

UNESCO Kalinga Prize Winner – 1981

Sir David Attenborough



**A British Legend of Science Serials,
Britain's Best Known Natural History Film Maker
&
Arguably the World's Foremost Television Naturalist**

[Born: May 8, 1926 in London, England]

Mankind has Probably done more damage to the earth in the 20th Century than in all of Previous human history.

... David Attenborough

**"If we [humans] disappeared over right, the world would Probably be better off."
The Daily Telegraph, London, 12, November, 2005**

... David Attenborough

"It seems to me that natural world is the greatest source of excitement, the greatest source of visual beauty; the greatest source of intellectual interest . It is the greatest source of so much in life that makes life worth living."

... David Attenborough.

David Attenborough : A Biographical Profile

World's Best Known Broadcasters, Humanists and Naturalists



Born	: May 8, 1926 London, England
Residence	: Richmond, London
Nationality	: British
Field	: Naturalist
Alma mater	: Clare College, Cambridge (Natural Sciences)
Notable Prizes	: Order of Merit, Order of the Companions of Honour, Royal Victorian Order, Order of the British Empire, Fellow of the Royal Society

Sir David Frederick Attenborough, OM, CH, CVO, CBE, FRS (born on May 8, 1926 in London, England) is one of the world's best known broadcasters and naturalists. Widely considered one of the pioneers of the nature documentary, his career as the respected face and voice of British natural history programmes has endured more than 50 years. He is best known for writing and presenting the eight "Life" series, in conjunction with the BBC Natural History Unit, which collectively form a comprehensive survey of all terrestrial life. A ninth

series is in production. He is also a former senior manager at the BBC, having served as controller of BBC2 and director of programming for BBC Television in the 1960s and 1970s.

He is the younger brother of director and actor Richard Attenborough.

Early life :

Attenborough grew up in College House on the campus of University College, Leicester, where his father, Frederick, was Principal.^[1] He was the middle

of three sons (his elder brother, Richard, became a director and his younger brother, John, an executive at Alfa Romeo). During World War II his parents also adopted two Jewish refugee girls from Europe.

Attenborough spent his childhood collecting fossils, stones and other natural specimens. He received encouragement in this pursuit at age seven, when a young Jacquetta Hawkes admired his “museum”. A few years later, one of his adoptive sisters gave him a piece of amber filled with prehistoric creatures; some 50 years later, this amber would be the focus of his programme *The Amber Time Machine*.

Attenborough was educated at Wyggeston Grammar School for Boys in Leicester and then won a scholarship to Clare College, Cambridge where he studied geology and zoology and obtained a degree in Natural Sciences. In 1947, he was called up for National Service in the Royal Navy and spent two years stationed in North Wales and the Firth of Forth.

In 1950, Attenborough married Jane Elizabeth Ebsworth Oriel; the marriage lasted until her death in 1997. The couple had two children, Robert and Susan.

First Years at the BBC :

After leaving the Navy, Attenborough took a position editing children's science textbooks for a publishing company. He soon became disillusioned with the work, however, and in 1950 he applied for a job as a radio talks producer with the BBC. Although he was rejected for this job, his CV later attracted the interest of Mary Adams, head of the Talks (factual broadcasting) department of the BBC's fledgling television service. Attenborough, like most Britons at that time, did not own a television, and he had seen only one programme in his life. ^[2] However, he accepted Adams' offer of a three-month training course, and in 1952 he joined the BBC full time. Initially discouraged from appearing on camera because Adams thought his teeth were too big, ^[3] he became a producer for the Talks Department,

which handled all non-fiction broadcasts. His early projects included the quiz show *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?* and *Song Hunter*, a series about folk music presented by Alan Lomax.

Attenborough's association with natural history programmes began when he produced and presented the three-part series *The Pattern of Animals*. The studio-bound programme featured animals from London Zoo, with the naturalist Sir Julian Huxley discussing their use of camouflage, aposematism and courtship displays. Through this programme, Attenborough met Jack Lester, the curator of the zoo's reptile house, and they decided to make a series about an animal-collecting expedition. The result was *Zoo Quest*, first broadcast in 1954, which Attenborough presented at short notice, due to Lester being taken ill.

In 1957, the BBC Natural History Unit was formally established in Bristol. Attenborough was asked to join it, but declined, not wishing to move from London where he and his young family were settled. Instead he formed his own department, the Travel and Exploration Unit^[4], which allowed him to continue to front the *Zoo Quest* programmes as well as produce other documentaries, notably the *Travellers' Tales* and *Adventure* series.

BBC Administration :

From 1965 to 1969 Attenborough was Controller of BBC2. Among the programmes he commissioned during this time were *Match of the Day*, *Civilisation*, *The Ascent of Man*, *The Likely Lads*, *Man Alive*, *Masterclass*, *The Old Grey Whistle Test* and *The Money Programme*. He also initiated televised snooker. This diversity of programme types reflects Attenborough's belief that BBC2's output should be as varied as possible. In 1967, under his watch, BBC2 became the first television channel in the United Kingdom to broadcast in colour.

From 1969 to 1972 he was BBC Television's Director of Programmes (making him responsible overall for

both BBC1 and BBC2), but turned down the offer to become Director General of the BBC. In 1972 he resigned his post and returned to programme making

Major Series :

Foremost among Attenborough's TV documentary work as writer and presenter is the "Life" series, which begins with the trilogy: *Life on Earth* (1979), *The Living Planet* (1984) and *The Trials of Life* (1990). These examine the world's organisms from the viewpoints of taxonomy, ecology and stages of life respectively.



**Attenborough with a pair of albatrosses
in the series *Life in the Freezer***

They were followed by more specialized surveys: *Life in the Freezer* (about Antarctica; 1993), *The Private Life of Plants* (1995), *The Life of Birds* (1998), *The Life of Mammals* (2002) and his most recent, *Life in the Undergrowth* (2005), which concerned terrestrial invertebrates. *Life in Cold Blood* (dealing with reptiles and amphibians) is currently in post-production and due for broadcast in 2008. ^[5] The "Life" series as a whole currently comprises 74 programmes.

Attenborough has also written and/or presented other shorter productions. One of the first after his return to programme-making was *The Tribal Eye* (1975), which enabled him to expand on his interest

in tribal art. Others include *The First Eden* (1987), about man's relationship with the natural habitats of the Mediterranean, and *Lost Worlds, Vanished Lives* (1989), which demonstrated Attenborough's passion for discovering fossils. In 2000, *State of the Planet* examined the environmental crisis that threatens the ecology of the Earth. The naturalist also narrated two other significant series: *The Blue Planet* (2001) and *Planet Earth* (2006). The latter is the first natural history series to be made entirely in high-definition.

In May-June 2006, the BBC broadcast a major two-part environmental documentary as part of its "Climate Chaos" season of programmes on global warming. In *Are We Changing Planet Earth? And Can We Save Planet Earth?*, Attenborough investigated the subject and put forward some potential solutions. He returned to the locations of some of his past productions and discovered the effect that climate change has had on them.

In 2007, Attenborough presented "Sharing Planet Earth", the first programme in a series of documentaries entitled *Saving Planet Earth*. Again he used footage from his previous series to illustrate the impact that mankind has had on the planet. "Sharing Planet Earth" was broadcast on 24 June 2007.^[6]

Life in Cold Blood is intended to be Attenborough's last major series. In an interview to promote *Life in the Undergrowth*, he stated:

Once I have completed the reptiles series [...] that will be enough. It would complete the survey for me. I will have given a series to every group of animals and when that is done there would be 100 or so hours of DVDs on the shelf.^[7]

However, in a subsequent interview with *Radio Times*, he said that he did not intend to retire completely and would probably continue to make occasional one-off programmes.

Other Work :

In 1975, the naturalist presented a BBC children's series about cryptozoology entitled *Fabulous Animals*^[8]. This represented a diversion from Attenborough's usual fare, as it dealt with the creatures of myths and legends, such as the griffin and kraken. It was a studio-based production, with the presenter describing his subjects with the aid of large, ornately illustrated books.

From 1983, Attenborough worked on two environmentally-themed musicals with the WWF and writers Peter Rose and Anne Conlon. *Yanomamo* was the first, about the Amazon rainforest, and the second, *Ocean World*, premiered at the Royal Festival Hall in 1991. They were both narrated by Attenborough on their national tour, and recorded on to audio cassette. *Ocean World* was also filmed for Channel 4 and later released.

Between 1977 and 2005, Attenborough also narrated over 250 editions of the half-hour BBC1 nature series *Wildlife on One*^[9] (BBC2 repeats were retitled *Wildlife on Two*). Though his role was mainly to narrate other people's films, he did on rare occasions appear in front of the camera.

Attenborough also serves on the advisory board of BBC Wildlife magazine.

Achievements, Awards and Recognition :

- 1970 : BAFTA Desmond Davis Award
- 1974 : Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)
- 1979 : BAFTA Fellowship
- 1983 : Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS)
- 1985 : Knighthood
- 1991 : Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (CVO) for producing Queen Elizabeth II's Christmas broadcast for a number of years from 1986

- 1996 : Companion of Honour (CH) "for services to nature broadcasting"
- 2000 : International Cosmos Prize
- 2003 : Michael Faraday Prize awarded by the Royal Society
- 2004 : Descartes Prize for Outstanding Science Communication Actions
- 2004 : Caird Medal of the National Maritime Museum
- 2005 : Order of Merit (OM)
- 2005 : Nierenberg Prize for Science in the Public Interest
- 2006 : National Television Awards Special Recognition Award
- 2006 : Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (<http://www.ieem.net/>) - Institute Medal in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the public perception and understanding of ecology
- 2006 : The Culture Show British Icon Award (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/livingicons/bio01.shtml>)
- 2007 : British Naturalists' Association Peter Scott Memorial Award

On 13 July 2006, Attenborough, along with his brother Richard, were awarded the titles of Distinguished Honorary Fellows of the University of Leicester "in recognition of a record of continuing distinguished service to the University."^[10] David Attenborough was previously awarded an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree by the university in 1970.^[11]

In 1993, after discovering that the Mesozoic reptile *Plesiosaurus conybeari* had not, in fact, been in true plesiosaur, the paleontologist Robert Bakker renamed the species *Attenborosaurus conybeari* in Attenborough's honour.^[12]

Out of four extant species of echidna, one is named after him : Sir David's Long-beaked Echidna, *Zaglossus attenboroughi*, which inhabits the Cyclops mountains in the Papua province of New Guinea.

In June 2004, Attenborough and Sir Peter Scott were jointly profiled in the second of a three part BBC Two series, *The Way We Went Wild*, about television wildlife presenters. Part three also featured Attenborough extensively. The next month, another BBC Two programme, *Attenborough the Controller*, recalled his time as Director of Programmes for BBC2.

In November 2005, London's Natural History Museum announced a fundraising campaign to build a communications center in Attenborough's honour. The museum intends to open the David Attenborough Studio in 2008.^[13]

An opinion poll of 4,900 Britons conducted by *Reader's Digest* in 2006 showed Attenborough to be the most trusted celebrity in Britain.^[4] In a list compiled by the magazine *New Statesman* in 2006, he was voted tenth in the list of "Heroes of our time".^[15]

It is often suggested that David Attenborough's 50-year career at the BBC making natural history documentaries and traveling extensively throughout the world has probably made him the most travelled person on Earth ever.^[16]

His contribution to broadcasting was recognized by the 60-minute documentary *Life on Air*, transmitted in 2002 to tie in with the publication of Attenborough's similarly titled autobiography. For the programme, the naturalist was interviewed at his home by his friend Michael Palin (someone who is almost as well-travelled). Attenborough's reminiscences are interspersed with memorable clips from his series, with contributions from his brother Richard as well as professional colleagues. *Life on Air* is available on DVD as part of *Attenborough in Paradise* and *Other Personal Voyages*.

Favourite Attenborough Moments:

In April 2006, to celebrate Attenborough's 80th birthday, the public were asked to vote on their favourite of his television moments, out of twenty candidates. The results were announced on UKTV on 7 May. Each is given with its series and advocate:

1. Attenborough watching a lyrebird mimicking various noises (*The Life of Birds*, selected by Bill Oddie)
2. Mountain gorillas (*Life on Earth*, Sanjeev Bhaskar)
3. Blue whale encounter (*The Life of Mammals*, Alan Titchmarsh)
4. His description of the demise of Easter Island's native society (*State of the Planet*, Charlotte Uhlenbroek)
5. Chimpanzees using tools to crack nuts (*The Life of Mammals*, Charlotte Uhlenbroek)
6. A grizzly bear fishing (*The Life of Mammals*, Steve Leonard)
7. Imitating a woodpecker to lure in a real one (*The Life of Birds*, Ray Mears)
8. The presenter being attacked by a displaying male capercaillie (*The Life of Birds*, Bill Oddie)
9. Chimps wading through water on two feet (*The Life of Mammals*, Gavin Thurston)
10. Observing a male bowerbird's display (*The Life of Birds*, Joanna Lumley)
11. Watching elephants in a salt cave (*The Life of Mammals*, Joanna Lumley)
12. Wild chimps hunting monkeys (*The Trials of Life*, Alastair Fothergill)
13. Freetail bats leaving a cave and Attenborough holding one of their young (*The Trials of Life*, Rory McGrath)
14. Being threatened by a bull elephant seal (*Life in the Freezer*, Björk)

15. A wandering albatross chick and its parent (*Life in the Freezer*, Ellen MacArthur)
16. Spawning Christmas Island red crabs (*The Trials of Life*, Simon King)
17. In a tree with gibbons (*The Life of Mammals*, Steve Leonard)
18. Burrowing under a termite mound to demonstrate its cooling system (*The Trials of Life*, Björk)
19. Observing a titan arum (*The Private Life of Plants*, Alan Titchmarsh)
20. Timelapse footage of a bramble growing (*The Private Life of Plants*, Rory, McGrath)

Parodies and Artistic Portrayals :

Attenborough's accent and hushed, excited delivery have been the subject of frequent parodies by comedians, most notably Spike Milligan, Marty Feldman, *The Goodies* and *South Park*. Especially apt for spoofing is Attenborough's pronunciation of the word "here" when using it to introduce a sentence, as in, "He-eah, in the rain forest of the Amazon Basin..."

Attenborough is portrayed by Michael Palin in the final episode of Monty Python's *Flying Circus*, where he searches the African jungle for the legendary Walking Tree of Dahomey (*Quercus Nicholas Parsonus*), sweating excessively and accompanied by native guides wearing saxophones.

Attenborough also appears as a character in David Ives' play *Time Flies*, a comedy focusing on a romance between two mayflies.

In the documentary *In the Wild: Lemurs with John Cleese*, while trekking through the forest in Madagascar, Cleese points as if to have seen an exotic creature and exclaims, "It's David Attenborough!"

On an episode of *The Ricky Gervais Show*, Karl Pilkington speculates that David Attenborough is

likely careful not to kill any insect pests, imitating Attenborough's inevitable recognition that "that's where I make me money."

"Springfield Up", an episode of the animated series *The Simpsons*, portrays a documentary filmmaker, voiced by former Monty Python member Eric Idle, whose character is based on David Attenborough.

In the late 1980s, an Australian weekly programme called *The Comedy Company* featured a segment with "David Rabbitborough". He got around in a safari suit touring the Melbourne suburbs in the same format as Attenborough, but his specimens were human beings.

In the 1980s, a TV advertisement for Guinness featured an Attenborough impersonator investigating the odd 'species' of humans who prefer bland lager to flavoursome stout.

In a Finnish TV commercial, Attenborough is impersonated, looking at fireflies-until the lights are turned on by a studio employee going to a soft drink vending machine.

Views and Advocacy

Environmental causes :

From the beginning, Attenborough's major series have included some content regarding the impact of human society on the natural world. The last episode of *The Living Planet*, for example, focuses almost entirely on humans' destruction of the environment and ways that it could be stopped or reversed. Despite this, his programmes have been criticized for not making their environmental message more explicit. Some environmentalists feel that programmes like Attenborough's give a false picture of idyllic wilderness and do not do enough to acknowledge that such areas are increasingly encroached upon by humans.^[17]

However, his closing message from *State of the Planet* was forthright :

The future of life on earth depends on our ability to take action. Many individuals are doing what they can, but real success can only come if there's a change in our societies and our economics and in our politics. I've been lucky in my lifetime to see some of the greatest spectacles that the natural world has to offer. Surely we have a responsibility to leave for future generations a planet that is healthy, inhabitable by all species.

In the last few years, Attenborough has become increasingly outspoken in support of environmental causes. In 2005 and 2006 he backed a BirdLife International project to stop the killing of albatross by longline fishing boats.^[18] He gave public support to WWF's campaign to have 220,000 square kilometers of Borneo's rainforest designated a protected area.^[19] He also serves as a vice-president of Fauna and Flora International and president of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. In 2003 he launched an appeal to create a rainforest reserve in Ecuador in memory of Christopher Parsons OBE, the producer of *Life on Earth* and a personal friend, who had died the previous year. Sir David also launched ARKive in May 2003,^[20] a global project which had been instigated by Christopher Parsons to gather together natural history media into a digital library, an online Noah's Ark. He later became Patron of the World Land Trust, and an active supporter.

Attenborough has repeatedly said that he considers human overpopulation to be the root cause of many environmental problems. Both his series *The Life of Mammals* and the accompanying book end with a plea for humans to curb population growth so that other species will not be crowded out.

He has recently written and spoken publicly about the fact that he now believed global warming is definitely real, and caused by humans.^[21] At the climax of the aforementioned "Climate Chaos"

documentaries, the naturalist gives this summing up of his findings:

"In the past, we didn't understand the effect of our actions. Unknowingly, we sowed the wind and now, literally, we are reaping the whirlwind. But we no longer have that excuse: now we do recognize the consequences of our behaviour. Now surely, we must act to reform it: individually and collectively; nationally and internationally – or we doom future generations to catastrophe."

In a 2005 interview with BBC Wildlife magazine, Attenborough said he considered George W. Bush to be the era's top "environmental villain". In 2007, he further elaborated on the USA's consumption of energy in relation to its population. When asked if he thought America to be "the villain of the piece", he responded:

"I don't think whole populations are villainous, but Americans are just extraordinarily unaware of all kinds of things. If you live in the middle of that vast continent, with apparently everything your heart could wish for just because you were born there, then why worry? [...] If people lose knowledge, sympathy and understanding of the natural world, they're going to mistreat it and will not ask their politicians to care for it."^[6]

Other Causes :

In May 2005, Attenborough was appointed as patron of the UK's Blood Pressure Association, which provides information and support to people with hypertension.^[22]

Sir David Attenborough is also an honorary member of BSES Expeditions, a youth development charity that operates challenging scientific research expeditions to remote wilderness environments.

Religion and Creationism :

In a December 2005 interview with Simon Mayo on BBC Radio Five Live, Attenborough stated that he considers himself an agnostic.^[23] When asked whether his observation of the natural world has given him faith in a creator, he generally responds with some version of this story:

My response is that when Creationists talk about God creating every individual species as a separate act, they always instance hummingbirds, or orchids, sunflowers and beautiful things. But I tend to think instead of a parasitic worm that is boring through the eye of a boy sitting on the bank of a river in West Africa, [a worm] that's going to make him blind. And [I ask them], 'Are you telling me that the God you believe in, who you also say is an all-merciful God, who cares for each one of us individually, are you saying that God created this worm that can live in no other way than in an innocent child's eyeball? Because that doesn't seem to me to coincide with a God who's full of mercy.'^[24]

He has explained that he feels the evidence all over the planet clearly shows evolution to be the best way to explain the diversity of life, and that "as far as I'm concerned if there is a supreme being then he chose organic evolution as a way of bringing into existence the natural world."

In a BBC Four interview with Mark Lawson Sir David, in answer to the question "Have you at any time had any religious faith?" replied "No."

In 2002, Attenborough joined an effort by leading clerics and scientists to oppose the inclusion of creationism in the curriculum of UK state-funded independent schools which receive private sponsorship, such as the Emmanuel Schools Foundation.

Work :

Bibliography

- *Zoo Quest to Guyana* (Lutterworth Press, 1956)
- *Zoo Quest for a Dragon* (Lutterworth Press, 1957)
 - (book club edition with 85 extra pages, *Quest for the Paradise Birds*, 1959)
- *Zoo Quest in Paraguay* (Lutterworth Press, 1959)
- *The Zoo Quest Expeditions* (Lutterworth Press, abridged compilation of the above three titles with a new introduction, 1980)
 - Paperback (Penguin Books, 1982)
- *Quest in Paradise* (1960)
- *Zoo Quest to Madagascar* (1961)
- *Quest Under Capricorn* (1963)
- *Fabulous Animals* (BBC, 1975) ISBN 0-563-17006-9
- *The Tribal Eye* (1976)
- *Life on Earth* (1979)
- *Discovering Life on Earth* (1981)
- *The Living Planet* (1984)
- *The First Eden* (1987)
- *The Atlas of the Living World* (1989)
- *The Trials of Life* (Collins, 1990) ISBN 0-00-219912-2
- *The Private Life of Plants* (BBC Books, 1994) ISBN 0-563-37023-8
- *The Life of Birds* (BBC Books, 1998) ISBN 0-563-38792-0

Glossary on Kalinga Prize Laureates

- *The Life of Mammals* (BBC Books, 2002) ISBN 0-563-53423-0
- *Life on Air: Memoirs of a Broadcaster* (autobiography; 2002) ISBN 0-563-53461-3
 - Paperback: ISBN 0-563-48780-1
- *Life in the Undergrowth* (BBC Books, 2005) ISBN 0-563-52208-9
- *Amazing Rare Things – The Art of Natural History in the Age of Discovery* with Susan Owens, Martin Clayton and Rea Alexandratos (The Royal Collection, 2007) Hardback-ISBN 978 1 902163 46 8; Softback – ISBN 978 1 902163 99 4
- *Life in Cold Blood* (BBC Books, 2007) ISBN 9780563539223

Introductions :

Attenborough has written the introduction or foreword for a number of books, including:

- *African Jigsaw : A Musical Entertainment*, Peter Rose and Anne Conlon (published:1986, Weinberger)
- *Life in the Freezer : Natural History of the Antarctic*, Alastair Fothergill (BBC Books, 1993), ISBN 0-563-36431-9
- *Birds of Paradise : Paradisaeidae* (Bird Families of the World series) Clifford B. Frith, Bruce M. Beehler, William T. Cooper (Illustrator) (Oxford University Press, 1998) ISBN 0-19-854853-2
- *The Blue Planet*, Andrew Byatt, Alastair Fothergill, Martha Holmes (BBC Books, 2001) ISBN 0-563-38498-0.
- *Light on the Earth* (BBC Books, 2005), two decades of winning images from the BBC

Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, ISBN 0-563-52260-7

- *Planet Earth*, Alastair Fothergill (BBC Books, 2006), ISBN 0-563-52212-7

DVDs

Major programmes

A number of Attenborough's programmes have been available on video; most are now out-of-print. These DVDs are available (unless stated, dates are of original transmission):

- *The Tribal Eye* (1975): to be released 27/8/2007^[25]
- *Life on Earth* (1979)
- *The Living Planet* (1984)
- *The First Eden* (1987): to be released 27/8/2007^[25]
- *Lost Worlds, Vanished Lives* (1989)
- *Trials of Life* (1990)
- *Life in the Freezer* (1993)
- *The Private Life of Plants* (1995)
- *Survival Island* (1996)
- *The Life of Birds* (1998)
- *State of the Planet* (2001)
- *The Life of Mammals* (2002)
- *Life in the Undergrowth* (2005)
- *Life in Cold Blood*: (predicted to be Spring 2008)
- *Great Wildlife Moments* with David Attenborough (compilation)

Glossary on Kalinga Prize Laureates

- *Great Natural Wonders and Greatest Wildlife Show on Earth* (2005) (Two specials released in Australia only)
- *Wildlife Special: The Tiger*
- *Wildlife Special: The Eagle*
- *Wildlife Special : The Leopard*
- *Wildlife Special : The Serpent*
- *Attenborough in Paradise and Other Personal Voyages* includes seven one-off documentaries:
 - *Attenborough in Paradise*: 1996-04-08
 - *The Lost Gods of Easter Island*: 2000-04-24
 - *The Amber Time Machine*: 2004-02-15
 - *Bowerbirds: The Art of Seduction* : 2000-12-17
 - *The Song of the Earth*: 2000-12-23
 - *A Blank on the Map*: 1971-12-29
 - *Life on Air*: 2002-11-20
- *The Life Collection*, a comprehensive box set, was released 5 December 2005
- *Planet Earth* (2006)

Narrated by Attenborough :

- *A Zed & Two Noughts* (film drama)
- *Tarka the Otter* by Henry Williamson, read by David Attenborough (available on audiocassette, 1978)
- *Yanomamo* (musical entertainment, 1983) by Peter Rose and Anne Conlon; on-stage narration and published audio recording
- *Ocean World* (musical entertainment, 1990) by Peter Rose and Anne Conlon; on-stage

narration (including at The Royal Festival Hall), for audio recording and video broadcast (both published)

- *Tom Harrisson: The Barefoot Anthropologist*
(<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,1989676,00.html>) (documentary, 2006/7)
- *Climate Change: Britain Under Threat* (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/hottopics/climatechange/>) (documentary, also presented, 21 January 2007)

Character Voice:

- Voice of the museum commentary in Robbie the Reindeer: *Legend of the Lost Tribe*

Other Programmes

Author and Producer :

- *Zoo Quest*
- *Eastwards with Attenborough*
- *The Tribal Eye*

Producer :

- 1986 to 1991, The Queen's Christmas Message

Notes and References

1. History of College House (<http://www.le.ac.uk/careers/collegehouse.html>)
2. Attenborough, David (2002), *Life on Air*. BBC Books. ISBN 0-563-53461-3. pp.10-11.
3. *Life on Air*, p.13.
4. *Life on Air*, pp.60-61
5. Parkinson, broadcast 16 June 2007
6. Radio Times 23-29 June 2007
7. Times Online: Attenborough names ape girl as his heir to TV jungle (<http://>

Glossary on Kalinga Prize Laureates

- entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,14934-1869845,00.html)
8. Fortean Times episode guide to Fabulous Animals (http://www.forteanimes.com/features/articles/101/attenboroughs_fabulous_animals.html)
9. Wildlife on One (<http://catalogue.bbc.co.uk/catalogue/infax/series/WILDLIFE+ON+ONE/>) at the BBC Programme Catalogue
10. Honorary Degrees and Distinguished Honorary Fellowships Announced by University of Leicester (<http://www2.le.ac.uk/ebulletin/news/press-releases/2000-2009/2006/06/nparticle.2006-06-09.8313843344>), University of Leicester press release, 9 June 2006; India News report (<http://indiaenews.com/2006-06/10872-leicester-varsity-honour-attenborough-brothers.htm>)
11. University of Leicester Alumni Relations (<http://www.le.ac.uk/almni/annual.html>) Sir David Attenborough (Hon DLitt 1970) gave the Alumni Association Lecture in 2003
12. Plesiosauria Translation and Pronunciation Guide (<http://www.dinosauria.com/dml/names/ples.html>)
13. The David Attenborough Studio campaign (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/studio>)
14. Simon Hoggart, 'In David we trust...but not Peter,' (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,5673,1696927,00.html>) The Guardian, 28 January 2006
15. New Statesman (<http://www.newstatesman.com/200605220016>)
16. Brian Leith, 2002. Life on Air (Press Release) (http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2002/10_october/31/lifeonair_mammalspack.pdf); Andrew Denton, 2003 "Interview with David Attenborough (<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/enoughrope/transcripts/s951650.htm>)" on Enough Rope, ABC TV.
17. James Fair, "Small Things Bright and Beautiful", BBC Wildlife Magazine, November 2005, pp.25-26.
18. 'Personal plea by David Attenborough,' (http://www.savethealbatross.net/the_latest/the_latest_item.asp?newsid=24), www.savethealbatross.net, 27 January 2006
19. 'Sir David Attenborough: Heart of Borneo is a global heritage,' (http://www.wwf.org.uk/core/about/ta_0000001801.asp), WWF-UK press release.
20. Arkive sets sail on the web (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/conservation/story/0,969572,00html>), The Guardian, 20 May 2003
21. Climate change is the major challenge facing the world (<http://news.independent.co.uk/environment/articles570935.ece>) David Attenborough, The Independent, 24 May 2006
22. Press release (http://www.bpassoc.org.uk/media_centre/newsreleasesearchive/sir_david_attenborough.htm), Blood Pressure Association web site, May 13, 2005
23. Interview (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/fivelive/listen/audioarchive.shtml>) with Simon Mayo, BBC Radio Five Live, 2 December 2005
24. David Attenborough, 2003, "Wild, wild life (<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/24/1048354544138.html?From=storyrhs>).", Sydney Morning Herald, March 25. Attenborough has also told this story in numerous other interviews.
25. BBC Shop (<http://www.bbcshop.com>.)

External Links :

- BBC- David Attenborough Life on Air (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/programmes/tv/lifeonair/>)
- Sir David Attenborough BBC biography (http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/programmes/who/david_attenborough.shtml)
- BBC interview with Attenborough in 1976 (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/audiointerviews/profilepages/attenboroughed1.shtml>)
- David Attenborough-Perception, deception and reality (<http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/page.asp?tip=1&id=3122>) at the Royal Society
- David Attenborough interview: 'Everyone likes Birds' (<http://www.pbs.org/lifeofbirds/sirds/sirdavid/index.html>)
- BBC Radio 4 programme interviewing Attenborough (http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/science/nature_20050523.shtml) in Real Audio format
- David Attenborough Studio campaign at the Natural History Museum (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/take-part/support-the-museum/david-attenborough-studio/index.html>)
- Official Life in the Undergrowth site (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/tvradio/programmes/lifeintheundergrowth/>)

- ThrowawayyourTV.com (http://del.icio.us/ThrowawayyourTV/David_Attenborough) David Attenborough Video Archive
- "David Ateenborough, one life on Earth" (2007) (<http://e-blogules.blogspot.com/2007/07/david-attenborough-one-life-one-earth.html>)
- David Atteborough (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0041003/>) at the Internett Movie Database.

Media Offices

Preceded by **Controller of BBCTwo** **Succeeded by**
Michael Peacock **1965-1969** **Robin Scott**

**David Attenborough :
Major Television Series****The Life Series**

Life on Earth/The Living Planet/ The Trials of Life/
Life in the Freezer/ The Private Life of Plants / The
Life of Birds/ The Life of Mamals / Life in the
Undergrowth / Life in Cold Blood

Other Work and Narrated :

Zoo Quest/ The First Eden/ Lost Worlds, Vanished
Lives/State of the Planet/ The Blue Planet/ Planet
Earth/ Are We changing planent Earth

Source :

"http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Attenborough"



ATTENBOROUGH, DAVID



British Producer/Host/ Media Executive
by
Sean Cubitt

David Attenborough joined the BBC's fledgling television service in 1952, fronting Zoo Quest, the breakthrough wildlife series that established the international reputation of the BBC Natural History Unit at Bristol. The first of these, Zoo Quest for a Dragon, established Attenborough as an intuitive performer, so prepossessed by his fascination with the subject at hand and unconcerned for his own dignity in front of the camera that he seemed to sweat integrity. A sense of daring has always surrounded him with a glamorous aura: even in this early outing, the massive Komodo Dragon, object of the quest through Borneo, at least looked as ferocious as its name portends, and Attenborough's

presence seemed to prove not only the reality and size of his specimens, but a kind of guarantee that we too were part of this far-flung scientific endeavour, the last credible adventure in the period which witnessed the demise of the British Empire. Moreover, Zoo Quest engaged, albeit in an entertainment format, a far higher level of scientific seriousness than more child-oriented and anthropomorphic competitors from Europe and the United States. Perhaps only Jacques Chouteau was so resistant to the temptation to cuteness

Despite this rare skill, shared only by a handful of his fellow scientists, mainly in weather reporting, Attenborough was promoted to senior management

at the BBC where he served for 15 years. As controller of BBC2, he oversaw (and introduced on screen) the arrival of colour on British screens on 1 July 1967, and is credited with turning BBC2 round from elite ghetto to an attractive, varied and increasingly popular alternative to the main channels. His skill as scheduler was evidenced in the “common junctions” scheduling policy, which allowed announcers on the two BBC channels to introduce a choice of viewing, a practice which opened the Corporation up to charges of unfair advantage from the commercial broadcasters and contributed indirectly to the pressure for a fourth, commercial channel. Attenborough introduced popular sports like snooker as well as *The Forsyte Saga*, and he pioneered the blockbuster, personality – presenter documentaries like Kenneth Clark’s *Civilisation*, Jacob Bronowski’s *The Ascent of Man*, Alistair Cooke’s *America*, J.K. Galbraith’s *The Age of Uncertainty* and his own *Life on Earth*. Common to these expensive, and to that extent risky projects, was a faith in television as a medium for quite complex historical, cultural and scientific ideas. Even those series which were less popular achieved the talismanic status of the kind of programmes license fees should be used to make. Promoted to deputy controller of programmes for the whole network, third in the BBC’s hierarchy, he was hotly tipped for the post of Director General, but abandoned management because, he said, “I haven’t even seen the Galapagos islands”. However, he continued to speak passionately in defence of the public service ethos in many public fora.

Life on Earth, for which over 1.25 million feet of film were exposed in over thirty countries, subsequently sold in 100 territories and was seen by an estimated 500 million people worldwide. Though he has always claimed modestly that photographing animals will always bring in an audience, the accumulated skills of naturalists and wildlife cinematographers, as well as enormous planning, are required to reach remote

places just in time for the great wildebeest migration, the laying of turtle eggs, or the blooming of desert cacti, scenes which have achieved almost mythic status in the popular history of British television. The multimillion pound sequels of *Life*, *The Living Planet* and *The Trials of Life*, the former concentrating on environments and ecologies created, through a blend of accessible scholarship and schoolboyish enthusiasm, the archetypal middlebrow mix of entertainment and education that marked the public service ethos of the mature BBC. Throughout the trilogy, the developing techniques of nature photography, allied with a sensitive use of computer-generated simulations, produced a spectacular intellectual montage, driven by the desire to communicate scientific theories as well as a sense of awe in the face of natural complexity and diversity. Though it is possible to be irritated by the lack of concern for the human populations of exotic countries, symbolized by the absence of local musics from the soundtrack, Attenborough’s combination of charm and amazement has been profoundly influential on a generation of ecologically-aware viewers.

The Private Life of Plants, devoted to the evolution and adaptation of flora worldwide, was another spectacular success in the old mould, involving Attenborough popping up beside the world’s oldest tree, hanging precariously in the jungle canopy, or seeking out the largest flower in existence by sense of smell. Honoured by the academy, respected by his peers and loved by audiences, Attenborough’s imminent retirement leaves the BBC with a major problem in finding a replacement. Competitors have, since the pioneering work of Brian Moser on Anglia TV’s *Disappearing World*, dispensed with onscreen presentation entirely, and in Moser’s case opted for subtitled translations from local people rather than Western experts. Attenborough may be not only the first, but the last of a disappearing species.



Sir David (Frederick) Attenborough.

[World's Best Known Broadcasters & Naturalists]

Sir David (Frederick) Attenborough.

- Born in London, 8 May 1926
- Brother of actor Sir Richard Attenborough.
- Attended Wyggeston Grammar School for Boys, Leicester Clare College, Cambridge
- Married Jane Elizabeth Ebsworth Oriel, 1950
- One son and one daughter.
- Served in Royal Navy, 1947-49.
- Worked for educational publishers, 1949-52 before joining BBC as trainee producer, 1952
- Host, long-running Zoo Quest, 1954-64
- Controller of BBC2, 1965-68
- BBC's director of programmes, 1969-72
- Returned to documentary-making in 1979 with Life on Earth wildlife series
- Has since made several more similarly acclaimed nature series.
- Gave Huw Wheldon Memorial Lecture, Royal Television Society, 1987.

D.Litt.:

- University of Leicester, 1970
- City University, 1972
- University of London, 1980
- University of Birmingham, 1982

DSc:

- University of Liverpool, 1974
- Heriot-Watt University, 1978
- Sussex University, 1979
- Bath University, 1981
- University of Ulster, 1982
- Durham University, 1982
- Keele University, 1986

- Oxford University , 1988
- Plymouth University, 1992

LLD :

- Bristol University, 1977
- Glasgow University, 1980

D.Univ.:

- Open University, 1980
- Essex University, 1987
- Antwerp University, 1993

ScD:

- Cambridge University, 1984.

D.VetMed:

- Edinburgh University, 1994.

Honorary Fellow:

- Manchester Polytechnic, 1976
- University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, 1980
- Clare College, Cambridge, 1980

Fellow :

- British Academy of Film and Television Arts, 1980
- Royal Society, 1983
- Royal College of Physicians, 1991

Honorary Freeman :

- City of Leicester, 1990.
- Commander of the British Empire, 1974
- Commander of the Golden Ark (Netherlands), 1983
- Knighted, 1985

Glossary on Kalinga Prize Laureates

- Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, 1991.

Member :

- Nature Conservancy Council. 1973-82

Corresponding Member :

- American Museum of Natural History, 1985
- President, British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1990-91
- President, Royal Society for Nature Conservation, since 1991

Trustee :

- Worldwide Fund for Nature U.K., 1965-69, 1972-82, 1984-90
- Worldwide Fund for Nature International, 1979-86
- British Museum, since 1980
- Science Museum, 1984-87
- Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, 1986-92

Recipient :

- Society of Film and Television Arts Special Award, 1961
- Royal Television Society Silver Medal, 1966
- Zoological Society of London Silver Medal, 1966
- Society of Film and Television Arts Desmond Davis Award, 1970
- Royal Geographical Society Cherry Kearton Medal, 1972
- UNESCO Kalinga Prize, 1981
- Boston Museum of Science Washburn Award, 1983
- Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science Hopper Day Medal, 1983
- Royal Geographical Society Founder's Gold Medal, 1985
- Encyclopedia Britannica Award, 1987
- International Emmy Award, 1985

- Royal Scottish Geographical Society Livingstone Medal, 1990
- Royal Society of Arts Franklin Medal, 1990
- Folden Kamera Award, Berlin, 1993

Address :

- 5 Park Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6NS, U.K.

TELEVISION (Writer, Presenter)

- 1954-64 : Zoo Quest
- 1975 : The Explorers
- 1976 : The Tribal Eye
- 1977 : Wildlife on One
- 1979 : Life on Earth
- 1984 : The Living Planet
- 1987 : The First Eden
- 1989 : Lost Worlds, Vanished Lives
- 1990 : The Trials of Life
- 1993 : Wildlife 100
- 1993 : Life in the Freezer
- 1995 : The Private Life of Plants

PUBLICATIONS :

- *Zoo Quest to Guiana*. n.p., 1956.
- *Zoo Quest for a Dragon*. n.p., 1957.
- *Zoo Quest in Paraguay*. n.p., 1959.
- *Quest in Paradise*. n.p., 1960.
- *Zoo Quest to Madagascar*. n.p., 1961.
- *Quest under Capricorn*. n.p., 1963.
- *The Tribal Eye*, New York: Norton, 1976.
- *Life on Earth*, Glasgow: Collins and Sons, 1979.
- *The Living Planet*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1984.
- *The First Eden*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1987.
- *The Trials of Life*. n.p., 1990.
- *The Private Life of Plants*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994.



BBC- Science & Nature - David Attenborough

Sir David Attenborough :

Sir David Attenborough's most recent projects to air include the extraordinary natural history series, Planet Earth. He is currently filming for his latest series, *Life in Cold Blood*, which will explore the lives of reptiles and amphibians and is scheduled to transmit in 2008. On his 80th birthday, in 2006, Sir David was on the Galapagos islands filming giant tortoises, including the famous Lonesome George who was around the same age.

In April 2005, Sir David was awarded the *Order of Merit* by the Queen which recognizes exceptional distinction in the arts, sciences and other areas.

His 50-year career in broadcasting was celebrated in *Life on Air*.

Pioneering Programmes :

Sir David Attenborough's distinguished career in broadcasting now spans more than 50 years. It began in 1952 when he joined BBC Television Talks Department at Alexandra Palace. In 1954 he launched the first of his famous *Zoo Quest* series which, over the next 10 years, took him to the wilder parts of the world. In between times, his programmes included political broadcasts, archaeological quizzes, short stories, gardening and religious programmes.

Seeing in Colour :

In 1965, Sir David became Controller of BBC2 and was responsible for the introduction of colour television into Britain. In January 1969, he was appointed Director of Programmes with editorial

responsibility for both of the BBC's television networks. Then, in 1973, he resigned to return to programme-making, claiming "I haven't even seen the Galapagos Islands". First came *Eastwards with Attenborough*, a natural history series set in South East Asia, then *The Tribal Eye*, examining tribal art.

Landmark TV :

An estimated 500 million people worldwide watched the 13-part series *Life on Earth*, written and presented by Sir David. At the time it was the most ambitious series ever produced by the BBC Natural History Unit. Its sequel, *The Living Planet*, came five years later in 1984 and in 1990 the final part of the trilogy, *The Trials of Life* was broadcast. He also wrote and presented two shorter series, *The First Eden*, on the long history of mankind's relationship with the natural world in the lands around the Mediterranean, and *Lost Worlds, Vanished Lives*, about fossils.

In 1993, Sir David presented the spectacular *Life in the Freezer*, a celebration of Antarctica and in 1995, he wrote and presented the epic *The Private Life of Plants*. In 1996, *Attenborough in Paradise* fulfilled a lifelong ambition to make a special film about the elusive but beautiful birds of paradise. In 1997, he narrated the award-winning *Wildlife Specials*, marking 40 years of the BBC Natural History Unit. In 1998, he completed an epic 10-part series for the BBC, *The Life of Birds*. In Autumn 2000 he presented *State of the Planet* and in Autumn 2001 he narrated *The Blue Planet*. In 2002 he worked on the innovative new BBC1 series, *The Life of Mammals* and in 2005 he fronted *Life In The Undergrowth*.

Recognition :

In 1985, Sir David was knighted, he was given the Order of Merit in 2005. Over the years he has received honorary degrees and a number of prestigious awards including Fellowship of the Royal Society for Nature Conservation.

Television :

- 1954-64** : Zoo Quest
- 1975** : The Explorers
- 1976** : The Tribal Eye
- 1977** : Wildlife on One
- 1979** : Life on Earth
- 1984** : The Living Planet
- 1987** : The First Eden
- 1989** : Lost Worlds, Vanished Lives
- 1990** : The Trials of Life
- 1993** : Wildlife 10
- 1993** : Life in the Freezer
- 1995** : The Private Life of Plants
- 1996** : Attenborough in Paradise
- 1997** : The Wildlife Specials
- 1998** : The Life of Birds
- 2000** : State of the Planet
- 2001** : The Blue Planet
- 2002** : The Life of Mammals
- 2005** : Life In the Undergrowth
- 2006** : Planet Earth
- 2008** : Life in Cold Blood – in production

Publications :

- 1956** : Zoo Quest to Guyana
- 1957** : Zoo Quest for a Dragon
- 1959** : Zoo Quest in Paraguay
- 1960** : Quest in Paradise
- 1961** : Zoo Quest to Madagascar

- 1963** : Quest Under Capricorn
- 1976** : The Tribal Eye
- 1979** : Life on Earth
- 1984** : The Living Planet
- 1987** : The First Eden
- 1990** : The Trials of Life
- 1994** : The Private Life of Plants
- 1998** : The Life of Birds
- 2002** : The Life of Mammals
- 2002** : Life on Air
- 2005** : Life In the Undergrowth

Awards :

- Society of Film and Television Arts Special Award
- Royal Television Society Silver Medal
- Zoological Society of London Silver Medal
- Society of Film and Television Arts Desmond Davis Award
- Royal Geographical Society Cherry Kearton Medal
- **UNESCO Kalinga Prize**
- Boston Museum of Science Washburn Award
- Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science Hopper Day Medal
- Royal Geographical Society Founder's Gold Medal
- Encyclopedia Britannica Award
- International Emmy Award
- Royal Scottish Geographical Society Livingstone Medal
- Royal Society of Arts Franklin Medal
- Folden Kamera Award



David Attenborough Interview

Travels with Sir David Attenborough

In this interview, I talked to Sir David Attenborough at his home on Richmond Hill, about his experiences traveling around the globe during the past forty years, in pursuit of some of the most amazing and original natural history footage ever filmed.

Sir David Attenborough is probably Britain's best-known natural history film-maker. His career has spanned four decades and during that time he has travelled to some of the world's remotest regions. He took his first international flight in 1954, before the world was shrunk by jet engines and modern navigational aids. Since then, he has flown in a variety of aircraft and rested his weary head in countless hotels. Like anyone who has flown for a number of years, he has many tales to tell.

"Before the BBC, I joined the Navy in order to travel. They put me on an aircraft carrier moored to a buoy in the middle of the Firth of Forth, which wasn't exactly the kind of travel I had in mind! When I came out, I was a very junior 'irk' in publishing. I joined the BBC as a trainee. At first, the television service had no money and it was regarded as a rather raffish arm of the BBC."

Sir David found the studio format unimaginative and longed to take a camera outside to film, but he was told, 'Sorry old boy, that's not what television's about. Television is about what you do in here'. He did however eventually succeed and his first expedition was to Freetown, West Africa with a team from the London Zoo.

"We were sent in an old two-engined Dakota, which held twenty or so people. It took three days to get there because we couldn't fly at night as there were no direction-finders [radio beacons]. The first night we stopped at Tangier, which I must say, to a young chap was quite a revelation, especially down at the Casbah! The second night we stopped in Dakar and then on the third day we got to Freetown. On board

we were served sandwiches which came in cardboard boxes.

"The trip was more memorable for the return flight, also in a Dakota. I was looking out of the window and noticed all kinds of black stains beginning to appear on the wing and coming from the engine. Seeking an excuse to engage the stewardess in conversation I said to her: 'those black stains out there, are they routine?'"

"It's awful. We're going to lose an engine!' she said. And with that all these sparks came out and the thing stopped. She gripped my arm and said 'What are we going to do?' and I said, 'You're supposed to be comforting me!'"

"We came into a airport called Blackbushe, where my dear wife Jane was waiting for me. She turned to her companion, the cameraman's wife who was a 'you-know-who-I-am-I've-done-everything sort-of-girl', and said 'They're coming in on one engine.' She replied, 'Oh, they always do that for practice!' So Jane wasn't in the least bit alarmed when we finally landed."

Sir David remembers how flights to the Far East were done in four or five stages. "Getting to places like Bangkok or Singapore was a hell of a sweat. But when you got there it was the back of beyond. It was just a series of small tin sheds. You felt you were really in the 'mystic east' with all these hucksters around which you were never quite sure aren't pickpockets and loose ladies"

Trips to New Guinea were little short of an epic, taking weeks to arrive. "You had to fly Australia and

then go up to Port Moresby, New Guinea and from there to Lae. From Lae you had to get a missionary aircraft to fly you the rest of the way. The Journey took a week, but it often took a fortnight to get all our gear.”

Travelling so extensively, the details of each journey tend to merge, but one flight stands out vividly in Sir David’s memory. He was in Paraguay collecting armadillos and anacondas for London Zoo which were due to arrive in Britain on Christmas eve. However when he got to Puerto Rico, the airline had cancelled all the outbound flights. He recalls the situation: “I asked the airline staff what I was going to do with all the animals as I didn’t have any food for them. They were very unhelpful and said, ‘That’s your problem.’”

After making enquiries, Sir David discovered that Puerto Rico is a favourite Christmas haunt of wealthy Texans and New Yorkers. Consequently, a number of American airlines had empty return flights, one of which was willing to carry him and his precious cargo.

“It was a First Class-only plane, I mean it lushest kind of plane I’ve ever seen. There was a charming air-hostess to look after us. I told her the journey was taking much longer than I thought and I was running out of food. She said, ‘Oh, how awful! But we’ve only got caviar and Californian peaches’. So I said, ‘That’s funny, that’s exactly what armadillos like!’ So that’s what they ate all the way to New York!”

Sir David admits that he finds it difficult to sleep on aircraft, but abhors the idea of taking sleeping pills. He usually passes the hours reading magazines or the occasional autobiography. He rarely reads novels. Coping with talkative passengers is also difficult. His usual and most successful strategy is to give mono-syllabic answers and keep turning to his book. Crew, on the other hand, he says are absolutely charming. “My last trip was to the States, and on the way back I sat in the cockpit for take-off and landing. In a funny way, I think aircrew know that I’ve travelled a lot and therefore feel we are fellow

professionals to some degree-which is nice, very complimentary.”

Have passengers ever confused him with somebody else- perhaps they recognize his face but can’t put a name to it? “I find people say embarrassing things like, ‘Should I know you?’ To which you reply, ‘No you shouldn’t – I mean why should you know me?’. Or ‘Are you famous?’ And you can’t very well say, ‘Well yes, I’m frightfully famous!’ So I say ‘no’ to that one. And occasionally they say, ‘It’s wonderful to meet you. I think the best thing you’ve ever done was “Ghandi”!’ and then you say, ‘Thank you very much!’”

Sir David usually prefers to fly on wide-bodied jets where he can wander about, or on smaller aircraft which are half full allowing him to stretch out. He admits to being unable to tell one aircraft from another and he’s not at all interested in engineering or the aircraft themselves. He doesn’t even drive a car!

“I have colleagues who will look out of the window and say, ‘Oh God! There’s a 4B: I haven’t seen of those for years.’ But it’s lost on me. I can just about tell if it’s got a jet engine or one of those funny things on the front!” he admits.

After a long journey Sir David, like other travelers, is often faced with jetlag-but not as much as some. “I suffer much less than many of my colleagues. I am perfectly able to go to Australia and film within three hours of arrival. There is one class of companions who are always saying, ‘Back home now, it’s three o’clock in the morning’. Now I think a major element of jetlag is psychological, so I always say, I don’t care what you do, but nobody ever tells me what time it is at home, ‘I’m absolutely strict about it. When I land, I put my watch right, and I don’t care what I feel like, I will go to bed at half past eleven. If that means going to bed early or late, that’s what I live by. As soon as you get there, live by that time,” he recommends.

Travelling to so many countries means being a target for a variety of exotic illnesses. Surprisingly however,

Sir David is not prone to them. "I haven't – touch wood-had a stomach upset for fifteen or twenty years. I remember coming home once after I'd been traveling for many days and nights. After the relief of getting home, I woke up in the middle of the night drenched in sweat, I mean absolutely swimming in it. I thought, 'This is it, I've got malaria. I should've been more careful.' I lay there for a long time working out what to do, with poor Jane laying fast asleep next to me. I finally clambered out of bed and I felt not too bad, actually. I then discovered that in the four months I'd been away, Jane had bought an electric blanket with double controls and it was on full. It was a great relief!"

However, he has not been completely immune. "Just recently we were coming out of Niger and it so happened that there was a great pilgrimage so all the hotels were full. We ended up sleeping on the floor in tin huts with bed bugs and fleas. I remember sleeping in places that were infested with rats and waking up with one trundling over my face. Actually, I hate rats! In my time, I've picked up all sorts of thins of hotels- fleas, lice, tapeworm."

The best hotel Sir David ever stayed in was the old 'Raffles' in Singapore. But not all the hotels were as nice. "I remember there was a great hotel in Surabaya in East Java called 'The Orange Hotel', which was one of those great hotels, rather like Raffles really. We used to get up very early and film. They always used to come up to us and ask us what we would like and we would always say fried eggs – it was about the only thing they did really. But the fried eggs always turned up cold. No-one spoke English, so I kept says 'panas, panas' (hot, hot) but it didn't make any difference. So we thought the thing to do was to get up earlier, but whatever time we go up the fried eggs were cold. Eventually we discovered that they fried the eggs the previous night and stacked them in piles. Not the world's greatest breakfast!"

Sir David does not always ender himself to hotel managements. "The main problem I used to have staying in hotels was that I used to collect all these

animals; and of course we used to have to smuggle them into the rooms. We put pythons and anacondas in sacks under our beds, armadillos in the bath and had bats hanging up on the curtains! Of course, everything got out in the middle of the night.

"I remember once in Madagascar I found some marvellous things called pill millipedes which are about the size of a golf ball. For some reason, I found a group of about a hundred and fifty of them-it was the most extraordinary sight. I thought they'd make a wonderful display at London Zoo, so I gathered up about a hundred or so and put them in a sack. That night, I had to stay in a hotel. In the middle of the night they found a hole in the sack and by morning they were all gone. I went out into the corridor and there were pill millipedes everywhere and I had to go dashing around picking the things up. I got into a lot of trouble for that!"

Animals – like airline passengers – are often unpredictable and occasionally get a little too close for comfort. Sir David recalls, "I was flying to East Africa in the old days, and for some reason I was absolutely shattered. I felt like hell. I was travelling to meet with Elsa, the famous 'Born Free' lioness. Joy Adamson, an Austrian Countess who found Elsa said to me (he mimics her Austrian accent): 'Oh David, it's the end of the world. Elsa is dying. She has been attacked by a strange lioness and she has run away'. I thought: 'Oh well, that's just tough. I'm not going to worry about it, I'll just try and calm her. Anyway, I finally got out a camp-bed and fell asleep. Well you know what it's like when you're really dead tired and the whole of your life blood seems to have just disappeared and you feel like a sack of wet dough. Well, I woke up with, this terrible weight on my chest and a frightful smell of halitosis! It was Elsa-and she was sitting on me. She had long hair around her chin, and was dribbling and I could see those yellow teeth and there was this terrible smell. I thought I was about to be her breakfast-I didn't know what to do. And then Joy came around the corner and said 'Ah Elsa, meine liebchen!' Never mind me, who was about go be her

liebchen's breakfast! And then this thing got up and went off. It was quite an awakening, I can tell you!"

Sometimes when things don't go according to plan, Sir David and his crew might find they've got spare time on their hands. What do they do? "I don't approve of sunbathing and it's bad for you. On occasions like that, if you're interested in natural history, there's always quite a lot to do. Also I always take a serious book along with me and I listen to music."

His wife Jane has accompanied him only twice on working trips: once to the States and once to Australia. "The crew are very nice about it, but actually you know perfectly well that you're taking up a seat that they could have spread themselves into. Also, being a spare wheel on these trips with nothing to do is very demoralizing."

There must be very few places on the globe that Sir David has not visited. One is Central Asia, which he admits he would very much like to visit. "I've been to Nepal but I'd like to go to Tibet. It must be a wonderful place to go. I don't think there's anything there, but it would be a nice place to visit," he muses.

Having spent half his life traveling, is there the spirit of the gypsy still in him?" No, not really, I don't think there is. I am absolutely dependent on this place (indicating his home in Richmond). We've lived here for thirty eight years. This is where our kids were born and this is my place. As far as I'm concerned, if I can't have this, I don't want anything."

So what is the Attenborough motivation to continue traveling? "I like animals. I like natural history. The travel bit is not the important bit. The travel bit is what you have to do in order to go and look at animals."

Would he have liked to have been someone like Darwin and come back today? "Oh yes, I think so. I mean, one is living an amazingly privileged life. It's only been the last twenty or so years that one could have possibly gone to all the places you and I go to. Very few people in the history of biology could have seen as much of the actual things that I have and

the sad thing is that I do so little with it. I'm so busy gobbling it up that I don't sort of digest it.

"But one of the great things, far more exciting than going to the moon, would have been not Darwin, but Captain Cook. On his first and second voyage, he went round the Pacific and went to Tahiti where he saw a new brand of humanity, and a completely new set of animals and plants. That must have been mind-blowing. The reverse side of the coin in having this extraordinary ability to go anywhere, is that no-one anywhere is remote any more. I just caught the end of it in the mid-fifties. When I was right in the middle of Borneo, you thought you were in a different world. There was no radio, no ways of communicating – but it was nothing compared to what Cook did. I just wish the world was twice as big and half of it was still unexplored."

Finally I asked Sir David what his most frequently asked question in an interview was. "It's usually 'what are you going to do next?' and you didn't ask me! Congratulations! And it's one that drives you potty. There are two questions that get asked towards the end of an interview. 'What are you working on now? And other is 'What was your most exciting moment?'

"If I do a series or tapes for the States and it's sponsored by somebody for the public broadcast system, I am committed to going on tour around various stations. So I do all these interviews, sometimes six or eight in a day. The trouble is they all ask the same questions and you get to a stage when you can't remember whether you've said it before, maybe in the last interview or may be in this one. Eventually, you get bored with it and make things up because you can't bear it any longer. So they say, "And what was your most exciting moment?" 'Well, I once had to do hand-to-hand battle with a mouse...a rather ferocious animal!' And their eyes get bigger. 'And what is your next series?' 'Well I thought: Whore-Houses of the World!'...'What?!'"

ANNA - anna@warman.demon.co.uk



Meet Sir David

by

Gareth Huw Davies

Everyone likes birds :



A golden eagle rests on Sir David's arm

Said Sir David Attenborough, looking out into his garden on a summer morning, assuring me there is avian interest even here. "What wild creature is more accessible to our eyes and ears, as close to us and everyone in the world, as universal as a bird?"

I was in Sir David's house in Richmond, West London, to talk about his new series *Life of Birds*. It is another of his great landmarks in wildlife film making, an odyssey to the furthest corners of the world, every bit as ambitious and world-ranging as his "Life" trilogy and the recent *Private Life of Plants*.

Sir David is, by common consent, the world's master wildlife documentary presenter. His power of story telling is legendary. In a few moments I were airborne and travelling the world in my imagination for a rapid mind's eye tour to far-off locations from the ten programs.

Soon we were on the beach on Hood Island in the Galapagos as the tropical breakers crashed in, and the waved albatrosses lumbered out of the surf and took off towards the camera like antique bombers.

Then on to the Atlantic rain forest in Brazil as the loudest avian sound of all, the deafening call of the bell bird, echoed through the trees. And, as we listened, humming birds like tiny feathered jewels waltzed around our heads.

We watched under the permanent drizzle of the Iguacu Falls in Paraguay as dusky swifts zipped through the towering curtain of water to their nests. In the Kalahari lanner falcons dropped with devastating speed into a flock of Cape pigeons. On the edge of a lake in Upper New York State the returning loons, the great northern divers, called poignantly over water as still as platinum. Then, as we came in to land, Sir David made an unexpected admission. When the BBC's Natural History Unit first asked him to make the series he wondered if he was the best person for the job.

Nobody who knows his work over 40 years could doubt that he was the clear first choice. He is one of Britain's foremost broadcasters, and one of the last of the great on-screen presenters. In Britain he is a household name, and, among those who are not royalty, movie, music or sports stars or politicians, one of the few people to be recognized in the street.

He explained: "Until now I had always shied off birds, because I felt there are so many people who know so much more about them than I do. But I was persuaded that that was an advantage, for me to look at them from the general naturalist's point of view."

Glossary on Kalinga Prize Laureates



Parrots clamber to get a free meal

Modesty is one of his endearing qualities. His “little knowledge” is equivalent to most people’s “great learning”. Like all his series, *Life of Birds* is very much his series, written to his own words, put together largely as he planned it. His rare skill is being able to compress often complex behaviour into a succinct and understandable film sequence, and deliver it to a script which is a model of precision.

“Birds are the most popular group in the animal kingdom. We feed them and tame them and think we know them. And yet they inhabit a world which is really rather mysterious. Once they take off from our bird tables or our lawns they disappear into a world of their own.

“What I am interested in with birds, just as I am with spiders or monkeys, is what they do and why they do it. This is what the series is about.

“Let’s find out what they exactly mean when they sing that particular song, or why they flutter their wings in a certain way, or why the colours of nestlings’ mouths change as they grow up?”

He began the series, as he does all his series, with an outline of the questions he wants to ask and answer, the subjects he wants to cover. He then puts his ideas to the series’ two “outstanding”

researchers. This is followed by a dialogue over many months with the researchers and producers. “Some of the research we have come across provides extraordinary insights to demonstrate that the world of birds is so much more than we thought it was.”

A fat file of notes accumulated. Only then did Sir David begin his travels.

He covered 256,000 miles in the making of the series, 10 times round the Earth. He didn’t go everywhere, but tried to be on hand for most of the key filming moments all over the planet. As ever, he was in the thick of the action.

In South America he “Conversed” with megallanic woodpecker, through tree-tapping. In Australia rainbow lorikeets walk all over him. In Scotland a capercaillie knocks him down, while in the Seychelles his commentary is drowned out by sooty terns.

On a tiny South Sea island he went into the dense forest and called down Providence petrels, huge birds the size of footballs, perhaps the tamest of all wild birds. There is a sequence where one sits on



There were times when filming was uncomfortable

his hand then crawls up his neck. “It’s a fully wild bird—we see it flying away into the distance. Why does it come so close? We have no idea.”

Glossary on Kalinga Prize Laureates

He admits to several passages of discomfort: the worst was in a cave in Venezuela when oilbirds were being filmed. The crew used infra-red cameras, leaving Sir David in the pitch dark with no light to see the rats, mice, bats and insects scurrying up his legs or flying around his face.

He writes all his own scripts. His skill as a writer is often overlooked-he won a prestigious literary prize in Britain for the book of the series, even before the series itself had been screened.

Sir David is the last of the pioneer generation of television presenters, bright young people who came into the field in the 1950s when TV was still an Awfully Big Adventure. It is hard to believe that he was turned down for his first job in radio; he was quickly invited to join the nascent form of TV.

He made some of the first black and white TV nature films, then rose to be the BBC's director of TV programmes when colour TV was being introduced in Britain. Since he returned to film making in the 1970s his career has been an unbroken sequence of successes.

For 20 years he has been making massive wildlife films; his biggest opus was the Life trilogy, an account of wildlife on this planet from 3 million years ago to today. He became the master of the epic split sentence, begin in Africa and completed half a world away in South America.

Sir David lives in Richmond, quite close to his brother the actor/director Richard (Lord) Attenborough. 72 now, he displays the vitality of a man many years younger. His wife Lady Jane died two years ago during the making of this series – they were a devoted couple and had been married for over 40 years. His daughter Susan now runs his business affairs.

The great presenter is no prima donna. He travels Economy Class with his film crew. When a surprised airline staff realise he is aboard and offer to upgrade

him to First class his invariable answer is – “Only if my crew can come too.”

He will help carry their equipment on location and is happy to redirect to them much of what he believes to be undeserved praise heaped on his own head. “People assume I do all the work. I keep having to tell them: ‘It was the cameraman, not me. Usually I wasn’t even there.’

“Cameramen are among the most extraordinarily able and competent people I know. They have to have an insight into natural history that gives them a sixth sense of what the creature is going to do, so they can be ready to follow. They need the eye of the artist as well as the certainty of mind to turn to the director and say ‘You now have the sequence you wanted.’”

But all his producers know it is he who is the consummate professional, delivering his commentary to camera with very few takes. He will usually oblige their whims. He famously abseiled down a rainforest tree in Private Life of Plants in his late 60s. He went into a termite’s nest in Africa, and let himself be attacked by military ants. Indeed he has only two aversions: the rat, and anywhere-like dark caves-where there may be rats.

At quiet moments on set he will retire to his tent to listen to classical music on CDs, then emerge in the evening to regail the film crew with his famous fund of traveller’s tales.

He said this of Life of Birds. “It was a most illuminating and joyful experience. I travelled with the best cameramen to all the dramatic sites in the world.

“If you spend three years thinking about nothing but birds, you end up considering them in quite a new way.

“My reaction used to be like most peoples’ when a bird come into my garden. I would look at it in the same way. It flutters down. Aren’t its wings nice.

Look, it's feeding. Now it's flown away. But if you have just done a program about warning behaviour or mate guarding, you see quite different things.

"So it's 'Look, his mate has come as well, and he's guarding her, and see how he reacts to a threat. 'You now have this insight; things suddenly fall into place, and you start to see things that have been going on before your eyes all your life and never understood.

"It is not until you get his kind of directed curiosity, with a very knowledgeable ornithologist at your elbow, that you really begin to see these things.

"After this series I no longer watch, say, a pigeon drop from the sky into my garden in the same way as I used to. I know more about it; I have more empathy with it. I understand its problems and its abilities more than I ever did before.

"It's not enough for us to just put a name to a bird and look at because it's pretty. We see only a tiny fraction of a bird's existence. There is a huge amount of its life that we have no knowledge of. I hope this series will enable people to get inside the mind of a bird.

"There are birds far out on the open sea. Birds go to the poles, and survive extremely low temperatures. Birds go underwater. They have been seen diving to 1000 feet. Birds have colonized the air in a fantastic way. They even fly over the Himalayas. Swifts stay on the wing nearly all their lives, making nests of bits of fluff they catch in the air. They even mate in the air.

"There is no question that birds are the most widespread and successful kind of organism in the world."

How can he chose a favourite out of the fabulous parade of birds he has seen in making the programme? But he admits has always been greatly moved by the beauty of one species, the birds of paradise.

"They are some of the great wildlife spectacles, among the most beautiful and fantastically decorative birds in the world.

"I have been besotted with them since I was a schoolboy, when I read the travels of the great 19th Century British naturalists, the first Europeans to see these things. These birds are so romantic and they all have legends surrounding them. They all do the most extraordinary things, each with its individual dance and display."

And so I ask what Sir David has achieved in his career. He says he is also proud that his work makes a contribution to education. It was a matter of "huge pride" that his Life series was used by college students as a study aid. His father was a university lecturer who trained his sons' inquiring minds. "And that's what I suppose I am, a teacher."

But He insists that his films carry no message. "As Samuel Goldwyn said, sending messages is for Western Union. What I am doing conforms to the geat Reithian values [Lord Reith-founder of the BBC] – 'to entertain, educate and inform.'

"There are no messages in any of our films, no morals to be drawn, no insights into the human condition through a wild creature's wisdom. The reason I'm in natural history film-making is because it is so deeply enjoyable . It is one of the greatest pleasures in life, observing the natural world."



David Attenborough

Life on Earth

David Attenborough, (Sir David Frederick Attenborough) was born in London, 8 May 1926 into the family a Cambridge school administrator and his wife. He read zoology and geology at Clare College, Cambridge. After a brief spell in the Royal Navy, he joined a publishing house as an editorial assistant (1949-52) before moving to BBC television as a trainee producer in the Television Talks Department at Alexandra Palace.

Attenborough conceived the idea of a TV series based on animals in their natural habitats and, in 1954, the first Zoo Quest programmes were filmed in Sierra Leone. In the second series, Attenborough took over as presenter and also wrote the first of several books to accompany the programmes, *Zoo Quest to Guiana* (1956). His ten years of involvement with the Zoo Quest series took him to many of the wilder parts of the world. He was also involved in a wide range of political, archaeological, religious, short story and gardening programmes in these years.

In 1965, Attenborough was appointed controller of BBC 2, the BBC's newly created second channel. In this role he was responsible for overseeing the production of such notable series as Jacob Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man* and Kenneth Clarke's *Civilization*. There were also many technical concerns associated with the introduction of colour television in Britain. In January 1969, he was appointed Director of Programmes with editorial responsibility for both of the BBC's television networks. Then, in 1973, he resigned to return to programme – making and writing.

The Tribal Eye (1976), a series concerned with art in so-called primitive societies, was followed by an extensive 13-part series about evolution called *Life on Earth* (1978) – at the time the most ambitious series ever produced by the BBC Natural History Unit. Watched by an estimated 500 million people worldwide it was highly praised and the companion

book, *Life on Earth* (1979), became a best-seller. This was followed by several equally successful series, notably *The Living Planet* (1983), in which Attenborough presented examples of how plants and animals are adapted to their environments, and *The Trials of Life* (1990), which examined the processes by which various species survive.

In 1993, Sir David presented the spectacular *Life in the Freezer*, a celebration of Antarctica and in 1995, he wrote and presented the epic *The Private Life of Plants*. In 1996, Attenborough in *Paradise* fulfilled a lifelong ambition to make a special film about the elusive but beautiful birds of paradise. In 1997, he narrated the award winning *Wildlife Specials*, marking 40 years of the BBC Natural History Unit. In 1998, he completed an epic 10-part series for the BBC, *The Life of Birds*. In Autumn 2000 he presented *State of the Planet* and in Autumn 2001 he narrated *The Blue Planet*. He is currently working on a major BBC1 series for 2002, *The Life of Mammals*, for transmission in Autumn 2002.

Over the years he has received several honorary degrees and a number of prestigious awards. He was made a CBE (Commander of the British Empire) in 1974 and became a fellow of the Royal Society in 1983. He was knighted as Sir David Attenborough in 1985.

Attenborough was a member of the Nature Conservancy Council (1973-82) and was a trustee of the UK branch of WWF (Worldwide Fund for Nature) until 1990 and of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew until 1992; he remains a trustee of the British Museum. In 1991 he was elected president of the British Association. He is known for his passionate advocacy of international action to save wildlife and their habitats from destruction by human activities and was President of the Royal Society for Nature Conservation.



Sir David Frederick Attenborough

[Born 8 May 1926.....]

(A British Legend of Science Serials)

“The Best Known Face of British Nature Broadcasting” - David Bellamy

Sir David Frederick Attenborough is the son of Frederick Levi Attenborough and Mary Clegg. He was born on 8 May 1926. He married Jane Elizabeth Ebsworth Oriel in 1950.

He was educated at Wyggeston Grammar School for Boys, Leicester, Leicestershire, England. He graduated from Clare College, Cambridge University, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England, with a (an unknown value)¹. He graduated from Leicester University, Leicester, Leicestershire, England, in 1970 with a Doctor of Literature (D. Litt.). He graduated in 1972 with a Doctor of Literature (D. Litt.)¹. He was invested as a Commander, Order of the British Empire (C.B.E.) in 1974¹. He graduated from Liverpool University, Liverpool, England, in 1974 with a honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.)¹. He graduated from Bristol University, Bristol, England, in 1977 with a honorary Doctor of Law (LL.D.). He graduated from Heriott Watt University, Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1978 with a honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.). He graduated from Sussex University, Sussex, England, in 1979 with a honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.)¹. He graduated from London University, London, England, in 1980 with a Doctor of Literature (D.Litt.)¹. He graduated from Glasgow University, Glasgow, Scotland, in 1980 with a honorary Doctor of Law (LL.D.)¹. He was invested as a Fellow, British Academy of Film and Television Arts in 1980¹. He graduated from Bath University, Bath, Somerset, England, in 1981 with a honoary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.)¹. He graduated from Ulster University, Ireland, in 1982 with a honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.)¹. He graduated from Birmingham University, Birmingham, West Midlands, England, in 1982 with a Doctor of Literature (D.Litt.)¹. He was invested as a Fellow, Royal Society (F.R.S.) in 1983¹. He graduated from Cambridge University, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England, in 1984 with a honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.)¹. He graduated from Keele University, Keele, Staffordshire, England, in 1986 with a honorary Doctor of Sciene (D.Sc.)¹. He graduated from Oxford University, Oxford, Oxfordshire, England, in 1988 with a honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.)¹. He was a journalist and broadcaster. He was invested as a Commander, Royal Victorian Order (C.V.O.) in 1991. He graduated from Plymouth University, Plymouth, Devon, England, in 1992 with a honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.)¹. He graduated from Edinburgh University, Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1994 with a honorary Doctor of Vetinary Medicine (D. Vet.Med.)¹. He was invested as a Companion of Honour (C.H.) in 1996¹. He graduated from Bradford University, Bradford, Yorkshire, England in 1998 with a honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.)¹. He graduated from Nottingham University, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, England, in 1999 with a honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.)¹. He lived in 2003 at 5 Park Road, Richmond, Surrey, England¹. He has a son and a daughter¹.

Citations

1. [S37] Charles Mosley, editor, Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage, 107th edition, 3 volumes (Wilmington, Delaware, U.S.A.: Burke's Peerage (Genealogical Books) Ltd, 2003), volume 1, page 183. Hereinafter cited as Burke's Peerage and Baronetage, 107th edition.

Sir David Frederick Attenborough, English broadcaster and writer, b 1926

When such a man as David Bellamy, himself a 'face' of broadcasting, refers to someone like this, you listen. For nearly 50 years, David Attenborough has been presenting and producing high-quality educational and wildlife programs in Britain, and is not just a national figure, but is known worldwide for his commitment.

Born in London on 8th May 1926, he took an early interest in wildlife, which he pursued through his education at Clare College, Cambridge. After reading zoology and geology, he joined the Royal Navy for three years, before leaving in 1947 to join an educational publishing house.

The big turning point came for him in 1952, when he joined the BBC as a trainee producer, and two years later, had the opportunity he had been waiting for, to travel the world to see animals in their home environments. The TV series *Zoo Quest* was a breakthrough not just for David, but for broadcasting, breaking new ground and setting a standard for wildlife documentaries.

His innovative approach to production and broadcasting standards led to his being offered a post as the controller of BBC2, which he accepted in 1965, being responsible for such landmark series as *The Ascent of Man*, presented by Jacob Bronowski, and Kenneth Clark's amazing *Civilisation*. He continued to work with BBC2 as the director of programmes until 1972.

His first love still called to him, though, and he returned to his work in documentary television, producing, presenting and narrating the outstanding 'Life on Earth' trilogy of series which was first aired between 1979 and 1990. *Life on Earth* was a tremendous fillip for the BBC, earning millions in overseas sales, and spawning many imitations, and again, setting new standards for nature broadcasting.

He continues to work as a producer, and is much in demand for narrative work for wildlife programming

world-wide, and is currently working to finish 'The Life of Mammals' for airing in 2002

As a well-respected broadcaster, he has received many honours over the years, including honorary degrees and his 1983 election to Fellowship of the Royal Society. He is a Trustee of the British Museum, was a Trustee of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew and President of the Royal Society for Nature Conservation. Awarded the CBE in 1974, he was also knighted in 1985 for his services to broadcasting, and appointed a CVO in 1991 and Companion of Honour in 1996.

His brother is Richard Attenborough, film producer and actor.

Biography :

- **Blue Planet (2001)** role- Producer and Narrator
- **Ultimate wild Paradises: The Top Ten Destinations (2001)**
- **Night of a Thousand Shows (2000)**
- **They Said It Couldn't Be Done (1999)** rate-Presenter
- **The Life of Birds (1998)** role – Himself
- **Cities of the Wild (1996)** role – Narrator and Producer
- **Survival Island (1996)** (voice) role – Narrator
- **The Private Life of Plants (1995)** role – Host
- **Life in the Freezer (1993)** role – Presenter
- **The Trials of Life (1990)** role – Himself
- **A Zed & Two Noughts (1985)** role – Narrator
- **The Living Planet (1984)** role – producer and Presenter
- **Life on Earth (1979)** role – producer and presenter
- **Eastwards with Attenborough** role – producer and presenter (1976)
- **The Tribal Eye** role – producer and presenter (1976)
- **Zoo Quest** role – producer (1954)



Some of the Books Written by Sir David Attenborough

1. Dancing Out of Bali

by David, Sir Attenborough (Foreword), John Coast (Paperback-September 15, 2004) Avg. Customer Rating: Usually ships in 24 hours List Price :
Used & New from \$13.10
Buy new : \$13.57

2. The BBC Natural History Unit's wildlife specials

by Sir David Attenborough (Foreword), Keith Scholey (Editor) (Hardcover - October 1, 1998) (Rate this item)
Usually ships within 1-2 business days
Used & new from \$79.35

3. Richtersveld : The Enchanted Wilderness

by Graham Williamson, Sir David Attenborough (Hardcover - October 2000) (Rate this item)
Other Editions : Hardcover ! Unknown Binding
Usually ships within 1-2 business days
Used & new from \$83.53

4. Tomorrow Is Too Late

by Franklyn Perring, et al (Hardcover - September 27, 1990) (Rate this item)
Usually ships within 1-2 business days
Used & new from \$8.74

5. Peter Scott: Painter and Naturalist [LARGE PRINT]

by Elspeth Huxley, David, Sir Attenborough (Introduction) (Hardcover - August 1, 1996) (Rate this item)
Other Editions : Hardcover | Paperback | Hardcover (Large Print)
Special Order
List Price : \$25.99
Used & new from \$2.95
Buy new : \$25.99

6. Wild Fruit by Snowdon

by Penny David, Sir David Attenborough (Paperback - October 13, 1997) (Rate this item)
Usually ships within 1-2 business days
Used & new from \$5.98