

Frank Carson, Sally James, Bob Monkhouse and Gordon Astley on Tiswas ITV/Rex

The Story of Children's Television From 1946 to Today exhibition will gather together footage, props and scripts from some of the nation's favourite childhood programmes. Staff at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum (The Herbert) in Coventry are creating the exhibition, and it will go on display at the museum from May to September 2015 before going on tour to other venues.

It's been nearly seven decades since Muffin the Mule trotted onto our screens (with the help of human sidekick Annette Mills), and since then generations of children have fallen in love with the characters and stories brought to life on their television sets.

At the beginning there was just a weekly one hour slot dedicated to younger viewers. Fast forward to today and more than 140,000 hours of children's programmes are broadcast every year across a growing number of channels, and new interactive platforms such as apps are transforming the way children access content.

The Herbert, run by Culture Coventry, has the support of the BBC and ITV, where many of the original television shows began. The Trust will also work alongside Kaleidoscope, Ragdoll Productions (makers of the Teletubbies) and the Children's Media Foundation.

Reyahn King, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: "Countless stories, characters and theme songs have come, gone or stayed on our television screens and every generation have their own favourite childhood programmes. However,

despite the central role they play in our culture the story of children’s television is under-researched. We’re delighted to support this project to give this story its own showing and bring together decades of memories for us all to enjoy.”

Original items such as the Tracy Island model built on Blue Peter and characters from The Wombles will be star features and no format will be left unexplored – from puppetry to CGI and live shows to dramas and fantasy.

Highly interactive and family friendly, the project and exhibition promise to be as entertaining as the programmes they’re exploring. Story-telling workshops, film screenings and other events, as well as a creative play space during the summer, will get people of all ages involved in the stories they already love and ones they are yet to discover. The exhibition itself will include an area where people can share their own memories, and sharing of memorabilia and photographs will be encouraged via online channels.

The University of Warwick is also working closely with the museum. The University's Department of Film and Television Studies is carrying out a research project examining the role children’s television plays in formation of memories and nostalgia, and their findings will create an added dimension for the project.

Other themes and questions will also play a part. What was the impact on the BBC when ITV was introduced? How has technology impacted on the use of puppetry and animation? What role does the digital age play in children’s programming?

Stephanie Brown, Director of Marketing at Culture Coventry, the trust which runs the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, said: “We are all extremely excited about re-living our childhoods from Captain Pugwash to Basil Brush and The Magic Roundabout, and there are many original artefacts and interactive features that will enthral adults and children alike. In many ways, The Story of Children’s Television is the story of all of our childhoods, helping us to shape our sense of who we were and of the world beyond ourselves.”

Visitors can see The Story of Children’s Television 1946 to Today exhibition at The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum from 22 May to 13 September 2015.

Notes to editors

About The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

The Herbert, Coventry's award winning museum and art gallery, celebrates the city's culture, history and arts. A registered educational charity, situated at the heart of the city centre, the Herbert is also Coventry's creative media centre and history centre. It brings under one roof the unique heritage and creative aspiration of one of Britain’s most historic cities.

The Herbert offers an innovative, imaginative and sustainable service to the people of Coventry, Warwickshire and the West Midlands. Since re-opening in 2008 after an extensive redevelopment, the Herbert has increased its audience to 340,000 visitors per year. Working in partnership across the museum and arts sector regionally, nationally and internationally, it uses its collections and exhibitions to engage with families and intergenerational audiences.

The Herbert's dynamic cultural programmes benefit Coventry and the surrounding region's economy; generating creativity, prestige, social cohesion and public and private wellbeing. The Herbert connects businesses with customers, artists with audiences and visitors with history, their heritage and future aspirations.

About Culture Coventry

Culture Coventry is the trust that manages four of Coventry's finest visitor attractions:

- Coventry Transport Museum, home to the world's largest collection of British road transport, including the two fastest cars in the world.
- The award-winning Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, which celebrates the city's culture, history and arts.
- The Lunt Roman Fort, a fully excavated and partially reconstructed turf and timber fort, including the only gyrus in the Roman Empire.
- The Priory Visitor Centre, where visitors can explore the excavated remains of Coventry's first cathedral.

Between them, the attractions proudly tell stories of Coventry's unique history to over 800,000 visitors per year from around the world.

Further information

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