

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

Internal Memorandum

FROM: R B N Smither
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Information Retrieval

TO: Senior Keeper

DATE: 11 June 1980

FIAP Cataloguing Commission Meeting, Stockholm 3-7 June 1980

I attended last week a meeting of the FIAP Cataloguing Commission hosted by the Svenska Filminstitutet which is represented on the Commission by Rolf Lindfors of the Cinemateket. The meeting was also attended by Harriet Harrison (Library of Congress, Chairwoman), Wolfgang Klaue (SFA Berlin), Dorotehea Gebauer (DIF Wiesbaden) and Roger Holman (NFA London). The Commission has 9 members but there is at present one vacancy, and the members from Hungary and Yugoslavia were unable to be present in Stockholm. The Commission worked through a lengthy agenda, on which I shall report first, but my visit to Stockholm was interesting in other respects which I shall also cover.

1. Commission Business

The Commission reviewed its relations with other international organisations, notably UNESCO, IFLA and FIAT. It was also noted that the proposed conference on cataloguing to be organised in Canada for IFTC had been again postponed and was now most likely to be abandoned. Reports were also given on relevant decisions reached by FIAP's own Executive Committee and other Commissions.

The Commission noted the publication, sales record and reception (reviews etc) of its two publications last year, 'Film Cataloguing' and the 'Study of Computer Usage'. Members also exchanged information on activities in their own institutions, Roger Holman explaining the NFA's current computer typesetting work. We also considered the question of publicising the cataloguing aspect of archive work through the FIAP bulletin and through symposium contributions at future Congresses. The Commission compiled a shortlist of possible candidates for the Commission vacancy for consideration by the Executive Committee.

Business thereafter concentrated on the Commission's two current projects and on the plans for a future project. The first current project is the 'Glossary of Filmographic Terms'. The most recent (English language) draft was received and plans made for translation into French, German, Russian and Spanish at which stage it is hoped to publish. The second current project is the 'Bibliography of National Filographies' on which (thanks to the excellent research library of the Svenska Filminstitutet) substantial material progress was made.

The future project decided on was the preparation by the Commission of proposed international standards for film cataloguing. This major commitment is undertaken in part in response to the charge laid by UNESCO on the archives of the 'moving image' to provide such guidelines, and in part as a reply to the proposals for uniform cataloguing standards emanating from the library world in such forms as the second edition of the Anglo American Cataloguing Rules, the ISBD (NBM) etc. The Commission decided to seek UNESCO help with the project (primarily in the form of financial assistance towards extra Commission meetings, as progress in the task with the Commission's current pattern of annual meetings will inevitably be very slow). Meanwhile members are to provide discussion papers on specific catalogue areas; I have agreed to work on the question of titles.

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Together with Roger Holman, I extended a joint invitation on behalf of the Museum and the National Film Archive to the Commission to hold its next meeting in London, most probably in late February 1981.

2. Svenska Filminstitutet

Our hosts provided detailed tours of the Institutet's Stockholm premises and of the film vaults and laboratory at Rotebro to the north of Stockholm. The Institutet's resources are very enviable: the Filmhuset (Film House) although not in central Stockholm is a large, purpose-built modern building (10 years old) owned but not entirely occupied by the Film Institute. It includes 3 cinemas (360, 130 and 15 seats), library, stills and cutting collections, studio and office space and film storage areas kept (like the archives main vaults) at -5°C . The vaults and laboratory outside Stockholm are also very well equipped, the laboratory possessing a number of pieces of specially developed film treatment equipment which I shall endeavour to describe to Terry Watson. It is, finally, noteworthy that the Institute is building a cell of vaults to be maintained at -25°C for the Archive's colour preservation material.

3. Publications

Our hosts generously presented each of us with various publications, the most valuable of which are undoubtedly copies of the 2 volumes so far published (1930-39 and 1960-69) of the Svensk Filmografi and a book detailing all films (domestic and foreign) released in Sweden in the 1950s. These are being sent after me; I shall hand them over to the Department of Film, if you would like them, on their arrival. They were, incidentally, published through computer typesetting.

4. Museum visits

In free time from Commission meetings, I was able to meet cataloguers in two Stockholm museums using computerised cataloguing for their collections of exhibits: The Ethnographic Museum using the on-line ISIS package, and the Nordiska Museum using an internally produced package reminiscent of (but considerably less sophisticated than) GOS. The visits were informative as well as enjoyable, and I have brought back a couple of new ideas as a result.

I should in conclusion note that the hospitality of the Svenska Filminstitutet was very generous and that Rolf Lindfors himself worked extremely hard to make an undoubted success of the Commission meeting.