



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

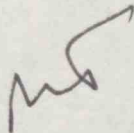
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Charles has asked me to point  
out the attached letter in  
today's Times.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sally".

SALLY

24.2.90

A handwritten mark or signature in black ink, possibly initials, located in the lower right area of the page.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Uncertain future of film archive

From Mr James Quinn  
Sir, I have read with concern Oscar Moore's article (February 15) about plans to "bulldoze" the National Film Archive to the extent that it may lose its identity as the cornerstone of the British Film Institute.

The NFA, the life work of the late Ernest Lindgren and his dedicated colleagues, has been known as the "role model", as your correspondent puts it, for over 50 years for film archives throughout the world. Between 1955 and 1957 the Government sought, in effect, to close down the BFI except for the archive, and it was especially important therefore at that time to emphasise the interdependence of the archive and the other departments of the BFI.

Times have changed, however, and to divest the NFA today of its special standing and limited autonomy could be hurtful to the institute as well as the archive. Increased and easier access to archive material and "greater streamlining" should be possible without "restructuring" the NFA on the lines proposed.

"Longer term profitability", if this were to depend on the sale of copyright in films the NFA does not own, would certainly lead, as Mr Moore observes, to the withdrawal of prints by the real owners. When the late Luchino Visconti made me a personal gift of an uncut version of his celebrated film, *La Terra Trema*, at the Venice Festival many years ago, I did not hesitate to present

the film in turn to the NFA. I might not do so today.

It may well be that changes in the administration of the NFA are needed, but the proposals adumbrated in your article suggest that important issues of policy are also involved. The Governors of the BFI will no doubt consider the implications of such changes before any decision is taken.

Yours faithfully,  
JAMES QUINN (Director,  
British Film Institute, 1955-64),  
Crescent Cottage,  
108 Marine Parade,  
Brighton, East Sussex.

From Lady Elton

Sir, The new director of the British Film Institute, Mr Wilf Stevenson, must be under the baleful influence of the *Zeitgeist* with his plans to exploit and market the resources of the National Film Archive for "enterprise culture".

Mr Stevenson would be well advised to read the article in *The Times* of September 26, 1961, suggesting that the NFA, richly replete with source material for history, should take its rightful place with eminent libraries, museums and art galleries.

The archive's continuing excellence is largely due to David Francis, whose premature retirement will be a disastrous loss to scholarship and to the status of archives. Historical records do not constitute an industry, not least when many of them are held on loan, or without copyright, and are hence not "marketable".

Yours faithfully,  
MARGARET ELTON,  
The Court, Clevedon, Somerset.

## Television on record

From Mr John Chittock  
Sir, The preservation of the colossal output of television hinges on a bizarre mix of commercial decisions and futurology, depending on whether the broadcaster sees on whether the life in it, or the archivist is able to recognise that one day it just may be historically important. Television material which goes out live may never even demand a later decision from the archivist — it is gone.

Although the National Film Archive struggles to preserve samples of television output, it does so on a severely limited scale. If a proper archiving activity had existed during the lifetime of John Grierson, the man who invented

the "documentary" film, we might not have lost most of his television series, *This Wonderful World*; or the BBC's studio presentation of the 1969 moon land; or ITV's first opera production, Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. Such losses are tragic.

The need for adequate funding to record a proportion of our daily television output, off-air, should parallel our concern for preserving the environment. If a city without old buildings is like an old man without a memory, a nation which destroys its televisual history is a nation blind to its own existence.

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN CHITTOCK, Chairman,  
The Grierson Memorial Trust,  
37 Gower Street, WC1.  
February 22.

## Seeking widows of Gallipoli

From the General Secretary of the Royal British Legion

Sir, On April 25, ministers, senior officers, and Service representatives from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and France will join the ranks of veterans and relatives to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings at Cape Helles and the Anzac beaches.

Although we lost some 36,000 soldiers and sailors in the bitterly fought nine-month campaign, one of the remarkable events was the successful withdrawal of all Allied troops from the Gallipoli Peninsula without a single loss of life.

The Royal British Legion will be taking a party of close relatives, including brothers, sisters, sons and daughters of men buried in the 31 Commonwealth War Grave Commission cemeteries. Our party will also include veterans who fought in the 1915 campaign; additionally there will be a doctor, nurse, and escorts accompanying the group.

The "Anzacs" will celebrate the anniversary of their first "blood- ing" with a dawn service on April 25 and will later, in company with all other visiting nations, attend the international service at the Turkish National Memorial. Then, at midday, the British, Australian, and New Zealand parties will hold services at their respective memorials.

The Legion administers the Ministry of Defence grant for war widows and there are still two vacancies available on our pilgrimage. If any of your readers know of a widow who lost her husband at Gallipoli and would like to visit his grave, I would be most grateful if you could put them in touch with me.

Yours faithfully,  
PHILIP CREAMY,  
General Secretary,  
The Royal British Legion,  
48 Pall Mall, SW1.  
February 16.

## Rudolf Hess affair

From Mr Hugh Thomas  
Sir, Mr Roy Davies (February 23) forgot to mention that *Timewatch* had only translated four paragraphs of an 11-page document. Readers may be interested to know that the actual document contained medical evidence of a near-fatal, high-velocity gunshot wound through the chest, with massive blood loss in the lung substance and pleural cavity and a consolidated lung.

CPS wishes to implement. The Treasury has finally endorsed this principle but is refusing to pro-

CPS funding

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