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Department of Sociology
University of Keele

Ray Dunning

P R O J E C T D I A R Y

COMMUNITY VIDEO IN BENTILEE

23.5.72 - 20.7.73

M.A. Thesis 1974

Volume Two

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Acknowledgements

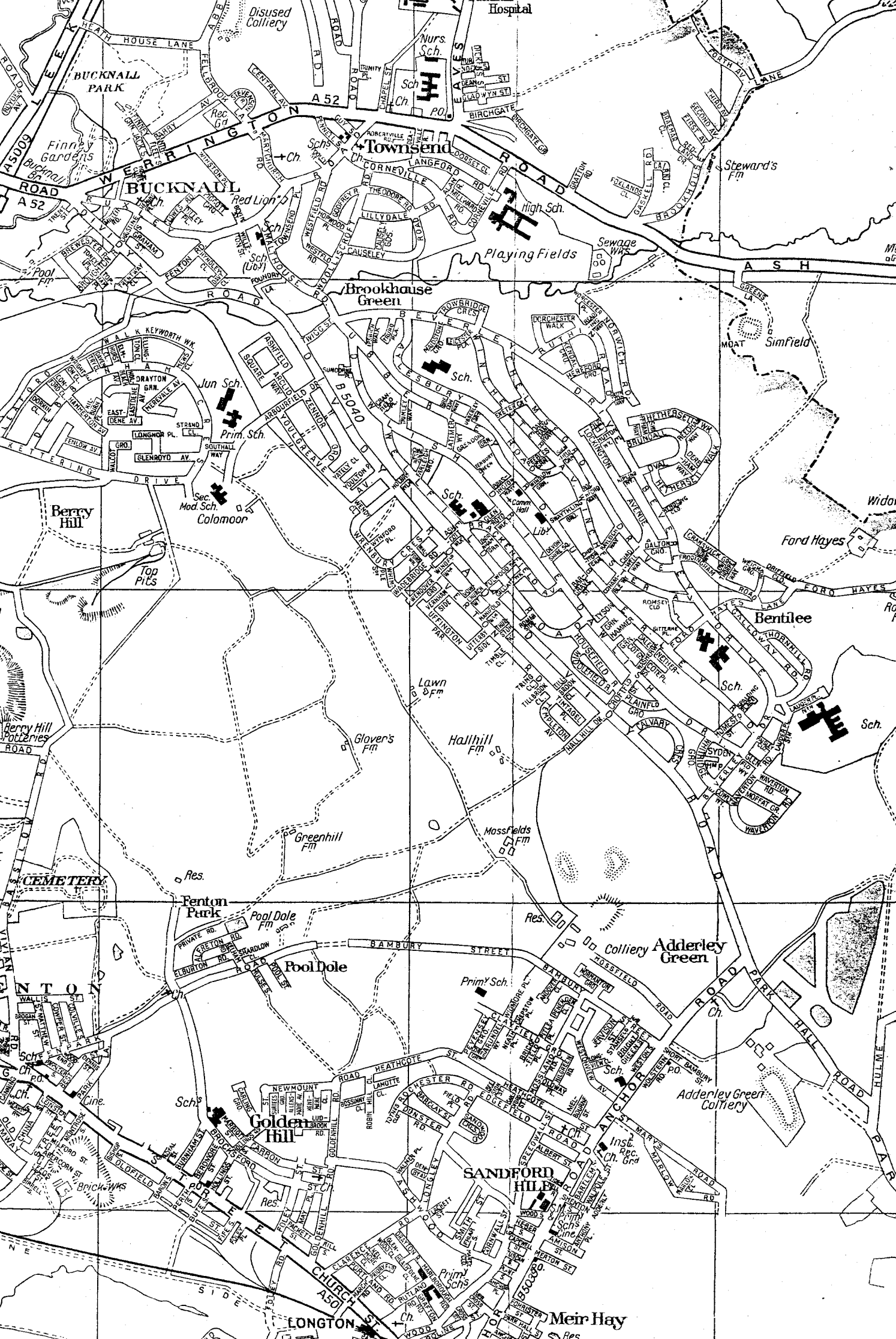
We should like to express our gratitude to all those who, in various ways, made the project possible. In particular, we should like to thank: Ronnie Frankenberg, for going out on a limb and accepting two non-sociologists to do research in his department; also Doreen, for secretarial help and much more.

The Young Volunteer Force in Stoke-on-Trent - John Freeman, Peter Hudson and John Armstrong - for giving us the benefit of the doubt. Parents and relatives who helped us financially, from one unsuccessful grant application to the next.

Arthur Mellor and members of the management committee of the Community Association.

Dave and Jean James, Gerry Sandford, Arthur Ball, Dave Waters, Elsie Procter, Pat Fulkner and all the other Bentilee residents who participated (not forgetting to mention the manager of Woolworths).

Sue Gamson, for the loan of her van for a year, and Alf the garage mechanic, for keeping it on the road.



Disused Colliery

Hospital

BUCKNALL PARK

BUCKNALL

Townsend

High Sch.

Playing Fields

Brookhouse Green

Steward's Fm

Simfield

Jun Sch.

Prim. Sch.

Sec. Mod. Sch.

Calamoor

Berry Hill

Top Pits

Ford Hayes

Bentilee

Hallhill Fm

Glover's Fm

Greenhill Fm

Massfields Fm

Fenton Park

Pool Dole Fm

Pool Dole

Colliery Adderley Green

Prim. Sch.

Adderley Green Colliery

Golden Hill

SANDFORD HILL

Sch.

Sch.

Inst. Rec. Grd. Ch.

CHURCH

Meir Hay

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT DIARY

In the Autumn of 1969 I began a one-year, post-graduate teaching course at the University of London, Goldsmiths' College. My brother-in-law had been a student there the previous year and he advised me to sign on for the subsidiary course in television operation offered by the Television Research and Training Unit there.

The Unit was designed by its Director, Tony Gibson, whose main concern was to develop the use of closed-circuit television in various teaching situations. At that time the chief function of the Unit was to provide regular courses for student teachers, and in-service courses for teachers, in the use of studio television.

I signed on for the one-term course on Teaching with Television described, as follows, in the Unit's 1969 publicity leaflet:

"Recent developments in educational technology offer greatly increased scope for the use of television as part of the learning situation. The Television Research and Training Unit has pioneered the use of low cost, versatile, closed-circuit television studios and mobile units in a wide range of teaching applications. These courses provide intensive practical experience in planning, use and follow up, with scope for individual research and experiment, and for the comparative study of different techniques."

The publicity leaflet also included a piece taken from The Times Educational Supplement (7th April, 1967) which, presumably, confirmed the

Unit's view of itself and its project at that time.

"Basically the plan behind the studio is to find some way to help the teacher to relax while teaching in front of a camera and in the artificial atmosphere of a television studio. In the ordinary way the television teacher can be surrounded by as many as twenty-five cameramen, electricians, floor managers, etc., but he is separated from the producer himself by the glass panel of the control room and can only communicate with him through a third person. Each additional aid which he may make use of in the course of his lesson - graphics, film strips, models or whatever - is controlled by an assistant and is probably out of the teacher's reach. This may be taken in his stride by the kind of person whose extravert temperament takes easily to teaching 'cold' in front of the cameras. But Mr. Gibson has seen that there are many teachers who might do excellently on television, but who are thrown off keel by the impersonality of the conditions under which they must work and the feeling that they are giving a performance rather than a lesson, together with the fact that they do not control their own material. Mr. Gibson set out to design a studio where there would be a much more intimate atmosphere, where the number of personnel could be cut down drastically, and where the teacher could move about more freely, controlling at least some of the aids and illustrations he may be using."

I attended the television operators' course every Friday throughout the autumn term, 1969. During the Spring term, 1970, I was away from

the college for most of the time, doing teaching practice. When I resumed working at the Unit in the Summer term, things had changed there quite a bit. Friday afternoons had been set aside for experimental sessions run in collaboration with John (Hoppy) Hopkins, John Kirk, Gordon Woodside and other members of TVX - the television department of the Institute for Research in Art and Technology.

The Unit and TVX shared an interest in portable videotape recording equipment. Goldsmiths' had just bought a Sony $\frac{1}{2}$ " portapak to experiment outside the studio set-up. Following experiments at the 1969 Camden Arts Festival, TVX was interested in using portable equipment to operate a local community television service in Notting Hill.

Sessions took the form of discussions at first, and discussion groups were open to all students and staff at the college, although no more than about a dozen people were present on any one occasion. Bob Jardine - a friend of mine for many years and a student, then, at the Architectural Association - came along, mainly out of curiosity, and quickly became involved.

Hoppy and John Kirk shared their experience from the Camden Arts Festival with the rest of us, and they took the initiative in formulating a plan to use video to help the Albany Trust in its work with squatters in Deptford.

TVX members seemed contemptuous of what seemed to them to be lack of initiative and commitment on the part of the teaching students. But from our point of view, Hoppy's methods for 'demystifying' the medium of television (as TVX was fond of putting it) tended only to mystify

all the more. He seemed to take an obsessive delight in systematising and structuralising everything that happened (and even things that did not happen). To me, at least, these formulations - based on general systems theory - could not adequately represent my experience.

But all things considered, I liked the idea of taking the portable equipment out of the college and into the surrounding communities, and I like the idea of community television services which would allow public access to programme production facilities. I suppose I saw this as a kind of adult education extension of the sort of work Tony Gibson had been doing in classrooms with his portable 'mini-studio', bearing in mind in particular his conclusion that "the greatest educational use of TV is not the showing of taped or live programmes to passive audiences audiences but the actual making of a TV tape". (1)

The work we did at Goldsmiths' sowed the seeds for the North Kensington community television project (NKTV) which Bob set up in the Autumn of 1970 as a joint urban studies project with fellow A.A. student, Mike Hickie.

Following my year at Goldsmiths' I taught for two years in a girls' secondary school in South London. Consequently, my involvement with NKTV was limited. But during that time Bob and I were living in the same house and so I was kept well-informed.

I was particularly interested in NKTV's Play Video project which was devised and carried out in a comprehensive school in North Paddington,

(1) Experiments in Television, National Committee for Audio-Visual Aids in Education, 1968, p.44.

between February and June, 1971. The project was an attempt to extend community video operations to the world of formal education. However, the researchers' notion of 'creative education' as a freely developing, reciprocal relation between 'teacher' and 'taught' radically contradicted the examination-oriented notion governing operations in the State system. This limited the scope of the experiment, and even though the researchers worked in collaboration with some teachers at the school, it remained a peripheral activity.

Inasmuch as Play Video involved the active participation of the teachers, I felt that it was a step in the right direction but, while I sympathised with NKTV's motives and methods, I felt that the project was an attempt to extend operations too far too soon. Everything remained to be done in less specialised quarters of the community; the surface had barely been scratched.

NKTV broke up after the Play Video project. This was in the Summer of 1971. TVX had given up fieldwork some months earlier to work on a report on community video in Canada and North America for the Home Office CDP. The U.K. community video scene was very quiet for several months.

During this period I was getting more and more restless as a school-teacher. After a year or so's teaching and gathering my thoughts, I wanted to see the back of timetables and examination syllabuses for a while and experiment with media in a less tightly structured environment. So I applied, early in 1972, to do research for a Higher Degree at the University of Keele.

My application found its way to Ronnie Frankenberg, Professor of Sociology. He was keen to set up an interdepartmental unit for research in 'visual sociology', and he felt that my project might fit in well with his plan.

Bob Jardine applied successfully to Keele round about the same time, and it was agreed that we should begin joint research, under Ronnie's supervision, in the following October.

During the first six months of 1972 - while I was making my application to Keele - things were beginning to happen in the community video field. In February IRAT published its report, under the title Video in Community Development, as an edition of seventy-five xeroxed copies, and this was followed by a seminar on the subject; there was a conference on Communications and Community Development at Liverpool University in May; and in the same month there was a community video exhibition in Cwmbran - put on in connection with a feasibility study for a possible project there. These events saw a coming together of people and groups with similar interests from different parts of the country.

By the time I moved to Keele in October, community video was beginning to take on a national, corporate identity. CATS, the latest name for the TV and Video Department at IRAT, helped the process along by sending out questionnaires to people such as Bob and myself - asking for details of our project, to be published in a UK Video Index.

I had been feeling for some time that the idea of video in community development was advancing much quicker than the fact of video in community development in the U.K., and CATS's intention to compile this

Index convinced me of it. Much too much was being taken for granted on the basis of totally inadequate fieldwork experience. Here was a move to organise a national community of videasts when video had not so far been used to successfully organise a community at a local level.

Bob and I determined that our research at Keele would attempt to redress the balance. We undertook an action-research project in Bentilee - a large housing estate in Stoke-on-Trent - ostensibly to investigate the possible uses of video by community groups. We determined at the outset to adopt a phenomenological approach in order to avoid adding our own wishful thinking to the growing body of groundless theory. This involved bracketing existing 'knowledge' based on limited experience or adopted vicariously from experience abroad, and starting from scratch with equipment made available by the Department of Sociology.

The following Project Diary account describes what happened.

Ray Dunning May 1973
and September 1974

P R O J E C T D I A R Y

"Experience is what you get when you're looking

for something else."

(seen on a matchbox)

Tuesday, 23 - Thursday, 25 May, 1972.

Drafted a synopsis of our proposed project, together with an estimated budget, and sent copies to : (1) the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, (2) the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust, (3) Granada TV.

PROJECT SYNOPSIS

May '72.
c.c. Culbertson,
Granada,
Roxbury.

Community Television: A Study in Education for Community Development.

The current expansion in the market of relatively inexpensive, easy to operate video equipment has led to experimentation with its use in a variety of social and educational settings.

In the main, educational television has remained a studio-based operation involving the production of programmes to be used as an extension of instructional teaching methods (1,2). Education, as such, has not capitalised on the portability of video equipment which can be taken out of the classroom into the community (some of the work done at Goldsmiths' College TV Department is a notable exception), neither has it explored the possibility of TV being used as a two-way system, to break down the tradition of injecting selected information from "out there" and allow the student to actively participate in and directly influence his own education. However, videotape recording and playback techniques have been used in the training of teachers (micro-teaching) and to provide feedback about teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom. (3)

Similar techniques have been used in psychotherapy where it has been found that video can help to improve communication and enhance creative development in interpersonal and group situations (4).

During the past five years there has been a growing interest in the use of video technology in community development, to improve dialogue between people and government and between community action groups. Some preliminary work has been carried out in Canada, notably under the aegis of the National Film Board (5). In this country, such experience as we have is drawn from the work of TVX at the Institute of Research in Art and Technology and the North Kensington Community TV group (6,7,8,9).

In Canada, these activities have led to community programming on local cable TV systems. Until recently, this kind of scheme was against the policy of the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications in this country. However, the climate appears to be changing and early in 1972 a cable TV company operating in South London was granted a licence to originate local community programmes for an experimental period (10).

Whereas in the fields of education and psychotherapy a considerable amount of research into the uses of video is being carried out, in community development this is not the case. Rather, there is an increasing amount of information available of an empirical nature with little attempt to integrate findings.

Public involvement in community development requires a programme of education which extends beyond the walls of schools and colleges. It also requires effective channels of communication between the individuals and groups which constitute the community, and local government. It is our view that community TV can make a unique contribution to this area. The broad aim of this project is to systematically explore and develop practicable procedures and theories about video techniques in community development and education.

It seems to us, taking into account work in this country and abroad, that the possible applications of video technology in a community context fall into different spheres of operation which are interdependent and which need to be researched and developed concurrently. These spheres include video recording and playback in interpersonal situations, communication between specific groups within the community, and community-wide information dissemination, whether by showing videotaped programmes at public viewing sites or by means of cable distribution to homes by the relay companies.

(During the year October 1972-October 1973) it is our intention to set up a series of connected projects within this framework, to study (the nature and extent of) a particular community, its power structure and decision-making machinery and the community's own perceptions of its problems and goals. We will also investigate educational facilities, both formal and informal, and observe our own relation to that community and the effect of introducing video. Because of the exploratory nature of the work, it is proposed that a phenomenological method be used initially for the purposes of analysis with a view to developing testable hypotheses. Such an approach aims at a consensus in which answers to our questions may be validated intersubjectively by all those participating in the project, and, as such, is compatible with the principles of community involvement in community development.

The end product of the research programme will be a collection of case studies of video applications in community action and development together with an evaluation and analysis of each project. It is hoped that the conclusions and tentative theories which emerge from this work will be of practical value to others working in community development and education, and provide guidelines for future research.

We have been offered postgraduate research facilities including video equipment and technical assistance by the Department of Sociology at Keele University. However, we are in a position of having to find our own source of financial support for the one year period of the project. We should therefore like to submit an application for the following budget:

BUDGET FOR ONE YEAR

Subsistence for two postgraduate research workers	-	£1,500
Secretarial assistance (postage/Xerox/typing)	-	£ 75
Travelling expenses (visit to Canada)	-	£ 200
Videotapes/audio tapes/film etc.	-	£ 200
Occasional assistance in collecting information	-	£ 25
TOTAL	-	£2,000

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 10. Lewis, P. (1972). COMMUNITY TELEVISION. New Society/March 1972.
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SPONSORS

These people have kindly agreed to act as referees and may be contacted if further information about the relevance and importance of the project is required:

Professor Ronald Frankenberg, Department of Sociology,
University of Keele,
Staffordshire.

Peter Lewis, Assistant Education Officer, Independent Television Authority,
70 Brompton Rd.
London S.W.3.

George Goetschius, Lecturer in Social Work, London School of Economics,
Houghton St.
London W.C.2

Marjorie Mayo, Community Development Project, Home Office, Kingsgate House,
Victoria St.
London S.W.1.

JOSEPH ROWNTREE MEMORIAL TRUST

Telephone York ~~53410~~ 29241
(S.T.D. OYO 4)

Beverley House
Shipton Road
York YO3 6RB

5th June, 1972.

R. Jardine, Esq.,

Dear Mr. Jardine,

I am writing further to the exchange of correspondence you had with Mr. Waddilove which led to the Trustees' consideration of your research proposal into "Community Television and Creative Community Development" at their meeting last Friday. Mr. Waddilove left York immediately after the meeting for a month's overseas tour and cannot therefore write to you himself.

I am afraid the Trustees felt unable to give the financial support you are seeking. Although they have in the past taken an interest in mass communications research the Trustees do not wish to extend their activities in this area at the present time.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss) M. L. Wallis
Administrative Assistant.

MLW/H

Thursday, 8 June 1972.

Meeting with Professor (Ronnie) Frankenberg at the Department of Sociology, Keele University. We talked about our intended research project and discussed suitable fieldwork locations. We said that we didn't want to go into an area 'cold', but would prefer to work with an established community development agency. Ronnie suggested that we should get in touch with John Freeman at the Young Volunteer Force Foundation project in Bentilee, a council estate in Stoke-on-Trent.

GRANADA TELEVISION LIMITED

P.O. Box 494, 36 Golden Square London W1R 4AH
Telephone 01-734 8080

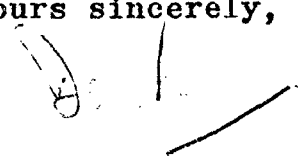
Robert Jardine Esq

9th June 1972

Dear Mr Jardine,

I have studied with interest your paper on Community Television - A Study in Education for Community Development. I am afraid that Granada is fully committed at the moment. As you know we have a number of projects which we assist in universities and academic institutions, and I am afraid that we are unable to extend the scope of our support at this time.

Yours sincerely,


Denis Forman

DF/BJM

15 June 1972.

John Freeman,

Dear John Freeman,

A colleague and I have been offered facilities by Keele University to set up a project to explore some of the ways that portable video (television) equipment can be used in community development. You may know that community television has existed for some time in Canada and the USA, but over here people are only just beginning to use video equipment in this way. We've had some experience already, mainly working with community groups in London on a project last year, and hope to extend this work in the autumn, basing ourselves in the Stoke area.

I understand from Professor Frankenberg, at the university, that you are involved with a YVFF project in Stoke. Would you be interested in talking over the possibility of using video equipment in your work? (It may interest you to know that the Community Projects Centre in Cwmbran, Mon., which began as a YVFF project, is buying some video equipment for its own use). The advantage of using Keele as our base is that the university already has some equipment which we will be able to use.

If you're interested, please let me know and I'll send you more information about the work we've done in the past. Perhaps you could also tell me something about the work you're engaged in.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Jardine.

young volunteer force

Bob Jardine.

22nd June 1972.

Dear Mr Jardine,

It is good to hear that you are thinking of starting up a television video experiment at Kele. I would be very interested in meeting you and discussing ideas to see if we can come to some mutual agreement.

I enclose a brief discription of our work which is about six months old and indicates the range of groups that we are involved with. I will let you have further information when it becomes available in the very near future. I would appreciate any further information that you have on your work.

Perhaps you could give me a ring or suggest some dates when you are going to be in the Potteries and we can have a chat.

Yours sincerely,

John Freeman
John Freeman.

THE YOUNG VOLUNTEER FORCE IN STOKE ON TRENT

This is not so much a soft-sell as an attempt to inform people who might be interested of the work of the YVF in Stoke on Trent. Possibly it will also clear up some misunderstandings. The first point to make clear is that we are not primarily engaged in recruiting young volunteers and setting them to work on community service. While we recognise this to be useful and necessary, we do not feel it to be the priority for us in this city. We are in touch with groups who do run voluntary community service, and we would hope to be of some help to these - as we would for other groups of people who are trying to solve collective problems collectively.

And this, at simplest, is what we mean by community development.

Our Aims

We are aware that there are many individuals with problems that are best met by individual efforts, by families and by the Statutory Services designed to cater for individuals who are personally "inadequate" or "handicapped".

But we are also concerned with what we see as an equally important class of needs that are hardly provided for within the existing framework of public welfare and family privacy. This is the area where individual needs overlap and merge and where the common needs can be traced back to common social and environmental conditions. It is for this reason that we have preferred to concentrate our efforts on working with groups, bringing together and supporting individuals who become aware of needs in common and look to each other for a collective effort to meet them. It is this transition from individual to collective - or community- self-help that is at the basis of our work in community development. This being said, we cannot simply ignore the individual needs that come our way. Our office at Bentilee is geared to providing a limited information and advice service to individuals. We now deal with at least 25 enquiries a week, and for the most part these are referred on to the relevant statutory department or voluntary agency. We would like to develop this co-operation with social service departments and other agencies, especially as the forthcoming reorganisation of the social services will demand considerable adaptation of methods and relationships in a community context.

Our Organisation

Since the replacement of Gary Craig by Gregory Wilkinson, we have divided the work into two main spheres. John Freeman will concentrate on support and consultative work on a city wide basis, while Gregory Wilkinson will devote most of his

2
time to grassroots developments on the Bentilee estate.

What we have done and are going to do in future.

On the city level, work will include co-operation with informal groups, voluntary bodies and local authority departments:

- a community development course / seminaar for potential community leaders and some professional people to be run in conjunction with the W.E.A.
- the Steering Committee of Voluntary Organisations (of which J.F. is secretary) will compile reports from working parties on the social needs of the city.
- support the Hanley Youth Project through sitting on the management committee. This project has appointed a worker to contact "unattached" young people in Hanley.
- support the Stoke on Trent Adventure Playground Association through sitting on the executive committee. This Association has been building an adventure playsite in the Boothen area of Stoke and is hoping to start an adventure playground in the Chell Heath area.
- follow up the work that has been done this summer with four playschemes in the city. All have had local adult groups supporting the playschemes and it is likely that they will come together to form a city based organisation, possibly tying up with the Adventure Playground Association.
- encouraging community development in the Meir and Chell Heath. In the Meir a group has met twice to examine the needs of the area while in Chell additional issues have been raised by the playscheme committee.
- To assist the Planning Department in their plans for involving local people in participating in planning in line with the Skeffington Report. This will include analysing the results of the recent experiment in the Burslem- Tunstall area.
- community service: to assist schools and other youth groups to make an effective contribution to the lives of their community.
- to support the Child Poverty Action Group. This group has prepared a Guide to Welfare Benefits in Stoke.

In Bentilee, a good bit of time will be taken up with our informal information and advice service. This built up partly just because we were there, partly as a result of a campaign to increase take-up of welfare benefits. There is also a free mart service, with goods and furniture given, sought or exchanged free of charge. Work with groups on the estate runs as follows:

- parents and under-14s: we have helped form and now support an association of parents who run the three 'Grasshopper' junior youth clubs on the estate. This group may well tie up with the less formal group of mothers who have come together round this summer's holiday playscheme. The latter group is also considering joining forces with other playscheme

groups in the city and with the Stoke Adventure Playgrounds Association. A recently formed club for handicapped children 'The Butterflies' is to affiliate to the Grasshoppers, and the committee is preparing to bring parents of handicapped children together informally for mutual support.

- Old age pensioners: a third autonomous 'Senior Citizens' Association' is likely to be formed shortly at the Berryhill Working Men's Club. If so this will be applying the model developed by the Ubbberley and Bentilee Senior Citizens' Association at the other WMC on the estate. The Old People's Welfare Committee will be encouraged to shift its emphasis from charitable paternalism to practical co-operation with the old people's own organisations.

- Mothers and infants: there is a need already recognised for more playgroups and a nursery school; it should be possible to bring together the mothers concerned to create the former and demand the latter.

- Teenagers: a number of teenagers already come regularly to the YVF shop; there have been suggestions - supported by the Playscheme mothers - that they should have a club-house they can run for themselves. A long shot, this; but not quite impossible. It is possible that a Social Science student would be ready to come and help the teenagers form their own committee to press for a club. Previously a couple of the less clubbable of the teenagers have gone on from this office to join a street theatre group. Another helps train an under-14s football team.

As an approach to a more general community awareness - and organisation where necessary - we have sought to develop a working relationship with the 'Harold Clowes Community Association.' A student on placement has conducted a survey on the use of the Harold Clowes Community Association Hall, and this has demonstrated an emphasis on hall management to the exclusion of community effort.

We hope that the Working Men's clubs will be ready to provide a platform and a pool of local people for recruitment to activity groups on the estate. Until the Ubbberley club too the Senior Citizen's Association under its wing, the clubs' contribution to local groups and causes had been limited to cash collections.

A community paper, managed written and distributed by local people, is also on the cards. Its supervisory board would bring together representatives of the various institutions and interest groups on the estate, and its content would be geared to action and interaction on the estate - though never divorced from the wider human context.

We hope also to call on trades unionists on the estate to apply their ideas and experience of democratic organisation to the improvement of their home community. In this we would work closely with the Workers Educational Association.

There is currently a move to get a public meeting together

Page 4

to discuss needs of the estate, with a view to action by local residents and the Council. This followed some indignation in the Playscheme group about an £8,000 facelift for the Bentilee shopping centre: "That' not what's needed, and why were we not asked ?"

We hope in future to have more students on placement from Keele and to help any students or social science departments who are concerned to apply their academic training to practical purposes in the community.

Where you might be able to help us, or we you

It may well be that in your work you are aware of needs that go beyond the scope of your own job, but which might be susceptible to a community development approach. In that case we might be able to help, to put you in touch with other people with similar concerns, or to suggest possible methods and resources. We for our part are anxious to avail ourselves of the experience of others with much more detailed knowledge than ours on many local problems.

If there are things you feel need doing in the situations that confront you at work (or in your home area), please dont just keep your ideas to yourself. If there is more to be done than you can tackle on your own, then we may know of other people who might be interested and helpful. More minds are better than one, and the chance of getting them together should not be wasted.

John Freeman,

Dear John,

Thanks very much for your letter. I'm glad you think we may be able to work something out together, and I think it would be a good idea for us to meet and talk things over.

I'm sending you some information about the work we did last year in North Kensington, which I hope will give you an idea of some of the ways that video equipment can be used in community development. It's not intended to be a comprehensive picture by any means, but it may serve as a useful starting point for a discussion with you and your colleagues. We'd like to keep things as open and flexible as possible and let the project develop as an extension of the work you have under way at the moment.

At the moment I'm not sure when we shall be in Stoke again, but if you have any suggestions in the light of the enclosed information we'd be very glad to hear them, along with any other information you may have about your own work.

I will phone you as soon as I know when we are likely to be in the area again.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Jardine.

see: "An Exploration in the Use of Videotape Recording in Teacher-Pupil Relations trips"
"Some Ideas about Video and Community TV"

An Exploration in the Use of Videotape Recording in Teacher-Pupil Relationships

Robert Jardine
North Kensington Television

This paper is based on work which formed part of the North Kensington Community Television Project. We were not interested in the use of 'educational television' as a teacher-extension or teacher-substitute in the communication of specific skills or bodies of knowledge, but as a means of creative intervention in teacher-pupil relationships. The technique employed was similar in some respects to micro-teaching, but videotape recording was used as a medium for encouraging dialogue between pupils and teachers as well as an observational and evaluational aid. Our main concern was to explore ways of optimising relationships between teachers and pupils so that they might approach each other, and hence life in general, creatively.

'Creative' is used here in its broadest sense to describe the process by which an individual comes to realise his or her own potential for personal development through relationships with other people and the world at large (cf Maslow's (1959) term: 'self-actualizing creativeness'). Laing (1960) has stated that it is impossible to be human without a dialectical relationship to others. That this is self-evident is demonstrated if we reflect that in order to deny it, it is necessary to enter into precisely such a relationship. The denial of the axiom reaffirms it. Thus personal creativeness, the process of self-realisation, is seen as being facilitated by two-way communication (dialogue) between persons.

The work was carried out at a mixed secondary school in a 'deprived' area, and was conceived as an extension of the pupils' drama lessons. We used drama as a basis for the project because it did not have a specifically exam-oriented syllabus and as such

offered greater freedom for experiment. However, we hoped that any positive suggestions for the use of video recording in teacher-pupil relations would be applicable to other subjects as well.

We worked with three groups of pupils, aged 12-13 and 14-15, and three teachers. We asked that each session should last for at least two periods, and as we did not wish to disrupt lessons more than necessary, groups were chosen who normally had a double period of English at some time during the week which could be devoted to the project. (There was no drama course as such, drama lessons forming part of the English syllabus.)

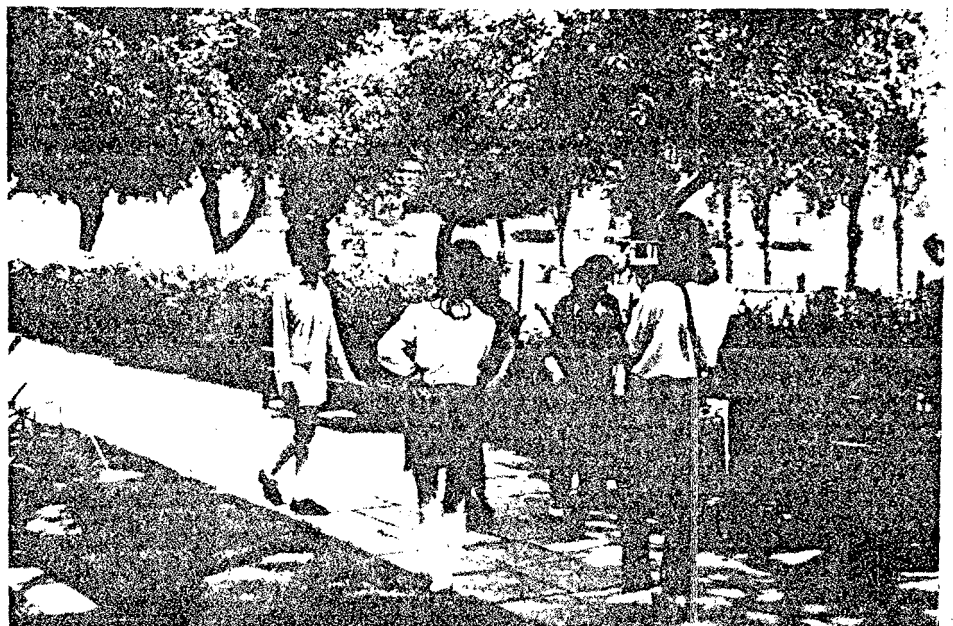
Over a period of about a term and a half we carried out five sessions with one group, seven with the second group, and ten with the third group. At the beginning of the project we made several visits to each group, observing the pupils and teachers in action, before we began video recording. During this period we discussed procedural details with the three teachers. We wanted the project to be an extension of their drama work, rather than an isolated experiment, since we felt that the latter course offered less scope for integration into the overall syllabus. The procedure which we adopted was to record the pupils improvising a dramatic situation. A Sony portable camera and battery-operated half-inch videotape recorder were used, with a mains vtr and monitor for playbacks. Usually, we operated the camera with a pupil holding the extension microphone. The cameraman was guided by a 'director' who was either the teacher or one of the pupils. The videotape was replayed during the second half of the lesson, followed by a discussion which was also recorded. If the pupils wanted to develop the play at the next session we would begin by replaying the previous week's discussion. Alternatively, they would spend some time during the week preparing

new themes for the next session. The typical sequence which emerged was: improvise and record play—playback—discuss and record. The procedure was, however, kept flexible. Sometimes we would stop halfway through an improvisation in order to play back what had happened so far. Occasionally we began a session by showing a tape made with one of the other groups.

From our observations in class and from talking with the teachers we learned that they usually approached their drama lessons in one of two ways. One way was to give the pupils an initial situation or theme and let them improvise a play around it, choosing roles and deciding on the development of the plot. Another way was to tell them a complete story which they then acted out, making modifications if they so wished. As we wanted to encourage a dialectical relationship between pupils and teachers (while not causing a disruption of the ongoing situation) one of the strategies which we suggested, based on the above procedures, was as follows:

1. The teacher prepares the lesson as a complete story with a beginning A, a middle B, and an ending C.
2. At the start of the lesson the pupils are given part A only. They then develop the play themselves and act it out, and a videotape recording is made of the play with its new middle B1 and ending C1.
3. The tape is played back immediately and the two stories ABC and AB1C1 form the basis of a discussion between teacher and pupils.

At a session with her group, Joyce, one of the teachers, decided to try this approach. She had worked out a story and written a brief scenario for the play. As she had not done any prior



preparation with the group she outlined each scene before they began. During the course of the play she occasionally stepped in if she thought the action was straying from the point, or if she was not happy with their characterisations. In the latter case she merely asked them whether they really felt they were playing true to character rather than telling them they were wrong. Although they were not encouraged to stray from the point of the situation they were allowed to digress from the teacher's version of the story (of which they were only sketchily aware) and to introduce any developments which they saw fit. When Joyce judged that each scene had run its course she interjected the beginning of the next scene. Her scenario and the play as acted out by the pupils are compared in Figure 1.



Figure 1

TEACHER'S VERSION	PUPILS' VERSION
Scene i. John, a schoolboy, is persuaded by two friends to help them commit a burglary.	John, who has already spent five years in prison, is persuaded by two friends to help them commit a burglary.
Scene ii. The owner of the house surprises them. He does not try to catch them as he recognises John.	The owner surprises them, grabs John, scuffles with him and overpowers him.
Scene iii. John is being questioned at the police station. His teacher refuses to stand bail on the grounds that he cannot trust John not to run away.	John is being questioned at the police station. He tells the police he is an engineer. He phones his former teacher and she agrees to stand bail.
Scene iv. John's mother and father.	At this point the two 'friends' suggest that the police should bring them in for questioning. The group agrees. The police arrive at a club frequented by the friends. Lesson ends.
Scene v. Back at school the teacher who refused to help tries to be friendly but John is curt with him.	
Scene vi. John's school friends.	

There is a significant difference in John's age and social position in the two versions. In the teacher's version he is still a schoolboy; in the pupils' version he is an engineer with a previous conviction. In Joyce's story there is a pointed lack of violence; the opposite is true of the pupils' version. Also, there are significant differences in the role and sex of the 'teacher' in the two versions.

We knew from speaking with the teachers that the themes which they chose often reflected their own current real-life preoccupations (this case was a striking example) and we supposed that the same would be true for the pupils. Later experience confirmed this. A comparison of the teacher's version of the play and the pupils' version allows each to gain insight into the experiential world of the other. This encourages dialogue between pupil and teacher in place of instruction of the

pupils by the teacher. In the latter case there is always the danger that there may be too great a disparity between the teacher's world and that of the pupils with the result that the teacher is in a position of forcing his view of the world on to the pupils and communication breaks down.

Alternatively, the teacher may choose themes which he thinks reflect the pupils' imaginings and real-life preoccupations. These, too, may be unrelated to the pupils' ideas. Both these possibilities indicate a lack of understanding of the pupils by the teacher which can only be avoided when they have a dialectical relationship to each other.

As the project progressed, other techniques of encouraging dialogue between pupils and teachers began to suggest themselves. From the start we had recorded the discussion which followed the playback of the videotape of

the improvisation. At most sessions we replayed this second tape as well. During the recording of the play, the cameraman was usually under the direction of a teacher or one of the pupils who indicated when he should stop recording at the end of scenes or sequences of action. Later on in the project, however, we continued recording after the director had shouted 'Cut!', so that the finished videotape contained, along with other 'extraneous' activity, all the interruptions made by the teacher during the course of the play. Thus we had a record of teacher-pupil interaction at all stages of the session. The 'performance' to be discussed following the replay was not, therefore, the pupils' improvisation but the drama lesson itself.

Not surprisingly, it proved rather difficult to get the pupils to discuss the teachers' 'performances' recorded on videotape as interruptions in their plays. I do not think that this was because they were reticent or afraid but rather because it seldom occurred to them to do so. Most of the pupils' comments were directed at themselves or at each other. Some of these give an indication of the initial impact of self-viewing: 'When I was on the videotape I thought I was smaller than what I already am.' 'Seeing myself on 'tele' is quite good but some people may think it's not you. On videotape you look a lot different and you sound it.' Other comments suggest that self-communication, or feedback, by means of instant video replay can have an educative effect: 'When I saw myself on tape it was exciting to watch myself do things wrong, instead of people telling me I'm wrong.' After watching a tape of her group, a girl commented that she had talked too much. By dominating the play in this way she had prevented the others from developing their roles. The following week, although she played the same kind of role she cut her share of the talking down by more than half.

During in-class discussions, the

teachers' remarks were also usually aimed at the pupils' improvisations. Sometimes, though, they would talk about their own 'performances' but this was usually to us, not in front of the pupils. For example, Mary pointed out her tendency to talk all the time in class as a kind of defence just to keep the pupils quiet. Joyce felt that she 'interrupted too much' and made 'value judgements' about the improvisation rather than practical suggestions. On one occasion, during a discussion in class, she expressed an opinion which was not immediately taken up by the group. A few minutes later she mentioned it again but attributed the opinion to one of the girls. She had not been aware of this at the time and would not have realised it but for the video recording.

Walter, the third teacher, felt that he was not getting on so well with his pupils as Joyce appeared to. He did not know whether this was because of them, or whether it had something to do with him. He suspected that it was his fault. He sometimes got the impression that he was 'going over their heads'.

The feedback process which occurs during self-viewing on a video monitor has been utilised in recent years in micro-teaching techniques. In conventional micro-teaching, however, the trainee teacher usually discusses his recorded performance with a supervisor and/or other trainee teachers. While this may make the teacher more aware of himself and enable him to improve his performance as an instructor it does not give him anything like a full understanding of his relationship with the pupils in his class. Instructional teaching alone is not sufficient to communicate both cognitive and emotive understanding because such understanding develops out of a two-way process.

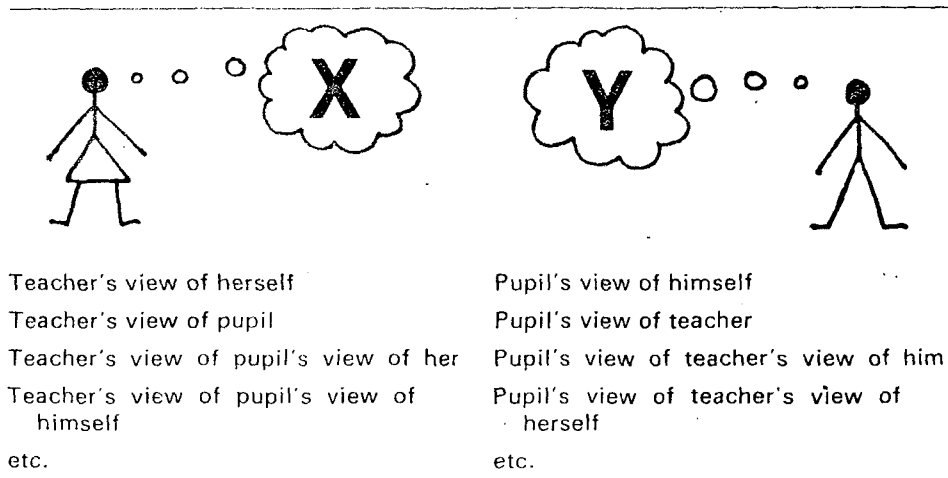
Education is a function of the teacher-pupil relationship. If education is to contribute significantly to the realisation of cognitive and emotive potential in pupils and teachers, that is to say, if it is to be creative, then the conditions must exist for dialogue between teachers and pupils. Video playback in conventional micro-teaching gives the teacher a new perspective on his own actions and the behaviour of the pupils in his class. It does not allow these perspectives to be checked dialectically against the pupils' perspectives of their own and the teacher's actions. What we were attempting to do was to increase the possibility of dialogue and its effectiveness by bringing video feedback into the classroom. Within the relatively brief period of the project we were only partially successful in this.

If the drama lesson itself is now the 'performance' to be discussed by the teacher and pupils, does this not have implications for lessons in other subjects as well? In an attempt to formu-

late these implications into a practicable procedure to cover a wide range of teacher/pupil interaction I have borrowed from the basic schema of the Interpersonal Perception Method (Laing, Phillipson, Lee 1966).

Figure 2 shows a few of the infinity of perspectives or points of view which make up our experience of ourselves and of others. Each pair of perspectives (eg teacher's view of pupil; pupil's view of self) contains the possibility of understanding (if they are conjunctive) or misunderstanding (if they are disjunctive). For example, he (a pupil) thinks he is being clever. She (the teacher) thinks he is being 'clever'...

Figure 2



Our experience of ourselves consists only partly of our experience of our own feelings, thoughts, intentions, desires and actions. In our relationships with others there is, in addition to this direct self-experience, an indirect component which is our view of the other person's view of us, mediated through his behaviour. Our self-identity, which is what we feel we are, and what we feel ourselves to be for others, is a synthesis of these

direct and indirect components.

However, self-identity is not based on the totality of our own perceptions, feelings, thoughts, intentions, desires and actions, nor on the totality of other people's behaviour towards us. Experience is selective. Consciously or unconsciously, we include certain aspects of the interpersonal situation in our experience of self and other, while excluding other aspects. We may also exaggerate or play down those aspects which we include. Depending on which aspects we include and which aspects we exclude from our experience of self, the self which we feel ourselves to be, and which we feel ourselves to be for

others, may or may not coincide with the way others really see us.

Videotape enables us to make recordings of sequences of personal interaction which include the totality of each person's verbal, gestural and postural communication to the other(s). It conveys the nuances of meaning in vocal inflexions, facial expressions and the movements of the eyes, hands and body. Videotape also enables us to play back this record instantly, rather



like the 'action replays' which have become commonplace in television coverage of sporting events. The technique is one with which we are all familiar: certain parts of the race, game or whatever, are replayed immediately after they happen, sometimes in slow motion, so that viewers can build up a clearer picture of what happened. The viewer may even change his mind about what he has just seen as a result of the replay.

The replay may be repeated several times, both during and after the event. For example, during the television 'post mortem' on a football match, parts of the event are again selected for playback. At the same time, the players involved may be invited into the studio to 'talk us through' what we are watching on the screen. In this way not only we, the spectators, but also the players themselves get a new perspective on what happened.

With videotape, we can make recordings of interpersonal communication, replay them, and invite each person involved to talk us through what he sees himself doing and what he sees the others doing. His new perspective on his own and the others' actions is based on a complete behavioural record which is a common reference for each person. Each person's experience will still, of necessity, be selective, but the selection is open to checking and modification in the light of subsequent replays and of the perspectives of others. On television you look and sound different than you think you look and sound. Laughter, surprise, embarrassment, disappointment, are among the most common reactions to self-viewing. They are the concomitants of a change of viewpoint or 'mind' on one's own behaviour and the behaviour

Figure 3

T's view of self	P's view of self
T's view of self on tv	P's view of self on tv
T's view of P	P's view of T
T's view of P on tv	P's view of T on tv
T's view of P's view of T	P's view of T's view of P
T's view of P's view of T on tv	P's view of T's view of P on tv
T's view of P's view of P	P's view of T's view of T
T's view of P's view of P on tv	P's view of T's view of T on tv
etc,	etc,

of others. During the replay, each person can draw the other's attention towards details of communicative behaviour and the interpretations derived from them which they may have omitted from their perspectives.

In Figure 3 we have arrived at a duplication of each perspective in the relationship. Let the teacher's original perspective = X. Let the pupil's original perspective = Y (ie there is disjunction). Let us call the duplicate perspectives X1 and Y1 respectively. We can repeat the recording/playback cycle many times to give X2Y2, X3Y3 . . . XnYn. Each time the cycle is repeated we may hypothesise that the possibility of conjunction between the perspectives X and Y increases. Clearly, this procedure is applicable not only to drama lessons.

Summary

Creative education is concerned with the development of the whole person. It is made possible by open, two-way communication between pupils and

teachers. We have seen some evidence to support the view that videotape recording and playback can provide a means of creative intervention (ie a way of coming-between which can release experiential blocks and facilitate two-way communication) in teacher/pupil relationships. The procedure outlined above, however, needs to be extensively tested in the field. An important question is whether or not the presence of a third, 'neutral' party is required. The equipment necessary for this kind of project is extremely simple to use and could be operated by the pupils and teachers themselves.

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SOME IDEAS ABOUT VIDEO AND COMMUNITY TELEVISION.

Bob Jardine and Mike Hickie. London / May 1972.

We live in an age of mass communication in which we often know more about what is happening in distant parts of the world than about events on our own doorsteps. Communication at grass roots level about local issues, by means of leaflets, posters and public meetings, cannot meet the need for dialogue between individuals and groups in a community, and between the community and local government. Local media, such as newspapers and local radio, can be just as inaccessible to the public as the town hall.

In depressed areas of our cities poor quality housing and high rents lead to overcrowding. In spite of this - or perhaps because of it - many people feel socially isolated.

National and regional needs often conflict with local community needs. Every day, decisions affecting our lives are made in which we do not participate and over which we have no control. Some of us do not live in one place long enough to have any say in local government.

Architects, city planners and other 'experts', by assuming increasing responsibility for control of the environment, deprive people of the chance to be involved creatively in the development of their community. The social services merely confirm feelings of helplessness and inadequacy by reinforcing dependence on authority.

Some of us believe that we can do something about our problems. Some of us are already trying, but regard others doing the same with

suspicion and hostility.

The word 'community' means having something in common. Whether you feel you belong to a community or not depends on whether you feel you share experiences, ideas and aims with other people. One of the most valuable things to have 'in common' in community development is information. Exchange of information between people and community groups leads to better understanding and co-ordinated action. A community may be defined as the pattern of communication channels between its members.

Community video, or community television, is a way of generating new communication links within the community and of improving existing ones. Community TV is TV by the community for the community. Needs, aspirations and problems are seen and communicated through your eyes, you are in control.

Many of you will have had encounters with the existing media. You may have been interviewed by a reporter from your local newspaper, or from radio or TV. Some of you will have experienced the frustration caused by oversimplification or outright distortion of what you were trying to say. This can happen for a number of reasons. The interviewer may have misunderstood you. Or he may have imposed his own interpretation and values, either by asking questions in which he, as a reporter, was interested, or by editing his notes, tape or film into an 'acceptable' journalistic presentation. This is not always a deliberate attempt to misrepresent you.

Community TV means that you set up the programmes, you produce and edit them, until you are satisfied that your message is coming across

clear and undistorted. In the process, you are likely to get a better understanding of yourselves and the way you work together, and this, too, helps in communicating what you want to say.

How is all this done ? It has been made possible by the manufacture of easy-to-use, portable, battery - powered video equipment which is light enough to be carried on your back and which is cheap enough to be owned by educational institutions and some community organisations. With this equipment, operated by just one or two people, you can record sound and vision simultaneously on videotape, where it is registered magnetically like sound on an audiotape. Unlike film, there is no delay for processing : videotape can be played back immediately on a video monitor or on a standard TV set. If you're not happy with it, the tape can be erased and reused.

Over the past two or three years there has been a growing interest in this country in the use of this type of equipment in community development. In Canada and the USA, community TV has existed for some time. In Britain, such experience as we have is drawn from comparatively few projects on a much smaller scale, such as the work of TVX at the Institute for Research in Art and Technology and the North Kensington Community TV group.

The North Kensington project lasted from January to June 1971, and during this period we contacted and worked with only a few of the community groups in the area. We had extremely limited funds and equipment for the project, but out of it emerged some guidelines for future work. Although the use of video techniques in community development has only begun to be explored, it seems to us, taking into account experiences in this country and elsewhere, that community TV

falls into at least three spheres of operation which are interdependent and which should be developed concurrently.

The first, and smallest sphere of operation, may be described as interpersonal. This refers to video recording and playback in fairly small group situations. For the members of a group to be involved in all stages of making a videotape - planning, recording, viewing, amending, editing - can be a valuable activity. It is creative in a deeper sense than just creating a finished programme which is interesting to watch (in fact, some of the most useful tapes have little interest value outside the immediate context in which they are made). Partly, this has to do with the 'finding out' stage of a group's activities.

In addition, self viewing on videotape can be useful in the interpersonal sphere. It can help the members of a group to discover more about themselves, about each other, and about the way they function as a group. We have found evidence of this in our own projects, particularly with school children and their teachers.

People communicate not only with their voices, but also with facial expressions, gestures and body movements. These different 'channels' of communication determine the way our total message comes across to other people. Some channels provide the context for messages on other channels. For example, when we say something we may also imply non-verbally what we feel about the content of the spoken message.

Sometimes, different channels of communication complement each other, making it easier for the other person to understand what we are trying to say. At other times, they may be conflicting or contradictory, in

which case it is easy for others to misunderstand us.

The danger here lies in the fact that it is difficult for us to be aware of all our multichannel messages simultaneously. We tend to concentrate on one particular channel, usually speech. We rely on the other person's response to tell us whether we have been understood or not. If we have obviously been misinterpreted, the chances are that this is due to a message on another channel which is distorting our verbal communication. Reviewing our communicative behaviour on videotape from time to time in, say, a group discussion, affords the opportunity of studying and assessing the nature and effect of such behaviour. It allows us to examine the different channels which constitute our total message, to discuss them with others and, if necessary, to modify what we are saying and the way we are saying it.

By improving communication between group members, video recording and playback can help in the clarification of the group's objectives. How many meetings of community groups have become hopelessly entangled because some members or sub-groups do not see eye to eye? If differences of opinion concerning a group's role in the community and its aims really are differences, then the ensuing argument is a vital part of the functioning of the group. If, on the other hand, they are based on misperception and misunderstanding of the other's 'message' and standpoint, the members may waste a lot of time and energy disputing a false issue. Video playback can help to reveal and correct misunderstanding based on misperception.

The process of making a videotape can also help a group to articulate its goals and strategies. When we find it difficult to organise our

thoughts into a plan of campaign, it is useful to have recourse to some kind of media process. We may go over our ideas aloud, perhaps discuss them with others, working around the problem using the medium of words. Or, depending on the problem, we may find it useful to make notes or diagrams. By translating our thought processes into 'external', mediated form, we can get a new perspective on the problem at hand, and are thus in a better position to work out ways of solving it. Video-tape, with its unique facility for recording, instant playback, erasing and re-recording can be an important aid in the process of group discussion and decision-making.

The second, wider sphere of operation involves communication between groups. Once a group's cause, objective or strategy has been articulated and put on videotape, the tape can be shown to other groups to inform them about the nature of the problem and the proposed initiative, in order to gain wider support in pursuing a plan of action.

The Walmer Road project was an example of this. Walmer Road is one of the streets in North Kensington overshadowed by the new urban motorway. The houses in the street had deteriorated since construction began on this section of the motorway. Repeated approaches to both the Greater London Council and Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council, requesting that the residents be rehoused, had gone unheeded. These 'approaches' included blocking the motorway at the opening ceremony, a demonstration at County Hall, and telephoning the borough housing officer at half-hour intervals on a rota for two days, as well as applications via the usual channels. Vibration, noise and dirt from the motorway were making conditions unliveable.

We met some of the residents of Walmer Road to discuss making a tape of housing conditions in the street. The plan was to take the video equipment into some of the houses and let the residents describe in their own words what was happening to their homes and their lives, and then show the tape at the weekly meeting of the Lancaster Neighbourhood Centre to get their support for further approaches to the council. (The Lancaster Centre had a fairly good working relationship with the council.) The tape was recorded and previewed in the same afternoon.

Two days later, the tape was shown at the Centre and it was agreed to arrange a meeting with housing officials at Kensington Town Hall. The residents expressed the hope that it might be possible for members of the borough council to see the tape. By providing specific, concrete examples of housing conditions in the street, the tape promoted a lively discussion of relevant issues as opposed to the wandering arguments which unfortunately tend to characterise meetings of this kind. The Walmer Road residents were pleased with the outcome of the meeting and it was decided that we should accompany a group of them to the Town Hall to make a recording of the meeting with the officials for those residents who were unable to attend during normal working hours.

Ten days later, we accompanied a group of residents and people from the Lancaster Centre to the meeting at the Town Hall as planned. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the rehousing of six families in the street. These families were living in the worst conditions and were regarded as test cases. As we were entering the room where the meeting was to take place, the Deputy Town Clerk, who was to chair the discussion, saw the video equipment and refused to go ahead with the meeting unless we left it outside. We explained that we only wanted to make a tape of

the meeting to show to other residents in the street, but he was adamant. The meeting concerning the rehousing of the six families was more important than our recording and so we had to give way. Nor did we get the opportunity to show the first tape.

In retrospect, this impasse might have been avoided if the Deputy Town Clerk had been told of our intentions beforehand. We realised that both sides must be involved if our work was to achieve any form of dialogue over a problem. After the meeting we wrote to him explaining our position and aims, and asked if he would be prepared to make a tape giving the council's view of the situation. He did not reply, and although we tried to telephone him we had no further contact. Since we accomplished our first objective, namely, to get wider support for the residents' cause, but failed to create a dialogue with the council, this project was only a partial success.

Another way that video can be used in the inter-group sphere is to record group decision-making processes and the resultant action, particularly when this has been successful, to provide models for action by other groups. In this way, people can come to realise that their problems are not unique and that they have much in common with other people. For this reason, we did not confine our work exclusively to North Kensington but made videotapes with groups based in other parts of London.

Sometimes we worked with people who were trying to communicate with a section of the community which did not constitute a group as such, and did not get together in one place for regular meetings. Possible sites for showing videotapes to this kind of audience include empty shop windows,

TV rental shops, pubs, launderettes, school playgrounds, street corners, etc.

On one of these occasions, some people living in a large block of council flats were trying to form a tenants' association to pressure the council into carrying out much-needed improvements to the building. We were invited along to the first meeting. The day before the meeting took place, leaflets were distributed to every flat. However, only a handful of people turned up. After some of them had voiced complaints and related experiences of individual dealings with the council, it was felt that, to carry any weight, a tenants' association needed stronger backing from a larger number of tenants. One of the main problems was to bring tenants together at a time which was convenient to as many people as possible.

We suggested that perhaps a video show in the central courtyard one afternoon could be made the focal point for a meeting. We recorded a tape with some of the residents and showed it in the courtyard on the following Sunday. In the space of an afternoon it attracted quite a crowd who came to see what was happening and stayed to watch the video-tape which was repeated several times. While this was going on, we went around with the portable video recorder asking people what they thought about the tape and about the idea of forming a tenants' association. Out of the gathering came a commitment from a number of people present to form an association. A committee was subsequently elected and they began holding weekly meetings.

Early on in the project, we discovered that a large section of North Kensington is covered by a cable TV system. Many parts of Britain have similar cable systems, and many more are planned in new housing estates

and towns. In North Kensington, the system is operated by British Relay. The cable is strung across the backs of houses and provides 'piped' TV to people who rent sets from British Relay. A local antenna picks up broadcast signals and relays them, via an area transmitter, to subscribers' homes. We made some enquiries and found that the cable has a capacity of four channels, only three of which are currently being used to carry BBC and ITV programmes.

suggested the possibility of a third sphere of operation, in which programmes made by people in the community could be watched by a large proportion of the community in their homes. The cable would permit a more geographically precise means of transmission than is possible in airwave broadcasting, thus making it practicable to carry information tailored to the needs of a definable local area.

We discussed the technical feasibility of this idea with a Post Office telecommunications engineer, who advised us that there would be no major difficulty in putting programme material produced with portable equipment on to the cable system. A slight difference in quality compared with BBC and ITV transmissions could be expected, but a precedent for this existed in Canada, where the reduction in quality had been found acceptable for community programming.

The legal aspects of this proposal proved more problematic. The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications informed us that cablecasting locally - originated programme material by the relay companies was not permitted, and it was against their policy to license such a scheme. The situation has since changed, and early in 1972, Greenwich Cablevision, a relay company operating in south London, was granted a licence to

originate programmes for an experimental period. This change in government policy towards the relay companies has encouraged us to think again about the future of community cablecasting.

Obviously, cablecasting on a regular basis would require considerably more resources than we had at our disposal at the beginning of 1971. It would also require a fairly high level of organisation. For example, some kind of co-ordinating committee would be necessary, drawn from a wide range of interests and points of view within the community. The role of such a committee would be liaison between individuals and groups wishing to make programmes, a video production team and the cable company. The committee would be responsible for sharing out cable time and equipment. The job of the video production team would be to provide technical assistance to groups, either by making programmes with them, or by training them in the use of the equipment so that they could produce their own programmes.

It is very important that community involvement through viewer response be maintained in this sphere of operation. This is necessary to ensure the relevance of the information. One way of achieving this would be to arrange 'talkback' programmes, taped at public meetings and in the streets, to be relayed 'live', or at a convenient time, via the cables.

In Beloeil, a town in the Canadian province of Quebec, meetings of the town council are regularly transmitted 'live' on cable. After the meeting, viewers can phone in and put questions to the councillors. Their questions, and the councillors' answers, are also relayed 'live'.

In Toronto, one of the cable companies has given cable time to regular

community programming. Local groups can produce 'live' programmes using the company's free studio facilities. Alternatively, they can bring along material pre-recorded on portable equipment, hired or borrowed from colleges in the area, and plug it into the system. Although the cable company is legally responsible for all material which is transmitted, no censorship is imposed provided that the material is not libellous or pornographic. Programmes have been made about the effects of living in high-rise flats, the pollution of local beaches, and about the need for pre-school playgroups in the area. It remains to be seen to what extent the experiments now being set up in this country will produce similar community programming, or whether they will concentrate on providing local news and entertainment.

However, cablecasting is not the be - all and end - all of community TV. It represents only one, the widest, of the three spheres of operation. There is still a great deal of work to be done in the other two spheres - interpersonal and intergroup. While you do not yet have access to the cable in your area, or indeed, if there is no cable, this need not prevent you from using video equipment to help you communicate with and understand others better, if this is an important part of your work.

The equipment may not be cheap enough for your group to go out and buy a set, but there are ways round this difficulty. The main sources of video equipment in this country at the moment are educational institutions. If you are a student, the chances are that your college or university already has some equipment of this kind. It is probably locked away somewhere so you may not even know about it. You could try approaching the powers-that-be to let you use it for purposes other

than recording the occasional lecture.

If you are not a student, but involved with a community group of some kind, and feel that this equipment might be of use to you, you could also try approaching your local college or university, possibly through interested students.

There is a real need that this kind of grass roots work should continue and develop in this country, not only to ensure that the challenge of cable TV is met with the enthusiasm and know-how necessary for participation by the community: there are communication needs which arise in the interpersonal and intergroup spheres which may not involve the community as a whole, at least not all of the time.

The field is wide open for experiment.

young volunteer force

Bob Jardine Esq.,
[Redacted]

10th July 1972.

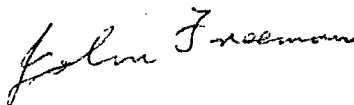
Dear Bob,

Thank you for your letter and the information that you enclosed. I found the articles interesting, particularly your ideas about video and community T.V.

The summer time is always an especially busy time for us because we have some involvement with children's play. Therefore I do not really want to write at great length about your ideas. I have already told one or two local residents that it is possible that a video T.V. experiment will be starting. I would propose that next time you are in the Potteries we should have a couple of hours together as a prior discussion to calling a group of local residents together to get their views on the use of community T.V. It may well be that we will suggest that your actions on Bentilee are largely directed by a group of local residents. I don't know how this would seem to you but just put it as a tentative idea. Two residents have already expressed interest in discussing a community T.V.

I look forward to your phone call when you are likely to be in the area again if you can manage to give me two or three days notice that would be most helpful.

Yours sincerely,



John Freeman.

Director Anthony D Steen

President The Rt Hon Selwyn Lloyd, CH, CBE, TD, QC, MP Vice Presidents The Rt Hon Douglas Houghton, CH, MP The Rt Hon Joseph Grimond, MP
Chairman of Trustees The Hon Charles Morrison, MP

Monday, 7 August 1972.

Drove up to Stoke-on-Trent for the day.

14.00 Arrived at the Young Volunteer Force project centre, a shop in the Bentilee estate shopping precinct. Spent about two hours talking to John Freeman and Peter Hudson, two of the fieldworkers. John began by asking us about the ways we thought video might be useful in community development - what practical experience did we have? We told them more about the background of the North Kensington project and described some of the work which has been done in Canada. John then talked for a while about the Potteries (he advised us to read Arnold Bennet), about Bentilee and about YVF activities there. Bentilee is a council housing estate with a population (he said) of about 15,000 people. We asked about relations between YVF and the Labour-controlled council: these are fairly good, and have to be so as the project is financed by an annual grant from the Social Services Department. They asked us some pretty searching questions about our motives and attitudes - political and otherwise - and we stressed that for us this was a 'finding out' project rather than an 'activist' one. We emphasised that we had no 'hypotheses' to prove; we simply wanted to discover how video could be used by the people on the estate. We thought it was important to put the equipment in the hands of local residents, to be used according to their own needs. We discussed the probably discrepancy between our view, or 'model', of what happens, and the 'models' of the people with whom we work, and related this to our dialectical approach to the research. We also talked about research findings, which we saw in terms of (1) feedback into the community, and (2) publication for the benefit of interested outsiders. YVF helps to produce a community newspaper called "UBB"*. Although they and the committee of residents do all the work, John and Peter felt that local people see it as their own. The local

Monday, 7 August 1972 contd.

daily paper, the Evening Sentinel, "toes the party line". They thought that the programmes offered by BBC Radio Stoke-on-Trent were quite good. We felt that the meeting went encouragingly well; we think we'll be able to work with them, and we got the impression that they too were pleased with the way things had turned out, although Peter, in particular, had been worried at first that we might be a couple of 'video-freaks' - i.e. convinced that video is the answer to all social problems. We asked them how they thought local people would react to us. John replied that they would probably see us at first as 'long-haired yobboes from that place up on the hill' (i.e. the university). We felt that YVF's attitude towards us was one of wishing to help without having to contribute too much in the way of scarce and hard-won resources.

Next move : John said it was up to them to introduce to local residents the idea of using video. He said he would write a circular inviting people to a meeting in October, at which we could demonstrate the equipment. They will send us a copy before it is distributed.

Afterwards, on the way back, Bob told Ray he thought it important that we maintain an adequate level of communication and metacommunication between ourselves about what we were doing. He had found this difficult with other colleagues in the past and felt that it had been detrimental to the development of the work.

* An acronym of the names of three estates : Ubberley, Bentilee and Berryhill.

Report of meeting between PH?JF, and Bob Jardine and Ray ? about community video on 7th August 72.

Bob and Ray had come from London to talk about their ideas. They are going to Keele in October to do a Masters under the supervision of Frankenburg. While no money is available at this time to pay them they do have fairly full use of the video machine.

Both are graduates and Ray has a teaching diploma from Goldsmiths. He has two years teaching experience. JF was impressed by their ability to get over their ideas in a non-doctrinaire form and they seem to have the personality to get on with local people. Neither seemed to want to impose their ideas of the world. The basis of the proposal is to give local groups a machine which can be used in various educational ways. Thus local groups would control the whole process of making a programme. This can be done with the camera and a small recording pack which weighs about 12 pounds. The tape in the recorder pack is then removed and played through an adapted TV set which has to be plugged into the mains. This piece of equipment is heavier but can be moved from place to place.

Purpose of Using Video

Bob outlined the following purposes for the equipment

1. To act as a mirror for a group. This might be used when a group has a particular personality problem in the group which it would be useful to talk through. By having a video of the group happening this could be examined after the end of the meeting.

2. When a group sends a representative to some "power figure" the representatives can take the machine with them. By taping the conversation the rest of the group can see what the power figure said and how their reps behaved. This can lead to a closer examination of tactics in dealing with this kind of person. It also ensures that the rest of the group shares the experience of dealing with the "power figure". Similarly the machine can be used in reverse in taking messages from the "power figures" to the people can be done.

3. It can be used to collect information.

The Next Steps

Since Bob and Ray will not be starting at Keele until October (and therefore will not have the equipment until then) no immediate action is required. JF said that in the middle of September a draft proposal would be prepared by YVF and sent to Bob and Ray. YVF will then call together a group - possibly under some organisation like UBB or the BVPC or the Neighbourhood Council or Harold Clowes.

Possible people to be involved :-

Keith and Archie
Arthur Ball
Willie Carr.
Geoff Johnson and a couple of old people.
Len Procter.
Someone with the WMC contacts
Someone in the Labour Party

Tuesday, 10 October 1972.

Our first day at Keele. We spent the morning in the Sociology laboratory checking out the equipment which we would be using during the project. This comprised :

One Shibaden SV700EC videotape recorder (mains power; record and playback). This machine gives up to one hour continuous recording on 1/2" videotape.

One Shibaden TV19UL 19 inch TV receiver/video monitor.

One Sony AVC 3200 video camera with viewfinder monitor, tripod, standard and zoom lenses.

One Shibaden Portapak (SV707E portable videotape recorder with shoulder strap, powered by rechargeable batteries; FP707 hand-held video camera with CRT viewfinder, zoom lens and built-in microphone; optional extension microphone input and earphone for monitoring sound when recording). This machine gives up to 20 minutes continuous recording and has no playback facility. Tapes have to be transferred to the SV700EC VTR for viewing.

(See Appendix 1 for illustrations and technical specifications.)

Three omnidirectional microphones, one for use with SV700EC, two for use with SV707E.

Supply of videotapes.

Two tripod-mounted floodlamps; one hand-held quartz iodine lamp.

One camera adaptor to connect Portopak camera to mains VTR.

One battery charger for Portopak. (The internal batteries give 40-60 minutes recording time. We tried to obtain a 4 hour battery pack but discovered that these were not available for this make of equipment. We therefore had to make do with a second set of internal batteries.)

The Department of Sociology also made available a Kodak Carousel

Tuesday, 10 October 1972 contd.

automatic slide projector and projection screen and a Uher battery/
mains reel-to-reel tape recorder. In addition to the above we had
our own 35mm still cameras, slide projector and screen, two mains
reel-to-reel tape recorders and a portable cassette tape recorder.

The Department provided us with an office, telephone and secretarial
facilities.

Wednesday, 11 October 1972.

14.30. Meeting with Ronnie in his office. We discussed finance. No
news from Gulbenkian so far. Ronnie suggested we should also approach
the Social Science Research Council and the Nuffield Foundation. He
also mentioned that he has an idea for setting up an interdisciplinary
research unit in 'visual sociology' to which he hopes to attract funds.
We asked him if he could put us in touch with someone in the
Department of Education as we were interested in doing some work in
Schools. He told us to arrange to see Philip Boden.

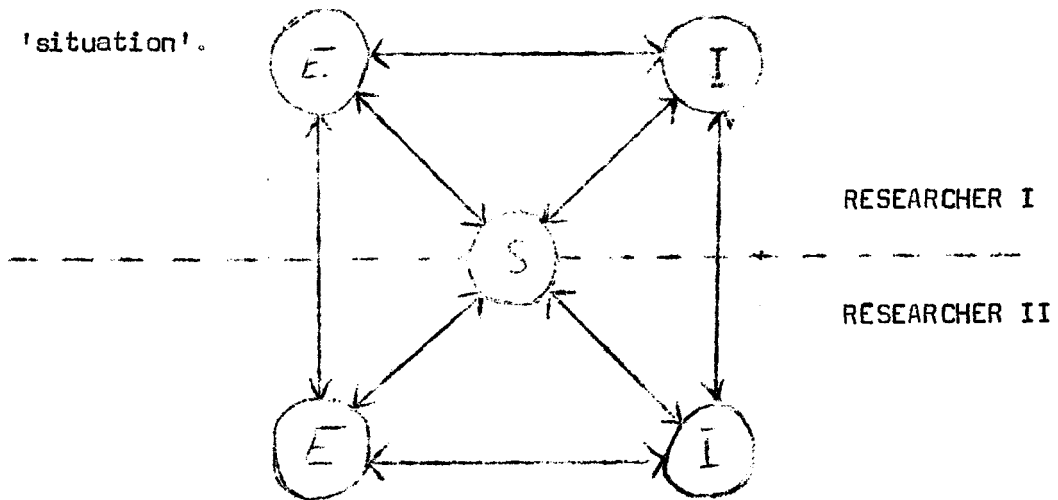
Thursday, 12 October 1972.

P.M. We discussed problems of method, in particular the relevance of
Husserl's phenomenology to our research. The discussion was recorded
on tape. We arrived at the following tentative diagram which represents,
within the framework of a dialectic between two researchers, (1) a
dialectic between the observed 'situation' and the phenomenological
explication, (2) a dialectic between the phenomenological explication
and a hypothetical / experimental / theoretical interpretation *, and

* see van Kaam (1969) : Existential Foundations of Psychology,
Image Books, New York.

Thursday, 12 October, 1972 contd.

(3) a dialectic between such an interpretation and the observed 'situation'.



S = observed 'situation'

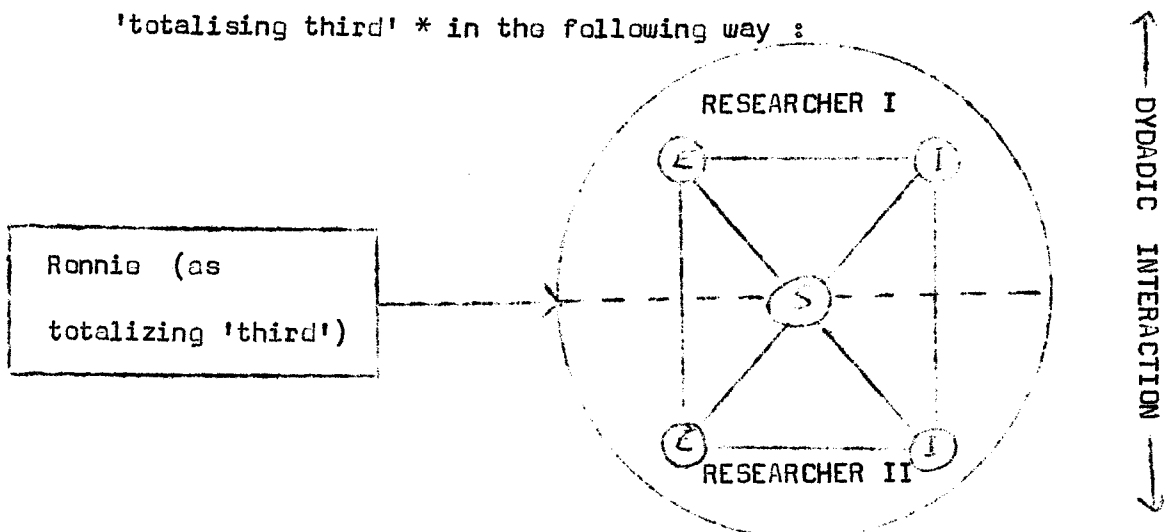
E = Phenomenological explication

I = hypothetical/experimental/theoretical interpretation

Friday, 13 October 1972.

10.30 Phoned John Freeman at the Young Volunteer Force shop in Bentilee but he was out.

P.M. We reconsidered yesterday's diagram in an attempt to include the perspectives of 'significant others' (eg Ronnie, YVF) within the schema. We found we could do this in terms of Sartre's notion of the 'totalising third' * in the following way :



* Sartre (1960) : Critique de la Raison Dialectique, Gallimard, Paris.

Friday, 13 October 1972 contd.

FOOTNOTE: 28 Feb 1973

The above diagram still holds true (in our view) as far as Ronnie is concerned. He sees us as a dyadic unit. However, this simple triad does not always apply to our fieldwork where we are frequently regarded as a 'monad' which enters into dyadic relationships with other 'collective monads' (eg different groups and factions). If we consider YVF also as a 'significant other' then they may stand as 'totalising third' not to us as a dyad but to us as a 'monad' in relation to, say, the Community Association. And the Community Association, likewise becomes a 'third' to our relationship with YVF. And so on.

When Bob and Ray were last in Bentilee we agreed that we would try and introduce them to certain groups in Bentilee. This is now needed to be done.

1. In calling a meeting, and this is the method that has been decided, whose banner should this be done under. Possible agencies are Y.V.F., Neighbourhood Council, B.V.P.C., or Harold Clowes. It was agreed that Y.V.F. would call the meeting but would prefer another body to do so. Thus J.F. will approach Arthur Mellor of Harold Clowes to see whether he would be interested in calling a group together. He will also ask Harold Clowes if the meeting can be held there.
2. It was agreed that organisations, rather than individuals should be invited to this meeting. J.F. should suggest that Skinner should be invited as well as ? some of Tenants Associations.
3. Content of meeting: A demonstration should be suggested to Jardine with possible handling of the machine by the group. Also should include some ideas about the use of video. It must be made clear that Y.V.F. will not be controlling the equipment. Another point that will have to be discussed is the storage of the equipment. While Y.V.F. would prefer it was stored elsewhere (as a matter of principle) it is prepared to offer its shop as a base.
4. General discussion: It is expected that video will be of particular use in any training programme. Thus John A. is particularly interested in its use. Otherwise the point was made that we have to rely on Jardine to some extent in providing the group work skills in dealing with situations. A further point was there are very neutral ways the machine can be used e.g. Judo, football reporting, and other routine type tasks.

Monday, 16 October 1972.

10.30. Phoned YVF and spoke to Pete Hudson. He was concerned that the project might be seen by local people as yet another YVF 'gimmick', if this happened, some of them "wouldn't touch it with a barge-pole". John Freeman has, therefore, been trying to get an introductory meeting arranged by the chairman of the Community Association. This accounts for their delay in getting in touch with us. If the Chairman is not interested, John will go ahead and organise a meeting through YVF. In the meantime, a further meeting between YVF and ourselves would be useful. We gave them our phone extension number so that they could call us back and suggest a suitable date and time.

13.00 Arranged to discuss the project with Philip Boden of the University's Department of Education at 9.00 tomorrow.

15.30 Phoned BBC Radio Stoke-on-Trent. Made an appointment to see the Programme Organiser on Wednesday at 15.00 to talk about community programming (we'd seen an article in UBB, the community magazine, which referred to the station's "new community studio").

Report on next steps to be taken on Video13th October 1972

When Bob and Ray were last in Bentilee we agreed that we would try and introduce them to certain groups in Bentilee. This is now needed to be done.

1. In calling a meeting, and this is the method that has been decided, whose banner should this be done under. Possible agencies are Y.V.F., Neighbourhood Council, B.V.P.C., or Harold Clowes. It was agreed that Y.V.F. would call the meeting but would prefer another body to do so. Thus J.F. will approach Arthur Mellor of Harold Clowes to see whether he would be interested in calling a group together. He will also ask Harold Clowes if the meeting can be held there.
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4. General discussion: It is expected that video will be of particular use in any training programme. Thus John A. is particularly interested in its use. Otherwise the point was made that we have to rely on Jardine to some extent in providing the group work skills in dealing with situations. A further point was there are very neutral ways the machine can be used e.g. Judo, football reporting, and other routine type tasks.

The Brook will be reclaimed

Brook Apathy

At the end of May and beginning of June the Council in conjunction with the Bentilee Valley Project Committee ran a series of public meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to explain to the people of Bentilee the plan for the Brook which is now public. The City officials also invited comments and minor alterations to the scheme.

The meetings were very poorly attended indeed. But one or two interesting points did arise and so perhaps the meetings were not a complete failure.

vital bridge and path left out

One such point was raised by several residents at the Harold Clowes meeting. Pathways have indeed been included in the scheme, but another path across the central section of the Brook would be a great asset - some where from Chalfont Green to Filey Close. As most readers know, however, the Brook banks are at their steepest at this point. A direct path, therefore, whilst practically possible would be of little use as old people and mothers with prams could not use it. A bridge - on the Bucknall New Road style would perhaps be ideal, but out of the question because of the cost.

meandering path: solution

So what the residents came up with was the idea of a wandering path which, by taking an indirect route down the banks, would provide a gentler slope and solve the problem.

Hanley High School traffic

Another omission was a path to allow the hoardes of pupils from Hanley High to get to and from school without getting dirty shoes and socks.

bentilee residents at Radio STOKE

Four members of the Bentilee Valley Project Committee attended a two hour debate at Radio Stoke on the environment, pollution and participation. The debate went on the air in the form of a programme called 'The City of Tomorrow.'

The debate was on the occasion of the opening by the then Lord Mayor Arthur Cholerton of Radio Stoke's new Community Studio. In a fitting speech for the occasion, the Lord Mayor spoke of Community Councils as being a good way to assist participation in local affairs.

community council for Bentilee

The Bentilee 'team' were encouraged by these remarks as the project had recently set up a working party to consider the follow up to the Brook scheme and the idea of a Community Council was one of the suggestions made.

invitation to Lord Mayor

At its first meetings the working party decided to invite the Lord Mayor to a discussion on the work and formation of a Community Council for Bentilee. Arthur Cholerton was very interested and will be coming up to Bentilee sometime in June. The meeting will be of interest to many residents of Bentilee so watch the normal poster places for the date.



NEW?

Tuesday, 17 October 1972

9.00 Talked to Philip Boden about the possibility of working in schools in the Bentilee area. He said that Willfield Junior High was the only one he could suggest if we wanted to limit the project to the estate. Unfortunately he had no contacts at the school but he would look into the matter for us. He told us that we'd need permission from the local authority to work in schools. In the meantime it would be a good idea to try to get to know any Willfield teachers who might be involved in youth clubs in the area.

9.45 Phone message from John Freeman: he has arranged a meeting with the Committee of the Community Association for 19.30 on 24 October.

15.30 Phoned YVF and spoke to John Armstrong. Arranged provisionally to meet John Freeman on the 19th or 20th of October. He will phone to confirm.

Wednesday, 18 October 1972

10.30 Message from John Freeman asking us to call at the shop on Friday at 11.00. Memo from Philip Boden - a list of people who might be able to help us. We decided not to contact any of them until after our meeting with John Freeman.

10.45 Phoned John Freeman to confirm the Friday appointment. He seemed friendly and keen.

15.00 Visit to BBC Radio Stoke-on-Trent. We talked to Geoff Lawrence, the Programme Organiser, for over an hour. He seemed

Wednesday, 18 October 1972 contd.

very willing to talk to us and before we left he showed us round the education department and the community studio.

Thursday, 19 October 1972

10.30 Message from Chris Ensor, a final year undergraduate. He wanted to know if we'd be interested in doing some video work in the area of Hanley where he lives. Sent him a note suggesting a meeting in the lab at 14.30.

14.30 Met Chris Ensor. He had heard about us from John Armstrong. His impression of John Armstrong's idea of our project was that we were a 'camera crew'. Seemed a nice bloke. Postponed making a decision until after the Bentilee meeting on October 24 when we shall know how busy we are likely to be there.

15.00 Ran through the tape-and-slide show and decided to use it on the 24th if John Freeman thinks it is suitable.

Friday, 20 October 1972

11.00 Called at YVF shop and met John Freeman, Pete Hudson and John Armstrong. We talked about the forthcoming meeting with the Community Association Committee. John Freeman described the Chairman, Arthur Mellor, as a "powerful local figure"; he is a member of the Labour Party. Pete said he found him difficult to get on with: relations between YVF and the Community Association had been strained following a survey on the use of the Harold Clowes Hall carried out by a Keele student on placement with YVF. John F. and Pete both thought that we would be accepted by the Committee if we were not seen to be too closely associated with YVF (potteries people always give newcomers

Friday, 20 October 1972 contd.

"a fair crack of the whip"). The local Labour Party tends to be "dogmatic" and "paternalistic"; for example, it refuses to recognise the Tenants Association. John F. advised us to "play it straight" at the meeting on Tuesday evening and not to stress the community/council conflict which had happened in North Kensington. For this reason we decided not to use the tape-and-slide show. John F. advised us to emphasise the "educational" aspects of the project. He suggested that we take the same line as at our first meeting with him (7.8.72); this approach had "impressed" him.

Monday, 23 October 1972

14.30 Played back audiotape of method discussion (see 12.10.72) and afterwards resumed the discussion in the light of what we've read and done since. Didn't make much progress.

Tuesday, 24 October 1972

10.30 Checked out video equipment for tonight's meeting.

19.30 Meeting at Harold Clowes Community Hall, Bentilee, with Arthur Mellor (Chairman), Alan Tellwright (Secretary) and Mr. Allman (Vice-Chairman) of the Community Association, and John Freeman. The meeting began slowly with fairly lengthy pauses in the conversation. We introduced ourselves and explained that we were doing research at Keele and talked about what we hoped to be able to do in Bentilee. Bob did most of the talking for us and said that we had no definite ideas we wanted to try out, other than to make the equipment available to any groups who wanted to use it. Mr. Tellwright, who is a cine enthusiast, seemed to understand our intentions more clearly than the other two. Mr. Mellor suggested the kind of content that he thought

Tuesday, 24 October 1972 contd.

would make good "programmes": eg judo and weightlifting (playback to show mistakes), flower shows, hairdressing classes, recording a scene from a local drama production. Mr. Tellwright suggested that it could be used in schools (he is a headmaster), but Mr. Mellor thought that schools were already well-equipped with "audio-visual aids", and anyway, school lessons might not make very interesting "programmes", except possibly in the case of "special lectures". The demonstration of the equipment was not very successful. No one seemed keen to try using the camera - this was in keeping with their general air of reserve - so we recorded a few minutes of the discussion. The quality of the picture wasn't very good due to the lighting. They were very patient and understanding about this. Then Bob asked them what they felt would be the best way to introduce the equipment to people who might be interested in using it. Mr. Mellor said that they would write to representatives of all the groups in the area, inviting them to a meeting. This was arranged for Tuesday, 21 November. Mr. Mellor drew up a list of possible interested parties. By this time they seemed to have warmed to us rather more and the rest of the evening (until 21.30) was spent in pleasantly polite conversation. Mr. Mellor thanked us for coming and we thanked them for giving us their time.

22.00 Went for a drink with John Freeman at his local. He seemed satisfied with the outcome of the meeting and felt we had made a good start in getting the support of the Community Association. He didn't think the meeting had been the quiet disaster we had felt it to be at the time. He said Mr. Mellor's reticence might have been due to the fact that a member of his family had just died. He also pointed out that the Tenants Association was significant by its absence from Mr.

Tuesday, 24 October 1972 contd.

Mollor's list. Referring to our 'performance' John said he saw Bob as "the PR man" and Ray as "the technician". It looks as though we shall have to spend the next three weeks getting to know the area better, letting things take their own slow course.

Report of meeting at Harold Clowes Community Centre on 24th October 72

Present: A. Mellor
A. Tellwright
Mr. Allman
Bob Jardine
Ray Dunning
J.F.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the community video experiment. First event was that J.F. crashed into the crash barrier breaking his windscreen and damaging the pole. This prompted various remarks about J.F.'s eyesight and led to an additional contact point being established between H.C. group and J.F. J.F. introduced people and then passed over to Bob Jardine. Bob is the spokesman and Ray the technician of the pair and Bob spoke very briefly saying that the purpose of their study was to see 'how a community would use the video'. This was followed by a demonstration of the equipment which was not particularly satisfactory because the T.V. set was not working very well. This may have been because the Hall has strict lights which have starters. The equipment is very simple to use and really is easily transportable. A. Mellor was thinking primarily in terms of how the Harold Clowes groups could use the machine but gradually shifted to more general usage. The following usage was suggested:

1. Judo Instruction.
2. Flower Show
3. Showing the general public what was happening in the Radio Club.
4. The Playgroup. Showing mums who did not attend regularly what happened.
5. The Schools.
6. Weighlifting.
7. Lads and Dads Football. Some other uses were suggested particularly by J.F. and A.T.

A. Mellor was primarily interested in the educational and communication aspects of the machine. He will need some guidance on the usage but is very pro. He did not quite understand how Bob and Ray came to be there, with no studies to do. This led to a chat about Keele University and their contacts with it. There was even mention of the Y.V.F./Keele survey and Harold Clowes. The general point was made and accepted that one of the great difficulties on the estate was communicating with people, and getting people to do things. They saw this machine as a chance ~~in~~ for organisations to reach out to new people and to include. They agreed to call a meeting of all organisations on the estate to discuss needs of the equipment. This will happen in three weeks time. A somewhat slow but positive meeting. Ray and Bob are skillful operators and sat tight for a long time when nothing much was happening. The time will be well spent.

Thursday, 26 October 1972

15.00 Our first tutorial* with Ronnie Frankenberg. We discussed how we should present our theses - the difficulty lies in the fact that so much of our work will be a joint effort. Ronnie phoned the Deputy Registrar to enquire about this, and was told that we would be required to submit two separate theses. As a result we decided that, as far as a review of literature is concerned, Ray should concentrate mainly on British material and Bob should deal with work in Canada and the USA. Ronnie said he's look into the matter further. We told him about our meeting with the Community Association Committee. He seemed to think it was inevitable that things would move slowly at first. We talked about phenomenology in social science and Ronnie said that he didn't impose any particular methodological bias on research students; it was up to us to find our own theoretical approach. The question of finance came up next. Ronnie suggested that we should apply for a grant to the Social Science Research Council and we agreed to draft a proposal by next week. He is still hoping to raise money to fund an interdepartmental unit for research in 'visual sociology'.

Friday, 27 October 1972

15.00 Went to YVF shop to collect background information about Bentilee from John Freeman. Over coffee, he invited us to spend as much time as we wished at the shop looking through their files and soaking up local atmosphere. Pete Hudson and John Armstrong asked if they could come and see us at Keele sometime, to practise using the equipment. We fixed a date provisionally for next Tuesday. Then we went for a drive around the estate and along the Brook.

* All tutorials were tape recorded.

Saturday, 28 October 1972

Began reading background information about Bentilee. Possible use of video in connection with Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan and proposed Bentilee Neighbourhood Council.

Tuesday, 31 October 1972

9.30 Set up, cleaned and checked video equipment in lab.

10.15 Pete Hudson and John Armstrong arrived for a practice session. We showed them how to use the portapak and playback what they recorded on the mains VTR.

12.15 Ran through tape-and-slide show for Pete and John. Pete said he thought that it might be worth showing at the public meeting on 21 November, but we didn't reach a decision. Over lunch, we discussed with John the possibility of working in schools in Bentilee. He has some contacts. John wondered if he might be able to borrow extra equipment from Stoke Polytechnic.

15.00 Staff/postgraduate seminar.

Unasked questions:

- (1) How do you feel about your piece of research?
- (2) How do you think the way you have interpreted your study area relates to the way you see yourself; to the way the people see themselves; to the way they see you?
- (3) What do you think has been the effect of your research on the community?
- (4) Do you think that your process of coming to understand the social

Tuesday, 31 October 1972

life of the area may have helped the members to understand themselves?
Do you think this is important? How are your observations to be fed
back to the people observed?

①

VIDEO its use on Bentilee

John Armstrong

One of the articles written by Robert Jardine and Mike Hickie outlines ~~the~~^{2/3} ~~low~~ areas in which video can be used.

(a) inter personal - self viewing by members of a group. This appears to be quite a revelation to many participants, often helping them to realise misconceptions ~~and~~ and thereby assisting the dynamics of the group concerned. Also the group's goals and strategies can be clarified and articulated via video.

Uses on Bentilee could include an introduction to this approach at Spode House. However

②
This may be too early a date
to introduce video and self
viewing, especially as Spode
is the very first meeting of
the training programme.

Participants may be either
distracted or apprehensive about
the use of video. On the other
hand video may entice and
deepen the involvement and
learning processes coming
from the meeting.

~~From a brief~~
Video could become a
vital part of any future
'training' activities. Playshops
are an obvious field, both
at committee level and on the
play site. BVPC is a
possibility, as is Granthropes.
Granthropes have expressed their
interest in the psychological side
of their work.

(B) Between Jones
e.g. Council and residents as
in Kensington. The authors
point to the problem of obtaining
a dialogue from officials.
Uses on Bentlee include the
Brook projects which could well
become a major issue if given
coverage by video and the
Planning simulator. ~~THE~~

Video could also provide an
ongoing link between the
reclamation dept and the
people of the estate. A quick
and easy way to exchange views
- films could be shown at
BVPC meetings (thereby encouraging
attendance) and in the shopping
centre for passes by to watch.
This means of participation
has possibilities elsewhere in
the city - both on reclamation

and major planning ^{and} ~~and~~ ~~and~~
(e.g. Windsor ST & GIAs)

(C) contacts with uninvolved people

The Authors outline the use of
contyoad shows at which
passers by ~~are~~ can watch a
programme on a local issue.
~~The~~ ^{the} people then filmed & interviewed
as they watch it, thereby being
involved in the issue in
question.

Possibilities in Bentlee.
The Brooke — needs building up
into a major issue — especially
with regard to the dramatic
changes in recreation and play
facilities that will come about.
Video could be very valuable here,
especially if the shopping centre
and perhaps other areas are used

for showings. ~~The~~ ~~MP~~ programme
of recording could be worked out
starting with the arrival of
the bulldozers.

Another possibility is its
use in sub areas like the top
end — helping them to integrate
into the main issues on the
estate.

(D) teacher - pupil relationships

Use of video in schools. Obviously
useful in our schools project
may also help win over the
support of some teachers, as
~~the~~ such a scheme may be
helpful to them.

The authors do not
however discuss the use of video

in developing new issues which ⁽⁶⁾
are as yet unexplored and
unrealised by many people in
the area. It particularly
'difficult' ~~is~~ problem with a
city wide scale is participation
in planning, particularly structure
planning. Planning proposals
will have a major social effect
on Stoke yet the consequences
are as ~~yet~~ not realised by
many people.

Video could be a way
of raising these issues and a
way of linking people and
planners without the need for
manipulative public meetings.
~~The~~ ~~subject~~ A project
on planning issues could be
of interest to the authors
as it appears to be an as yet
unexplored area.

Wednesday, 1 November 1972

8.30 Took van to garage for examination - it's been difficult to start and backfires.

11.00 Worked on draft proposal for SSRC (see f. 7.11.72)

Thursday, 2 November 1972

10.00 Tutorial with Ronnie. He read through our SSRC proposal and said it looked "both interesting and convincing" but was dubious about our frequent use of the word "phenomonological". He also thought we should include "rather more detail about what (we're) actually going to do" (i.e. in the field). He will add a preamble about his interest in visual sociology. Decided not to submit the application until we've heard from the Gulbenkian Foundation. We discussed participant observation methods and Ronnie gave us a copy of an article which he had written on the subject (published in New Society in 1963). He suggested that a lot of sociologists, in adopting a "scientific" attitude to human problems, exclude areas of experience and possible solutions (such as the need for love) which are left to poets (and phenomenologists?).

Friday, 3 - Tuesday, 7 November 1972

Read background information. (Bonfire party on the Brook on 4 Nov. - lights, music, spit-roast lamb, huge fire, plenty of drink and fireworks and lots of people.)

Draft Proposal to the Social Science Research Council.

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MEDIA APPLICATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES IN
AN URBAN AREA.

In this study we recognise two areas of chief concern: (i) the communication needs of individuals, groups and organisations, within the study area, vis-a-vis the media; (ii) the relation between these individuals, groups and organisations and the researchers.

Previous media research concentrates largely on the social and cultural effects of centralised (i.e. one-to-many) systems of mass communication, and there is a steadily-growing body of literature on the subject. At the opposite end of the spectrum, although we find a trend in practice towards a more decentralised (i.e. one-to-one; many-to-many) use of some media, this progress is not matched by sociological research. Examples of this trend are to be seen in the proliferation of community newspapers and experiments involving the use of film and portable videotape equipment in community development. Certain kinds of media, such as local radio, local newspapers and cable television (both ETV and the new local stations) stand between the two poles, allowing some degree of community access and participation, while their organisational structures, objectives and criteria remain closely allied to those of the mass media.

It is intended to set up a project, based in the Department of Sociology at Keele University, to study media applications and perspectives in relation to community life on a large council estate in Stoke-on-Trent. By 'applications' and 'perspectives' are meant the

ways the various media are used and are seen to be used, and the ways in which those using the media 'see' themselves and others (including the researchers) in relation to common issues. The research will concentrate mainly on the decentralised end of the media spectrum.

A project is already in progress on the estate in which the Department's portable video equipment is being used by groups of residents as a communication tool. The project forms the basis of a phenomenological study of video intervention in social interaction. This will include an explication of subjects' reactions to seeing themselves on TV in individual and group situations. Data from this project will be used extensively in the proposed study.

We shall be considering data in the form of verbal 'pictures' (e.g. conversations, interviews, discussions, meetings, local radio programmes, local and community newspapers, etc.) and visual 'statements' (e.g. graffiti, posters, official and unofficial plans and diagrams, photographs, films, buildings, the work of local artists, etc.) together with other intentional signs and symbols insofar as these help to reveal aspects of social life, particularly notions of 'community'. Since this study employs a phenomenological approach, we shall not be concerned with the veracity, or otherwise, of these verbal and visual 'perspectives' in themselves, but rather with the way they relate to each other. A phenomenological understanding of the situation may be arrived at by comparing these perspectives in terms of concordance/discordance, in order to see how the media mediate the idea of 'community' for the members.

The researcher/subject relationship will be explicitly dialectical,

being itself a special case of concordance/discordance between different perspectives, and this dialectic will guide the development of the research through the phenomenological phase and beyond.

It is outside the scope of our methodological brief to hypothesise about the nature of the results. However, these are conceived as having at least two applications:

- (i) to be fed back continuously into the observed situation throughout the period of research. This dialogue will enable us to contrast and compare (for example) our view of them - their view of themselves; our view of ourselves - their view of us; our view of their view of themselves - their view of our view of them; and so on.
- (ii) to be made available to other researchers and interested 'outsiders'.

Findings will be collated and published in the form of an illustrated report.

HAROLD CLOWES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

UBBERLEY ROAD, BUCKNALL, STOKE-ON-TRENT. Telephone 29196

Chairman :
Mr. J. A. Mellor

Hon. Treasurer :
Mr. D. T. Poole

Hon. Secretary :
Mr. A. Tellwright

Caretakers :
Mr. & Mrs. G. Shaw

Honorary Adviser to the Theatre : Mr. Percy E. Hughes

6th November, 1972.

Dear Colleagues,

During the next twelve months two post graduate students of Keele University will be working in the Ubberley & Bentilee area, trying to assess what value and purpose video recording has to a community in general.

Mr. Bob Jardine and Mr. Ray Dunning will make themselves available along with the equipment to suit your requirements.

They will be present at the "Harold Clowes" Community Hall on Tuesday 21st November, at 7.30 p.m. to demonstrate the use of video tape together with close circuit television and to answer any questions you may like to ask. The potentiality of this equipment can be judged by the representatives as to its main function in their particular circles.

We would appreciate and request that representatives from your organisation be in attendance.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

A. Tellwright. (Sec.)

Wednesday, 8 November 1972

On 30.10.72 we arranged for the following notice to be read out in undergraduate sociology lectures:

"We need lots of volunteers to help us explore the experience of seeing one's recorded image on television. Volunteers will be asked to spend about an hour being videotaped, watching the playback and discussing their reactions informally. We would prefer people with no prior experience in this field."

We required about 40-50 people, we thought, to make the project worthwhile. Thirty-eight students volunteered, and between 8.11.72 and 4.12.72 we held sessions with fifteen of them.

Our intention in setting up this project was to fill profitably the weeks between the meeting on 24.10.72 and the public meeting on 21.11.72 by trying to explicate what it feels like to see one's recorded image on a video monitor. We based our method on research described by Van Kaam (1969) in which he arrived at an explication of the phenomenon of "feeling understood" by comparing subjects' written accounts. We thought we could do something similar by (a) tape recording our subjects describing their feelings to us, and (b) comparing their descriptions. We believed that if this method were to be valid we should influence the conversations as little as possible by the questions we asked.

13.30 - 16.00 First three self-viewing sessions. At the beginning of the afternoon it was our intention to influence the train of thought of the subject as little as possible, if at all. However, during the playback, it became apparent that we were influencing what the subjects talked about. Should we treat ourselves as equal participants and if

Wednesday, 8 November 1972 contd.

so what value has this experiment? Also, is it possible to arrive at an understanding of social and psychological phenomena except through interaction involving the researcher as participant?

By 4.12.72 things were beginning to move in Bentilee and the self-viewing sessions were taking up valuable time so we decided not to carry on with them. However, the methodological issues which had arisen continued to concern us in our work on the estate.

Thursday, 9 November 1972

15.20 Tutorial with Ronnie in the lab. We ran through the tape-and-slide show and Ronnie suggested certain alterations to the wording of the script which in places, he felt, did not lend itself to being spoken. He thought it might be a good idea to start the public meeting with it. We discussed the definition of "community" given in the script.

Friday, 10 November 1972

11.15 Called at YVF shop to see John Freeman. He was busy, so we went for a walk along the Valley, taking photographs. When we got back to the shop, John suggested that we go to his flat to talk. John Armstrong and a community worker from Belfast called Geoff came, too. We discussed whether we should use the tape-and-slide show at the public meeting; what YVF is trying to do; what they mean by 'community' (see transcript of tape-recording). We also talked about the different groups and organisations on the estate. We all had lunch at The Mechanics in Hanley afterwards.

John Freeman had reservations about using the tape-and-slide show because of the 'political' nature of the references to tenants associations and tenant-council conflict. (He hadn't actually seen the show, but had read the script.) John Armstrong, who had seen it, felt that it came over far 'softer' than when just reading it, but wondered whether it was possible to cut out parts of the tape or change them in some way. He thought that the show contained concrete ideas and that might be what was needed.

Bob said that if we showed it we'd have to make it clear that these weren't necessarily ideas that we wanted to try out in Bentilee, but that they represented a collection of experiments that had been carried out in other areas. People could discuss them and criticise them - the more they criticised them the more constructive it would be for them and us, since in criticising them they might begin to form their own ideas about ways of using the equipment.

John Freeman thought this was a rational viewpoint and felt that, with the local political situation as it was, people might not take a rational view. He was worried in case this led them to reject the whole thing. They would have to be convinced that they would have a real say in the way the equipment was used. It all depended on Arthur Mellor: "If Arthur Mellor pushes, then you're O.K. - people will give it a serious crack of the whip."

John Freeman wondered whether Arthur Mellor really understood what we were trying to do: "I'm not sure if he really believes you so far ... not that he disbelieves you, but, you know ... 'What's your proper study, then? What are you doing? What lessons do you have? Are you

getting good marks?' ... It really depends ... if they believe that you're going to give them a real crack in deciding how the machinery's used ... and that is not yet established." (By 'them' he meant the management committee of the Community Association.)

John A.: But do you mean by that that they want control?

John F.: No, I'm not saying that at all, but they're thinking now, in a fog of unease and ... unsureness about what's happening - they are thinking, "Well, this offer's been made ... is it real?".

John Freeman pointed out that at the first meeting Arthur Mellor had begun by thinking of ways in which groups connected with the Community Association could use the equipment. The tenants association was, significantly, not on his list of people to be invited to the public meeting.

We discussed rewording certain parts of the tape, deleting all references to 'tenants association', 'pressure', etc.

John Freeman explained why they were so concerned ("you know, it's not just for our own preservation") that we should "get on well with these groups".

The first reason is that ... a lot of the human contact ... the people who know a lot of people ... a lot of the most conscious people ... are in the Labour Party/Harold Clowes circles ... so in terms of their function of leadership and of involvement and identification of problems it's fair to say that they are very significant on the estate. The second

John F.: reason is the straight power thing - you know, if you
contd. want to change anything, or if a local group wants to
change anything, then it's going to have to go, in some way,
either directly or indirectly, through that kind of group.
It's going to have to finish up with the councillors at
some stage, and if they are sympathetic to the medium - if
they think, "Well, we'll look at this machine because we're
interested in it and what it says might be quite good ...",
then it'll change their attitude, I think. I'm really saying
it's your decision (i.e. whether to use the tape, and if so,
whether to change it) and you take responsibility for it.

John A.: We're not saying that words like 'tenants association' are
out for good, but at this stage it's just senseless to talk
too strongly - people would just kill it.

.....

John F.: Could it be useful to say something about our expectations
and our values and what we're looking for? You know - what
we regard as a good community project ... We are trying to
establish, first of all, for our own benefit and for other
people's benefit, perceptions of the problem, a definition
of the problem ... It's often in a very simple form for
local people - you know - "the kids don't have enough to do;
what can be done?" The problem is that people feel the kids
don't have enough to do. Now, we are looking for some form-
ulation of the problem, some idea about the values of various
people, about why they think it's a problem, you know - and
I think Grasshoppers is an interesting example here. Grass-
hoppers was formed because people felt that the under-fourteens

John F.: didn't have enough to do. Some people felt it was a problem
contd.

because young people were drinking. Some people felt it was because of all the vandalism. Other people felt it was a problem because mums went out to work and didn't have enough time, energy, and strength to provide a satisfactory home background. Others felt - not so much now - that the schools lacked discipline. I think you can see all sorts of values in those types of statements - you know, values about what kind of existence we ought to be aiming for. So we are trying to do two things at the beginning - one, to establish what the problem is, and two, to try to establish what values make people recognise that there is a problem. I think it's fair to say that the initial process is far more conscious now than it was two or three years ago. We've had a real battering lately over - sort of - 'distant professionalism' ... We're trying to establish the problem and the values involved, but at the same time we look for, firstly, the launching of some fairly concrete programme reasonably quickly, because we've found in our experience that, unless something happens reasonably quickly, people aren't prepared to maintain their interest - you know, they come along and if you try to hang out the chat and the build-up and the research side, they soon become disenchanted. They need something positive - an example with Grasshoppers - we tried to hang it out for much longer at the beginning - we spent four meetings trying to slow things up but people wanted to go ahead. We are looking at the achievement of some positive service, or benefit, or programme for either the members of the organisation or for the rest of the community, which will stimulate that community - provide an organisational base for

John F.: doing something. We're looking at some kind of product and
contd.

we're also looking at the involvement of local folk in the production of the product - as much clarity as possible and as much control as possible over what the product should be and the way that the product should be produced.

Now that's a little bit purist, I think - there are various schools of community work, as I'm sure you're aware. One of the most influential on us is the non-directive stuff. One has certain theoretical stuff on board and one has ... certain power things on board - various power groups that you have to satisfy if you're going to stay in existence. One's the profession, two's the local authority, three's local people, four can be the officials of the funding body and five, in YVF, is our national headquarters. And there are splits in all these groups. But we've been very much concerned - and I think largely we've been successful - in ensuring that the local groups and the local people are the prime power group that determines our decisions. But to go back to the theoretical stuff - generally, what we're after is to - if we're asked what's our 'end point' the answer we give is we just don't bloody know, you know - it's one of three or four things - we're trying to create a situation where people are aware of one, the values of professional help - and I'm not ordering these in any way - two, the difficulties involved in organisation, three, the personal abilities to cope with change, to be able to look at situations and see what they can do, how they are affecting things today, and four, the organisational guts that is very often necessary to produce change, and five, the ability to call on and know where various resources are, both in terms of finance and in terms of

John F.: expertise, to help them make those decisions. And that's what
contd.
we're looking for at the end, and this could take, in practical
forms, several shapes. It could be the development of, say,
twenty, thirty, forty people - ten people who are aware of this
kind of thinking and have the personal capabilities to do it.
It could be an alliance between those groups of people and profes-
sionals, either employed locally by local people or by some
sympathetic organisation which is not controlled locally. There's
sort of two models there. It could be that the supporting agency
was something like the Social Services. I don't know if that
makes sense, but let's go on a bit more about the things we
look for in a good programme.

We also look to see whether the people involved in that
programme are seeing needs for more analysis, more recruitment
of helpers, more involvement - you know, how wide is the commun-
ication net going? We're also looking at the way they make
decisions - are they being made on more rational criteria?; are
they trying to build up these criteria? or are they made purely
for personal power reasons? We're looking for the understanding
of us as professionals and whether they are using us as profes-
sionals in suitable ways. We're looking at how they relate to
other institutions, how they relate to various policies. Let's
take an example again, the Grasshoppers - I certainly felt that
the policy on the under-fourteens taken by the city was totally
inadequate. There are all sorts of questions that Grasshoppers
ought to be asking about the schools. Now they are starting to
ask questions and to push things at the Youth Department, and I
regard this as an encouraging sign.

John A.: There are some interesting things that we haven't said anything about, which I think perhaps from Ray and Bob's point of view are quite crucial, and that's our - as workers and as an agency - our attitude towards social change. You've mentioned everything we look for in terms of analysing the situation and building up local resources, but we haven't really mentioned why we're doing it or in what way we're looking for this to develop - because in a community work can be just as much right-wing orientated as left-wing orientated. For instance, we could say we're trying to fit them in and make them consume local government services more efficiently, we could say that we're trying to get the local authority to provide better services, or we could say we're trying to get things organised locally, with local resources

John F.: I think we have said, by implication, something about why. We mentioned organisational things - quite often - and therefore we're saying, you know, "there are deficiencies in bureaucracies". We've also said that our prime reference point is the local community. To some extent, we've said, our views are determined by their views - but not wholly. An interesting polarisation which occurred recently characterises community work into two main schools - one of them talks about community work in terms of poverty, social deprivation, equalisation of resources, local control of resources; and the other talks about participatory democracy, the caring community, local involvement. So one's the participation kick ... and the other's the more socialist side, the more poverty-programme side. Now we have far more in on the second of the two - the participation side - largely

John F.: because it's very difficult, in Bentilee anyway, really to be able to grab hold of the problem of poverty and deprivation. We've tried in various ways - we've tried on the welfare rights bit, we haven't tried very hard on the unemployment side - but, you know, it's not seen as a problem. So that's a bit about the why.

John A.: It still leaves to an extent unsaid, and I don't think perhaps we can say it - this business of are we trying to fit people into, to make them a more efficient part of, the existing structures.

John F.: Well, let's go back to this statement ... about training. Training involves four main areas - one, the examination of the whole situation, what's happening, and producing certain reasons for why it's happening - an analysis, a critique. Then, two, identifying certain areas that you want to take action upon, within that overall framework - setting up the organisational - the 'machine' required to carry out that programme. Then, three, obtaining the skills, you know, identifying tasks, obtaining the skills necessary to do those tasks, and communicating what's happening to other interested folk. And four, the evaluation of the programme, seeing whether that programme fits in with the original conceptions of the action programme at the beginning, and seeing whether it's having any side effects that were not thought of originally. But it's very difficult to do - if one comes from the theoretical side to look at what in fact's been done, then I think one gets a different sort of viewpoint - one looks far more at the importance of keeping groups together,

John F.: of just maintaining them. One has to talk a lot more about the
contd. relationships that they had before, to do certain things. One has to talk about dependency on education and the professional - you know, how people regard us as professionals and the planners as professionals is very interesting ... in a way we're toy professionals to them - we're paid, but they're not quite sure what our special body of knowledge is, if you want to talk about professionals in that sense - but they're damned sure what it is in terms of the planning people. Planners are gods to them ...

.....

Bob: One thing that I'm not very sure about is what actually a community is - I mean, do you define it as some kind of administrative or geographical area, or - ?

John F.: You'd better have a word with Ronnie about this because I think he's written a book about it.

Bob: I suspect that his view of what a community is might differ from what you think the community is that you're working in.

John F. (to Geoff): What would you say?

Geoff: I don't think you can define - well, a feeling of community is a ... feeling of togetherness - either on a personal basis or in the case of people who've got together to deal with some problem or issue. I don't think you can talk about community on the basis of, say, Bentilee - something that large - although you might superficially, from the outside as it were, project yourself onto Bentilee and look at different groups and organis-

Geoff: ations. From my own experience I would talk in terms of little
contd. communities - half a dozen streets or so - and identify them by
the way they coalesce and are different. I think it would be
difficult to develop a strong sense of community on a housing
estate.

John F.: There's the two traditional definitions, aren't there? There's
the geographical thing and there's the interest thing - so one's
looking at things that bring people together, and the challenge
over the past ten years, I think, is that people have been saying,
"If we look at things on a geographical basis, we're wasting our
time because what brings people together is common interests
and common problems and common aspirations." In terms of
student culture ... one can talk about various communities -
one can talk about people who are interested in the legalisation
of marijuana ... I think in relation to working-class areas
one can talk far more and with far more meaning about geograph-
ically-based communities. Interests and aspirations are far
more closely related geographically in working-class communities
than they are in middle-class communities.

Geoff: I don't think I understand the attribution of the term
'community' to something like a pressure group - say the
legalisation of marijuana - I wouldn't call that a community.

John A.: I think in any situation you've got the spatial side of it, and
that has consequences on how people come together and when they
come together, and this has consequences for the links they
build up between them.

Bob: How important is it to you in your work to have a definition of what your community is, or does it tend to be a very much more day-to-day, ad hoc progress - you know, as various people get in touch with you, so you get in touch with other people, and you work together and maybe you don't have a working definition of what the community is before you set out?

John F.: Well, in our case, we deliberately chose Bentilee because we felt that there was some common interest there, and also there was a very defined geographical area to reinforce that.

Bob (to Geoff): Is it (i.e. 'community') something that can only be seen from the outside, or is it seen within clear limits by the people who are inside - I mean, do the people in those six-street communities themselves see their community as ending on the sixth street, or is that just the way that you see it?

Geoff: I don't think they identify themselves as living in a community of, say, six streets, I think you have to go outside to see that ... It's only when you move outside - it seems to me anyway - that when you move outside you do identify it. But when you're in it, I'm not sure that you do. Maybe it's only when people get moved out of an area - to a new housing estate - but perhaps still do their shopping in the old place, that they sense a lack of community, and this lack defines it negatively for them.

.....

Bob: I'm still interested in this business about the same six people on the estate being on all the committees of all the different organisations.

John F.: Well, let's start by trying to identify some of these organisations and see whether in fact it's a true statement that we've put to you. Let's start by looking at organisations and thinking what organisations there are. There are the schools, and it's fair to say that the schools have very little influence in anything on the estate, bar the formal education of young people in those schools. The headmasters and teachers don't take any leadership role whatsoever in the general thinking of what's going on about the estate ... in terms of making or advising on a decision about where a children's playground should go, whether we're going to have a youth club, whether the bus shelters are in the wrong place - you know, they're just not in it. They are involved in a leadership role in that they are a resource allocator - they can allocate their school or not, they can be obstructive or not. So there's this whole area which is obviously of considerable importance.

Secondly, there's the churches, and the churches are fairly important in Bentilee. The strongest church, in my view, is the Catholic church, and people do talk to you in political terms about the 'Catholic vote' - Edith Beddows, one of the three councillors, is a Catholic. They seem to be involved in quite a lot of ways ... they put on various community events, they run a youth club and a bingo thing. They're a provider of certain amenities, and they're also a provider of certain welfare services. They really fought hard to get a pre-school playgroup started in their school - I think they had to take it to the Minister. Also, they're trying to do something for the Ugandan Asians at the present time. If you look at the Catholic Church in terms of the number of roles it has to fit

John F.:
contd.

people into - cleaning, flower arranging, mending the cassocks, bingo, school - it really is a way of keeping people - you know, if people need slots to feel an attachment to something, then they've really got it worked out. But very hierarchical, the whole thing. Now, there's one guy, Joe Wood, who's been involved in quite a lot of things in the political arena. He was a Labour councillor and he resigned - was voted out - over making various controversial statements about the Brook. He found out various underhand dealings in the Council ... he's a very honest guy.

Then there's the Methodist church. It has very little corporate form - one doesn't talk about 'the Methodists' very much as a body. They do some things as 'Methodists' - they run a youth club, for example, they allow their premises to be used for the Boys' Brigade - but they don't seem to function as a corporate group. But in fact if you look around there are lots of people who are pretty involved in all sorts of things who are Methodists - Tom Tuhey is a Methodist and so is Jim Dixey. So there's various sorts of people who are active locally ... and the same can be said to a lesser degree about the Church of England. But in both the Church of England and the Methodists the local minister is very much not a leader.

Then there's the clinic, a provider of services. The doctors aren't really involved in the estate. The health visitors are, but they're not interested in decision-making.

Historically, virtually all the decisions that were made on the estate were either made centrally, or locally by 'Harold Clowes'*. Now the main people there are Arthur Mellor, Alan Tellwright, Tom Tuhey, Reg Walker - and you know one can really

* i.e. The Community Association.

John F.: get six or seven people. Now, over the past year, particularly, contd.
a lot of scheming and a lot of pressure has been coming from us and from people whom we've been working with - people like Dave James and Jim Dixey - and the scheming's included things like the Brook, the Bentilee Valley Project Committee, things on UBB, Grasshoppers' taking a more pushy policy. So in terms of the people who are really making policy on a lot of things happening on the estate, it's basically being decided, with greater or lesser degrees of consultation, by Arthur Mollor, Tom Tuhey, Rog Walker, Dave James, Jim Dixey and YVF - a pretty small group. Also, some decisions are made at City level - you know, Social Services ...

Bob: Where does BVPC fit into this, and also the intended Neighbourhood Council?

John A.: Well, if you'd asked us that a couple of months ago I think we could have given a clear answer ... but now we're a bit confused about exactly what stage BVPC is at - whether it's on its way out, or whether, when it gets some 'hard' things in front of it to organise, it might pick up again. BVPC came about, to an extent, as a suggestion thrown up by the ward Labour Party ... and what we'd hoped was that this, apart from - well, it had a few aims really - in the sense that there was a specific one of participation in planning and getting the Brook done, but also getting across the idea of participation in general, and from that grew up the idea of a Neighbourhood Council. And BVPC was seen as developing and growing and pulling in more people until eventually it could act as an umbrella organisation ...

John A.: the feeling among BVPC is that it shouldn't be political - they
contd.

can only see politics in terms of parties. We saw this as a case of setting up a Neighbourhood Council, giving it as many options as possible and seeing where it would go and what the dynamics would be, and we had expected, I think, that it would in general increase the power of the estate at City level, and also that it would have as one of its main principles the participation and involvement of a greater number of people.

Now all of that seems somewhat under pressure at present.

Largely, I think that the Neighbourhood Council has been sold too theoretically - partly, there's not enough understanding of it in real terms, partly, there's doubt about the political side of it, the belief that it should be a purely social body - and also the fact that BVPC, which was to be the embryonic Neighbourhood Council, is, since the main planning decisions were formulated, apparently going through a very difficult period. Far too few people come to meetings, far less commitment, far less enthusiasm generated and imagination - and that's what's frightening, not so much the fact that people aren't coming, but that people come and there's no real spark.

John F.: It (i.e. BVPC) sees the worst of everything.

John A.: It seems to have ceased to have belief in itself, which leads us to wonder whether the overall idea of an umbrella organisation is wrong. This is Pete's idea, that Bentilee is a place that doesn't work together and in a way doesn't need to work together - it's a series of small groups, each working on its own thing, each providing its own service. That's one side of it,

John A.: and the other side is, well, this is just a difficult time for
contd.
the estate as a whole. The situation is that BVPC is in a
difficult position because work hasn't started on the Brook -
they're going through a period when you'd expect activity to
drop.

Sunday, 12 November 1972

22.15 Discussed revision of script for tape-and-slide show and rewrote it.

Monday, 13 November 1972

Self-viewing sessions...

Monday, 20 November 1972

13.30 Recorded revised commentary for tape-and-slide show ready for tomorrow night's meeting.

SOME IDEAS ABOUT VIDEO AND COMMUNITY TV: REVISED VERSION.

We live in an age of mass communication in which we often know more about what's happening in distant parts of the world than about events on our own doorsteps. Communication about local issues by means of leaflets, posters and public meetings can't always meet the need for dialogue between individuals and groups in a community and between the community and local government. Local media such as newspapers and local radio can be just as inaccessible to the public as the town hall.

In depressed areas of our cities, poor quality housing and high rents lead to overcrowding. In spite of this - or perhaps because of it - many people feel lonely.

National and regional needs often conflict with local needs. Every day, decisions affecting our lives are made in which we don't participate and over which we have no control. Some of us don't live in one place long enough to have any say in local government.

Architects, city planners and other 'experts', by assuming more and more responsibility for control of the environment, deprive people of the chance to be involved creatively in the development of their community.

Some of us believe we can do something about our problems. Some of us are already trying, but regard others doing the same with suspicion and hostility.

These issues have at least one thing in common - they're all to do with communication. Clearly, the mass media aren't equipped to do anything

about this situation. We must find alternative ways and means.

Some of you will have had encounters with the existing media. You may have been interviewed by a reporter from your local newspaper or from radio or even TV. Some of you will have experienced the frustration caused by oversimplification or outright distortion of what you were trying to say. This sort of thing happens for a number of reasons. The interviewer may have misunderstood you. Or he may impose his own interpretation and values, either by asking questions in which he, as a reporter, is interested, or by editing his interview into an 'acceptable' journalistic presentation. This isn't always a deliberate attempt to misrepresent you.

This slide show is about one way in which groups of people are beginning to get around this problem using portable video equipment to help them communicate with other groups and organisations. The basic technology of television used in this way enables them to set up, produce and edit their own videotapes so that their 'message' comes across clear and undistorted. Needs, aspirations and problems can be communicated through their eyes - they are in control.

All you need to be able to make videotapes is a portable camera and a shoulder-pack video recorder which is powered by batteries, plus a playback machine and a video monitor. Sound and vision are recorded together on magnetic videotape in the same way that sound is recorded using an ordinary tape recorder. Unlike film, there's no delay for processing - videotape can be played back immediately on a monitor or on an ordinary TV set. If you're not happy with it, the tape can be wiped out and re-used.

Over the past 2 or 3 years, there's been a growing interest in the use of this kind of equipment in community development. In Canada and the USA community television has existed for some time. In Britain our experience is drawn from comparatively few projects on a much smaller scale, such as the work of TVX at the Institute for Research in Art and Technology and the North Kensington community TV group.

The North Kensington project lasted from January to June 1971 and during the period we worked with only a few of the community groups in the area. We had extremely limited funds and equipment for the project, but out of it emerged some guidelines for future work. Taking into account experiences in this country and elsewhere, it seems to us that the use of video in community development falls into at least 3 spheres of operation.

The first and smallest sphere of operation may be described as interpersonal. This refers to video recording and playback in fairly small group situations. For the members of a group to be involved in all stages of making a videotape - planning, recording, viewing, amending, editing - can be a valuable activity. It's creative in a deeper sense than just making a finished tape which is interesting to watch - in fact, some of the most useful tapes are interesting only to the people who make them. Partly, this has to do with the 'finding out' stage of a group's activities.

In addition, self-viewing on videotape can be useful in the interpersonal sphere. It can help the members of a group to discover more about themselves, about each other, and about the way they work together. We've found evidence of this in our own work, particularly with schoolchildren and their teachers.

People don't communicate just with words. What we say, the expressions on our faces and our gestures all make up the way we put ourselves across to other people. For example, when we say something, we may also express with our faces what we feel about the words we are using. We aren't always aware of what our faces and gestures are saying to other people. Or it's possible that what we think they're communicating isn't quite what other people take them for. I might be trying to be friendly, but you may think my smile is cynical. Watching ourselves on a video monitor from time to time in a group discussion is a sort of 'action replay' which enables us to see ourselves as others see us. It gives us a second chance to put over what we're trying to say and if necessary to change the way we say it.

By improving communication between group members in this way, video recording and playback can help them to sort out their objectives. How many meetings of community groups become entangled because some members or sub-groups don't see eye to eye? If differences of opinion over a group's role in the community and its aims really are differences, then the ensuing argument is a vital part of the functioning of the group. If on the other hand they're based on the kind of misunderstanding we've just been talking about, the members may waste a lot of time disputing a false issue.

The second, wider sphere of operation involves communication between groups. Once a group's objective or strategy has been worked out and put on videotape, the tape can be shown to other groups to tell them about the problem and the intended action in order to gain wider support for their cause. The Walmer Road project was an example of this.

Walmer Road is one of the streets in North Kensington overshadowed by the new elevated motorway. The houses in the street had gone from bad to worse since the roadworks began. Vibration, noise, and dirt were making conditions unbearable. The residents felt they had a right to be rehoused, but the council seemed unsympathetic. When applications through the normal channels failed to have any effect the residents held a demonstration on the motorway, blocking all the traffic. They also got together and telephoned the housing officer at half-hour intervals, on a rota for two days.

We met some of the residents of Walmer Road to discuss making a video-tape about housing conditions in the street. The plan was to take the video equipment into some of the houses and let the residents describe in their own words what was happening to their homes and their lives and then show the tape at the weekly meeting of the Lancaster Neighbourhood Centre to get their support for a meeting with the council. (The Lancaster Centre had a fairly good working relationship with the council.) The tape was recorded and previewed in the same afternoon.

Two days later the tape was shown at the Centre and it was agreed to arrange a meeting with housing officials at the Town Hall. The residents hoped that it might be possible to show the tape to the officials. By providing specific, concrete examples of housing conditions in the street, the tape started a lively discussion of relevant issues as opposed to the wandering arguments which tend to happen at meetings of this kind. The residents were pleased with the result and asked us to accompany a group of them to the town hall to make a recording of the meeting with the officials for residents who couldn't attend during normal working hours.

Ten days later we all went along to the meeting at the Town Hall as planned. The aim of the meeting was to discuss rehousing six families in the street who were living in the worst conditions. When we arrived, the Deputy Town Clerk who was to chair the discussion, saw the video equipment and refused to go ahead with the meeting unless we left it outside. We explained that we only wanted to make a tape of the meeting to show to other residents in the street, but he was adamant. The meeting concerning the rehousing of the six families was more important than our recording and so we had to give way. Nor did we get a chance to show the first tape.

Looking back, we might have avoided this situation if we'd told the Deputy Town Clerk of our intentions beforehand. We realised that both sides had to be involved if we were to achieve any form of dialogue over a problem. After the meeting we wrote to him, explaining our position, and asked if he'd be prepared to make a tape giving the Council's view of the situation. He didn't reply and although we tried to telephone him we had no further contact. Since we accomplished our first objective - to get wider support for the residents' cause - but failed to create a dialogue with the Council, this project was only a partial success.

Another way that video can be used in the intergroup sphere is to record group decision-making processes and the resultant action, particularly when this has been successful, to provide models for action by other groups. In this way, people can come to realise that their problems aren't unique and that they have quite a lot in common with other people. For this reason, we didn't confine our work exclusively to North Kensington, but made videotapes with groups based in other parts of London.

Sometimes we worked with groups of people who were trying to communicate with a section of the population which didn't constitute a group as such and didn't get together in one place for regular meetings.

Possible sites for showing videotapes to this kind of audience include empty shop windows, TV rental shops, pubs, launderettes, school playgrounds, street corners, and so on.

On one of these occasions, some people living in a large block of flats were trying to organise themselves to get much-needed improvements carried out to the building. We were invited along to the first meeting. The day before, leaflets were distributed to every flat, but only a handful of people turned up. They felt that if they were going to get anywhere they needed the support of a larger number of tenants. One of the main problems was to bring them together at a time which was convenient to as many people as possible.

We suggested that maybe a video show in the central courtyard could be made the focal point for a meeting. We recorded a tape with some of the residents and showed it in the courtyard on the following Sunday. In the space of an afternoon it attracted quite a crowd who came to see what was happening and stayed to watch the tape which was repeated several times. While this was going on we went around with the portable video recorder asking people what they thought about the tape and about the idea of forming an association. A number of people thought it was a good idea - a committee was subsequently elected and they began holding weekly meetings.

Early on in the project we discovered that a large section of North Kensington is covered by a cable TV system. Many parts of the country

have similar cable systems and many more are planned in new housing estates and towns. In North Kensington the system is run by British Relay. The cable is strung across the backs of houses and provides 'piped' TV to people who rent sets from British Relay. A local antenna picks up broadcast signals and relays them via an area transmitter to subscribers' homes. We made some enquiries and found that the cable has a capacity of 4 channels, only 3 of which are being used at the moment to carry BBC and ITV programmes.

This suggested the possibility of a third sphere of operation, in which videotapes made by local groups could be watched by people in their homes. The cable would permit a more geographically precise means of transmission than is possible in airwave broadcasting, so that programmes could be tailored to the interests and needs of a definable local area.

We discussed the technical feasibility of this idea with a telecommunications engineer who told us that there wouldn't be any difficulty in transmitting videotapes made on portable equipment over the cable system. We could expect a slight difference in quality compared with BBC and ITV transmissions, but a precedent for this existed in Canada, where the reduction in quality had been found acceptable for community programmes.

The legal aspects of this proposal were a bigger problem. The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications informed us that cablecasting locally-made programmes by the relay companies wasn't permitted, and it was against their policy to license such a scheme. The situation has since changed, and during 1972 the Ministry granted licences to cable companies in five areas to make their own programmes for a trial period. This change in government policy towards the relay companies has encouraged us to think again about community cablecasting.

Obviously, cablecasting on a regular basis would require considerably more resources than we had at the beginning of 1971. It would also require a fairly high level of organisation. For example, some kind of coordinating committee would be necessary, drawn from a wide range of interests and points of view within the community. The role of such a committee would be to liaise between individuals and groups wishing to make programmes, a video production team and the cable company. The committee would be responsible for sharing out cable time and equipment. The job of the video production team would be to give technical assistance to groups, either by making programmes with them, or by training them to use the equipment so that they could produce their own programmes.

Community involvement is essential at this stage if local programmes are to be relevant. One way of doing this would be to arrange 'talkback' programmes of people's views and reactions, taped at public meetings and in the streets, to be relayed 'live' or at a convenient time via the cables.

In Beloeil, a town in the Canadian province of Quebec, town council meetings are regularly televised 'live' on cable and afterwards viewers can phone in and put questions to the councillors. In Toronto, one of the cable companies has given cable time to regular community programming. Local groups can produce 'live' programmes using the company's free studio facilities. They can also bring along videotapes made on portable equipment and plug them into the system. Although the cable company is legally responsible for everything that's transmitted, there's no censorship so long as the programme isn't libellous or pornographic. Programmes have been made about the effects of living in high-rise flats, the pollution of local beaches and about the need for pre-school play-groups in the area. It remains to be seen to what extent the experiments

now being set up in this country will produce similar community programming or whether they'll concentrate on providing local news and entertainment.

But cablecasting isn't the be-all and end-all of community TV. It represents only the widest of the 3 spheres of operation. There's still a great deal of work to be done in the other two spheres - interpersonal and intergroup. While you don't yet have access to the cable in your area, or indeed if there is no cable, this needn't prevent you from using video equipment to help you communicate with and understand others better, if this is an important part of your work.

The equipment may not be cheap enough for your group to go out and buy a set, but there are ways around this. The main sources of video equipment in this country at the moment are educational institutions. If you're a student, the chances are that your college or university already has some equipment of this kind. It's probably locked away somewhere so you may not even know about it. You could try approaching the powers that be to let you use it for something besides recording the occasional lecture. If you aren't a student, but involved with a community group of some kind and feel that this equipment might be of use to you, you could also try approaching your local college or university, possibly through interested students.

There's a real need that this kind of work should continue and develop in this country, not only to ensure that the challenge of cable TV is met with the enthusiasm and know-how necessary for participation by local groups: there are communication needs which arise in the interpersonal and intergroup spheres which may not involve the community as a whole, at least not all of the time. The field is wide open for experiment.

Tuesday, 21 November 1972

10.00 Checked equipment for tonight's meeting.

18.30 Arrived at Harold Clowes Hall to set up equipment. By 19.45 the following people had turned up: Arthur Mellor, Alan Tellwright, Mr. Allman, John Freeman, Pete Hudson, Dave James (Grasshoppers Youth Club and Bentilee Valley Project Committee) and Mrs. Foskett (laboratory assistant at Willfield school). The meeting had been called for 19.30 but we waited until 20.00 to see if anyone else would turn up (no-one did). Mr. Mellor introduced us and Bob said a few words explaining who we were; that we were interested in "looking at the way people communicate", and in particular, at ways in which they might be able to use video equipment. Bob also said that we didn't see ourselves as a film crew, but as helpers and observers. Referring to the tape-and-slide show he stressed that, although it contained ideas based on projects elsewhere, these weren't necessarily ideas which we wanted to try out in Bentilee. It was up to them to decide how they wanted to use the equipment. He was careful to point out the mistake NKTV made in North Kensington in its careless approach to the council. Then we presented the revised tape-and-slide show. This was followed by a discussion which we videotaped at John Freeman's suggestion (we had already let people see themselves on the monitor, 'live' and in playback as they arrived). Ray operated the camera throughout the discussion. After a brief demonstration of the equipment, Dave, Arthur and Mrs. Foskett took the portapak into a Youth Club in another part of the building and interviewed some of the youngsters who then came in to watch the playback. Next, we played back the discussion tape. The sound quality was not very good because some of the speakers had been too far from the microphone and so people started to talk amongst them-

Tuesday, 21 November 1972 contd.

selves. While we were putting the equipment into the van, John Freeman suggested to Bob that in future we could store it in the YVF shop and he would give us a key. Bob said that we should work with YVF on a tape about the area. John seemed interested and said he'd like to make tapes about the Housing Finance Bill and about community projects in other parts of the country. Alan Tellwright told Ray that he'd like to use the equipment at his school, even though it isn't on the estate. He said that if the project caught on the council might be persuaded to buy some equipment, if not for the community in general, then possibly for schools. As we left Arthur made a point of thanking us quite formally and we thanked him for arranging the meeting. He offered to put us in touch with people belonging to the different groups who use the Community Hall (we'd come to the conclusion that, since the meeting had not been very well-attended, we'd have to adopt a more direct, personal approach). Later, in the Auto Club, we had a drink with Dave James and John Freeman. Dave talked of making a tape about the Brook for BVPC. Both he and John discussed local politics and talked about the possibility of setting up a Neighbourhood Council on the estate. About the meeting, John said that although the attendance had been poor, we could go ahead and do what we liked on the estate now that we had the approval of the Community Association.

A Case Study of the Bentilee Valley Projects Committee - an exercise in Public Participation.

Introduction

This case study was written to test the template produced by the Gulbenkian community work group in their work on the analysis of projects. It examines the Bentilee Valley Project Committee half way through its work.

Background Information

Bentilee is a large housing estate in Stoke on Trent which was built by the Council in the early 1950's. Development took place on farm land in the east of the City about two miles from the centres and local authority offices. The estate is completely surrounded by remaining farm land and this produces a feeling of isolation among the residents and a peculiar mixture of Urban and Rural existence. Housing is solid but drab being the normal red brick semi detached construction. The estate is long and thin being one and a half miles long and about half a mile wide and the population numbers 15,000 people. Three characterless roads run lengthways through the estate with houses numbering up to 700. While local shopping is adequate; general amenities are uniform and being mainly workingmen's clubs, pubs and some welfare facilities. There is also a large community centre. The estate has a low reputation in other parts of the City (some call it Edge City).

The relationship between many local people and the Council has been tense for much of the history of the estate. One bone of contention has been the Brook that runs through the middle of the estate, which has been left completely derelict despite being the designated public open space. Promises to renovate this land have been made by the Council but have never materialised. The total area of ground involved is 63 acres and the majority of the population live within walking distance of the area.

In the early part of 1970, a Young Volunteer Force team of two workers took premises in the middle of the local shopping centre. For many reasons they saw their brief as involving the whole community and not just young people. Thus they had been established in the area for over a year before this project commenced and so were reasonably well established.

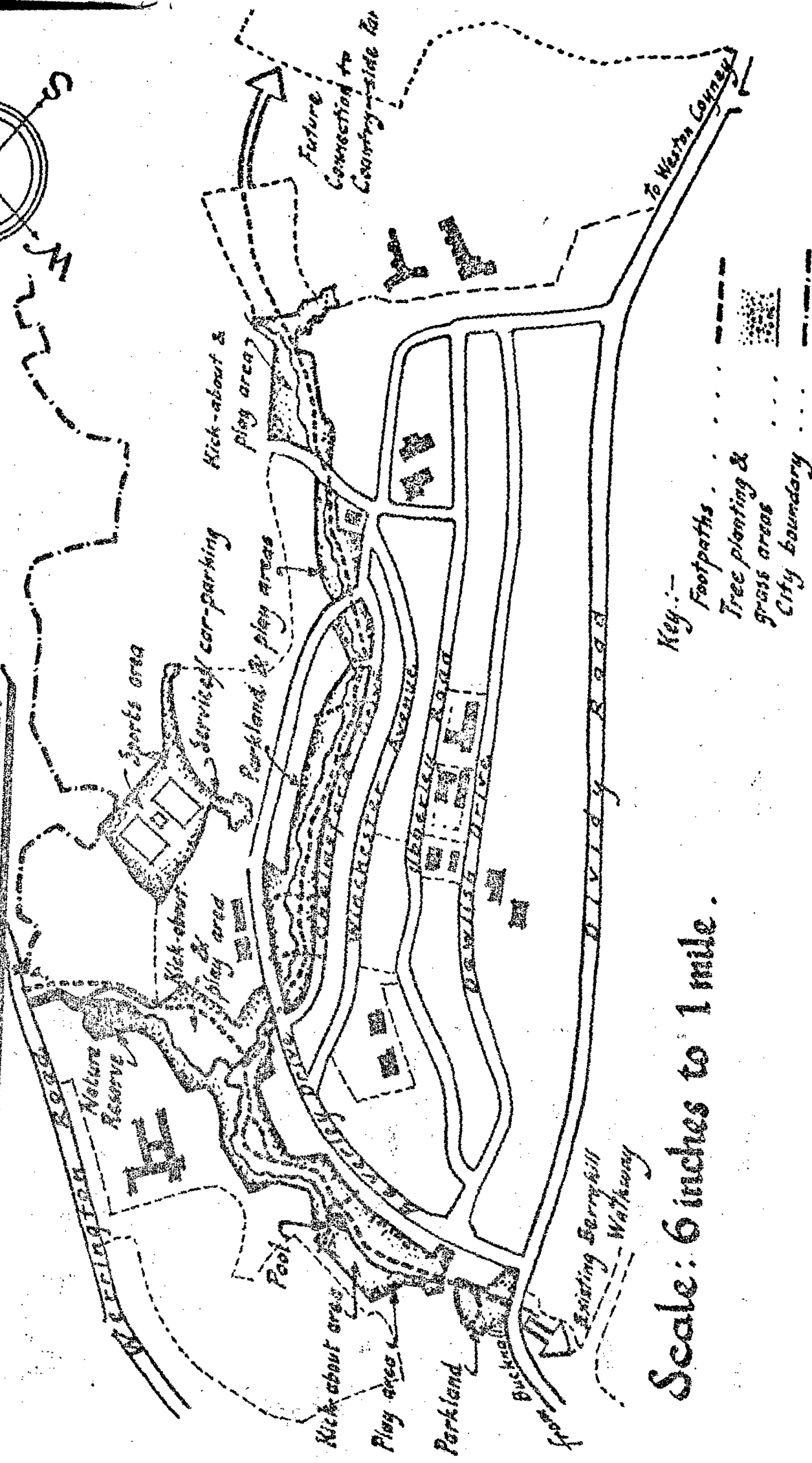
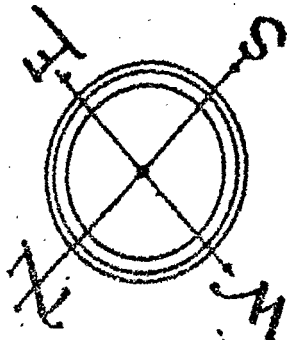
PERCEPTIONS OF THE SITUATION BEFORE ACTION IS TAKEN - Opportunities and Problems.

1.1.1. As seen by those affected

The majority of Bentilee residents are affected. Most feelings about the Brook are negative being represented by statements like 'the Brook is infested by rats', 'its a place people dump rubbish', 'the Brook is filthy', and 'in winter you can't get across it'. This last statement applies particularly to the elderly. Some of the stories about the Brook, particularly the ones about the level of pollution, in our opinion is true, but all stories about the Brook are believed by local people. Some use is made of the area for kick-about football and taking dogs for walks, and so there is a basic desire and need to use this piece of land. A further problem is that local people do not believe that

CITY OF STONE ON-TRENT LAND RECLAMATION PROJECT.

THE BENTLEE VALLEY.



Scale: 6 inches to 1 mile.

Key:-
 Footpaths
 Tree planting &
 Grass areas
 City boundary

any change will occur in the state of the Brook. This follows from the fact that the Council have promised to relump the area on several occasions. Nothing has so far been done.

1.1.2. As seen by those responsible

By responsible I understand those people, organisations, or groups which have some power in relation to this area of land. These are:

- The Labour Party. Since this project is involved in the allocation of resources political groups are obviously important. The Labour Party is the dominant party both locally on Bentilee and in the City where they have a three to one majority on the City Council. Thus they are the only relevant political party in this case study. The Ward Labour Party has, of course, been aware of local peoples feelings about the Brook. They have attempted to get the necessary finance allocated on numerous occasions, but until recently have failed. On one occasion the refusal of the Labour controlled Council to allocate funds led to the resignation of one of the Bentilee councillors in 1966.

The relationship between the Ward Labour Party and the Central, City based Labour Group is obviously important in determining the power of the Ward Labour Party and the policies that it can hope to get implemented. It would be naive to suggest that the policies of the Ward Labour Party are always accepted by the Central Labour Group. It is also clear that the Departments have considerable influence over the implementation of proposals.

- The Planning Department. This Department has grown in strength over the past few years largely because Stoke on Trent has an extensive reclamation programme in line with the planning profession generally the professional staff of this department are interested in ideas of participation because of the history of conflict over the Brook, they are aware of the crucial nature of the Brook for Bentilee people. Some planners are also slightly embarrassed by the way that the Bentilee community has developed. The Planners had expected that it would be a more attractive place than it has turned out in practise.

- The Parks Department. This Department has owned the Bentilee Valley for a long period of time and has been attacked on numerous occasions by Bentilee residents because of their inactivity. For many reasons it has failed to achieve the necessary resources to reclaim the Brook. It is not one of the major City departments and so is unable to get as many resources as it needs. It is generally interested in fairly traditional ideas of Parks provision and Recreational provision.

- The Young Volunteer Force. This organisation being the authors of this report saw the reclamation of the Brook as a chance to generate a major debate about decisions on the environment of Bentilee. Being a community work agency it was concerned to ensure that a large number of people discussed future developments fully.

- Harold Clowes Community Association. This Association has close links with the Ward Labour Party and is primarily concerned with managing a large Community Centre. Thus it has not had as much effect on the scheme as might be expected.

1.1.3. As seen by outsiders - people living outside Bentilee

There will be little opposition to this scheme from people living outside Bentilee because much of the money does not in fact come from the Stoke ratepayer. The government will pay 75% of the cost. There is some

feeling that Bentilee asks for more resources than other areas and this is one potential influence.

- Residents of the Estate who never use the Brook. There are some people who will not use the Brook area. Generally their view will be that while the proposal is irrelevant to their needs they are pleased to see the area cleaned up.

- Councillors from other Wards. Those in positions of power concerned with planning and parks departments will be pleased to see this scheme starting because it will remove a major source of discontent.

1.2. Values identifiable in groups and individuals

- Local Residents. It is fair to say that the Potteries people are a warm and gentle people. They are fairly parochial and generally accept existing leadership structures.

- Parks Department. Generally they feel that they are a poor relation among the City Departments and tend to do things that have already been tried. As with many local authority departments they would like to expand their field of operations.

- In line with the Planning profession generally they are interested in public participation, but at the same time they are aware of the pressures on them from the elected representatives to make decisions reasonably quickly. They see the reclamation programme as an area where they can become experienced in participation without holding up some other major schemes.

- Young Volunteer Force. Committed to community work principles but realised that it is important to achieve something reasonably quickly. Prepared to take a leadership role should it be required.

- Bentilee Vally Projects Committee. This developed into a groups as the project continues and some incidents of its development will be discussed later.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1. General objectives.

- a) To tidy up the Brook so that it would become a suitable place for people to come and use it for their leisure. This would include getting the right kind of amenity in the correct place on the estate.
- b) To involve more local residents in playing a part in decisions affecting the estate. This would include providing residents with the right kind of information and learning situation so that they can make informed decisions.
- c) To experiment in methods of participation in planning.

2.2. Specific targets or short term objectives.

General objective a)

There were many groups wanting specific amenities. The local football team wanted a football pitch. The local Senior Citizens Association wanted

a Park which would be acceptable to old people.

b) There were specific measures taken to inform more people about the decisions that were being made. This included starting a local paper which discussed issues raised by the Brook projects. There was a procedure for obtaining news from local people about the proposals. This included holding of public meetings and the preparation of an exhibition by the Schools on the theme of Bentilee and the environment.

2.3. Priorities

Different priorities exist in different groups and this has led to conflict on occasions. One dilemma has been how much time should consultation take.

How much time should be spent in obtaining local peoples views and their commitment to the proposed changes to the Brook area. Some members of the more established groups in the Community like the Ward Labour Party want brief involvement of other local people, taking the form of one public meeting. Other groups like the Y.V.F. wanted greater stress on involving more people in the required decisionmaking.

POLICIES

3.1. Existing Policies of the Water Board. They have certain policies about the flow of water which affects the Brook proposal.

- Planning Department. They have no defined policy on public participation as it is changing at the present time. They are of course committed to referring all major decisions to the elected representatives.

- Of the Parks Department. Scheme must look reasonably tidy and be suitable for easy upkeep. Other statements about policies have already been made. (It should be noticed that statements on policies are difficult to obtain as sometimes they are not stated or specified).

5.1. Time available.

The Community Worker employed by the Y.V.F. spends about a quarter of his time on this project. Normal amounts of time are spent by the City Officials from the Parks, Highways, and Planning Departments. They are, however, prepared to spend some extra time on evening meetings with the public. It is difficult to estimate the amount of time that has been given by people in a voluntary capacity but at least a dozen meetings have been held concerning this project.

5.2. Money.

About £90,000 is available to do the actual physical work in reclaiming the area. This scheme comes under the government reclamation scheme and so 75% of the cost is borne by the government. Small sums have been provided locally for the participation exercise and the administrative costs involved. The sums involved are about £25 which have come from local organisations.

5.3. Land.

63 Acres of land are available for this project.

5.4. Skills.

Since the project has been a genuine partnership between the City Council and local residents in the Bentilee Valley Projects Committee the skills

of the local authority have been available to the project. This includes planning and layout skills. Community work skills and contacts were provided by the Y.V.F. and since many people on the Committee had experience of Committee procedures there were skills in this direction. There was also a high degree of knowledge about the local political situation. It should be noted that when some minor conflict existed between the planning department and the local group the possibility was explored of obtaining skills from elsewhere. As it turned out this was not required but channels were being opened by the Community Workers to the University and elsewhere.

6. Organisations, Structures and Relationships.

1. Formal and informal workings - Bentilee Valley Projects Committee.

This Committee was formed to discuss and make recommendations concerning the Brook. It is representative committee consisting of representatives from all major organisations on the estate.

The chairman is the chairman of the local ward Labour Party, the secretary is the community worker employed by the Y.V.F. It meets about once a month and all major business is conducted at these meetings. Planners and representatives of the Parks department are invited to some of the meetings but they are not present as a matter of course. Local councillors are also invited but have not attended every meeting. Representatives do not seem to have been reporting back to their committees or organisations, and so the B.V.P.C. as established an identity of its own. The guts of the organisation is about three or four people who have fairly good informal links. These people are the Chairman, the Secretary and a man involved with Youth Activities who is on the fringe of the political structure. One important organisation that does affect what B.V.P.C. can do is the Labour Party. The group has some links with the Labour Party and therefore is careful about its relationship with the Council. There are good informal links between the Community Worker and the Planner in charge of the planning aspects of the project.

Planning of Strategy

Strategy is planned by informal groups on the estate being the ones already mentioned. Methods of achieving goals are generally ones of consensus and of producing legitimate arguments.

Action

This section is laid out in time sequence.

- August 1971 A Planning Department official takes a man from the Department of Environment around the brook area. They agree to classify it as derelict.
- 29.9.71 Ward Labour Party hears that brook is likely to be reclaimed and calls for public meeting. 80 people attend (which is unusually high for the estate) and participation is mentioned.
- 1.10.71 Worker from Y.V.F. discusses situation with Ward Labour Party.
- 12.10.71 Ward Labour Party meeting votes to make the project of consulting people independent of the Labour Party.
- 15.10.71 Planner meets Y.V.F. worker and expresses interest and willingness to give time to participation.

- Nov. 1971 75% Government grant confirmed.
- 23.11.71 Bentilee Valley Project Committee inaugurated. 23 people present being representatives of 15 local bodies and local councillors.
- 7.12.71 Second meeting of the B.V.P.C. - 27 people present. Two working parties are set up discussing sport and play, parks and landscaping. Outline for future action proposed.
- 3.1.72 First newsletter distributed to local residents explaining what is happening. This was an attempt to inform more people so they could have a view on the project.
- 4.1.72 Fourth meeting of the B.V.P.C. with the Planning Department represented. Planner indicates that no firm plans have been formalised by his Department but adds that this meeting closes consultation with B.V.P.C. Mild objections raised. Planner outlines Planning Department schedule. Working Parties report.
- 14.1.72 Letter to Planning Department stating that their schedule does not allow for full participation and proposing alternative time schedule.
- 21.1.72 Y.V.F. have meeting with an adviser on planning.
- 25.1.72 Letter to all Schools requesting help with exhibition on theme "Bentilee, Past Present and Future".
- 25.1.72 B.V.P.C. hold public meeting. 40 people present including some new faces. Thoughts of Working Parties expressed. Need for continued development and maintenance after the initial reclamation stressed.
- 30.1.72 Second newsletter goes out.
- 4.2.72 Y.V.F. representative meets with local schools to discuss proposed exhibition.
- 15.2.72 At B.V.P.C. meeting revised time schedule is accepted by Planning Department. Specific recommendations are made by the Working Parties.
- 29.2.72 Exhibition on the scheme is opened in the Y.V.F. shop. (this is a different exhibition to the one on Bentilee Past, Present and Future which will be prepared by the schools).
- 29.2.72 Group of local adults meet to discuss newsletter.
- Mid March 72 Third newsletter produced by local group with help of Y.V.F. worker. Covers issues not only referring to the brook but of general local interest.
- 28.3.72 B.V.P.C. meeting. Letter received from a group of residents in the south of the estate asking for information about proposals for their area. (This group felt that they were not being fully consulted). More discussion on follow-up of scheme including discussion of overall representative structures of the estate. Also discussion of

maintaining the brook area once the reclamation is completed. Plans agreed for Public Meetings to be held in Workington's Clubs and some pubs to inform people about the scheme. Master Plan prepared by Planners and Parks Department submitted to local residents. Being considered at the present time by B.V.P.C. but embodies the bulk of their recommendations.

While it is impossible to detail all things happened in this project there are probably three key moments in its development from the community work stand-point. These incidents were:-

1. The decision of the Ward Labour Party to make the project of consulting local people independent of the Labour Party. If the Labour Party had retained control of this project several results would have followed. It is quite likely that the public would not have heard nearly so much about the project. This follows from the fact that this would have been one item on the Labour Party agenda as well as the likelihood that the Ward Party would have wished to have the bulk of discussion within its own membership. Thus involvement of other organisations would have been lower and consultation of the general public less. Since there is some identification of the Ward Labour Party with the Council, and since some local people feel that the Council have not honoured all the promises on the brook, it is likely that people would be less willing to participate in a Labour Party exercise. There would also be problems for an organisation like Y.V.F. in taking part in a politically backed exercise.
2. The second key meeting took place at the B.V.P.C. meeting on the 4.1.72. At this meeting a senior planner informed the B.V.P.C. of the time schedule. The schedule did not allow the B.V.P.C. to prepare a reason case for the Planning Department. The timing of the schedule was dictated by procedural considerations in the Planning Department and the timing of Council committees and the meeting of the full Council. The question of time is of crucial importance in participation, because one legitimate worry is that discussion could take place for years and no decisions ever made. Thus a compromise is usually required. By challenging the time schedule of the Planning Department, and the Parks Department, accepting the revised proposal, this project became a true partnership between local residents and the Planners. If the revised schedule had not been accepted participation would have been virtually negligible. In a partnership of this type Planners need to be very sensitive to local peoples attitudes. In general in Stoke high status is placed on the words of educated professionals and on occasions, this needs to be challenged.
3. The third key incident occurred on the 23.3.72. A letter was written by a group of residents living in the south of the estate requesting information. The B.V.P.C. interpreted this letter as a challenge to their authority in speaking for the whole of the estate. They had become an established group and felt that this letter did not acknowledge their right to represent local peoples views on the brook. Part of the reason for this attitude was the knowledge that a person with extreme political views was connected with the letter.

RESULTS

Although the project is not yet complete it seems likely that the brook will be reclaimed in line with the wishes of the Bentilee Valley Project Committee. Thus objective (a) is likely to be achieved. In terms of the less concrete goals mentioned in objective (b) it is fair to say that

more people have a better knowledge of the workings of local government. Further than that it is difficult to evaluate it is difficult to say at this stage and a complete evaluation will have to wait the completion of the project. Nevertheless there is solid achievement in terms of the flow of information and growing potential for change. This is seen particularly in terms of interest in a Neighbourhood Council and in ensuring that the reclamation scheme is followed up. This may include the consideration of further amenities on the brook area, particularly those that can be constructed by local labour. Another result is that there is a greater communication between the Schools and Community groups on the estate. The growth of the newsletter into a full community newspaper is another solid achievement.

Wednesday, 22 November 1972

10.00 Took van to garage to have it fixed.

11.00 Set up equipment in lab and played back last night's tape,
making notes:

Pete H: Part of the trouble is that people don't know what's going on.

Arthur M: People will always find time if they're interested.

Dave J: If people make tapes about their own activities, who's going
to be interested in watching them?

Arthur M: Everyone must have the opportunity to make tapes. All the
tapes should be shown at the same time, then people coming to see their
own tapes would also see other people's tapes.

Dave J: Showings in pubs and clubs.

Arthur M: Tape about gardeners' club annual show.

Dave J (to us): What you're interested in is what can we achieve with
this equipment rather than just making pretty pictures.

Arthur M: Cricket knockout competition.

Mrs. Foskett had been talking to a local DHSS official about setting up
a 'Good Neighbourly' system, and she thought that video might be used
in connection with this in some way.

Pete H: If we went around making a tape about all the organisations,
people would at least be interested in coming to see themselves.

Dave J: It might be a good starting point, mightn't it?

Then we talked about costs involved, pointing out that there would be
no problem in making tapes if they could be reused, but we might run
into difficulties if groups wanted to keep tapes.

Wednesday, 22 November 1972 contd.

Arthur M: If anybody wanted to make a tape and keep it they'd have to pay for it. But 20 mins. on videotape would be "an asset to any faction".

Discussed practical aspects of showing tapes in pubs. Mrs. Foskett enquired about using Rediffusion cables for distribution. She also wanted to know if it would be possible to record off-air programmes for use at school.

Pete H (to us): How would you go about making a tape of all the groups on the estate?

Bob J: I don't think we could do it. We'd have to do it with a group like YVF or the Community Association who know what's going on on the estate. We'd let them do all the interviewing and operate the camera.

Dave J: Make tape about Grasshoppers to show to Youth and Education Departments ("education 'upstairs' and 'downstairs'") ...

John F: ... also to tell parents about what's happening. Suggested we should write to all the pubs in the area asking for permission to drop in at any time and show tapes.

Mrs. F asked for a demonstration of the equipment.

16.45 Phone call from Pete Hudson. He began by asking if we'd got any photographs which he could use in a report about last night's meeting to go in UBB (the community newspaper). He seemed keen to talk about the meeting. Seeing himself on TV seems to have made quite an impression on him, but he wondered whether the "value of this experience" was felt by some of the others last night. He suggested that this might be due to a "culture gap" and that, at least initially, groups might be more interested in making information tapes to show to others. He said that

Wednesday, 22 November 1972 contd.

he and Dave James were intending to carry out a survey on leisure activities, and it might be a good idea to do part of this visually using the VTR. Also, he wants to make a tape of a discussion between BVPC and the Community Association about setting up a Neighbourhood Council.

Thursday, 23 November 1972

15.00 Tutorial with Ronnie. We told him about the public meeting at Bentilee and explained our intention to contact particular groups individually. He told us about a series of programmes about communities which he's been asked to write for Harlech TV.

Friday, 24 November 1972

10.30 Went to YVF shop to discuss last Tuesday's public meeting, and what our next move should be. We felt that, for the first time, John Freeman and Pete Hudson put their cards on the table and we felt more able to speak freely. Our relationship with them seemed to enter a new phase of frankness, developing from an initial wariness on their part (our first two meetings with them), through a period of 'matey-ness' following the first meeting with the Community Association. John thought that some action would probably come out of Dave James' enthusiasm to experiment with video. We would probably hear more about this after tonight's Grasshoppers Committee meeting. John and Pete suggested various people we should contact. John thought it important that we should make a tape within the next couple of months to show to the Community Association Committee, as evidence of a follow-up to their effort in organising the public meeting. We should ask John Armstrong about teacher contacts. We repeated that we didn't want to be seen as

Friday, 24 November 1972 contd.

a camera crew but as helpers and observers. They said they didn't think that YVF should make the first tape but they repeated that they would be willing to store the equipment for us as long as we took responsibility for it. John gave us a key to the shop. We talked about the important decisions which we have made and which have been made for us and which have shaped our progress so far.

Pete: As part of our other sort of work role we're considering a way of linking up community work with adult education - community work with training - and (a) perceptual difference seems to exist there (between members of the community and professional community workers). For example, in Grasshoppers when we initially thought we'd start the training and have a non-directive group worker who is concerned with training ... he came up to a Grasshoppers meeting and he threw everything back on the group and, afterwards, the group said, "Well, he didn't have anything to teach us; he didn't have any answers" you know? They wanted answers and he didn't give any; he just sort of turned everything back on them. So I think its (a) perceptual thing. They think there is a body of knowledge that just needs to be tapped, whereas we think that that isn't what education and training is about ... So they want the end result and don't see that ... you get trained or educated or whatever through the process as much as through the impartation of facts.

.....

Pete: I've got a very relevant comment to ... make on the discussion we had a bit earlier about ... and this links up with a conversation we (Pete and John F.) had the other day about research, when John said that one interesting thing we have to look to are 'key decisions' made in community work. Now, a lot of 'key decisions' are made without thinking

Friday, 24 November 1972 contd.

about them ... I think it's interesting to discuss the whys and wherefores because I think it's very material to the kind of report you'll be writing on the ways in which video was introduced to Bentilee. To put it in black and white, you - a few months ago - were interested in video and community work, and doing a paper or something on the uses of it. Now, you found out that there happened to be some equipment at Keele and that - without you being able to take a 'key decision' as to where you went - it was available.... So that led you here. And then there were one or two more 'key decisions': you're on Bentilee rather than, perhaps (another estate); we have our own sort of limitations on the estate which means that we will say certain things to you, which means that it's finished up, so far, that a meeting's happened at Clowes with all the regularly involved people in Bentilee life being involved, and that's another 'key decision'. It's not a good or a bad one, it's just a fact, and I should think this would be very interesting for the report because it could have been - at any one stage - say, the stage when you knew that you were in Stoke and you knew that you wanted to come to Bentilee, you could have then said to us, "Thanks for the background, now we want to leave you out because it seems to us that you're concerned with just (deprived) people and we want to make the decision ..." another 'key decision' as it would have been, " ... to go to the man in the street or the Community Centre or the Tenants Association or anything." And I think that these are interesting reflections because they materially affect the outcome of the whole thing.

John: One of the key decisions that was made - Pete expressed this in a practical form - in a more theoretical form one could look at various levels of power in the community and various levels of involvement which

Friday, 24 November 1972 contd.

are sometimes concurrent. You've made a very definite decision in terms of your input - in terms of who's got what power. You haven't started off, for example, at the other end of the scale, with the Prime Minister or the Town Clerk or the business in the community. You've taken, for various ideological reasons I would suggest to you, decisions of wanting to get to the man in the street. But you've been blocked here on that. You've been told, "No, don't go to the man in the street ...," you've been told that from here, "... if you do that you're sunk". And that decision has been taken by you. It was a conscious decision here to push you in that direction.

Saturday, 25 November 1972

Played through self-viewing videotapes, made notes and transcribed audiotapes of sessions.

Letter from Gulbenkian Foundation rejecting our application for funds.

11.45 Phoned Pete Hudson to find out what happened at last Friday's Grasshoppers committee meeting. He mentioned that the organisation was having internal difficulties - there had been a row between the Chairman and one of the committee members about the running of one of the youth clubs under the Grasshoppers 'umbrella'. Towards the end of the meeting Dave James had brought up the subject of video and told them about the public meeting at the Community Hall. They had already decided to hold a series of special meetings to discuss their problems, and Dave suggested that they should videotape some of these for playback within the group (cf. 'sphere one' in the tape-and-slide show script). Pete was surprised at this, since his interpretation of Dave's comments at the public meeting (see note 22.11.72) was that Dave was more interested in what could be done with a tape after it had been made, and not so much in recording and immediate playback. The secretary of Grasshoppers will probably get in touch with us to arrange a meeting.

Later, we sent a letter to Pete in his capacity as secretary of BVPC, formally asking to be invited to their next meeting.

CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION, LISBON

United Kingdom & British Commonwealth Branch

DIRECTOR: PETER BRINSON

98 Portland Place, London WIN 4ET : 01-636 5313/7

Telegrams : *Gulfound London WI*

21st November 1972

Robert Jardine Esq.,
Department of Sociology
Keele University
Keele
Staffordshire ST5 5BG

Dear Mr. Jardine,

There has now been an opportunity to consult the Trustees about your application for a grant to undertake a study in the relationship between the use of community television in the education for community development, but I am afraid I have to inform you that after careful consideration they decided they were unable to allocate funds for this purpose.

I feel sure you will appreciate that with the funds at their disposal they are able to help only a very few of the many worthwhile projects they are privileged to consider.

I hope very much you will be successful in attracting the necessary support from other sources.

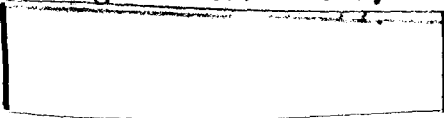
Yours sincerely,



Richard Mills
Deputy Director

27th November, 1972

Mr. Peter Hudson,
Young Volunteer Force,



Dear Peter,

Following the meeting held at the "Harold Clowes" Community Hall on 21st November, at which we discussed the possibility of setting up a community video project on Bentilee, it was suggested that we should begin to make personal contact with the various groups and organisations on the estate who might be interested in making video-tapes about issues which concern them.

We should be glad of an opportunity to present some of the ideas which emerged and demonstrate the equipment at a meeting of the Bentilee Valley Project Committee, if this can be arranged.

We should be grateful, therefore, if you would raise the topic at the next meeting of the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RJD'.

BOB JARDINE
RAY DUNNING

Tuesday, 28 November 1972

Self-viewing sessions.

Wednesday, 29 November 1972

11.00 Service engineer arrived to investigate a fault which had developed in our Sony camera. He had to take it back to the workshop in Derby.

11.30 Phoned YVF and spoke to Pete Hudson. He had read out our letter at last night's BVPC meeting, at which Dave James was acting chairman. They would like to have a demonstration of the equipment and to be able to use it in connection with the Brook reclamation scheme. Meeting arranged provisionally for next Tuesday, venue to be decided. Pete will let us know. Also spoke to John Armstrong about working in schools. Last Friday John Freeman had suggested that we delay writing to the head teachers until we've had a chance to talk things over with some of John Armstrong's teacher contacts. John Armstrong is having a meeting with them at the shop tomorrow lunchtime and will bring up the subject of video.

Thursday, 30 November 1972

Self-viewing sessions.

Friday, 1 December 1972

Revised SSRC application.

Monday, 4 December 1972

Self-viewing sessions.

Tuesday, 5 December 1972

12.00 Our van still in garage, so phoned John Freeman to ask for a lift to the BVPC meeting tonight.

19.00 John Freeman picked us up at Keele and drove us and the equipment to the Harold Clowes Hall. Pete Hudson, Dave James (and daughter), Tom Tuhey (ward Labour councillor), Arthur Ball, Gerry Sandford and two others attended the meeting. Some time was spent discussing the minutes of the last meeting, then they asked to see the tape-and-slide show. Ray explained that it contained ideas based on previous experience - not necessarily ideas that we wanted to try out in Bentilee. After the tape-and-slide show we demonstrated the equipment and the committee discussed ways of using it, while we videotaped them. They were concerned that, although they have been instrumental in getting something done about the Brook, things aren't seen to be happening yet by local residents. They felt this was bad for their credibility on the estate. One suggestion was that they should make a tape about the Brook scheme, including details of the proposed changes and interviews with BVPC members, the contractor, councillors and local people. They seemed eager to make an early start. It was decided to hold a practice taping session on Sunday morning. Pete Hudson and Dave James will work out a sequence for the tape. Coffee afterwards at Pete's house, before he drove us back to Keele. Left the equipment with him.

Sunday, 10 December 1972

10.30 Arrived at YVF shop (after a journey involving two buses and a taxi). Dave James arrived 20 mins. later while we were getting the equipment ready. John Armstrong and Dave Waters, editor of UBB, turned up soon after 11.00. We sat around drinking coffee and talking until

Sunday, 10 December 1972 contd.

11.50 when we decided not to wait any longer for the other committee members who had said they would come. Just before we set off for the Brook, Gerry Sandford joined us. When we got there, Dave James produced an outline shooting schedule which he'd worked out with Pete Hudson, and which he wanted to follow. He began by taping a panoramic view of the Valley, while John Armstrong improvised a commentary on its history and the problems it presents to local people.* Ray stood by to help with the equipment and Bob took photographs. Next, Gerry took a turn with the camera while John Armstrong 'interviewed' Dave James in his capacity as 'a local resident and member of BVPC'. Dave found it difficult to organise his thoughts in front of the camera, calling "Stop" to Gerry when he ran out of things to say.** Then he'd think of something else and they'd shoot some more tape. Dave thought that it was essential to have a carefully worked out script for the final tape. We drove to the other side of the Valley, where Dave James interviewed Jim Dixey outside his shop. Dave Waters operated the camera. Jim Dixey said he'd like to use the equipment on 13 January at the Grasshoppers judo club which he runs. Then we went into the Beverley pub where Dave James interviewed some men playing cards while Gerry took another turn with the camera. Later, Gerry did some interviewing with Dave Waters as cameraman. While this was going on, Ray talked to John Armstrong about his meeting with the teachers. When the portapak batteries ran out we all sat round a table, drinking and talking. Dave James said they'd have to give some thought in future to the questions they asked, to encourage interviewees to say more than just "yes" or "no". Gerry said they'd have to be careful not to put words into the mouths of the people whom they interviewed. He felt that professional TV interviewers tended to do this. Dave James

* see Appendix II

Sunday, 10 December 1972 contd.

was worried because he felt he'd talked too much about his own views while he was questioning people. Bob thought that was all right because, whereas a "BBC reporter" approaches an interview as a (supposedly) disinterested outsider, he (ie Dave) was asking people about issues which directly affected him, too, and therefore his views were equally important. Ray suggested that the equipment had given them an excuse to talk to people in the pub and Gerry agreed. Then we went back to the shop to play back the tape. The quality of the tape itself wasn't too good - it had been used several times before. Bob said we'd use a brand new one for the finished 'programme'. Ray pointed out some 'faults' in technique - Dave James had overexposed the first couple of sequences and people had been taped in silhouette against the window in the pub. Dave James felt that these things weren't as important as what was being said. Bob thought that even recorded camera directions (** see above) weren't out of place. After the viewing, Dave James invited John Armstrong and ourselves back to his home for Sunday dinner. John drove us back to Keele around 17.00. On the way we talked about his work with local teachers. He hadn't brought up the subject of video at the last meeting with them, but would discuss it with some of them early in the New Year once a project of his own is under way. When we got back to Keele we asked John to check some letters we'd drafted to the Town Clerk, secretaries of Working Men's Clubs, Senior Citizens' Associations, etc. He advised us to delete a reference to 'community development' from the letter to the Town Clerk because the council has recently appointed a community development officer (Jane Skinner) and he thought they might interpret our letter as an offer to put our equipment completely at her disposal.

11th December, 1972

Town Clerk,
Town Hall,
Stoke-on-Trent.

Dear Sir,

We are setting up a research project, based in Bentilee, to investigate ways in which groups and organisations may be able to use portable videotape equipment to help them communicate with each other.

We wonder whether it would be possible for us to come and see you to discuss our plans. One idea is that this new medium might be used by the Local Authority in its public relations and information work. As you may know, a project of this nature is already under way in Stockport. Also, we would like to talk about the possibility of arranging for videotapes made by local groups about issues which concern them to be played to representatives of the various Local Authority departments, to provide a basis for an exchange of views and information.

Perhaps you could write to us, suggesting a convenient time for a meeting, or phone the University, extension 297.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

R.V.D.

RDJ

RAY DUNNING
BOB JARDINE

11th December, 1972

Mrs. Pat Faulkner,

Dear Mrs. Faulkner,

We are writing to you at the suggestion of John Freeman of YVFF in the hope that you might be interested in a project which we are setting up in Bentilee. We shall be working with different groups and organisations on the estate, showing them how to use portable video (television) equipment and helping them to make "programmes" about their activities. John thought you might like to become involved through your connection with the pre-school playgroups.

If you'd like to know more about what we're trying to do, we could come and see you if you let us know when it will be convenient. We can be reached at the above address, or by phone - extension 297.

We look forward very much to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

R.V.D.
Ray

RAY DUNNING
BOB JARDINE

11th December, 1972

Mr. Frank Dicken,
Secretary,
Berryhill Working Mens' Club,
Calvary Cres.,
BENTILEE,
Stoke-on-Trent.

Dear Mr. Dicken,

We are setting up a project in Bentilee which will involve local groups and organisations in making 'TV programmes' about their activities, using portable videotape equipment. Following a recent meeting at the "Harold Clowes" Community Hall, to discuss the idea, it was suggested that we should write to you, asking whether it might be possible to arrange for some of these 'programmes' to be shown at your club in the evenings. (We would provide all the necessary equipment).

We should be glad to come and discuss these ideas with you if you can spare the time. We can be contacted at the above address, or by ringing the University, extension 297.

We look forward very much to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

R.V.D.
Ray

RAY DUNNING
BOB JARDINE

11th December, 1972

Mr. Davies,



Dear Mr. Davies,

We are writing to you at the suggestion of John Freeman of YVFF in the hope that you might be interested in a project which we are setting up in Bentilee. We shall be working with different groups and organisations on the estate, showing them how to use portable video (television) equipment and helping them to make "programmes" about their activities. John thought you might like to become involved through your connection with the Senior Citizens' Association.

If you'd like to know more about what we're trying to do, we could come and see you if you let us know when it will be convenient. We can be reached at the above address, or by phone - extension 297.

We look forward very much to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

R.V.D.


RAY DUNNING
BOB JARDINE

Tuesday, 12 December 1972

19.45 Set up playback equipment at YVF shop for special meeting of BVPC which had been called to view and discuss Sunday's tape. John Armstrong, Pete Hudson, Dave James and Arthur Ball were present, together with two other men whose names we didn't get, and a training officer from YVF Head Office who was visiting Bentilee. While we were cleaning the VTR Dave Waters turned up with a bloke called Russ who helps with the distribution of UBB. John Freeman arrived shortly afterwards and sat quietly next to Bob at the back of the room. Pete Hudson talked about the shooting schedule he's worked out with Dave James. Before the playback Dave James explained to those who weren't there on Sunday that this was just a practice and that the final tape might be completely different. In particular, he mentioned that the only reason he featured so much in the practice tape was because so few people had turned up for the session. He didn't want to be as prominent in the final tape. Then we ran the tape through without stopping and they talked and joked about it among themselves. Afterwards they discussed various sequences while Pete again outlined the shooting schedule and made some revisions to it in the light of what was said. They all felt that the picture quality and the camera work were OK but that the introduction to the final tape and the questions put to people who were interviewed would have to be worked out more carefully. Arthur Ball felt that Dave James had been putting words into people's mouths. It was decided to begin working on the final tape as soon as possible. We arranged to come back tomorrow evening to shoot the title and record an introduction by Reg Walker, the Chairman of BVPC.

Next Tuesday morning has been set aside for recording scenes around the Brook and we shall tape interviews in one of the Working Men's Clubs one

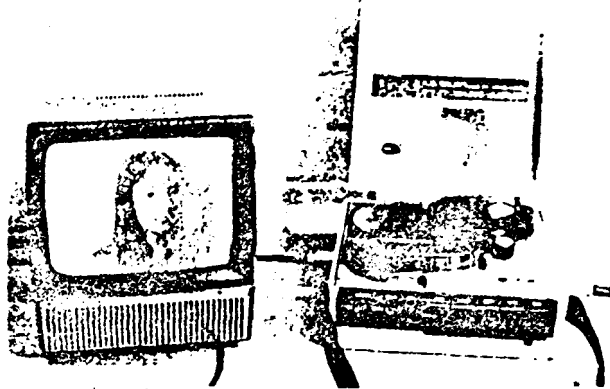
Tuesday, 12 December 1972 contd.

evening next week. Arthur Ball will arrange this. Afterwards we all went to the pub. Pete suggested that a tape might be made of people's reactions to viewing the committee's tape.

The new UBB was published today, containing an article about the public meeting at the Harold Clowes Hall on 21 November.

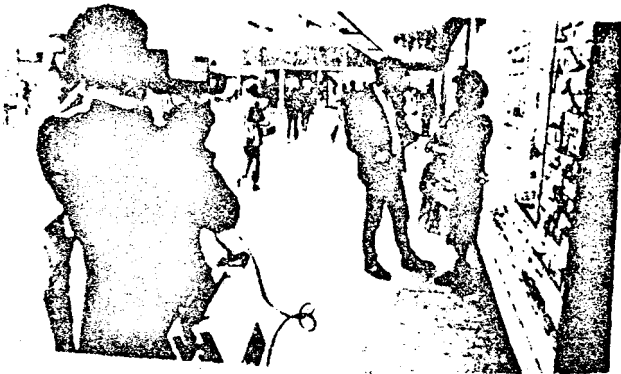
Bentilee's very own TV

If anyone told you that Bentilee was to have its own T.V. company you would be very suspicious indeed. An actual T.V. company just for Bentilee is perhaps stretching things but we are to have our own T.V. - That's fact.



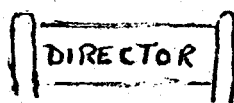
At the Harold Clowes Community Hall on Tuesday 21st of November several Bentilee folk heard how two research students from Keele were prepared to put £1200 pounds worth of video T.V. equipment at the disposal of the community. Bob Jardine and Ray Dunning working under Professor R. Frankenburg of the Sociology Department of Keele University, are studying the use of video T.V. in a community setting. Consequently the equipment - two T.V. cameras, a play back unit and a monitor T.V. set - plus the time and advice of Bob and Ray - are available free of charge to any groups who wish to make use of it.

In a slide show with a commentary residents were told of three possible uses of video. These are broadly:- inter personal, inter group, community wide. Examples would be:- People seeing themselves on T.V. and seeing themselves as others normally see them. A group such as a youth club making a film of their activities and showing it to another group such as the Council or businessmen in order to publicise their club to get more funds. All sorts of individuals and groups within a community making programmes under the auspices of a Community T.V. Association to be put out on the cable T.V. network in Bentilee. But the research students pointed out that there may be other ways of using video T.V. which local people might suggest.



The actual equipment is fairly easy to use so that anybody can make their own programmes without undergoing a T.V. technicians course. Bob and Ray will teach people what little does need to be learned. This means that YOU can make programmes about whatever you want. The next step is that any person or group who is interested should contact Bob and Ray at Keele Park 371 and ask for the Sociology Department. Information can also be obtained from the Chairman of the Community Hall Committee - Mr Arthur Mellor and at the YVF shop in Devenshire Square.

This is a tremendous offer: it is up to Bentilee to make the most of it.



Wednesday, 13 December 1972

14.00 Following a phone message from Alan Tellwright, we contacted him and arranged to take the equipment to his school at Milton next Monday afternoon to record their Christmas play.

17.15 Went to YVF shop to begin the final version of the BVPC tape (which they had decided to call Promises, Promises).* Pete Hudson seemed harassed and worried because he felt that they hadn't made full use of last night's playback. He thought they should have gone through it sequence by sequence, analysing it in greater detail. He felt he had let himself be carried along by the eagerness of the others to get on with the finished tape. Apparently, John Armstrong had criticised him afterwards for playing too great a part in organising things. In John's opinion, the other members had shown themselves quite capable of working things out for themselves at the practice session on Sunday. Pete read out the notes for a script which he'd prepared, including some introductory comments to be spoken by Reg Walker. He said he didn't want to do any of the interviewing because he saw his role as similar to ours (ie as a helper). Then we shot the title sequence (Letraset on card) and Pete phoned Reg to check that it would be all right for us to record his piece this evening. We were warmly welcomed at Reg Walker's house and given coffee and biscuits. Pete went over the script with Reg while we set up the equipment, including two photofloods, in the living room. We did two dummy runs before shooting the sequence. Pete operated the camera. Then we played back the tape to make sure that it was all right and for the benefit of Reg Walker and his family. Reg didn't seem too satisfied but his wife reassured him. He felt he would have done better if he'd had more time to study the script. Then we packed up and left. In the van, Ray said he thought we'd "done a
* see Appendix II.

Wednesday, 13 December 1972 contd.

BBC" on Reg by "setting him up and putting words into his mouth". Bob pointed out that Reg is, after all, chairman of the committee which is making the tape, so that really it was a case of BVPC "doing a BBC" on themselves. Ray said that if he had been 'directing', he would have "sat two BVPC members down in front of the camera, with a list of topics they wanted to discuss, and then just let them talk about it."

Thursday, 14 December 1972

15.00 Tutorial with Ronnie. Showed him the BVPC practice tape and gave him a copy of UBB.

A few comments about the video T.V. exercise which is beginning to take place on Bentilee at the moment.

Some time ago now Bob Jardine and Ray Dunning approached John Freeman with a view to discussing the use of video T.V. in community work. I believe the contact came by Cwmbran but I am not sure. I also believe they wrote to Y.V.F. Stoke because they felt that we might be interested and probably more significantly, they had heard that Professor Frankenburg of the University at Keele had some idle video equipment - and was interested in the concept of 'visual sociology' - whatever that may mean.

The initial discussion between Y.V.F. Stoke and Bob and Ray took place in the middle of August when the Y.V.F. reaction was one of which resulted in us making interested noises but giving no commitment. At this time Bob and Ray had got permission so it seemed from Professor Frankenburg for the use of the equipment to do their experiment but financial arrangements were still being sorted out.

Bob and Ray as well as just being interested in possible uses of a video in community work have had some experience of it already in North Kensington and are also concerned to write a thesis on the subject as the result of the project.

The second meeting in September where all Y.V.F. staff members were present took the subject a little further and although one or two reservations were made on Y.V.F. stakes part it was agreed that we should go ahead with some sort of project.

From the Keele side about £1,200 pounds worth of video equipment had been put at the disposal of the Bentilee community via Bob and Ray completely free of charge and with the time and expertise of Bob and Ray on hand too. Bob and Ray said that their role must never exceed that of technical advisers which implied that they did not wish and an no account would be involved in policy decisions on the making of tapes or in the actual making of tapes. This was largely due to the feeling that they wanted to observe just how a community would use this new resource and not how they would get a community to use this resource. Y.V.F. largely agreed with this thinking and to a certain extent included themselves in the same decision. That is to say that we too felt that as far as possible it was up to us, not to control video use ourselves but to make it possible for a very wide range of Bentilee people to have access to the tapes and if possible to see that video did not become identified with Y.V.F.

This led to the decision, then, that we would urge the community association to call the inaugural meeting at which Bob and Ray would explain the use of video and make the offer to the community, rather than Y.V.F. calling it. John Freeman approached to Chairman who was in full agreement and a meeting was called. There is some lack of clarity as to how efficient we were in sending out invitations because although most significant people in the community heard about the meeting by word of mouth, some took some small offence at not being invited by letter when they knew that others had been. Because of this and because of the slowness of Bentilee to react to any new things attendance at the initial meeting was not all that it might have been. Anyway representatives from Y.V.F., Bentilee Valley Project Committee, Grasshoppers, a school, Harold Clowes and I believe one other attended. X

At the meeting Bob and Ray showed a tape and slide show of how video could be used in the community but stressing all the time that in no way they wanted to limit the use of video to their suggestions in Bentilee. The tape and slide show outlined four possible uses of video which were as follows:-

1. Interpersonal - that is video being able to show to increase and improve communications between persons so that they learn how to react in situations and can perhaps develop as persons from this.
2. Intergroup - that is one group may make a film of its activities and show it to a wider audience to publicise it and to increase membership for example and also of course the learning process whilst making the tape could better clarify their own aims.
3. Communitywide - and this leads to the possibility of setting up a community television network going through piped T.V. networks.

There followed quite a lively discussion on the possibilities of video in Bentilee and also a demonstration on the use of the equipment and during the meeting an actual tape was made by members of the meeting of the youth club next door and also of the discussion which we ourselves had. The expected result of fascination with the equipment arose enough to enthuse people about it.

It was suggested and agreed at that meeting that the next step would be further publicity and that Mellor - the Chairman of the Community Association would provide Bob and Ray with names and addresses to whom they could write to try and interest them in their wares. Also UBB would carry a feature article on video and also word of mouth would groups making approaches to Bob and Ray.

The first approach that was made to my knowledge was by the Bentilee Valley Project Committee and a discussion followed with the resulting decision to make a tape as quickly as possible about the history of the Brook and the reclamation of it from the B.V.P.C. point of view for showing in pubs and clubs to publicise the work of the B.V.P.C. a little more and to show the residents that contrary to popular opinion based on a series of broken promises over 18 years something was indeed happening. Bob and Ray's decision to not to get involved with policy decisions or with actual tape making led to a committee decision that before a tape was made a practise in the use of the equipment had to be gained and so a further meeting for the following Sunday was arranged at which Bob and Ray could instruct committee members in the use of it. Also at that meeting it was decided that some sort of programme schedule had to be worked out for the tape if it was to be made quickly as the committee wanted. Two members of the committee therefore were delegated after discussion as to the kinds of things which should be included in the tape to work out a tape schedule.

The Sunday session went reasonably well although numbers were not large and they made a tape on the Brook themselves. It included talking amongst themselves about the Brook and also interviewing residents in a pub.

The following Tuesday a meeting was called again to see the tape which had been made so that it could be criticised and lessons learned from it which could be put into effect in the making of the finished article. This meeting proved very productive indeed and the following conclusions were made:-

1. The camerawork although done by entire amateurs was really quite good and certainly adequate for our needs.
2. Interviewing techniques had to be thought out a little more carefully so that questions would be asked which elicited full responses rather than just 'yes' 'no' replies; questions which did not put answers into

into the mouths of the interviewees.

3. The fact that we have ordinary folk not able to express ourselves in quite the same way as the BBC newscasters was felt to be of total irrelevance. In fact it was felt to be more than ~~a~~ irrelevant that is of positive value.

It was decided that more haste should be made in making the finished 'programme' and the draft programme schedule was proposed and a title for the tape was suggested as 'Promises promises'. It was agreed that on the following night the title and the introduction would be made and followed on the following Tuesday with a walk up the Brook. So far the title and introduction have been made and the following Tuesday hasn't yet arrived.

Other approaches made to Bob and Ray on the use of video have been by the Grasshopper Clubs and the Playscheme Association and also by a Headmaster of a School on the estate; but the Headmaster is the secretary of the Community Association on the estate. The only other approaches that have been made I am not sure. Following the initial steps in this project Bob and Ray have been more than pleased with the response, and in fact surprised that it has been so much and of such a quality. That is to say of a higher quality of intention than that which they found in North Kensington. That seems a little confused. What is meant is that for example the B.V.P.C. group after their first trial tape on the Sunday were very self critical and felt that they could do a lot better and this was very encouraging for Bob and Ray.

Some general considerations; first despite the decision of Y.V.P. to try to stay in the background, which was very significant in community work terms in so far as it was felt to be possible and right for the community work agency to help bring in new resources to the area without wishing to control them, have obviously not being as pure and successful as might have been. It is a Y.V.P. worker who is the secretary of the B.V.P.C. Secondly the enthusiasm which already surrounds video on Bentilee is encouraging but one bears in mind all the time that video is a very special 'new toy' and it remains to be seen whether just as kids tire of expensive new Christmas presents, Bentilee eventually tires of video. This points to the third conclusion which is that it is possibly up to the community workers involved to ensure that video is not treated just as a new toy but is used as an aid to existing goals and never replaces them. Fourthly reaction towards the fact that all this equipment is entirely free has been slightly amusing. Even the tapes are free and yet members of the various groups who have so far come in contact with video from the outset spoke of purchasing tapes for themselves. Just how significant this is I am not all that sure. Fifthly the possibilities of video seem to be immense to quite a few people who have already come into contact with it and already talk of trying to establish a community T.V. network through pip television has started with some feeling. Sixthly in connection with the B.V.P.C. tape the desire to make an initial tape 'programme' as quickly as possible as possible led to the missing of a golden training opportunity in that it has inevitably meant the community worker has taken a larger role than would have been necessary if a little more time had been allowed.

In conclusion it is true to say that this new venture for Bentilee is potentially one of the most significant for many months if not years and this potential for development must not be lost.

CITY OF STOKE-ON-TRENT

L. KEITH ROBINSON, LL.B.
TOWN CLERK



TOWN HALL
STOKE-ON-TRENT
ST4 1HH

Telephone: 0782 - 48241

Your Ref.

My Ref. LKR/MW/715

14th December, 1972.

Dear Mr. Jardine,

With reference to your letter of the 14th December, I confirm that I shall be available to see you and Mr. Dunning at my office on Wednesday, 3rd January, 1973, at 10.30 a.m., when we can discuss your plans regarding the use of portable videotape equipment by this Authority.

No doubt you will inform Mr. Dunning of this arrangement.

Yours sincerely,

Town Clerk.

Mr. Bob Jardine,
Department of Sociology,
University of Keele,
Keele,
Staffs. ST5 5BG

Monday, 18 December 1972

13.30 Arrived at Milton Junior High School to make a tape of the Christmas plays. The recording and playback went without a hitch. The first play had been written and produced by the kids themselves. The second was an adaptation of A Christmas Carol, produced by the headmaster, Mr. Tellwright. He plans to talk about the playback with the cast tomorrow. We said we'd like to know what happened. He said he would make notes for us. He'd like to use the equipment on a field trip on January 31st.

18.00 Cleaned and prepared portapak for shooting the next sequences of the BVPC tape, Promises, Promises, tomorrow.

Tuesday, 19 December 1972

10.00 We had arranged to meet some of the members of BVPC at the YVF shop, before going out to shoot some more of the Promises, Promises tape. It was a bitterly cold, foggy morning. Arthur Ball arrived. Pete Hudson had left a note at the shop to say he couldn't make it as he had to go on a course. We weren't really expecting anyone else, but we hung around for a while, talking to Arthur and drinking coffee, hoping that the fog would clear. It didn't, and so we left the shop around 11.00 and drove to the lower end of the Brook, near Arthur's house. Arthur didn't seem to know exactly what we were supposed to be doing as Pete had not discussed the shooting schedule with him. Obviously one of us would have to operate the camera. We suggested that we should tape Arthur while he talked about what it was like to live next to the Brook. He didn't want to do this and said he would prefer it if one of us interviewed him. We said we didn't want to play such an 'involved' role in making BVPC's tape. So we decided to get the views of other

Tuesday, 19 December 1972 contd.

local residents, but insisted that Arthur should do the interviewing. It was freezing and there weren't many people around. We felt a bit fed up because things were so disorganised. Eventually, Arthur stopped a man who was passing by and asked him some questions. We taped the conversation.* The next person Arthur interviewed was his wife, then two women neighbours. Then we drove around to the other side of the Brook to Jim Dixey's shop, as Arthur thought he would be a good person to interview. Jim was out, so we went into the Beverley and had a drink while we waited for him to return. There was a small group of men sitting in the pub. When Arthur approached them they said they'd prefer not to be taped giving their views. Jim Dixey still hadn't returned by the time we'd finished our drinks, so we drove back to the YVF shop to check the tape. It was OK, but views of the Brook were obscured by the fog.

Wednesday, 20 December 1972

11.00 Worked on abstract of SSRC application and handed it in to be typed.

20.00 Videotape session with BVPC at the Ubbertley and Bentilee Working Men's Club. We arrived about 15 mins. early. No-one else was there, but Arthur Ball and his wife turned up a few minutes afterwards and he signed us in. We left the equipment in the van for the time being, bought Arthur and his wife a drink, and sat and chatted to them. We asked Arthur about how the club came to be formed, and he gave the impression that he was quite involved in club affairs. He exchanged a few words with an elderly gentleman at the next table (Sam Carter,

* see Appendix II.

Wednesday, 20 December 1972 contd.

secretary of the Senior Citizens' Association), and asked if he'd like to be interviewed later about the Brook. Apparently, the man said no. Arthur told us that he had hurt Mr. Carter's feelings some time ago, over a club matter. (Mr. Carter never replied to our letter of 11.12.72 and we wondered whether our being associated with Arthur could have had something to do with it.) Arthur's wife canvassed a few other people in the room while Arthur went to ask the club steward where we could set up the equipment. He came back and said we could use the TV lounge. By now, Pete Hudson had arrived. He too had a word with Sam, but got the same reply. Gerry turned up a few minutes later. He said he'd been in two minds about whether he should come. He hadn't seen the replay of the practice tape and thought that his camera work was probably not very good. We told him the results were all right. Pete said that Mr. Davies, secretary of the Senior Citizens' Association at the Auto Club, has asked if we would tape their Christmas party on 9 January. Then we unloaded the equipment, set it up in the TV lounge, and played through the Promises, Promises tape as far as it went (about 8 mins.). There followed a short delay while we had to tape and play back a visiting girls' choir singing a carol, by which time the room was full of people who had been told what was happening by Arthur and his wife and had come along to watch. Dave James had arrived by now, and as Gerry and Arthur seemed reluctant to take the lead, he was obliged to do so (though he said afterwards that he didn't really want to do it all himself). Pete had already left, saying that he had to get back to his wife who had just come out of hospital. We recorded some tape with the camera plugged into the mains VTR and with the monitor switched on. We had to use a movie light to get an adequate picture. Dave began by interviewing several people, then, when it became

Wednesday, 20 December 1972 contd.

clear that they weren't too sure what 'reclamation' and 'participation' meant, he asked us to stop recording for a couple of minutes while he explained to them. (There were about 30 people in the room, watching and listening.) Then he carried on talking to them in small groups, drawing out their questions and ideas, while we recorded again. Ray operated the camera for the first set of interviews, Gerry the second. Arthur stayed in the background. Bob held the movie light. Everyone seemed to have forgotten about the shooting schedule, with the result that we ran out of tape in the middle of an interview. We rewound the tape and played it back straight away. Nearly all the people were interested enough to stay and watch, but particularly those who had been interviewed. Picture and sound quality were quite OK. Gerry's camera work was very good and he seemed pleased about it. Dave said to us that they (ie BVPC) weren't aiming at technical perfection, but he felt that they should have worked out what they were going to say in more detail. The tape hadn't turned out quite as they'd intended, but nevertheless he had learned a few things about people's attitudes to participation and their views about the Brook. While we packed up the equipment, he was busy talking to some of the people in the room, explaining more about the scheme. We were not sure how useful the tape would be as a 'product' for showing around in the weeks to come. Dave felt that there was little point in showing it in its present form at the Town Hall, because the authority would just say: "But the work's going to begin in January - what are you moaning about?" However, he suggested that it might be a good idea to keep the tape in case of further delays in the work. Dave then had to leave, but he invited us to his house for supper, later. First we loaded the van, then had another drink with Arthur and his wife. Arthur didn't seem too pleased

Wednesday, 20 December 1972 contd.

with the way things had gone. He thought Dave was trying to "run before he could walk" and had asked questions which went beyond the idea of participation over the Brook and hinted at the formation of a Neighbourhood Council, something which Dave is very keen on. Arthur said he was thinking of breaking off his association with BVPC when the reclamation work has been completed. He doesn't want anything to do with the proposed Neighbourhood Council because this will involve "clashing with the Council". Afterwards, at Dave's house, over supper, we talked about the Neighbourhood Council. Apparently the local Labour Party has rejected the proposal. Dave also said he wasn't convinced that BVPC had really participated in the Brook scheme; he thought that their demands had been acceptable to the Planning Department only because they had asked for more or less what the Planning Department had intended to provide anyway. He went on to tell us that he had fallen out with YVF a little while ago. He had consulted the local authority's community development officer about a survey of leisure needs which he wanted to carry out on the estate, and had been annoyed when YVF said that he should have asked them first.

Thursday, 21 December 1972

14.30 Phone call from Pete Hudson. He was keen to talk about what happened last night. He told us that relations between Sam Carter and YVF weren't too good, at least as far as Sam was concerned. Since we were seen by him in the company of both Arthur and Pete, he probably won't want anything to do with us. Pete also said he thought that Arthur's interviewing on the tape we recorded on Tuesday morning was very good, and that unlike Dave James, he didn't tend to put words into people's mouths. We mentioned Arthur's reluctance to do anything on

Thursday, 21 December 1972 contd.

Tuesday without Pete, and he said that maybe it was a good thing in the long run that he hadn't been there, with the result that Arthur had had to get involved.

In the evening we drove to Wales, where we spent Christmas. Our grant application to the Social Science Research Council was sent off while we were away.



in confidence

please type throughout

1 applicant Prof/Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ initials R.J. surname Frankenberg

2 department Sociology

3 institution University of Keele

4a official address Keele, Staffs. ST5 5BG

4b official telephone
number (give STD code
from London)

5 position held Professor of Sociology and Head of Department.

6 type of application project or programme new revised supplementary
(tick appropriate boxes)

7 brief title of research (up to 12 words)

Exploratory study of media applications and perspectives in an urban area.

8 abstract of research (up to 150 words)

The proposed research will investigate aspects of communication in an urban area. These aspects will include the decentralised and partially decentralised uses of media, such as local radio, community newspapers, films, and informal verbal and visual communications (e.g. graffiti). The research will also include a study of the applications of portable videotape equipment as a communication tool in community development. A comparison of verbal - visual media perspectives will be made in order to reveal shared concepts such as the notion of 'community'.

This research is intended as a contribution to the department's general interest in 'visual sociology' which includes both the development and use of visual techniques in sociological research, and the interpretation of visual phenomena in sociological terms.

9 total grant required (£) 8,350

10 proposed starting date May 1st, 1973

11 proposed duration Two years

12 staff
 (specify title or level
 of each appointment; also names if known)

- a research workers
 Raymond Dunning
 Robert Jardine

average salary £	super-annuation (eg FSSU) £	Graduated Pension & National Insurance £	duration of appointment	total for period £
1500	150	100	2 yrs.	3500
1500	150	100	2 yrs.	3500

research workers	total £ 7000
------------------	--------------

- b other staff
 None

other staff	total £
-------------	---------

- c Senior Visiting Fellows
 (name and present position)
 None

salary or expenses and fares

Senior Visiting Fellows	total £
-------------------------	---------

- d staff associated with the project
 (but for whom no claim is made)

13 travel and subsistence costs
 (these should be explained in the account
 of the proposed investigation)

- inside UK
 outside UK

travel	sub-sistence	total
2 years @ £350 p.a.	-	£700

travel and subsistence	total £700
------------------------	------------

14 equipment and materials
 (specify and say whether recurrent or non-recurrent: imported equipment should be quoted net of import duties)

Videotape recorder, monitor etc., supplied by department (£4000) -
 Tapes, films etc., supplied by department (£350) -
 Tapes, films 250

equipment etc	all recurrent	£ 250
	all non-recurrent	£ -
	total	£ 250

15 other costs (specify)

Secretarial assistance - 6 months 400

other costs	total	£
-------------	-------	---

16 financial summary of grant required

research workers (12a) 7000
 other staff (12b)
 Senior Visiting Fellows (12c)
 travel and subsistence (13) 700
 equipment etc (14) 250
 other costs (15) 400

total £ 8350

17 estimated incidence of total expenditure in each calendar year (Jan-Dec)

19/73 2776
 19/74 3764
 19/75 1810
 19/.....
 19/.....
 19/.....

total £8350

18 What direct or indirect financial support will be provided by the applicant's own institution?

value £ 5950

description

Equipment as above - £4350
 Telephone - £100 per year - £200
 Administrative costs per staff member per year @ £350 - £1400

19 Is this research currently being supported by any other outside body or is this application being submitted elsewhere? No

If so, give details. Decisions about applications to other bodies (including those made after the award of an SSRC grant) should be reported to the SSRC as soon as available.

"A Study of Media Applications and Perspectives in an Urban Area."

In the proposed study we recognize two areas of chief concern:

1. the communication needs of individuals, groups and organisations within the study area, vis-a-vis the media;
2. the relation between these individuals, groups and organisations and the researchers.

Previous media research concentrates largely on the social and cultural effects of centralised (i.e. one-to-many) systems of mass-communication and there is a steadily growing body of literature on the subject. At the opposite end of the spectrum, although we find a trend in practice towards a more decentralised (i.e. one-to-one, many-to-many) use of some media, this progress is not matched by sociological research. Examples of this trend are to be seen in the proliferation of community newspapers and experiments involving the use of film and portable videotape equipment in a community context. Certain kinds of media, such as local radio, local newspapers and cable television (both ETV and the new local stations) stand between the two poles, allowing some degree of community access and participation while their organisational structures, objectives and criteria appear closely allied to those of the mass-media.

It is intended to set up a project based in the Department of Sociology at Keele University to study media applications and perspectives in relation to community life on a large council estate in Stoke-on-Trent. By 'applications' and 'perspectives' is meant the ways the various media are used and the ways in which those using the media 'use' themselves and others (including the researchers) in relation to common issues. The research will concentrate mainly on the decentralised end of the media spectrum.

A project is already in progress on the estate in which the Department's portable video equipment is being used by groups of residents as a communication tool. The project forms the basis of a study of video intervention in social interaction. Data from this project will be used extensively in the proposed study and since it is intended that a common source of finance be found to support the research aspects of the video project and the present, wider study, some notes on work already underway are included here.

VIDEO PROJECT

The increased availability of relatively inexpensive, easy-to-operate video equipment has led to experimentation with its use in a variety of social and educational settings.

In the main, educational television has remained a studio-based operation involving the production of programmes to be used as an extension of instructional teaching methods (1,2,3,4,5.). Formal education has not capitalised on the portability of video equipment which can be taken out of the classroom into the community (some of the work done at Goldsmiths' College TV Department is a notable exception). In addition videotape recording and playback techniques have been used in the training of teachers (micro-teaching) and to provide feedback about teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom (6).

similar techniques have been used in psychotherapy where it has been found that video can help to improve communication and enhance creative development in interpersonal and group situations. (7)

During the past five years there has been a growing interest in the use of video techniques in community developments to improve dialogue between individuals and groups in a community and between the community and local government. Some preliminary work has been carried out in Canada, notably under the aegis of the National Film Board. In this country such experience as we have is drawn from the work of TUX at the Institute for Research in Art and Technology and the North Kensington Community TV groups(8.9.10.11.12).

In Canada these activities have led to community programming on local cable TV systems (13). Until recently this kind of scheme was against the policy of the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications in this country. However, the climate appears to be changing and early in 1972 a cable TV company, operating in S. London was granted a licence to originate local community programmes for an experimental period. Subsequently, licences have been granted to companies in five other areas of Britain.

Whereas in the fields of education and psychotherapy a considerable amount of research into the uses of video is being carried out, in community development this is not the case. Rather, there is an increasing amount of information available of an empirical nature with little attempt to integrate findings.

Public involvement in community development requires a programme of education which extends beyond the walls of schools and colleges. In particular it is felt by the agencies concerned with community work training in the Stoke area that an informal educational setting should be established in which professionals and enthusiastic lay people can co-operate (14). It is our view that video can make an important contribution in this area.

The broad aim of this project is systematically to explore and develop practicable procedures and theories about video techniques in community development and related aspects of education. We are approaching this task from a community studies perspective but our observations focus on the consequences of social intervention rather than on the day-to-day life of the community.

It seems to us, taking into account work in this country and abroad, that the possible uses of video by a community fall into different spheres of operation which are interdependent and which need to be researched and developed concurrently. These spheres include video recording and playback in interpersonal situations, communication between specific groups, organisations and institutions and community-wide information dissemination, either by showing videotapes at public meetings etc. or by means of cable distribution to homes by the relay companies. Because of the exploratory nature of the work it is proposed that a phenomenological method be used initially for the purposes of analysis with a view to developing testable hypotheses. Such an approach aims at a consensus by which our observations may be validated intersubjectively by those participating in the project and, as such, is compatible with the principle of public involvement in community development. The end product of this part of the research will be a collection of case studies of video uses in the community together with an analysis and evaluation of each project.

VISUAL SOCIOLOGY

The Department is interested in developing sociological research using visual material as raw data. The present study is seen both as a pilot and as part of this wider programme. Other types of projects which will be linked with it include:

1. A study of the relationship between photographer and subject as revealed in the resulting photographs. This study, started in January 1973 and is being carried out by Mr. A. C. White.
2. A long term consideration of the relationships of film and sociology being developed by myself.
3. I am also involved in association with a firm of Planning Consultants in a consideration of the social aspects of the visual environment in the town centre of a northern town (Bolton).
4. A study of the sociology of visual arts in the 18th century involving the discussion of the impact on art and society of the development of techniques in the multiple reproductions of works of art. This study focuses on the relationship between engravers and painters at the time of the foundation of the Royal Academy, and is being carried out by Mr. Gordon Effe, a lecturer in the Department.
5. A projected study by Mr. Paul Ballaby, another lecturer in the department, of the status and role of artists (in particular, master masons, sculptors and mural painters), in the generation of religious symbolism, throughout the 12th century 'Renaissance', viewed in the contexts of changing patronage and wider structural transformation in medieval society.

It seems to us that the general field of what might be called visual sociology is both academically important, of potential use in such areas as planning and Art School education, and has been seriously neglected in British sociology.

In the present proposed study we shall be considering data in the form of verbal 'pictures' (e.g. conversations, interviews, discussions, meetings, local visual 'statements' (e.g. graffiti, posters official and unofficial plans and diagrams, photographs, films, buildings, the work of local artists, etc.) together with other intentional signs and symbols in so far as these help to reveal aspects of social life, particularly notions of 'community'. Since this study employs a phenomenological approach, we shall not be concerned with the veracity or otherwise of these verbal and visual 'perspectives' in themselves, but rather with the way they relate to each other. An understanding of the situation may be arrived at by comparing these perspectives, for example in terms of concordance/discordance, in order to see how the media mediate the idea of 'community' for the members.

The researcher-subject relationship will be explicitly dialectical, being itself a special case of concordance/discordance between different perspectives, and this dialectic will guide the development of the research through the phenomenological phase and beyond. We are already investigating this relationship under laboratory conditions using video recording and playback.

PROPOSED INVESTIGATION (CONT'D)

It is outside the scope of our methodological brief to hypothesise about the nature of the results. However we can foresee at least two uses for our findings:

1. continuous feedback into the observed situation throughout the period of research. This dialogue will enable us to contrast and compare (for example) our view of them - their view of themselves; our view of ourselves - their view of us; our view of their view of themselves - their view of our view of their view of themselves; and so on. Thus, our process of coming to understand the situation can be checked against their understanding.
2. availability to other researchers and 'outsiders'.

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Tuesday, 2 January 1973

Travelled back to Keels.

Wednesday, 3 January 1973

10.30 Appointment with Town Clerk (Mr. Robinson). A Mr. Reeves was also present. Mr. Robinson asked us to explain what our objectives were and what costs were likely to be involved. Bob replied that we were exploring the uses of video in community development, and hoped to use it in a dialogue between Bentilee and the local authority. We explained about the equipment, and Mr. Reeves asked us what we personally expected to get out of this work. We said that we were postgraduate research students ... etc. Mr. Reeves seemed cautious and wondered whether video might be just another gimmick. He wanted to know what advantages video had over film and warned us against the indiscriminate use of equipment by people who just wanted to "see themselves on TV". Mr. Robinson said that the Planning, Education and Social Services Departments might be interested, and he would contact the Planning Department with a view to our making a trial tape about land reclamation with them. If the result is "good enough", the tape will be shown at a meeting of all the Chief Officers. He will contact us in about three days.

20.00 Meeting at the YVF shop to introduce the idea of video to people who had helped to run playschemes on the estate last summer. John Armstrong called the meeting. We arrived at 19.30 and began to set up the equipment ready for the meeting which was due to start at 20.00. John had hired a 16mm film which he wanted to show. By 20.00 there were nine people present, besides ourselves: Peter Hudson, John Armstrong, Dave James, Pat Faulknor, Linda Gratton, and four boys who had seen

Wednesday, 3 January 1973 contd.

what was going on through the shop window and asked if they could come inside and watch. John Armstrong made a few introductory remarks, including suggestions for ways in which video might be used in connection with playschemes: for example, they could tape the kids performing plays and show it back to them; a recording could be made of a day's activities for showing to other playleaders; this tape could also be shown to parents and to the public, possibly in the shopping precinct, to get support for the scheme; it could also be used for fundraising purposes. Then the lights were switched off and we watched the film. This was an Inter-Action film which showed the Dogg's Troupe visiting Croydon with their participatory street play, Moonmen. The idea was to use the play as a crowd gatherer, after which the 'actors' became 'playleaders' for the rest of the visit, working on projects and games with small groups of kids. There was a short sequence at the end of the film about video. While the film was running, two women and a little girl came in. A crowd of kids had gathered outside the shop window and three of them, teenaged girls, came inside and sat down. When the film finished, everyone started talking among themselves. We switched the video equipment on, threaded a tape and turned the camera on to them. We had the monitor switched on, so that people could see themselves. Some of the kids had a go with the camera. After some minutes we rewound the tape and played it back. Then Pete Hudson decided it was time to get down to business and started organising the discussion. This we also videotaped, and the following notes were made while watching this tape in the lab on 4.1.73.:

Pete said that one thing we'd learned already (ie from the first few minutes which had been taped and played back) was that if everyone spoke

Wednesday, 3 January 1973 contd.

Then Bob explained how the equipment worked. Pete said a few words about who we were and that the equipment was being made available by the university for the use of Bontiloo people for a year ... "We're very lucky." He also said that in case anyone thought the university was being "incredibly generous", there was a "catch". He immediately changed this to "there is a reason for it". He then went on to explain that we would be observing what happened and writing a thesis about the uses of "video television" in Bontiloo: "They're observing us all the time ..." "As well as the equipment for a year, Bontiloo has also got the expert services of Bob and Ray on one condition, I believe, and one condition only, and that is Bontiloo makes the tapes and they advise us how to do it technically. They will not make them for us - they will not tell us what is a good thing and what is a bad thing, because (then) they'd be observing themselves* and not us."

Referring to the letter we sent her, Pat Faulkner said she was interested in using the equipment in connection with her pre-school playgroup. Linda Gratton asked if we'd show them how to use the equipment themselves. Bob explained how we'd hold a practice session with BVPC on a Sunday morning. Pete asked the kids for their comments: one boy said "I just think it's great - all the equipment and that." He thought it must have cost a lot of money. Pete asked them if they'd been to any of the play-schemes last year. Most of them said no. Then he asked if they'd go along if the video equipment was there for them to use: "Yeah!" "That'll be good, won't it?" Pete asked Mrs. Grewcott (one of the two ladies who came in late) if she thought that the equipment would have been helpful to her when running what appeared to be a "more chaotic playscheme"

* This refers to the reason we gave YVF for not wanting to make tapes ourselves: We wanted to study the way local people used the equipment.

Wednesday, 3 January 1973 contd.

last summer. She replied that she thought it would, and that she'd think about how it could be used in the games they played. Linda Gratton thought it would be useful when they did plays. Pete observed that, "What we've just seen on the big screen (is the Inter-Action film) has happened tonight. They had the Moonmen, we had the (monitor) screen. And we started with just us and now we've got this lot." (This in reference to the kids - youngsters and teenagers - who had by now crowded into the shop until it was packed.) He tried to involve some young girls in the discussion, but they were too shy. Linda Gratton asked if it would be possible to show tapes in the shopping centre. We replied that there was no reason why not, as long as the police didn't object and provided that one of the shopkeepers would let us use his power supply.

STOP TAPE

PLAYBACK

Pat Faulkner: "It doesn't look like me, that doesn't!"

After the playback, the kids filed out of the shop, leaving the adults to carry on talking.

RECORD

Mrs. Grawcott practised using the camera, then Pat Faulkner. Dave James felt that they hadn't capitalised on the fact that so many kids had been at the meeting - they should have asked them to tell their parents about the next meeting, and even tried to recruit some of the older ones as helpers on the playschemes. Pete commented on the different ways people have of attracting attention when they want to speak. Dave spoke of the way video seems to "draw people together".

Wednesday, 3 January 1973 contd.

When the meeting broke up, Pat Faulkner said she would get in touch with us soon to arrange a practice session. Afterwards, we went to the pub with John Armstrong and Dave James. Told them about our meeting with the Town Clerk. They seemed to think we'd probably done the right thing. Dave thought that the Planning Department would be more interested in making a 'product' than a 'process' tape. He also talked about making consumer tapes about rising prices in Bentilee, to be shown in the shopping precinct.

Thursday, 4 January 1973

11.00 Played back tape of last night's meeting and made notes (see 3.1.73). Phoned John Freeman about contacts at Sixth Form College. He seemed glum, but brightened up when Ray asked him if he'd had a good Christmas. Asked Pete if we could take photostats from the notes he'd drafted for the BVPC tape - Promises, Promises. He said he'd give them to us next time we meet. He also said he'd seen Alan Tellwright, who asked him to remind us about January 31 (we had promised to accompany some of his pupils on a field trip and make a tape about it). Pete seemed a little put out because he hadn't been told about this.

Friday, 5 January 1973

Spent most of the day in the lab, transcribing the BVPC tape - Promises, Promises.

Sunday, 7 January 1973

10.30 Arrived at Dave James' house. We had arranged to take a series of slides of the Brook for him, as record before reclamation work begins. We waited for a while to see if John Armstrong would turn up,

Sunday, 7 January 1973 contd.

but he didn't so we set off with Dave to the bottom end of the Brook. We asked him if he wanted to take the photographs (using a 35mm SLR camera with through-the-lens metering). He said he'd rather not, so Bob did the photography: "you're the experts - I'm happy." We walked the whole length of the Brook, taking 30 slides in all at frequent intervals. Dave noted the viewpoints on a plan of the reclamation scheme. Later, he asked us for our "outsider's view" of what should be done to the Brook. We found it difficult to give a definite answer, beyond agreeing with the general outline of the scheme as planned (ie general tidying up and providing bridges and recreation space). Finished up at the Beverley just before closing time. Dave started talking to two blokes at the bar and the landlord about the reclamation scheme, spreading out his map on top of the bar. He was sounding them out about community involvement in stages subsequent to the basic reclamation work. The landlord at least seemed quite enthusiastic, and while Dave carried on in conversation with the two men, he came over and talked to us about it. He also asked us if we'd take some photographs of his little girl, and we said we'd go back sometime. He is agreeable to our using his pub for taping and playbacks at almost any time (Tuesday evening is best for a good crowd). We left the pub at 14.30 and went back to Dave's house for Sunday dinner.

Monday, 8 January 1973

11.30 Phone message asking us to contact Mrs. Foskett at Willfield School. Ray phoned her. She wants to 'borrow' the equipment intermittently over a period of weeks to record educational programmes off-air. Ray asked if we could meet her at the school to talk it over, and he was told to get in touch with the headmaster (Mr. Taylor) this after-

Monday, 8 January 1973 contd.

noon. We weren't too happy about her request to use the video in what seemed to us to be a wasteful way (since we had only one set of equipment and limited time). We phoned John Armstrong for information about tomorrow evening's Senior Citizens' party. He didn't know anything about it, but he said he'd phone Pete Hudson who was in Liverpool since he had made all the arrangements. John A. said he'd visit us at Keele next Monday to discuss using video in schools through his contacts with local teachers.

Later, we started to take slides off the monitor of the Promises, Promises tape, but the machine developed a fault.

14.00 Ray phoned Mr. Taylor at Willfield School and arranged for us to meet him at 10.00 tomorrow. Then we phoned John Armstrong again. He'd spoken to Pete who had said that he didn't know much about tomorrow's party either. John suggested that we should call and see Mr. Davies, the secretary of the Senior Citizens' Association, tomorrow afternoon. We said we mightn't be able to make it after all because our monitor had developed a fault, but that we'd try to borrow another one from the Psychology Department. We told John of our phone conversation with Mr. Taylor and he warned us not to be too disappointed if we don't make much headway with him.

Tuesday, 9 January 1973

10.00 Arrived at Willfield School and spoke to Mr. Taylor's secretary. She said he was too busy to see us and sent us to find Mrs. Foskett. We discovered we couldn't record from the school's TV set, but there is an external aerial which we may be able to plug into our receiver/monitor. We said we'd come back and try it out next week, as soon as our monitor has been repaired. At breaktime, Mr. Taylor spoke to us in passing, but

Tuesday, 9 January 1973 contd.

was distinctly off-hand. After break we were invited to watch a film about Summerhill, which was being shown to ROSLA pupils as part of their Moral and Social Studies course. After the film, the kids split up into discussion groups. Before he rushed off to join the group which he was supervising, Mr. Hall, the organiser of the course, promised to have a word with us when we come back next week. We left the school feeling that we had scored a success in getting Mr. Taylor's permission to visit the school when necessary, since YVF have, in fact, found it difficult to establish a working relationship with him. We went to the YVF shop and saw John Freeman and John Armstrong. John F. was in a friendly mood and said he'd been in touch with someone who might be able to help us get money. Ray gave John Armstrong some printed information which he'd asked for on the ROSLA Design for Living course, and we arranged to go along to the next UBB (community newspaper) meeting. John A. is hoping to involve schoolkids in producing the next issue. We came away with a pile of material from an exhibition of schoolkids' work about the reclamation of the Brook (held last summer). We wanted to take slides of the drawings and diagrams in the interests of 'visual sociology'. On our way back to Keele we called at Mr. Davies's house to explain that we mightn't be able to go to their party this evening, if we can't borrow another monitor.

17.50 Arrived at the Auto Club for the Senior Citizens' party, having borrowed a monitor from the Psychology Department. Mr. Davies showed us to two seats which had been kept for us, and we sat down to a meal. Someone said: "You're a bit old to be pensioners, aren't you?" When we'd eaten, we set up the equipment at the back of the hall and recorded the speeches. Mr. Davies thanked us for bringing the equipment along, and

Tuesday, 9 January 1973 contd.

invited Arthur Mellor, chairman of the Community Association to say a few words. (The following is extracted from his speech, 'explaining' our presence:)

"These chaps are here tonight to ... they are doing a thesis on ... community life and what they are after is all the information leading up to ... what the community does or what this Bentilee estate is ... out to give the people."

During the speeches we occasionally panned the camera along the rows of people. When we played the tape back, one man waved at his own image on the monitor, as if expecting it to wave back. Next, the Grasshoppers staged a display of gymnastics and judo, which we also taped and played back. The kids were very excited to see themselves. We spent the rest of the evening drinking and enjoying the entertainments.

Wednesday, 10 January 1973

13.30 Finished taking slides of Promises, Promises tape, using the Psychology Department's monitor. Also photographed schoolkids' exhibition material.

16.30 Our monitor was returned after being repaired. We tested it while taking slides of the Senior Citizens' party tape. After half an hour, the fault reappeared.

Thursday, 11 January 1973

9.15 Experimented with editing the BVPC tape by playing it back and reshooting sequences off the monitor, using the portapak. The quality

Thursday, 11 January 1973 contd.

was not too bad. Mr. Carhill phoned from the Town Clerk's office and asked us to get in touch with John Barnes in the City Architects, Planning and Reconstruction Department. We phoned and arranged to meet Mr. Barnes on Tuesday at 9.30.

16.30 Transcribed BVPC practice tape.

Saturday, 13 January 1973.

Spent the afternoon at the Territorial Army Hall, videotaping the Stoke inter-club judo competition for Jim Dixey, who runs the Grasshoppers judo club. We had two playback sessions, during which the competitors sat down to watch themselves. Jim asked us to show the tape again at the next meeting of his club.

Monday, 15 January 1973

9.30 John Armstrong came to see us at Keele. We talked about his work with teachers in Bentilee. He was fairly frequent meetings with a small group of teachers. We said we'd like to go along to one of these meetings, to try and interest them in video. John replied that he had a project of his own which he wanted to put to them first, and asked us to wait for a few weeks.

Tuesday, 16 January 1973

9.30 Meeting with John Barnes, who is responsible for land reclamation in Stoke. We discussed the possibility of using video for public participation. He is working on a scheme to reclaim a disused quarry. The 'programme of participation' he has in mind involves a letterbox questionnaire. The Department's decisions will be based on the responses to the questionnaires and their proposals will be presented at a public

Tuesday, 16 January 1973 contd.

meeting. Bob pointed out that this did not involve the local residents in any of the decision-making. JB remained unconvinced that he could achieve any more, using video, than he was doing already, but he agreed to discuss it with Jane Skinner of the Social Services Department. We all agreed that it was too late to do anything more in the way of participation on the Brook scheme, but it might be useful to make an information tape about the way the scheme will eventually look. We said we'd talk to BVPC about this.

11.00 Letter from SSRC asking for clarification of one or two points in our application.

19.00 Playback of judo tape at Stoke Judokwai.

Wednesday, 17 January 1973

10.00 Arrived at Willfield School to practise recording off-air for Mrs. Foskett. We tried out monitor with the school's external aerial, but found that we got better reception with our own indoor aerial. Even so, it was still a very poor picture. We made a trial recording which was unsatisfactory. Later we phoned Rediffusion to ask if they could fit an output socket to the school's television set (which took signals from the cable system). They said they'd send someone to have a look at it. Afterwards, we talked to Mr. Hall who said that one teacher (Ken Hudson) was interested in making tapes with the kids. He wasn't in school today, and Mr. Hall said he'd try to arrange a meeting in the near future. Mr. Hall also said that he'd like to tape some programmes off-air. He had some other ideas, too, such as making tapes in situations which were inaccessible to large groups of kids, and tapes about kids visiting old people, etc.

Thursday, 18 January 1973

12.30 Drafted reply to SSRC request for more information.

15.00 Tutorial with Ronnie. Discussed draft and made a few changes to the wording.

16.00 Message from John Armstrong, asking us to phone back. Phoned him. He said that Arthur Ball had got an idea for videotaping an interview with someone in the Planning Department. Arthur would like us to call at the YVF shop on Monday to talk about it with him.

20.00 UBB editorial policy meeting at YVF shop. (We include here three separate accounts of the meeting, two written by ourselves individually, the third written by Peter Hudson. All three differ in certain significant respects. Since, however, they refer to a common situation, they must all be regarded as partially 'true', and demonstrate the dialectical nature of the situation.)

Bob:

The meeting was scheduled for 20.00 but when Ray and I arrived a little late only John A., Pete H., Iris and Dave W. were there. We chatted for a while to see if anyone else would turn up. This was not intended to be an ordinary, run-of-the-mill meeting of the UBB committee, getting together to assemble the next issue of the magazine as smoothly as possible. Pete said he felt that all of them - Dave as editor and Iris and himself who were in charge of typing and layout - were developing 'set' ways of producing the magazine from one issue to the next, and he didn't think this was necessarily a good thing. This evening he wanted to discuss alternative ways of putting the magazine together, involving

more people in the newsgathering, editorial and production aspects.

With this in mind, requests had been made to teacher contacts at the schools on the estate, asking them to tell any pupils who might be interested about the meeting, and invite them to come along. The turnout which resulted from this was nil. The committee wasn't sure whether to blame the fog, which was dense that night, the relatively late starting time of the meeting, or just general lack of interest. However, there were some new faces at the meeting (besides ours). Three young girls who had been playing outside the shop came in to see what was happening and stayed. By now, Elsie, George and Dave J. had arrived, too.

Pete, who acted as chairman for most of the meeting, began to explain how the magazine was produced, for the benefit of the three girls. He adopted what I should call a 'workshop' approach, beginning with the visual appearance or layout of the magazine, showing them how to make headlines using Letraset, and the way that copy was typed in columns. Elsie had brought along an article of her own, handwritten, which was handed to Dave W. for editing and grammatical correction. A previously-edited, handwritten article was given to Iris to be typed there and then, ready for the next issue. John A. and Dave J. showed the girls how to past up page layouts. Pete and Ray went to the pub to fetch some drink.

The meeting split up into smaller groups. Iris was typing at the front of the shop, where John A. was talking to the three girls. Elsie spent some time talking to the girls as well, about the possibility of starting a children's page in the magazine, written by them. At the rear of the shop Ray and I were talking to Dave J., about what we'd been doing at

the Grasshoppers Judo Club and also about our meeting with John Barnes at the Planning Department. We told him about John Barnes' offer to make a videotape about the Brook. Dave said that what he'd really like to do was make a tape explaining the idea of a Neighbourhood Council. The problem was that he didn't think that BVPC, with its strong links with the ward Labour Party (Reg Walker is Chairman of both) would approve, and he didn't think he could do it as an individual.

The conversation came around to local politics. Pete and Elsie joined in. Councillor Tuhey has won the Labour nomination for the County Council election, and has, in confidence, asked YVF for their support in his election campaign on the estate. So far, YVF have not committed themselves either way. Dave J. felt quite strongly that they should not be so partial. The editorial 'line' of USB during the forthcoming election was also discussed. At this point the conversation became very difficult for an outsider to follow. It was not always clear to me, when someone began a sentence with 'we ...' or 'you ...', whether they were referring to YVF, USB, or even, at times, BVPC, since most of them belong to at least two of these organisations, and some to all three.*

Pete said he felt the discussion had gone far enough, and that it was now time for some action. He suggested that everyone spend the next quarter of an hour or so drafting a piece for the magazine, in the light of what had been discussed. No-one else seemed to think that they could produce anything worthwhile at such short notice, so Pete shut himself away in the back room to write, while the rest of us carried on talking.

* During this confusion, I didn't fully grasp the significance of Elsie's grievance against Tom Tuhey for the rest of the conversation. See Ray's account for clarification on this.

A short while later he emerged, bearing a 'letter to UBB' which he read out and then gave to Dave W. In the letter he described Tom Tuhey's approach to YVF and said that he, personally, felt that Mr. Tuhey should have gone to the electorate for support, not the YVF. He (Pete) would only help Mr. Tuhey to the extent that he felt the councillor's objectives were in the interest of Bentilee people. This meant that he would also be prepared to help any other candidate if he saw fit and if the opportunity presented itself.

The effect of the letter on the meeting was quite dramatic. My immediate response was to ask John A., as the other YVF member present, what he thought about it, but Dave J. cut in. The issue revolved around the question whether or not Pete had the right to express publicly a personal view about a confidence made, not to him as an individual, but as a member of YVF. John A. pointed out that the letter, if published, could have serious repercussions on all the groups to which Pete belonged, and indeed on YVF in general. Pete said the letter was now in the editor's hands and excluded himself from the debate. Dave W. was asked for his view, as editor. He replied that if the letter had come to him through the mail, and if he had not known any of the 'behind-the-scenes' facts, he would have printed it, possibly after getting in touch with the writer to check whether he was entitled to speak on behalf of the named organisation (ie, in this case, YVF). He put the question to Pete who admitted that he wasn't speaking on behalf of YVF, and that maybe the letter should be modified. He appeared pale and strained. John A., too, seemed tense and I got the impression that the issue might not end for them when the meeting finished.

The letter brought into focus the whole problem of editorial control. Who should decide finally whether or not to print such a letter? Previously this had always been decided in committee, but Dave W. said that, as editor, he'd like to feel that he did have some kind of authority. He didn't want to be concerned only with correcting grammar and tidying up literary style. Did Pete have the right, now, to ask for the letter not to be published? What criteria should they use when selecting material? In the past this had not been so much of a problem because they'd needed to print almost everything they could get hold of, in order to produce a magazine at all. The talk wandered into the realms of libel and legal advice. Pete quietly picked up his letter and tore it into pieces.

The three girls had left some time ago, but Elsie had arranged to see them again about writing for the magazine.

Ray:

Bob and I arrived at the YVF shop soon after 20.00. Pete H., John A., Dave W. and Iris were there. There was no sign of the school kids who were supposed to have been coming. Everyone seemed depressed about this. We sat around talking for a while to see if anyone else would turn up. Pete asked if someone would explain to those present the intention behind tonight's meeting. John A. said he understood that the idea was to involve more people in the production of UBB and, as much as possible, to redistribute tasks and responsibilities of those already involved. The 'professionals' would like to hand over responsibilities to local residents. Dave W., the editor, agreed and said that John had 'put it in a nutshell'. More people began to arrive - Elsie who writes the "Bird's Eye View" page for UBB, Dave J. and a chap called George. Pete

was eager to begin the meeting and said that, in the absence of the schoolkids, there were three possibilities: (1) that we all go to the pub; (2) that an 'old-style' UBB meeting be held, and (3) that we go ahead with the different kind of meeting - assuming that the schoolkids had been deterred by the fog and that they would come along to subsequent meetings. It was decided to go ahead with the third alternative and three young girls who had been hanging about outside the shop were invited in. Pete explained a little about the practical side of producing the paper, eg how to do titling using Letraset, how articles needed to be typed out, etc. Then he suggested that the group split up so that people might write articles there and then for the next issue of UBB. For the benefit of those unfamiliar with all present, he indicated those members of the group who could provide specialist assistance. Then the group broke up. Pete went to the off-licence to buy some drink. I went along to help him carry it back. On the way we discussed the future possibility of involving schoolkids and we also talked about how UBB meetings might be made into social events. There was quite a lot of activity in the shop when we got back. Bob and I had a few words with Dave J. about the possibility of using film or slides instead of videotape to make training programmes for gymnastics. We also talked a bit about local schools - mainly Willfield and Hanley High. John A. taught the kids to use the Letraset and, by now, another chap had joined us. Our conversation with Dave J. turned to the nomination of Tom Tuhey as Ward Labour Candidate for the forthcoming election. Just then Pete called Dave to join a conversation he was having with Elsie. Elsie was annoyed about an article in the Sentinel in which, she felt, she had been misrepresented. The background to the article, it seems, is as follows: Once he had got the nomination, Tuhey had visited YVF to ask their advice on which local issues he should champion to make sure of

winning the election. Tuhey had implied that if YVF helped him, he'd see they were all right in future. Now, YVF has not yet made up its mind whether to help Tuhey or not (Dave J. thinks they shouldn't involve themselves overtly in politics), but they had referred Tom to Elsie who is concerned with consumer problems on the Bentilee estate. The article in the Sentinel is a report of a Council meeting in which Tom Tuhey talks of a "group of housewives" in Bentilee who are keeping an eye on rising prices, etc ... Elsie felt that Tom had been using this issue to make himself popular, and, in so doing, had changed the facts. Elsie was thinking of writing a letter to the Sentinel and Pete wanted to know what UBB should do about it. Dave J. pointed out that without further information we couldn't be sure that Tom wasn't telling the truth - he mightn't have been referring to Elsie when he spoke of "a group of housewives". Dave was concerned about the laws of libel. Pete said that we should each write an article and he took himself off to do just that. The conversation continued in his absence. No-one else attempted to write anything. When he returned, Pete read out his letter to UBB in which he revealed, as a YVF worker that they had been approached by Tuhey and that the public should know about it and should also know the YVF was not prepared to help any one candidate to get votes. Then Pete handed the letter over to Dave W. as editor. This sparked off an intense discussion, the main areas involved being (a) had Pete the right to involve YVF in an issue which he was tackling as an individual? (b) who would be responsible in case of an action for libel? (ie. Dave as editor or the UBB committee or BVPC as the parent body) (c) might the advantages of revealing Tuhey's tactics to the public be outweighed by the disadvantages incurred by his animosity if and when he is elected? Pete left the discussion because, since he'd handed his letter in to the editor, he felt he had no further say and that it was up to the remaining

members of the committee to decide if it should be published. Dave W. said that in the normal course of events he would have published the letter. John A. said that apart from the fact that Pete had not considered the effect his 'personal' action would have on his YVF colleagues whom he had not consulted, the issue was complicated by the question who should now decide whether the article should be published. As far as the first part was concerned it was a YVF matter and would be sorted out internally, but the second part should be decided there and then. It struck me, although I didn't voice it at the time, that Pete was giving information in his letter which he could only have got as a member of YVF. To think that he could pass on that information, therefore, as a private individual was a contradiction. Pete was recalled into the discussion. He explained that although tonight's meeting was meant to be different and although he'd written the article to bring matters on to a practical level as far as the production of the next issue of UBB was concerned, when he handed it over to Dave W. he did so in all sincerity and now it was up to everyone else (and if the production 'team' of UBB is to be extended who does 'everyone else' include ?) to decide if it should be printed. By 10.45 p.m. we were still no nearer to reaching a conclusion. Dave J. thought the letter should not be published. Pete thought that for future purposes it might be an idea to seek legal advice. Dave W. repeated that under normal conditions he would include such a letter in UBB. Pete admitted he should have considered the YVF position - he hadn't realised the Tuhey had approached them in confidence. Elsie thought that people should know what was going on. John A. wanted to know whether the editor or the committee had the final say. Eventually Pete tore up the letter and we all went home.

18.1.73

At the previous meeting of UBB it had been decided as a kind of reaction to P.H.'s suggestion that he personally drop out of some of his UBB roles, that the whole of UBB from now on should be run on more 'democratic lines'. This would mean that instead of there being Board meetings to decide articles and then work apportioned to writers, and then another meeting to vet the contributions, followed by P.H. and Iris producing the actual magazine, the whole magazine from start to finish could be produced by every body at a single meeting ~~xxxxxxx~~ or a series of meetings. This would mean that the editor would edit there and then and in so doing show other people how to edit, the production manager would do layout there and then and in doing so show other people how to do lay out and so on. It was also felt that this opportunity could be used to bring in more people into the magazine as the whole evening might be more of a social event within which work went on rather than an obviously meeting type meeting. Consequently little work groups should spring up all over the room rather than it being a central meeting.

Therefore in preparation P. H. and J.A. had invited children from two senior schools and also one or two other potentially interested people.

On the night when things finally got going there were no people as a result of J.A.'s canvassing with schools and only one new person on the adult side. There were however three girls which we hoiked in from the street who seemed very interested. The whole event turned out to be quite something and there are two reports written by Bob and Ray which cover some of the issues. This report however will try to highlight some of the important issues for future action.

1. Some articles actually got typed and had a heading put to them during the evening although by no means enough to fill a magazine.
2. The kids began learning how letreset should be used and obviously enjoyed it.
3. Elsie got into an interesting discussion with the children about starting a children's produced page in UBB.
4. A general atmosphere of conviviality (to quote a phrase) seemed to be built up which could be useful for the future.
5. A really dynamic 'open ended learning situation' arose on the question of how UBB should approach the forthcoming political local elections.

In some ways it was P.H. who precipitated this open ended learning situation, but for the purposes of this report, I do not wish to go into any great detail on how it arose and the justification for it. However a few words perhaps are relevant.

The issue had been focused by the presentation to the group of a contribution for UBB by P.H. couched in the terms of a personal letter on the political situation in Bentilee. Some of the issues that this raised and some of the reasons are given as follows:-

1. It looked as if P.H. was putting himself on the line and therefore people did take it seriously. An alternative to this however is that it may have looked as if P.H. was playing games but if so why did they take it seriously?

2. In the end no decision was taken by the group as a group to publish or not to publish. To edit or not or alter or whatever. As it was very late P.H. withdrew the article thus taking the decision on the groups behalf which made it possible for the group not to have to take a decision. This is significant as it highlighted the whole question of decision making within the group. However it would be untrue to say that any conclusions were arrived at.

3. In the course of the debate although it may have seemed a bit of a red herring at the time the question arose of liable. We could not publish the article because we may have been liable. If this were the case who would be guilty? Would it be the editor? Would it be the writer? Would it be the committee? Would it be B.V.P.C. as the parent committee? The relevance of this is that it may be the kind of opportunity which a C.D. worker concerned with education can latch on to for educational purposes. In other words it could be important and valuable that a legal expert be called in to teach people about the laws of liable.

4. It raised, from the point of view of the C.D. worker/educationalist, the question of the link between education and action. From an educational point of view there seemed to be little doubt that people's minds were stretched, if that's a legitimate phrase, that they were thinking hard, that they were learning, that they were involved in what was going on, that it meant something to them. However that being so it may have meant that whilst there was scope for more formal learning inputs as suggested above, the outcome could be that no more UBB's get produced. In other words in the course of that meeting no obvious action seemed to follow from the mind stretching process. Indeed so many apparent new problems were thrown up; that of liable, that of the authors right to say some of the things he said, that of the editorially neutral position of a community newspaper on politics and so on that future meetings could be so preoccupied with such problems as to leave little time to actually produce newspapers. This is indeed a very real problem that at the time of writing I certainly don't have many if any answers. A comparison with what seems to be happening in the P.ayscheme Association may be relevant. The educational side of the work in connection with the B.P.A. has been stressed for the last few months and despite the fact that the committee decided to alternate the learning meetings with business meetings, events have taken it so that business never ever gets discussed.

A similar process is happening in UBB as with B.P.A. on UBB technical points like distribution like finance and so on, which were kind of obvious by their absence at this particular meeting.

However it will be wrong to build up too many hypothesis on the strength of one meeting and I don't propose to do that. I think the only general pointer to the future that I would wish to make at this time, is that as community workers interested in education, we must not forget that education to the exclusion of action could possibly not be defined as real education. Consequently it may be incumbent upon us that future meetings to dwell upon real issues involving the future of the paper which may mean reverting to the old style of production from time to time, whilst still having open ended freaky collective meetings as well. In other words lets take a new experience in small and manageable doses.

On the action side I have heard that since that meeting Elsie is planning a separate meeting with the three girls to help them get together their material for the children's page which is certainly an important action orientated step forward.

Friday, 19 January 1973

14.00 Finished SSRC application supplement and gave it to Doreen for
Ronnie's approval before it is typed (see General Methodological Note).

GENERAL METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Our intention is to observe and document ways in which various media are used in the study area, including, for example, who controls them and who has access to them? We shall analyse the 'message content' of these media in terms of related perspectives on common issues. We expect to find, in some cases, agreement between perspectives (conjunction) and, in other cases, disagreement between perspectives (disjunction). The intelligibility of the situation is explicated through such patterns of conjunction and disjunction between different media perspectives. An important tool in this analysis will be the basic schema of the Interpersonal Perception Method (1).

Part of the aim of this study is to test the validity and usefulness of a phenomenological method which, following Van Kaam (2), we consider to consist essentially in making explicit what is implicit in social action (i.e. explicating as opposed to explaining). The process of explication is controlled by validity checks. In the preliminary stages these are intrasubjective and intersubjective and lead to a consensual description of the situation under study. By 'intrasubjective validation' we mean a comparison of similar phenomena observed in different situations by the same researcher. By 'intersubjective validation' we mean a comparison of the observations of the same phenomenon by more than one researcher. Later, hypothetical statements may emerge from a critical comparison of these explications which can be used to test the validity of the explications through experimentation. In our view, the ultimate criterion for validity at this pre-experimental, pre-theoretical phase of the research is the postulate of adequacy (3). This has been defined thus:

"Each term or concept in the model of action must be constructed so that an act actually performed in the world in the way indicated by the construct would be understandable for the actor himself and for his fellow men in terms of common sense schemes of interpretation. This ensures consistency of social scientific constructs with those of everyday common sense experience". (4)

Much of the research involves participant observation methods. A considerable amount of time is spent training community residents to use portable video equipment and observing how it is used. We see our role primarily as observer-helpers and not as a 'production crew'. We assist in the making of videotapes on a practical level but take a non-directive approach in planning and preparation. Video work with community groups in our experience has followed a typical sequence: (i) we are approached by a group wishing to make a videotape 'programme' about an issue of local concern; (ii) a practice session is arranged at which group members learn how to operate the equipment themselves, plans are discussed and a trial tape is made. This is followed by (iii) an evaluation session at which members formulate their intentions more precisely after seeing the trial tape and prepare a shooting schedule for a second tape. (iv) The second tape is recorded by the members. (v) Showings are arranged (e.g. to Local Authority Departments, in pubs, clubs and Bingo Halls, in the shopping precinct). (vi) At these showings viewers' responses may also be recorded during discussion between the viewers and group members. This third tape may either be used by the members merely to evaluate their project or it may form the basis of a subsequent 'programme'.

We are currently working in close collaboration with Young Volunteer Force community workers on a Council estate in Stoke-on-Trent. Projects so far have brought us into contact with community action groups, schools, youth clubs, senior citizens' associations, playgroups, and the Local Authority, particularly the Departments of Planning, Education and Social Services.

In addition to our participant observation work with video we are interested in the decision-making processes and criteria for selection and presentation involved in making videotapes compared with these processes in the production of news bulletins, documentaries and educational programmes by the broadcasting companies and by Local Authority ETV studios. We are also interested in local radio, in particular the way the programme organisers see its role in the 'community' compared with the views of local residents. This comparison of perspectives extends to a study of local issues as presented in the local area newspaper and in community newspapers.

With reference to the final paragraph on page eight above, we may expand our intentions thus:

"The researcher-subject relationship will be explicitly dialectical....."

In his book 'Search for a Method' (s) Sartre writes:

"Research is a living relation between men.....Indeed, the sociologist and his 'object' form a couple each one of which is to be interpreted by the other; the relationship between them must be itself interpreted as a moment of history."

The most succinct exposition for our purposes of Sartre's method is given by Esterson (6). Briefly, the researchers' interpretation of the situation as an outsider and the interpretations of insiders are dialectical poles (an examination of the work of Gurvitch helps to clarify the various forms of the dialectic (?)). It is the synthetic movement of the dialectic which produced a working hypothesis linking the perspectives of researcher and subjects.

".....this dialectic will guide the development of the research through the phenomenological phase and beyond".

As we have said our prime concern at the moment is with explicating. There is a dialogue between our descriptions and the events observed. There is also a further dialogue between the descriptions of the two researchers. At the next level of investigation the dialogue exists between (i) the hypothesis and the descriptions on which it is based (ii) between the hypothesis and the observed events.

References:

1. Laing, Phillipson and Lee, 1966, "Interpersonal Perception", London, Tavistock.
2. Adrian Van Kaam, 1969, "Existential Foundations of Psychology", New York, Image books.
3. Alfred Schutz, 1962, "Collected Papers, Vol. 1", The Hogue, Nijhoffi..

4. Filmer, Phillipson, Silverman and Walsh, 1972, "New Directions in Sociological Theory", London, Collier-McMillan
5. Jean-Paul Sartre, 1963, "Search for a Method" (trans. H. E. Barnes), New York, Vintage Books.
6. Aaron Esterson, 1970, "The Leaves of Spring", London, Tavistock.
7. e.g. Phillip Bosserman, 1968, "Dialectical Sociology: an analysis of the sociology of Georges Gurvitch", Boston, Porter-Sargent.

Chronology

The researchers are already familiar with video work in this country and abroad therefore fieldwork is already underway. We have spent the past three months setting up contacts in the study area.

The next eighteen months will be a period of participant observation in the video project. Concurrently with this we shall be studying the local and community press, listening to local radio and viewing relevant broadcast TV programmes, interviewing editors and programme controllers and eliciting the views of local residents about the role of these media in their 'community'.

While some degree of explication will progress simultaneously with the field work, the final six months will be devoted exclusively to the explication of data and their presentation.

Monday, 22 January 1973

11.15 Went to the YVF shop to talk with Arthur Ball about the tape he proposes to make with someone in the Planning Department. Arthur didn't turn up. We sat around drinking coffee and talking to John Armstrong and Pete Hudson. Showed them our accounts of last Thursday's UBB meeting. Pete made the point that neither of us had explicitly mentioned the educational aspect of what had happened. Both he and John Armstrong agreed to write their own versions of the meeting, taking our descriptions into account (only PH did this - see 18.1.73). Then we tape recorded a conversation with Pete on the subject of 'education and action' (see partial transcript). Lunch at the Beverley. Took some snaps of the landlord's daughter, as we had promised. Spent a couple of hours afterwards in Hanley library, looking through back numbers of the Evening Sentinel, for references to the 1972 BVPC schools' exhibition.

19.00 Playback of judo tape at Grasshoppers youth club at Harold Clowes Hall. There seemed to be some doubt as to who was doing whom the favour (similar situation at the Beverley at lunchtime).

EDUCATION AND ACTION

Pete: Well, to carry on where I left off ... when you come to write up your project, either now ... or at the end of the time you will actually have, you can describe what happened and it may be that, for example, if you were to do it now you'd say, "Well, we've been to X number of meetings, people have been interested insofar as they've seen themselves on telly - it's been a bit of a toy. One group actually started making a tape, but for some reason or other" - and perhaps you could describe the reason - "they sort of stopped dead, you know, didn't go much further ... full stop. Conclusions - it was fun and interesting and I'm sure that if every

community had one it would go a lot further." From the action point of view, nothing very relevant happened - but you could still write up the thing as a success story, you know, it was interesting that this happened rather than that .. and so on and so forth. Now, on the same basis, if UBB meetings are to continue as that last one did, afterwards we could write up and say - from an educational point of view - "Their minds were stretched, we think, because the discussion seemed to go up to a higher level than it had ever been before ... they started looking at some of the central issues involved in producing a newspaper and started looking at some of the issues involved in being active members of the Bentilee community. They learned a hell of a lot ... so, perhaps no more UBBs ever come out, that's not important. What's happened is that we, as community development workers, played a part in helping people to become more aware of X, Y and Z." There seems to be a very real comparison between alternatives for us as CD workers and what may be the reality of your situation if you were to write a report and finish your exercise now.

Ray: Before you say any more, could you define what you mean by 'education' and what you mean by 'action'?

Pete: Well, I don't think I can, actually, ... no, it's very difficult. I could try ... (pause) ... I think if I do try, it'll be more satisfactory pointing back to the magazine. Beforehand, before that last meeting, magazines were produced. In other words, there was action. This time, a magazine wasn't produced but people's minds were stretched, I believe, a little bit, and I'm sure they felt that they were probably learning something. I think for the time being that will do as the difference between action and education. It certainly isn't satisfactory enough ...

and I think what we're trying to find is the happy balance between learning and action, because if we are bold enough to say anything about education, presumably we are implying some criticism of the existing education and learning provision. Otherwise, if we weren't implying any criticism we wouldn't have to do any more about it ... and it seems that, within the existing education provision, to be very simplistic, that information and so on is always given in a total vacuum - you know, maths is important, one day it will become relevant, and this kind of academic objectivity and so forth seems to go through a lot of educational institutions ... and I think it's one possible reason for us, as CD workers, becoming interested in 'education'. We don't think that's enough - education has got to have more direct relevance for action - whatever that may mean.

John A.: Well, it sounds as if what you're saying is that education is a way of helping people to ... be aware about certain things, whatever those might be. But the point of it is, the things that they'll get to know about, hopefully, they'll begin to internalise into their own lives and they'll select their own view of things - we're helping to provide a view of things. Education, if it's going to be meaningful, is what's internalised into you ...

Ray: And it comes out through your actions?

Pete: In the short term ...

John A.: It begins to blur then ...

Pete: Yes, but in the short term, if you take that to its - to some

kind of logical conclusion - we oughtn't to have any real worries that there is a possibility that UBB will now go out of existence. I think actually, before we go on, it's important to realise that ... from the point of view of this discussion, we're basing - or I am - a lot of statements or conclusions on just one meeting.

John A.: Well, the thing I want most is another UBB meeting.

Pete: Yeah.

(John A. thought that we shouldn't forget the effect that UBB has had on the estate. It has been instrumental in getting various clubs established, and must have had an effect on other issues as well (though it would be more difficult to evaluate these) otherwise people wouldn't say the magazine is "a good thing" and "we'd like to see more of it" ... "It's a two-sided thing - it benefits the group who produce it, and it benefits the estate and the city of which it's a part.")

Pete: A third side is the benefit to the community worker who has something to do with it and that, I think, is really quite important because - I don't want to get into a discussion about John (Freeman) in his absence, but there is an example which is quite relevant, I think. You know this Irish project that John is involved in? Well, the worker there was on the same course as me in Liverpool and just in passing we were talking about newspapers, and he's got one, that is, Geoff has, over there, which is no more than an information sheet and it's cyclostyled ... and John, apparently, has been trying to persuade Geoff to have it printed - smartened up a bit and made into a full-flown community newspaper. Now, having said that, let's take that as an example - forget the

personalities because I don't think it's important ... some of the things which may have influenced John have certainly influenced me as a community worker, in connection with UBB. In other words, it's nice to be associated with something that looks good ... I think, therefore that the community worker's perspective is really very relevant - certainly when you're talking about action rather than education. You know, this has been a criticism of many YVF projects ever since they started - that 'it doesn't matter what you do as long as you bloody do something' kind of approach, and that as long as people can see that things are being done, that's all that matters. Now, I suspect that these may not be the kind of important criteria for the next stage of Bentilee community work ... but I'm not sure. Does that make sense?

John A.: Yes, but again there are two sides. There's the side that we might consider that to do something is the important priority, but equally, how does the estate see it?

Pete: Yeah.

John A.: Do they feel that things should be happening - concrete things rather than groups of people getting together like we did last Thursday night? Nothing very concrete ... but a lot coming from that will be of value in the future when people have had a chance to chew over what happened. What does this mean in relation to the amount of time we have here? Ultimately, I think, it comes back to our outlook ... you can't really do something that you can't believe in.

Pete: Sure ... can I pick up one point there, because ... I don't know how relevant this is to the tape, but it's certainly relevant to

John, John and me ... I think, you see, that what I want to do more and more is to put into practice what we've always said is our policy here - making Bentilee the first and last reference group. In practice it's very, very difficult, but it does influence the kind of ways in which we act. So, for example, I think I would prefer now to ... more than I did in the past ... not to be seen, by myself or by Bentilee people, as a link man between Bentilee and some of the (local authority) departments which affect life on Bentilee, but I'd rather be working more here with the people ... I don't know whether that gets us any further or not.

(LONG PAUSE)

Pete: Can we go back to the relationship between learning and action? ... I think what I've been saying is that if our new perspective of education - it isn't all that new - but (if) our concentration on that were to lead to the disbandment of UBB, to the disbandment of BVPC, to the disbandment of many things, I think I would want to say two things ... either I'm going to leave education alone or that, from the point of view - where I see it we've got hold of the wrong concept of education. Because I think that education, in the sort of way we're grasping it, has got to enter into some kind of action inevitably - it is not possible that it can't, that it can be otherwise ... and for my terms of reference I'll then define education as a process which will lead to some kind of more committed action, and therefore say that education does not take place in many educational institutions. But even that is a bit tricky ...

Bob: Can I ask you how, if at all, you see our role as 'researchers' in inverted commas, having quite a lot of contact with you here and else-

where on the estate - do you see that there is any way that we fit into your plan of 'education for action'?

Pete: Well, I think, to be honest, we haven't really got a plan as yet. It's just been a lot of thinking and a few ideas. But I think there would obviously be a connection - if for no other reason - I'm sure there would be other reasons - but if for no other reason it seems, to date, that when people get involved with video, even if it's only on the level of being a bit of a new toy, it does make them think, perhaps, new things. I think there would be plenty of other, more concrete ways of linking up. But that is enough to say yes, there are obvious links, but where you go from there I don't quite know.

Bob: Well, what about purely in our observational capacity - you know, being around, noting what goes on and writing about it? ... It seems to me that we can't hope to understand what's going on without trying to understand your understanding of what's happening. I was wondering if you saw any kind of reciprocal benefit - it may be that our process of gradually coming to understand helps you come to understand.

Pete: I certainly see this in an informal way - yes, very definitely. I think that is something about the kind of ideal society that could - going back to what we were talking about over the weekend - that is, you know, it is an inevitability to me that I cannot fail to learn from your learning if I come in contact with you. I think this might be important to pursue actually. The trouble is, you see, Bentilee often refuses to do just that. That's a gross generalisation, but what I mean is that people within Bentilee often deny the fact that outside influences can be valuable. So that constantly, whenever outsiders come in with new

views, and so on and so forth, there is a tremendously strained process for some time, and, for example with Chris Ensor, it just remained, you know. I don't particularly want to have to formalise that, but I think - to me it's quite strange the way Bentilee reacts to outsiders, particularly students, because it hasn't been my experience that this reaction happens elsewhere. I'm sure it does, but it's not within my experience. In fact I've never been anywhere long enough, but certainly in one or two communities in Cardiff the outsider was welcomed with open arms and the differences were accepted, I think.

Bob: I don't think we can grumble too much about the welcome we've had here, can we?

Ray: Not really.

Pete: (laughs) It has been interesting - by yourselves and through us and through USBB you've come in on a very definite ticket, you know - you are the suppliers of goodies and you have said, "We do not want to interfere in your lives. Here is something for you to do, to play with and we'll help you do it in the way you want to do it." And you've been as good as your word, whereas we weren't like that, or we're not always seen like that and other students who've been around haven't always been like that. And I don't think you're going to be able to stay like that much longer, either.

Bob: Yeah, this is something else we've been talking about during the past week or so - mainly with reference to Jim Dixey and his judo club ... we seem to be getting into a rut.

Ray: And Mrs. Foskett with her recording off the TV ...

Pete: Sorry?

Ray: Her recording off BBC broadcasts - you know, she wants to record educational programmes off BBC or ITV and we're not particularly interested in doing this. But if we're going to be true to our word, as you put it, then we (have to do it).

Pete: Even if you do, you see, that may eventually lead to video being tied up with Grasshoppers and Mrs. Oojah and then I suspect that other people would not allow that and you would either have to say, "Well, you go and sort them out," or you would then have to come down off your academic pedestal and get involved and say, "I quite agree with you" or "Shut up!" You know, I don't think it's going to be possible, let alone desirable - that's another issue - I don't think it will be possible to remain neutral all the time.

Ray: But there's a difference as well between us saying we don't want to be involved in that, and us being pushed into something because of something that happens here. If, as you say, the equipment was tied up with Mrs. Foskett and Grasshoppers and other people didn't like this because they wanted to use it, well that would put us in a position where we'd have to make a decision.

Pete: So that Bentilee had made it for you?

Ray: So that they would have pushed us into making a decision.

Pete: Yeah.

Ray: Whereas, at the moment, we're saying we've got the time to do this with Mrs. Foscett, we've got the time to do this with Grasshoppers but do we want to do it? That's different, isn't it?

Pete: So you're becoming involved on your terms rather than on their terms?

Ray: Mmm ... I mean, one reason we've given ourselves for helping Mrs. Foscett is that it's getting us into Willfield - it's getting us to know people in Willfield and this means we might be able to work in other ways, you know.

John A.: It's the same problem for us. Do we respond to any demand ... or do we select and on what grounds do we select? - because it's important to our plan or because it seems to us to be a major need?

(LONG PAUSE)

Bob: Have we talked ourselves out?

(RECORDING ENDS)

Tuesday, 23 January 1973

13.45 Appointment at Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College. Talked to the Principal, Mr. Brown, about the college's video equipment. He was very helpful and friendly. Video is used at the college mainly for recording programmes off-air, but the Science Department has used it to make its own teaching programmes, and some work has been done by the Drama Department. We were introduced to Mr. Leek, Head of Science, who is in charge of the college's audio visual equipment; we also met Ian Mather, the A-V technician. They have been using computer tape instead of video-tape, and from what we saw, the results weren't too good. The Head of Drama wasn't available to speak to us, but we saw a teacher in that department who said she would get in touch with us if they decide to use video this term. We left our address and phone number in the Science Department.

Wednesday, 24 January 1973

14.30 Phoned Mrs. Foskett at Willfield School. She told us that an engineer from Rediffusion had called last Wednesday afternoon. After examining the school's television set (to see if it would be possible to fit an output socket) he said it was too old to be tampered with. Mrs. Foskett had then phoned the Education Office in Hanley and was told not to bother with trying to adapt the set, because the school would soon be equipped with a new Phillips video cassette recording system (VCR). We told Mrs. Foskett that we could try and improve reception on our own monitor by taking an aerial on to the roof. We said we'd phone back tomorrow to arrange a date for this. (Bob wasn't too keen to go on Friday, because he wanted to spend the day at Hanley library looking through more back copies of the Evening Sentinel. Ray was eager to visit Willfield as soon as possible, to get this job out of

Wednesday, 24 January contd.

the way, and also to have an opportunity to meet Ken Hudson.)

Phoned Dave James at work in reply to a message received this morning. He wants us to take the equipment along to Grasshoppers at Brookhouse Green School on Monday night. The reason he gave was that some people there felt that "everyone else has had a go, why can't we ?" He also wants to record and playback interviews in the shopping precinct at Devonshire Square on Saturday. Our decision to go along on Monday night meant that we would miss one of the fortnightly postgraduate seminars at the University.

16.15 Phoned John Armstrong. He wants to bring John Brooker, secretary of the Stoke-on-Trent Playschemes Association to have a look at the equipment, and to talk about making a 'programme'. Arranged to meet them in the lab at 9.15 tomorrow.

Thursday, 25 January 1973

9.30 John Armstrong and John Booker arrived, and we began by playing through Promises, Promises, which John Armstrong hadn't yet seen. Afterwards we demonstrated the equipment to John Booker. Three possibilities emerged out of the ensuing discussion: (1) John B. is interested in making a tape explaining about playschemes - possible visit to an adventure playground in North Kensington, London (2) recording and playback at an Association meeting (3) use of video in playschemes during the summer holiday.

10.00 Phoned Mrs. Foskett and arranged to go to Willfield at 10.00 tomorrow.

Thursday, 25 January contd.

11.00 Took John B. to the Students' Union snackbar for coffee. He gave us a brief history of the Playschemes Association (1970 - one playscheme run in Bentilee by YVF; 1971 - four run in Stoke area by YVF; 1972 - Association formed). Relations with Social Services Department - playschemes may get some money from the Department; they have done so in the past but the Department also runs its own playschemes. Association members attend the Department's training sessions. Arranged to attend a meeting to discuss the future of the Boothen playscheme next Friday.

15 00 Tutorial with Ronnie. Talked about Sartre and money.

16.30 Phoned Dave James and confirmed next Saturday's arrangement for 11.00.

Friday, 26 January 1973.

10.00 Arrived at Willfield School. Tried unsuccessfully to get adequate reception on our monitor with the aerial indoors. Borrowed ladders and extension cable to take aerial on to roof. After a process of trial and error we eventually got a fairly good picture. However, the quality was still not good enough to make a satisfactory recording, and so we decided, not reluctantly, to abandon the task. We were introduced to Ken Hudson at lunch time, and he promised to mail us some ideas for using video in ROSLA projects.

Saturday, 27 January 1973

11.30 Called at Dave James' house. He was already at the YVF shop. Jean (his wife) made us a cup of tea and phoned him. He came back home and we chatted for an hour or so. There was no sign of Gerry, who had

Saturday, 27 January contd.

said he'd come to help.

12.15 The three of us went to the Beverley for a drink. Dave talked about YVF and told us that they weren't too popular on the estate. He said they took the credit for everything that got done. He also said that he didn't think that BVPC could get the idea of a Neighbourhood Council off the ground while Reg Walker is chairman (Reg Walker is a ward councillor and chairman of the ward Labour Party, which has in the past opposed the setting up of a Neighbourhood Council). Dave compared our method of approach in Bentilee to that of other students who have worked on the estate (e.g. social work students on placement). He said that they had given the impression that they'd come along "to help the under-privileged". Ray said that our intention was simply "to understand". Dave added that, in his view, we "muck in and work with the residents."

13.15 Returned to Dave's house for lunch.

14.15 Set up equipment outside Woolworth's in Devonshire Square. Dave arranged with the manager for us to use a power point in the store, so that we could record using the mains VTR and play back simultaneously. We were there for about an hour and a half while Dave interviewed passers-by about what they thought their local councillors should be doing for them. We attracted a crowd of kids, all wanting to get into the picture. Arthur Sharman, chairman of the Tenants Association, turned up with his son. He talked to Dave for some time, while his son, a cine enthusiast operated the video camera. We packed up when it started to rain heavily, and loaded the van hurriedly as a traffic warden was breathing down our necks. During the interviews Dave had promised everyone that the tape

Saturday, 27 January contd.

would be shown to their local councillors, and afterwards talked to us trying to organise a debate between the Labour Party and the Tenants Association. Tea at Dave's afterwards.

Monday, 29 January 1973

14.30 Viewed Saturday's tapes. John Booker turned up at the lab and practised using the equipment for an hour or so. He wants to use it to record the next Playschemes Association Committee meeting which will probably take place at the end of next week. Phoned Alan Tellwright to cancel next Wednesday's engagement to go on the school field trip (Ronnie has some people from Harlech Television coming to see him and would like us to meet them). We told Mr. Tellwright that he could borrow the portapak. No news from Ken Hudson yet.

19.15 Grasshoppers youth club at Brookhouse Green School. Set up the equipment and Dave asked us to explain how it worked to the kids. Then they took it in turns to 'interview' each other and to use the camera. From time to time we played back what they'd recorded. They were very excited by the equipment. Pat Faulkner, who also helps at the club, asked if we would take the equipment along to her pre-school playgroup next Tuesday morning. Afterwards we went to the Beverley with Dave. He asked us if we knew anyone at the University who would be willing to do some research on behalf of Grasshoppers, for an application for Urban Aid. They have been offered a student on placement with YVF for this purpose, but Dave would prefer that YVF was not involved. We said we'd ask around but pointed out that we didn't want to do anything which would put us on bad terms with YVF. Afterwards, on our way back to Keele, Ray recalled some more of the conversation with Dave

Monday, 29 January contd.

in the Beverley at Saturday lunchtime. Dave had felt, and we were inclined to agree with him, that YVF tries to control everything that happens on the estate (see for example, 15.1.73). Dave had said he was glad to know our view. Tonight, for the first time, he spoke to us, not as associates of YVF but as ourselves.

Tuesday, 30 January 1973

14.00 Took the portapak to Mr. Tellwright at Milton School and explained how to use it.

Wednesday, 31 January 1973

12.00 Sat in on Ronnie's Foundation Year discussion group, along with a director and a producer from Harlech Television. Ronnie introduced us as a "radical alternative to broadcast television." We weren't altogether happy with that definition, and it seemed to put the HTV people a little on the defensive.

13.00 Afterwards, we had lunch with Ronnie and his two guests. They had come to discuss a series of six programmes which HTV plans to make about communities. Ronnie is employed as a consultant for the series. The programmes will probably be screened in the autumn.

19.30 Meeting of Boothen playscheme group at the Albert pub.

Thursday, 1 February 1973

15.00 Tutorial with Ronnie. Talked about the presentation of the sociologist's personal life and problems in his research. Bob said that personal matters were making work difficult at present.

Monday, 5 February 1973.

14.30 Phoned Pete Hudson to find out whether Arthur Ball has done anything more about making a tape with the Planning Department. Pete said he hasn't. Pete will see Arthur tomorrow night at a meeting of BVPC and will tell him that John Barnes is willing to co-operate and that we are ready to start whenever Arthur is.

Tuesday, 6 February 1973

10.30 Set up equipment at Harold Clowes Community Hall for a training session with Pat Faulkner and other mothers who help run the pre-school playgroup. Most of the children took no notice of us, and while they were drinking their mid-morning milk, we showed Pat and another helper how to use the portapak. They recorded about 10 minutes of tape, taking turns with the camera. They found the camera and shoulder-pack recorder rather heavy for one person to carry. Everyone watched as we played back the tape, but not all of the children seemed as interested as the adults. It seemed to us that Pat would have been content to leave it at that, so during the lunch break we asked if she'd like to make a 'programme' about the playgroup. She said she'd like to make a finished tape to show to parents and asked us if we could come back next week, when they will have had a chance to plan what they want to record and work out a commentary. They'd prefer to use the camera mounted on a tripod.

14.00 Called at the Beverley to give the landlord the photographs of his little girl.

Wednesday, 7 February 1973

12.00 Correlated slides of Promises, Promises tape and practice tape with transcripts.

Wednesday, 7 February contd.

16.30 Phoned Dave James. Arranged provisionally to view Devonshire Square interview tapes (see 27.1.73.) with him and Tom Tuhey next Tuesday. (Mr. Tuhey is one of the Labour councillors for the estate.)
Phoned YVF. Spoke to John Armstrong first. Provisional date for Notting Hill Adventure Playground visit (to make a tape with John Booker) is 3 March. Also, BVPC visit to a community college in Leicestershire on 28 February - they want to make a recording. Next, we spoke to Pete Hudson. He said he'd discussed making a tape with the Planning Department with Arthur Ball last night. Arthur would like to see us one evening next week to talk about it over a drink. Gerry may also be involved, but Pete thought that Arthur and Gerry have "differences of opinion" over some things.

Thursday, 8 February 1973

9.45 Following a request from Elsie Procter, who is trying to start a consumer group on the estate, we played through the Devonshire Square interview tapes, noting the names and addresses of some women who had been quite angry about the way food prices had risen in the local shops. Phoned Pete Hudson and asked him to pass the information on to Elsie.



.... Neighbourhood Councils — As we all know, there is criticism today from people who say that they do not know what is going on, or why, and that, whatever it is, they have no say in it. This is one reason for low polls at most local elections.

The 1972 Act will increase this sense of remoteness. And this at a time when it is clear that more and more people, as individuals, and in groups that care, want a say in the really local issues that affect their neighbourhood and their families.

More and more *ad hoc* groups, many with affiliations to wider areas or nationally, are being formed. . . . The Association for Neighbourhood Councils has carried out surveys in towns from Newcastle to Reading, and in every case a majority of the people who were asked said that they would like to have a genuinely local body in which they could take part.

On their function—they could have limited executive powers, similar to those of existing parish councils, together with a modest right to precept in the new district councils; they could have specific executive powers delegated to them by the district councils....

Monday, 12 February 1973

10.30 Phoned Ken Hudson at Willfield School. He apologised for not getting in touch with us. He said he had two ideas about using video with his ROSLA pupils : (1) to make a 'programme' about the course to be shown to new pupils at the beginning of each year (2) for making tapes in situations outside school where it is impractical to take large groups of pupils. We arranged to see him a week tomorrow to demonstrate the equipment.

19.30 Went to see Dave James at Grasshoppers club at Brookhouse Green School. The meeting with Tom Tuhey tomorrow night is at Dave's house. Some members of a newly formed consumer group are also expected to come and watch the Devonshire Square interview tapes. Dave drew our attention to Harold Wilson's speech, in which he referred to Neighbourhood Councils, which was reported in the weekend press. Afterwards, we went round to Arthur Ball's house to discuss making a tape about the Brook with the Planning Department. He said he was surprised to see us because he'd told Pete Hudson that he had changed his job and wouldn't have so much time in future for this kind of work. Pete had told us about this over the phone on Wednesday but he was under the impression that Arthur was still keen to get something under way with the Planning Department. Pete had also said that Arthur had been nominated as BVPC's "link man" with us, and had seemed to "welcome" the job. Arthur told us he felt that the job had been thrust upon him. He thought another member of BVPC should be brought in as well. We got the impression that he really wasn't interested at present. We felt a bit uncomfortable because of the misunderstanding. We were also annoyed when he accused us of not turning up at the YVF shop on Monday, 22 January; in fact it was he who failed to keep the appointment. We left after about 10 minutes.

Tuesday, 13 February 1973

10.00 It snowed heavily today. Phoned Pat Faulkner's playgroup to see if it would be worthwhile going along. Only two children had turned up so far, so it was decided to postpone making a tape until next Thursday.

16.30 Went to the YVF shop to talk about our visit to Arthur Ball's last night with Pete Hudson. Pete was speechless when we told him what had happened. He was certain he hadn't misunderstood Arthur and referred to the minutes of the last BVPC meeting to confirm that Arthur had been keen to act as a link man between BVPC and ourselves. Pete suggested that we call to see Gerry, to see if he was still interested. We went to his house, but he hadn't come home from work yet.

18.00 Had a meal at Dave James' with John Armstrong. Afterwards we set up the equipment in Dave's living room and played back the Devonshire Square tapes. It was the first time Dave had seen them. He seemed quite pleased and relieved that they weren't "too controversial". Then he phoned Tom Tuhey and invited him over to see the tapes. By now, Elsie Procter had arrived, and when Mr. Tuhey turned up we played through the interviews again. He was in quite a good mood and at first restricted his comments to camera work and interviewing technique. He watched closely sitting on the floor in front of the monitor. Before he left Mr. Tuhey jokingly remarked on the interviewer's (i.e Dave's) bias and the amount of time taken up by the chairman of the Tenants Association. He said that if Dave could organise a public meeting for next week, between the Labour Party and the Tenants Association, he'd be glad to attend. Dave asked Mr. Tuhey if he didn't think it was time for a "confrontation"; Mr. Tuhey replied that he didn't think that "a confrontation was good

Tuesday, 13 February contd.

for the community". Dave said: "No - a public meeting," and Mr Tuhey said that if that was what he had meant, that was all right. Dave also asked him if he'd seen Harold Wilson's speech in the papers (about Neighbourhood Councils). Mr Tuhey said he hadn't. After he left, we showed Elsie how to use the portapak. John Armstrong asked if we'd heard any more from Ken Hudson, and we told him about our phone call to him yesterday. John wondered whether Ken was not very reliable and was thinking of inviting him to the shop for a talk. John said he would like our work with Ken to be complementary to his own ideas for involving Ken in the community. Later, we went to the pub with Dave and on the way back he said that he wanted to write to Harold Wilson, the local Labour Party, and the press, about the reluctance of the ward Labour Party to accept the idea of a Neighbourhood Council for Bentilee.

Friday, 16 February 1973

14.15 Pete Hudson phoned. He said he'd spoken with Gerry Sandford. Gerry was still interested in working with video, but he would need help to get started. Pete had suggested to him that a BVPC video subcommittee should be formed, to include Gerry, John Armstrong, Dave Waters, and anyone else that Gerry wanted to co-opt. Gerry said he might be able to get Arthur Ball to join. Pete felt that, for the time being, the subcommittee should get together to discuss their aims before thinking about producing tapes. One of their aims, in Pete's view, might be to foster community interest in a Neighbourhood Council. He didn't want to be on the subcommittee himself, and asked us to visit Gerry at 19.00 next Tuesday for a general discussion.

Tuesday, 20 February 1973

Meeting with Ken Hudson postponed.

19.00 Went to Gerry Sandford's house, as arranged, but he wasn't in. Drove round to Dave James' to see if there was any news about the public meeting between the Labour Party and the Tenants Association. He hadn't been able to book a hall yet. He showed us a copy of a questionnaire which had been sent out by the Planning Department to get people's views on priorities in the Stoke Structure Plan. He said that the questionnaire had been sent to a random sample of households and that the Planning Department wanted "to keep it out of the hands of community groups". However, BVPC had managed to get hold of fifteen copies.

20.00 Accompanied Dave to a BVPC meeting in the hope of finding Gerry. We didn't really want to spend a lot of time there when we discovered that Gerry hadn't turned up, but John Armstrong suggested that it might be a good opportunity to talk about video. We discussed making a tape about parking on the estate to show to the Surveyor's Department. Bob wanted to talk about the work we had done so far : BVPC has spent quite some time and energy producing two tapes (practice tape and Promises, Promises). Promises, Promises didn't turn out as planned and hasn't been used in the way intended. Its impact on the community as a whole has been negligible, although within BVPC, its production generated some friction (Dave James - Arthur Ball : see 20.12.72). However, by 21.30 an opportunity to raise these issues hadn't arisen and it didn't seem likely that the conversation would move in that direction. We left soon afterwards.

Wednesday, 21 February 1973

Bob went to London for the day.

18.45 Ray met Gerry, John Armstrong and John Freeman for a meal at the university before going to the first of two lectures by Richard Crossman, organised by the Adult Education Department at Keele. After we'd eaten, John Freeman suggested that it was a good time to have the chat we should have had with Gerry last evening. John Freeman seemed keen to get things moving, and in reply to Gerry's request for some positive ideas, he suggested that we should get on with making a tape about parking and play facilities in Bentilee. It was also suggested that Gerry should try to interest some other local people in helping him. Ray said that we should get together to evaluate what we've already done.

20.00 - 22.00 Richard Crossman lecture at the University. When he'd finished speaking, someone asked him for his views on televising Parliament. Mr. Crossman said that it was imperative that Parliament should be televised, and he gave his reasons. This prompted John Freeman to ask Professor Shaw (who had organised the lecture) if we might videotape Richard Crossman's second lecture (tomorrow evening) to show to BVPC and other interested people in Bentilee. Professor Shaw seemed surprised that we should want to record a lecture when he could supply Bentilee with 'live' speakers. John took this to be a refusal and explained to Ray afterwards that he and Professor Shaw disagree over the future of the WEA in Stoke. John supports WEA while Professor Shaw would like to replace it with his Adult Education Department at the University. John saw Professor Shaw's offer of 'live' speakers as a ploy to gain a foothold in Bentilee and his 'refusal' to allow us to videotape tomorrow's

Wednesday, 21 February contd.

lecture angered John.

22.00 Ray went for a drink at the Sneyd with Gerry and the two Johns. He told John Armstrong that Bob and he would have to leave the University in June and cut short the project if the Social Science Research Council turns down our application. John A. said that YVF might be able to supply some funds and he put this suggestion to John Freeman. John F. said firmly that there was "no chance". He said that there were cheaper ways of getting hold of video equipment (e.g. by borrowing it from Stoke Polytechnic) and that while it might be very nice to have two interesting blokes hanging about to watch and to supply technical information, the money could be better spent. He said that the responsibility for finding money lay with Ronnie. Ray said that there was little Ronnie could do apart from helping us in our applications to grant-giving bodies. He had helped us a lot already by accepting us to do our research in his department and by letting us use the equipment. John F. said that, in that case, the responsibility for finding money was ours. Ray agreed and pointed out that we'd spent several hundred pounds each of our own money already. Ray said we could borrow enough to last us until June which would mean that we could qualify for our Masters degrees. But that was not the point. Neither YVF nor anyone else in Bentilee had made full use of the equipment yet. John Freeman said that YVF didn't want to use it: they would prefer Bentilee residents like Gerry to really push things forward. Gerry said that it was difficult for him to devote enough time to video; sometimes he worked on Sundays and only saw his wife for a few hours in the week. Ray became quite angry at the suggestion that we were expecting to be supported for apparently doing nothing. He said that as 'participant observers' our role should develop and change. It was

Wednesday, 21 February contd.

up to the community to tell us what it wanted and to use us more fully. John Freeman said that that sounded more reasonable and that it was possibly the time to start changing our role. Gerry asked what effect that would have on our research. Ray said that our research included observing crises such as this. John Freeman said that we hadn't spoken in these terms before and that we'd always defined our role in a very narrow and unrelenting way. After we left the pub, John Armstrong had a few words with Ray. He said that it wasn't a case of "ganging up" on John Freeman, but both he (John A.) and Pete Hudson saw very good reasons why YVF should support our project in Bentilee. He said that besides this, we shouldn't be told, "Well, thanks for what you've done, but it wasn't enough".

Thursday, 22 February 1973

10.00 Phoned Pat Faulkner at the pre-school playgroup. She said that only a few children had turned up again, so we decided to postpone making the tape until next Tuesday. Phoned YVF. John Booker was at the shop, and we made plans for the Notting Hill Adventure Playground visit. We are to meet John between 13.30 and 14.00 on Saturday, 3 March in Acklam Road, London.

20.00 Second Richard Crossman lecture at the university. Gerry came with us. The lecture was entitled The Decline of Politics. Towards the end he touched briefly on the role of pressure groups, such as the Trade Unions and Neighbourhood Councils, in participatory democracy. Bob asked him: "What kind of tactics would you suggest for a pressure group which can't 'turn off the gas', can't withhold rent, can't withdraw labour? I'm thinking particularly of certain kinds of community action group." Mr. Crossman replied that they should work within the Labour movement. Alluding to the ward Labour Party's rejection of

Thursday, 22 February contd.

BVPC's proposal to set up a Neighbourhood Council in Bentilee, Bob then asked: "What if there is conflict between the pressure group and the local Labour Party?" Mr. Crossman said he couldn't discuss this without knowing the details, and Professor Shaw said there wasn't time to go into it then. Later, in the bar, John Freeman repeated to Ray that we shouldn't rely on YVF for financial support. He said that he wouldn't "put it as strongly" as he had done last night, when his bluntness had been due to Professor Shaw's 'refusal' (as John saw it - Shaw hadn't actually said "No") to let us videotape the second Crossman lecture. Later, John asked if we had written an interim report on the project which he could read. Ray replied that we hadn't, but that we hoped to get our theses written up by the end of the summer.

Friday, 23 February 1973

11.00 Set up equipment in lab and showed a tape of an interview between two social workers, for Dr. Ursula Sharma's third year undergraduate discussion group. Dr. Sharma said that she'd like us to show her how to use the equipment.

Monday, 26 February 1973

11.30 Phoned Willfield School and left a message for Ken Hudson asking if it would be all right for us to go and see him in the afternoon of Tuesday, 6 March.

Tuesday, 27 February 1973

10.15 Pre-school playgroup tape. Set up equipment at Harold Clowes Community Hall and decided to start shooting after lunch at 13.30. In the meantime, we went around to the YVF shop. John Freeman, John

Tuesday, 27 February 1973.

Armstrong and Dave James were there. We didn't see much of John Freeman - he stayed in his office most of the time. Dave said that he still hadn't been able to arrange a meeting between the ward Labour Party and the Tenants Association. He said he wanted to make an information tape about Neighbourhood Councils. We asked him if he would mind our showing his Devonshire Square interviews tapes at tonight's meeting of the university's Sociology Society, at which we have been invited to give a talk on community television. He was quite willing and said it was "all part of the contract". (?) We told John that we wouldn't be able to go on the Leicester Community College trip next Wednesday because we wanted to attend an important staff/postgraduate sociology seminar at the university. We told him he could borrow the portapak.

12.30 Had a fish and chips lunch at the playgroup. Pat practised operating the camera, and Joan (one of the helpers) showed us some notes she had made for a commentary (see next page). Gerry turned up just before we began taping. He'd been told where to find us at the YVF shop. He'd been thinking of ways to use the equipment, since he felt that we were not being used enough. (Dave had made a similar comment earlier in the shop.) Gerry again brought up the subject of parking problems on the estate - there are no garages, very few parking bays, and the narrow streets are always lined with cars, restricting traffic movement. He suggested making a tape about it the weekend after next

13.30 We began taping the playgroup, with Pat operating the camera, focussing on different activities in the room, while Joan provided a voice-over commentary. Later, she mingled with the children and talked to them and the other helpers. We recorded a 20 min. tape and played

Say hello to Her mothers.
Tell them the name of
the playgroup and explain
what a playgroup is for.
Tell them that it is run
by five local mothers voluntarily.
Tell them about the toys &
the money raising where
the money goes.
Tell them we like the
children to come regularly

FUND RAISING. 10p fee for
children; Coffee morning ^{3 June & 7 July}
Raffles. Jambles Sales.

Tuesday, 27 February, contd.

some of it back afterwards to check that it was all right. Joan was a bit embarrassed by her commentary, but we thought it was OK. We arranged to come back at 15.00 next Tuesday, to play back the tape for the mothers when they collect their children.

15.00 Dr. Una McLean, from Edinburgh University, gave an illustrated talk to staff and postgraduates in the Sociology Department on her method for interesting medical students in social medicine. The approach involves project work presented in the form of synchronised tape and slide sequences. We were invited to have dinner with Ronnie and Dr. McLean, before presenting our own tape and slide show to the Sociology Society.

19.30 Sociology Society meeting. After a brief introduction, we ran through the revised tape and slide show, Some Ideas about Video and Community TV, then showed the Devonshire Square interview tapes, together with slides of the same event (this had the effect of putting what was happening on the video monitor into a slightly different perspective). During the discussion afterwards, someone asked us about our 'non-directive' approach. Ronnie made a point which we had talked about earlier in the day : people may find it difficult to know what to do if given a completely free hand; on the other hand, if they are given some direction, then at least they have something which they can either agree with or disagree with.

Wednesday, 28 February 1973.

While writing up the diary for yesterday, we came to the following conclusions :

(1) it may be time to modify our approach to a more participatory one, in terms of giving advice, making value judgements and taking action.

Wednesday, 28 February contd.

(2) perhaps we can draw a lesson from our laboratory interviews last term, when we also found that it was not always possible to take a completely non-directive role.

Thursday, 1 March 1973

11.30 Phone YVF to make final arrangements for the trip to Notting Hill this weekend. Spoke to Pete Hudson, who said he'd heard we were having financial difficulties. He said they (YVF) would have to see what they could do to help us out. He thought that they could quite easily help us out with small amounts, but realised that that would be of little use in the long term. John Armstrong told us that Gerry had written to Harold Wilson, asking if we could tape an interview with him about Neighbourhood Councils.

15.00 Tutorial with Ronnie. Asked him how he would begin to 'analyse' the Devonshire Square interview tapes, which he'd seen at the Sociology Society meeting. The following is a transcript of the recorded conversation:

Bob: What did you think of the videotape we showed the other evening? If you were us, and you had a collection of that kind of stuff, what would you start doing with it?

Ronnie: I gave some thought to this, actually, at the time. It struck me as rather intractable material to write about, and I started thinking about it in the way I do in terms of contradictions. The ones that came to mind were the difficulty the bloke (is Dave James) was obviously having, between his desire to let everyone speak and the fact that most of

Thursday, 1 March contd.

The people who wanted - well, to be rather than speak - were kids, and he wasn't at all sure whether children were among those whose opinions he wanted. And then at one stage he decided that he would overcome this situation by succumbing to it, so he asked the children to give their opinion. That was one thing, and the other thing was the point I made to you at the time, and that is the degree to which do-it-yourself video is conditioned by what you've seen people doing on the box, in the kind of formal interview situation, and I think Una (Dr. Una McLean) made the point that whenever it began to break away from this format - by everyone joining in and it becoming a discussion - he pushed it back - you know, he had this kind of neat and tidy idea. When you see a film or a television programme which hasn't been constructed along these lines it makes very difficult viewing ... (e.g. an Andy Warhol film).

Bob: Coming back to videotapes for a minute, I've had this idea for some time that you can sometimes see a different kind of contradiction in them, between the way the tape was intended to turn out and the way it actually does turn out, or the way it was originally intended to be used and the way it was originally intended to be used and the way it eventually is used (e.g. Promises, Promises)

Ronnie: Yeah, well I think this was a problem, too, for him. In fact, in a way his social assumptions went wrong. First of all he seemed to be assuming that the people who came along would be local people, and there was this "horrible" period in the middle when three people came along in a row who weren't local. And secondly ... he'd made assumptions about numbers and the willingness of people to stop and talk which also were only partially successful. The main feeling it produced in me at the

Thursday, 1 March 1973 contd.

time was this sort of scepticism about - in what circumstances people do really talk about political problems - whether there are in fact any. So if I were going to follow this up, I would perhaps try and think of all the possible situations in which people might talk about political issues and then try and get videotapes of them doing it. It's part of this business of the sort of castration of ordinary people in relation to society. In our society, outside exclusive groups like Parliament and the council, there are no fora for the discussion of anything of any importance. And if you happen to have a job where the machines are noisy, and you don't drink, then you never interact with anybody else and you're never in an interactive situation in which political problems are discussed. People are always receiving information, with little opportunity to discuss it ... So that when you go along with a microphone and ask people things - the other interesting contradiction is that when you ask people what ought to be done, they say, "lots of things", and then when you say "which?" they don't know ... So I think you could make quite a good analysis, or the beginnings of a good analysis, in terms of firstly, how one-way communication in the media determines the way in which, if somebody's operating the media themselves, they tend to structure what they're doing; and secondly, how previous experience leaves people without sufficient ability to handle a situation in which their opinions are considered as important ...

Saturday, 3 March 1973.

13.00 Met John Booker, Dave and Jean James, Dave Waters and George Gratton (treasurer of the Stoke-on-Trent Playschemes Association) in Acklam Road, Notting Hill. John Booker shot some tape in an adventure playground underneath West Way, but the light was poor so we drove

Saturday, 3 March contd.

around to Telford Road - the site of the original Notting Hill Adventure Playground. John Booker checked with one of the playleaders that it would be all right for us to shoot some videotape and take photos in the playground. John wandered around with the portapak, recording the different activities which were going on. He was more interested in 'on-the-ground' activities than in the rope and timber constructions, since the Playschemes Association does not usually undertake to provide the latter, more ambitious kind of facilities on its sites. Later, Dave Waters taped an interview between John Booker and one of the playleaders. We stayed at the playground until shortly after 16.00, then arranged to meet John Booker at Keele early on Wednesday morning to view the tape (we were spending the weekend in London.)

Monday, 5 March 1973

14.30 Played through the Notting Hill Adventure Playground tape in the lab. It was quite good, although John had overexposed the beginning, and the sound was rather poor during the interview. Some of the other sequences, however, were visually very striking.

Tuesday, 6 March 1973

12.30 Called at the YVF shop to deliver the portapak for tomorrow's visit to the community college at Leicester. John Freeman and Pete Hudson were there. The atmosphere was rather gloomy. We feel that YVF (in particular, John Freeman) is being critical of our 'passive' role, yet in the past they have expected us to check with them before making a move, and have even put us off doing things if they thought they might clash with their own activities. We are beginning to realise that we should be more 'active'. Our previous reluctance to accept this

Tuesday, 6 March contd.

may account for the cooling of our relationship with YVF. John Freeman seems annoyed with us. But will they be more annoyed if we start doing things of our own accord? Bob felt that the situation will probably get worse and may develop into conflict before our relationship with YVF improves.

14.00 Saw Ken Hudson at Willfield School, to talk about using video in connection with his RDSLAs courses. He said that between now and Easter he will organise things with interested staff and some of the pupils, so that we can begin work immediately after the holiday. We suggested a visit to the school in the near future to demonstrate the equipment.

15.00 Playback of pre-school playgroup tape to mothers at Harold Clowes Hall. Several of them lost interest and left before the tape finished. No one asked any questions. We asked Pat Faulkner if she wanted to keep the tape, and she replied that they'd rather make another, better one, to be shown in Devonshire Square one Saturday afternoon for fundraising and recruitment purposes.

Wednesday, 7 March 1973

9.30 Met John Booker in the lab and played through the Notting Hill Adventure Playground tape. He asked if we could show it at a meeting of the Playschemes Association in Norton (Stoke-on-Trent) tomorrow night. We also played the pre-school playgroup tape, and he asked us to bring that along as well. Later, in the snack bar, we discussed our financial position with him; he said it would be in his interests for YVF to support us and that he'd have a word with John Armstrong about it. We pointed out that we'd never have considered that YVF might support us if they hadn't mentioned it as a possibility.

Thursday, 8 March 1973

19.00 Meeting of the Norton Playscheme group at Norton and Ball Green Community Hall. Set up the equipment. John Booker arrived at 19.15. We waited until 19.45 for everyone to turn up. We began showing the tapes; there were two mothers present who had been involved in a playscheme last year, two girls from the Sixth Form College (who had also worked on last year's scheme) some other girls and housewives who were newcomers, and a gang of restless kids. John Booker talked over the Notting Hill tape and explained some of the similarities and differences between adventure playgrounds and playschemes. John Armstrong arrived while the tape was running. Then we showed the pre-school playgroup tape, but stopped it after about 10 minutes because John B. and John A. were eager to get on with the discussion. The seats were re-arranged in a circle. The two women began talking about the practical problems of running a playscheme. There won't be a playscheme in Norton over Easter, but one is being organised for the summer holidays. In the meantime, a visit is being arranged for interested parents to the Chell Heath Easter playscheme. Afterwards, a group of us went to the pub. John Armstrong said he'd mentioned to some of the groups in Bentilee who have been using the equipment that we might have to pack up and leave at the end of the year. They said they would be sorry if the project has to end. John seemed surprised that even though they don't seem to be making a great deal of use of it, they still think there is a need for it in Bentilee. Gerry Sandford, in particular, is very keen. Arranged to phone John tomorrow at the shop, to find out what Gerry's plans are for making a tape about parking problems this coming weekend.

Friday, 9 March 1973

10.30 Tutorial with Ronnie.

Friday, 9 March contd.

12.00 Phoned John Armstrong: he hadn't been able to contact Gerry about the weekend, so we decided it might be best for us to call at his house with the equipment tomorrow afternoon.

Played through the Leicester community college tape. A lot of the shots were out of focus and there were light burns on the tube. Some parts were also underexposed.

Saturday, 10 March 1973

14.00 Drove to Bentilee and called for Gerry. He wasn't in so we went round to Dave James' house and talked about the play/parking tape. Dave said he didn't see much point in a tape which just showed cars parked all over Bentilee, since there is already a plan to provide parking areas, along with play space, as part of the reclamation scheme. However, the Surveyor's Department seem reluctant to discuss these proposals publicly. Ray suggested that we should try to find out more about the plan, so that BVPC can offer constructive comments, and, if necessary produce alternatives. It was decided that we (ie Bob and Ray) should contact Jane Skinner, a community development officer working for the Social Services Department, and arrange to talk with her about Bentilee, as a first step towards getting more information. Dave Waters turned up and said that Gerry had told him that the parking tape was to be made on Sunday. We said we couldn't make it on that day, and agreed that Dave Waters should take the portapak around to Gerry's house in the morning. Bob brought up the question of anonymity in our theses and Dave James said he couldn't see any reason why we shouldn't use people's real names (Bob was keen to do this so that the diary, at least, would give residents a clear picture of all that had happened). Dave James said that we had done a lot to change the attitude

Saturday, 10 March contd.

of Bentilee people to students. We suspect this is mainly Dave's personal view, and is linked with the fact that he sees us as 'separate' from YVF. We then went to look for Gerry again, but couldn't find him, so we left the equipment with Dave Waters in case they want to do some taping tomorrow.

Bob + Ray, or Ray + Bob,

Hi there partners!
to the Umberto Club

(ie tonight Wednesday) to have a meeting /
dink with the video BVPC style group?

Also the consumer group would like your
series on 'this Friday' - probably afternoon
and BVPC on Saturday afternoon and
Sunday mornings.

Hope to see you
tonight!

John

This cancels the
phone message

Wednesday, 14 March 1973

11.00 Message from John Armstrong, asking us to attend a BVPC meeting tonight at 20.00. Also, Gerry wants to use the equipemnt on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning.

12.30 Phoned Jane Skinner, but she wasn't at her office.

15.00 Phone message to tell us that tonight's BVPC meeting has been cancelled.

Friday, 16 March 1973

13.45 Drove to the YVF shop to meet Elsie Procter, who wanted to tape some street interviews explaining about the Bentilee consumer group. John Freeman and John Armstrong were there when we arrived. We had previously told them that because funds were getting short we would have to suspend operations for the Easter vacation. John Armstrong asked us whether we would stay in Keele over Easter if we had enough money. We said that we wouldn't have thought of going home if we'd had enough money to stay, but that now we were looking forward to the opportunity to do some writing up. We told them that we would arrange for them to use the equipment whenever they needed it. John A. asked us to make out a check-list of our weekly expenses. When Elsie arrived we set up the equipment outside the YVF shop. Elsie talked to passing shoppers about rising prices and the difficulty of making ends meet, and also handed out leaflets which listed those goods affected by VAT. We operated the equipment. We recorded nearly half an hour of tape and played it back in the street. By this time the schools were out and as usual we attracted a crowd of kids as well as shoppers. We left the equipment at the shop ready for tomorrow.

Saturday, 17 March 1973

13.15 Arrived at the YVF shop to meet Gerry who wanted to discuss his plans, which included making a tape about parking this afternoon. He wasn't there. John Armstrong and Dave Waters were waiting for us. They hadn't heard from Gerry so we drove round to his house. His children told us that he was ill and had been off work for the past couple of days. We returned to the shop and went for a drink with John and Dave at the Hollybush. We weren't sure how to 'interpret' Gerry's illness. John said he had been very keen to make a start, earlier in the week. He had also talked of taping a local football match tomorrow morning. We decided to leave the portapak with Dave Waters and on our way back to Keele we dropped a note through Gerry's letterbox, asking him to phone us in the morning if he felt fit enough to go ahead with the football tape.

Sunday, 18 March 1973

No news from Gerry about taping the football match.

Tuesday, 20 March 1973

14.00 Message from Gerry asking us to phone YVF. Pete Hudson wanted to check that it will be all right for them to use the equipment while we're away. We said we'd leave everything with them at the shop, but asked them to keep in touch with the university in case it was needed in the Sociology Department during the vacation. We arranged to drive over with the mains VTR and monitor (they already had the portapak). Pete said that if we arrived within the next half hour, Gerry would be at the shop and would like to see us.

14.45 Arrived at the shop; Gerry wasn't there. YVF had just bought a

Tuesday, 20 March 1973 contd.

copy of Video in Community Development* and John Freeman said he wasn't very impressed by it. Pete Hudson showed us a report he'd written about the UBB meeting (18.1.73) and said he would send us copies. His account differed considerably in emphasis from ours. We refreshed Pete's memory on how to set up and clean the equipment, then played through a tape which Dave Waters had made of the football match on Sunday. Gerry turned up just after 16.00. He said he'd been in bed with tonsillitis over the weekend. He wanted to show the football tape to the home team next Thursday evening, and he said he thought it would be a bad thing if we have to wind up the project in the summer, as things are "just beginning to move". We gave them an address and phone number where we could be contacted while we were away, then drove to Wales for our Easter 'holiday'.

Wednesday, 21 March 1973

We spent five weeks in Wales, editing the project diary and drafting sections of our individual theses. While we were away there was an exchange of correspondence between the Social Science Research Council and Ronnie. Copies of these letters were forwarded to us. In view of the radical misunderstanding of our intentions by the Council we didn't feel it was worthwhile pursuing this application any further.

* Video in Community Development : Hopkins, Evans, Herman, Kirk (Centre for Advanced Television Studios,)Ovum, London, 1972.



Social Science
Research Council

State House High Holborn London WC1R 4TH

Telephone 01-405 6491 ext

Professor R J Frankenberg
Department of Sociology
University of Keele
Keele
Staffordshire
ST5 5BJ

Your reference

Our reference HR 2345/1

Date 27 March 1973

Dear Professor Frankenberg

EXPLORATORY STUDY OF USE OF MEDIA APPLICATION AND PERSPECTIVE IN AN URBAN AREA

I am writing to let you know the Council's decision regarding your application for research funds. You will, I am sure, be disappointed to hear that they are not able to offer you the necessary funds for the project as it stands. Although the Sociology and Social Administration Committee thought that this was an interesting idea they pointed out that you had given very little detail about the sort of data the research workers were hoping to collect or about the local communities to be studied. It was also felt that the wording of the application was rather diffuse, and that this made it difficult to perceive any clear focus in your proposed research.

Although they appreciated that a project of this kind required expertise in video-tape techniques, it was felt that neither of the research assistants had the necessary formal qualifications in sociology and it was not clear to what extent you would be involved in the research to give sociological guidance. It would also be helpful to know what work you have conducted in this area already.

The Committee have however ~~already~~ asked me to invite you to submit a revised but more limited application, perhaps restricted to one aspect of communication. In particular, it was thought that research into the diffusion of mass communication media was an almost untouched research topic in which research work could be most fruitful. Alternatively, it was suggested that you might concentrate a research into the role of local radio in the community. Finally, the Committee thought that you should consider consulting the Department of Communication Research at your university before re-drafting your proposal.

I hope that you will not be too discouraged by this news and that you will consider submitting a revised application. The next closing date for receipt of applications is 15 April and if you do decide to resubmit we would allow you a few days leeway.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Stella Shaw
Committee Secretary



UNIVERSITY OF KEELE

PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY :
Ronald Fraakenberg, B.A. (Hons.) (Cantab),
M.A. (Econ), Ph.D. (Manchester)

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
KEELE,
STAFFORDSHIRE ST5 5BG
(Tel. Keele Park 371)
STD 0782 71 371

29th March 1973

Dear Miss Shaw,

Thank you for your letter of the 27th March 1973.
I tried to contact you by telephone today but was unsuccessful.

I am, as you suggest, of course, disappointed, although not entirely surprised at the unwillingness of the Social Science Research Council to provide funds. I am, however, quite astounded at some of the comments that you have been asked to pass on and would welcome your advice as to how best to proceed. To mention the most extraordinary thing first I cannot see why the Committee should feel that it is necessary for me to consult brain physiologists for a project on mass media since I cannot believe that the Social Science Research Council Committee is unaware that the Keele Department of Communication is in fact concerned with the physics of neuronal transmission. Secondly, since our whole emphasis and interest in the application and in the Department's work in general is on the sociology of the visual, I was surprised to have it suggested that we might concentrate the research on the role of local radio. I am afraid I do not know what the "diffusion of mass communication media" means, which is why it remains an untouched research topic, and I would welcome your opinion as to what was intended to be meant by this phrase.

Thirdly, as to the extent to which I would be involved in the research, the fact that I made the application and enclosed my own curriculum vitae was intended to be an indication that I was deeply concerned. I would have willingly have pointed this out in advance of the committee meeting had I been asked. I had assumed that the committee might have heard of my Communities in Britain and that it was, therefore, not necessary to stress that I had some experience and knowledge in community research, which I was hoping to extend.

cont'd.....

I do not, in fact, agree that the application was diffuse or that, at least in the revised form, it contained little detail about the data that we were hoping to collect, but I would naturally welcome your guidance as to why you thought that detail was lacking.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Ronald Frankenberg

Miss Stella Shaw
Committee Secretary
Social Science Research Council
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LONDON WC1R 4TH



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Telephone 01-405 6491 ext 1283

Professor R J Frankenberg
Department of Sociology
University of Keele
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Your reference

Our reference HR 2345/1

Date 2 April 1973

Dear Professor Frankenberg

Thank you for your letter of 29 March.

In reply, may I first apologise for the mistake in my letter to you of 27 March, which should of course have read the Department of Mass Communication Research at Leicester university (and even that is wrong as it should be Centre!) The fact is that we have a great rush to get out these letters as fast as possible in order to give people time to re-submit for the next 'round', and I failed to read through my letter properly before signing it.

On your other points, may I also say that it was the opening two paragraphs of your application which led the Committee to comment that you might concentrate on the role of local radio, since you discuss the proliferation of various kinds of media over recent years, and they took this as an indication of your interest in all forms of mass media. This view was reinforced by the opening paragraph of your general methodological note, in which you said that your intention "is to observe and document ways in which various media are used in the study area" and, lastly, by your own statement in paragraph two, page two that "We are also interested in local radio ...". It was also these paragraphs, which discuss centralised and decentralised systems of mass communication, which led us to coin the phrase 'diffusion of mass communication media'. This was intended as a reference to the process by which the mass communications media have become decentralised, as "seen in the proliferation of community newspapers and experiments involving the use of film and portable video equipment". In short, the Committee understood you to have a general interest in all forms of mass communication, and they wished to indicate that, in their view, within this field topics such as the role of local radio or this decentralisation/diffusion process were perhaps more amenable to sociological analysis than the use of video in the community.

On your third point, it is my turn to express mystification since, although we have received full curricula vitae for Mr Dunning and Mr Jardine, there was no curriculum vitae for yourself in the papers which we received. Furthermore, I should also say that, even if your curriculum vitae had been included, I think the Committee would still have asked the same question. We regularly receive applications from Professors who do supply such details but closer enquiry reveals that their involvement with both the planning and execution of the research is minimal. The problem which worried the Committee was that, although you were interested in and certainly knowledgeable about the project, particularly the community aspect, you might not have much time available to spend on it - this being a major constraint on research by full-time university staff at present.

Professor R J Frankenberg

2 April 1973

Finally, the question of lack of detail. The Committee would like to have more information about such matters as which community groups are to be involved in the study, and why these particular ones were selected; how many video tapes are you likely to collect, and how will they be analysed; how will you study decision making processes and criteria for selection and presentation, who are the actual people who take these decisions and how many are likely to be involved; what kind of interviews will you use, will there be any structuring or questionnaires; if no questionnaires will you tape record the interviews; who will be doing what, and when? In short, they would like the three final paragraphs of your General Methodological Note, and other parts of the note relating to what will be done, expanded, as they found it difficult to understand exactly what is involved in this kind of research.

I hope that these points answer your queries and that you now feel able to go ahead with a revised application.

Yours sincerely



Stella Shaw
Committee Secretary

Thursday, 29 March 1973

Phone call from Pete Hudson and John Armstrong. Pete told us that BVPC was sending us a cheque for £25 "to help us out for a couple of weeks". John said that they'd been using the equipment quite a lot, and were beginning to appreciate just how much we'd been doing for them - he hadn't realised how much effort it requires to transport and set up the equipment each time it is used. They've been using the portable camera with the mains VTR, and had worked out for themselves how to connect them using the camera adaptor (we hadn't shown them how to do this).

Saturday, 14 April 1973

Phone call from Gerry. He's written to Harold Wilson, asking if he would let us videotape him talking to members of BVPC about Neighbourhood Councils. His secretary has written back saying that Mr Wilson is prepared to do this.

Wednesday, 25 April 1973

Drove back to Keele

Monday, 30 April 1973

14.45 Pete Hudson visited us at the university, and told us about some of the things that have happened in Bentilee while we've been away. The Harold Wilson interview has been arranged for May 24 or 25, to coincide with his visit to Stoke to open the new Labour Party headquarters. There has been some argument between members of BVPC over who should be present at the interview. Pete said he thought he oughtn't to be there, and that Reg Walker, as a prominent local Labour Party figure, shouldn't be present either. He had fallen out with Reg over this.

Tuesday, 1 May 1973

10.30 Went to the YVF shop. John Armstrong, Pete Hudson and Dave James were there. John said they'd used the equipment several times while we'd been away. They'd taped another football match, a school play, and made a preliminary tape about parking. They had started on a 'finished' tape, but the camera connection on the portapak had worked loose, preventing further recording. Also, one set of batteries didn't seem to be charging properly. The equipment was at John Armstrong's house, and he said he'd return it to us for checking first thing tomorrow morning. Dave James told us that he, Dave Waters, Gerry and Elsie Proctor have been chosen provisionally by BVPC to interview Harold Wilson. They'd like it to be held at the Labour Party Auto Club, rather than at the Labour Party headquarters (the Auto Club is in Bentilee, the Labour Party HQ in Longton). They want us, as "professionals", to do the recording. Dave said he thought that there would be a considerable demand for the tape afterwards - it could be shown to local councillors (who are still opposed to the idea of a Neighbourhood Council in Bentilee) as well as to local people, and even throughout the city. We asked what else had happened during our absence. Dave told us that Tom Tuhey had been elected as ward councillor in the county elections; he (Dave) has joined the Labour Party and had supported Mr. Tuhey's campaign. He seemed cool towards us and more than once asked us how much longer we would be working in Bentilee. We left the shop at 12.15 and drove around the Brook to see how the reclamation work was progressing. Pete asked us to take some photographs for the next UBB. Called at Gerry's house but he wasn't in.

Wednesday, 2 May 1973

9.30 John Armstrong returned the equipment to us at the university.

Wednesday, 2 May 1973 contd

Later, a technician came to repair the camera input on the portapak.

Friday, 4 May 1973

11.00 Saw Pete Hudson at the YVF shop and discussed the pictures which he wants for the next issue of UBB. Then we spent until 13.30 driving around the estate. Ray took photographs of the Brook, and also of the new bus shelters and street lamps which are being erected. Lunch at the Beverley. Took the van to the garage to have a gasket replaced.

Saturday, 5 May 1973

Bob was away for the weekend. John Armstrong drove Ray and the portable equipment to the YVF shop by 10.15. Pete Hudson joined us there and the three of us went to the Auto Club by 11.00 to videotape a pram-race organised by BVPC as part of the Bentilee Mini Festival - a series of events staged to coincide with the Stoke-on-Trent Festival. While we were waiting for the race to begin, John and Ray had a drink and discussed the possibility of asking Ronnie if groups on the estate may continue using the Sociology Department's video equipment when we leave. Ray also promised Jack Rothwell - a member of the Uubberley and Bentilee Working Men's Club - that we'll tape a yard-of-ale drinking competition that he's organising for May 16 at the Club. This will also be part of the Mini Festival. The pram-race took place in heavy rain. Both sets of batteries for the portapak were fully charged when we began taping, but set B ran out after only 5 minutes. Jane Skinner was at the Auto Club at the beginning of the race, but when Ray looked for her at the end for a chat, she was nowhere to be found. Gerry turned up after the prizes had been presented, and Ray arranged for us to have a word with him next Tuesday at 20.00. Then Pete drove Ray back to Keele. We talked about

Saturday, 5 May 1973 contd

the video project. Pete agreed with Ray that what had happened so far could at least be "justified" as an "educational experience". But he thought it could have been more successful in other ways. After all, he said, the word "video" suggested that there should be something to "show" for it. He said that the tapes that had already been made had not been used. The important thing was not so much the "academic justification", but what Bentilee people felt they'd got out of it. In this respect Pete thought Gerry had been "brought out of himself" by becoming involved.

Tuesday, 8 May 1973

20.00 Called for Gerry at his home and the three of us drove around to the Ubbertley and Bentilee Working Men's Club for a drink and a chat. We called at Dave Waters' house on the way, but he couldn't join us as he had some work to do. At the club, we talked with Gerry about the forthcoming Harold Wilson interview. The arrangements still haven't been finalised. We told him we needed to know when and where the interview was to take place, and how many speakers would be involved, so that we could check the lighting and begin to think about how the interview could be recorded satisfactorily using a single camera and microphone. Gerry said that BVPC will try to organise a dummy run beforehand. Then we discussed the play/parking tape that he, John Armstrong and Dave Waters had been recording before the portapak developed a fault. We said that if they wanted us to, we'd help them get any background information they wanted from the local authority. Gerry told us that Father Ryall wants us to make a tape for him, and he also reminded us about the yard-of-ale drinking contest which is to take place on 16 May. Gerry asked us how we felt about his acting as a link man, not only between BVPC and ourselves, but also on behalf of other people and groups (Father Ryall, the Catholic priest, had

Tuesday, 8 May 1973 contd

approached him, not us). He wondered whether we would prefer to have interested parties contact us directly. We said we thought it better that he, as a resident on the estate, should begin to co-ordinate requests for the equipment. Gerry also said that he was concerned that people were not making sufficient use of the equipment. We replied that for our part we were happy to concentrate on the few projects which were already under way. We talked about what might happen if we have to leave at the end of June when our money runs out. We suggested that Gerry should get in touch with Stoke-on-Trent Polytechnic or the Sixth Form College to ask if they would be willing to lend their equipment from time to time to groups in Bontilee. We said we'd ask Ronnie if the Sociology Department's equipment would continue to be available. Gerry brought up the subject of cable-casting, and wanted to know about the future possibility of using the Rediffusion cable network in Bontilee. We suggested that he should get in touch with John Golding, M.P. for Newcastle-under-Lyme, who was one of the speakers at the recent Cable Now conference, organised by the Architectural Association at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London.

Wednesday, 9 May 1973

10.30 Played through tape of prem race in the lab. Most of it was quite good, but for some reason the picture broke up for a minute or so, about half way through. It appeared to be a recurrence of the fault which had developed in the portapak while we were away. Phoned John Armstrong and told him about it. He said it didn't matter so much that this tape was spoiled - it was more important that the equipment should be thoroughly repaired as soon as possible. We pointed out that it might be possible to edit out the picture break-up.

Thursday, 10 May 1973

15.00 Tutorial with Ronnie. Talked about other sources of grants and concluded that it was really too late for us to make any further applications (these things take so long, and we shall have run out of money long before we could expect any results from yet another application). We also discussed who we should choose as external assessor for the thesis, but no decision was reached. Showed Ronnie the edited manuscript of the first part of the project diary.

Friday, 11 May 1973

11.00 Recorded a 20 min. tape to test the portapak. When we played it back there was no sign of the fault which had appeared on the pram race recording; battery set B still not charging fully.

Monday, 14 May 1973

14.00 - 16.00 Videotaped a demonstration interview between two social work students for Joyce Warham, a lecturer in the Sociology Department to use in connection with her course.

Tuesday, 15 May 1973

14.00 Set up equipment in seminar room and demonstrated it to Dr. John Law and his group of second year students.

Wednesday, 16 May 1973

19.00 Yard-of-ale drinking competition at the Ubbertley and Bentilee Working Men's Club. We taped the first few contestants and Gerry did the commentary. We had to leave at 21.30, and left John Armstrong and Gerry to carry on.

Thursday, 17 May 1973

9.00 John Armstrong returned the equipment to us at the lab. They hadn't managed to record the most exciting part of the competition last night. John said he thought they'd forgotten to press the record button on the VTR. He added that it was a pity that we'd had to leave early. Checked the equipment to make sure it was working properly. Before he left, John asked us to tape a football match on Saturday afternoon at Brookhouse Green School (also part of the Mini Festival).

Friday, 18 May 1973

10.30 Phone message from John Edginton, who is writing an article on community television for the Guardian, asking us to call him back. We rang him and he asked for information about what we've been doing in Bentilee. We said we'd write to him giving an outline of the way the project has progressed. Later, drafted a letter to be typed and posted to him.

Saturday, 19 May 1973

14.00 Arrived at Brookhouse Green School to tape "a football match". Pete Hudson met us and told us that the event was in fact a five-a-side football knockout competition of nine matches! Gerry made a brief appearance. We started recording with the portapak, but found this unsatisfactory; in order to conserve battery power we couldn't leave the machine switched to standby when we weren't actually recording, and the time taken for the equipment to warm up when starting from the off position meant that we were missing a lot of goals. So Pete arranged with the groundsman for us to use the power point in his shed, and we continued recording using the mains VTR. In this way we taped most of the three final matches and the prize-giving. We intended to edit the

Saturday, 19 May contd

highlights of the three matches into a tape about the Mini Festival, together with sequences from the other events which have been recorded.

18.30 Left the equipment with Pete, who wanted to tape a darts match at the Thurston tonight (the final event in the Mini Festival).

Monday, 21 May 1973

12.00 Drove to the YVF shop to pick up the equipment. Gerry came in while we were there. He complained about the way the arrangements for the Harold Wilson interview have been handled by BVPC. Reg Walker had told them that it was to take place on May 24 or 25, but there was still no definite news from Westminster about this. Pete said that he's phoned Mr. Wilson's secretary this afternoon. Lunch at Pete's home. Then we drove back to Keele.

15.00 Phoned Pete to find out the result of his call to Westminster. He had been told that Mr. Wilson wouldn't be coming to Stoke after all.

Evening. We had intended to borrow a VTR from the Psychology Department in order to edit the Mini Festival tapes. Unfortunately one of the video heads had been damaged earlier in the day and so we were unable to go ahead (no other department in the University had equipment which was compatible with ours).

Tuesday, 22 May 1973

10.30 Took van into garage for MOT test.

16.00 Phoned garage to find out the results of the test - it needed

Tuesday, 22 May 1973 contd

three new tyres in order to pass, an expense we had to meet but could ill afford.

Wednesday, 23 May 1973

11.00 Phoned YVF shop to see if there was any more news about the Harold Wilson interview. They hadn't heard anything. Dave James was in the shop. A couple of weeks ago he'd asked us if we'd like to go on a Grasshoppers coach trip to New Brighton. He asked us again if we'd like to go along and make a tape of the outing, and we said yes. The coach will leave Devonshire Square at 8.00 next Sunday.

11.30 Collected van from garage.

14.00 Phone message from Gerry, asking us to meet him at the YVF shop on Saturday to evaluate the two play/parking tapes they'd made while we were away.

Thursday, 24 May 1973

10.30 Phone call from John Edginton. He said he'd like to come up from London tomorrow and talk to us about the project, to get more material for the article he's writing. Arranged to pick him up at the station at 11.55.

Friday, 25 May 1973

12.00 Met John Edginton at Stoke-on-Trent station and drove him to the university. We talked about our work over lunch and then we took him to the lab to watch some tapes. John asked if it would be possible for him to talk to some of the Bentilee residents who have been involved in

Friday, 25 May 1973 contd

the project. We phoned the YVF shop to let them know we were coming over (John Edginton used to work for YVF and already know John Freeman, Pete Hudson and John Armstrong).

16.30 Arrived at the shop. Pete made a cup of tea while John Edginton discussed the video project with John Armstrong. He also talked with John Freeman and Pete, and with Elsie Procter who happened to drop in. He said that, to his knowledge, the Bentilee project was unique in that it concentrated on one area for an extended period, and he was interested to know "what happens when the novelty wears off". Later we tried to see Gerry, but he hadn't come home from work. We went to Dave James' house and John chatted to him for a while. Earlier in the afternoon we'd told John that we had come to realise that we needed to take a more 'directive' approach from now on, but this realisation had come too late since lack of finance meant that we would have to wind up the project at the end of June. John asked Dave about this, and Dave said he thought that more use could have been made of the equipment if there had been a stronger nucleus of interested and skilled people. He made a distinction between the use of video in community development and the setting up of a community television service using cable. He was very enthusiastic about the latter idea, but thought it would be feasible only on a city-wide basis: in a place like Bentilee there were "not enough people with ideas, ability, commitment and influence".

19.00 We drove John Edginton back to the station. Before he left he said he hadn't decided what line he would take in his article - the Sunday Times had already published a general piece on the same subject.

Saturday, 26 May 1973

10.45 Arrived at YVF shop and set up playback equipment for evaluation of play/parking tapes. John Armstrong was there, but there was no sign of Gerry. We went around to his house and discovered that he'd had to go to work this morning. He turned up at the shop just before 12.00. We played through the tapes and made plans for a 'finished' tape to be recorded next Wednesday evening. We are to act as 'camera crew' and Gerry will come along to 'direct' us. John Armstrong made notes about locations and the times when most accidents occur. Afterwards we went to the Ubbberley and Bentilee Working Men's Club for a drink.

1. Lorry parking - Ayelsbury Rd about 8.30 - 9 pm.
2. parking Wellfield Rd. - narrow road not much room.
3. parking ON the brook area e.g. shot of trailer parked on grass.
4. Parking by the Winchester - doesn't have adequate car park.
5. Rutter + Brundall oval

PLAY SLOTS

- 1) 2 Playgrounds - Abberley Rd. } how much are they used?
Playground on Brook
- 2) Play on pavements + in street
- 3) Play on the greens.
- 4) Play on the brook

2 roads with most accidents

Wellfield
Udberley

> times
5.30 - 7.30
under 11

accidents happen within 200 yds of
own home - out playing.

Mobile shops major cause of accidents.

Where do children play?

shots to show where main activity is.

Bus stops - two near Beverley Road ^{about.}

Bus stop ~~by brook~~ on Beverley where
brook crosses road. DJ reckons this
should be moved - dangerous crossing.

Sunday, 27 May 1973

8.00 Grasshoppers coach trip to New Brighton. We went along and made a 20 min. tape of us all enjoying ourselves at the seaside.

Monday, 28 May 1973

P.M. Played through the New Brighton tape.

Tuesday, 29 May 1973

P.M. Played through tape recordings of tutorials with Ronnie and made notes.

Wednesday, 30 May 1973

16.30 Phoned YVF to let them know we will have to postpone making the play/parking tape until tomorrow evening, because the equipment is needed this evening by a member of staff in the Sociology Department.

Thursday, 31 May 1973

A.M. Listened to some more tape recordings of tutorials and transcribed portions.

18.30 Went to Bentilee to make the play/parking tape. Because of the change of date, Gerry couldn't be with us until later, so it had been agreed that we should make a start on our own. Working from the list of locations which John Armstrong had prepared, we drove around the estate and taped cars parked bumper to bumper along the kerb, reducing the flow of traffic along the narrow roads to a single file; children playing in the streets (some little girls were skipping with the rope stretched across the road) and in playgrounds; ice cream vans and chip vans (which, according to statistics, are connected with the majority of traffic

Thursday, 31 May 1973 contd

accidents on the estate); parked lorries and coaches; and badly-sited bus stops. We had almost finished by 19.30 and went to the Beverley for half an hour to wait for Gerry to come home from work. Then the three of us spent a further half hour completing the tape. Gerry didn't want to do any of the camera work as didn't want to "spoil" what we'd already done.

(This tape, the New Brighton tape and the Mini Festival tapes mark a new departure in our work: we've decided to let ourselves be used as a camera crew if that's how people want it to be.)

Saturday, 2 June 1973

12.15 Played through the play/parking tape at the YVF shop with Gerry. We suggested that a commentary should be dubbed onto it.

Monday, 4 June 1973

A.M. John Edginton's article appeared in today's Guardian. We were rather disappointed that he hadn't included more of his interview material with Dave and Elsie. Ronnie was put out because no reference was made to Keele, and he suggested that we should write to the Guardian. He also thought that we might stand a better chance of attracting funds if we made it clear that the project was based at a university.

15.00 Phone call from YVF to tell us that, presumably as a result of the Guardian article, Granada Television has been enquiring about the project. Later, John Edginton phoned: the Guardian had cut his article by 500 words, so he will send us a typescript of the complete version.

VISION OF THE FUTURE

John Edginton on the bleak prospects of a remarkable experiment in community television

"HELLO. Have you just been shopping? Would you mind telling me what you've bought?"

The woman, who had been struggling shyly past the camera with her heavy shopping bag, recognises the interviewer, relaxes, and starts chatting about the high cost of groceries and the difficulty of making ends meet. During the conversation somebody walks past and says "Hi, Elsie!" to the interviewer, who acknowledges the greeting over her shoulder.

The interviewer is Mrs Elsie Procter, a housewife who lives in Bentilee, a large council housing estate on the edge of Stoke-on-Trent. She is interviewing her neighbours in the estate's shopping centre.

"I wanted to get across the idea that an active consumer association on the estate would help keep the prices down. I thought if we taped interviews with people on the video about their shopping problems, we could play it back on a TV set in the shopping centre. It might encourage people to discuss the issues and to get involved with the association."

During the past few months the residents of Bentilee have grown used to the sight of various neighbours operating portable video equipment—a camera, a tape-deck, and a microphone—and seeing the results played back on a large TV set.

On another occasion Mr David James, a member of the residents' Bentilee Valley Project Committee, was interviewing people in one of the working men's clubs on the estate about what they thought of the council's plans for reclaiming a large piece of marshy waste land, which runs right through the centre of the estate—a scheme which has been promised for 18 years. The interviews form part of a tape made by the project committee called "Promises, Promises," which was later shown in the club's TV lounge.

While the subjects of these tapes are essentially local, and would probably interest few people outside Bentilee, the process that has produced them—that of a community learning to use the tools of the mass-media to express itself, its aspirations, frustrations, problems, talents, angers, banalities—ought to provoke the excitement and curiosity of everybody concerned with the future of television in this country.

What is happening in Bentilee is a community video project. A unique three-year experiment, which, unfortunately, is almost certainly going to finish in July—after only nine months in operation—because there is nobody, no trust, no grant-giving institution, no broadcasting authority, far-sighted enough to award it the few thousand pounds it needs to continue.

The possibility of the public making its own TV programmes has grown with the development of videotape and relatively cheap portable equipment which a child can learn to use, and with the establishment of a cable network to many homes in Britain—mostly those which find it difficult to get good reception from an aerial. At the moment 1,900,000 homes in Britain are wired for cable TV and this figure is increasing by about 12 per cent each year.

The problem is that any group wishing to use the cable system not only needs the cooperation of the company which owns it, but also has to obtain a licence from the Government. In Canada, largely because of the influence of the National Film Board and its

"Challenge for Change" projects which pioneered community use of video, the Canadian Radio and TV Commission has legislated to ensure that at least one channel of the cable network is made available to local residents for their use, and, in some cases, for their direct control.

In Britain, the Government has awarded five licences for so-called community television stations using cable; these stations are being run by the cable companies themselves. A glance at a weekly schedule for Greenwich Cablevision—one of the two companies that has commenced operations—shows that it is basically a local news and entertainment service, with little sign of action groups, public programme-making, or controversy.

Greenwich could argue that there is no tradition of or apparent demand for public participation in the media. That is why Bob Jardine and Ray Dunning, who are responsible for the Bentilee project, regard their experiment as being necessary and important.

"Before you start asking for a community TV station you have to establish what we call a community video-consciousness. Let people see the equipment, play with it, get over the initial excitement of having a new toy, let them realise it as a medium of expression for them, without putting them under any pressure to make programmes." Their theory is that a community needs to spend a couple of years experimenting with the equipment before it turns its hand to making programmes for the cable network.

"That is presuming that you go at the community's pace. You could bring in an outside group of experts, you could do everything yourselves, but then you end up with an elite crew of programme-makers and a community which feels largely ignored."

Audrey Bronstein at Inter-Action, a community organisation in London, has introduced video equipment to numerous groups and activists. She agrees that only a long-term experiment, such as the Bentilee one, will show just how feasible the idea of community programme-making is after the initial interest has grown stale. She argues that such experiments ought to be paid for by the cable companies.

"They should provide staff, portable equipment, roving media vans, shop-front studios, training workshops, and an extensive information campaign about the potential community use of cable. To provide channel time alone with no other resources is a certain way of ensuring the experiment will fail due to what will be described as 'public apathy and lack of support.'"

"We have tried to be totally non-directive," emphasises Bob Jardine. "Having made the first contact with the community association through the Young Volunteer Force community workers on the estate, we have just let the equipment be used by the people in the way they think best. After six months we can sense a drop in enthusiasm coupled with a realisation that to make good tapes, and to get them seen, requires a lot of hard work and organising. At first people were mostly concerned with the input, now they are beginning to realise the need to organise the output. Unfortunately, because the life of the project is threatened, it is undermining people's preparedness to stick with it."

Marshall McLuhan's reaction to video was: "I have seen the future and it works." In Bentilee the future doesn't stand a chance unless somebody with the money is prepared to invest in it.

"Hello. Have you just been shopping ? Would you mind telling me what you've bought ? "

The woman, who had been struggling shyly past the camera with her heavy shopping bag, recognises the interviewer, relaxes and starts chatting about the high cost of groceries and the difficulty of making ends meet. During the conversation somebody walks past and says "Hi. Elsie ! " to the interviewer, who acknowledges the greeting over her shoulder. The woman being interviewed keeps blowing her nose. No self-respecting professional would allow that kind of informality to stay in a TV programme, but here nobody seems to mind.

The interviewer is Mrs Elsie Procter, a housewife who lives in Bentillee - a large council housing estate on the edge of Stoke-on-Trent. She is interviewing her neighbours in the estate's shopping centre.

"I wanted to get across the idea that an active consumer association on the estate would help keep the prices down. I thought if we taped interviews with people on the video about their shopping problems, we could play it back on a TV set in the shopping centre. It might encourage people to discuss the issues and to get involved with the association."

Mrs Procter has never held a microphone before in her life.

" When we were getting ready, I thought - Oh my God! - I was quite put off by it. But as soon as it started I forgot about the camera completely. I really enjoyed the whole thing. "

During the past few months the residents of Bentillee have grown used to the sight of various neighbours operating portable video equipment - a camera, a tape-deck and a microphone - and seeing the results played back on a large TV set. On another occasion Mr David James, a member of the residents' Bentillee Valley Project Committee,

was interviewing people in one of the Working Men's Clubs on the estate about what they thought of the Council's plans for reclaiming a large piece of marshy waste land, which runs right through the centre of the estate - a scheme which has been promised for 18 years. The interviews form part of a tape made by the Project Committee called 'Promises, Promises,' which was later shown in the Club's TV lounge. Another Bentillee resident is in the process of making a tape on the subject of 'Play and Parking', with the idea of showing it to the Council and prodding them into providing better facilities. One of the youth clubs has been taping its judo sessions for future training material, and the football club has taped a couple of matches - inviting the visiting team back to watch the tape and discuss the game.

Whilst the subjects of these tapes are essentially local, and would probably interest few people outside Bentillee, the process that has produced them - that of a community learning to use the tools of the mass-media to express itself, its aspirations, frustrations, problems, talents, anger, banalities, ordinariness and all - ought to provoke the excitement and curiosity of everybody concerned with the future of television in this country. More important, it gives some hope to those dispossessed communities which have conceded all control over the decisions which affect their lives to a distant bureaucracy and an economic necessity.

What is happening in Bentillee is a community video project. An unique three-year experiment, which, unfortunately, is almost certainly going to finish in July - after only nine months in operation - because, incredible though it seems, there is nobody, no trust, no grant-giving institution, no broadcasting authority, far-sighted enough to award it the few thousand pounds it needs to continue.

The possibility of the public making its own TV programmes has grown with the development of videotape and relatively cheap portable equipment which a child can learn to use, and with the establishment of a cable network to many homes in Britain - mostly those which find it difficult to get good reception from an aerial. At the moment 1.9 m homes in Britain are wired for cable TV and this figure is increasing by about 12 per cent each year. Cable is being included in proposals for most new towns and estates. The beauty of it is that any section of the circuit can be isolated - a programme could be relayed to just one block of flats, for example. It is easy to imagine the usefulness of that facility to, say, a tenant's association, if it also had video equipment at its disposal for programme making.

The problem is that any group wishing to use the cable system, not only needs the cooperation of the company which owns it, but also has to obtain a license from the Government. In Canada, largely because of the influence of the National Film Board and its Challenge for Change projects which pioneered community use of video, the Canadian Radio and TV Commission has legislated to ensure that at least one channel of the cable network is made available to local residents for their use, and, in some cases, for their direct control. The Commission in a policy statement isolated community programming from other forms of cablecasting as "a process which involves direct citizen participation in programme planning and production." The cable company is merely licensed to provide a service, including an access channel; any group which satisfies the Commission as to its aims can receive a license to provide the programmes.

In America, too, the Federal Communications Commission insists that any cable system established after March 1972 must have at least one access channel.

In Britain, the Government has awarded five licenses for so called community television stations using cable - these stations are being run by the cable companies themselves. A glance at a weekly schedule for Greenwich Cablevision - one of the two companies that has commenced operations - shows that it is basically a local news and entertainment service, with little sign of action groups, public programme-making or controversy. Even its 'Special Report' programme turns out to be "Behind the scenes of the Entertainments Department of Greenwich Council". Not a chance of the local Claimants' Union making a report called "Behind the scenes of the Social Security Office" I suppose. But perhaps it is unfair to criticise Greenwich Cablevision for merely adhering to the terms of their licence which demands a "High standard of quality" in the programmes and which "shall be specifically intended to reflect the tastes and interests of persons resident in the area." That means professionalism and programmes made for people not by them. In any case, Greenwich could argue that there is no tradition of or apparent demand for public participation in the media.

That is why Bob Jardine and Ray Dunning, who are responsible for the Bentillee project, regard their experiment as being necessary and important. They believe that if more people knew about video and had a chance to use it there would be a keen interest in making programmes for local cable stations.

"Before you start asking for a community TV station you have to establish what we call a community video-consciousness. Let people see the equipment, play with it, get over the initial excitement of having a new toy, let them realise it as a medium of expression for them, without putting them under any pressure to make programmes." Their theory is that a community needs to spend a couple of years experimenting with the equipment before it turns its hand to making programmes for the cable network.

"That is presuming that you go at the community's pace. You could bring in an outside group of experts, you could do everything yourselves, but then you end up with an elite crew of programme-makers and a community which feels largely ignored."

Audrey Bronstein at Inter-Action, a community organisation in London, has introduced video equipment to numerous groups and activists. She agrees that only a long-term experiment, such as the Bentillee one, will show just how feasible the idea of community programme-making is after the initial interest has grown stale. She argues that such experiments ought to be paid for by the cable companies. "They should provide staff, portable equipment, roving media vans, shop front studios, training workshops and an extensive information campaign about the potential community use of cable. To provide channel time alone with no other resources is a certain way of ensuring the experiment will fail due to what will be described as 'public apathy and lack of support'. It is unfair to expect a different kind of response when people have no relevant experience to fall back on other than the slick professionalism of the broadcasting corporations."

I suspect that the kind of approach that Audrey favours will suggest to people another kind slickness - they will feel they are being sold something. Which is not, in fact, the way Audrey operates at all. Bob Jardine emphasises that unless you allow people to feel that they can reject this new-fangled gear if they want to, the exercise will lose its point.

"We have tried to be totally non-directive. Having made the first contact with the community association through the Young Volunteer Force community workers on the estate, we have just let the equipment be used by the people in the way they think best. After six months we can sense a drop in enthusiasm coupled with a realisation that to make good tapes, and to get them seen, requires a lot of

hard work and organising . At first people were mostly concerned with the input, now they are beginning to realise the need to organise the output. Unfortunately, because the life of the project is threatened, it is undermining people's preparedness to stick with it."

Marshall McLuhan's reaction to video was "I have seen the future and it works." In Bentillee the future doesn't stand a chance unless somebody with the money is prepared to invest in it.

5th June, 1973

The Editor,
The Guardian,
164 Deansgate,
Manchester,
M60 2RR

Dear Sir,

With reference to the article by John Edginton : VISION OF THE FUTURE [Arts Guardian, page 8, 4th June 1973], we would be grateful if you would print the following addendum:

We should like to point out that the community television experiment in Bentilee is an action-research project based in the Department of Sociology at Keele University. We are grateful to Professor Ronald Frankenberg for making available the necessary equipment and other facilities. Without this support the project would never have got off the ground. In our experience, the active involvement of academic institutions in this field, in the affairs of neighbouring communities, is all too rare.

Yours faithfully,

Ray Dunning
Bob Jardine.

Tuesday, 5 June 1973

11.00 Phone call from the Evening Sentinel. Spoke to one of their reporters who wanted to know about the work we've been doing.

12.00 Phone call from Peter Heinze, producer of Granada Television's Open Night. He intends to devote one programme in the next series to a discussion about 'access television'. He'd like to come and see us the next time we make a tape with anyone on the estate.

14.00 Message from John Armstrong: Elsie Procter would like to talk to us about using the equipment in her campaign as Tenants-Ratepayers candidate in the forthcoming District Council elections.*

15.45 Drove to Bentilee to see Elsie. It's the first time she has involved herself in local politics, and she began canvassing only a week ago. She wants us to make a tape of her talking to passers-by about election issues, and then play it back in Devonshire Square on election day (this Thursday) in the hope that it will encourage people to vote for her. We told her about our conversation with Peter Heinze and asked if she'd mind if he came along to watch. She was quite willing. We arranged to meet her at the YVF shop tomorrow at 10.30.

17.00 Phoned Peter Heinze and invited him to come to Bentilee tomorrow.

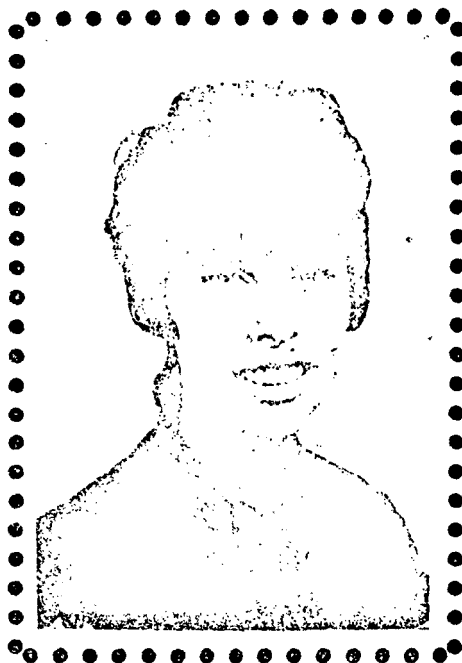
Wednesday, 6 June 1973

10.30 Set up the equipment, including mains VTR and monitor, outside the YVF shop. Elsie was already there and Peter Heinze turned up soon afterwards. We talked to him about the work we've been doing in Bentilee;

* YVF had offered the equipment to all the candidates for the ward, but Elsie was the only one to take advantage of it.

ELSIE PROCTER

Thursday
June 7th



Thursday
June 7th

Vote for Tenant Ratepayer

May I introduce myself ? I am a housewife with a family, having lived in Bentilee for 15 years. I have worked for some years with many local groups, such as Playschemes, Grasshoppers, Consumer Group, Lads & Dads and UBB Magazine.

I am a Socialist, but I believe that party politics should be pushed aside in the interests of the people. We have all had enough of broken pledges and promises. So I am asking you to vote for one of your own kind, someone who knows what Bentilee is all about. Let's leave politics to the politicians and get on with what matters most to us all on this estate,

THAT MEANS BENTILEE.

Vote Tenant & Ratepayer

YOU CAN VOTE FOR:

MORE CAR-PARKS, GARAGE SPACE, SAFER ROADS.

A DAY NURSERY TO HELP MOTHERS WHO WORK

EVEN MORE CLUBS, DISCOS, A COFFEE BAR OR TWO FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS.

MORE HELP AND CO-OPERATION FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR THE DISABLED AND ELDERLY.

A FAIR RETURN FOR THE UNFAIR RENTS.

COUNCILLORS WHO WILL PUT THE PEOPLE FIRST AND NOT THE PARTY.

VOTE FOR YOUR TENANT-RATE PAYER CANDIDATE. SOMEONE WHOSE PROBLEMS ARE YOUR PROBLEMS.

**VOTE FOR A BETTER
BENTILEE**

Published by: E.Procter.168 Chelmsford Drive,Bentilee

Printed by: Adderley Press, 2 Bambury Street, Adderley Green, S.O.T

Wednesday, 6 June 1973 contd

then he chatted to Elsie while we completed our preparations. We recorded a 20 min. tape. Elsie asked passers-by what they thought about the estate and what changes, if any, they'd like to see made. She also asked them if they were going to vote tomorrow, and explained the aims of the Tenants-Ratepayers Association. Peter Heinze watched us at work, then left, saying he would get in touch with us. We played back the tape to check that it was OK.

Thursday, 7 June 1973

11.00 Playback of Elsie's tape in Devonshire Square, at approximately hourly intervals. The manager of Woolworth's let us use a power point and we positioned the monitor on a table in front of the store. Elsie had checked with the Town Clerk that she was not breaking any regulations by using video in this way on election day. A sizeable crowd gathered during the first playback and Elsie took the opportunity to talk to them and canvas their support for the Tenants-Ratepayers Association. Later in the morning, two women came up to Elsie and said they'd heard about her "film", and that although they hadn't seen it they'd voted for her.

We began the afternoon by taping a 'band' of kids playing kazoos and saucopan lids and carrying banners. This, too, was part of Elsie's campaign. When the kids marched out of the shopping precinct to parade around the estate, we played back this second tape, alternating it with the interview tape. By 17.30 there were only a few people left in the square so we started to pack up. We asked Elsie how useful she thought today had been. She believed that the tape had helped her to put across her message, and also that the novelty of having the equipment had brought her to the attention of the voters.

Thursday, 7 June 1973 contd

20.30 After fish and chips, ice cream and a few beers we went to the YVF shop to view the play/parking tape with Gerry and John Armstrong. John made a list of the sequence of events from which to prepare a commentary. It is to concentrate on three main issues: (1) badly sited bus stops (2) poor parking facilities, and (3) inadequate provision for play. It was decided to postpone recording the commentary until Dave Waters could be present.

Bus stops
Parking
Roads.
Play.

Unedited tape random evening time ^{6:30-8:30}
31.5.73 date — to illustrate

Ubberley Rd — Kids. / Lorry parked.
Alvesbury Rd Mobile Shop badly parked. —
Traffic unable to pass — car has to move —
NARROW ROADS.

PLAY AREA Ubberley Rd. ^{cloves} — swings. Number of
Kids on-estate.

Ubberley — parking — ice cream van — mind
that child.

Play area — Ubberley far end — some kids
older than area designed for.

1 Kids on pavement car passing

Wellfield Play — ~~play~~ ^{ball} thrown over road
bikes. Kids on walls

Lower Green on Dividy — football

Wellfield Rd. Single file parking — no space
to pull into. 2 pull ins.

Green at Danlish lower end of Wellfield.
Kids on green playing - road junction

Ubboley Rd - bloke mending car - no room
for repairs - Auto Club.

Mardstone Grove - fish + chip van badly
parked. - CAUSING EVERYTHING.

Play area on Brook

The Drain on Brook - kids ~~is~~ running
into drain - sliding down concrete.
Football.

Chelmsford Heavy lorries parked on Brook
reclamation scheme
~~ground~~. Kids playing on pavement

~~and~~ Mobile Shop - girl crossing to
~~at~~ shop.

Skipping rope across road.

Beverly kids playing on brook new road.

Bus Stop Beverly - opposite junction

Dorchester Kids on green - safer no traffic.

Brundall Oval single file traffic. Car down
blokes road. Car has to pull out and
then on. Kids on green - Hasty Tasty.

Beverly - lorry parked.

Winchester Kids cricket - in road - car close to kid.

(2)

Aylesbury - parking on both sides.

Bus Stop Ber. - ~~the~~ badly positioned between
2 junctions

Bus Stop Ber - on bend

Ford Hayeshane Lorries parked on reclamation
site - Coach also - Tanker.

Thornhill Lorry - on grass.
Kids playing tennis.

Bus Stop - in reverse.

Lockington - Ice cream van - cars

blocking road. Bus in Layby (always)

Buses at junction of Holton Way - going
back.

Evening Sentinel,
8 June 1973.

Ward 16 (three seats): Elected:
A. Tuhey (Lab.) 990; R. Walker
(Lab.) 796; Mrs. E. Beddow
(Lab.) 775. Not elected: A. Shar-
man (Lab, Ten, and R.) 567; E
Proctor (Lab, Ten, and R.) 424.

Estate to lose own TV

BY 1980 the City Council housing estate could be famous.

Its residents could be challenging the likes of Dimbleby, Baker and Bosanquet in the TV ratings charts.

For during the last eight months do-it-yourself television has become a major pastime among the tenants.

And with community television the up and coming thing, success could be theirs with the granting of an independent licence in seven years' time, writes **Bob Dulson.**

But their vision of the future is more likely to end up an illusion. For it seems their TV dream will suffer an untimely closedown.

The reason Predictably, money.

Hoping

Local T.V. came to Bentilee by courtesy of Keele University research students Bob Jardine and Ray Dunning. Bob, aged 26, and Ray, aged 25, brought video TV to Bentilee as part of a community development project.

And for eight months they have financed the scheme themselves with the aid of personal savings, loans and a grant.

But now they have been told that a further research grant will not be forthcoming. So the brightness of the Bentilee screen will have to fade.

Bob told me: "We are



hoping against hope that finance will arrive from somewhere to enable us to carry on."

With money, the possibility of Bentilee TV as an independent station in the future was not an impossible dream, he said.

"Eventually it could have been possible to beam programmes all over the estate."

Both boys had worked on a similar project in North Kensington, London, before finding places in Keele's Sociology Department. On arrival here they set about making contacts and eventually introduced themselves through a residents committee.

In co-operation with the Young Volunteer Force who are in operation on the estate, they went into action.

Ideal subject

And during the first eight months (of what was originally planned to be a three-year study by Bob and Ray) the Bentilee residents have grown used to the sight of various neighbours operating portable video equipment — camera, tape deck, microphone, etc. — and seeing the results played back on a large TV set.

The students efforts were two-fold. Firstly, for them, it provided an ideal subject for research. But, secondly, and of more value in so much as it instantly involved the people of a community, it explores the idea of television for the people by the people, to use a well worn cliché.

There is evidence to show that so-called community television stations already in existence are merely local council propaganda vehicles.

Bob Jardine and Ray Dunning were essentially trying to bring out the word community and make it work, for itself.

And the time had arrived, said Bob, when the "new toy" aspect had waned and people were beginning to be concerned about the output of the video system as well as the input. The very thing interest was aimed—to see what the people would use it for.

No-one can deny that the equipment has been extensively used. The two students (both with training in the arts) have been on hand to explain its use and practicalities and then left it to the group concerned.

The Bentilee project is or was, unique. A community project with results which could have proved to hold nationwide interest. An die next month because no-one has the faith or foresight to realise its importance and award it the cash to continue.

"Obviously from a personal point of view we will be bitterly disappointed," said Bob.

But there is some small ray of light in their gloom.

"We should be pleased, however, if we thought we had inspired enough interest among the residents for them to carry on after we've gone," added Bob.

Should the residents be able to borrow the equipment, the taps will cost them nearly £5 for 20 minutes.

Saturday, 9 June 1973

Inter Cities Conference at Manchester University.

Theme: More Power to the People.

15.00 Attended workshop/discussion group on the use of media in community development, led by Audrey Bronstein of Inter-Action. Audrey talked about Inter-Action's use of video and showed some tapes made with tenants associations and groups of kids. We described what we'd been doing in Bentilee, adding that we were sceptical about some of the claims made by others working in similar fields, about the 'effects' of using video. John Armstrong pointed out that making a tape requires a great deal of creative energy, and that, so far, in Bentilee, more work has gone into making tapes than into showing them. He thought that a cable system might solve the problem of showing tapes to a wider audience with less waste of time and effort.

17.30 Had a look at Inter-Action's brand new £11,000 media van.

Monday, 11 June 1973

18.00 Went to tea with Dave and Jean James. Afterwards, we all went to Dave's Monday night Grasshoppers youth club at Brookhouse Green School for a playback of the New Brighton tape. Most of the kids who had been on the outing were there. They enjoyed the tape so much that Dave asked us to play the Notting Hill Adventure Playground tape as well. We projected slides on to the wall alongside the monitor while the tape was running. This went down well; the kids seemed to enjoy relating the different visual perspectives conveyed through the still and moving images. As yet there is nowhere like it on the estate, and Dave said he thought it was useful that the kids had been able to get an idea of what an

Monday, 11 June 1973 contd

adventure playground was like. He told the kids that if they wanted to make a tape themselves, they should get together and see us to arrange it. About half a dozen of them, boys and girls, came and talked it over, and we eventually agreed to meet them at the YVF shop next Saturday afternoon, to make a tape about the fact that there's nothing for kids to do in Bentilee on Saturday afternoons. Before we left, Dave asked us to show the slides of the Brook which we had taken for him (7.1.73) so that he could explain to the kids about the recreational facilities which will be provided as part of the reclamation scheme.

Wednesday, 13 June 1973

17.30 Father Ryall has asked Gerry if he will arrange for us to make a tape of the First Communion Service next Sunday at St. Maria Goretti church. Phoned YVF to see if they had any details. Pete said he didn't know anything about it, but gave us Father Ryall's phone number. He also said that the Harold Wilson interview has now been fixed for July 11 at Westminster. Phoned Father Ryall but he was out.

Thursday, 14 June 1973

17.30 Phoned Father Ryall and made arrangements for Sunday. Message from Pete Hudson, asking us to be at the YVF shop at 19.00 tonight to record a commentary on to the play/perking tape.

19.00 Met John Armstrong and Dave Waters at the shop. Dave hadn't seen the tape so we played it for him. Then we ran through it again, sequence by sequence, while Dave and John made comments, based on rough notes, which we recorded over the original soundtrack. About 20.15 Gerry arrived and we recorded his views on the siting of bus stops. We had to

Thursday, 14 June 1973 contd

record some bits of the commentary more than once. The finished tape turned out to be a fairly dispassionate statement about play/parking problems in Bentilee. John thought they needed to make more positive demands and proposals, in addition to analysing the problem. Bob said that this could be done by other means, e.g. duplicated leaflets giving official accident figures for circulation at showings, when demands and proposals could also be made by personal representation. Possible 'audience' includes the Road Safety Officer, the police, the Highways Committee, the Surveyors Department and the bus company.

Saturday, 16 June 1973

13.00 Went to the YVF shop to meet the group of kids from Grasshoppers as arranged. About eight of them were waiting for us when we arrived. We set up the equipment in the shop and showed them how to operate the camera and portable VTR. They decided they wanted to start shooting at the swimming pool at Willfield School. When we got there, there was a queue of youngsters waiting to get in. Three of the girls in our party (aged about 12-13) taped interviews with some of them. The general feeling was that the price of entry (5p) for a limited period (one hour) was too expensive: at Hanley baths they only have to pay 5p for as long a swim as they want. The trouble is that the pool at Willfield is the only one on the estate and Hanley is too far away for the kids to travel. When the portapak batteries ran out we returned to the YVF shop and set up the mains VTR and monitor on the pavement outside. We played back what had been recorded so far and attracted a small crowd of kids and adults. When the tape was finished we switched the VTR to record, and the Grasshoppers kids carried on interviewing people. When a topic of discussion was exhausted, we played back that section of the tape, before

Saturday, 16 June 1973 contd

deciding on the next topic. When everyone felt they'd had enough (after about an hour from the time we got back to the shop) we took the equipment inside and played back the whole tape to a shopful of kids.

Sunday, 17 June 1973

10.30 Recording of First Communion service at St. Maria Goretti R.C. Church. We set up the equipment at the back of the church, leaving Gerry to do the actual taping. He intends to show the tape on Wednesday evening.

Dear Bob & Ray.

Sat. 15th June '75

Having now recovered from "electionitis", I thought I would drop you a line to thank you both for the hard work, time and patience you placed at my disposal. I really am very grateful.

I must tell you also, how very much I have enjoyed working with the video equipment, quite an experience for me, and, I hope, not the last time I shall make use of it.

Although I didn't come 'top of the class', so to speak, I do not feel in any way discredited or disheartened.

I really had only that week, from the Monday until Thursday in which to 'sell' myself, and as I got 424 votes, I consider that the video was the main puller-in of those. In that short time, just 4 days, to get that many votes was nothing short of miraculous, remembering that I am a very new face in the political field.

So I really do hope you don't feel it was time

2

Wasted, I certainly do not.

I have three years in which to build myself a public image, and who knows, by that time things will be different.

I have, as I said, enjoyed working with you both, and I hope we can still get together for the programme we talked about - a sort of 'This is your life', I would be very interested.

I have been keeping my fingers crossed that something would turn up for you in the way of hard cash, it really does seem a shame that your work has to come to an end.

Well, here's wishing you both the best of luck and all good wishes in whatever the future holds for you, and once again, my gratitude.

Yours sincerely

Ekie Procter.

Wednesday, 20 June 1973

18.30 Playback of First Communion tape - to the biggest, most enthusiastic audience we've ever had - at a party for children and their parents at St. Maria Goretti School. Later, Gerry said he thought that the video project might end when we leave, because it will lose its "authority" with local residents.

Monday, 25 June 1973

Midday. Phone call from YVF. Granada Television has been in touch with them - they want to come and film us 'in action' tomorrow afternoon. Gerry has arranged to interview a Mrs. Lloyd who is trying to get a Pelican crossing placed on Dividy Road, and Elsie has something planned, too. All we have to do is turn up with the equipment.

Tuesday, 26 June 1973

12.45 Drovo to Bentilee. Gerry and Elsie were already at the YVF shop. The mother of the woman that Gerry is going to talk to was knocked down and killed on Dividy Road two weeks ago. Elsie wants to do some interviews with housewives about the new family allowance scheme. The film crew arrived - 10 people in all. Outside it was pouring with rain, but Peter Heinze was keen to film us working in Devonshire Square. So once again we plugged into Woolworth's, taking shelter under the canopy at the front of the store. They 'arranged' us to take advantage of the available lighting. We started shooting Elsie's interviews. The tape was a complete mess, because their cameraman kept wandering in front of our camera: we all had to reconcile ourselves to the fact that we were taking part in a performance. Things weren't quite so bad when we moved on to Mrs. Lloyd's house, even though she had to repeat her story several times so that she could be filmed from different angles.

Tuesday, 26 June 1973 contd.

Before the film crew left, Peter Heinze told us that the film they'd shot would be edited into a 2 min. clip which might be used in the programme. He also said that they would invite us to the studio to watch the programme being recorded on July 20.

Thursday, 28 June 1973

Last day at Koele. In the morning we packed all the equipment for the Harold Wilson interview, and left it ready to be collected by BVPC nearer the date. Drove to Bontilee to tie up loose ends, then home to Wales.

Thursday, 5 July 1973

Phone call from Pete Hudson: the Harold Wilson interview will now be on the 12th, not the 11th July. Same time and place - 11.15 at St. Stephen's Gate, House of Commons.

Thursday, 12 July 1973

11.15 Met Dave James, Dave Waters, Gerry and Pete Hudson at the House of Commons. A secretary came down and ushered us, with the equipment, into Mr. Wilson's office. Pete didn't come in with us, as it had been decided that he shouldn't be involved in the interview. We set up the equipment at one end of a long conference table and arranged four chairs at the other end. We didn't have to wait long for Mr. Wilson to appear, and after introductions all round the interview began. He was asked to give his views about the need for Neighbourhood Councils within the newly reorganised local government structure; the 'ideal' size of the area which such a council would serve and the powers and responsibilities it would have; and to make practical suggestions about setting up Neighbourhood Councils, with particular reference to finance. The

Thursday, 12 July 1973 contd

interview lasted for about half an hour. Afterwards we played back part of the tape to check that it was all right. Then we loaded the equipment into the van in which the BVPC representatives had travelled to London, and handed the tape over to them. It will be up to them how they use the tape and the equipment from now on.

Monday, 16 July 1973

Phone call from Granada. They want us to go to Manchester on Friday for the recording of Open Night.

Friday, 20 July 1973

Evening: Appeared on Granada TV's Open Night discussion programme, along with Julian Critchley, MP, Maurice Townsend, managing director of Greenwich Cablevision, and Peter Lewis, manager of Bristol Channel. The programme was illustrated with clips from BBC2's Open Door, the Tyne Tees Access programme, material from the cable stations at Greenwich and Bristol and a short sequence about the Bentilee project. The programme will be broadcast in most areas on Sunday night.

BENTILEE VALLEY

PROJECT COMMITTEE

Chairman; REG WALKER
Secretary; P. R. HUDSON
Treasurer; G. SANDFORD.

PRESS RELEASE

235 DAWLISH DRIVE
BENTILEE
STOKE-ON-TRENT
Telephone: 23211

A Neighbourhood Council for Bentilee

The Bentilee Valley Project Committee is currently concerned with establishing a Neighbourhood Council and Community Advice and Information Centre for Bentilee. The Committee is made up of local residents who are concerned that the public at large have both the right and a duty to participate in the running of their own community life.

The history of the group goes back to the planning of the reclamation of the Bentilee Valley, work on which is now well under way. There was a major public participation exercise concerned with this reclamation scheme, and the Bentilee Valley Project Committee who helped officials and councillors from the Corporation to plan the scheme.

Public participation, now are far more common concepts, took a great step forward in North Staffordshire with the inauguration of the Bentilee scheme. A senior planning official has described this project, which has allowed the residents of Bentilee to plan and design for themselves the 66 acres reclamation scheme which will smarten up the areas of the vast Bentilee housing estate, as the most exciting and progressive scheme of its kind in the City.

The project is also sited as an example of participation in a recently published book called 'Current Issues in Community Work' published by a group of many of the country's leading academics and professionals in the field.

All the members of the 'Neighbourhood Council for Bentilee' group, were founder members of the Bentilee Valley Project Committee. Now nearly two years after their work began they can sit back with some pride as the huge bulldozers and diggers push the earth around according to their own residents' plans.

But sitting back is the last thing they are doing. Early on in their deliberations the group realised that all the improvements and benefits the reclamation would bring could be very easily wasted and destroyed. Hard facts, but then Bentilee has a hard reputation.

One of the major aims of participation was to foster concern amongst local people for the Brook land and the estate as a whole. But such concern and community spirit has to be maintained, as well as fostered. The Bentilee Valley Project Committee has made an excellent start but if trees are not to be pulled down as soon as they are planted then more has to be done.

Thus it was that the idea to establish a Neighbourhood Council was born. The Bentilee Valley Project Committee with wide resident representation in carrying out one important but limited exercise had been a good start. What better now than to widen out both the representation and the scope in the new body - a Neighbourhood Council.

The Neighbourhood Council Group then started to research their idea. Masses of literature was obtained and read from the London based Association for Neighbourhood Councils and other local authority areas who are beginning to get interested in this new concept in participation.

Discussions with local politicians were held - Councillor R.B. Gent M.P., and Councillor Arthur Cholerton were particularly interested and helpful. The group visited an existing Neighbourhood Council in Liverpool to pick up a few tips. Thoughts got translated on to paper: constitutions, financial estimates and the like were all worked on.

THE PROPOSALS

1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL ON BENTILEE

The Neighbourhood Council would be a representative body with members elected from the general body of residents on the estate, and also from the local voluntary groups and associations operating on Bentilee.

In this way the many shades of opinion on the estate will have an opportunity to find expression.

The Neighbourhood Council would have three aims.

- (a) to find out how Bentilee people would like to see their estate improved
- (b) to bring together the already broad range of voluntary activity on the estate so that Bentilee folk can pull together for the overall good of the area
- (c) to act as a consultative body for authorities as the new District and County Councils. The work of the elected representatives on these bodies is increasing all the time. A local Neighbourhood Council would be able to provide local opinions and thereby support the District and County Councillors in their work in a constructive way.

2. THE FOCAL POINT - A COMMUNITY ADVICE, INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTRE

The focal point of the Neighbourhood Council will be a Community Information Centre located on the estate. This would be accessible to everyone on the estate, and would be able to provide a much needed advice and information service for residents on a wide range of subjects.

Also it would provide a constant flow of opinions and information from residents on Neighbourhood Council about the pressing local needs and means of tackling them. It is essential that a Neighbourhood Council be completely open to local residents and their opinions.

The information centre would include an office, located in the same building as the information centre, which would offer a range of resources and other facilities for Neighbourhood Council and all other voluntary groups on the estate.

Staffing - The Centre would be staffed by paid part time helpers who would be responsible for the information service and also ensure continuity and efficient co-ordination. These helpers would be local residents so they would have first hand knowledge of the problems they would be tackling.

Support in High Places

In February 1973 the Right Honourable Harold Wilson M.P. made, in Newcastle upon Tyne, a major policy speech entitled: Democracy in Local Affairs, which really supported the idea for Neighbourhood Councils on a nationwide scale.

The Bentilee Group approached Mr Wilson, and were granted an interview which they recorded on video tape and can now show on closed circuit television back in Stoke-on-Trent.

This gave the people of Bentilee a tremendous moral boost and made them even more determined to achieve their aim for a Neighbourhood Council and Community Advice Centre.

Money Required

Quite obviously funds would be required for such a venture. Nothing is free. An Advice Centre would need premises, staff, and would also need running costs.

Undaunted, the Group approached the national Director of the Young Volunteer Force Foundation, Anthony Steen, to get a verbal commitment to support the new venture for an experimental period. Mr Steen agreed to put up somewhat half of the estimated budget for the first year of the Neighbourhood Council and Advice Centre - £6,000.

At present the Bentilee Committee are approaching the Stoke-on-Trent Corporation and have strong hopes that a grant from that direction will make this existing new venture in community self-help able to start early in the New Year.

Bentilee residents plan a revolutionary social experiment

The Bentilee area may become the "springboard" for a spectacular new social experiment.

A group of people based in Dawlish-drive have set their sights on forming a "neighbourhood council" which would deal with the "grass roots" problems of people living in the area.

And in a bid to get their proposals off the ground the group recently had an interview with Labour Party leader, Mr. Harold Wilson in which they put their ideas forward.

The interview, held at the House of Commons, was recorded by the group on their own video-tape equipment and they now plan to show the tape to Bentilee residents in a bid to gain support for the neighbourhood council project.

At a Press conference called by the Neighbourhood Council Steering Committee last night they called on the City Council to give financial backing to an experimental project in Bentilee.

Advice bureau

The steering committee chairman, Mr. Reg Walker said: "The neighbourhood council would comprise between eight and 16 individuals from different areas of Bentilee, Benryhill and Ubbertley together with representatives from local organisations and societies. As a neighbourhood council we could then deal with the problems of people living in the area on a community basis.

"Members of the neighbourhood council would be elected in properly held elections and as a council they could deal with many prob-

bureau in the centre of the giant Bentilee estate which would be run on a voluntary basis. Committee secretary, Mr. Peter Hudson explained: "At the moment local people simply don't know how to tackle some of their problems and it is here that the advice bureau would come in. They could bring their complaints to the bureau and the information would be passed on to the relevant authority or to their local ward councillor."

The committee claim that the response to the project has been "very good" and they plan to distribute leaflets to every home in the Bentilee area explaining the aims of the project. They hope to go ahead with the election of members within a few months.

Mr. Hudson told the *Sentinel*: "We have already been offered £3,500 from a

national charitable trust but we need about £6,000 to run the advice bureau for a year. We hope that the City Council will agree to meet the other £3,000 or so needed to run the advice bureau for the experimental period."

In his interview with three members of the committee, Mr. David James, Mr. Gerry Sandford and Mr. David Waters Mr. Harold Wilson said that he would like to see the neighbourhood councils linked with local authorities. "I would like to see a right of representation on some of the principal committees of the local authorities — in other words that they should be co-opted members."

The committee have already approached the City Council with their proposals and they hope to have further exploratory talks with council leader, Mr. Jim Westwood and others.



The Bentilee Valley Project Committee held a Press conference at the Dawlish-drive Young Volunteer Force H.Q. last night to discuss their efforts to establish a neighbourhood council. Above the Secretary, Mr. Peter Hudson and the Chairman Mr. Reg Walker are seen watching the video-tape recording of Mr. Harold Wilson when he met the Bentilee committee.

A P P E N D I X I

EQUIPMENT

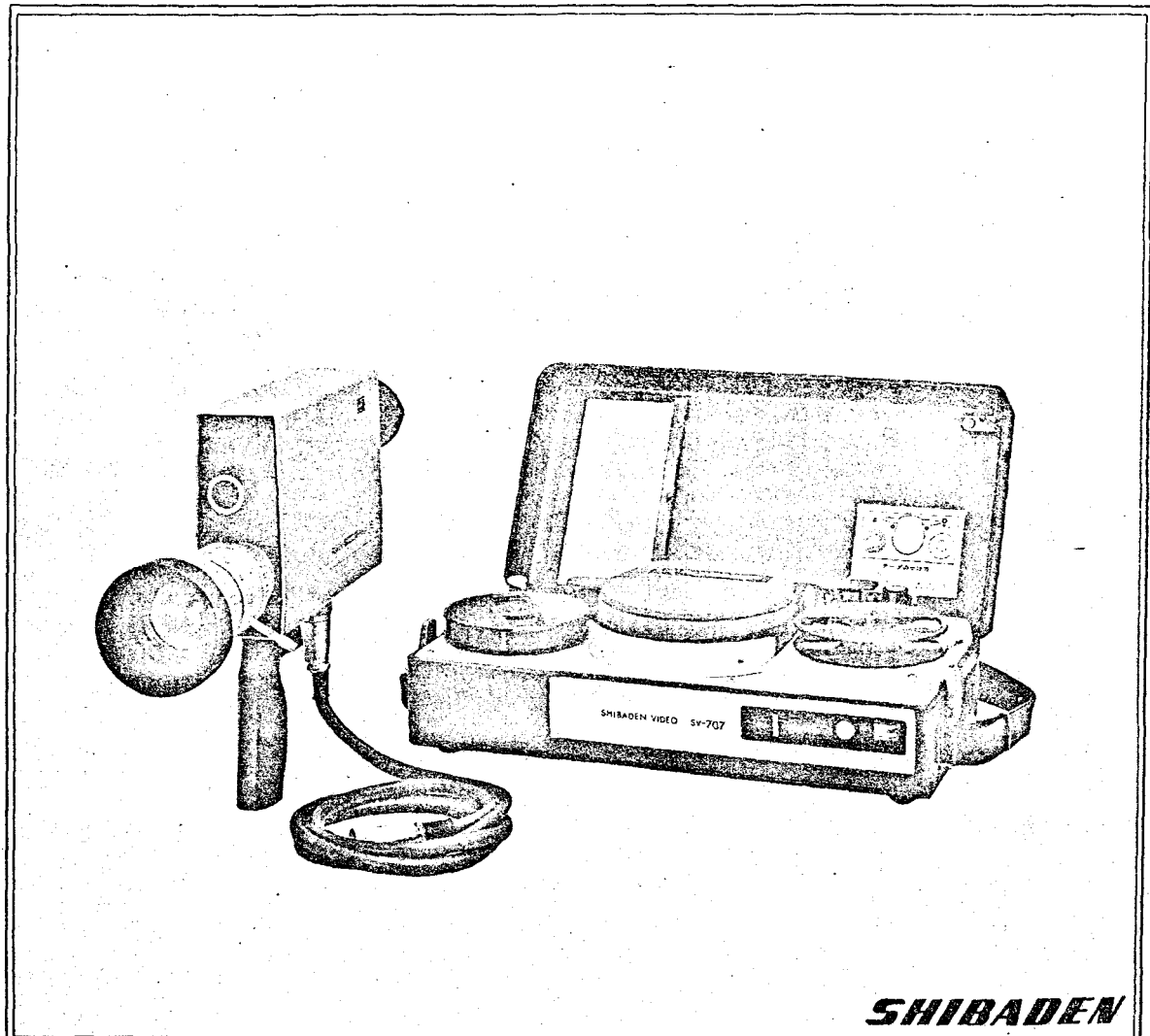


PORTABLE VIDEO RECORDING SYSTEM

SV-707E, FP-707

This new portable camera/video tape Recorder combination from Shibaden delivers the ultimate in quality and reliability. Weighing only 20 lbs., including its zoom lens and microphone, it may be operated on either a self-contained rechargeable battery pack or regular house current, and can be

used anywhere. Used in combination with other Shibaden SV-series video tape Recorders such as Model SV-700EC or SV-800EC as a play back unit, it offers instant reproduction.



SHIBADEN

FEATURES

1. Solid State:

Solid-state circuitry is used throughout both the recorder and camera to assure temperature stability and reliability.

2. Fully Automatic:

For simple operation, fully automatic gain control and servo control are built into the SV-707E as well as an automatic voltage stabilizer.

3. Semi-Professional Quality:

The SV-707E employs the 2:1 interlace recording system normally found in studiotype video tape recorders to assure high picture quality.

4. Complete Interchangeability:

Video tapes recorded on the SV-707E can be played back

on any Shibaden SV-700E or SV-800E series video tape recorder.

5. Internal Power Supply:

Two high-performance rechargeable batteries provide power for portable operation.

6. AC power Supply:

The system may also be operated wherever normal AC power is available by using the SAP-12 AC adapter (a optional accessory).

7. Lens Interchangeability:

The FP-707 comes equipped with an F2.0 zoom lens and will accept many other standard C-mount lenses.

SPECIFICATIONS

Shibaden Portable Video Taperecorder Model SV-707E

Recording System: Two rotary heads scanning system,
625 lines

Tape speed: 6.7 i.p.s.
Approx. 22 minutes with 5" reel (800
ft.)

Tape Width: Half-inch

Horizontal Resolution:
270 lines limiting visual resolution on
test pattern

Video Signal to Noise Ratio:
38 dB, Peak-to-peak video signal to
r.m.s. noise

Audio Signal to Noise Ratio:
40 dB from peak record level

Audio Frequency Response:
80 Hz to 10,000 Hz

Power Requirement: 12V DC \pm 10%

Power Consumption: 10 Watts

Dimensions: 15-3/4"(W) x 4-5/8"(H) x 7-5/8"(D)

Weight: 15 lbs.

Battery:
made by SONNEN SCHEIN 3G x 3/u.
two batteries rechargeable

Charging Time of Batteries:

Approx. 8 hours using Shibaden
Charger SBC-12

Accessories: Two SONNEN SCHEIN batteries,
SBC-12 battery charger, earphone,
shoulder strap, empty reel, cleaning set
and carrying case

Shibaden Portable CCTV Camera Model FP-707

Pick-up Tube: 2/3" Vidicon, separate mesh

Scanning System: 625 lines 2:1 interlaced

Horizontal Resolution: 450 lines

Video Signal to Noise Ratio: 40 dB

Video Output: 1.0 Vp-p composite

ALC: 300 lx to 100,000 lx

Viewfinder: Built-in electrical viewfinder 1.5" CRT

Microphone: Built-in 600 Ω mic

Lens: C-mount zoom lens, F2.0, 14~70 mm

Power Requirement: DC 12V 7 Watts

Dimensions: 2-1/2"(W) x 6"(H) x 8-1/2"(D)

Weight: 5.5 lbs. (including zoom lens, pistol
grip and dynamic microphone)

Accessories: Camera cable with connectors, zoom
lens, pistol grip and carrying case.



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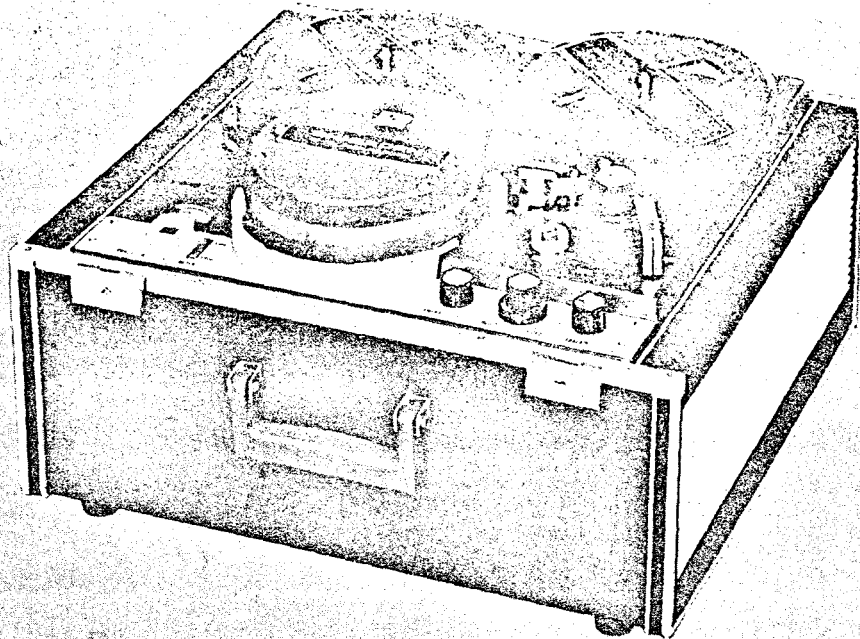
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Printed in Japan

SOLID STATE VIDEO TAPE RECORDER**SV-700EC, ES**

Shibaden Model SV-700EC, ES are self-contained high quality moderately priced solid state Video Tape Recorders employing two rotary heads. They have been designed especially for business, industrial educational and home usage. They can receive and record video signals along with audio supplied from Shibaden receiver/monitor (OFF-THE-AIR) or TV camera of the 50Hz line frequency lock or external lock system. They can also be used as an integral part of the Shibaden Closed Circuit Television System.

Mechanically Model SV-700EC, ES offer better performance than any other VTR in the size and price range. Twin rotary heads are made of a specially developed metal for a longer recording life over a wide frequency range of more than 3MHz. It delivers 270 lines in horizontal resolution, 38dB in signal to noise ratio, and guarantees complete tape interchangeability from one to another. Model SV-700EC, ES are mounted in heavy duty portable carrying case suitable for both field and indoor usage.

**SHIBADEN**

FEATURES

Tape Interchangeability

Tapes recorded on one SV-700EC, ES are fully playable on any other Shibaden SV-series half inch Video Tape Recorder.

After Recording

Voices and sound can be added or recorded over to a previously recorded tape.

Over One Hour Continuous Recording

Continuous recording up to 70 minutes is possible on Shibaden standard 7" reel video tape.

Slow Motion Viewing (X 1/10)

Slow motion playback is available for analysis of recorded information (Model SV-700ES only).

Stop Motion Viewing

Stop motion playback is available for analysis of

recorded information.

AGC System

No level adjustment is required for both video and audio input signals because of AGC system.

Tape Editing

Recorded tape can be edited with no blanking and negligible editing noise by using two sets of SV-700EC, ES.

Easy Operation

Model SV-700EC, ES have been designed with a minimum of controls and function switches for easy operation.

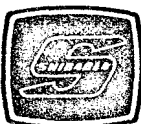
SPECIFICATIONS

System: 625 lines
 Recording system: Two rotary heads scanning system
 Recording signals: C.C.I.R. standard TV signals or CCTV signals
 Tape width: 1/2 inch (12.7 mm)
 Reel: 7-inch (732 cm/s)
 Recording time: Approx. 70 minutes
Video
 Input: 1.0Vp-p, 75Ω unbalanced
 Output: 1.4Vp-p, 75Ω unbalanced
 Frequency response: 3MHz
 Resolution: 270 lines horizontal
 S/N: 38dB

Audio

Microphone input: -60dB, 10KΩ unbalanced
 Line Input: -14dB, 10KΩ unbalanced
 Line output: -14dB, low impedance unbalanced
 Frequency range: 60 to 10,000Hz
 S/N: 40dB
Power requirement
 Voltage: 200/220/230/240V
 Frequency: 50Hz
 Consumption: 150VA
 Dimensions: 468 (W) x 276 (H) x 433 (D) m/m
 Weight: 25 kg (52.8 lbs.)

* Specifications subject to change without notice.



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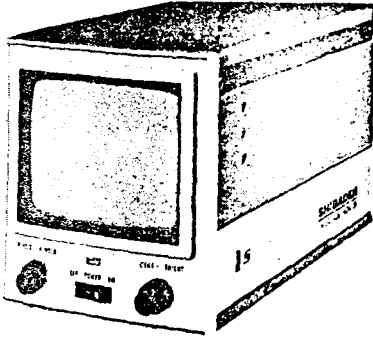
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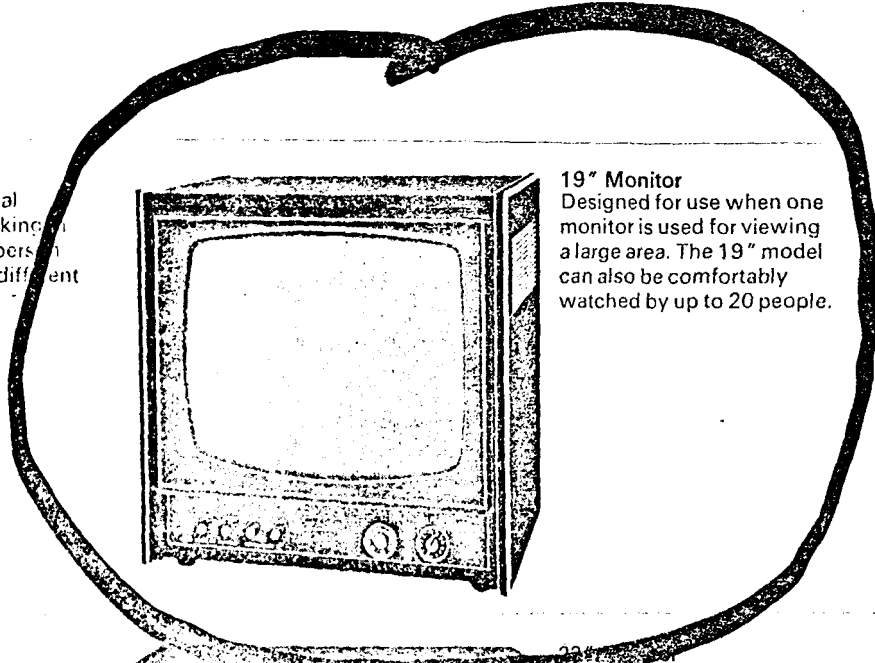
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Monitors

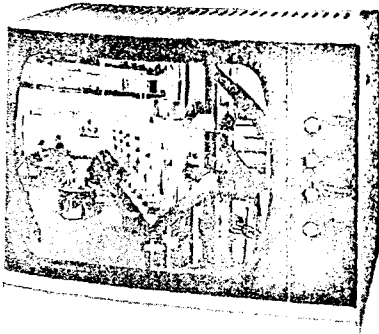
A complete range of monitors, many available for colour reproduction, from the small 5" for personal viewing and banking, to large screen projectors for audience viewing. As part of our design service IVS will recommend the monitor that will give the best possible solution to your problem.



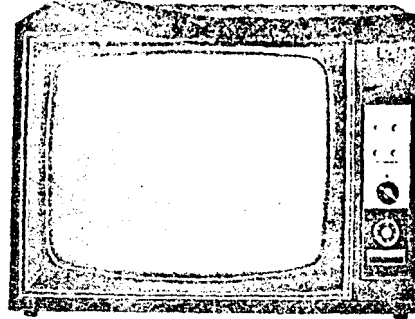
5" Monitor
Designed for personal viewing and for banking groups, to give one person coverage of several different situations.



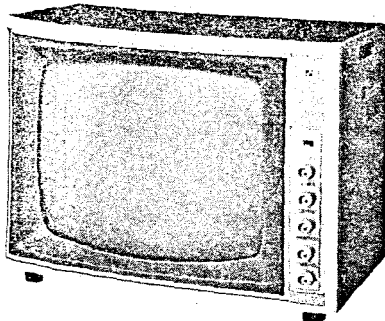
19" Monitor
Designed for use when one monitor is used for viewing a large area. The 19" model can also be comfortably watched by up to 20 people.



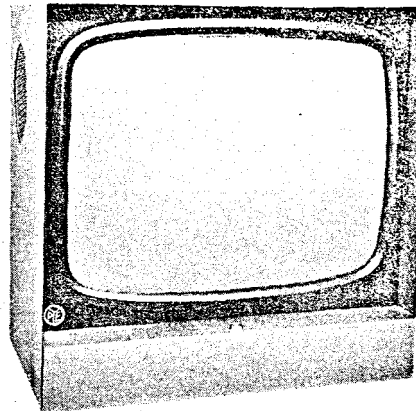
9" Monitor
Like the 5" unit, this model is designed for personal viewing and banking, and is ideally suited to laboratory and research work.



23" Monitor
Suitable for large group viewing or coverage of a wide area.

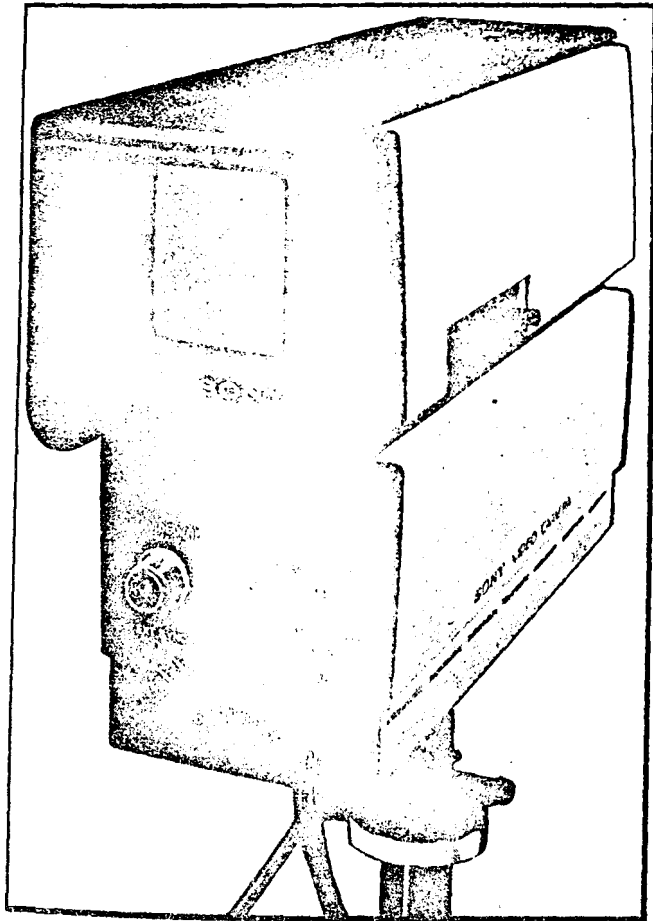


16" Monitor
Two or three people can watch a 16" monitor and it can also be banked when small groups have to watch several different functions at once.



25" Monitor
Like the 23" this model is designed for large group viewing and coverage of a wide area, but is also particularly suitable when large reproduction of a small detail is needed.

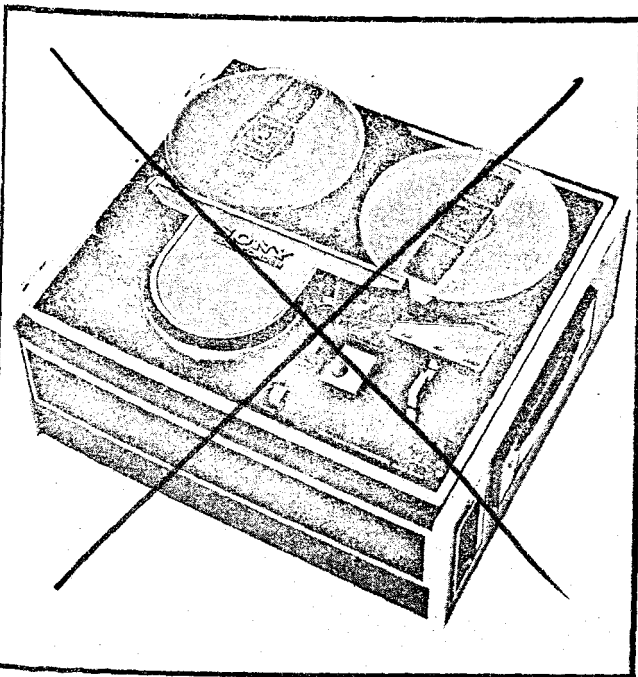
SONY



SONY are the leaders in the field of $\frac{1}{2}$ " Video tape recording systems. They offer an extensive range of 625 line and american 525 line standard equipment. REW stock this complete range and are experts in its installation and service.

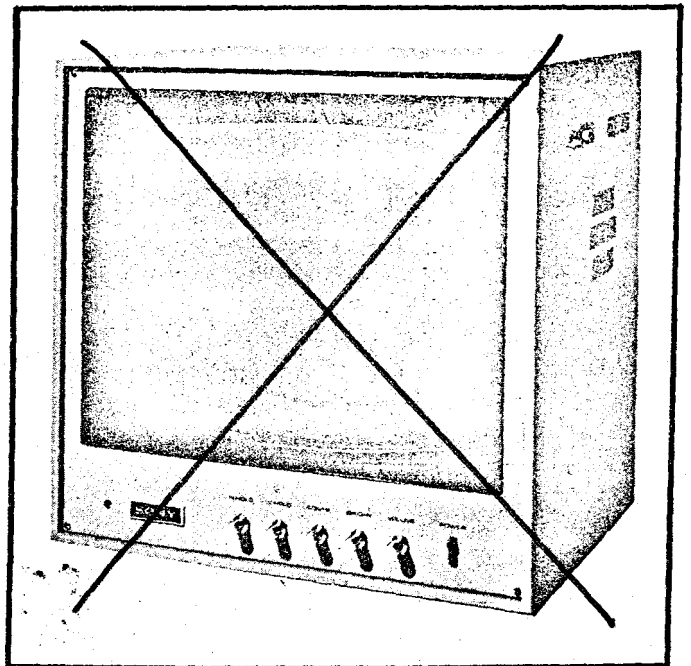
AVC 3200 CE 625 Line Video Camera

This fine camera is shown with a 4" Electronic Viewfinder which is available as an optional extra. The high definition and low lag of this equipment is attained by its $\frac{2}{3}$ " separate mesh vidicon tube.



CV2100 ACE $\frac{1}{2}$ " 405/625 Video Recorder

Enables you to record from a Television Monitor or camera sources. Other features are still frame, sound dubbing and assemble editing.



SONY CVM 195LCE Metal Cased 500 Line High Resolution 19" Video Monitor with sound.

This monitor will accept either 525 or 625 line input.

A P P E N D I X I I

TRANSCRIPTS OF BVPC PRACTICE TAPE AND PROMISES. PROMISES

B V P C PRACTICE TAPE

Opening sequence: the camera pans around the houses overlooking the Brook. Dave James operates the camera while John Armstrong ad libes a commentary.

John A : (the first part of the sentence is clipped) ... schools have developed and working mens' clubs have been built over the years. But there's still a general lack of leisure facilities on the estate. The Bentilee Brook runs through the middle of the estate and it's the largest area of open space on the estate. Since the houses were built the area has been neglected and is largely a dumping ground for people's unwanted furniture and rubbish. In 1971 the opportunity arose for a reclamation scheme after fifteen years of promises about action to be taken over the Brook. At last the opportunity has come to have something done about it.

Cut to John Armstrong interviewing Dave James. Gerry operates the camera. The exposure is correct.

John A : Mr. James, you are a member of the Bentilee Valley Project Committee - could you tell me a little about the development of the reclamation project?

Dave James: From its inception? Yes, ... the actual programme started more as an accident than anything else. It was during a reclamation scheme that was to take place in the B. . . area of Burslem that a member of the Young Volunteer Force, John Freeman, was in discussion with a member of the reclamation committee, that is, one of the officials, and out of this came the suggestion that Bentilee could possibly be in a

position - or one of the areas that could be in a position to come under reclamation. A previous attempt had been made and this had been turned down by the Minister. However, it was felt that a second attempt was feasible and, as a result of this, a second application was successful. On the estate a meeting was called by the Labour Party and from that meeting it was decided to form a committee called from all members of the public and all interests on the estate ... (to camera) stop! Just a minute. I've ...

Cut to same situation.

J.A : Could you tell me a little more about the later stages of the programme, when the Bentilee Valley Project Committee had become established and it had held its first meeting?

D.J. : Yes, it was decided quite early on to attempt a further participation scheme in this area - this particular reclamation scheme - and this was done by involving the councillors from Ward 16 and Ward 15 within the Committee and also inviting official members of the local authority to meetings. We have, during the course of the last twelve months had perhaps six or eight meetings with officials and during the course of this time we feel that we did, to some extent, have participation, although I've certain reservations in this respect ... (to camera) stop! I'm ... (laughs). You don't get it in sequence, do you? (laughs). I think you've got to ...

Cut to same situation.

J.A : (Clipped) ... people on the estate, and also have you been

successful in getting your ideas about what you'd like to see on the Brook adopted as part of the plan put forward by the local authority?

D.J : Yes, I think many aspects of the scheme fall in line with the general requirements that we put forward to the officials during the course of our discussions. As I said, there were reservations. One, particularly, was the sports area - we would like to have seen put on one plateau. Unfortunately the officials say that this is not possible and we're now left with a three stage ... football pitches on three different levels.

J.A : Whereabouts is this area, Mr. James?

D.J : This is over to the north side of the estate, on the perimeter of the reclamation scheme.

J.A : And what were your reasons for feeling that the area should have been on one level rather than on three?

D.J : Well, if one considers that multi-use is more readily available by having it all on one plateau rather than on two or three, we're now virtually restricted to football and one must anticipate that in ten, fifteen, twenty years time, the attitudes of people may have changed and this may not be the leading leisure activity, you know, within the community at that time.

J.A : You expect to see other sports developing in that time? What particular sports would you like to see catered for on the Bentiloe reclamation programme?

D.J.: Well, I would not define any particular sport. I would say that we must try to lay out the ground work so as to be ... to make it flexible so that in future it will suit future demands.

Cut to Dave James interviewing Jim Dixey outside Jim's shop. Dave Waters operates the camera.

D.J.: Mr. Dixey . .

J.D.: Good morning Mr. James.

D.J.: Have you ever heard of the Bentilee Valley Project Committee?

J.D.: I've heard of them, yes.

D.J.: Do you know what the committee was set up for?

J.D.: Basically, yes.

D.J.: Would you like to tell us about it ... your angle?

J.D.: Basically, I believe, they were formed to put their ideas forward for what they would like done on Bentilee valley and the project - and the land surrounding, I should say.

D.J.: Do you think it will ever happen ... the reclamation scheme?

J.D.: Not at the moment, no (laughs).

D.J : What ... why do you feel this?

J.D : Well, I feel that the Council are holding back or somebody's holding back on the start of the project. I mean, it was originally due to start in October - it's now December and it still hasn't started.

D.J : Yes, but, you know, well, we've been having, now, consultation with the local authority over the past fifteen months and they've said that it will start. It is going to happen - why do you still have reservations?

J.D : Well, it's three months overdue. They're three months behind now. When are they going to start? Sixteen years ago they should have started and, as I say, they still haven't started up to now.

D.J : So, really your apprehension is something from the past? ... from past ...?

J.D : From past experience, yes - on things they've said they're going to do which they've never done.

D.J : Do you remember any of these little things from the past?

J.D : Yes - football pitches that were promised at the back of Norwich Road here (indicates behind him), which still are not there. We're still waiting for ...

D.J : Yeah, anything else?

J.D. : ... nursery schools that were promised sixteen years ago we're still waiting for. One should have been on the corner down here.

D.J. : So really your reservations are not purely about reclamation - they're about the local authority attitude, generally, within this area?

J.D. : Yes.

D.J. : I see. Thank you very much, Mr. Dixey.

J.D. : I hope you're not going to play that ... (laughs).

Cut to the inside of the Beverley pub. Dave James interviews a group of men sitting round a table by the window. Gerry operates the camera.

D.J. : (to Gerry) Are you right? (To man at table) Good morning, sir, have you ever heard of the Bentilee Valley Project Committee?

First man: No, I can't say I have.

D.J. : Have you heard that there's going to be a reclamation scheme shortly to commence in Bentilee?

First man: Yeah.

D.J. : What are your feelings about this?

First man: It's a good idea really.

D.J.: Have you any further interests? What would you like to see in the reclamation scheme - what do you think the Council should be doing with the land?

First man: A few more things for the kiddies - somewhere to go, some swings, playing fields.

D.J.: What do you think in the way of football pitches, etc?

First man: Yeah, it's a good idea that is.

D.J.: The big question that's being asked is, do you think it will ever happen?

First man: No (laughs).

D.J.: Why do you think it will never happen?

First man: I don't think the Council will approve it.

D.J.: Well, I can assure you it has been approved and the contracts gone out now. But, this seems to be a general observation - is it anything to do with the past?

First man: I couldn't really answer that.

D.J.: (to Gerry) Can we have a ... are we still on? Hang on. I'm sorry, there's going to be a cock-up here (laughs).

Cut to same situation.

D.J. : Good morning, chaps - sorry to break in on your card game. I'm a member of the Bentilee Valley Project Committee, the group that was set up to negotiate, to some extent, with the local authority over the reclamation scheme. How do you feel about the sixty-odd acres the Council's going to reclaim in the near future?

Second man: This one here? (Points out of window)

D.J. : Yes, the Valley scheme.

Second man: Well, I think it should be improved, shouldn't it?

D.J. : What would you like to see made available within the scheme?

Second man: Well, all this bit here made up, like, made into a park.

D.J. : Would you like to see anything else, any ... what kind of facilities would you like to see within the scheme?

Second man: Cricket pitches, football pitches.

D.J. : Anything else?

Third man: Open air swimming baths wouldn't be a bad idea.

D.J. : Yes, that would be a nice idea, I agree ...

Third man: Open air swimming baths.

D.J : How far would you be prepared to participate? Suppose the Council said, "Yes, we'll provide all these things if you'll chip in a few pence a week to make it go", you know? How would you feel about this?

Third man: Fair enough, isn't it?

Second man: Aye.

D.J : You feel that this would be an 'on' thing do you?

Fourth man: It's a disgrace now ... as it looks now, isn't it?

D.J : Certainly. Well, I can assure you, even at this stage, that it's going to happen - that it has been approved by the Minister and by the local authority. It's now at the stage where the contract's going to be signed in the next couple of weeks. How does this make you feel?

Fourth man: Very happy. It's due to start at the end of this month?

D.J : Pardon?

Fourth man: It's due to start at the end of this month, is it?

D.J : Yes. The question we should have asked right at the beginning is, what do you think reclamation really means?

Fifth man: Tidying it up.

D.J. : Yes, well this is quite right.

Fifth Man: Because it's a disgrace... a disgrace to the county, and it's been like this sixteen years and they've just found time to do it. I've only just come up here (to Bentilee to live), but I know what it's cost me since I've come up - and I live just across the road here.

D.J. : Well, the thing is, are the people going to stop throwing their rubbish over the ground ?

Fifth man: They'll never stop it !

D.J. : You don't think this is on ?

Second man: They'll stop when it's a park.

Fifth man: They'll never stop it. They do it now up and down the country.

Second man: Yeah, but if it's railed off it'll be all right, won't it ?

Fifth man: They still do it at the park.

D.J. : Do you think we ought to have a fence then, is that what you're saying ?

Third man: No, it's a good short-cut across the estate, isn't it, to the shops and everything from here.

D.J. : There's going to be pathways and bridges within the scheme.

Fourth man: What about a picnic area on it ?

Third man: How long's it going to take?

D.J. : The other thing is that when it is done - the scheme is going to be a very initial scheme, that is, the groundwork - and then it's going to need a lot more people to get together to make it better ... this is in the way of deciding what type of equipment is going to go on it, the extent ... I don't think the local authority are going to provide everything. The thing is, are the people in the community going to be willing to provide some of it themselves ?

Gerry: Hold it there a minute.

Cut to same situation.

D.J. : Well, the question I mentioned a few minutes ago - it's only very much basic groundwork that you're going to have when the reclamation's completed. Now, do you feel that we should then press the local authority to provide every other amenity and all the equipping of this area - which is something like sixty-four acres - or, do you feel that you, as members of the community would be prepared to participate, both financially and otherwise, by forming groups etc. to improve on this - on the basic scheme ? How do you feel?

Third man leans forward to say something, but Dave turns to second man without noticing him.

Second man: I quite agree with you, yeah.

D.J.: The thing is, do you feel it's the Council's job ?

Third man: I do, yeah.

D.J.: To provide the finance ?

Third man: I think so, yeah.

D.J.: All the maintenance ? What about the football pitches ?

Third man: Oh, I don't know about that.

Fourth man: Are there going to be football pitches here ?

D.J.: There's going to be football pitches at Norwich Road, over the back. How do you feel about these ?

Third man: Oh, I think the Council should provide it, shouldn't they ?
I mean, it's been left up to various

D.J.: Yeah, but the question is, are you willing to

Third man: Subsidise ?

D.J.: Yes

Third man: Yeah.

D.J. : Would you be willing to form groups to, you know, to make this a better thing when it

Third man: (Nods)

Fourth man: (agrees)

D.J. : It has been suggested that if everybody on this estate would give five pence a week, you know, to a central fund operated by a large group within the estate, that is, members of the estate - the community - then we'd have sufficient money to do all our own programming in the way of carnivals and other events within the area. How do you feel about this ?

First man: Why should we pay when it's the Council's land ? We pay for the land we live on. The Council wants us to pay for the land what they're supposed to be making things better for, like, you know ...

D.J. : Well I'm perhaps putting it the wrong way. What I'm saying is, the basic groundwork will be done by the Council and do we press them to provide all the equipment ? Do we press them to provide every other facility we need in the area or do we say that we, as members of this community, are (prepared) to meet them half way ?

First man: No, I think the Council should - never mind meet them half way - I think the Council should pay for the lot.

D.J. : I see. OK, thank you (to camera) Interesting, that.

Cut to Dave James talking to a man at the bar.

D.J. : Good morning sir. I'm from the Bentilee Valley Project Committee, the committee that was set up to deal with the reclamation scheme - the negotiations that were carried on with the local authority. The scheme is going to commence in January of next year; what are your views about the scheme and what it should provide ?

Sixth man: It should have been provided a long time ago. It's nineteen years I've been going, now, waiting.

D.J. : You say that you've lived in the area for nineteen years ?

Sixth man: On the twenty-second of this month.

D.J. : And during that time what has been provided in the area ?

Sixth man: As far as I can see, only that park up there for those children.

D.J. : Nothing else whatsoever ?

Sixth man: Not as I know - not round this area anyway.

D.J. : Well, now we have the opportunity of something being provided, what do you think we should do about it as a community ?

Sixth man: Let the Council pay for all this lot to get done up.

D.J. : I see. Do you feel that the community should in some way participate ?

Sixth man: What do you mean by participate ? You mean financially ?

D.J.: Well, this is possible.

Sixth man: No. The Council should do it.

D.J. : I see, not in any way, shape or form ?

Sixth man: No. The Council should do it.

D.J. : What would you like to see in the way of play areas, etc. ?
what kind of amenities ?

Sixth man: There should be a lot more play areas up here for children,
although I haven't got none.

D.J. : Now what else would you like to see ?

Sixth man: That lot filled in (points towards window overlooking the
Valley) and provided.

D.J. : You'd like to see the Valley filled in ?

Sixth man: Well, something put on it that's respectable, 'cause that's
not is it ?

D.J. : What if I was to tell you that it is going to be cleaned up,
landscaped, and the Brook is going to be contoured in a proper way ?
Would you feel that this is quite reasonable ?

Sixth man: Are you telling me that now ? Well, I'll give you the true answer to that, how often have we been told that ?

D.J : Well, this is a very good question. Can I assure you it is going to commence early in the next year - how do you feel now ?

Sixth man: Well, I won't be assured till I've seen it done because they've been promising that long, haven't they ?

D.J : So what you're saying is, it's a series of broken promises ?

Sixth man: Well it is because (we're) paying (our) rents, the rents are going up, the rates going up - they're going to do this, they've been going to do it for years and they haven't touched it yet. They did start on the top end and they soon packed that in, didn't they ? Why did they pack it in ?

D.J : Well, I've no idea.

Sixth man: Well nobody knows the truth to that, do they?

D.J : So you're not very happy, even at this stage, that the Council - although I say that it is going to go on - that it will eventually be provided ?

Sixth man: Well, after the promises they've made about being provided, I'll believe it when I see it now.

D.J : I see. Right, thank you.

Cut to conversation between Gerry and a man sitting at a table. Dave Waters operates the camera.

Gerry: Good morning, sir.

Seventh man: Good morning.

Gerry: I'd like to interrupt your game to ask your views on the Bentilee Valley Project. Do you know about it ?

Seventh man: Well, all I know about it is it's an eyesore. It needs doing - the children need something.

Gerry: Do you think the Council should provide all this free?

Seventh man: Not necessarily free. We could probably help in some ways - raffles, little do's in the clubs.

Gerry: So you would, in fact, be prepared to help financially ?

Seventh man: To the best of my ability, yes.

Gerry: Do you think this should be stopped out of your rent, or added to your rent ?

Seventh man: Oh no.

Gerry: On a voluntary basis ?

Seventh man: On a voluntary basis. We pay enough rent up here, more than enough rent up here. It's a sore subject (laughs).

Gerry: Well, you know this scheme is going to be done?

Seventh man: Oh yes, we've heard about it, we've read about it, we've talked about it, but when is it going to be done ?

Gerry: Well I can assure you that this scheme is going to be started at the beginning of the new year. What do you think about that ?

Seventh man: That's a good help. It'll be nice for the kids if they can get something - it's the children that need it.

Gerry: You've no reservations about how long the scheme is going to take or how long it's been initially - in its initial concept ?

Seventh man: Well, I've only been up here for four years, and I've heard about it ever since I've been up here. But there's others have been up here ever since this (estate) opened up and they say that it's been talked about for twelve years, so it's about time something got done.

Batteries run out.

SECTION I

- Opener

Reg Walker

Camera instructions

① either still close-up of Reg with the interviewees voice only.

② Just the answers of no interviewees voice
Opening shot for a few secs. of Reg while voice says: "Reg Walker, the chairman of the Bentlee Valley Project Committee."

①

Question 1. (What's the ~~for~~ Bentlee Valley Project Committee ~~all~~ about?)

Answer: "The Bentlee Valley Project Committee is concerned with the reclamation of the Brook and with public participation"

Question 2. (~~Don't you think that~~ How long has the Brook been in such a state?)

Answer: "The Brook has been an eyesore for about 18 years now"

Question 3. (Don't you think it should have been tidied up before this?)

Answer: "In one way and another the people ^{of Bentlee} have been promised on many occasions over the years that something will be done about the Brook but"

Question 4. ("What's public participation?")

Answer: "Public participation is a process of consultation between the residents and the planners so that the reclamation scheme will ^{just} include what the residents want and not what the planners think they want."

Title

Reg Walker interviews - enigmatic questions

What is it?
Why not earlier?
Participation.

Introductions

- a) - to film itself - about video, who made it? Why?
- b) - to the Brook - History against views of Brook

B.V.P.C.

Plans

Officials

Councillors

- all filling in history of
reclamation in the area

Residents views against a walk up the Brook

- probably will be 'don't believe
it' angle.

INDOOR INTERVIEWS AND DISCUSSIONS

in Bingo Night H.C.

Ubb & Bentilee W.M.C. etc

based on what as
gone before in the
programme (which they
won't necessarily have
seen)

Round up conclusion pointing to the
future.

Possibly interview with Town Clerk/Contractor

Pose a question: What next?

- see next tape
- discussion Nov (now that tape is finished)

Section II

1. Introduction to the tape

"What you are watching is a programme by the Bentilee Valley Project Committee on Video Television. This video equipment has been put at the disposal of the Bentilee community for at least 12 months by the Sociology Department of the University of Keele, for any groups to use as they wish.

The Bentilee Valley Project Committee took up this offer as we felt that now the reclamation of the Brock is an imminent reality, we have a duty to inform all the residents of the area as much as possible about the scheme. Our committee is made up of local Bentilee residents drawn from all groups on the estate. Thus we are not professional broadcasters and cameramen, but ordinary folk like you."

Spoken against shots of the
equipment

or a map focusing on Bentilee

2. History to the Project

You all know how long the wasteland adjoining the Bentilee Brook has been with us - as an ever-present eyesore and rubbish tip - about 18 years.

Over this time residents have made several attempts to have something done about it. At one stage as much as £40,000 was put in Council estimates to clear up the Brook, but as with other efforts, this one came to nothing as well and the money was never spent. This has quite naturally led to people adopting the view 'promises promises..... it'll never happen.'

In more recent times the City Council proposed to the Minister of the Environment that the Government should help to pay to clean up the Brook. A Government inspector came, looked at the Brook and said 'No'.

Then early last year - 1971 - a community worker was helping City Planning officials in a reclamation scheme in the Bycars area of Burslem. He got the Planners to approach the Department of the Environment about the Bentilee Brook again. THIS TIME THEY SAID 'YES'.

At a public meeting called by the Labour Party a new committee - The Bentilee Valley Project Committee was set up with representatives from all local clubs, churches, playgroups, youth clubs and so on. This is an independent committee. This was in September 1971.

Since that time this committee - known as the B.V.P.C. has been meeting to decide what kinds of facilities should be included in the scheme. "Where would it be best to have football pitches - kiddies kick-about and play areas - an old people's park - and so on".

The committee has had many discussions with the officials and constantly put forward the residents point of view. The B.V.P.C. was, throughout the project, concerned to create more and more opportunities for the public participation - that is making sure the residents get what they want and not what someone else wants.

Another reason for 'Participation' is that the more people there are involved in the scheme, the more they will think it is theirs and so look after it more when it is finished. So there have been public meetings - seven or eight of them - the schools have surveyed the Brook and produced an exhibition, and URB the Bentilee paper has constantly held the Brook Project in the front of people's minds.

After 13 years of waiting and promises the Brook will at last really be reclaimed.

"PROMISES, PROMISES - a film about the reclamation of the Bentilee Valley"

Cut from title to Reg Walker's living room. Pete Hudson sets up the situation. Mr. Walker addresses the camera.

R.W : The Bentilee Valley Project Committee is concerned with the reclamation of the Brook and with public participation. The Brook has been an eyesore for some fifteen years and although many efforts have been made to the Council to get something done, nothing has been done over the years and many organisations have made many efforts to get something done - with the result that the Council have saved monies toward the reclamation of the Brook - as much as £40,000 - but over the years this has been allowed to dwindle and dwindle until there was nothing left in the funds. Now, people are asking what it is that ... nothing has been done before. Now, the reason that nothing has been done before is that although the Council have had monies for the Brook, the Government squeezes ... every three, er, five years have made it that sufficient money has not been received by the Corporation, and consequently we here at Bentilee have had to suffer through having nothing done whatever about the Brook. Public participation is a process of consultation between the residents and the planners, and the reclamation scheme will include a residents' ... what the residents want and not just what the planners think they want

Cut to the Brook. Arthur Ball interviews passers-by. The first interviewee is a man with a surgical collar. Bob operates the camera.

A.B : Good morning sir.

First man : Good morning.

A.B : What would you say if I told you the Brook was going to be started on ?

First man : Well, I've read about it in the Sentinel, and I think it's a great thing for Bentilee people that it's going to be tidied up.

A.B : Would you say it's fulfilled all the promises we've had over the last eighteen years?

First man : Well, I suppose the Committee on Bentilee must have put a lot of work into this and I think it's really great. As long as people treat it right I think it'll be money well spent.

A.B : Well, would you believe us if we said it was going to be started next month ?

First man : Well, yes, you know I seem to have been reading about it in the Sentinel and it's been on Radio Stoke for the last month or so - yes, if you tell me it is then I hope it is.

A.B : Right, thank you then.

First man : All right.

A.B : Thank you very much.

Cut to same place. Arthur Ball interviews Mrs. Ball.

A.B : Good morning madam.

Mrs.B : Good morning.

A.B : Would you .. er .. um (to camera) stop !

Cut to same situation.

A.B : What's it like living in this area, down by the Brook ?

Mrs. B : Well, at summer time when the weather's nice we have a lot of flies coming in when the windows are open - and you have a lot of smell from the Brook, 'cause there's a lot of people down this end have been complaining, time 'out numbers, about the smell from it, and it's supposed to have been done - I've been here eighteen years - and there's supposed to have been something doing but every time we go they always say they haven't got the money. But I'd like to see it changed in years to come because I think it would be nice for the children when they come down and, you know - folks sitting down on seats.

A.B : Now, would you believe us if we tell you it's going to be started on ?

Mrs. B : Well, I'll believe it when I see it.

A.B : You've had that many promises have you ?

Mrs. B : I've had that many promises and nothing's been done about it. I went one Tuesday night to that Committee up there to ask them if they could do something about it and they said they hadn't got the money.

A.B : What committee was this ?

Mrs. B : Well there was Tuhey there and one or two more persons - Brown was his name ? From up the top there - the little small bloke.

A.B : So, you believe us then that something's going to be done ?

Mrs. B : When I see it - 'cause we've had that many promises and nothing's been done about it.

A.B : Right, thank you Missus.

Cut to same place. Arthur Ball interviews two women (neighbours).

A.B : Good morning ladies.

Women (together): Good morning.

A.B : As you know, we've got a committee going on this estate called the Bentilee Valley Project Committee, and we're doing something about the Brook for you. Now, do you think something wants doing about the Brook?

First woman : Definitely, yes.

A.B : Have you heard any promises before, about the Brook being done ?

First woman : Well, they said they were going to start it at the end of September but they haven't up to yet.

A.B : About how long ago is it since they promised you all this ?

First woman : I can't remember, Mr. Ball.

Second woman : Well we've been here

First woman : ... nineteen years ...

Second woman : ... nineteen years ...

First woman : ... and nothing's been done about it, has there ?

A.B : Well, would you believe us if we told you it was going to start next month ?

Second woman : Seeing's believing ...

First woman : ... seeing's believing, Mr. Ball. When we see the man on the job then we'll know something's being done.

A.B : Well, what would you like to see ?

First woman : Well, what are they going to do in front of these houses ?

A.B : Well what would you like to see ?

Second woman : Well, a nice green ...

First woman : ... a nice green with seats on for people to use. Will the police be about to keep the vandals away ?

A.B : Well, I don't know ...

First woman : This is the point, isn't it ?

A.B : Well, would you believe me if I say we're having a paddling pool down here ?

First woman : No, I shouldn't say so, no. (laughs)

A.B : You've got children haven't you ?

First woman : Yes, I have got children ... but it seems impossible to have a paddling pool at the moment, doesn't it ?

A.B : Well, as you know, ... you know we, I've lived here eighteen years and we've asked time and time again for something to be done here. Also ... the same as you just mentioned, for ...

First woman : shops ...

A.B : ... shops, well this is something else that's going to be done.

First woman : Well I mean I have to go up to Townsend School to take the little one - well when it's like this (points to Brook) I have to go all

the way round. Admittedly there's a bus to catch, but I mean its quicker to go this way, if there was something to go across - as it is now you can't get across.

A.B : Have you ever been troubled by vermin around here ?

First woman : Only once we've seen one or two .. well I think they must be field mice ... but apart from that, no, I haven't. Anyway ... but I mean, as it is, you can see now, it's just a dumping place for people's rubbish.

A.B : So would you be prepared to stop all this dumping of rubbish, you know, if you saw anybody dumping rubbish ?

First woman: Yes .. yes. This is it.

A.B : Well, thank you ladies.

First woman : Thank you Mr. Ball.

Cut to TV lounge at Ubbertley and Bentilee WMC. Dave James talks with people who gathered in the room to watch the first part of the tape. Ray operates camera.

D.J (to camera): Are we going yet ? OK ? Good evening ladies. The Bentilee Valley scheme is due to start in January of next year. We've already had some comments from people who say they'll believe it when they see it - I can assure you it's going to start in January. What we're interested in now .. what you feel you would like to see on the

scheme - what type of thing .. how would you like see it done, from your point of view ?

Third woman : What do you mean - the Brook ?

D.J : The Brook - the whole scheme, all the way along.

Third woman : We'd like a bridge over the Brook, because when we come across to the club we have to cross the Brook.

D.J : What kind of landscaping etc. would you like to see, you know ? Flower beds, or grass... ?

Third woman : Ooh, flowers and trees ...

D.J : Anything else that you could envisage ?

First girl : It would be nice to see the Brook there, but it needs fencing off .. I mean it would be nice left there as long as it was clean.

D.J : You think it wants fencing off ?

First girl : I think it wants fencing off, if you're leaving it there, yeah.

D.J : You don't like it as it is now ?

First girl : Well, I mean children are falling in it all the time - I've done it myself - when they're little. I fell in the Brook once.

D.J : You don't think if it was fenced off children would tend to climb over and be in greater danger than they are now ?

First girl : Well, they wouldn't stand as big a chance, would they, climbing a fence - not little children. It's more smaller ones that are falling in than the bigger ones.

D.J : What do you think about normal playing areas and this sort of thing ? What about the middle age group, you know, thirty or forty-plus people, what do you think they ought to have out of this ?

First girl : Well, if you put a nice walk in and plenty of seats, then it's for everybody, isn't it ? I mean the old people can sit there and enjoy a good afternoon in the sun - when we have any that is.

D.J (to third woman) : What about the older people ? Are you a pensioner ?

Third woman : I'm old enough but I haven't got a pension.

D.J : You don't get a pension but you're old enough ?

Third woman : My husband's working.

D.J : What do you think we ought to have for the old people ?

Third woman : Well, seats

D.J : Yeah, anything else ?

Third woman : ... somewhere to sit around ...

D.J : Is there anything you'd like to do - I mean you don't just want to sit around all day ?

Third woman : Well, er ...

D.J : Any kind of building, or anything ?

Third woman : A building, like, that you can go in and ...

D.J : Would you like to be able to do that ?

Third woman : Yeah, you know, and have a cup of tea and a biscuit.

D.J : Yeah, pretty good .. (to fourth woman) .. what about our age group ? What do you think we ought to be getting out of the scheme ?

Fourth woman : (mumbles something about bingo).

D.J : You see, I've got plenty of ideas, you know, but I'd like your ideas you know .. I'm thinking in terms of sports, displays and play for kids, all this kind of thing.

Third woman : Well, I think we could have a football place for children - for them as plays football - nearly all the boys like football.

D.J : Anyway, last comment - as I started with - do you believe it's going to happen now ?

Third woman : Ooh, I don't know what to say to that ... I hope it does, in my days anyhow.

D.J : Right, thanks ladies. Can we pass on just a little bit. There's a young lady here from Bentilee I believe (moves to talk to second girl). What would you like to see on the scheme for your age group ?

Second girl : For my age group ?

D.J : Yeah, the teenagers.

Second girl : A discotheque or something.

D.J : Well, I don't think reclamation is going to provide that. What about the outdoor type of thing ? What would you like to be doing ?

Second girl : I don't know really. You get a lot of kiddies and us people.. ... No matter where you go there's always something you can find to do....

D.J : I see, you'd be happy with it if it's just made into open space would you ?

Second girl : ... if it was all levelled off so that there was somewhere to walk round, something like that or something for the little children.

D.J : All right, thanks. (Moves on) There's a gentleman over there ...

Second man : Personally, myself I think this Brook's ridiculous for the

simple reason there's no passage across the Brook - I've witnessed that, I fell in the Brook five or six times - I'm not afraid to admit it - there's no bridge across, there's no walk across, you've just got stepping stones or a mattress ...

D.J : It's a bit late in the day actually. Bridges are envisaged in the reclamation scheme itself, but where do you think the bridges ought to be ?

Second man : Well they ought to be for the old people so they can get across.

D.J : Where ?

Second man : One opposite the Beverley - a bridge across there for a start. Put one half way down through ...

D.J : What else would you like to see on the scheme, this is what we're interested in. Have you got any observations sir ?

Third man : With regard to what Mr. G.... has said just now, for the bridge across ... it's just going to be out of the way of the natural depression of the ground. That area ought to be made into sports grounds, the Brook culverted through them areas taking the natural supply of water through. But I would like to see that water dammed in a certain place to make a model yacht pond - make it a national sport - which other countries have got. It's an easy project which could be done.

D.J : Do you think that's a bit dangerous in the sense ... ?

Third man : Well, I think myself the people of Bentilee are rather sensible

D.J : What about the kids, you know ...?

Third man : (laughs) I think they'll be all right, they're not too bad at all. I think that when ... you're on the right track there's no doubt about it ... build, we've got to build ... notice to Bentilee because Bentilee's a very important part of this city. It's a tremendous big housing estate and something's got to be done - it's really got to be beautiful that Brook area has. There's a hell of a lot of ground there.

D.J : Do you think that the public ought to do something about this once the scheme is done ?

Third man : Well, I think that's when the public will do something for the simple reason that they see it in a state of apathy now - you know, nothing moving. When they see it moving that's when they will look after it.

D.J (to second man) : Do you feel the same about this ?

Second man : Yes, definitely.

D.J (to fourth man) : Would you like to comment on this ?

Fourth man : I'd like to see the stream filled in and culverted, and perhaps a couple of football pitches for the kids. They've got nowhere now to play football. You've got the 'Lads and Dads' very strong on this for football. I can understand the point about the lake but I

think perhaps an open air swimming pool might be more ideal.

D.J : Well, actually, if it goes to plan there are three football pitches included in the scheme. What we're talking about though is basic reclamation work. This is purely grassing and treeing - in fact it's not called parkland, it's forestry work they call it - it comes under forestry so it's roughly grassing and rough tree planting. From then on it's going to be between the public and the council, and this is what we're interested in - your views

Fifth man : It's the same as that gentleman's just said there now (ie. fourth man), an open air swimming pool for the young as well as the old. And also a nice bowling green where

D.J : A bowling green ?

Fifth man : A bowling green, yes, where they can go and play bowls. They've got them at Hadley Green, they've got them at other places, but they haven't got one on this estate.

Break while Dave James explains about reclamation to all present. When recording resumes Gerry operates the camera.

D.J : We've had this short discussion in the interlude about what reclamation is - I think we all have got a fair idea now of what it will entail. The extension from reclamation is going to be to some extent something that's going to happen only if we as members of the community and also ... push the local authority into doing this thing. What would you really like to see done within the area after the reclamation scheme

has been completed ? And what would you like them to do particularly whilst they're doing the reclamation scheme ? Things that they perhaps haven't thought of. What do you enjoy doing as an outdoor activity ?

Fourth man : Well I don't participate in any outdoor activities. I think basically it's an eyesore as it stands now, and to me anything that cleans it up is to the good. If you can provide amenities as well as cleaning up the eyesore, to me that's even better. As you say, participation by the people on the estate would be very helpful and I think you'll find that once you get started, probably people will help. As you probably know yourself - you've been involved in a lot of public spirited work - it's very difficult to keep people interested in things ...

D.J : Agreed.

Fourth man : ... and if you can get a nucleus and push it - I don't know if you're talking about financial help or physical help - what have you got in mind ?

D.J : Well I was thinking of both - the people that have got an interest, who are willing to get together with us - we're only quite a small band at the moment - I'd like to think that a lot more people are interested in this state when the reclamation starts, and would be willing to get involved - perhaps one night every couple of weeks, for a couple of hours - sitting down and saying ... I've spoken to Jack and John around the estate and they feel that they'd like this - you know ? ... and put suggestions forward, and be willing to process them too. Even to pushing the local authority into saying that this is what we want for this estate.

On the other side, I do think that ... How far would you be willing to go - even financially - in supporting a venture that you thought was something you'd like to see on the estate? What do you feel you ... would participate in this way ... would you feel that the local authority

Fourth man : The people who live on the estate should be prepared in some way to give some contribution, either by having sweeps etc., or even by a straight financial donation. You know I'd be prepared to give some sort of donation and lots of other people would if they could see the result of it, and they could see that there was going to be a finished product. They wouldn't like to see money going into kitty which stood still and nothing was happening. I think you can get too involved - I don't think you want too many amenities, because everything else need looking after and if you get too many things put around the estate you'll get people abusing them and people will have to look after them and you'll get this sort of attitude creeping in. To me, as I suggested, you just want open grassland and walks, a couple of bridges, some football pitches - well this to me is ideal. You don't want too much more than that - if you get that done, that would be a very good start. I think we can get a bit carried away and ask for too much and expect too much and if you expect too much people will lose interest when they see it's not happening. I think the aim should be fairly low to start with and once you've got a nucleus of it, then start thinking about building it up from there.

D.J : Very good point. One thing - do you think that the people are going to look after ... when it's done, and would you, as a member of the community, be prepared to do your bit to see that people do look after

it - in the way of saying to Jack who's tipping a load of rubbish, "Hey, don't put that there !" ?

Fourth man : I do think that in the state it's in, people do deposit rubbish because it is a rubbish dump. I think if you give people something to look after they will basically look after it. I mean we've seen trees grow up on the estate and some have been abused and pulled down, but generally speaking, they haven't been as badly treated as people said they would. We've had the playground at the top which we thought would be a wreck in a few weeks - it's still there and it's quite well-patronised. So I think if you give people something to look after, they won't abuse it. They only abuse it when it looks like a rubbish dump. If you do away with the rubbish dump, people will appreciate it.

D.J : Can I ask you one final question ? When reclamation commences and we need a strong committee, would you as a member of the community be prepared to give a couple of hours once every couple of weeks ?

Fourth man : I would give a couple of hours for a few weeks, yes. I wouldn't sign myself down for evermore, but I think I would even be prepared to work physically.

D.J : Well, this wouldn't be required initially.

Fourth man : I'd be prepared to give a couple of hours for a few, yes, you know - I wouldn't like to be tied down for a long period because you can promise too much. This is what happens with committees etc., but I would definitely - I appreciate what people like yourself and other people are doing, I think it's a very good thing - yes, I would

be prepared to help.

D.J : Right, thanks very much. I'll just pass on to these two young gentlemen over here ! I think you've heard the comments that the previous interviewee ... How do you feel? Have you anything that y u'd like to add to this ?

Third man : Well, I can thoroughly agree with what he said there about as long as it looks like a rubbish dump, it will be a rubbish dump. It's like kind of encouraging it. But from the moment the reclamation does start it's not a rubbish dump. Because I'm certain that taking the average person as I know them round here, if they were to see such a thing happening, so they would ... try to stop it. I'm sure the interest will start then, but what I wonder now is this - whatever grant you've got now, couldn't it be spent in two stages, such as the basic groundwork first - I'm not saying the fulfillment of the project, but as we see the contour of the land altering, you can see more advanced than you can at this present stage. You know, when you see something taking shape. then it'll probably alter your kind of thought of what this is. I've gone into this drawing a little bit, and I can understand it - where the sports grounds and bridges are and everything - quite good no doubt - but if we saw the groundwork take place first ... you'll find interest.

D.J : Well actually, the groundwork will be completed first - this is before there's any tree planting - there'll be groundwork and grass, that'll be the first things - the Brook'll be contoured. This we hope, anyway - this'll happen over the next twelve months and then it will be a two year project before completion - that's the tree planting etc. What type of trees do you think now ... ?

Third man : I think within the bounds of our city we've got the most beautiful park that there is in any part of the country, therefore I think that we've got the right people for that kind of job. You've got the right people for that.

D.J : You see there has been offered at some stage either a lot of the very small forestry type trees or less number of the larger 'standards' - as they are called. Which would you feel ?

Third man : Well, I think there again you must judge ... take it according to the ground as we see it taking shape, and trust the committee - the Cemeteries and Parks Committee who are bound to help you - they'll know more about it than I do.

D.J : Would you be interested in being involved ?

Third man : My goodness, I'd help all I could - I even help now - not specifically with you - you don't see my help - but if I see anybody ... vandalism or anything like that, I don't like to see it - I never ... I just stop the children.

D.J : Right, thanks for your comments.

Cut while Dave James moves to the other side of the room. Gerry continues operating the camera.

D.J (to sixth man) : Good evening sir. The reclamation scheme that's about to commence in January of next year on the estate will eventually result in three football pitches being provided on the estate. I believe

that you already play football - one of the clubs ...

Sixth man : Well, I help to run a football team.

D.J : On the estate ?

Sixth man : Yeah ... we have to play about four mile away from here.

D.J : Would you like to play on the estate when these pitches are available ?

Sixth man : Definitely - we'd try and put our names down - well, as early as now, for a pitch.

D.J : Would you feel that now's perhaps the time for the lads to get together and really do something about this, collectively over the whole estate.

Sixth man : Well, we've tried this before but I think it is about time we got ... all the teams on the estate did get together.

D.J : Well, if we were to call a meeting of all the teams on the estate, do you think this would be acceptable to your team ?

Sixth man : Definitely.

D.J : And what do you feel they'd be prepared to do in the way of organising the pitches etc. ? Would you like to take control of them rather than Parks control them ?

Sixth man : Well, we'd go as far as to say that if we can get a ground on this estate, we'd maintain our own ground. We'd mark it out and, if a roller was provided, we'd roll it.

D.J : In view of the fact that there's so many teams, would you be agreeable to sharing a pitch with another team ?

Sixth man : Well, it's what we have to do nowadays, anyway.

D.J : Yeah, this'd be agreeable would it? You feel that you could get together with these ?

Sixth man : Definitely, yeah.

D.J : And you'd be prepared to spend a bit of money and raise a bit of money ?

Sixth man : Well, money'd no object. If we could get a football pitch on this estate, money'd be no object - as far as this club's concerned.

D.J : It's been suggested in committee that we draw all the football interest together and then let them get on with a bit of backing from us ... get organised and try and obtain the

Tape runs out.

Interview with Harold Wilson M.P. at the House of Commons

12th July 1973

Present

The Right Honourable Harold Wilson M.P.
Mr David James
Mr Gerry Sandford
Mr David Waters

Video and Recording: Messrs Bob Jardine and Ray Dunning

- D.J. We feel that this is a fine honour to come down to the House.
- H.W. You realise that while we are doing it Big Ben will be striking, you don't mind that?
- D.J. No, we don't mind that.
- H.W. Some of the questions I may find difficult in answering because my view is that there should be consultations with everybody concerned.....
- D.J. Yes, we have been actually involved with neighbourhood councils for about eighteen months now.
- H.W. You have one have you?
- D.J. We don't have one, we are just in the process of trying to bring one into being, we studied it rather closely to see which was the best rather than go hurly burly into it..... and I think if we could follow on now to the questions.....
- H.W. Yes, I'll just get my speech.
Right we're nearly ready.
- D.W. Could you tell us in your opinion why we need neighbourhood councils please?
- H.W. I think in view of local development as it has been, many local authorities are to some extent remote or are felt even to be remote from people in their immediate communities or roads, streets or estates, or neighbourhoods, and of course with the new local authorities already elected, which will come into operation next year in general each councillor will represent a larger number of constituents in a wider area and the problem of remoteness becomes greater. I would like to see, for a whole number of reasons, the neighbourhood, it might be a council estate, or part of one, it might be a very hard hit down town urban area, it might be a country village, they should have their own council and their own means of contact with the bigger councils and means of influencing them.
- D.W. Do you think that this would bridge the gap?
- H.W. I do hope so. It will be a slow process because you might have to experiment with different kinds of areas to see what is the best form of doing it. You would have to consult local communities a great deal. I can think, in my constituency, the kind of area I would suggest for a neighbourhood council, or perhaps some councillors might

think to be right, and they say 'we don't want to link up with those people over there, we want separate ones.' Well we would have to cope with these problems.

- G.S. Do you see local councils as going under local authority committees or would they be independant bodies?
- H.W. They will be independantly elected by the people in their area once the area has been deignated for the purpose. They must have very close links with existing councils. They would be given certain specific functions just as Parish Councils are today, with, I would think, limited right of precepting on the larger councils. There is also the individual councils who say 'well you know, we have this problem' whatever it might be 'we would like the neighbourhood council to take it on and we will provide the money for that purpose.' They might delegate some of their functions to those local councils. The other link I would like to see with the major local authorities would be the right of representation, a right to send deputations and the right of representation on some of the principal committees of the council. In other words that they would be co-opted members.
- D.J. As a follow on to that question....would you feel that involvement of the ward councillors etc at the grass roots level would be sufficient for representation, and they would then be voicing the true voice of the smaller communities or the urban districts?
- H.W. I purposely didn't say 'ward councillor' because in some big cities the ward is a very big area without a single kind of identity. The idea of 'neighbourhood' is to bring people together in a community, people who feel they are one and another members of a community, and in some cases it might be a very small community, perhaps a rural area, in another area it may go up to some thousands, but there are wards which are bigger than that. In my own area in Liverpool, or Manchester, which I know, or Leeds or Bradford, I think a ward might be too big.
- D.J. You'd say the area which people identify themselves with?
- H.W. That's it.
- D.J. Fine. As regards the actual....well I think we've gone into the composition pretty well, but how do you feel these would be brought into being in this financial atmosphere?
- H.W. Well, of course, as you know there is a great deal of work done on this by voluntary organisations and by those who invented the very concept of neighbourhood councils, and they are to be consulted and I think the local authorities might be consulted. One thing might be that Parliament could pass a Bill authorising their establishment in appropriate cases but not making them compulsory, certainly not as yet. You can't make people feel like a community and that might facilitate an experiment. Money would have to be found. Let's have an experiment in a number, maybe ten, twenty, more if you like, of neighbourhoods of different kinds, down town urban areas, country districts, suburban areas, and also housing estates and that kind of thing. You might try and experiment and see what you learn from them, and you should be given a pretty free hand to develop functions. For example in one or two areas, as we know, the local neighbourhood co-operation has led to the establishment of a kind of Advice Bureau or Legal Advice Bureau. I was

sorry to read that one in London has packed up recently. We would like to see experiments along those lines and then after that you could perhaps extend the Act to say as from such and such a date, anyone could take the initiative and say, we, the people of this area, wherever it is, ask for a neighbourhood council, and there would be machinery to decide whether the boundaries are right or the area is right and just issue a certificate to say they exist and can hold elections.

D.J. This is the question. Who would state whether the situation was right? Would it be the fact that something did appear from the communities, would it be initiated from the communities or would the local authorities, seeing the need, step down?

H.W. Well, I would look mainly for initiation, I can think of a lot of councils I know, or parties, who would like to see their own neighbourhood more articulate, a lot more able to speak for themselves, more demanding if you like, but at the end of the day the schedule as it were would have to be done in accordance with the statute, not, I think, by Government; they want to delegate this, perhaps by local authorities, but with power to override the local authority, then local authorities which are stuck in the muds and do not want to see the development of neighbourhood councils....

D.J. Do you feel that this would also deal with the recreational aspect of the community as well as the social aspect?

H.W. Yes, I find it hard to distinguish between them. If you have, for example, an old people's welfare centre, or a general welfare centre set up by the council, is that recreational or is it social? I would think it could have potentially a wide range of things. Many councils might want to say that this particular centre was set up for this purpose, whatever it may be, we will then have it controlled by the area which it serves and not by the whole council, although the council might want to have one or two representatives on it and all sorts of things. Even the best councillor isn't always in touch with other people's councillors in big areas. Where are you going to site a bus stop? It's not a local authority function, in many cases it is a Transport authority function, some of which are local authority, some are not, and you very often get them put in the most inconvenient places, places which mean somebody crossing the road, children crossing the road, or facing a prevailing wind, in some parts of the country as we know, the rain falls horizontally. They might have to express views about this sort of thing. In not every case is the local authority the best place to express.....take one case in point...stationing of a road crossing to school, the lollipop lady, these are local functions.

D.W. What kind of area do you think would be the optimum size Mr Wilson?

H.W. I wouldn't like to lay that down and I hope Parliament wouldn't hurry to lay that down. As I said, think of a Stafford rural area with 300 people in it, think of a small housing estate of 1,500 people, think of a down town area. I think this may be much bigger, some experts on this have talked about up to eight or ten thousand, which is about the size of some of the wards in many areas now. I think it is the existence of a community spirit which is the test, as your colleague said, of identification, rather than saying hard and fast, there

has got to be one to every thousand or two thousand.

D.W. Do you think it would defeat the object if they were too big?

H.W. Yes, I do.

D.W. You do.

G.S. Well, that's relevant to us because in our community there is something in the region of 16,000. What problems do you see in us trying to set one up?

H.W. You know your community better than I do. Do they all feel very much members one with another, or are there some, as with my area of a similar size, with a feeling of 'well they are nice people over there but different people'.

D.J. Yes, this is the difficulty. There is the problem we now face. We find that the main barriers of course are the people in politics at the moment because they have some fears that these organisations would grow in strength and would ultimately become an opposition to the established political parties. Do you feel that there would be some safeguard built into restraining this?

H.W. I don't know how you can build in a safeguard. I think that if they were made, you know, if they were taken over by small unrepresentative groups trading on the fact that not many people went to the annual meeting and they just became a pressure group or pressure lobby, perhaps organised from outside, I think they would fail in their purpose from the start. I would think that a lot of young people with a desire for public service might welcome these. For example, it would be a very good training ground for bigger councils and if you like, for Parliament, if young neighbourhood councillors aged perhaps eighteen, twenty two, twenty three, if they started there and really got the grass roots feelings, in many cases in areas where the roots are concrete roots, if they got the feeling at the roots, it would be good training for them, and of course older people, whether it's in councils or in Parliament, are always anxious not to see power transferred away from them. Look at the position on the Health Service today under the new Act or the Water Board where the Minister wanted to appoint everybody instead of having them elected regionally. At every level the desire to hold on to power and not to decentralise. There will be tremendous opposition; tremendous.

D.J. How do you see them being financed, through local authorities?

H.W. Well, let's start with Parish Councils. They are allowed to, with the duties they undertake, to levy a small rate, to precept. That is one way of doing it, and as I said before, I would hope that the town councils and district councils as they are now called, in various shapes and sizes might put work down to them and say 'look we'll give you that, here's £250 for running this particular function which at the moment we run and think you might run better' or, we might say 'here is a little grant for you to experiment in something we've never done, hasn't been done, you can have this for two years, see if you can make something of it.' I think those would be the main ways of doing it. But there would be automatic financing for any function created by the Act, as in the case of Parish Councils today.

G.S. What would you see as the rights and duties and powers of a neighbourhood council?

H.W. As I say; that is what we would have to consult to see exactly what everyone concerned with this movement and knowledge of the particular areas could consider. But generally they will be given, as I said, certain specific powers. In the speech that I made about this I said that more and more people, if you don't mind me quoting this, as individuals and in groups that care want a say in the really local issues such as the availability of schools and parents' choice of schools, they can be representations on that, road improvement, traffic schemes, road safety; the deployment of lollipop ladies, I've referred to that, bus routes, bus stops, bus shelters, school bus service, the siting of rubbish disposal tips, effluent, atmospheric pollution, playgrounds and other recreational facilities for children, nursery schools and playgroups, care for old people, the disabled, the mentally and physically handicapped. Many people feel, and it's true, that some local authorities are not pressing on as they should with the Disabled Person's Act, put through by Mr Morris, and he and indeed one of your local members has acted in trying to make a reality of it and identifying the chronic sick, the disabled, who need help, and in many cases people don't even know they are there. Now neighbourhood council I think could be a spearhead of that job of identifying people who need help.

D.W. Would you give your support to pilot schemes Mr Wilson?

H.W. Yes, in some cases of course they would be financed by various foundations but I would like to see legislation to, at any rate, to try experiments in the first place before we go on to a nationwide scheme.

D.W. Experimenting first before the national network?

H.W. Yes.

D.J. Do you think it would be possible in view of what I said a moment ago about the feeling that we feel exists particularly at our local level amongst the local politicians, that were it established there wouldn't be the possibility of Government laying down guidelines that would resolve or negate some of these schemes?

H.W. I'd rather see guidelines than absolute prohibitions because these are only going to work if everyone uses a little bit of give and take. Of course there is no reason why, in some cases district councillors might not serve on these and be that valuable link. And there are other people too, who for one reason or another, cannot take on district service. In some cases they would be prevented by law, I think it is a bad law, in respect of many local authority employees, we would hope to change it. But there are others who for one reason or another can't or haven't time perhaps to function on a council governing say 250,000 people but who might be able to help and to give quite a lot of time, as quite a lot of people do voluntarily today, if it's a voluntary organisation, to a neighbourhood council.

D.W. Would you envisage any permanent kind of staffing or would you think this would be on a voluntary basis?

H.W. Again, it's for them to see how they get on. I would prefer it to be on a voluntary basis in the first instance because only then shall we know if the enthusiasm is there. It may be by the development of more and more functions they might take on, either by their own recruitment or appointment or by delegation from bigger authorities certain full time people association with welfare and similar problems.

G.S. How do you think neighbourhood councils would act as a pressure group for local people?

H.W. I think they would, not only for local people, I think in matters of Parliament. I've got a problem in my constituency, an unhappy story, there is a block of flats which suffer from a great deal of vandalism, they are quite modern and are almost impossible to live in. Now of course, the people concerned have written to me and one of my parliamentary colleagues has gone to discuss the problem with them and they have gone to their M.P. as well as to the local council. Now I guess the neighbourhood councils might well want to do that in some cases. They may have this kind of link with problems that run outside people's doors.

G.S. How far could they go? You know, in the sense that they can't turn the power off or turn the gas off? How far after they have gone to the local authorities with any particular problem?

H.W. Well I think that most local authorities really if they hear about cases like the gas needs turning off will see that it is done or at least get the Gas Board, and in cases where the rubbish shoot isn't working at a block of flats, it's a bad local authority that does not do something about it. Or if there is rubbish lying around, these people will take it up rather more quickly rather than waiting for the County Council.

D.J. There was one point made that was very interesting particularly to the people of Bentilee being a large urban area of something like 16,000 people and 4,000 council houses and that was the Advice Bureau that you mentioned, not only as a focal point for neighbourhood council but also as a workshop. Do you feel that finance would be forthcoming to set these up in conjunction with the neighbourhood councils?

H.W. There is finance already of course in some cases in some areas. Again I think on an experimental basis you might have one or two making a particular thing of that and being financed in that direction while others were developing other functions.

D.J. We find some difficulties in getting round institutions like the Social Services etc in setting these things up.....

H.W. You're off to a flying start that some areas would not have. You are community conscious, neighbourhood minded, you've got an aptitude for doing it, and to that extent you will naturally be more ambitious in your area than one in which perhaps people don't know one another very well and haven't many facilities.

Now, has anyone any more questions?

D.V. Yes, I think perhaps one. Would you give your support to the establishment of a pilot scheme within Bentilee?

H.W. I don't think it's for me to talk of individual cases. You seem to have got on remarkably well yourselves.