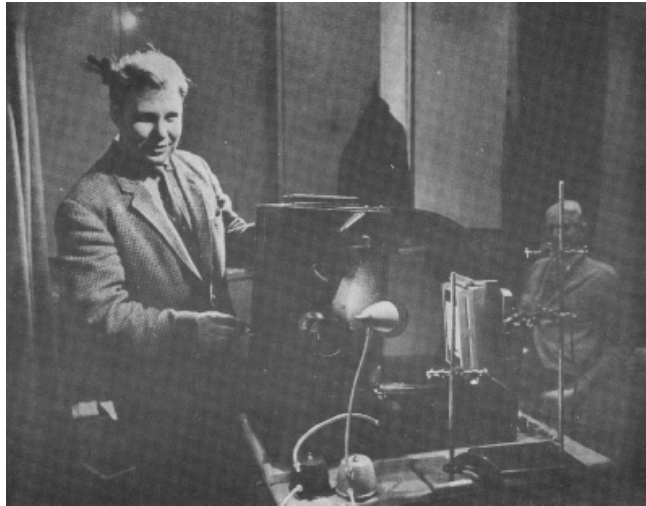


Heard and Seen!



Not the oldest cameraman in the business but certainly the oldest camera. The photograph shows Guild Council member Derek Brady with a 30-line camera made up from original Baird parts. Note the Nipkow disc and the chequered fading board. The photograph was taken at the ILEA's studios when the first play ever broadcast on television was reconstructed and recorded by ILEA teachers and staff in collaboration with Baird engineers. The man seated in the photograph is Lance Sieveking, who produced the original play and came out of retirement to produce this reconstruction. The 30-line transmission was recorded on 1/4" audio tape and shown on an original Baird receiver of 128 vintage at the Ideal Home Exhibition of 1968.

The play was Luigi Pirandello's "The Man with the Flower I his Mouth". It was transmitted at 3.30 on the afternoon of Monday, 14 July 1930 from the Baird studio at 133 Long Acre. It was broadcast on the National Programme of the BBC, vision transmitted on 356 metres and sound on 261 metres, medium wave. The play has three characters; Gladys Young was cast as the woman, the man was Val Gielgud and the customer Lionel Millard. Val Gielgud had 'flu and Earl Gray took his place on the day. George Inns was the effects boy operating the fading board.

At the start of transmission, a caption photograph of Lance Sieveking was shown whilst an aluminium disc recording was made for 6d at the end of Southwold pier was played. On it, Lance Sieveking made an explanatory announcement. Through an oversight, the photograph used was in profile. This turned out to be useful as several letters arrived later from as far away as Dublin and Lisbon asking why the speaker stood sideways to the camera and how he managed to speak without moving his lips!

There were two experimental sessions before the transmission and one note of interest from the second session before on June 24th 1930 reads, "There are a number of minor points of interest, one of which only is of sufficient importance to mention here. That is, a very satisfactory effect of perspective is obtained in a picture in which the back of the nearest speaker's head is seen, while beyond it, smaller, the face of his vis-à-vis."

A quote from the first experimental session reads: "I have devised a production method, and a television dramatic script, which I hope may be the foundation of the future technique. A copy of the script is attached."

It bears a striking resemblance to a script of today. It contains 29 shots, all on one camera.

The final word is a quote from the BBC Year Book of 1931: "The experiment is still too recent for its implication to be grasped. It is possible that all the lessons learnt since the first play was broadcast will only need to be forgotten."

Nothing's changed!