

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London		
Unit of Assessment: 34 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management		
Title of case study: Enhancing the Availability, Curation and Public Awareness of Television's Forgotten Dramas		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2013-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Professor John Hill	Professor of Media	2004-date
Dr Lez Cooke	Senior Research Officer	2013- 2018
Dr Billy Smart	Research Officer	2013-2017
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact Research into the history of 'forgotten' television drama at Royal Holloway has extended the programming, availability and appreciation of neglected television of the past through restorations, public screenings, events, talks, online postings and DVD releases. The research has also led to changes to the policies and practices of broadcasting archives, and other cultural bodies, enabling new and enhanced forms of programme access for researchers and educational users.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research Research at Royal Holloway into the history of UK television drama (experimental drama, radical drama and 'forgotten' television drama) has made a significant contribution to scholarship through the examination of work that has been critically neglected and rarely included in standard television histories. The research has involved a range of case-studies of individual plays and series that uncover the 'hidden' histories of television drama and identify the technological, economic and cultural factors that account for their critical and academic neglect (R1 to R6). In doing so, the research has also made the case for the artistic, cultural and political importance of 'forgotten' works and indicated the ways in which they invite a revision of traditional histories of television drama.</p> <p>By prioritising the investigation of 'forgotten' works, the research has also highlighted the role played by broadcasters, exhibitors, distributors, curators and archivists in shaping television history and 'canons' through policies of preservation, digitisation and access. Television archives have traditionally prioritised preservation and commercial use. However, even with the advent of digitisation and new forms of content delivery, the bulk of British television drama from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s still remains difficult to access and view. This is particularly so if the work originated from the regions and nations beyond London and, by examining drama from the English regions, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the research has identified a degree of correlation between 'regionalism' and absence from the television 'canon'. This, in turn, is shown to be linked to professional conceptions of cultural and economic 'value', as well as financial and legal concerns regarding format, cost and copyright, that have limited access to the full range of television of the past and inhibited the study of it.</p> <p>In these ways, research into forgotten and critically neglected television drama has broadened the range of television conventionally discussed in television histories and challenged some of the discourses of value and significance that underpin both academic discussion and archival and curatorial practices. As such, the research has also highlighted how the policies and practices of broadcasters, arts institutions and archives have governed access to forgotten television drama and indirectly shaped television historiography and discourses of canonisation (R1 to R6).</p>		
3. References to the research		

1. Hill, J. (ed.) (2013). *Journal of British Cinema and Television*. Special Issue on 'Radical Television Drama', 10:1, 149pp. Includes 'Introduction', 106-11, and 'From *Five Women to Leeds United!*: Roy Battersby and the Politics of "Radical" Television Drama', 130-150. Full edition available: <https://www.eupublishing.com/toc/jbctv/10/1> and listed articles also available from HEI on Request. QI: Double peer-reviewed in leading academic journal submitted to REF2014.
2. Smart, B. and Wrigley, A. (2016). 'Television history: archives, excavation and the future. A discussion'. *Critical Studies in Television*, 11:1, 96-109. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1749602015618634>. QI: Double peer-reviewed in leading academic journal.
3. Cooke, L., Hill, J. and Smart, B. (eds) (2017). *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*. Special Issue on 'Forgotten TV Drama', 37: 1, 159pp. Includes: 'Introduction' (co-authored), 1-4, 'Forgotten, Neglected and Lost : The Television Play in the early 1950s – The Case of *Anastasia* (1953) (Cooke), 24-33, 'Drama for People "in the know": *Television World Theatre* (BBC 1957-1959) and *Festival* (BBC 1963-64)' (Smart), 34-48 and 'Dominic Behan and the Beginnings of Television "Troubles" Drama' (Hill), 65-81. Full edition available: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/chjf20/37/1> and listed articles also available from HEI on Request. QI: Double peer-reviewed in leading academic journal.
4. Cooke, L. (2017). 'Six and Five More: Experiments in Filmed Drama for the BBC', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, 14: 3, 298-323. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3366/jbctv.2017.0375>. QI: Double peer-reviewed in leading academic journal.
5. Hill, J. (2017) "'Political fantasy in a realistic situation": the *Scotch on the Rocks* (BBC 1973) controversy', *Visual Culture in Britain* 18: 3, 342-61. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14714787.2017.1396915>. QI: Triple peer-reviewed in leading academic journal.
6. *Forgotten Television Drama: Uncovering the Lost History of British TV Drama* (2013-date), <https://forgottentelevisiondrama.wordpress.com>. QI: a website consisting of over 130 posts including invited conference papers, predominantly written by Cooke, Hill and Smart, that partly provide the basis for a forthcoming book *Television's Forgotten Dramas* to be published by Palgrave Macmillan.

References 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are outcomes of the peer-reviewed AHRC-funded research project AH/K002953/1: The History of Forgotten Television Drama in the UK 1946-82 (£535,204).

4. Details of the impact

Royal Holloway's research has increased public access to little-known television dramas, enhanced how historical television materials are curated, and influenced the policies and practices of television archivists. It has also enriched awareness and appreciation of television heritage. Beneficiaries include cinemas, arts organisations, DVD distributors, broadcasters, television archivists and a range of audiences (including enthusiasts, researchers and the wider public). The impact has been achieved via collaborations with a range of international, national and regional bodies responsible for the screening, distribution and archiving of television heritage as well as public talks and blogposts on the Forgotten Television Drama website.

Enhancing the availability, and extending the programming and curation, of little-known television drama in public venues and on DVD

Research into forgotten television drama has increased the availability and appreciation of neglected television works through restorations, public screenings, events, talks, online postings and a DVD series. By focusing on critically neglected material, the screenings and DVD releases have extended the programming and curation of television material of the past by directing attention to previously unseen, or unknown, works and framing the material in ways that depart from the conventional, canonical categories of writer and director.

Royal Holloway's research into important but neglected dramas has led directly to the restoration of incomplete or at risk material. Cooke's research into BBC experimental drama of the 1960s (R4) encouraged the BBC to restore John McGrath's *The Day of Ragnarok* (1965) for screenings in London and then Manchester in 2017. Hill's research into forgotten Northern Irish

television drama (R3) led to the British Film Institute's restoration of the first 'troubles' drama of the modern era, Dominic Behan's *The Patriot Game* (1969). Banned in 1969 by ITV, this was later screened for the first time in Northern Ireland (accompanied by a talk from Hill). John D. Stewart's pioneering Belfast drama, *Worm in the Bud* (1959), was also restored by Studio Canal as a result of Hill's research. It then received its Irish 'premiere' at the Belfast Film Festival in 2017 prior to a release on DVD with viewing notes by Hill.

The research has also increased the availability of forgotten television drama, extended curation and programming practices, and enhanced awareness of television of the past through over 100 screenings (reaching audiences of approximately 4,000) across the UK. An initial season of ten 'Forgotten Dramas', curated by Cooke and Smart, took place at the National Film Theatre, BFI Southbank, in February 2015, showcasing a range of largely unknown work unearthed by the research (R3). This was followed by an even more popular second season of nine 'Forgotten Television Dramas', curated by Cooke, Hill and Smart, in 2017. Screenings averaged around 70% occupancy and, in the case of *The Hotel in Amsterdam*, sold out. Most of the screenings were accompanied by introductions and interviews with practitioners (conducted by Cooke, Hill and Smart) and audience feedback indicated a strong welcome for the opportunity to see and learn more about little-known television of the past. Completed questionnaires for the opening screening of the 2017 season indicated that, while 63% of respondents were previously unfamiliar with the work shown, 96% were 'quite likely' or 'very likely' to attend further screenings and seek out more forgotten TV dramas (S9).

The momentum achieved by the 'Forgotten Dramas' seasons led to further collaborations with the BFI involving the exhibition of neglected or marginalised work identified by the research: a season co-curated by Smart on forgotten women writers (October 2018) and a season of 'Forgotten Black TV Drama', co-curated by Cooke (February 2019). The latter attracted considerable press and social media attention, helping reshape perceptions of early 'black television drama' in Britain. A two-page article in the *Guardian* (print circulation 130,000; digital readership 830,000) praised the 'surprising, perceptive and eerily prescient' selection of material (S5). The contribution of Royal Holloway's research to the work of the BFI is recognised by BFI television programmer, Marcus Prince. As he explains: 'the research of the Forgotten Television Drama team has not only generated seasons that have extended the range and focus of programming at BFI Southbank but also added to audience awareness and appreciation of television plays that were largely "unknown" and outside the conventional television "canon"' (S1). Royal Holloway's research also boosted the availability and appreciation of 'Play for Today', with the BFI adding twelve new dramas from the series to its digital Mediatheque to coincide with the 2015 season of 'forgotten' screenings. Further impact was achieved by an AHRC-funded collaborative doctoral award with the BFI (starting 2019) focused on 'Play for Today at 50'. During 2020, this led to more screenings, an online exhibition in association with the BBC, blogposts, contributions to a BBC Radio 4 documentary and a well-attended online conference on the actual day of the 50th anniversary.

While the BFI provided a prestigious 'national' showcase for the research project's discoveries, programming across the UK was further broadened through screenings of 'forgotten' material in Birmingham (the Midlands Arts Centre in 2016, the Electric Cinema in 2018), in Manchester (Home in 2017) and at various venues in Belfast (in 2015 and 2017). These events and seasons focused on rarely-seen regional drama, providing local audiences with the opportunity to see material to which they would not otherwise have had access. The research also underpinned a series of screenings of material from HTV (Wales), Scottish Television, Ulster Television and the children's series *Grange Hill* in association with the classic TV organisation Kaleidoscope. These events not only presented rare and previously unseen material but also brought together academics, practitioners and fans in novel forms of dialogue relating to the value of 'forgotten' television. Royal Holloway's research also fed into Kaleidoscope's publicly-available database of television programmes, 'TV Brain', and enabled the research team to facilitate the same organisation's involvement in correcting and cleaning up BBC Genome, the BBC's digitised database of programme listings from 1923 to 2009 (S2).

The public screenings of material uncovered by the research have also been accompanied by the launch of a range of DVDs (featuring over 20 dramas) by the commercial distributor Network under the title of 'Forgotten TV Drama'. Described as 'a brilliantly enlightened enterprise' by the leading film and television magazine *Sight and Sound* (print circulation 15,000), and praised for the 'thorough and thoughtful' notes written by Cooke, Hill and Smart, these DVDs have consisted of a mix of single dramas, drama series and collections of *Armchair Theatre Archive* (S6). The DVDs have reached a range of audiences, achieving sales of around 10,000 at a time when the DVD market has been contracting (S7). All screenings and DVD releases have been accompanied by material on the Forgotten Television Drama website which has mixed academic and popular writing and attracted over 100,000 page views during the relevant period (S8). The 'Forgotten TV Drama' title has also emerged as something of a 'brand' (associated with a web presence, screenings, DVDs and publications) that has invested the research, and the issues associated with it, with a degree of popular currency and recognition (S10).

Influencing the practices and policies of archivists towards neglected television material and increasing access to it

The practices and policies of curators and archivists have been influenced through a survey of academic access, meetings with broadcasters, presentations to archivists, a conference on television access and committee memberships. The research has aided the unlocking of the UK's television heritage by encouraging broadcasters and archivists to broaden their definitions of 'significant' television drama and make previously unavailable material more accessible to both researchers and a wider public than ever before.

Representatives from the leading UK television archives - BBC, ITV and BFI - sat on the Forgotten TV Drama Advisory Board, and collaborated with the research team in enhancing access to forgotten material from the start of the project. The challenges involved in obtaining access to, and information about, archival holdings that the research identified led to the BFI and Learning on Screen teaming up with Hill to organise a conference on 'Television Drama: Archives, Access and Research' at BFI Southbank in 2017. This event involved representatives from the BBC, ITV, BFI, ERA (the Educational Recording Agency), Learning on Screen, the British Library, Network, Kaleidoscope, FOCAL and Higher Education institutions and provided an important stimulus to meetings, hosted by Royal Holloway, devoted to enhancing archival access to television of the past. These initiatives encouraged the BBC to add to the value of BBC Genome by launching its BBC Programme Explorer tool which led to 200,000 BBC programmes becoming much more readily discoverable by both researchers and the general public. Inspired by the conference and subsequent discussions of the difficulties facing researchers and teachers, the BBC Archive Editorial team also negotiated a major change in policy with ERA that permitted pre-1989 television material to be added to digital services for those in formal education. This led to the immediate addition of 1,000 pilot programmes (including numerous rare Plays for Today and other television dramas) to Learning on Screen's Box of Broadcasts which had previously been restricted in the age of material to which it could provide access. In 2020, the BBC also entered into legal agreements to provide an 'on-demand' service that enabled learners, educators and researchers to access millions of BBC holdings in a way that had not hitherto been possible. As Jake Berger of the BBC Archive Editorial team explains: 'In its demonstration of the historical and cultural value of neglected parts of the archive and the importance of overcoming the obstacles to obtaining access to it, the Forgotten Television Drama project has informed and helped to change the BBC's own policies and practices governing information about, and access to, its historic holdings, and contributed to a game-changing level of access to the BBC archive for Formal Learners in the UK' (S2).

Hill's research also led to invitations (in 2017) to join both the Royal Television Society Archive Group, whom he advised on new principles of archival access, and the Northern Ireland Film Heritage and Archive Working Group. Hill's collaborations with the Belfast Film Festival and Northern Ireland Screen have played a key role in making early NI drama publicly available and better-known. As a member of the NI Film Heritage and Archive Working Group, he has also contributed to the development of an archival strategy for the region and the securing of funds

for archival activity, including the digitisation of programmes in the Ulster Television archive and the NI listings magazine *Television Post*. This in turn has generated a collaborative doctoral award with Northern Ireland Screen and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland on 'Ulster Television in the 1960s: the unknown history' involving academic research, public engagement and the educational use of digitised materials. As Francis Jones, Heritage and Archive Manager at Northern Ireland Screen, confirms: 'Hill was the first... we invited to be part of the [Archive Working] group' and 'his knowledge and research has influenced and contributed to the formation of core archival strategy, furthering our ambitions to safeguard Northern Ireland's moving image heritage ...whilst ensuring access to such materials for academics, researchers and audiences today' (S3).

The influence of Royal Holloway's research upon the policies and practices of archivists is further demonstrated by Hill's involvement with the global body for television archives Fédération Internationale des Archives de Télévision/The International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT/IFTA). With Lisa Kerrigan of the BFI and Sue Malden of FOCAL (the Federation of Commercial Audiovisual Libraries), Hill undertook a survey of the archival access provided to academic researchers by IFTA members. Hill and Kerrigan reported on the survey's findings at the FIAT/IFTA world conference in Mexico City (2017) and the presentation was circulated to all IFTA members (consisting of over 250 archives worldwide). Hill's research has continued to provide a stimulus for increasing research access to, and research collaboration with, television archives. Following up on Hill's earlier initiative, FIAT/IFTA hosted a round-table on 'Academic Research and Audiovisual Archives' at its 2019 world conference in Dubrovnik (to which Hill contributed). Hill also delivered a presentation to senior archivists at the same conference on 'The Archive, the Canon and Access'. This drew on conversations with a range of UK television archivists and made the case for increased access to 'forgotten', non-canonical holdings. The importance of his contribution has been acknowledged by FIAT/IFTA President, Bríd Dooley who writes: 'Through his work with FIAT/IFTA, in the form of a survey, presentations of his research and associated discussions, Hill has succeeded in stimulating debate within the international archival community about 'forgotten' or neglected material, demonstrated the value of mining less well-known parts of the archive and helped to keep the question of academic access and its benefits at the forefront of the international archiving agenda' (S4).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- S1** Testimonial, TV Programmer, British Film Institute: corroborates the impact of the research on BFI programming, exhibition practices and access to previously unavailable material.
- S2** Testimonial, Executive Product Manager, BBC Archive Editorial: evidences the influence of the research on BBC archival policies and practices and resulting increases in levels of access.
- S3** Testimonial, Heritage and Archive Manager, Northern Ireland Screen: evidences the impact of the research on the archive and exhibition policies and activities of Northern Ireland Screen.
- S4** Testimonial, President, IFTA/FIAT (2017-2020): corroborates the influence of the research upon the international body responsible for television archives.
- S5** Article, *The Guardian*, 7 February 2019: <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2019/feb/07/britain-bfi-forgotten-black-tv-drama> evidences the impact of the research in increasing the availability of black TV drama and enhancing awareness of its forgotten history.
- S6** Two reviews, *Sight and Sound*, September 2017 and October 2019: evidences how the research has impacted upon DVD distribution, extending the range of TV drama available on DVD and enhancing understanding of unknown material.
- S7** Sales figures, Network: evidences the impact of the research in enhancing the availability of forgotten drama and extending its audience reach.
- S8** Website statistics, <https://forgottentelevisiondrama.wordpress.com/>: evidences the range and reach of material accompanying screenings and events.
- S9** Summary of audience questionnaire feedback, 2 February 2017: evidences audience appreciation of BFI screenings and subsequent enthusiasm for seeing more forgotten drama.
- S10** Website, <https://www.tvcentre.org.uk/>: evidences the impact of the research upon the activities and policies of a range of beneficiaries including the BBC, BFI, IFTA/FIAT, Northern Ireland Screen, Kaleidoscope, Network, regional cinemas and festivals.