

INTERNATIONAL INDEX TO FILM/TELEVISION PERIODICALS

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EDITOR'S REPORT

Office

After nearly a year of searching for an office at a rent we could afford I finally found one in February this year. It is in a rather bleak area of North Kensington, but the building itself, a recently-converted Victorian factory overlooking a canal, is attractive. It is divided into studios and offices of different sizes, and occupancy is restricted to "media" organisations (the BBC has a television production studio there). Working conditions are pleasant and will be more so when all the services, such as the restaurant, are fully operational.

The office itself (340sq.ft., 34½sq.m.) was simply bare walls, floors and ceiling, and had to be completely decorated, carpeted and shelves and working surfaces installed. The electrical service was particularly expensive to install. However the rent is reasonable, rates and heating costs will be much less than in Shaftesbury Avenue, which will compensate in the long run for the initial expenses.

The move took place on 24 March 1987.

Computer

The FIAF Executive Committee finally approved our proposal to acquire our own computer in January 1987. I immediately started discussions with Computaprint, a company specialising in bibliographic applications. On their advice we bought an Armstrad PC1512 computer with a 20MB hard disc. They have produced a program based on the Revelation database system which is designed to meet our specification for speed in the recording of entries, automatic indexing of directors and authors, and the addition of all accents and diacriticals. Two microfiche bureaux are now making tests for the production of computer-generated fiche (comfiche) from the output of our computer. This method will avoid the troublesome delays we now experience in the creation of fiche from cards (e.g. 10 weeks to produce the final dispatch of the 1986 service - a cumulation of over 51,000 cards for 1982/86 on 67 fiches).

Computaprint themselves will make the camera-ready copy for the annual volumes, which from next year should be published at least four months sooner than at present.

Unfortunately staff sickness caused a three week delay at a crucial time in the instigation of the new system, but we are now catching up fast and hope to send out the first fiches by the end of May.

We are faced with a difficult decision regarding the format of the new fiches. Our present fiches are based on the standard for 98 frame library fiches and require a 24x lens. The normal comfiche standard involves a greater reduction, an improved layout in columns and much more data on each fiche. The 1982/86 cumulation which we have just sent out will cost us £1240. On comfiche it would take up

about 24 fiches and cost about £200. Most subscribers who have other data on microforms would be able to read the microfiche on their existing equipment, but some would need to buy the 48x lens required. We still have the option to produce fiches on the 24x standard, but we will not be gaining the full benefit in cost and convenience for users to be derived from the new system. I hope to be assisted in making a decision by reactions to the alternatives from subscribers attending the Congress.

Subscriptions

Since this time last year there have been seven new TV subscribers and one new film subscriber. They are marked with an asterisk on the attached list. We have had one TV cancellation (University of Alberta, Edmonton) and one probable cancellation (Rede Globo, Brazil, a TV card subscriber). Cinémathèque Québécoise, who subscribed to the film service on cards, have switched to microfiches. The decision of the Cinémathèque Royale in Brussels is not yet known.

Television volumes

I applied to The Television Fund of the ITV Companies Association (who subsidised the 1981/82 volume) for a grant to produce the 1983/84 TV volume. The application was turned down.

K.G.Saur

I had a brief telephone conversation with Mr Saur when he was visiting his office in London. At his request I sent a copy of the annual volume to his New York office since he wanted their views on the sales possibilities in the USA. Some time later I was informed that he did not wish to pursue the project (copy of letter attached).

Financial prospects

The anticipated deficit on this year's budget is accounted for by:

1. the inclusion of the increase in rent of the Shaftesbury Avenue office back to September 1986
2. the amount demanded by the Shaftesbury Avenue landlord to redecorate the office on leaving. We were bound by the terms of the lease to pay this
3. the costs of decorating and furnishing the Canalot office.

As a result of 2. and 3. the budget for the move, for which we received a grant from FIAF of £3000, was exceeded by £1259.

Whether we can meet the income targets this year and in future depends almost entirely on the receipts from St James Press. Their accounts both for UK and US are controlled by George Walsh in Chicago and it is extremely difficult to get information out of him. I hope to hear from him before I leave for Berlin with full information on the income that we can expect this year.