

Report of meeting on 8 April

Hoppy (CATS), Cliff Evans (Time Travellers), Tony Downunt/Simon Partridge (Videots), Andy Porter/Siobhan Lennon (Community Action Centre), John White (Albany), David Wilkinson (Hammersmith Video Officer), Graham Wade (Video & A-V Review), Ron Orders (Liberation Films) - were present. Apologies of absence were received from - Mick Jones (ILEA MRO/Videots), Sue Hall (Graft-On!), Harry Levinson (NELP), Maureen McCue (Heathcote Youth Centre), Peter Anderson (Lewisham Video Officer), Maggie Pinhorn (Basement Video Project).

Ratification of Constitution

It was decided to change the name and formally constitute the association. The draft constitution (see amended copy attached) was, with some amendments, unanimously ratified. It was decided to open a bank account in the name of the association and our assets are presently £21.00. Simon Partridge was elected Secretary and Tony Downunt was elected Treasurer.

Sainsbury's Paper on Group Support Fund

We obtained 3 copies of the "Production Board Discussion Paper: Group Support". The paper outlines the history of the Group Support Fund since it was set up to aid work being done in areas identified as "avant-garde film and video" and "social or political film and video" in mid-1973. It outlines certain developments in the field, since, and as regards video says:-

"The most remarkable developments are in the field of non-broadcast video. The introduction of high density $\frac{1}{2}$ " videotape and the development of an automated editing system have brought about a very high standard of programme making with reasonably low cost and easily operated equipment. There is only one further technological step to be developed before $\frac{1}{2}$ " tape is capable of cable transmission. We are therefore confronted with new uses of television which are by definition the concern of almost all BFI departments. The Production Board cannot unilaterally decide that film production is more or less significant or deserving of support than television production. Incidentally, the use of so-called non-broadcast video equipment is very much cheaper in terms of capital equipment and production costs than film-making."

It is critical of the small size of the fund (£10,500 when compared with £110,000 reserved for the traditional activities of the Board), and that the fund duplicates work already being carried out by the Regional Arts Associations. It also criticises the performance of the groups already funded, claiming that both portable and installed equipment has been underused.

It recommends that what is needed is not a Group Support Fund, but an Equipment Fund; and that a research programme should be established to look into community video activities in Britain which it describes as "by far the fastest growing of the various forms of activity we (BFI) are considering". The research would be related to the needs of the BFI and tied to a series of seminars for BFI officers and Regional Film and Video officers.

The equipment provided would be of two kinds: portable film and video on short or long term loan; installed equipment such as a public access film lab and video editing facility in London. The applications for the latter facilities received from London Film Makers' Co-op and CATS have, for the time being, been turned down on the grounds they are: too expensive (would absorb 20-30% of fund); the applicants lack the necessary "social philosophy and administrative ability"; danger of duplicating the plans of BFI Regional Department's mooted film/video workshop facilities; Gulbenkian Foundation has declared itself a source of support for installed equipment.

The paper ends, "Unless we (BFI) are able to come up with the goods, we shall continue to fail to meet a clear obligation which we ourselves have been acknowledging for nearly two years."

(Full copies of the paper are available from us.)

The meeting noted that a "discussion paper" had somehow become a "policy statement" of the BFI without those who would be affected by its recommendations having a chance to read it. In order, that in future, "discussion papers" should circulate external to the official bodies that produce them before becoming "policy statements", it was decided to send letters to the directors and relevant officers in the BFI, ACOB and GLAA - informing them that the association was formally constituted and asking what channels of communication could be opened up between us. The following letter was sent:-

"We are now a formally constituted association (a copy of our constitution is enclosed) and request information as to how decisions about policies and grants affecting our members are made within your organisation. We would also like to know how our association could be effectively involved in this decision making process."

The following reply has been received from Peter Sainsbury:-

"An interim note to assure you that your letter of 11 April regarding the constitution of the Association of Video Workers (London Region) is not being ignored. In order that you may receive a coherent reply from the Institute rather than a number of partial replies from the various departments, we shall be discussing your request for information internally in the near future and will let you have a fuller reply as soon as possible."

NEXT MEETING

Monday - 5 MAY - 6.30 p.m.

Lecture Hall Annexe, Architectural Association, 34-36 Bedford Square, WC 1.

1) Policy Statement on Video

In view of the current research activity (see General News, item no. 1 for details) the last meeting decided that the association should produce a policy statement on video. This meeting should try and work out how best this could be done and what topics the statement should cover - if you have any written material which you think would be relevant could you please bring it along. Before the meeting you should also receive a copy of Peter Sainsbury's discussion paper "The Production Board - An Outline of Present Policies" (if you don't, contact him at: 42/43 Lower Marsh, SE 1. - Tel: 928 4742) - we could also usefully discuss this.

2) ILEA ETV Cable System

We've contacted Vincent Thompson of the ILEA Resources Support Group about the closure or cut-back of the cable system. He should be able to provide more information which will help us to decide if there is any action we can usefully take.

3) Future Activities of AVW(LR)

We've received a couple of suggestions from the membership on this:-

- a) That we should organise tape showings where members show examples of their work and we talk about them. The normal AVW meeting length (2-3 hrs.) doesn't seem enough for this, so may be we'd have to fix a whole day sometime.
- b) That we should set up courses in basic video maintenance for AVW members - perhaps with the help of one of our technicians, or a Poly.

We could also arrange some seminars during the year and invite people down to them: e.g. an evening on media centres with representatives from Yorkshire Arts Association Communications Centre, Merseyside Visual Communications Unit or Milton Keynes Media Centre. What else?

4) Representation on BFI Production Board Committee

Simon Hartog, secretary of the Independent Film Makers Association, has told us that there are 5 places currently vacant on the Production Board Committee. If we elected representatives to sit on the committee this would be one way of obtaining information and affecting BFI policies.

5) Standing Committee of Artists Associations

We didn't have time to discuss this at the last meeting but an ad hoc committee of Artists Associations, which we (Tony and Simon) attended as observers, was set up on 7 April. The committee is still exploring what its functions should be, but initially it would act as an information exchange. The possibility of producing papers on the following long-term issues was discussed: democratisation of public patronage; unionisation of artists; living wage for artists; the way in which money is spent at present; relationship of the arts with the media; plans for action to change the situation.

We are comparing papers presented by Artists Organisations on the topic of Democratisation of the Arts Council. The next meeting of the committee is on 28 April and we will report its proceedings to this meeting which can decide whether we should be formally involved.

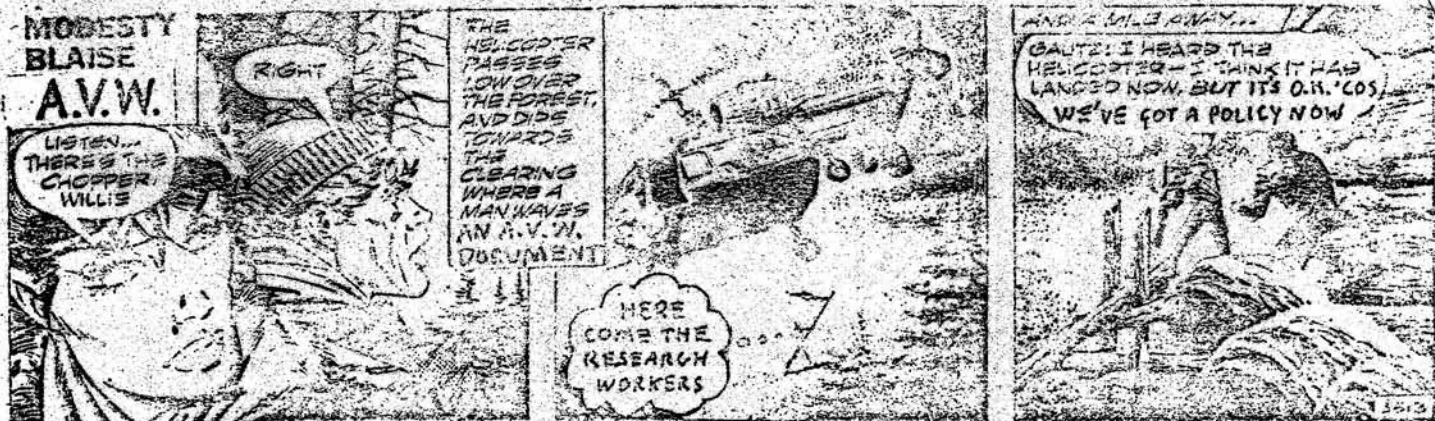
GENERAL

Research

It could be that AVW(LR) has acquired itself formal respectability at a crucial time. A number of different bodies are asking questions, and the answers they get will affect future funding and the direction in which video work will go. The research project that is most relevant to us is the BFI's, conducted by Frances Berrigan, (ALIV NEWS no. 3, p.1.) which will determine the whole future policy of the BFI towards video. There are also at the moment 3 bodies looking into, and formulating policy on the Arts in general:

- a) Gulbenkian Foundation Report on the Future Patronage of the Arts.
- b) Labour Party Arts Study Group.
- c) TUC Working Party on the Arts.

The Gulbenkian report was set up at the request of the Arts Council and the Regional Arts Associations, and has the co-operation of the BFI. They have said that the funding of community arts is one area they will be investigating; the Labour Party are broadly interested in "the function of art in society", and "particularly concerned with the role of local and municipal authorities and saw community arts as an area which could pressure these authorities to spend more on the Arts" (from Association of Community Artists newsletter).



It was with this background in mind that the last meeting of the association decided it was in our interests to produce a "policy statement" on video to feed into these various research projects; to use the strength that should come from our new found unity.

GLAA Video Seminars

5 seminars with the following organisations/people will be held at the Royal College of Art on 12,13,14,15,16 MAY, respectively:-

- 1) Islington Bus Co. & Inter-Action;
 - 2) CAFE & Graft-On!
 - 3) Richard Dunn - Swindon Viewpoint;
 - 4) Liberation Films;
 - 5) Dorothy Hénaut - Challenge-for-Change.
- They start at 6.30 p.m. - except 13 MAY, which starts 7.00 p.m.

A day conference, "Video Perspectives: A critical reassessment of the role of video in community development" - will be held at the RCA on 24 MAY. It will be chaired by Colin Young: George Stoney (Alternate Media Center, New York); Mike Barret (Milton Keynes Communications Project); Dorothy Hénaut (Challenge-for-Change, Canada); a representative from a Community Development Project; - will be present.

There will be 100 places available and tickets will cost £2.00 - some subsidies will be available on individual application. An information bulletin should be available shortly from Keith Griffiths, 25/31 Tavistock Place, WC 1. 387 9541...

Blanking out the ILEA screens

THE GRINDING of financial axes is being heard with mounting alarm at the ILEA's TV-centre, set up seven years ago to plug the gaps left by the national networks, especially in the area of minority needs, and to provide a regional orientation and involvement for London teachers and children. Two years ago, as a supposedly temporary expedient, the budget was cut by £68,000, with a drop in production that is now approaching 50 per cent of its previous level. The Tories on the authority's education committee voted in February for complete closure, and this view has since found a resonance among the Labour majority.

What has particularly riled the production staff, all of them seconded teachers, are the accusations of amateurishness - complaints which, they protest, are based on material that was produced in the centre's early days, some of which is still being

screened. Neither are the staff happy about what they describe as the ratings game. "County Hall is counting heads on the one hand and pounds on the other," one teacher-producer says. "You might as well ask how often a book is used. It is not a qualitative assessment."

Such assessments, of course, do not come in for ready measurement, although Peter Weiss, the centre's director since January, considers that the viewing figures combined with responses indicating enthusiasm and interest are not as high as they ought to be. However, the results of a major change in the structure of the service that took place 18 months ago are only just beginning to be fed into the closed-circuit network. The previous policy on programme development, according to the teacher-producers, amounted to "death by a thousand committees."

Now priorities are established by the Advisory Committee for Television and Supporting Materials, chaired by the ILEA's chief inspector, which takes

up ideas put forward by working parties made up of inspectors, teachers, and the centre's own media staff, who for the first time have been able to play a direct role in initiating programmes.

Their dilemma is the belief that by actively resisting cuts they would be guaranteeing the centre's closure. Meanwhile Weiss is preparing a report which spells out the options, geared to various levels of programme output, but placing these in the context of the services offered by the ILEA's Media Resource Centre, which could mean less TV and more slides or other mixed media packages. Closure is an option that will not be included in the report. "The weakest link in our armour," one teacher-producer observes, "is that parents - the rate payers - can't see the programmes." What remains to be seen is whether any links are established with the teachers who do, many of whom would presumably be less than delighted to be thrown back on their own over-stretched resources.

This paper is about fees for the single use of a videotape for playback in a non-commercial situation. There are many different uses both current and envisaged for videotape--this paper will be followed by others dealing with other situations.

The information on how it could be handled has been gathered from different sources both in the UK and abroad, some of which are film distributors. What follows are suggestions rather than rules.

Definitions

Non-commercial: Playback where the viewers do not pay e.g. as part of a lecture/demonstration/seminar; for local community groups and events; at video exhibitions and festivals; Trade Union branch mtgs, etc.

Single use: Playback on a specified day and a particular occasion. Depending on the nature of the tape, this may sometimes mean more than one actual playback, particularly if it is a learning situation such as a seminar, when viewers may wish to review portions of the tape more than once; or when the hirer may want to check out the contents in private first, etc.

Hire: The user pays a hire fee for the use of the videotape.

Videotape: This means, here, $\frac{1}{2}$ " or $\frac{1}{4}$ " black and white tapes. In future we can expect that videocassettes will come into use, and colour, which will need some more thought.

Style

In general an agreement (contract) is signed between the originator and the hirer. It will cover the following points (at least):

- 1 Deposit. The hirer agrees to lodge a deposit ^{five} ~~one~~ weeks or more before the event. This gives time for the cheque to clear, and ensures funds in case of tape damage or loss, or other contract conditions not met which cost the originator something.
- 2 Order. The deposit is accompanied by an order on the letterhead (if there is one) of the hirer signed by a responsible person. If no letterhead a written request.
- 3 Event. The name, ^{location and} date of the event is stated. Also that it is non-commercial.
- 4 Transit. The originator undertakes to deliver, by mail or otherwise, the videotape in time for the event. If sent by mail, it is important to mark the package "VIDEOTAPE: PROTECT FROM MAGNETIC FIELDS, METAL DETECTORS, X-RAYS" or something similar.

Return. The hirer undertakes to return the tape, ^{recorded delivery,} properly packed and labelled (an extra return label may be included in the original package), the day after the event. A certificate of posting is usually accepted as proof of despatch e.g. in film distribution. After return the deposit less the fee and any costs e.g. for damage, is returned to the hirer.

The cost of mailing out is borne by the originator, the cost of return is borne by the hirer.

5 **Damage.** The hirer undertakes to look after the tape, clean the playback machine before use, and other boring details, and to report any damage that may occur, such as the tape breaking.

6 **Loss.** It may be advisable to either insure the tape for mailing, or to send it recorded delivery, or both. The London Film-makers Coop has an insurance arrangement whereby every despatched film is insured (details from them).

(a) There shall be a minimum payment for any length of videotape however short.

(b) There shall be a minimum rate charged on a per minute basis.

Calculation of fees

The minimum payment should include a flat payment made to the originator for use of the tape, plus a small charge for overheads. It is suggested that the flat payment is equal to the list price of a new tape (roughly £6 for a half hour tape on EIAJ standard, or £6 for a 20-minute tape on CV2100 standard, etc).

If the length of the tape is over the length of one tape, the minimum rate is used to calculate the appropriate fee, pro rata.

Examples

These are based on Mon Oeil, distributors of political tapes (Paris).

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|-----------------------|--|
| (1) 20-min EIAJ tape: | In this case the tape is under $\frac{1}{2}$ hour and the minimum payment applies. |
| Overheads: £2.00 | |
| Flat rate: £6.00 | |
| Total: £8.00 | |
| (2) 30-min EIAJ tape: | In this case the minimum payment is the same as the pro-rata rate. |
| Overheads: £2.00 | |
| Flat rate: £6.00 | |
| Total: £8.00 | |
| (3) 45-min EIAJ tape: | In this case the pro-rata rate applies proportional to the length of the tape. |
| Overheads: £2.00 | |
| Rate: £9.00 | |
| Total: £11.00 | |

Deposits

Mon Oeil charges £30 deposit.

Cancellations

Yorkshire Arts Assoc. stipulates 14 days notice prior to the event, failing which the full amount is payable. As distribution increases in volume this will become more of a problem.

Notes

In the case of a lecture/demonstration, the originator brings the tape with him/her, so the overheads are zero.

It is worth noting that educational establishments already have a system of paying hire rates for film separate from any lecture fee, so if you point this out there should be no problem of precedent.

During the past year, Peter Bloch of Twenty Four Frames has been charging about £14 per hour for tapes, which fits the above scheme nicely.

In the event that the originator has to take equipment as well as videotape, payment for the hardware can be negotiated separately if required.

Comments

This probably looks devilish complicated. Actually its just because I've tried to go thru it point by point. All this stuff would fit into one side of A4 if it were written in terms of a contract.

The idea of the whole thing is to provide a guide for independent tape producers. There is no reason why the rates should not be adjusted according to the status and resources of the particular user, either upwards or downwards. But it should be obvious that the idea is to provide the originator with the cost of a new tape each time a tape is hired, which is the reason for fixing the basic flat fee at \$6.00.

Serpentine Video Show

A show of British and International videotapes opens at the Serpentine Gallery on 1 MAY and runs to 26 MAY - weekdays 12-8, Sundays 11-8, admission free. Besides many individual artists and groups such as Inter-Action and CATS, experimental cable stations will be represented. Internationally, the emphasis will be on such work as Nam Paik's videographics, Top Value TV's documentaries and Alternate Media Center's community experiments. Half the gallery will be used by British participants for closed circuit live installations and performances. A tape library will enable visitors to view tapes of their choice and excerpts/short tapes will also be shown daily for the benefit of visitors with less time. Further info from:-

Peter Bloch or Sue Grayson, Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gdns., W.2. 402.6075

Loose lipped

At last the director of the British Film Institute, the tight-lipped Keith Lucas has felt free to unburden himself about the BFI's financial problems, which involved the difficult feat of underspending - by £157,000 - in the past year.

It seems that the BFI has been rescued by movie buff and Institute member Hugh Jenkins, the Arts Minister. Subject to parliamentary approval the £157,000 forfeited back to the Treasury for 1974/5 will be made into a supplementary grant for 1975/6, thereby saving the BFI from the alarming prospect of bankruptcy.

Nor will the 1975/6 grant be cut by that amount, though, at £1,969,000, some staff feel it may not keep pace with the real value of last year's £1,537,000.

AN is explained in a staff memo in which Mr Lucas reveals "I am sorry I could not take you into my confidence earlier, but I was bound by an undertaking given at the request of the Minister to make no public comment." Moral: silence is golden.

From the Guardian London Letter - 19 APR 75

Articles

We have obtained copies of the following articles on video/media work:

Youth Media Work in Kentish Town: Phil Shingler, Inter-Action, GLAA Newsletter (April).

Cable Television - the great experiment: Graham Wade.

Video & A-V Review (May).

Video in the Community - Hammersmith formulates a 20 year town plan. Audio-Visual (March).

The Merseyside Visual Communications Unit: Jeffrey Jenions and Colin Wilkinson, published by the unit and describing its work.

Copies are available on request.

CATS

AVW members are invited to come to the Serpentine Gallery for Hoppy's event at 5 p.m., Sat. 17 MAY, and shoot some rock and roll. There should be several cameras on a mixer, and I'm asking people to take a camera and shoot one or more numbers depending on demand. Also, members can collect their free copy of JCATS at next and all subsequent meetings from me.

Further info available from the Co-ordinators:-

Association of Video Workers (London Region)

18 Wyatt Road, Highbury, London N5 2JU.

Tel: 01-359 2516 (morns/eves)

CONSTITUTION

1. Name

The name of the association shall be "Association of Video Workers (London Region)" (AVW(LR)).

2. Objective and Aims

AVW(LR) shall be an organisation and forum for people working with video on a non-profit basis in Greater London. AVW(LR) aims shall be:-

- 2.1. To exchange information about possible uses of video, equipment availability and work opportunities; to organise tape showings, exchanges and seminars. To facilitate this process of developing and sharing ideas AVW(LR) shall regularly publish a newsletter and hold meetings.
- 2.2. To develop access for communities in Greater London to the technology and knowledge required to produce and distribute videotapes in a communication, educational or artistic context.
- 2.3. To act as a pressure group to lobby for adequate finance from funding bodies such as the Department of Education and Science, Home Office, British Film Institute, Arts Council of Great Britain, Greater London Arts Association, Greater London Council, Inner London Education Authority, London Borough Authorities, Television Companies, Private Foundations and other sponsors.
- 2.4. To establish suitable rates and conditions for the use of videotapes by cable TV, broadcast TV, educational institutions and in lecturing and other situations.
- 2.5. To obtain wage parity with video workers in local government and educational establishments when doing work for these bodies; to cost our labour at not less than the TUC minimum wage when applying for funds from official bodies.
- 2.6. To maintain contact, co-operate or affiliate with similar organisations at a British, European and International level, when the need arises.
- 2.7. To represent the views of AVW(LR) to organisations carrying out research into video and associated fields.

3. Membership

- 3.1. Membership shall be available to anyone engaged in non-profit video work upon annual payment of £3.00.
- 3.2. Prospective members shall be able to join AVW(LR), and current members be expelled, at the discretion of any General Meeting (GM).
- 3.3. A GM shall be able to elect associate members, who shall pay the annual subscription but not have voting rights.

4. Organisation

4.1. The GM shall be the sole governing body of AVW(LR).

4.2. The quorum at GMs shall be the presence of half of the members, with a minimum of 10 members.

5. Co-ordination and Finance

5.1. There shall be at least three elected co-ordinators who shall be responsible for day-to-day administration, finances and producing reports of AVW(LR) meetings.

5.2. The co-ordinators shall be open to dismissal at any GM.

5.3. Two of the co-ordinators shall be designated Secretary and Treasurer.

6. Voting

6.1. The business of AVW(LR) shall be conducted by majority vote, with the chairperson of the GM having a casting vote in case of a tie.

6.2. Only members shall be entitled to vote.

7. Meetings

7.1. A GM of AVW(LR) shall regularly be organised by the co-ordinators, or may be requested by any member, and advertised at least a week in advance.

7.2. A chairperson shall be elected at the start of each GM.

7.3. An Annual GM shall be called to elect the co-ordinators and examine the accounts.

8. Constitution

8.1. The constitution may be amended at any GM, and voting may be by proxy.

Ratified at a GM of AVW(LR) on 8 APR 75.