

Original citation:

Wallace, Richard. (2016) John Cura : pioneer of the television archive. Journal of British Cinema and Television, 13 (1). pp. 99-120.

Permanent WRAP URL:

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/87242>

Copyright and reuse:

The Warwick Research Archive Portal (WRAP) makes this work by researchers of the University of Warwick available open access under the following conditions. Copyright © and all moral rights to the version of the paper presented here belong to the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. To the extent reasonable and practicable the material made available in WRAP has been checked for eligibility before being made available.

Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

Publisher's statement:

Copyright © 2016 Edinburgh University Press.

Published by Edinburgh University Press. Published version:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/jbctv.2016.0298>

A note on versions:

The version presented here may differ from the published version or, version of record, if you wish to cite this item you are advised to consult the publisher's version. Please see the 'permanent WRAP URL' above for details on accessing the published version and note that access may require a subscription.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: wrap@warwick.ac.uk

John Cura: Pioneer of the Television Archive
- Dr Richard Wallace (University of Warwick)

Abstract:

This article examines the work of John Cura, a freelance photographer who took over half a million still images of British television programmes between 1947 and 1968. Called Tele-snaps, these photographs constitute an archive of British television from a period where only a limited quantity of programme material survives. Based on papers relating to Cura's work, available in the BBC's Written Archive Centre, the article details the development of Cura's relationship with the BBC as a freelancer, from his speculative attempts at securing clients in the late 1940s to his longstanding contractual work with production offices throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

Cura's interactions with the BBC also shed light on the development of British television in the period before 1970. The article documents the changes that took place in the BBC's photographic department in the early 1950s, when photographs for presentation and archival purposes ceased, as well as the concern that the Tele-snaps caused the BBC's legal team by raising questions about television images and copyright. In doing so the article raises questions about the way television was valued by those that made it, given that Cura was able to sustain a successful business for twenty years by creating a lasting record of a wide range of television programmes, many of which no longer exist in the BBC's archive.

Author's Details

Email address: Richard.wallace@warwick.ac.uk

Postal address (work): Department of Film and Television Studies, University of Warwick,
Millburn House, Coventry, CV4 7HS

Postal address (home): 17 Eagle Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV31 2AG

Telephone number (work): 02476 151143

Telephone number (mobile): 07745 520391

Biographical Note

Dr Richard Wallace has research interests in aspects of British film and television history, particular the ways in which historical research can cast light on contemporary technological, social and theoretical transformations. Richard has additional interests in the mockumentary form, international documentary and screen comedy. He is currently Research Fellow on the AHRC-funded Projection Project at the University of Warwick.

Keywords:

John Cura

Tele-snaps

British television

Copyright

Archives

Missing television

Photographs

Reconstruction

Everyday television

Television landmarks

Dr Richard Wallace agrees to this submission and can confirm that the article is not currently being considered for publication by any other journal.