

ALAN WHICKER COLLECTION DONATED TO BFI NATIONAL ARCHIVE

London - Thursday, 5th May 2016. The BFI National Archive is pleased to announce that it has received the archives of pioneering investigative TV journalist, Alan Whicker, donated by Valerie Kleeman, Whicker's World Foundation. The collection contains meticulous records of one of the most enduring and influential careers in British television history, spanning the late 1950s into the 21st century.

This is an extensive and significant donation covering the entire career of a world-renowned broadcaster, and represents a unique insight into the production methods of a master documentarian. Alan Whicker's name is a by-word for brilliantly crafted and revealing studies of people and places, whether exploring behind the scenes of the Miss World competition, interviewing Papa Doc in Haiti, or exposing the lifestyles of the hippies of San Francisco, with an enquiring mind and a sceptical tone. This unlikely figure, clad in Gucci tie and blazer, found his way into the nation's hearts as he went where his audience was unlikely to follow.

The meticulously kept Alan Whicker archive spans the years 1938-2014. It includes a school report from 1938, documents relating to his war career and letters, photographs, extensive production files, audience reports, interview notes and questions (including Whicker's hand-annotated question cards) and transcripts of every TV programme he made, along with some, as yet, unidentified films. The archive gives an insider's view of some of the key events, social trends and personalities of the 20th century, while fully documenting the changing world of television reportage across more than five decades.

The material will be stored at the BFI National Archive's paper store at Berkhamsted where it joins over 600 named collections from individuals such as producers Michael Balcon, David Puttnam and Betty Box, directors including David Lean, Joseph Losey, Michael Powell, Carol Reed, Mike Hodges, Muriel Box and Derek Jarman, writers such as Emeric Pressburger, Janet Green and Trevor Griffiths, and documentary filmmakers such as Humphrey Jennings, Derek Armstrong and Michael Orrom. Among the most recent additions to the collection are the archives of Ken Loach, Alan Parker, Jenny Beavan, Richard Lester, Karel Reisz, Jack Clayton and Halas & Batchelor. The Whicker papers will be able to be consulted by researchers and students of television history once cataloguing is fully completed.

Robin Baker, Head Curator, BFI National Archive said, "This is a major collection that gives us a unique insight into one of the great figures of 20th century television. Alan Whicker was a household name, famed for his daring and insightful investigations of people from all walks of life, from close to home and around the globe. His standards were meticulously high and

his programmes set a benchmark for longform television documentary. The Alan Whicker collection is a very generous and important donation from Valerie Kleeman of the Whicker's World Foundation, for which we are extremely grateful. We're delighted that Whicker's papers are now part of the national collection of film and television. "

Valerie Kleeman, Whicker's partner in life and work for over 40 years and founder of the Whicker's World Foundation said, "The Whicker's World archive is now where it belongs – in the safekeeping of the BFI – where, I hope, its content will be of help and guidance to generations to come.

The 90 boxes, carefully curated by archivist Catherine Kirby, contain an intimate and personal take on the last half of the 20th century. Beginning with a letter informing him he has passed his School Certificate and continuing throughout his life in the Army Film and Photographic Unit, journalism and television, Alan Whicker observed both the light and the shadows of life.

Often he witnessed history in the making: war trials in Strasbourg, race riots in Alabama. He had access to the unaccessible: dictators, witch doctors, cults – and even the occasional royal. 'Whicker's World' covered everything from bullfighting and the first gay weddings to the horrors of Papa Doc's Haiti, always with intelligence, often with humour.

Whicker wrote and filmed what he saw, he had no preconceived ideas, no axe to grind. His motivation was to stimulate, to interest, to entertain.....and to allow viewers to come to their own conclusions.

The archive contains 60 years of carefully documented work: transcripts, notes, diaries and photographs, a lifetime of watching the world through thoughtful, quizzical eyes."

Alan Whicker CBE (1921-2013) was a renowned journalist, broadcaster and television presenter. During the Second World War he joined the Army Film and Photo Unit, and by the 1950s he was working as a foreign correspondent for a Fleet Street agency, and then as a broadcaster for BBC Radio. In 1957 he was spotted by producer Alasdair Milne (later Director-General of the BBC) who gave him a regular 'Whicker's World' slot on the ground breaking Tonight programme. This paved the way for the longer format *Whicker's World* which began in 1965 and ran for 40 years on the BBC and ITV.

His reportage spanned the globe and covered a huge range of subjects which reflect all aspects of 20th century culture, politics and history. These include race relations, gay marriage, gun culture, bullfighting, haute couture and interviews with significant (and often controversial) figures of the 20th century, for example, Francois Duvalier ('Papa Doc'), the notorious Haitian dictator, and oil billionaire John Paul Getty. At the height of his popularity Whicker's programmes commanded audiences of 15 million people. Whicker's work was also significant in terms of style and format, for example, he was an early pioneer of the 'blue light' programme, a format that is now well-established and perennially popular

(shadowing police in their daily and nightly duties). Alan Whicker is a significant cultural figure and a household name for a whole generation. He won many awards during his career including the BAFTA Richard Dimbleby Award and the Screenwriters' Guild Best Documentary Script (in 1963). His legacy lives on through the Whicker's World Foundation which supports new documentary talent.

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead organisation for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger.

About the BFI National Archive

The BFI National Archive was founded in 1935 and has grown to become the one of the largest and most important collections of film and television in the world with over 180,000 films and 750,000 television programmes. For over 80 years the BFI has been an international leader in film preservation and guardian of Britain's unparalleled film and TV heritage. The BFI is an innovator in presenting films to audiences in new and dynamic ways, from cinemas to film festivals, outdoor events to online video-on-demand. At the heart of all its activities is the BFI's central aim to ensure that everyone in the UK has access to the widest possible range of film and their own film heritage.

That heritage includes all time great British directors Alfred Hitchcock, David Lean and Powell and Pressburger; and the rich vein of documentary filmmaking, in which Britain led the world, including the lyrical work of Humphrey Jennings. The archive also boasts a significant collection of filmmakers' papers as well as extensive stills, posters and production and costume designs along with original scripts, press books and related ephemera.

Expert teams undertake the time-consuming and complex task of restoring films at the BFI John Paul Getty Jr Conservation Centre in Hertfordshire. The BFI's most precious film

materials are kept in optimum conditions in the world-leading Master Film Store in Warwickshire.

Stills

A selection of stills for press use in connection with this story can be found at:
[www.image.net/BFI/BFI National Archive/Whicker](http://www.image.net/BFI/BFI%20National%20Archive/Whicker)

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