

# **THE BECTU HISTORY PROJECT**

## **Procedure for Interviews**

### **Preparing for the Interview**

To assist with research, the interviewer may wish to obtain a credit list for the interviewee prior to the interview via the BFI Library or from other sources or from the interviewee.

Staff at the BFI Library can assist. (Contact Sarah Carrant on 020 7957 4824)

Once a potential interviewee has been contacted – do give them the introduction letter BHPA3) which explains about the History Project and that copies are deposited with the National Film and Television Archive in Berkhamsted for permanent secure storage.

The Project keeps masters, which are also locked away. The BFI Library holds copies but access to these is subject to the provisions of standard application forms.

We have made some material available online via selected projects such as the British Cinema History Research Project at the University of East Anglia and BFI Screenonline, as well as the BECTU History project website. Any use of material is strictly controlled. The interviewee should be made aware in advance that they will be asked to sign a copyright clearance form. Interviews in which the project does not hold copyright will be of limited accessibility and we intend to publicise the existence of the collection to a wider audience.

### **Recording the Interview**

#### **Technical issues**

- Whenever possible there should be a crew of two working on each interview: the interviewer and the recordist.
- Instructions on the use of the equipment are available, but it is best to get hands on experience of any piece of equipment before using it by yourself. Below is a list of currently active recordists for the various pieces of equipment used by the project.
- All interview proposals must be submitted to the Committee and the Archive coordinator can supply the BECTU equipment, although it is perfectly acceptable to use other equipment provided it is of a high standard
- The recordist must ensure that there is adequate media to record the interview (the average time for an interview is around two hours, This is only an average, some interviews will last much longer than this, and may even require more than one recording session to complete). It is also advisable to ensure that there is at least one spare battery with any kit. Always test the battery with the supplied tester.

- Two microphones are required – one for interviewee and one for interviewer. If necessary buy any media or accessories needed, and retain a receipt for re-imburement by the Archive Coordinator/Treasurer. Wherever possible for audio only recordings use type 1/normal position cassettes such as TDK D90s
- Any substantial expenditure i.e., for travel or subsistence, should be agreed with the Treasurer in advance, and will only be paid in exceptional circumstances. Interviewees are not paid a fee
- For video use D120s can be used when dubbing from camera tapes, which will each run to a full hour each side, matching the run time of a single miniDV tape.
- Before beginning the interview record the “opening legend” on the first tape (whenever possible, it is a good idea to pre-record this before you arrive at the interview). The wording is:  
 “The Copyright of this recording is vested in the BECTU History Project – the name of the interviewee is --- *state discipline/grade – name of interviewer – date – state SIDE ONE*”
- Take a photograph of the interviewee and with the interviewer

**Editorial Issue - Plan for the interview (Chronological approach to career)**

- Ideally, an interviewer should say as little as possible once the usual opening questions have been asked, ie
- The first six of these questions are absolutely essential as they are required by the database.
  - Name
  - Date of Birth
  - Place of Birth
  - Nationality
  - Awards
  - Honours
  - Parents – did your parents have anything to do with the “business”? –
  - Schooling
  - Further education
  - Formal training as film-/programme-maker
- Also worked in tv, theatre, radio... other?
- Main areas of work (crafts) p d ph ed etc
- A few or many companies?
- What attracted interviewee to film business
- Describe what their job(s) was/were
- How did you get started in the business

- Outline of career development
  - Who have you worked with, where?
  - What have you enjoyed about the job
  - What were the difficulties
  - How do they see the future of this craft/profession developing
  - Respond to issues they raise
- Then hopefully the interviewee will be launched into talking about his/her career as it developed, the interviewer only intervening to progress the interview.
  - The interviewer should ask the interviewee to clarify the spelling of any names, acronyms, or expand on any arcane practices or procedures that might be referred to. Always remember that some scholars using the interview may have only limited technical knowledge.
  - If after the interview the interviewee is hesitant about signing the copyright clearance form, explain that they can if they so wish, sign the form adding the rider – “access only with written permission”. The interviewer, and anyone who makes a verbal contribution to the interview, such as the recordist, must also sign an interviewer release form.

### **Recordists**

*Digital Cameras:* Martin Sheffield (01442 876301), Dan Thurley 07719382708  
[info@squareeys.tv](mailto:info@squareeys.tv)

*Analogue tape recorders:* Martin Sheffield (01442 876301)

### **Equipment**

All equipment is kept securely and can be accessed via the Archive Coordinator, Martin Sheffield (01442 876301). Reference packs containing notes for interviewers and copies of log sheets and copyright forms Documents HPA1 – 5) (for both interviewee and interviewer) are also available.

### **Log Sheet**

The log sheet should be filled in as completely as possible. Key details about the interview subject and duration of the interview should always be completed. The

extent to which a synopsis is provided will vary greatly from interviewer to interviewer.

**All completed interview tapes, log sheets and copyright forms should be returned to the Archive Coordinator, Martin Sheffield c/o BFI offices, 21 Stephen Street, London W 1T1LN(01442 876301).**

### **Interview Checklist**

- Recording device and sufficient media
- Microphone and spare batteries
- Log Sheet
- Interviewee copyright form
- Interviewer copyright form
- Research materials as necessary.
- Pen and paper (to jot down any points for clarification, such as spelling of names or acronyms, during the interview).

### **Any questions?**

If you have any queries about the content of these notes or conducting an interview in general please contact the Archive Coordinator, **Martin Sheffield** (01442 876301)

(March 2012 Sue Malden )

BHPA4