Fi Glover and producers Marya Burgess, Helen Lloyd and Dr Matthew Linfoot.

12:30

The Charles Parker Prize Nominations- Chair of this year's judging panel, Simon Elmes, introduces the five shortlisted nominees for the 2018 Charles Parker Prize for the Best Student Audio Feature.

12:45

Lunch break

13:45

Beyond the Ballads: Sampling Audio- In the late noughties music producer **Broadcaster (Lewis Atkinson)** sampled the original Radio Ballads to create dance track versions of them. Ewan and Peggy's son **Calum MacColl** joins Lewis to show how they did it.

14:30

Beyond the Ballads: Composing Audio- Multi-award winning radio producer **Alan Hall** explores and demonstrates the influence of the Radio Ballads on his own 'composed' radio features.

15:00

The Charles Parker Prize Winners- Announcement of the 2018 Bronze, Silver and Gold Winners.

15:20

Beyond the Ballads: New Production Talent - Former Charles Parker Prize Winner **Hana Walker Brown** with her own take on the radio ballad - *The Ballad of Hesse Road*.

15:40

Refreshment break

16:00

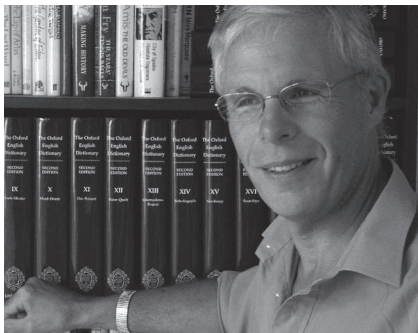
Beyond the Ballads: New Audio Talent- The executive producer of *Somethin' Else*, **Ami Bennett** on new ways of making audio features for BBC Radio 1.

16:20

Searching for The Travelling People- For the past few years Rural Media have been working with travellers, using the original voices recorded by Charles, Ewan and Peggy for their final Radio Ballad *The Travelling People*. In the last session of the 2018 Charles Parker Day we have an exclusive showing of their new film - introduced by **Damian Le Bas**.

17:15

Conference ends



Simon Elmes, a Trustee and Chair of the judging panel, reports on the Charles Parker Prize, 2017.

Nothing untoward, just a normal day. Did my usual: got up to thirty mile an hour, shut off. And then at the bridge just after Eccleston Park, I just sort of looked. And then this fellow just come from behind the back of the stanchion, dropped to his knees, put his hands just before the rail and put his head on the track. And I'm thinking 'what is he doing?' Didn't seem real...

“ ”

The account of an engine-driver's shocking confrontation with a suicide on the railway was a transfixing moment for all the judges of the Charles Parker Award for Radio Feature 2017. And, a full 59 years after Parker's *Ballad of John Axon*, it demonstrated that a story of death on the iron road still has the power to turbocharge the imagination.

That's been, since the Prize's inception in 2005, the gold standard for winning entries. I remember, as Chair of the first ever Charles Parker Prize, with immense clarity that same emotion when I heard Mark Williams's account of his own release from prison. It was utterly real, honest, full of hope and yet heart-breakingly raw. Following the adrenaline rush of freedom, Mark stood in a phone booth, lost, abandoned, tempted by the easy return to a life that had gone wrong. The rawness of our first laureate's experience - in the days before we heard much from inside prison walls - and his brilliant translation of it into compelling radio was a true beacon of originality. We all knew then that the Charles Parker Award was set to break new ground and reveal blistering new talent.

In thirteen years, there have been so many wonderful, unforgettable prizewinning pieces: Ruth Anne Lynch told of her family's return to Guyana, Jimmy Ewing described life in a Leeds mortuary while Hana Walker-Brown's narrative, *Four Metal Plates*, featured a young man whose lively night out resulted in cranial surgery. We've crowned stories of migration, of marriage and family breakdown and, less

gruellingly, of the bathing pool on Hampstead Heath and of a homeless pigeon-fancier of Trafalgar Square. Beachy Head was the location for Adam Allinson's utterly compelling and thrillingly professional longform feature *Life on the Edge* about suicide at the famous beauty spot while Joe Ovenall's *Black Shuck* told of a legendary hound that was said to haunt medieval East Anglia.

It was little surprise, then, that 2017's crop of nominees was as rich and diverse as ever. The judges were Gillian Reynolds, veteran radio critic of *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph* and now *The Sunday Times*, Clare Jenkins of Pennine Productions and Philip Sellars from the BBC, with Simon Elmes, CPA Trustee, as Chair.

It was a closely fought contest in 2017. Decisions were hard won, and a record six nominees took the stage in Sheffield for the prize-giving. The University of Sunderland was crowned with two of them: student Angela Burns presented *Cleaning out the Closet* - a harrowing story of her own mistaken arrest fifteen years before. In completely contrasting vein, her fellow alumna RJ Phoenix composed a beautifully realised sound portrait of anaesthesia, as the clouds of melodic oblivion closed around its subjects. *The Travellers* was a great piece of radio, said the jury.

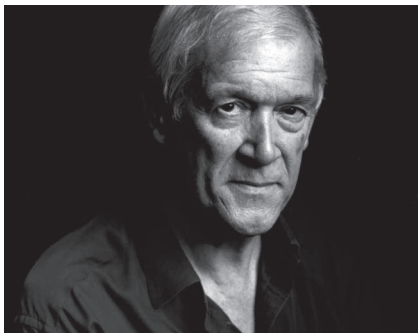
As for the prizewinners, Astrid Hald from Goldsmiths, University of London, made *Outlander*, a richly topical piece about an Afghan refugee boy being smuggled back to Norway: 'an engrossing listen, the memory of which stays with me,' was one juror's opinion. Astrid won a Bronze Award, which was in 2017 for the first time ever

declared a dead heat. Sharing the prize was Hester Cant of the University of Westminister. *Her Broth, Swede and Tofu* is a colourful and entertaining celebration of world food on the streets of London - "a skilfully textured, multi-layered feature" according to the judges.

In second place with the Silver Award came Laura Irving of the University of Bournemouth. Her short programme, *Quiet Revolution*, teased and tempted the listener with its mysterious and witty first-person account of a nighttime rollerskating expedition to a local park by a forty-something woman. 'A poised - quite simple-sounding, but complex in terms of ideas and sound - unpeeling of one woman's middle-aged angst and dreams...' according to the judges.

But the winner - with unanimous approval and a particularly high score in the marks awarded for its Charles Parker-esque qualities of rawness and honesty and sheer humanity - was *Heavy Toll*, by Tabitha Konstantine of the University of Salford. It's the tale of two railway workers, a train driver and a guard, who both had confronted the horror of suicides on the iron road. A remarkable piece of storytelling, it was constructed round two intimate interviews that painted, in the words of the judges, 'a horribly vivid, very human picture of train suicides and their effect on train staff.'

On the inside I was an absolute mess; I was rattlin'. And I like to think that I didn't allow passengers to see that. I went back to my cab at the back of the train and just sat down for a minute. And everything just kind of caught up to me - and I did rattle and my hands were shakin'.



Peter Cox reviews Peggy Seeger's *First Time Ever*, a Memoir

I confess to bias. I know Peggy. I know she can sing, talk, tell a story, skewer an unconsidered opinion, especially from a man. But that she could write? And how she writes!

FIRST TIME EVER



First Time Ever is an unflinchingly honest series of tales from her life taking us from her upbringing in Washington DC, via a growing-up-fast couple of years in Europe after the death of her adored 'folk song lady' mother, then to London and to Ewan MacColl. And to the *Radio Ballads*. At 22 she was whirled, daunted but undaunted, into orchestrating *The Ballad of John Axon* for its kindly but demanding and irascible producer Charles Parker. Despite being steeped in music from the time she could speak and sing and strum, she admits to naivety and a certain technical ignorance. She 'wrote for the English concertina as if it was an accordion', realising later that 'Alf Edwards had been playing the impossible.' Someone found her a *Guide to Orchestration*, saying it would put everyone out of their misery. The ferociously talented Peggy learned fast.

Flummoxed as to how to word my own review when the book has already met such wide critical acclaim, I looked again at two of the chapters at random. In one she reflects on that same Alf Edwards, one of the unsung heroes of the Folk Revival. She movingly describes how Alf (whose mother, a fiddle-playing circus tightrope-walker, had given him sixpence per instrument learnt - hundreds of characters like this people the book) taught her to play the English concertina. New instruments normally came easily but this presented a counter-intuitive struggle. She managed it, of course, and it appears among her gallery of instruments at every concert. At the end of the chapter she laments that life was too hectic for her to travel to

see Alf in the last years of his life, when his once-agile and trustworthy fingers were blighted by Parkinsons. Unlike most, she admits to every shortcoming.

The Women Who Came to Work chapter tells of the most intense period of her life. Dashing around playing and singing all over the country, she had two lively small boys at home (now lively collaborators - she now to her delight performs with both). Peggy needed help, because Ewan's hard-bitten mother, who ran the household with an obdurate independence, was well over 70. The diminutive Betsy saw each potential help as a threat. The chapter is laugh-out-loud funny, as Peggy characterises each doomed newcomer. The young Sandra Kerr, now an eminent performer and teacher, stayed a gallant year, but others - young and old, mad and sane - came and went with increasing frequency. Peggy is candid about Betsy: '...she was the anvil on which I was forged. She was hoping to create an adversary with whom she could have a fair fight. Her real adversary was Life itself but I was within reach.' Yet, typically, Peggy recognises that Betsy's character was an inevitable result of the gruelling life she'd led, caring for a sick and suicidal husband, fiercely protective of her only child to have made it past a second birthday.

Peggy's thirty-year relationship with Ewan MacColl, an all-consuming meeting of musical and political minds and bodies, is the central core of the book. She doesn't shirk from describing its testing beginnings, starting in a smoky

basement and culminating in the moment she finds herself stranded in France, pregnant, without a visa. How to get back to England to her child's father? And what of his being already married - to a wife once more pregnant as well? She takes us through their Singers Club and controversial Critics Group years, recorded by Charles Parker, an avid devotee of MacColl. Of Parker, originally a stiff religious Tory, wary of the working class and suspicious of the travelling community, she says:

"He became one of the most generous people I've ever known... More than anyone else I've known in my life, Charles turned himself around."

Above all the book is a testament to Peggy's shrewd assessment of character - she is especially unsparing of her own - and to her generosity of spirit. Written with wit and an original way with words, it is a tapestry of sharp pen-portraits and compelling stories, threaded through with her determination to make the world a better and fairer place, against all that uncaring capitalism and vested interests can throw at us.



The Charles Parker Trust was founded in 1982. This is what we do:

The Charles Parker Day celebrates the radio feature, past present and future, and was initiated in 2004 by Professor Sean Street, at Bournemouth University.

The Charles Parker Prize for Radio Features an annual award, open to UK students studying creative audio feature-making offering opportunities to the next generation of programme makers.

Digitisation of the Parker Archive, in partnership with the Library of Birmingham, safeguarding over 5000 original recordings, production files and letters.

Availability: advising and encouraging the use of the archive material in projects with companies such as Falling Tree, Cast Iron Radio and Rural Media.

Friends of the CPA are tremendously important and valuable to the Trust.

Becoming a member entitles you to a free copy of the new magazine and back copies of the Annual Report, a special concessionary rate for Charles Parker Day, plus the opportunity to have a say in the future of the Charles Parker Archive.

You can become a Friend by completing the form on page 15, which is also available on the Charles Parker website www.cpatrust.org.uk.

The Trustees - We are fortunate to have Trustees with a wide range of experience and skills in Radio and elsewhere. This year we welcome as our Treasurer Mark Newman, who succeeds Charles Parker's son Matthew, who has retired from the Trust after 35 years. Mark is a radio producer at BBC WM in Birmingham, where he's been since 2004. Previously he was breakfast show producer at Birmingham station BRMB and was part of Zoe Ball's breakfast show team at Radio 1.

Actuality Magazine has this year been edited by Peter Cox, assisted by Sheelagh Neuling and Phil Maguire. Design and art direction by Jamie Ellul at Supple Studio.

Our heartfelt thanks to the **Library of Birmingham** for providing the CPA with a home, and to all of you Friends, Trustees, and Archive users for your continuing support.

And a special thank you as well to **The British Library** for hosting the Charles Parker Day in 2018.

We look forward to hearing from any of you who have questions about, or suggestions for, the future development of the CPA.

Mary Kalemkerian
Mary Kalemkerian, Chair of The Charles Parker Archive Trust

Friends of the Charles Parker Archive Membership subscriptions

We invite you to join the Friends or to renew your subscription. Membership entitles you to an Annual Report, to concessionary prices for publications in print or sound, and to be actively involved in the future of the Archive.

The subscription rates are:

Organisations and families £15.00

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Unwaged £5.00

Additional donations are much appreciated, and there is added benefit if UK taxpayers contribute under the Gift Aid system.

Please complete this form and return it to the Treasurer of the Trust:

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Charles Parker Day 2019 - Bournemouth Calling!

A founder of the Charles Parker Trust and the pioneer of Charles Parker Day, Seán Street - Emeritus Professor of Radio, Bournemouth University, introduces us to Charles Parker's birthplace, the perfect host for Charles Parker Day 2019.

In 2004, I was director of the Centre for Broadcasting History Research (now Media Research) at Bournemouth University, and in that year we held the first Charles Parker Day at the Miramar Hotel, overlooking the sea on the town's East Cliff. Bournemouth was and is an auspicious place to study broadcasting history, and in particular radio. It was in January 1898 that Guglielmo Marconi came to Madeira House at the Pier Approach to set up an experimental wireless station; at that time he was testing the new technology's potential for transmitting across water, and his team relayed signals between the Isle of Wight and Bournemouth throughout that spring and summer, relocating to the Haven Hotel, Sandbanks, in neighbouring Poole in September the same year.

The area has other radio connections; one of the first stations operated by the British Broadcasting Company, 6BM, was established in October 1923 here, and much later, in the early 1960s, when the BBC was experimenting with the concept of local radio, Poole was one of the chosen sites. All this makes the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation an interesting place to be for a student of electronic media,

but above all it is the fact that one of the giants of sound features, Charles Parker, was born here in April 1919 that catches the radio imagination.

At the outset, Charles Parker Day was established with the intention of commemorating not only Parker and his work, but the radio documentary itself, with our mission statement declaring that we were 'celebrating the radio feature, past, present and future.' Among the speakers on that first day were Piers Plowright and Gillian Reynolds, and the event launched what has become one of Parker Day's most significant contributions, the Charles Parker Prize for Student Radio Features; then as now, the chair of the judges was Simon Elmes. Between 2004 and 2008, subsequent Days alternated between Bournemouth and Birmingham; from the start, it was the hope and intention that this would become an annual event, and that it would be peripatetic.

By 2009, as I neared retirement, Andy Cartwright and I discussed plans for a succession, and after the sixth CP Day, held at the National Media Museum in Bradford, Andy took up the reins. That it has now become the nationally recognized annual event it is today is down to his tireless work and extraordinary powers of vision and inventive development, and I owe him a heart-felt debt of gratitude. And now Charles Parker is coming home for his centenary; it is a source of personal pleasure and pride for me that the town of his birth will again play its part in celebrating one of its greatest sons, and one of radio's most innovative and creative spirits. Bournemouth Calling!

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*“He became one of the most
generous people I’ve ever known,
bending over backward to share
himself, his time, his ideas,
his skills.”*

**Peggy Seeger from
First Time Ever, a memoir**