

**CRAZY!—behind the scenes at TV's Top of the Pops!—Exclusive.**

# **RECORD & Radio MIRROR**

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7p

INSIDE:

**COCKNEY  
REBEL:**

The BIG  
new  
sensation?

**OSMOND~MANIACS**  
talk about their heroes  
—RRM special.

Keyboard ace  
**NICKY HOPKINS**  
hits out at some big-name stars!

AND:  
**NAZARETH**  
wish even  
Sassenachs  
A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR!





**It's number one  
it's the  
of the  
pop**







Robin Nash—  
producer



Bruce Milliard—  
director



Maurice Gallagher—  
programme assistant



Val Wilson—  
production assistant



Ann Mann—  
production assistant

## Mike Beatty meets TOTP's backroom boys and girls

Cassidy are now banned from the TV centre through no fault of their own. If we want them on the show we have to go outside to film them. Last time David Cassidy was over we had to go out to the airport to film him in an aircraft hanger.

"That was a weird day because somehow or another his suit had got lost on the way and he had absolutely nothing to wear. One of his entourage was sent out to buy another one. The one he came back with was white as requested alright, but it was also about five sizes too big. Poor David did the show with pins all over him in a haphazard tailoring job.

"It all went OK in the end though, but it was kind of weird filming in secret and believe me there was absolute secrecy. Virtually nobody was told. It was a bit like working for the French resistance. It's a shame we have to go to all these extremes but it's definitely necessary now."

But what is David really like. Is he friendly to work with? Is he professional?

"The first time he was on the show he seemed very aloof and unsure of himself" said production assistant Ann Mann, who was working on the show when he made his first appearance.

"He seemed to expect everything to be done for him and to be quite honest he was rather difficult. That was the time we had him on signing autographs and talking to Tony.

"However the show came off OK and that was what mattered. The next time he was on, we filmed him on the river and he was still a bit like a spoilt kid, but you could sense that he was improving and gaining more confidence."

"That was a bit frightening doing that bit because all these girls were throwing themselves into the river and trying to swim out to the boat.

"How none of them was drowned I will never know!

"But the last time he was on, when we went out to the airport, he was just great and a real gentleman. You could tell that he'd finally come to

terms with himself and he couldn't have been more courteous or amiable. He thought the whole bit about the suit disappearing was very funny and gave a great show even if he did have pins sticking into him.

"I don't think any of us really blame him for the times before. The pressure he was under in those early days must have been tremendous. Besides we've had a lot worse mannered people on."

But the whole business of the Osmonds and Cassidy not being allowed in is not only inconvenient but also costly. Polydor PR man Roger Holt had his problems on the Osmonds' last visit.

"I had to fly a whole film crew out to Germany for the day so that we could make a film for Top of the Pops. We filmed Donny, Marie and finally the Osmonds as a whole. It was a bit complicated suddenly having to arrange it in one day but we managed it."

But was it really worth it, just for those three songs to go out on Top of the Pops?

"Oh undoubtedly," he said. "Because apart from the films being used on Top of the Pops, they could also be used on programmes like Basil Brush and things like that. Besides apart from anything else, the promotional value of Top of the Pops is unbelievable. Record sales just leap after they've been on the show."

But how about the Osmonds, what were they like to work with?

"They couldn't be nicer. You really couldn't get a nicer bunch of blokes to work with if you tried. There's never any complaining and they're always on time. Real professionals."

The problems that have resulted from the fan mania are undoubtedly a nuisance, but they still don't stop the show from going out. But another time consuming business that keeps the production staff on the move are the letters and the telegrams that arrive for the Osmonds when they are on the show.

Last time, Top of the Pops received well over two hundred telegrams

for the group. A typical example still hangs on the office wall. Its addressed to Alan and Donny Osmond and is from a mother whose daughter is ill with glandular fever.

"Congratulations on your new record success it reads," and hopes for many more to come. If Donny could find time to call my daughter Anne Marie who is ill with glandular fever I know it would cheer her up."

It's all rather sad when you think that neither Donny nor Alan will probably ever see that message. All the mail was dutifully sent along to the record company and from there it will go on to the Osmonds' offices. There's simply just no time for them to read all the letters that are sent them, although I have it on good authority that they do do their best.

"I know that Donny went to see that girl who was knocked down by their car when she threw herself at it," said Anne. "But that was a different case. He actually saw it happen. But if he tried to answer all the requests that come in he'd never have any time to sing at all. It is a shame though."

But although the fans can pose a few problems for the Top of the Pops team, they'd all be the first to admit that the show wouldn't be the same without them and secretly I think they all like the excitement that goes with it all. Besides it's not always the fans that cause the trouble.

After the 500th show Keith Moon, drummer with the Who, managed to get himself banned from the BBC club bar.

"He just swept all the glasses and bottles right off the counter" said one of the bar staff. "All of a sudden, before we knew what had hit us, the whole lot landed on the floor with a resounding crash and everyone found

themselves wading knee deep in beer. He had to be forcibly removed I'm afraid."

This is just one of the reasons that there is tight security on the door every Wednesday night. Supposedly no one is allowed in without a club card unless they've been signed in by a club member.

Needless to say everyone who wants in usually gets in and both before and after the show most of the bands gather round for a chat and a drink. The roll call can often look like the Who's Who of the music business.

You're quite likely to see Noddy Holder of Slade chatting happily to Lyn Paul of the New Seekers, while Bev Bevan from ELO enjoys a quiet drink with Lynsey de Paul. Everything is amicable as a whole and a lot of groups who appear have to leave at eight to play a gig somewhere else. A few weeks back Mud rushed from the studios to get up to Sheffield where they were due that night. So you see it's not all glamour and glitter being a pop star!

But how about some of the other groups. What are they like to work with. Did the production team have any favourites?

"Not really" said Ann. "most of the people who come on the show couldn't be nicer. It's difficult to say who's the most popular. I know everyone loves Slade. They've been great ever since they first came on. During the afternoon when they're waiting for their rehearsal call you're quite likely to find them out in the canteen talking to some of the actors, or the ladies behind the tea bar. They're always ready to sign autographs and they're never late."

"I remember when they last made number 1, they invited everyone into the dressing room for a glass of champagne. They're

really very popular down here."

Another person who is well liked is Elton John. He once sent a bottle of champagne to everyone on the show. It turned out it was his birthday. He's always sociable and each time he goes on the show he's got some outrageous new outfit on that is the delight of the director Bruce Milliard who plans the camera shots.

Among Robin Nash's favourite bands is the Sweet.

"I guess I've always liked them, both as people and as a group. You see they were one of the first bands on when I started work on the show. Their costumes are always fantastic and bizarre, but they never go too far. Steve (Priest) occasionally has to be restrained a little in case he comes on looking completely like a girl, but it's usually OK!"

Bruce Milliard is a great admirer of Alice Cooper.

"I must admit, I thought he'd be very difficult to work with because of his stage act being so theatrically violent. But it wasn't the case. When I told him he couldn't use the snake in his act he said he quite understood and I don't think his act suffered because of it. The snake was kept locked in his dressing room and the only person who seemed even vaguely worried about it was the wardrobe master who wasn't too keen on going in."

"After the show he came up to the control booth and saw the film. He was incredibly pleasant and said thank you to everyone and told us how much he'd enjoyed doing the show."

"David Bowie's band were a bit different. They came up to watch and sat there giggling all through it I don't think they'd quite got used to seeing themselves on camera."

**Next week: Further amazing stories of what goes on behind the scenes at Top Of The Pops — the bit of "bother" with Rod Stewart; why the Beatles had to be towed into the studio; how Alan Price was mistaken for Jimi Hendrix; and much, much more!**

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IF YOU WERE to ask the majority of the commissioners and bar staff at BBC's television centre at White City which working day was their favourite, I can guarantee that none of them would say Wednesday. And why? Because that's the day they film Top of the Pops.

Yes, I'm afraid that Top Of The Pops, although no doubt a constant source of pleasure and delight to you at home, is not always regarded in that light by some of the people who, through no fault of their own, come into contact with the programme as outsiders.

One of the commissioners was actually bitten by an Osmond fan a few months back. He was, understandably, not pleased and was carted away growling to receive a tetanus injection from the nurse.

"You'd just couldn't keep them out" he told me. "I'd put my hand on the gate to make sure it was firmly closed when this girl grabbed my hand and bit it."

"That day was the beginning of the end as far as we were concerned. We complained and now any group that inspires this sort of fan mania has to be filmed away from the studio. We just couldn't cope."

Robin Nash, the programme's producer confirmed this.

"Yes I'm afraid it's true" he said ruefully. "The Osmonds and David