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January 2021

Dear all,

Much had been achieved during the Covid times. The Board of Management has been meeting regularly via zoom to keep track on developments. However we are very sad to report the death of Jimmie King who made many interviews for the HP over the years. Also, John Grace, a regular attendee had a stroke in December – we wish well for a complete recovery.

The BEHP Board wish to record their thanks for the exemplary support given by The Veteran magazine to the Project, regularly drawing upon our material and supporting us throughout these difficult times.

Digitisation

More interviews have been digitised: by John Harwood, Alec Hall-Shaw and Mike. This will hopefully be completed by early January 2021 when Claire Haywood got out the last batch of tapes and discs out of the Archive room at BECTU in Clapham, collected by John Harwood, then delivered to Mike and Alec. Mike talked about the TEAC system and its features, which has helped speed up this process.

Missing or damaged interviews

Sue has checked Claire's findings against the audit compiled in pre-Covid days which has enable us to clearly identify "missing" interviews, some of which were never recorded in the first place.

From this we have realised how misleading it is to enter information into the database of potential interviews before they are recorded. So we will revise our “acquisition” procedure and also remove the database entry for non-existent interviews.

Nevertheless, there are several interview tapes which have disappeared and a few incomplete or damaged interviews. The BFI have been asked if they will loan our tapes back to us to upload to our master hard drives. We may have to pay them to do this for us and the cost of a new hard drive.

We will then review all the hard drives we hold – to date 15, create a central log of their content, input the information to the database and create a back hard drive for additional security.

Restricted Interviews.

Sue had been working hard on these interviews and had made good progress contacting the relevant people such as Mike Hodges – who felt honoured to be a participant - and the daughter of William McQuitty. The interviews with Bill Cotton, Aubrey Singer and Paul Fox are now accessible.

Transcripts.

We are now checking through all the transcripts we have in our collection. David has done a brilliant job transferring some of the documents that had been put in TRANSCRIPTS, erroneously as they were only notes, to TRANSCRIPT NOTES, so we have an accurate record in the database. We have 180 transcripts identified as PDFs which need to be converted to WORD documents so that they can be searched – some have already been done. 24 transcripts have been put through the Speechmatics software. Most of these still need to be proofread. **VOLUNTEERS please!!!** There are over 400 interviews still needing to be transcribed in order to make them discoverable. Mike advises that Speechmatics no longer works in this area, and he

has been trialling OTTER, a similar product but with sophisticated embedded timecodes in the transcripts. It also has a multi-user version. We hope that John and Alec, once they have completed the digitisation work, will agree to help use OTTER to produce more transcripts. Again we will **need VOLUNTEERS to proof read these transcripts**. Although in their raw state, they will be of great use to researchers.

Finance.

We are most appreciative of the regular annual contribution from BECTU. Powerhouse have told Sue that they are keen to continue making use of the collection on a regular basis.

Methods of Shooting Interviews.

Nick Gilbey has raised a number of points which will help to set standards for filming and the follow-up, that would be adopted. Watch this space for more news!

Website upgrade.

This is still in the pipeline with new Drupal 8 release on hold possibly until 2022. It could cost between £5,000 and £10,000.

News from Members

Brian Norris 'project <https://livingmemories.imagencloud.com/> is developing together with Abbeyfield Care homes a service to help memory and address isolation of older people. The project uses archive film to help jog memories and also to generate pleasant memories from the past. A lot of the film they are using is from the Green Park Production archive which includes film shot for BP. Brian would like to look at any interviews we might have in the BEHP with people who worked for the BP Film Unit. Please let Sue or Brian brian.norris@outlook.com know if you worked in the Unit or know of anyone who did.

Happy New Year everyone! Its got to get better