

WORKSHOP: SPEAKING FOR THE RECORD

TUESDAY 6 JUNE 9.30AM NFT 1

Archival colleagues within FIAF and film historians will present case studies of how they have been engaged in collecting, preserving and presenting ancillary information to support the understanding and presentation of films in their archives.

The workshop will deal with the practicalities of gathering in and preserving oral and non-document based material, with the successes as well as the problems, both technical and intellectual, across the spectrum of fiction and non-fiction film, both professional and amateur. By sharing experiences those FIAF archives who are already doing this kind of work can offer practical models to those archives, large or small, who may be considering such activities or who have hitherto not considered such ancillary evidence as being within their capacity to collect.

Contributors

Human Studies Film Archives, Washington, USA

Speaker: Pam Wintle

Various methodologies and technologies used by the Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution, to document ethnographic and amateur travel footage will be described. Video clips will be used to demonstrate the value of documentation not only for specific information such as place, but for context which is necessary for a broader understanding of these actuality images. Projects to document similar actuality footage from three other American archives will also be presented.

IWM Film and Video Archive, London and North West Film Archive Manchester, UK. Joint presentation

Scraps of memory 1 - documenting amateur film

Speaker: Kay Gladstone (IWM FVA)

The presentation will explain how the IWM FVA acquires and catalogues privately shot amateur film. What special techniques, skills and other materials are needed to document these unique historic records? What is the relationship between archive and private donor? What other special demands does amateur film place on an archive? The IWM's answers to these questions reveal how a specialist archive of historical film consisting predominantly of 35mm professional official material now attaches equal importance to the documentation, preservation and presentation of 8mm, 9.5mm and 16mm personal films.

Scraps of Memory 2 - documenting amateur film

Speaker: Marion Hewitt (NWFA)

The North West Film Archive (NWFA) is custodian of a collection of moving images vividly illustrating life in the North West of England, and approximately two thirds of the Archive's main holdings are shot by amateur film makers. This presentation will highlight practical ways in which an archive can collect, keep and use ancillary information – putting the collection in a context which is essential to a full appreciation of the material.

- Collecting – including informal and anecdotal accounts, and written memories.
- Keeping – enhancing and relating catalogue records.
- Using – bringing context to presentations, and informing further research.

Hong Kong Film Archive

Speaker: Cynthia Liu

Hong Kong Film Archive's Oral History Project

- How it started
- What has been done

Mounting of the Martial Arts Films Exhibition Basing on Oral History Recordings

- The choice of the film genre
- Contents of the exhibition developed from interview-recordings with martial arts film directors, actors, martial arts directors and special effect experts
- Presentation making use of multi-media installations for film-clips, soundtracks and interview segments, alongside with displays of printed materials and artefact

Achievements

- How the mounting of the exhibition enriched the oral history databank and artefacts collection
- How the oral testimonies filled gaps in understanding the development and making of martial arts films: directors' philosophy, actors' reminiscences, and martial arts directors' accounts of trends of martial arts techniques and special effects
- A rare get-together of martial arts filmmakers and stars spanning generations.

Limitations in Using Oral History Materials

- Need to make cross-references and verify facts as events are often related as personal experiences, and details are easily forgotten by interviewees due to lapse in memory
- Restructuring of the recorded materials is often required as interviewees may express differently than what is needed and relate events in a muddled sequence.

New Zealand Film Archive, Nga Kaitiaki O Nga Taonga Whithiahua

Te Hokinga Mai: the Returning

Speakers: Bronwyn Taylor and Huia Kopua

As the primary repository responsible for the nation's film and television heritage the New Zealand Film Archive strives to be proactive in the collection of moving images and ancillary information. The Film Archive recognises the necessity to engage the people of New Zealand in the race against time to collect and preserve our moving image heritage. Huia Kopua and Bronwyn Taylor will describe two major outreach projects - THE LAST FILM SEARCH and TE HOKINGA MAI, demonstrating the importance of partnerships and reciprocity in a nation-wide search for early films and contextual information.

Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, USA

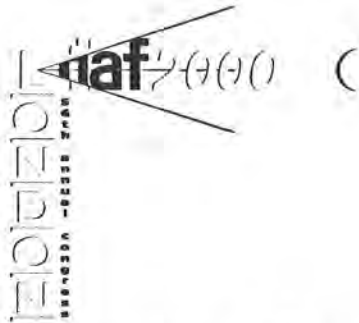
Bringing archival material to a wider audience

Speaker: Dr Richard Meyer, Professor of Telecommunications

THE MAN HATERS 1915 Produced by Basil McHenry, directed by William Bennage, original music by Kevin Purrone. This recently discovered film is an example of community activity in the fall of 1915. The producer Basil McHenry, a circus and theatrical man whose company operated out of Akron, Ohio, shot the film in Muncie Indiana in a two week period using local citizens as the actors. Voting was held in the "Muncie Evening Press" to select the woman to play the part of "Ruth". The "Who will be Ruth?" contest ran from October 20 to November 2. Any young woman over the age of 16 could enter by depositing a newspaper coupon in a ballot box at the Majestic Theater. The female receiving the most votes would play Ruth and the next nine young women in the vote standings would be offered parts in the movie. The three young men in the film were selected by McHenry from prominent local families. The producer carried out the same scheme in Anderson, Indiana a city 20 miles to the south. He also toured with such feature films as LES MISERABLES, TARZAN OF THE APES, and THE FOUR HORSEMEN. The locally produced

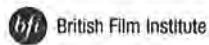
films generated enormous publicity for his other presentations. Nancy Turner, Head of Archives and Special Collections at the Ball State University Libraries oversaw the restoration of the film which had been salvaged from the original 35mm positive nitrate copy stored in a closet of the grandson of the contest winner Dora Grim. Ms Turner then arranged for the University to produce a half hour program for public TV which told the entire story and screened the ten minute film with School of Music Professor Kevin Purrone playing his original score. The presentation will discuss how newly discovered archival films can be restored and presented to a larger audience which would highlight the importance of the archivist's work.

Chairs - Janet McBain, Scottish Film and Television Archive and Iola Baines, Wales Film and Television Archive



SPEAKING FOR THE RECORD

Workshop
6th June 2000
National Film Theatre
09.30 - 12.30



Archival colleagues within FIAF, together with film historians, will present case studies of their engagement in the collection, preservation and presentation of ancillary information to support the understanding and promotion of films in their archives.

The Workshop will deal with the practicalities of gathering in and preserving oral and non-document-based material - successful or otherwise - both technical and intellectual, across the spectrum of fiction and non-fiction film, professional and amateur. By sharing their experiences, those FIAF archives who are already doing this kind of work can offer practical models to other archives, large or small, who may be considering such activities or who have hitherto not addressed this kind of ancillary evidence.

Chairs: JANET McBAIN, Scottish Film & Television Archive, and IOLA BAINES, Wales Film & Television Archive.

09:30 Introduction by the Chair.

09:40 PAM WINTLE, Human Studies Film Archives, Washington DC, USA.

A presentation of methodologies and technologies used by the Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution, to document ethnographic and amateur travel footage. Video clips will be used to demonstrate the value of documentation, not only for specific information such as location, but for the context necessary for a broader understanding of the actuality images in question. Projects documenting similar actuality footage from three other American archives will also be presented.

10:05 KAY GLADSTONE, IWM Film & Video Archive, London, UK

Scraps of Memory 1 - documenting amateur film

This presentation will explain how the IWM Film & Video Archive acquires and catalogues privately-shot amateur film. What special techniques, skills and other materials are needed to document these unique historic records? What is the relationship between archive and private donor? What other special demands does amateur film place on an archive? The IWM's answers to these questions reveal how a specialist archive of historical film consisting predominantly of 35mm professional official material now attaches equal importance to the documentation, preservation and presentation of 8mm, 9.5mm and 16mm personal films.

The above is a joint presentation with...

10:25 MARION HEWITT, North West Film Archive, Manchester, UK

Scraps of Memory 2 – documenting amateur film

The North West Film Archive (NWFA) is the custodian of a collection of moving images which vividly illustrate life in the North West of England, and approximately two-thirds of the Archive's main holdings are the work of amateur film-makers. This presentation will highlight practical ways in which an archive can collect, keep and use ancillary information – placing the collection in a context which is essential to a full appreciation of the material.

- Collecting – including informal and anecdotal accounts and written memories.
- Keeping – enhancing and relating catalogue records.
- Using – bringing context to presentations, and informing further research.

10:50 CYNTHIA LIU, Hong Kong Film Archive

The Hong Kong Film Archive's Oral History Project

- How it started.
- What has been done.
- Mounting of the Martial Arts Films Exhibition based on oral history recordings (the choice of the film genre; contents of the exhibition; presentation, including multi-media installations, etc).
- Achievements (e.g. enriching the oral history databank; how the oral testimonies filled gaps in understanding the development and making of martial arts films; a rare get-together of martial arts film-makers and stars spanning generations).
- Limitations of using oral history materials (e.g. the need to make cross-references and verify facts: restructuring of the recorded materials – often required as interviewees do not always provide information in a useful way or logical sequence).

11:20 BRONWYN TAYLOR & HUIA KOPUA, New Zealand Film Archive, Nga Kaitiaki O NgaTaonga Whithiahua

Te Hokinga Mai: The Returning

As the primary repository responsible for the nation's film and television heritage, the NZ Film Archive strives to be pro-active in the collection of moving images and ancillary information. The Film Archive recognises the need to engage the people of New Zealand in the race against time to collect and preserve their moving image heritage. Huia Kopua and Bronwyn Taylor will describe two major outreach projects – THE LAST FILM SEARCH and TE HOKINGA MAI – demonstrating the importance of partnerships and reciprocity in a nationwide search for early films and contextual information.

11:45 Dr. RICHARD MEYER, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, USA

Bringing archival material to a wider audience – THE MAN HATERS (1915)

This recently discovered film is an example of community activity in the fall of 1915. The producer, Basil McHenry, a circus and theatrical man whose company operated out of Akron, Ohio, shot the film in Muncie, Indiana, in a two-week period using local citizens as the actors. Voting was held in the 'Muncie Evening Press' to select the woman to play the part of Ruth. The three young men in the film were selected by McHenry from prominent local families. He carried out the same scheme in Anderson, Indiana, a city 20 miles to the south, and the locally produced films generated enormous publicity for his other presentations. Nancy Turner, Head of Archive and Special Collections at the Ball State University Libraries oversaw the restoration of this film, which had been salvaged from the original 35mm, then arranged for the University to produce a half-hour programme for public TV which told the entire story and screened the ten-minute film with School of Music Professor Kevin Purrone playing his original score. The presentation will raise the issue of how newly-discovered archival films can be restored and presented to a larger audience in a manner which highlights the importance of the archivist's work.

12:00 Discussion

12:30 Close