

RAILWAY CUTTINGS

Second issue

Thanks...thank you all very much indeed for your overwhelming response and support....absolutely marvellous.

The questions that were posed in that first issue have, to a certain degree, been answered and I shall begin by quoting from a letter written by John Sparks, of Ipswich; John has this to say :-

".....replies that you receive from the BBC are written by professional letter writers.....they don't give a blank as long as they have fobbed you off. "

Okay, I'll buy that, especially since John goes on to say that in one reply he received, they blamed the Musician's Union, ! How would it be if we were to each write to the BBC asking after the possibilities of them re-showing the old "Hancock" T.V. shows, and then compare the replies that we get ? Could be very interesting.

NOW, Before I received John's letter, I had already written to EQUITY, here is their reply:-

" Thank you for your letter regarding programmes made by the late Tony Hancock.

This matter has not been raised by the BBC for several years. The previous discussions came to nothing, as the BBC were not prepared to agree to our request to pay repeat fees to the extras used in these programmes. As you can imagine we were not talking about large sums of money. It is a problem for the BBC to sort out and reach an agreement with us, and we are not the ones being unreasonable in this matter. "

O.K. ?

So, I thought, if we're not talking about large sums of money, perhaps we could raise it ourselves.....so, I wrote back, asking three basic questions; 1) How much money is involved ?

2) Did, at any time during negotiations, the names Roger Hancock or " Hancock Enterprises" come up in connection with copyrights.?

3) Is there any advice you could give me as to what action one might take to get negotiations re-started.?

The subsequent reply from the British Actors EQUITY Association was equally basic :-

" Thank you for your further letter about the Hancock series. The answers to your points are listed below:

- (a) REPEAT FEES : That information is not available. It is a matter between the artists/agents and the BBC
- (b) COPYRIGHT: That is nothing to do with Equity, so I'm not in a position to answer that point.
- (c) ADVICE: This is a matter for the BBC to negotiate with Equity, as the repeats are well outside the period that we allow. That is subject to negotiation, so it is a matter for the BBC to approach Equity.

Yours etc.

" THINGS SEEMED TO GO WRONG TOO MANY TIMES "

Since Tony Hancock died in 1968, apart from the initial series of repeat shows and the one showing of the " Blood Donor ", television's recognition of the value of Tony's work has been virtually nil.

At the time of writing, the BBC are repeating yet more of the american Phil Silvers Shows, while BBC 2 are allocating increasingly more time to minority interests, and yet, still, we have no news of any likelihood of being given the chance to see again those immensely popular shows that made Tony Hancock, above all others, the most loved comedian the world has ever known.

Why ?

My good friend, John Rees, who, incidentally, was instrumental in urging me to produce "Railway Cuttings", has a letter from BBC tv, stating that the reason for their not being able to show any "Hancock's is that Equity (the actor's union) have raised serious objections to the idea.

Here, I feel, is a matter to be given fuller investigation.

Can anyone supply an address for 'Equity' ?

And what of the ITV shows ?

Were they really wiped clean, or do they still exist ?

Who holds the copyrights ?

Who runs 'Hancock Enterprises' and where do they fit in to the puzzle ?

My first memory of Tony Hancock was that of watching his shows on a very small and extremely faulty TV set, many many years ago, while my parents, (heaven forgive them), were watching 'Coronation Street'.

Hardly surprising then that my desire for true quality in the recordings Hancock's works is not as great as my desire for the recordings themselves, (my much played recording of 'The threatening letter' was actually made during a particularly heavy thunderstorm but I can safely recommend the recordings made by John Rees of 261 Queens Road, Portsmouth, Hants, and I'm sure that he would be most receptive in making copies of any recordings in his possession. But this, really, is a matter for discussion, and this is what " Railway Cuttings " is all about - involving and being involved - to this end, I look forward to hearing from you soon.

yours faithfully,

Chris Bumstead.

This issue of "RAILWAY CUTTINGS" is being distributed to addresses in Birmingham, Oxon, London, Suffolk, Herts and Portsmouth. It is a private venture and the author seeks no re-imburements. If you know of anyone else who would definitely be interested in receiving further issues, please let me know. Thank you.

The next issue should reach you in four weeks time.