

**Long, Paul, Birmingham City University. "Inscribing the work of Philip Donnellan into documentary and other histories"**

Reflecting on obscured aspects of documentary history, Michael Chanan notes a 'particular kind of historical unfolding' in which influential films get forgotten, falling out of circulation and leading to the absence of the kind of canon one finds in other artistic fields. He argues that this effect was exacerbated by the coming of television whereupon documentary became 'part of the evanescent flow of programmes, as ephemeral as journalism and again rapidly disappearing into the big black hole of the archives, from which very few are now beginning, very selectively, to emerge' (Michael Chanan). Among the British filmmakers lost in this way he numbers the BBC's Dennis Mitchell and Philip Donnellan.

Donnellan's incomplete and uncatalogued archive is held at the City of Birmingham Archives, UK. This deposit represents a considerable set of materials for accessing and assessing, amongst other things: the development of television documentary; a particular period in the history of BBC broadcasting; post-war social history and, above all perhaps, Donnellan's neglected status and individuality as a film artist.

At the time of writing I am leading a project to explore this resource, funded by one of the UK's regional screen agencies under the auspices of its 'Digital Film Archive Fund'. This fund seeks to galvanize access to audio-visual archives under the broad themes of 'home' and 'citizenship'. This welcome support also indicates the instrumentalism that guides the way in which money can be accessed for the preservation and use of this archive, highlighting perennial issues for any scholar and media archivist.

This paper is an attempt to consider the nature of where Donnellan's practice and oeuvre sit in histories of broadcasting, of how to make sense of these in relation to an avowed commitment to inscribe his work in a wider consciousness and the contemporary politics of archives in general and the media archive in particular.

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