

Oral History Interviews with Karen Jones and Michael Moulds

Eileen Bowser & Christian Dimitriu

EDITORIAL NOTE | NOTE ÉDITORIALE | NOTA EDITORIAL

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Periodicals Indexing Project – commonly known as the P.I.P. – a major FIAF initiative that originated in the late 1960s and came into being in the early 1970s. The present set of two interviews, both conducted in 2011, aims to document the first steps in its history and development, and includes the memories of two key figures: Karen Jones, interviewed by Eileen Bowser, and Michael Moulds, interviewed by Christian Dimitriu. The interviews are complemented by a P.I.P. Timeline, compiled by the Project’s current Editor Rutger Penne and Associate Editor Anthony Blampied.

Cette année marque le 40^{ème} anniversaire de la création du Periodicals Indexing Project – plus connu comme P.I.P. – une importante initiative de la FIAF qui a vu le jour à la fin des années 60 et s’est concrétisée au début des années 70. Cet ensemble d’entretiens, tous deux menés en 2011, se propose de documenter les débuts du projet et son développement et inclut les souvenirs de deux personnalités : Karen Jones, interviewée par Eileen Bowser, et Michael Moulds, interviewé par Christian Dimitriu. Les entretiens sont enrichis d’une chronologie du P.I.P., établie par Rutger Penne, l’actuel éditeur du projet, et Anthony Blampied, l’éditeur associé.

Este año marca el 40 aniversario de la creación del Periodicals Indexing Project – comúnmente conocido como P.I.P. – una importante iniciativa de la FIAF nacida a finales de los 60 y que empezó a finales de los 70. Las dos entrevistas, ambas realizadas en 2011, se proponen documentar los primeros pasos de su historia y desarrollo, e incluyen los recuerdos de dos personas claves: Karen Jones, entrevistada por Eileen Bowser, y Michael Moulds, entrevistado por Christian Dimitriu. Las entrevistas se complementan con una cronología del P.I.P., compilada por el actual editor del proyecto Rutger Penne y el editor asociado Anthony Blampied.

Karen Jones and the FIAF Documentation Commission

Eileen Bowser: Honorary Member of FIAF and member of the Editorial Board, *Journal of Film Preservation* (New York)

Eileen Bowser

It is the 20th of January 2011, and I am talking to Karen Jones in her winter home in Vence, in the south of France. I am talking to her as an old friend and as part of FIAF's ongoing Oral History Project.

Karen, let's begin by asking where you come from, your date and place of birth, if you don't mind.

No, I certainly don't mind. I was born on October the 8th in 1937, in Copenhagen.

And what drew you to cinema?

I was always from a small girl very interested in moving pictures. My mother and I often went to the cinema from the time I reached the age of 7 or 8, and we went to see movies three or four times a week. We saw quite a lot, with no discrimination, just whatever was shown in Copenhagen at the time. My interest in film started very early on. Later, when I went to high school – that was in the mid-1950s – I started going to the screenings at the Danish Film Museum. I went to see nearly all their screenings. After high school, I began the program for librarianship at the Danish library school. Even in high school, I made some theses on film literature. When I attended the library school, from which I graduated in 1961, my final thesis was about the major film theoreticians, such as Rudolf Arnheim

and Béla Balázs and Sergei Eisenstein up to André Bazin. I started using the library at the Danish Film Museum. They knew me by the time I graduated library school, because I had used their collections all during my years of study. I became acquainted with Ib Monty, the director of the Danish Film Museum. There was no staff for the library at the time. I would have loved to start my career there, but that was not possible. I started working in public libraries for about three years, and then I went to work for the library of the Danish Radio and Television. I worked there for a year, and then Ib Monty phoned me and said that now he had managed to get a position for a librarian, and would I like to have that position. Of course I said yes.

You had a goal and had been working your way toward it.

Well, it wasn't my original goal. I really wanted to make pictures. I started out as an amateur filmmaker in the beginning of the 1960s. And made some 8mm films. I entered some contests, and won some prizes. But at the time there was no such thing as a film school in Denmark. It only came the year after I started at the Film Museum. If it had been there, I would certainly have applied to get into it. Whether I would ever have been good enough to get in, I don't know, but that was my prime interest at the time. The library was my second interest.

You have made some very great contributions to FIAF. I wonder how you first came to be involved with FIAF's work?

I guess it started by my going to London, it must have been 1967, to pay a visit to the National Film Archive. I knew they had the biggest collection of literature on film and I wanted to meet the people there. That was how I got in touch with Brenda Davies, who was head of the Documentation Department, as well as Gillian Hartnoll, who was the head librarian. We got along together very well, all of us with a strong interest in the subject. I suppose that is why Brenda proposed me as a member of the FIAF Documentation Commission.



With Bolex camera making amateur films in the 1960s

That must have been quite early in the history of the Commission because it was only formed in the spring of 1968 at the London congress of FIAF, at first as the Cataloguing and Documentation Commission.

That is true. I was invited to join in 1969, only one year later. I attended the Commission meeting in Wiesbaden in the fall of 1969.

I think that may have been the second meeting. And who was head of the Commission at that time?

That was Brenda Davies. This was her last meeting as chairman. The new head was named Eberhard Spiess of the Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde in Wiesbaden, at that time serving as deputy chairman.

Do you remember who else was in the Commission at the time you entered?

You were there, certainly, and Brenda, Eberhard Spiess. Alfred Krautz from Berlin was there as an observer, before he joined as a member. I think that was all, just five of us, as the Commission had just been di-

vided into its two headings, Documentation, and Cataloguing, both halves still meeting in Wiesbaden.

And why was the Commission divided?

I think Brenda saw early on that it was two completely different tasks that were performed in the archives so it would be much more logical if the commission were split. There was a group of people working on cataloguing the films in the archive and a group working on the documentation of films in general.

Were we already involved in some projects when you entered the Commission, can you remember?

Yes, Brenda mailed the documents from the first meeting to me and one of the subjects I could see had been dealt with already was international cooperation with the indexing of film periodicals. It was a scheme set up among seven archives, I think, each making some indexing sheets for a number of periodicals. Only about fifteen periodicals were being indexed.



With Jacques Ledoux during the joint meeting of the Cataloguing and Documentation Commissions in Wiesbaden in October 1969

It was a discovery for me that people were attempting to index the same periodicals in different countries, and so duplicating the work.

Exactly the same thought that I had. We had a very small staff at the Danish Film Museum. In fact, I was the only full-time person working in the library, with only some students helping out a few hours a week. We had a huge collection then, second only to the NFA in London, and we had extensive periodical holdings. We wanted to index them but we didn't have staff to do it. So I was quite happy to see the beginnings of this kind of cooperation.

And how did it get organized?

At the meeting in Wiesbaden, we discussed the project, and the shortcomings of the sheet system. The sheets accumulated but the information could not be used directly, not until there was time to enter it into whatever card system the various libraries used. We discussed the possibilities of instituting a card service: to have the information typed onto cards and then distributed to the various archives.

This was before the use of computers.

Oh, yes, everything would have been so much easier. We decided at that meeting that I should go ahead and prepare a project for the international cooperation of the indexing

of film periodicals on cards, and the general idea was that the information on the cards should be made into an annual volume. And I think it was at that point that you, Eileen, volunteered to investigate possibilities for a publisher in New York. So it was already at that Wiesbaden meeting that the idea of the P.I.P., the Periodicals Indexing Project, was formed.

Then we had the task of convincing the FIAF Executive Committee that it was financially feasible. That took a lot of convincing.

I am sure that it did, and if we hadn't had you as a member of the Executive Committee we probably would never have got it started.

Of course it never would have worked without a lot of volunteer labor.

No, of course not, because it was seen as a cooperative project, where periodicals would be assigned to various member archives for indexing. In each archive, a staff member would allocate time for doing the indexing work, to filling in some indexing forms to be sent to an editorial office.

It must have been difficult to achieve a standard, a uniformity of work, for all these different countries, and while it was to be in English or French, the indexing was by many contributors for whom these were only second languages. It must have taken a lot of editorial work. Who was in charge of receiving all this information? And editing it?

Maybe we should just go back a bit, to the Wiesbaden Congress, where I presented this proposal. That was June 1971. At the time I had the idea that the sales of the annual volumes would eventually fund the project. Of course, later on, I could see that was a very optimistic view. We needed funds for starting up the project. The Danish Film Museum volunteered to get the project off the ground by housing it for the first year, and I would serve that year as an unpaid editor, with a staff member of the Film Museum to do the typing. So I was the first Editor of the P.I.P. Before that Wiesbaden congress, I had sent the proposal to all the FIAF members, and got a very positive response from the great majority. There were replies from 26 archives, and 24 were in favor. One archive, the National Film Archive in London, said the project would be of no use to them

because they already did a lot of indexing and had done it for years, and they were not going to change their system. The only other archive that gave a negative response was the Swedish film archive. The head of documentation there was Torsten Jungstedt, and he wanted filmographic information. He didn't see the point of retrieving documentation material.

Don't you think the reason archives responded differently was that they had different kinds of structures, some for whom documentation was an important part of their activities, and some who didn't do this kind of work at all? It was amazing to be able to bring together as many archives as we did.

Yes, that was rather amazing. Of course, 26 members replied, but, while I don't know how many members there were at the time, there were a lot more. Not all archives responded. Among those who were interested, there were those who did not do periodical indexing before.

Remember the case of the Staatliches Filmarchiv, they were not so interested because they were not doing documentation. They left that to the Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen where Alfred Krautz worked. That organization was not a FIAF member, but they wanted to cooperate, and made an arrangement whereby Alfred Krautz became a commission member representing the Staatliches Filmarchiv. There were so many different structures within FIAF, but they still had important things in common. So we had contributions from individual archives, first of all, the Danish Film Archives. The NFA in London, did they make a contribution by housing the project?

No, they never housed the project. Nevertheless, although they didn't get anything out of it, they did contribute by indexing some of the periodicals. That was generous of them.

Did they never adopt our system?

No, they never did. Unless it happened recently. But not in my time. But the project was agreed upon in Wiesbaden, and I was invited to go on a tour visiting the archives in East Berlin, Budapest, Bucharest, and Prague in the fall of 1971 in order to establish some cooperation with the Eastern European archives. They could not pay a subscription fee to the P.I.P.

in Western currency, so FIAF had decided they should have a free subscription, but they contributed by indexing a number of periodicals. Upon my return I began to sort out the practicalities of the project. It needed some guidelines, of course, for all the indexers. It was necessary first to prepare some publications about the project. Michelle Snapes [Aubert], who at the time was working at the National Film Archive, volunteered to help with these publications. I went to London and we worked together on them. These three publications were: (1) a thesaurus of subject headings, and (2) guidelines for the indexers – we designed an indexing form and explained how it should be used – subject headings, titles of articles, page numbers, etc., and a place for describing the contents of the article. The indexers were to fill in the form in either English or French. (3) The third publication was guidelines for filing the cards when they finally reached the archives. These three – *List of Subject Headings*, *Guidelines for Filing*, and *Guidelines for Indexing* – were published by the Danish Film Museum towards the end of 1971, and there was an English version and a French version. Michelle did the translation from English into French. She was French by birth, so it was good that she was cooperating on the project.

By January we were beginning sending out cards from Copenhagen to the subscribers. Maybe I should mention, too, that at a later meeting of the Documentation Commission it was decided that the commission should select the periodicals. That was not the role of the Editor. The periodicals selected for indexing should be of lasting value and contain critical and historical information. That decision was taken prior to the starting of the project in Copenhagen. Then the periodicals were assigned among the volunteers for the indexing work.

You succeeded in inspiring a crew of people all round the world to be involved in this project; that's kind of wonderful.

People were very much interested, so it didn't take much effort on my part. I was amazed at how interested people working in these different documentation departments were. We were in the same position. We didn't have the staff to do all the indexing, and neither did they. They saw that they could

gain by just indexing one or two periodicals, and they would get information about a lot of periodicals. They saw the advantage.

After the original contribution from the Danish Film Museum, FIAF set up an office in London.

The Danish Film Museum could not support the project for more than one year, so at the end of that period it was necessary to take on a paid editor. There weren't the funds to do it, only enough to employ a part-time editor. At that point I should have realized that it wouldn't be possible for a part-time editor to do the job. It was really a full-time job from the beginning. However, it seemed that the only way we could continue was to start out with a half-time editor, and as it happened, Michael Moulds, who had joined the Commission in 1970, and at the time worked at the Canadian Film Institute in Ottawa, had moved back to London towards the end of 1972. He seemed an obvious choice for Editor. He agreed to take on the job on a part-time basis.

A very complicated traffic began because there was no office at the time. Michael did the editorial work from his home in London, and the practical work of typing stencils to produce the cards was done by the FIAF Secretariat in Brussels. First the indexing forms were sent to Michael in London for editing, and he then sent the forms to Brussels where the stencils were typed and then returned to the editor for proofreading. Then the stencils were sent back to Brussels to reproduce the cards and circulate them to the subscribers.

That was very complicated. Who was the first publisher of the annual volume?

You succeeded in contacting the publishing house Bowker in New York. I thought it was astonishing that an American publisher would take on a project like this. It was an international publication; it was not aimed at an English-speaking market. I remember that I went to New York at the beginning of 1973 and brought 12 boxes of catalogue cards with me. I was held back by the American customs, I don't know if you remember that, because they thought it was weird that I was carrying 12 boxes of catalogue cards. There must be some suspicious activity going on. I think they kept me some hours while you were waiting to welcome me at the airport. But I finally got through, and the cards were turned over to Bowker. I spent a week in New York working with the editorial staff at Bowker. I think the



Visiting the vaults of the Rumanian Film Archive in October 1971 with Aura Puran and Mr. Fernoaga

volume was published in September 1973. At that point we thought the sales of the volume would finance the operation. But of course there is always a delay for the income to come in. There was nearly the whole of 1973 before they started selling some copies. There were problems with financing at that stage, and FIAF came up with a loan. I think that was due to your efforts, that you persuaded the Executive to come up with some funds.

We had to convince them that the project was eventually going to pay for itself. We had to try to persuade them again and again, didn't we? A lot of people didn't understand the process, and understandably they didn't want FIAF to get in a financial hole over this project. And we came very near it a number of times.

It almost came to an end in 1974, actually. It became clear during 1973 that it was impossible for Michael Moulds to do it on a part-time basis. He spent much more time on it than he was actually paid for. The Documentation Commission asked FIAF if the editorial post could become a full-time position. That was very difficult to persuade FIAF at the time. Eventually, Michael was presented with a contract on a full-time basis. However, the terms of the contract were not very attractive: it didn't give much authority to the Editor to be in charge of the project. There were strict

limitations on how the project should be supervised. The salary was based on a very low National Film Archive grade. Consequently, Michael didn't want to continue as Editor. It seemed rather catastrophic. What to do next? I was summoned to Brussels by Jacques Ledoux, who asked me if I would be willing to take it on again and set up an office in London. If I didn't agree to that, he left no hope for the project. I think FIAF would have abolished the project at that point. So I had no choice, really. It was sort of my baby, so I had to carry it through. At least it had been agreed by FIAF that the project should have its own office. We couldn't continue this two-way traffic between Brussels and London. London was chosen because it had the National Film Archive there, with its extensive documentation collection. It would be very easy to check information. The documentation collections in Brussels were not that extensive at that moment.

The Danish Film Museum made another contribution in letting you go.

I got one year's leave. I went to London in March 1974 to look for an office, and with the assistance of Kevin Gough-Yates (then head of the National Film Archive), especially his secretary, Christine Kirby, we finally found some space in Shaftesbury Avenue, which was an ideal location, in the middle of Soho, very close, about ten minutes' walk from the National Film Archive. A contract was signed for the lease, and I went back to Copenhagen until I started working as Editor again on May 1st in London. I employed some staff, a full-time assistant who typed the stencils for the cards and a part-time printer to produce the cards.

And what about the publisher?

In 1975, Bowker decided not to publish the 1974 volume. We were dependent on the income, so we were again in deep trouble. It hadn't been a bestseller, by any means. One could understand why Bowker wanted out. Then, thanks to Kevin Gough-Yates, St. James Press in London agreed to take it on. When it came to the end of my year of leave, I decided that I would not continue as the Editor because I could see that the future of the project was uncertain, and I did not want to lose my position at the Danish Film Museum. We advertised for a new Editor.



Working with Milka Staykova at the Commission meeting In Bautzen in October 1974

Luckily, Frances Thorpe came along and applied for the job. She had been working previously at the Slade Film History Register. She was very interested in film and she seemed quite the right person to take on the editorship. She became Editor as of May 1, 1975. I think it was the year after that you got the grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. At that point, we were in grave financial trouble, too. That really saved the project at that critical point in 1976. And after we had spent that, we got the grant from the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture. And that was largely due to Milka Staykova, who was head of the documentation department at the Bulgarian film archive, and had joined the Commission some years earlier. She was, and still is, a person with great charm, as well as being very competent.

I really enjoyed the fact that the financial support was also international.

Yes, it was a marvelous thing. I remember when it was announced at the Brighton Congress in 1978, when Vladimir Pogacic, then FIAF president, announced this grant. He kept it as a secret, I think, until he could announce it in public. Saved again. But then already the next year – there were still problems with the publishing house – St. James Press gave up on the publication, and then Macmillan took it on for

a year, and they withdrew in 1979. Then FIAF was persuaded to publish it. I believe you again had persuaded the Executive Committee to go on.

Perhaps it was Jon Stenklev (head of the Norwegian film archive). He always had the practical mind for the financial side of the project.

Jon Stenklev was always a big supporter. I'm sure he was important to the survival of the project, because he was the Treasurer of FIAF.

After you left the position as Editor, what happened? I'm sure you never really left the project, because, as you say, it was your baby. You probably contributed to the end of your time at the archive.

Actually, it was one of my colleagues Lars Ølgaard, who took on the indexing for FIAF, but I never lost touch, of course. As a member of the Documentation Commission, I was naturally attached to the project.

Maybe we should go back one more time to the P.I.P., and the crisis that happened in 1980. As far as I recall, at the Executive Committee meeting in 1980, it was concluded that FIAF could not afford to continue the support for the project. That was a grave situation. About the same time, Frances Thorpe decided to resign as Editor in order to take up a post in the



At the Commission meeting in Amsterdam in February 1974 with Brenda Davies, Michael Moulds, Eileen Bowser and John Luijckx

documentation department of the National Film Archive. A new Editor would have to be appointed. Fortunately, Michael Moulds agreed to take on the editorship again. He began again in January 1981. Later that year, at the congress in Rapallo, there was a group of supporters established by 11 archives, I think it was, to form a supporting group, each member paying an additional fee to subscribe to the P.I.P. The project was saved once more.

There were a number of people in the archives who believed in the importance of the project. For example, we had no one on the staff paid to do this kind of work at MoMA, but our administration was very impressed by the importance of the project, and agreed to be one of the supporters. I think there were some others like that. Was it the same office when Michael took over again?

No. The office had been changed. I don't really remember, but I think at one point Frances Thorpe took on more space at Shaftesbury Avenue, the adjoining rooms, but after that it was moved somewhere else. I have forgotten where. But Michael Moulds, who was Editor from 1981 until he retired in 1997, would certainly be able to tell much more about that. He also brought the PIP through all the tech-

nological changes that were to follow, and which were continued by his successor as Editor, Rutger Penne.

Very important changes. And then the office ended up at the FIAF Secretariat in Brussels, where it is to this day. Well, we won't talk about those changes. We were not directly involved. I think we can just say in summary not only did the project perform a useful purpose for the archives, it also helped to bring the attention of the world to FIAF. The annual volumes were being added to libraries around the world.

Yes, I remember that at the congress in Stockholm in 1983, Sam Kula stressed that the P.I.P. was FIAF's single best ambassador to the world outside of FIAF. Another big recognition of the project was when the British Film Institute awarded its special award for "work in the film and television worlds deserving to be more publicly known and appreciated" to the Documentation Commission for the P.I.P. Michael and I received the award at the National Film Theatre in June 1982 on behalf of the Commission.

Were there any other members of the Documentation Commission that you felt made some important contributions to the project?



Participants in the FIAF Summer School in Copenhagen, August 1977

As I mentioned before, Milka Staykova, she fought a lot for the P.I.P., first by getting the Bulgarian grant, and later, when she was to become the president of the Commission, when you had left the Commission. She fought for the project during her years as president. There were also the members of the P.I.P. Subcommittee. At the Documentation Commission meeting in Bautzen in 1974 it was decided that the commission should establish some working groups that could meet more frequently to discuss a project in more detail. The members who served on the P.I.P. Subcommittee throughout the years included you Eileen, Milka, John Luijckx from the Netherlands Filmmuseum, Jana Vosikovska from the National Film Television and Sound Archives in Ottawa, as well as the editors Michael Moulds, Frances Thorpe, and myself. But of course all the members of the Commission contributed to the work of the P.I.P.

Especially the indexers in the archives, those who were Commission members.

Yes. It turned out later that it was important to have workshops for the P.I.P. indexers. There were a lot of workshops held in different places. We had the first one in London in August 1982. Those workshops were very important, getting the indexers to know each other, getting the indexers to realize the importance of the project. They were really valuable... and still are.

We could then move on to another subject, but still related, the FIAF Documentation Summer School, which also brought together indexers. When was that?

That was organized in 1977 in Copenhagen. I was approached by FIAF some years earlier to organize the first summer school for documentation. There had already been some sum-

mer schools held in Berlin on the subject of film preservation, but FIAF felt there might be a need because Berlin did not specialize in that aspect of film archiving. But then I started my one year's leave of absence from the Danish Film Museum, so it was not until 1977 that we could hold the summer school in Copenhagen.

And how was it organized?

It was the work of the Documentation Commission, which held some prior meetings and decided which subjects should be taught. It was primarily the members of the Commission who lectured. It was very much a collective effort. Of course I had to do the practical background work to organize it. We also held a Commission meeting there immediately in advance of the summer school to complete the preparations.

Those were the years when FIAF was expanding its scope much wider to the other continents. To some extent that was represented by the participants.

There were 20 participants from 15 countries. It was a rather wide spectrum of documentation workers: some participants from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and from Mexico, Israel, Iran... But then of course from the United States, too, and from the European countries.

They were mostly people who continued their careers in the archives after that, and contributed to the P.I.P. project.

Yes, there were lots in Copenhagen who continued their work. I think they were very inspired by this summer school, getting together. You know, it is very lonely to work as a documentation person in a film archive, because normally documentation departments are not very big, and you are on your own to do a lot of things. And then you get together with a group of people who do exactly the same things. It is just in a different country. That was really the biggest achievement of the summer school, getting all these people together who shared a common interest. I think that is why it became, I must say, a rather big success.

It lasted two weeks, and that was ample time for the people to get to know each other. There was a lot of social life in the evenings. We did have a very tight working schedule, some 26 subjects were taught, maybe too much, actually, as we concluded toward the end. As far as I know, it was the only summer school in documentation. There were talks of holding it every two or three years, but it never happened.



Handing out diplomas with Eileen Bowser and Ib Monty to Witold Witzak from the Polish Film Archive at the FIAF Summer School

Everything depends on volunteering, support, enthusiasm. Were there other tasks of the Commission that you want to talk about?

Maybe I should talk a little about the FIAF Classification Scheme for Film Literature. That was another project started at the very beginning of the Commission. It was already under discussion at that Wiesbaden meeting, my first meeting. I got assigned to work on a study of the use of numerical systems for use in classifying film literature. I was to undertake that study with Gillian Hartnoll of the National Film Archive. I knew by that time that she was already working on a new classification for film literature, because she was unsatisfied with the one they were using. But then in 1970, when Michael Moulds joined the Commission, I found out that he was also working on a classification scheme. I had produced a new scheme for our collections when I started at the Danish Film Museum, because there wasn't one that could be used. In the Universal Classification scheme, there was just one number that was allocated to film, where they used subdivisions. That wouldn't work at all for a larger specialized film collection. So we started to combine our efforts.

I think it was at the Prague meeting of the Commission in 1971 that we set up a subcommittee to work on classification. That was formed by Gillian Hartnoll, Michael Moulds, and myself. We worked for the following years on our ideas, but it came to the point that we had different approaches to classification. Gillian had some brilliant and very new ideas about how this classification could take form, but Michael and I were afraid that her scheme would be too complicated to be used by the FIAF archives. The people working in the libraries of the archives were not that used to working with classification. It would have been too much, I think. Gillian actually completed her scheme ahead of Michael. He was the mind behind our classification scheme. I only contributed with some ideas. So we had two schemes emerging. When Gillian was finished with her scheme, it was circulated among FIAF archives and the Commission members, and we discussed it at a Commission meeting, but decided that we could recommend it for use, but not for something like the P.I.P., because we wanted a scheme based on a more universal idea. Michael's scheme used a lot more from the Universal Decimal Classification. We didn't have to invent numbers for subjects that were already covered by the UDC. Michael finally completed his scheme in 1977. The Commission decided to adopt it as a recommendation for FIAF archives. It was published by ASLIB, the British library association, in 1980. It was a long span of years to the final publication. It was published as the *FIAF Classification Scheme for Literature on Film and Television*. It had become obvious during the years of working on the scheme that we might as well include television, because they were so close.

The scheme was quickly adopted by a number of FIAF archives, and it soon became evident that FIAF workshops were needed for the users of the classification. We held a work seminar in Madrid in 1981, with the cooperation of the librarian of the Spanish film archive, Maria Dolores Devesa. That workshop lasted five or six days. It was a very good thing to do because a lot of the users had encountered various practical problems, and it was an opportunity to get together and evaluate the scheme and to discuss how to use it. We re-



Three editors of the P.I.P. at the Indexers' Workshop in London in August 1982 (Frances Thorpe, Karen Jones and Michael Moulds)

peated the workshop one more time, in Lisbon in 1984, in cooperation with the Portuguese film archive. Rui Brito was the head of documentation there and later became a member of the DC. At this point a subcommission on classification had been set up by the DC to revise and update the classification scheme. The members were, apart from Michael and myself, Rosemary Curtis of the Australian Film and Television School, Margareta Nordström of the Swedish Film Institute, and Jan-Hein Bal of the Netherlands Filmmuseum. They contributed greatly to the revision work, and finally a second revised edition was published by FIAF in 1992.

There were other projects the Documentation Commission undertook, not all of them under your leadership, though I sometimes felt that most of them were. Eberhard Spiess and Alfred Krautz had a project, a subcommission group...

Yes, that was *International Directory of Cinematographers, Set & Costume Designers*, a project proposed by Alfred Krautz at the DC meeting in London in October 1973. A subcommittee was set up consisting of Alfred, Vladimir Vimr, Bujor Ripeanu, and John Luijckx. The first volume was published in 1981 by the publishing house Saur in Munich. There were a number of

volumes of the directory, divided by country or region, but I don't know very much about it, as I was not directly involved. That was mainly Alfred Krautz's project, although other members of the DC contributed (Eberhard, Rui Brito, and Michelle Snapes/Aubert).

Do you remember other Commission members that we haven't mentioned?

There was John Luijckx from the Netherlands Filmmuseum. Anne Schlosser from the American Film Institute library in Los Angeles served for a short time. There was Aura Puran from the Rumanian film archive, who succeeded Bujor Rupeanu. Vladimir Vimr from Prague for a couple of years. Jana Vosikovska from Ottawa, who joined the DC in 1980. And Brenda, of course, Brenda Davies, who continued for some years on the Commission and then was not permitted to be a Commission member because of policy struggles of FIAF with the British Film Institute.

There were problems about autonomy of the film archive. The British Film Institute made the documentation department a separate department, moving it out of the National



With Eileen Bowser conducting the interview in Vence in January 2011

Film Archive, which was the actual member of FIAF. So we had to lose Brenda for a while. She was an innocent pawn of that struggle.

But that was only for a brief time, in 1975, I think, because she came back in 1976 and stayed on until 1979.

She was a very hard worker.

She was very dedicated. And who else? Frances Thorpe, she became a member when she became Editor of the P.I.P. She stayed on the Commission even after she left as Editor, because by then she was working at the National Film Archive. She stayed on the Commission until 1987. Michael rejoined the Commission as a member when he became Editor of the P.I.P. He had been with the Commission throughout all the years because he was working on the classification scheme, and so he attended the meetings as an observer.

There was a debate within the Executive Committee about whether as a paid FIAF employee, he could be a member. But that was resolved eventually, I think.

We also got involved in some UNESCO projects, maybe we should just mention them. I have some rather bad feelings about all the time that was spent on those projects. We were approached as a commission at the meeting in Sofia in 1979. You presented us a UNESCO contract signed by the President of FIAF to do a feasibility study for an international documentation center. You asked me if I was willing to undertake that task. I thought it sounded too much work for one person, so Frances Thorpe agreed to write the study with me.

It was to set up an international documentation center where younger archives could draw on for help to establish film documentation departments in their own countries, to get advice, international cooperation. We suggested in this study that the P.I.P. should be

part of the center. We envisioned that some of the projects already going on could be placed in this center. We concluded that such a center should be placed in a country where there was easy access to film documentation collections. It was quite an extensive report, and maybe it was too ambitious for UNESCO. We didn't find out what we were supposed to do with this project. Maybe we misinterpreted what UNESCO wanted.

We submitted the report in 1979 to UNESCO and never heard a word about it. I think Wolfgang Klaue had some meetings with UNESCO. He told us that UNESCO had found it too ambitious, and too costly. It also turned out that the main concept was the documentation on the preservation of films, not so much documentation of films. So what we submitted was not really what was wanted.

Don't forget that UNESCO had fluctuating funds, depending on the world situation. Yes. Well, it was quite an extensive report. You contributed too, and Brenda Davies did, and Christian Castellani, the director of FIAT, the international television archives association, also contributed a chapter.

We accepted a number of contracts over the years with UNESCO. At times it was very useful, because we got some income. I think they don't do as much these days.

Some years later, I was approached by Robert Daudelin of the Cinémathèque Québécoise to write an article on film documentation in film archives. He had the task to assemble some articles for the *UNESCO Courier*. And so I did, but it wasn't published in the special issue for similar reasons, that documentation of film was of secondary interest. It was mainly on film preservation.

Your article should anyway be part of the FIAF archives. There is a new project to archive and catalogue and make accessible FIAF's own documentation collections. Your article will eventually be found useful, perhaps. Were there any other projects that we should mention?

There was one that you were very much involved in, *A Handbook for Film Archives*. The Commission members wrote a chapter on film documentation.

Yes, that was an important Commission contribution. That book was put together using the expertise of members of FIAF.

There was also the *International Directory of Film and Television Documentation Sources*. That was initiated by Brenda Davies, and I did some of the work on that. That was a good project, and it is still there, being revised and updated. I had a letter just before I left the Danish Film Museum from Nancy Goldman, who is now the president of the combined Cataloging and Documentation Commission. She was preparing a revision. So the work is still going on.

As is the P.I.P.

And the Classification Scheme is still being used by a large number of archives throughout the world.

We could never have imagined that the Periodicals Indexing Project could still be alive these many years. I think that is quite

an achievement. I am very proud myself to have had a part in it. I am sure you are too.

Oh, I am. Next year it will be the 40th anniversary of the P.I.P. That is something.

We must do something to celebrate that occasion. When did you retire from the Commission?

I retired in 1989 at the Lisbon meeting of the Commission. That was two years after the old commission had been suspended by the EC and the new commission named. It was felt that it was necessary to try out a commission where the members had limited terms, so the EC decided that the members should be re-named every second or third year.

That was a policy that was established at that time for the whole of FIAF. The Executive Committee also would have term limits. Of course that was only possible because FIAF had gotten so large, there were more possible candidates for positions. You could never have done that in the early days because there were not enough people – people who had the funds for travel, for example.

The Commission was completely reorganized. Milka Staykova wanted to resign, and I was asked to stay on a bit longer. I too wanted to leave. But I stayed on to make a bridge to the new Commission when it was appointed in Berlin in 1987. I attended my last meeting at the Commission meeting in Lisbon, in 1989. When the