

## **Screen Studies South West meeting**

**27 January, 2009 at 2:30PM**

**The Bill Douglas Centre at The University of Exeter**

### **Present:**

Phil Wickham, Chair (Bill Douglas Centre, University of Exeter)

Anna Misiak, (University College, Falmouth)

Martha Blassnigg (University of Plymouth)

Michael Punt (University of Plymouth)

Claudy Op Den Kamp (University of Plymouth)

Sarah-Jane Meredith (South West Screen)

Lisa Stead, minutes (University of Exeter)

### **Apologies:**

Apologies:

Steve Neale, Dan North, James Lyons, Song Lim, Helen Hanson, Joe Kember, Andrew Nelson (University of Exeter)

Jason Whittaker ( University College, Falmouth)

Phil Ellis (University of Plymouth)

Brian Neve (University of Bath)

Charlotte Crofts, Estella Tincknell, Kathrina Glitre, Andrew Spicer (UWE)

Sarah Street, Angela Piccini (University of Bristol)

Trevor Hearing (Bournemouth University)

Paul Ward (Arts University Bournemouth)

### **1. Welcome**

Phil Wickham (PW) called the meeting of SSSW to order at 2:30pm, recapping on the previous meeting and directing those present to the minutes posted on the website.

### **2. Forthcoming Symposia**

Anna Misiak (AM) gave feedback on first SSSW symposia at University College, Falmouth. Outcome of Falmouth symposia positive, stimulated research spirit, several students decided to go into graduate film theory.

2 themed symposia planned this year, building on Falmouth symposia.

First planned for March 30<sup>th</sup>, run by Arts University Bournemouth, organised by Paul Ward. The symposia has now been streamlined to animation, excluding games. The event will feature industry speakers, speakers from Exeter, Bath Spa, Bournemouth, UWE, and Aardman, Sundog Media are also involved.

Second event planned for 3rd September in Bristol, organised by Charlotte Crofts and Estella Tincknell at the University of the West of England, on the theme of Radical British Screens. This will be a 1 day symposium on radical British TV and cinema, featuring presentations on practice as well as theory. The organisers are exploring the possibility of hosting the event at the Arnolfini in Bristol—this could incur small charge.

----request from group to resend CFPs for these events—PW will circulate.

PW: discussed possibility of organising a further open symposium either this year or next.

AM suggested a themed symposium on artists who make transition into film making. Falmouth as a university is interested in looking at the transition from traditional fine art into digital media. September conf. on Digital media Futures generated a lot of these ideas

Planned for September or later this year, maybe October not to clash with Bristol —AM asked the group if they were willing to feature the name of the network to promote it – group agreed.

AM asked PW to put query out via network to see what kind of interest there is in an event on this theme.

PW suggested open event lacking thematic link is easier to organise and is a good forum for postgraduates and early career scholars; this could possibly be organised and hosted at Exeter.

### **3. Screen Heritage and the South West**

Sarah Jane Meredith (SJM) discussed recent developments in the Screen Heritage strategy, the digital film fund, and the region's archive, SWFTA in Plymouth, which has encountered various problems over last few years.

There has been 2 years working on UK screen heritage strategy--£25 million has been granted from Screen Heritage to give various projects across UK--the bulk

has been given to the BFI. The funding is divided between three strands--revitalizing the regions, education, and digital access.

Before Christmas, £247,000 funding was put into region to look at collections. It has now been agreed that significant collections are held at Dartington, Trilith and of course the South West Film and TV Archive.

Preserving significant collections means something different in each region as the archives are in different states. SW archive is in a physically bad condition—the biggest concern therefore is to put the collection somewhere secure, where in future people will be happy to submit material, bringing the archive up to proper conservation standards. Some collections have pulled out over the years due to anxiety over physical state.

South West Screen are still waiting for money to come through—the funds have to be spent within 2 years. Funds will hopefully come in this financial year. Discussions have begun with Plymouth city council about available buildings for re-housing the archive. SJM stressed the need to make sure the whole collection doesn't just move-- what's vital and what's not within the holdings needs to be established.

Dartington has been resourced to do some interesting work with their archive—funding has been given, for example, to create a pilot to digitize their material to a very high level, making access to material from the website high enough quality for users to repurpose it. A system will be set up whereby both paper and film materials will talk to each other--access will be available to both online.

Basic cataloguing of the SWIFTA collection is now underway. In a few weeks users will be able to go to the website and start searching the collections. Part of the £25 Million will go towards the UNION catalogue--all regional film archives and collections will be connected to it and will be linked under themed headings, allowing central access to all.

SJM talked about a project being set up as a demonstration of this, entitled Portrait of Britain -- led by BFI, this project looks at collections right across UK, offering a snapshot of Britain. This will be up and running by 2011—in the mean time the focus is on getting all networks up to standard so that there will be automatic harvesting from the union catalogue.

- PW inquired about the holdings at Dartington

SJM – the focus at Dartington is largely upon those who have visited – Tagore, for example. Dartington holds a collection of beautiful colour films, but also rural practice material from before the war.

SJM discussed the Digital Film Archive Fund (DFAF)-- will run to 2011—this hope is to use the materials that come out of the project to make a public access case for archive material in its widest sense. This will be used to appeal to the government for more funding by demonstrating the importance of materials.

PW discussed the BDC's involvement with DFAF— the BDC is involved with the Cinema Bus, a 1960s industrial film lorry converted to screen films and host workshops. This project is in connection with North Devon Council. The bus offers screenings and workshop facilities and can travel anywhere and be booked by other bodies. Staff member Emma Gifford is being paid for by the fund. Film-making students might use it and screen within. Seats about 22. The idea is to be able to take the bus to remote rural locations and show films, use facsimiles of BDC exhibits in workshops with kids etc. The project should start at end of March, and runs to a year contract.

#### **4. Research Round-Up**

##### Exeter

PW also discussed the large Polish film Festival taking place across the UK run via polish cultural centre in London, KINOTEKA going on the road in large Polish community locations, of which Exeter is one. This will run from March–May, and include the screening of relatively new Polish films at the Exeter Phoenix that haven't been seen in UK before. BDC exhibition of Polish-related artefacts and prints of posters will be featured. AM is also involved, trying to bring academics into creative life in the city by introducing screenings and leading the film group in Exeter central library for a week. The Film Group, run like a book group, opens up discussion of film texts for the public and offers great potential for impact ratings for academics.

PW still in talks with BFI for getting Mediatheque for SW in Exeter—interest from county council, possibility of marking Mediatheque part of the central library's restoration scheme. PW stressed that the SW one of last regions not to have a Mediatheque in place.

Lisa Stead (LS) mentioned forthcoming literary archives conference set for 2-3<sup>rd</sup> October 2010 entitled Reclamation and Representation, encouraged submissions from any film-related researched dealing with archival sources and the representation of authors.

##### Plymouth

Martha Blassnigg (MB) gave update on some recent research grants. MB explained how Plymouth works with a consortium of science, arts and technology, building collaborations between these groups.

MB outlined archive project with South West Film And Television Archive and department of health and psychology at the University, focused around tracing the way people talk about self-recovery and self-healing processes in moments of crisis, personal and national disaster etc in documentary interviews. The idea is to trace how this might reflect how people think about themselves in terms of the people / places they connect with, belief systems etc.

MB, and Michael Punt (MP), discussed a major EU project collaboration between Plymouth, University of Amsterdam, and the Netherlands Film Museum focused around creativity and innovation, responsive call for arts and humanities to investigate how we can better understand creativity and how it can lead to innovation to improve cultural social economic changes in Europe, including changing conceptions of creative industries. A project was created to deal with interconnections and the two-way exchange between experimental film and advertising film. Plymouth received notice recently that they had secured the funding, preliminary but confirmed—the 1 million Euro project runs for 3 years and should start at the beginning of April. Plymouth and Amsterdam will focus on 1960-70s TV exchange between UK and Netherlands. A symposium will be organised at the end of the project to make use of the findings. There is a budget of £60,000 for an exhibition, with several PhDs attached, and a plan for several books to be generated by the project. An exhibition will be organised around game-play strategy.

MB explained that there will be a PhD bursary attached to the UK project to look into Netherlands film museum collection of experimental films from a reception point-of-view and make connections with advertising film. A candidate is needed to fill this position who is very competent with archives, and who would almost certainly have to be based in Plymouth with some work in the Netherlands.

Claudy op den Kamp (CK) discussed work with Peninsular Arts, film workshops—talked about putting together archival / restoration programme in April / May, putting programme together of 4-5 screenings, ideally this would turn into monthly screening for a year that deals with archive issues. Collaboration with SWIFTA planned, particularly music students making music videos with footage from local archive.

## **5. The Future of the Field**

PW asked the group if there were any concerns about the place of the screen studies field within future landscape of HE in this period of cuts in spending for universities.

MP and MB said that recruitment in filmmaking was currently very high. MB stressed that recruitment was mainly in practice, however, with industry background.

AM said that there was strong intake of undergraduate film students at Falmouth, and recruitment was stronger for Film than Media Studies.

## **6. Future of Network Meetings**

PW asked the group whether they should rethink discussion meetings due to the difficulties for some of attending. PW asked if it would be more useful to have one

full day meeting a year planned some time in advance with a set date rather than try for 3 termly meetings where attendance is quite low.

However all the group agreed that the current format was productive and should be kept. Even if attendance was low discussion and collaboration was proving fruitful and annual meetings might lead to opportunities of working together being missed.

MP asked if University College, Newport could be included in the SSSW network, as they were so close to some of the other bodies represented, although just outside the region. PW said that this was worth thinking about, but stressed that it was important not to go too far beyond the borders of the SW.

PW discussed creating an online membership list. This would consist of a document with one line research interests linked to profiles so that all involved in the SSSW network could be featured. The group did not have concerns about links to their profiles or basic details about their research being put on a document online so a list will be made available over the next few months.