

Interview with Sue Hall

Transcribed by Ieuan Franklin.

HN: [Summarises]

HN: ...I'd like to start the interview with your background. I mean, who are you? Could you tell us a bit more about where you grew up and uh what motivated you later on to get into video, so we learn a bit more about your background. I mean, where did you grow up, and could you tell us something about your parents, where they have come from, and something about your childhood.

SH: I'll do my best – OK? I grew up in a place called Reading, which is about 40 miles to the west of London, now down the M4, though the M4 didn't exist when I was a child. And it was further to go but there was always a good train service. So the result of this was, there was never anything to do in Reading, because anybody who was grown up would go to London. You wanted to go out, you've got the train to London.

But of course, for children, for young teenagers, that was not possible. So Reading was like a dormitory city in a way, in those days. It's changed now, I think it's the centre of the Silicon Valley of England, and people are working there and live there, which wasn't so much the case then. My parents both came from Vienna. They were Jews – they fled from Hitler. My father was a doctor, but he was also a Jew, and a member, a registered member of the Communist Party of Vienna. So the day the Anschluss happened, he left Vienna with his passport and his backpack, and he left over the mountains to Switzerland and came here. My mother was not politically oriented in any way, and did not know what was going to happen. And she came out later, in 1939, in the spring, with a brown passport, as a domestic servant. That was the only way you could get into this country by then. And so my parents met here. There was something called the Austrian Centre, and they met, and soon they got married.

And then, this was early in the war, and the English had difficulty with these German speaking foreigners. They didn't really know about Jews, or they didn't understand. So they classified my father as an enemy alien, and set him off to live in the Shetland Island in a tent for 3 months, in the middle of the winter. Which he told me was the worst experience in his life. He had nothing but fish to eat. He hated fish so much he'd never eat it again.

But I grew up in the suburbs of Reading, and there was countryside all around, we had a big garden, I could run around barefoot, climb trees, I had a bow and arrow. There was a golf course round the back where we could trespass, us children. One of my school friend's father had a field with a herd of cows, just at the back of my garden. So it was right on the boundary between the town and the countryside, where I grew up, and there was still a lot of countryside, though. As I entered my teens the countryside disappeared. More and more housing estates were built, until there were no large woods left within walking distance anymore, by the time I left at age 18 to go to college. Um, let me think.

HN: About your parents – what sort of values did they give you...suggest to you?

SH: Well, they were Jews, they were very keen on education. They thought education and learning, and reading books, these were the most important thing in life. So I would be bribed to pass my 11-plus, for instance, this is an English exam you had at age 11, I think it doesn't exist anymore. But when I was a child it was a big deal, and if you passed it you went to Grammar School, if you didn't pass it, you were basically on the scrap heap already at age 11, was what was generally thought about it. It wasn't supposed to be like that, but that was what happened. So yes I did pass my 11-plus, and I got a bicycle – my prize! And I found it all a bit synthetic – I didn't like school, I didn't like being told what to do. And I did much better by myself. I studied chemistry from the age of 8 – my father bought me a book, and a bunch of chemicals, and a Bunsen burner, and some test-tubes and

stuff. And I think my best chemical moment, was there was an experiment described in the book where you got an old sweet tin, and it didn't say what size, and you filled it with gas, town gas, from the gas stove, and you made a fuse and you lit it and it blew up. It was basically a bomb. And when I was 8, in 1956, you were allowed to do that sort of thing. I mean the neighbours were a bit surprised when all the windows rattled, and to tell you the truth I was surprised! I wasn't expecting the tin to go 50 feet in the air!

Anyway, that was a one-off, but I was growing crystals, and burning magnesium wire, and observing various things. I was also very keen on astronomy – the stars. I mean, I didn't call it astronomy. Looking at the night sky. I'd walk up and down the road with my father, there was very little street lighting. And I remember spectacular comets, when I was 9 or 10 – the best one I'd ever seen. It covered about a 10th of the night sky for a whole week or so. Let me see, then a bit later there was geology. The university had a geological club or society, and I asked if I could join them, and they said yes. So I was the mascot, the 10 year old mascot – they would take me on field trips. I had the most wonderful time digging up fossils, and taking them to the museum to find out how old they were. I found a Neolithic hand axe – it wasn't very well finished, but it was a great moment of triumph for me. So until I was about 12 or 13 that was my childhood. But of course um my father was an atheist, and my mother didn't really know what to think – she wasn't sure. And, but my father was culturally Jewish, and he would have his friends over on Saturday mornings, Saturday afternoons. And they would argue about politics, because Jews argue, that's the discipline. Rather like the Buddhists, you know, you test your point of view by getting somebody as clever, or cleverer, than you, to try and take it to bits. And the first thing I remember were arguments about Greece, where there was at that time a civil war going on between the Right and the Communists. And, I know it's subsequently been said that Roosevelt and Stalin had agreed that Greece would go to the West, but the Greeks didn't agree. They kept on fighting. And in the end it did go to the West, though we're not so sure now. And politics was very much part of my childhood – I didn't know what it was called, but it was the world out there.

HN: And what was the position of your father? What did he think about the situation then in the '50s, was he a member of the Communist Party?

SH: No, he was not a member here. I mean, my parents' point of view, it's quite interesting to compare it with current immigrants. Their point of view was, it was their duty to adapt to the country that had taken them in, not that they should practise their own trips full on. I mean, this is in the war anyway, the first part of their stay here. So it was wise to take that point of view, otherwise he might have been on the Shetland Islands for much longer! Anyway after a bit they realised he was a doctor, and they sent him to a little cottage hospital in Yorkshire, to work, and my mother also worked, I think funnily enough as a proof-reader, although English wasn't her major language. But, you know, in the war they didn't have people to do that sort of thing?

SH: Did you ever get to know your grandparents?

SH: No, they were all murdered by the Nazis – they were in Vienna, my grandparents, they were all killed. This isn't just rumours and history, it's for real, you know, the Nazis went in there and they murdered a huge number of people, amongst which both sets of grandparents.

HN: Do you remember when you parents told you [the first time]?

SH: No, because they would never talk about it. And I found talking to other people of my generation, similar backgrounds, later – this is a very common thing, it was so distressing that, when their children would ask questions they would change the subject. So, my parents, it was very difficult.

HN: So when did you first time realize it, that your grandparents were killed.

SH: Well, when I was very small. I mean I knew...you know, it didn't mean that much to me, because I'd never met them, when I was 3 or 4. Because my friends had grandparents, I would visit my friends in their house, and there would be an old person there, quite often, because at that time it was not so common to send the older generation into these care homes. I don't know if they even existed then, after the Second World War, in the early '50s. So I came home, and I said, where are my grandparents, you know, where's grandpa and grandma? And the answer was, well they died in Vienna – that's why we left. I mean, when you're a child, you accept what is, and you know, it's like that, yes OK, I didn't ask anymore, at that age.

HN: And how was it for you to, you're the only child in that family, how was it for you to grow up as an only child?

SH: Well it had advantages and disadvantages, you know it was quite boring sometimes, if I didn't have any friends to play with in the summer holidays or whatever. On the other hand, my parents waited till they really wanted a child. And I had a lot of love and care and attention that I didn't have to share with anybody. So, you know, good side, bad side. I don't really...

HN: Were there other people during your childhood that were important to you, be it friends or teachers or other people? Someone who is sticking out in your memory.

SH: I had friends in school my own age, no I can't think of anyone older. My parents were the most influential adults, and the other adults that I met and saw quite a lot of were the couples they played bridge with at the weekend, and they weren't very interesting. They were rather like my Mum and Dad, you know, when you're a child you're not interested in your parents' friends – they're boring! They talk to each other and don't take any notice of you. Anyway, one of these couples had a daughter exactly the same age as me, so we would be put together whether we liked it or not. And actually we didn't have much in common. When we were small it didn't matter, but as we got older it was more difficult. And I can remember age 6, 7, visiting her when my parents went to play bridge at her parents' house, and she was living in a much more working-class district of Reading, where there would be 15 or 20 children playing together in the street, and we would have games, the sort of games that have disappeared now. You know, you read about them in middle-class history books. But there were quite elaborate street games – and I can't remember all the details.

HN: So that was good for you?

SH: Yeah, yeah that was good fun, and I learnt something, but what was interesting in those days that there were so few cars that people would drive about 5 miles an hour in the backstreets, because they knew they would be full of children. But now of course that's all changed. And nobody thought twice about letting their children go and play in the street, you know. The idea that it could possibly be dangerous had never entered anyone's mind.

HN: When you were a girl, did you have ideas of what you wanted to become later, or ideas about how you wanted to live in the future?

SH: Mainly as I got older...when I was very small I wanted to be Thomas the Tank Engine! You know, when people asked me what I wanted to be, when I was 3 or 4 years old, I said 'I want to be Thomas the Tank Engine', this is an English radio show about trains, for children, you know. And I identified with this particular train. I mean it's a very famous programme – Andy, I'm sure, will have heard about it. And, let me see, as I got older, everyone said to me, don't you want to be a doctor like your father. To which the answer was 'No, I don't want to go to University for 7 years and study a lot of boring stuff and put up with the bad smells as you dissect cadavers, after which you only then get paid, after 7 years, I can't think of anything worse!' But I didn't know what I wanted to do. But various things made an impression on me in my childhood. When I was five, Sir Edmond Hillary climbed Everest, and I can remember getting up in the morning and finding the Times, which was one of the newspapers my parents read, on the doormat. And in those days the front page of the

Times always had classified ads. There was never any news on the front page – it was thought to be in bad taste. And just this once, there was a huge colour photograph on the front page, this was all for the Queen's Coronation, you know, it's carefully orchestrated. But there were pictures...I wasn't so impressed by the pictures of them on top of Everest, which was on the front page, but when you looked inside, it was the first time a newspaper had printed in colour since the war, as far as I know. There were colour photographs of the trek to Everest, through the subtropical rainforest, and I looked at that and I thought it was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen, and I announced to anybody who would listen - the neighbours, my parents etc. – 'I'm going to go to Kathmandu when I'm grown up'. It wasn't the same as 'What are you going to do...', but it was in a way, and yes I did do it. And it was as beautiful as I thought it would be, and I was pleased to get there.

HN: And how, did your, what kind of interest did you develop when you became a teenager?

SH: Uh in my early teens, I joined YCND, which was Youth CND, which you can join, in those days, from the age of 13. And it was quite interesting, there was, you know, highly seditious things like sell Peace News on the library steps. It was not a militant organization of any kind. So we were quite surprised when we had a meeting in the Quaker Friends Meeting House in Reading and there was a guy there nobody knew. And he came late, sat in the back row, and he was wearing shiny black shoes. And after about half an hour, he, whenever we were talking about anything, he was suggesting violence, you know, and that was just, it did make any sense! So, although I was only 13, the YCND was up to 25 years old, and there were people there who were Trade Unionists, and who knew a bit about what might happen. And after about half an hour, we all thought this guy was a cop, I mean he had cop written all over him, so they weren't very good at going undercover in those days! No long hair, police issues shoes and trousers, a different coloured jacket and shirt, and so they started to interrogate him, I mean the people running the meeting, and it became, he got uncomfortable very quickly and got up and left. And it was perfectly obvious that he was from the police, and if you think about it, it's a bit surprising they'd bother, you know, such a harmless bunch of children. And that was a good lesson about how to think about the police. They will always pick on people weaker than they are, to bully first. That holds, everywhere in the world, the same. And it's still the same now, although they're much cleverer about how they do it.

HN: Did this put you off politics, when you experienced that with the plain clothes policeman?

SH: Not at all. I wasn't in the least bit concerned. I thought it was a good lesson, and I thought one should be careful how one behaved in public, because one might be being watched at any time, so if you wanted to do something, you didn't want people to know about it, don't do it at a public meeting, or use a bit of common sense. But, no it didn't put me off, but soon after that, I got hooked on music. And politics had to take a back seat for quite a long time. I mean it's still, underlying everything I did was the usual liberal intellectual veneer, if you see what I mean.

HN: What was that, I don't understand.

SH: Veneer is a layer of wood which is not the same as the wood it's put on. It's cheap furniture, veneer, they take some plywood, I don't know how they do it. They then have a very thin layer of mahogany and they stick it on...

HN: How do you relate that to politics?

SH: It was superficial, my interest in politics was superficial – it was not a major part of my life.

HN: And what was attracting you with the music?

SH: I heard rhythm and blues and blues for the first time...I was a teenager by then, and I was full of angst and anguish, and I found the blues absolutely perfect for that, and the rhythm and blues was the blues you could dance to. And I found I really liked dancing by myself. Not the waltzes but the shakes – there were masses of dance crazes that came through. And uh as I, when I was about 13 or

14 I started clubbing. And everything changed for me. I became very involved in clubbing, I got to know quite a lot of the musicians who were playing in the bands, who were playing funk-based rhythm and blues, people like Georgie Fame, Zoot Money, Chris Farlowe, Geno Washington, Ronnie Jones.

AP: Graham Bond?

SH: Graham Bond, there you go, one I missed. But Georgie Fame, we knew the whole band very well – we knew Georgie, we knew the roadies. And they would always let us in free to a gig, anywhere we went.

HN: And where were those clubs?

SH: Um the Ricky-Tick club was the first one, was run out of Windsor, Maidenhead, Slough, I can't remember which of these towns they had their Head Office in, in the beginning. Reading was like a faraway branch of this organization. Then later they rented this fabulous huge farmhouse down by the river in Windsor, which would hold over 500 people, which was quite a lot in those days, maybe 750. And it was the most wonderful site for a rock club, I mean, right by the river, away from other buildings, a beautiful huge building, with large halls inside...and I saw a lot of interesting people there, but it would chuck out at midnight, 1 in the morning, I don't know, sometime like that. Then there would, if somebody had a car drive, or get the train to London, and we used to go mob-handed and jump over the ticket barriers and let them chase us. Nobody ever paid. Because we didn't have the money, you know, we couldn't get in the club if we paid for the train.

So then in London I made friends with the people who managed Georgie Fame and Zoot Money and all these other bands, who were called the Gunnell brothers, Rik and Johnny Gunnell, and they ran a club in a basement in Wardour Street, called the Flamingo Club. It was small, only about 300 people, but it was over half Jamaican, the audience. And it was the first time I mixed with people of other ethnicities, and I thought it was so exciting. I absolutely loved the Jamaicans! Because they were a bit older, and I didn't know about the social circumstances, I had no idea at 14, that actually, you know, they were facing quite difficult circumstances in their daily life here, it was hard to find digs because of racial prejudice, low pay, only the dirtiest jobs. I didn't have a clue about that. And on Saturday night they didn't care – they had enough money for their new suit from Carnaby Street, and their porkpie hat, and they were going to have a good time dancing to the music! And in between the bands, there'd be records – it was, like, Blue Note jazz, Tamla Motown, a lot of ska, blue beat from Jamaican and Trinidad, and...as well as rhythm and blues. It was a good mix of proper music that I still listen to today, some of it. And that was my musical education, really, and I also, where I learnt to dance, because the Jamaicans were so loose. And there was no, it wasn't like, there is a dance. It was, that was where I learnt about improvisation. And stringing the moves together as you feel like, in your own head, rather than according to some preordained ritual.

HN: Did you make friends at that time, with the people you met in clubs?

SH: Oh yes, my whole life centred around that...I went to this club when I was older, I went there for about 3 years, and I was taking A-Levels, so I must have been 17, 18. And I got a pass, to go, there was a television company in those days, which was called I think Associated Rediffusion. What a name! And they'd be in the club at the weekend, and I'd got a free pass to go to their studios in Wembley at 6pm, where they were going to record all the Tamla Motown artists, who had come here for the first time. I mean, this was a really big deal for me, something that I just couldn't miss. And I had an A-Level before, so I rushed through the A-Level, I think I finished the whole thing in about an hour, and left, and hitchhiked to Wembley, which is harder to get to than the West End hitchhiking. And I was with a friend, and found the studio, and that was the important thing, to be at the gig, you know the A-Level didn't matter.

HN: When you finished school, did you have time to think about what is going to be your next step, or was it automatically for you, did you know what you wanted to do?

SH: No I had no idea what I wanted to do. In fact I didn't want to do anything except music and clubbing at that time! But uh, no what happened was, when we were taking O-Levels at school, I had 2 very close friends who would go clubbing with me – girls, same age. And they, I think were not academically inclined, so they were going to leave school after they'd got their O-Levels, and look for some kind of job. Each of them a bit different. And I was supposed to be staying on to do A-Levels at school. But we also decided to go to see the Beatles' first movie *Help* one afternoon. Because it was a funny scene, they said to us, while you're doing O-Levels, you don't have to come into school if you don't have an exam, you can revise at home. And this was just at the time the O-Levels were ending, and it was a bit ambiguous, and we decided to take the afternoon off. And I wasn't sure, I thought, does this still apply, do we have to stay, 'cos actually the exams are over now. So I went to the Nurse at the school and said 'I've got a migraine', which was a lie. And no-one can tell if you've got a migraine or not, and I did get migraines. So I got a note to say I can go home. And the other two didn't. And we went to see *Help*. And the next day we went to class, and one after another my friends were sent to see the Headmistress, and they didn't come back. And I didn't know what was going on. And then at lunchtime I found they'd been expelled. And I was absolutely furious, because they needed the letter from the school to get a job, you know, that was how it worked. So the school was going out of its way to really mess them up. And it made me angry. So I invited myself to go and see the Headmistress, and I gave her a piece of my mind, I told them exactly what I thought of her and her school, and that I wasn't staying there for another minute! This came as a surprise to both her and my parents. And I took my A-Levels at the local Polytechnic. Which was good for me, because I always had great difficulty waking up in the morning, and I managed to find 3 subjects I never had to get up in the morning...! 3 A-Levels that the local Polytechnic did, very peculiar subjects, they didn't do a full range of school subjects, I think I took English, Economic History, Economic Geography, and the British Constitution. And I chose them because they were in the afternoon. But the college was on the A4, the road to London. And sometimes when I'd get there I thought 'I don't really feel like going to college, I think I'll stick out my thumb, and go to the West End instead'. Anyway, somehow I managed to get my A-Levels, despite of this bad attitude. And I wasn't really interested in any of the subjects. And then my parents wanted me to go to University. And in Reading the women at the University had to stay in a sort of prison for the first 2 years – I mean it was a women's hall of residence. The men got a choice – their halls of residence were not guarded and restricted in the same way. The women had to be in by 10 o'clock at night, they weren't allowed to have anyone visiting them in their room. You know, there was a whole load of absolutely absurd, petty restrictions, and I thought I'm damned if I'm going to leave my parents' house, and put up with that sort of thing, which is the absolute opposite of the lifestyle I've had for the last 3 years.

So I looked around, and I was very interested in psychology. I mean, my Dad had a lot of medical textbooks, including original works by Freud, and on gestalt in German, which I tried to read, because I did German O-Level, and I spoke German quite fluently for a while, until I forgot it all. So I was interested in psychology, and I, there was a book out at the time, by a guy called Vance Packard, 'The Hidden Persuaders', which was about the psychology of advertising, in a nutshell. So I thought I'd study Advertising Copywriting, because I'd found a one-year course at Watford Art School, which I'd heard of, it was fairly close to London, it wasn't ideal, but it was only 1 year. And I didn't want to tie myself up for 3 years. And I knew then, that it wasn't a University, there wouldn't be any halls of residence. So I went up to Watford with my mother to look for somewhere to live. And the college gave us a print-out. And it started, the college was at the top of the hill, at the top of the town, and we worked our way down through all these nice, middle-class houses, with the spare bedroom, where I would eat with the family, which was exactly what I didn't want. Until finally, right down by the tracks, the railway tracks, there was this really run-down old house. And on about the 4th or 5th

floor, with no life, was a bedsit. And that was it - that was perfect for me. And my mother was very reluctant, but what could she do? I wouldn't have it, I wouldn't stay with these families up the hill, I wanted privacy. So I got my bedsit down by the tracks. And the house was a little odd, I couldn't quite figure it out at first, there was a very old couple next door to me on the top floor who never went out. They probably couldn't make the stairs, I don't know. I don't know how they got food or anything, it never occurred to me in those days. And the rest of the house, there was never anyone there in the daytime, it used to get busy at night, and then I figured out it was full of prostitutes. I didn't care, why should it bother me? So I got what I wanted, as I was in this place, and at that time I'd just arrived there, the college term would start after the weekend, for the freshers. And my friends had also gone away. Georgie Fame had had a number 1 hit and was touring in America, the Flamingo was closed for redecoration, because they thought they'd use some of the money to tart it up a bit! So for the first time in years and years I didn't know what I was going to do on the weekend, and I thought I can't stay here in this bedsit all weekend, that is not going to be the appropriate start to my time here. So I got a copy of Melody Maker...and I looked at the back pages, which is where the gigs are advertised, and I couldn't really find anything that I wanted to go to, that I thought was suitable. And there was also the problem of, since everyone I knew was away, where was I going to stay, or what was I going to do, was I going to get the last train back to Watford at half past eleven at night, and then have the rest of the weekend in Watford, it didn't really seem too good. On the other hand, I didn't want to spend 48 hours on the streets. So I looked at the back pages, and the smallest ad was the only thing that was of interest, and it was something I'd never heard of, by people I didn't know. And it was for a band called Pink Floyd, doing their first London gig, in All Saints Hall in Westbourne Park. So I had never heard of any of this, although I did know Westbourne Park, I knew somebody who lived there. So I thought, I'll go there, and if it's no good I'll see so and so. So I got the train, and I got to the gig, and I paid to go in, which I hadn't done for years. And when I got in the people were very different to the people I'd known before. It was the start of the hippies - they were all dressed up in silk and velvet and satin shirts, and, you know, a different vibe. And they looked like they probably did drugs. But there wasn't anyone actually doing anything that I could sort of say, right, can I have a hit on your joint? And I didn't quite know what to make of it, but I, being such an experienced clubber, I knew that if you wanted to find out about a gig, you chatted up the guy on the door, and of course when you're 18 and a girl, most people will let you have a go, they're friendly towards you. So they guy on the door was Hoppy, and so I chatted to him at the interval, and tried to find out, you know, what the context was, what was going on here, what was it about, who were these people, why was this music so different? I had a lot of questions. And it turned out that he was quite friendly, and he answered the questions, and then he told me really the gig was raising money for a brand new underground newspaper. I didn't know what that was, the underground I thought was the tube [laughs], you know! And he said the very first edition was coming out the next day, and I could crash on his floor if I would help deliver it to shops in the King's Road on Saturday. So that sounded like a reasonable deal, so I said yes. So after the gig I had to wait for him to pack up, you know how it is if you're the promoter, you have to pack it up at the end, it's not like if you're the punters you just go, it's quite hard work. And then 7 of us got into his Mini, which had the seats in the back removed. And we drove a short distance to Bayswater where he was living in a mansion block flat at the time, and went into the lift of his flat. And for me it was like I'd entered the world of magic. You know, he rented the rooms in his flat to various people, and the first room was a guy who'd just come back from Morocco, with some kif, and he was sieving the kif as I walked in. There was nice music playing, that was the sitting room, that was where I would eventually get to sleep, although I didn't sleep much. Then in the next room was somebody from AMM, an avant-garde music band, and in the next room was a filmmaker from New York, Andy somebody, projecting his film onto the wall. It was like, yeah - give me more! So, you know, Hoppy disappeared. He'd got me there, the rest of it was up to me. But everyone was very friendly, and I was used to staying up late, and I was used to smoking kif, and all the rest of it. So it fitted me like a glove on the hand. And I didn't sleep very well, but when you're young it

doesn't matter. You've got enough energy to cope if you miss a night's sleep. So the next day, very exciting, I mean I didn't know how exciting. And I found out later, the first edition of International Times – Hoppy had just come back from the printers, he'd got up very early to drive out to the printers, which was outside London. 'Cos it was very hard to find anybody to print this stuff. People didn't like it. And a lot of printers, when they saw the thing, they'd say no. But he eventually found one who would do it. 'Cos, there was no...cheap easy printing, you know, it was either Roneograph – no-one would read that - or off-set litho, which was, required large-scale expensive equipment. So that was a bit of a hitch in printing underground newspapers then. And it was a very interesting read. I'd never seen anything like it before, you know, it was like, a couple of years earlier I'd seen all these people once, but I hadn't known who they were. That was at the Albert Hall poetry reading by the beat poets, which was organized by about 13 different people, and depending on which version, everyone's got a different version of who booked the hall and who did it, but Hoppy was definitely involved. So I'd seen all these people, 5000 of them at the Albert Hall at this beat poetry reading. And this was the first time we'd looked round and said, wow, there are other people like me in the world. But I didn't know where they'd come from, you know, I'd gone with my boyfriend, we were there, we didn't really meet anybody, and then we went back to Reading...So I was re-meeting these people a year later. And, I don't know, well that was my new social circle really, who I'm still in touch with today.

HN: Shall we make a break there?

[Mentions she would like to make a change to something said earlier...]

[Cut]

SH: ...I'm thinking of doing a book, 'cos the next thing I did was to travel, by myself mainly, all over the place. And, for instance, I spent 5 months with...

HN: Can we start now...So you said before...that you want to go back to something else.

SH: Yeah. When I was talking about my childhood, and the point where I became less interested in politics and let the music scene take over a lot more, before that happened, there were a couple of other things that I missed out that made a very big dent on me. And the first of these was the Cuba Crisis. And then reason that it made such an impression on me, was it was the first time in my life that the adults around me were frightened – my mother and father were frightened, they were really frightened, their friends were frightened, everyone was frightened. We thought we might be dead tomorrow, no-one knew what was going to happen. Were they going to let these nukes off? There was no hotline, there was no means of communication between the Kremlin and the White House, nobody knew too much about Khrushchev and what he would actually do. People knew that Kennedy had said that he would use nuclear weapons unless the Russians withdrew theirs from Cuba – it was a very real threat. It could easily have happened. And I had never seen all these adults so frightened before, so it made a very big impression on me, aged 14. And that's when I turned away, really, from politics. Because I thought there's nothing I can do, the peace movement has no effect at all on any of this – you know, we may influence local politicians but they have no control over what's happening, and really we are being conned, so there's no point pretending that my democratic vote will make any difference to whether I live or die. So that was a very big realization, I mean not that I had a vote aged 14, but I thought sometime in the future, and I think it was 21 I would get one, that I wouldn't value it very much, given the circumstances, so it's important to mention that, and the death of Kennedy, where we were treated to what was obviously a charade – the story we were told was clearly untrue. And it followed the pattern of old books like 'The Count of Monte Christo', that sort of thing, where the assassin was themselves shot in a police station, tell me that isn't the Secret Services, who else can possibly arrange for such a thing to happen. So I became very disillusioned, as a result of these two sets of incidents, not that they are directly related. But I thought music was a safer place to enjoy myself as a young person.

So cut/shift, I'm starting at college, I've met the social circle who I will continue to relate to for most of the rest of my life, and it turns out one of my tutors at college, who I have [for] film studies, not film studies, actually using a 16mm camera for, I don't know, was it one morning or one afternoon a week, with a guy called Mark Boyle. Well it turns out Mark Boyle is the person who Hoppy has booked to do the light shows at the West End club that succeeded the gig in All Saints Hall, and the idea was that Hoppy and Joe Boyd, Joe Boyd, knowing a lot more about the music business than Hoppy did, would uh book a club for all night Friday nights, and the club was called UFO...and it was almost on the corner of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street, so it was very central, although most of the other clubs were in Soho, and this was just outside And it was very successful – the guy who owned the club was an Irishman, it was called the Blarney Club, the actual place. And it was a basement, like the Flamingo, but much bigger and on the Tottenham Court Road. And from then on, that's where Pink Floyd, and Soft Machine, and the other psychedelic underground bands played every Friday night for about 8 months till the News of the World did an article about a pupil taking LSD, and the Irishman was so shocked he threw us all out, wouldn't take the bookings anymore. And by then Hoppy had gone to jail. So it was a very short period, where everything was centred around this one place.

HN: Why did Hoppy go to jail?

SH: He went to Amsterdam for the weekend, and lent his room in his flat to an American guy called Simon Barley, who was so grateful that he left him a large piece of Lebanese hash next to his bed. Unfortunately, when Hoppy came back he was the subject of a police raid, and they found this hash, which Hoppy hadn't yet seen, and of course he was charged with possession, and he had been busted before. So it was not a first offence. So he was going...this was thought to be much more serious at that time than it is now. And it was known that they had the discretion, they could give you a suspended sentence or they could send you to jail. But Hoppy decided to take the opportunity of his trial, which was just after the 14 Hour Technicolour Dream, which was the first rave in England, at Ally Pally [Alexandra Palace], more than 10,000 people. So that would have been in late spring '67, and he went to jail I think in July or August '67. And he decided to use the court to make a political speech, and the judge didn't take it at all well, and gave him 9 months. And I think that he made a big mistake, because he couldn't take jail. And he'll still tell you he never really recovered from that. But, you know, at the time that was what he did.

HN: What effect did this have on you?

SH: Not very much. I mean I was not his girlfriend, I wasn't living with him. He was a friend. A much older friend, and I knew a lot of other people around that scene. I was very fond of Hoppy but I didn't know what he was doing or why, I didn't ask him, he didn't tell me. We were not that close, I was so much younger he wouldn't have sought any advice from me, I'm sure. I had no idea he was going to do that, and when I thought about it afterwards I thought it was a bit unwise, but brave. But then it turned out really he hadn't thought about it, and he wasn't ready for the consequences, which was a pity. We missed him, everybody missed him, there was a big campaign run by IT because the Times had objected to the name International Times so it had to be changed to IT. And it had no effect whatsoever of course. And I don't know, there was the peculiar thing, I don't know why they do it, but whatever sentence you do you get let out a bit ahead of time. And those days if you got a 9 month sentence they would let you out after 6 months, so he got out at the end of November '67. And he was in love with a woman from California, called Suzy Creamcheese, and they immediately left. You know, he was only in London for about a week. I saw him and, let me see, he left me his car. I got the Mini. Which wasn't in very good nick, but it was better than no car at all. He was travelling around the continent, and that's when he saw video for the first time, at the Venice Biennale, in 1969. Someone had an American format Portapak – there were no European format ones around. I mean he told me, I wasn't there. But then uh, or was it '68.

HN: What I think we can now see, which were the next developments in your life, which then leads to your own involvement with video?

SH: Well that's quite a long story, and didn't happen quickly. Because I did my college course, it wasn't very interesting, to tell you the truth, it wasn't as interesting as I thought it would be. I never wanted to work in advertising, I was interested in how they applied what Packard was writing about – the copy that was produced, and the TV ads and so on. And I did get to see how ads were made, part of this college course I was on, was I was sent to work at a large advertising agency as a student for 6 weeks. And I did wonder, how am I going to get there, because I can't get up in the morning, I could never wake up in the morning, and I was going to have to get a train at about 6am in Watford Junction to get into London in time to go to work at 10 o'clock or something. I mean, it was by no means clear to me that it would have ever happened. But 2 weeks before I was due to start this secondment, I met somebody who, again, became a life-long friend, I met them in the cloakroom in UFO, that was the private place at UFO. And this was a guy about Hoppy's age, about 10 years older than me, who became a very close friend. And when he heard about my situation, I mean how about this for synchronicity and a stroke of luck. It turned out he was working as a copywriter at the agency my college was sending me to, so he said why don't you come and sleep on my sofa for 6 weeks, and I'll drive you to work, you know, we can go together. So I said great! My problems are now solved. And yes that very lucky for me. And meant that I did actually get to see the inside of Ogilvy and Mather and write some copy and so on. And as part of that they took me along several times to Soho shoots or edits. And I didn't really know what I was looking at, but that's what I was looking at, later I remember and...then I didn't want to study, and I left college and I found a room to rent in a friend's house in London, and I needed a job, and I got a job but the guy lied to me – he told me I'd be writing copy but actually it was selling space. And I was no good at it and I didn't like it, so I only did it for 2 weeks. So then I found various ways to maintain myself – buying and selling in the markets, Portobello Road and so on. And there was a lot of Indian tat – you know, clothes, bedspreads, coming in and I knew the people bringing it, and I knew the people who had stalls booked in Portobello Road market, or in other markets. So I could middle and make a bit of cash, or run the stall for a bit or whatever. The people were interesting – the work was not interesting. But I wanted to go to Nepal, and I was trying to save money. And then in 1968, in the autumn, I got arrested by the police in the street, and I got found with a little bit of cannabis, and as I said, only a tiny bit. But it was a much more serious matter in those days, and luckily I came up in front of a magistrate who was called Lady Wootton, who'd written a famous report called the Wootton Report, which was the first report saying the marijuana is not really a dangerous job, and you're doing far more harm persecuting them and giving them criminal records than they're doing to themselves smoking this stuff. So I was lucky to come up against her, and I got a suspended sentence and a £50 fine. And I thought about it, and I thought, well if I stay here I'll just get busted again, and then I'll go to prison, and I don't want to do that. And I thought this is the time to leave. And I didn't have enough money saved up to go to Nepal. So Hoppy had meanwhile married Suzy Zeiger, AKA Creamcheese, and they'd hired a house on Formentera, at the far end, and then they had enough of it, and left. And it only cost £8 a month. So I reckoned I could afford this for the whole winter, and you know food was cheap, you could cook on an open fire...I'd never seen this house, didn't know what to make of it. The first couple of weeks were quite difficult, but it suited my budget, and as far as I was concerned it could keep me out of trouble, and I wouldn't get busted and I could have my year of suspended sentence in peace somewhere else. I'd only been there a couple of weeks when somebody turned up who wanted to pay for me to go to Morocco on their behalf. So I did, and sorted them out, whatever they wanted. And it all went very well, and I met some friends down there. And then I went back to Formentera, and I'd only been there about another month when the police decided to have a sweep, this was under Franco, still, the dictator. The Guardia Civil decided they were going to clear Formentera of hippies. So they turned up quite unexpectedly, nobody had heard any rumours that this was likely to happen – had never happened before. And they closed the houses that the hippies were renting, with sanitation notices, because they didn't have an inside

toilet. Well, none of the local houses had an inside toilet, how come they weren't closed? Well that wasn't a question you could really get an answer to. But all I know is that I was sitting in my house, and I saw a silhouette of a shadow of a peaked cap in the doorway, and then a few seconds later the police entered, told me to take my stuff out – I had 20 minutes to get everything out of the house, and then they sealed it up, and nailed up one of these sanitation notices on the door, and it was forbidden to re-enter. Luckily I'd made friends with somebody from London who had a very pregnant wife who'd just gone back to England, and we'd agreed to give up one of the houses and share the other one, to cut costs. And anyway we were friends, we were doing similar things. And he was a lecturer in Spanish at London University. So he spoke excellent Spanish, which was more than you could say for my couple of hundred words. And we moved to Ibiza, because we couldn't stay in Formentera, and he found us a house deep in the countryside that was just as cheap, because that was the point. You know, because keeping the cost of living down was very important. And this new house was about 40 minutes from the nearest road, but we had bicycles, we hired bicycles, that's how we got to the bus stop. And, uh, it was like the other one, they, these houses had very thick stone walls, they're three or four hundred years old - I mean they probably don't exist anymore, it's all been redeveloped for tourists now, on Ibiza now anyway, I haven't been back to Formentera. But I lived near a place called San Carlos, which was quite a long way from Ibiza town. And deep in the countryside, and every evening at 6 o'clock our landlord and his wife would come over to converse with us. I found it a bit stressful because my Spanish was so poor, but Geoff could keep a conversation going. And it was very interesting – he tried to ask our landlord what he thought about Franco, and the guy wouldn't discuss it. And then changed the subject - I mean this happened several times. And then he said to Geoff, would you like to come looking for mushrooms with me tomorrow – you'll have to get up very early. So I said now, because it was like, be ready to go at 6 in the morning, that was a bit early for me, and Geoff said yes. And he told me later that when they were in the middle of a really big field, and you could see all around whether there was anyone there or not, he started to rant against Franco, because as is well known, Catalonia was the Left. And this guy was very much on the Left. But he didn't dare say anything. But he explained to Geoff that walls had ears there, you never knew which of your neighbours who might report you to the Guardia Civil was lurking just round the corner, outside your house, who would overhear if you said something against Franco. And then the police would really come to get you. They didn't need to provide any evidence. And he said that you should never talk about anything you didn't want other people to hear in a house. And that you should, you know, you should always have 50 metres you could check out all around you before you said a word. People would do well now to remember this. I think people have forgotten...

HN: Sorry I have to interrupt here...

SH: Sorry I'm rambling...

HN: ...What we could do is...and I think it also has to do with being tired, because we have been going on now for about one and a half hours...

SH: ...Well I could immediately to video, but there's one thing I've left out which is very significant for me, which is the time I spent in the Lebanon, where I understood the Sunni Muslim culture for the first time, and I got a completely different perspective on my own culture.

HN: But generally the years you were travelling, how many years were you travelling altogether?

SH: Uh 4.

HN: So after 4 years you came back to London?

SH: Well no I came back several times in between, but not for long.

HN: Maybe what you could do is summarise, those years of going back and forth, travelling. What effect did this have on you, compared to the time when you left London? What experience did it bring you into your life, which then later on, for the time in London, and for your involvement with video, what was important about the travelling?

SH: Well the things that were important to me was the understanding that there wasn't just a single culture. That it wasn't true, what I'd been told here in school, or by older people here, that this is the way to do it. There wasn't any way to do it, there were a lot of different ways. And the thing that...

HN: Can you maybe give me an example, where you really were confronted with this different way...?

SH: In the Lebanon was the most confrontational shall we say. In those days no one had any ideas about Muslims, let me say straight away. We turned up in the Lebanon, two girls, I was wearing jeans and short...

2nd file

SH: ...in T-shirts and no head coverings, just like that...and we turned up in Baalbek like that, and eventually we were offered hospitality by some people who...we didn't know this, but it just happened this way that the people we met were the people who ran the dope trade for the whole of the Lebanon. And they actually controlled Baalbek and the district and when it came to a face-off between the army and the police and our guys, our guys won. And they actually really did control the district - they controlled the water supply and they were heavier at fighting.

HN: And how was it for you, I mean how did you realize the difference in culture?

SH: That was a very big difference for a start – there wasn't anywhere in England where there was an independent tribe of people who could tell the police to fuck off, and the army, and win. But these people could. At first I thought it was all bullshit, but then I lived through it and I saw what happened...But what made the biggest impression on me was, when I'd been there about 6 weeks, I'd forgotten that I was a Jew. It didn't mean anything to me – I wasn't religious. But after about 6 weeks the topic came up in some way – not about me personally, or I wouldn't be here talking to you about it! But all Jews were Israeli agents they thought, and if they'd found out I was a Jew they would have killed me. That made me sit up and think – it had never crossed my mind. But there was one other thing that really got to me – when I'd been with them for 3 or 4 months, and I knew what was going on. I wore jeans, and I was travelling with 2 pairs of jeans, and I don't know, 6 pairs of knickers. And if you were jeans you have to wear them to be comfortable. And I liked to have a clean pair of knickers every day. And so I washed them –they were easy to wash...So I washed my knickers, all apart from the ones I was wearing. I left them on the line and I went off for the day and came back. And when I got back they weren't there. And I was really furious – somebody's stolen my knickers, how dare they? And at that point the people who were designated to look after us, who were a couple of teenage boys, who belonged to the family, pointed out to me – 'it's all very well saying somebody's stolen your stuff, but actually you've been staying here as our guest for 3 months, we haven't had any money'. Because there had been a coup d'etat as soon as I arrived, there was no post, so you couldn't get money for a long time. And nobody's asked you for anything, and here we share. So I then tried to explain to him the problem of wearing jeans without knickers, and needing to wash them all the time. Anyway, the net result was that I got 4 of the 6 pairs back. But that made me think about different cultures more than anything, because the idea...I'd always thought that it was wrong to steal. But here was a culture where it wasn't stealing. You know, if everyone shared everything you couldn't really call it stealing. But actually that wasn't true either, because they didn't go around stealing each other's things. Anyway, it may seem like a small thing to you, but it...made me start to question my own culture's values.

HN: We just have to stop here because the battery has almost gone...

[Edit]

SH...In the Lebanon...hardly anyone went there, that was a good thing about it. There were other people there. There was a guy who'd worked as a telecoms engineer in the Vietnam War – an American. And he hooked up our village to the electric grid. We had free electricity. And those fuckers were so dangerous. When we first moved up there, the 16 year old who was supposed to be looking after us, he took the mains and stuck it in the bath...just think about it.

HN: You came back, and how did you link up...

SH: Well I'd had enough of travelling, I'd learnt about other cultures, I understood. Travelling is just a boring routine like anything else once you no longer are looking for specific information. I'd got the information I wanted to get...because for me, travelling was instead of university, it was a way to educate myself about other people and their situations and how they saw things. And I'd done that. And I was bored with it. You know, there was a time when I got on a plane and thought 'Oh fuck not another plane...'

HN: And then what did you make...?

SH: I was looking for something to do – I didn't know what to do. But squats were available. There wasn't much money available – there was a big recession like now, but different. A lot of unemployment amongst young people – it was hard to find a job. So I ended up in this huge squatting community. Because all my friends...one of them said I'll crack a house for you, and I found some other people to share the house. And in, I don't know, August 1972, I moved into my squat. And I started to look around for something to do. And I thought that I would train as a pilot. That's what I started to do – flying light aircraft, I thought I could go to the Caribbean once I'd got a pilot's licence. I didn't want to fly passenger jets, I wanted to fly small planes – freight- around the Caribbean. I mean not drugs, that wasn't happening then, or if it was I didn't know about it...But it just seemed to me it was a portable skill I could use in a lot of parts of the world, and it would be quite a nice lifestyle, and it would be different. So I started paying for flying lessons, and driving out to Biggin Hill twice a week, to learn to fly. And then Sheik Yamani started OPEC and there was the oil crisis, and then private flying stopped... [I'm sorry, I have to...]

[edit]

OK so...after the OPEC action, the oil price went up by 5 times, and I could no longer afford flying lessons. Firstly all private flying was stopped for 9 months. So I had 9 months, and I couldn't do what I planned to do for my next move in my life. So I looked around, and at the same time we had something here called the 3 day week, when...I can't remember, was it the electrician engineers or the miners...if one lot was not on strike, the other one was on strike. So there was never enough coal for the electricity for the whole country for a while. And several years running we had something called the 3 day week where people were only allowed to work for 3 days in a week, and businesses could only open 3 days a week. I mean it sounds absolutely nuts, and it was actually absolutely nuts. But that was what was happening. But really if you wanted to do something, it had to be something you could do fairly locally, amongst the people you knew.

HN: And what did you decide to do?

SH: I decided that I was going to think about architecture and planning. And I started an organization called Graft On, which was the name of the ward, the electoral ward, where I lived. And of course since it was mainly squatted, uh, that meant a lot of interaction with the other squatters. And it turned out the council had a plan to demolish all these houses. They'd already emptied out the former residents, and send them to live in...Lewisham where they didn't know anybody, and couldn't get any work. And we were, we had just fallen into the gap. So I found that the Architectural

Association, a bunch of architects and planners who were interested in working with us, the squatters in Kentish Town, to draw up an alternative plan, which didn't involve the demolition of the street. It involved removing some of the worst old houses, but leaving the street pattern intact. And we had a 2 year long battle with the council, we fought two public enquiries, we got a lot of support from other people in the area who had Tenants Associations, I started a Residents Association. We were squatters because squatters couldn't call themselves tenants, but we were residents. We were supported by the Victorian Society, and people like that. This is very close to Hampstead, where the liberal intellectuals hang out. And we had a surprising amount of support from these kind of people, which I wasn't expecting. So while I was organizing the Residents Association, Hoppy decided that he'd be better...somebody moved out of my squat, they went back to Ireland, they'd made all the money they needed to buy their house and live happily ever afterward. It was Don the accountant and his lady who worked for Friends magazine. And so the top floor was vacant and Hoppy decided he'd rather live there and have his office across the road. So he moved into the top of my squat. [Phone rings] I'll just answer this...

[Edit]

OK? ...So yes I was working very hard to get local allies to support...and also to get interest from the squatters, who weren't exactly easy to convince that they should indulge in these strange bureaucratic practices, to form a Residents Association, so that there would be something in existence that the council would recognise and negotiate with, that was my strategy. So while I was doing this Hoppy approached me, and he said, what about making a video - Forming a Residents Association. So I said, yeah, great, it would be very interesting, to see how it works. So that my introduction to video. And as soon as I saw the video I was far more interested in that than in the community work. And it was quite clear that I was not suitable for community politics - I was much too impatient and bad tempered and opinionated. But I was a pretty good technician, and I could plan and make video programmes...

HN: And what attracted you...by video, what was so attractive about it?

SH: I liked everything about it. I mean, I didn't know I would like it. Hoppy suggested it, and I agreed to work with him on that first project, Forming a Residents Association. While we were doing it, I began to like it more and more ...I don't know, what did I like? Everything! The mixture of...inventing what you were going to say, I mean 'say' in quotes...pictures and words together. And uh having to get the equipment to work. I mean I liked the interaction of the technology with the culture. And I...these were both areas that I could work in and be good at.

HN: And what was your next production after this first one about the Residents Association?

SH: Well they weren't so much productions, because although Forming a Residents Association was edited, it was very painful. We had to drive to Brighton. Rod Snell was our technician - Queen's Award to Industry, nobody saw that coming! And uh it took all day to just cut together, assemble edit a very crude sort of programme, and I'd never done it before, so I was very much in Hoppy's hands, and Rod made several helpful suggestions while we were making the programme. But by the end I understood what it was. And I thought, yes, I can do some more of this. But there was no editing - we had to edit in camera for the next, I don't know, 8 or 9 months, on half-inch open reel. At that time, 1973, there wasn't any editing, so the editing we did in Brighton was onto something called 1 inch B format, which didn't really work very well, but that was what the Technical Colleges were using.

HN: So when you only had this possibility to work by editing in the camera, what kind of situations did you get into, to film, and what did you do with those edited uh videos, to whom did you show it?

SH: Well first of all we were living in this very large squatting community, which was unique, there had never been anything quite like it. So things were happening all the time. We didn't have to go

anywhere or do anything special. We just had to hang out with our friends, and suddenly something interesting would start happening. The point was, this was participant observation, to put it in a technical way. We were squatters ourselves, we were not from the outside. And at first people were very hesitant about the video, and we took it out and let other people handle it a lot, we showed them, this is what you do, this is how you zoom, this is how your focus. And then we'd erase it, we'd re-use tapes, which were very expensive in those days. But after people had had a go themselves, they felt reassured. They didn't see it as dangerous, or outside, or any of those things. And that was quite crucial. And we videoed occupations, parties, evictions, street actions, lectures, seminars...marches. I think that just about covers it.

HN: And then you showed it back to the squatters?

SH: We showed it back to the squatters, and also squatters in other parts of London. And then gradually, gradually, other people started to be interested. And we broadened the work, the scope of the work we were doing, but in, I think it was October 1974, Hoppy came in and said he'd got a letter from the British Film Institute. I think it was actually from the Production Board. They wanted to spend some money on video equipment for quote 'community and arts groups'. There weren't very many people to spend it on in those days. And I was very surprised - it never occurred to me anyone would want to give me any money, and I didn't think what I was doing was art - I thought it was life. But I was prepared to have a flexible point of view, if the money was enough! And I looked at the letter, and I asked Hoppy a few questions and it turned out that there was only about half a dozen people who could really apply for the money in the terms this thing was written, and you had to know about it to apply for it. I wouldn't have known about it if it wasn't for Hoppy.

HN: We have to stop here...we'll come back to that....

[edit]

SH: Right, so, I asked Hoppy a few questions about this whole process because he had been through it before and I hadn't. And he told me that there were half a dozen groups who would be applying for this money. So we looked at the total amount of money - I can't remember how much it was, but it wasn't very much. And I pointed out to him that if we could combine his organization and mine, then we could ask for twice as much, and that would be enough, between us, to get an edit desk, which had just come out, the...3670, Andy may remember...the Sony 3670 half-inch open reel so-called edit desk, with which you could do stopwatch editing. And so we wrote a grant application where we said that we needed access to this equipment, both of our organizations, which was actually only 2 people, but what did they know? It might have been fifty people. And that we would make it available to other groups in the organizations, 30% of the time. And this turned out to be an absolute winner - they gave us all the money we asked for. We thought really we should have asked for more! Then we did something that nobody else thought of doing for a long time. Instead of just dumping the stuff on a desk, we actually built a console. And we put the equipment in a planned ergonomic way into the console, and we got the eyelines right for the monitors, and it was a sort of edit suite, and so people had to bring their own portapacks, in order for it to work. You know, we'd got an audio mixer, we'd got some monitors, we'd got an edit VTR, but they still had to bring their portable VTR as the source. And anyway, since they were all adjusted differently with the skew and the tracking in those days it wasn't standard, it was probably just as well to playback on the stuff you'd shot the stuff on. So we put out a press release and opened up, and we were absolutely inundated from day one! 30% of the time - I don't think I actually shot anything after that, or only at the weekend!

And it was not only artists and community groups - in the first, I don't know, month we were open we also had work from Schroeder's Chemicals [?] and National Westminster Bank. So I, both Hoppy and I were both very interested in cybernetics and general systems theory, and applying those techniques to our own work, and so we took a look at running what we called a video resource

centre, or video access centre, from that point of view, and we wrote a pitch about that, about how to enable communication by disenfranchised social groups. And one of the ways we differentiated between our clients was to have a tiered rate structure. So for the artists and community groups - this was in our squat, the very first Fantasy Factory - it was £2 an hour. But if you were a commercial organization, it was £10 an hour. And if you came from an educationally supported group it was £4 an hour.

So we had 3 rates, and when we had these 3 rates, we had to write terms and conditions which said how got what rate, and why. And many, many years later, we looked at those terms and conditions and said OK, we don't need to write an Equal Opportunities Policy, we've already got one. And it was true. Because there were more categories in our terms and conditions than there were in the Equal Opportunities Act.

HN: ...Which kind of work in the resource did you like best? What was your favourite work?

SH: I liked editing my own programmes best. Obviously I like making my own stuff the best, but there wasn't much time to do it because there was so much demand from outside.

HN: And which were your own programmes?

SH: The Squatting Tapes. I mean, you have to remember, we're talking about assemble editing. That means you can only bolt chunks of stuff together. With a stopwatch you can only get to within, I don't know, a quarter of a second, maybe a bit less sometimes. So the editing isn't like what we call editing today, it's just really bolting chunks of stuff together in an assembled fashion.

HN: And when did you do your first editing of a squatting tape, what was it about?

SH: Well it was the one, Forming a Residents Association, in Brighton, so that would have been January '74 I think, before Fantasy Factory opened. The fact that it was so difficult, the equipment didn't work well, and we had to go all the way to Brighton to do it, made me think, I'd like some of that here please.

HN: But once you had the editing source, what tapes did you produce?

SH: I think the first tape we made was called Some Choice Examples of Camden's Housing Policy.

HN: And what was this about?

SH: Squatting. And the actions of the squatters and the interference of the council. And how bad the council was! They were definitely the villains of the piece, in our videos.

HN: And where did you show this video?

SH: Uh locally - I mean, in order to show videos in those days. You have to remember, this is before VHS. People didn't have anything to playback videos at home. You had to take the equipment with you, or you had to send it to somebody who had the same equipment you had.

HN: So it was a big thing for people to see it?

SH: Yeah. It was a big deal. You went to a room somewhere, you took the equipment, you set it up, you hoped it would work, you did a test beforehand. Often if you tried to show it on an ordinary television and you didn't take a monitor it didn't work, because the televisions had a very hard lock, and the signal was not time base corrected. I mean it was a very steep learning curve. Some of the playbacks we did, we couldn't get the tape to play, it was like, alright we'll go home now, we'll have a chat instead. But, you know, that only happened once. And then I knew that if I really wanted to play it, I had to take a monitor with me, just in case, whatever the people said they'd got, or hadn't got. Who looked at it? Very few people actually. Distribution was the crisis. There wasn't any. And it was very hard to organize. It was easier to get stuff distributed in Canada and North American than it

was here, actually, at that time. Because they were in advance of us, and if could get a transfer to 525 lines, which you could do optically with a camera, if you were prepared to put up with really horrible quality.

HN: ...It was difficult to produce, in a way, and it was very difficult to distribute?

SH: No, it wasn't difficult to produce – that was the easy part. Because there was really exciting stuff happening in the street right outside the house, all the time, I mean, you couldn't make it up! One night I was at home and the windows of the house opposite shattered out into the street! I mean lots of us had seen people throwing bricks from the outside in, nobody had ever seen anybody breaking their own windows like that. And that was the house where the Mental Patients Union started a bit later....

HN: Did you tape that?

SH: Well I didn't tape the glass breaking because it was night and I didn't know it was going to happen. But I happened to be looking outside, and I saw it. And it was so unusual that I called to whoever else was there...I can't remember who it was, I said 'Look, what on earth's going on across the road?' And people ran out screaming and fighting, and I had a young, very large guy with me at that time, young Alex, who went out and separated them. And they were nuts, you know, they'd just come out of the nut-house, and in those days people would naturally gravitate to these sorts of squatting communities because there was no restriction on how they would behave, and no control.

HN: Did you start to videotape them?

SH: No, they would have beaten me up! No I didn't. But we did start to talk with the woman from LA, the Hollywood Hills High School, there were two people from Hollywood Hills High School in our squatting street, and one of them was Pam Edwards, who'd been trained as an architect, and she'd taken all the stairs out of her house, so you'd go in her house, and you'd climb up ladders, and you could look right down from the second floor to the bottom floor, and you had to be bloody careful not to fall down the holes! But that was where the mental patients decided it was going to be their house, and so she had a bit of a territorial problem, and solved it by starting the Mental Patients Union and getting them to self-organize, and sort themselves out, and apply for grants and get support etcetera.

HN: What do you think I mean, working with video in this community, what effect did it have on the squatters?

SH: It raised their profile, that was the main effect – people were impressed by video then in a way they wouldn't be now. Oh, there's some video, we'll show it on the telly – that sort of thing.

HN: And it raised their profile for whom?

SH: Well the people we were struggling with were the council – we wanted them not to demolish the street. We weren't insisting that we stay in the houses, but it was a real battle for North London.

HN: And could you convince the council?

SH: No, because it became a matter of pride, they had to defeat us. But that was the last Crescent to be demolished. I mean, the, we lost the battle, we won the war, if you like. And, conceptually, it was quite important that, it was recognized during that struggle, that the street pattern mattered. Whereas previously that had not been acknowledged by the people who were in charge of town planning and building.

HN: So you had quite an influence on the whole idea of how an area is going to be redeveloped – you have to protect the structure.

HS: Yeah. That was the meta influence. But in the squatting community everything was being tried out for the first time, which you're still hearing about today. There was community supplies, which was community wholefoods at low prices. There was a community café, the Filmmakers Co-op was based there, at a place called The Old Dairy, Prince of Wales Crescent. There were a lot of artists and groups in this district who had nothing to do with each other, but there was a huge concentration in one area, and it was kind of mixed up, because there were people like me who were squatters, who just seized a house that didn't belong to them and occupied it, but there were a lot of other people, like the house that was Hoppy's office, which was licensed to him, it was a kind of legitimized squatting. And then there was an organization called Student Community Housing, for students, and they would license their houses. So as long as the licence ran, the students were legally in occupation, and with the permission of the council. But actually we were all one group, culturally and age wise. Most people were in the age range of, let's say, 18 to 28.

HN: How could you make a living there?

SH: That's a very good question. I mean, it was possible to live on very little. And a lot of people were on benefits, social security. I wasn't. I used to buy and sell in the markets, to make a bit of money. But none of us had any money, I mean it was very difficult to make money at that time. Previously in the '60s, you'd always known someone with a good job who was making loads of money, who'd keep a whole flat full of people on one salary, no problem. By this time, 73, 74, 75, that was long gone. Everyone was broke, who I knew. And then we started getting arts grants, and officially you couldn't get paid. But, of course, actually you could write a bit of padding in, and get paid.

[Edit]

SH: ...OK? So the forming of Fantasy Factory really was a bridge between squatting and the rest of the world. Because as soon as we were running a facility, we were much more restricted in the shooting we could do ourselves because there was so much demand, and, you know, we wanted to meet the demand, that's how we were earning our money. And suddenly the money was pouring in, even from the artists, and we always had a roughly equal mix of work, I mean, we didn't plan it like that, but there was demand from the education sector who paid more, there was demand from the commercial sector, who paid a lot more, and there was demand from the artists and community groups, who paid the least. But they all paid. Because when we tried to do it for nothing, we were treated with great disrespect – people didn't value our time, they didn't tell us if they weren't going to come, a lot of time was wasted like that. So everybody had to pay something, and then soon after that we discovered the standby booking and the definite booking – if you want to be sure you get the equipment on Wednesday, you come and pay us in advance, and then you'll definitely have it on Wednesday. If you want to take a chance, and you'll make up your mind at the last minute we might sell it to someone else, we won't tell you, you give us a phone call on Wednesday and if it's there you can have it, that's the set-up. And at first people thought, yeah, oh they'll never sell it, but we did have really high demand; and they soon found, quite often, the day they wanted was gone, and they complained, and we said you could have paid for it, but you didn't want to – this other person did, you know you've got nothing to complain about. And gradually people got used to the idea that actually if they wanted to know that they were going to edit on a certain day at a certain time they'd have to pay in advance...

HN: How many years did you run that resource?

SH: 20 years.

HN: And when you look at this 20 years period, what kind of work, in running the resource, what was...

SH: I liked it all, because, for instance, the commercial clients would come in with stuff that was socially of no interest at all – it was anti-culture if you like, more than anything. But they were the

people who were making the slick movies and TV programmes, and I learned a hell of a lot how to edit from those people, and applied the techniques and knowledge to the editing I did, the teaching I did for the artists and the community groups. In that way everybody benefitted from the mix of creative styles and input. So of course it was much more interesting to work with groups like Nazis are No Fun, than it was with, say, Abbey Life, or on some pop promo. But the combination of work was what was interesting – the fact that it was completely different every day, and you could never tell what was going to walk through the door next. Having said that, we never had any request to edit porn. People would phone up Fantasy Factory and I'd get these odd phone calls if I happened to answer the phone rather than Hoppy. This was after squatting, when we'd moved to the West End. And people would ask these strange questions, and after, it took me about 2 years to figure out that these were people trying to figure out if this was a porn cinema! It never crossed my mind – I'm a woman, I'm not interested in that stuff, why should it be? It never occurred to me that the name Fantasy Factory might attract that sort of interest - because actually Fantasy Factory was named after a track on a Stevie Winwood Traffic album, called Shoot Out of the Fantasy Factory, that Hoppy and I happened to like at the time we were starting the company. That was quite funny. We did get some soft-core porn, there was an Indian group from Milton Keynes, and they were making comedy soft-core porn stuff. I mean, it was like fiction for the Indian community, and it, when I say porn, it was very soft, you know, there was nothing really pornographic about it, it just did show that sex was possible if in this community, which was quite a big deal for them at that time.

HN: How was it working together with those different groups, and different artists, do you remember which artists who came in and used your resource did you like to co-operate with?

SH: Well most of the artists couldn't afford an editor, so they'd get us to show them how the equipment worked, and they'd do dry hires, or they'd bring their own editor who could do it for nothing. So I didn't work with that many artists, and I'm bad at remembering people's names...

HN: What about the community groups?

SH: There were hundreds. I would really have to look at a print out. Because if it wasn't my stuff, it wasn't like, it wasn't as if one thing was really that much more interesting in itself than the other. What was interesting was being able to experiment with the hypothesis of Shannon and Weaver regarding communication, and the three levels – the technical level, the semantic level, and the level of effectiveness. And to look at who was coming to us, and saying in those terms how do we analyse what they're up to. For instance, if it would be British Telecom, it was obvious what they were doing. They were trying to inform their employees about the corporate mission statement, you know, it was all terribly boring bullshit what those people made in those days. They hadn't yet got the hang of the fact that nobody would watch it if it was like that.

Then, if it was, like, let's say Nazis are No Fun, Rock against Racism - that was much more interesting, to me personally. But actually in terms of the content, and what you had to do to make the edit work, they were both equally interesting and totally different. And, as I said, what was most interesting was taking techniques familiar to one bunch of clients and applying them in an entirely different situation to the benefit of another project...

HN: That's very interesting, and there's another thing which would be interesting, if you look at 20 years of running the resource, and you used the theory of Shannon and Weaver, to analyse it, what would you think, I mean it's very difficult to evaluate the work, but what would be the effect you had, with 20 years...

SH: Well we had a most enormous effect, but that was partly because video was growing up like mushrooms all around us. You know, when we started off there was no access to editing – we were unique in what we did. People would come from Edinburgh to use our facility – arts groups, you know they'd book up and come to London especially for a week, just to be there editing. And from

all over the country. And by the time we moved here in 93, 94, editing was something you could get at a consumer level, not yet with iMovie, but it was well on the way. And, so there'd been a most enormous cultural shift, and when we started almost nobody understood what video was – what is video? What is it, how does it affect us? What can we do if we make a film or video about our project? Nobody knew anything about that. By the end, everybody knew they needed to have a video about their project, whoever they were, and they expected to be able to do it. And it was that expectation that we'd helped to create, and that was what we wanted to do. We wanted to even up the playing field between people like the BBC, which is the mouthpiece of governments, and what ordinary people thought. We wanted to give voice to their views without the intervention of the broadcasters.

HN: How did you both work together, Hoppy and you, how did you divide up your work?

SH: Very spontaneously I think you could say! We never planned any of it. I mean, that's not quite true. We would plan to go to a place, and take the video with us. And then when we got there, something would happen, and we would start shooting and the video would start making itself, and after a while it would become clear what it would be about. I'm afraid I never managed to get my head around the, what was he, some sort of arts intellectual who was doing an MA on video arts and culture, or something like that, and he told me that it wasn't art until you worked out exactly what you were going to do beforehand. And I just roared with laughter, because I'd never met anybody who managed...people would do that, but they'd never do what they thought they were going to do, not one single person I'd met ever actually did that, and the whole point was, you'd start thinking you were going to do this, then while you were doing it, something would happen which would reveal the fundamental flaw in your first set of thinking, or however you want to put it, and what you were doing would change, and you would...work with that change, and that was the creativity!

HN: That was particularly when you and Hoppy were working on your own productions, but what was it like when you were running the resource together, I mean who was doing what, when all those groups and artists came...?

SH: We both did everything. We both worked as editors, we were both technicians. If I was editing and something went wrong, Hoppy would have to sort it out. If he was editing and something went wrong, I would have to sort it out. By sort it out I mean go into the workshop, with the oscilloscope probes, and find out what was wrong.

AP: ...were you aware of an antagonism...?

SH: Well we were refused permission to join the union for many years. We kept asking, and we kept being told 'no'. I can't remember how long that went on when they finally let us in, and by then we didn't really want to be part of the union anymore, you know, by the time they said 'yes'! So that was a bit odd, because we were mainly hanging out with a bunch of people who thought they were socialists, but I've never really gone for the Left/Right thing, I've always found it a bit old fashioned. My idea of uh if you want to make a sort of binary thing, it would be between libertarian and authoritarian, rather than Left or Right, and as you know you can get authoritarian on the Left or on the Right, and you can get libertarian on the Left or on the Right. So we were never in dialogue with most of the arts funding bodies. They refused to try to understand the stuff we were writing. Because we wrote a lot of papers about the conceptual basis of the work we were doing, which, as I said, was based on Shannon and Weaver's theories. Everything we did was exploring different aspects of that. And we would always set objectives – in that sense following what the guy talked about, the artists who said 'we're going to try to do this to accomplish such and such'. But it would never actually work out like that when we did it. But then at the end we'd go back and look at what we thought were trying to do, what had happened, how much of it matched what we thought we were trying to do, how much is outside that set, and then we'd draw a Venn diagram to show the overlap, and write some stuff and so on [?]

HN: ...Were you also in contact with other video resources or other videomakers – how was that, and with whom were you working most closely together in the 70s and 80s?

SH: Well it wasn't so much a case of working closely together. It was more like, Hoppy, completely separately from me, ran a publications division, let's call it. And uh he started off with a commission from the Home Office, to do a treatise called Video in Community Development. And after he'd done that he decided to start an academic journal, which was called the Journal of the Centre for Advanced TV Studies. The Centre for Advanced TV Studies never actually existed, it was a sort of bay window in Prince of Wales Crescent. And occasionally people wandering in and out of it. But it was just Hoppy really.

HN: How did you relate to that, was it important to you?

SH: Yes. Because the exchange subscriptions came from all over the world, with about 50 other magazines published in the field, like we had exchange subscriptions with Broadcast, the I-EEE [?] Journal, the Post Office Engineers Journal, Hughes Corporation journal, the Videocassette and CATV Newsletter, which I've already mentioned, all the audio-visual magazines published here – they were all for free. We could go to IBC, which was the International Broadcast Convention - that was the broadcast equipment manufacturers' show. And I got to be an expert at chatting up salesmen at trade shows. And in fact, I can remember, when we finally got a grant to buy a U-Matic edit suite, going round a trade show near Heathrow, and telling each re-seller of U-Matics, how much discount the last one had offered us – lyingly - and in the end we managed to get an enormous discount on what we bought, by knowing the industry and knowing how to work it.

HN: We're coming towards the end of our interview, I would like to know a little more about the list you gave me, the archive.

SH: The stuff in the list is mainly unedited tapes, shot with the squatters, in the three years 1973 to '76 or was it '72 to '75, there's a bit of overlap, with some stuff in '78 which is squatting in other districts. But the vast majority of it is that. And it is everything in everyday life. I mean all the things that you've heard about now, I mean the green movement, that was started then. You know, the community food thing. We were in a situation where, because everyone was so poor, we had to share, otherwise no-one would have anything. And that brought out a lot of conflicts because people felt different about how things should be shared. And there was nobody to arbitrate those conflicts. Because the police wouldn't turn out for incidents unless there was Grievous Bodily Harm going to result, that was what they told me on the telephone and I told them people were fighting in the street. So there was no back up. We were on our own. And that was good in a way, because it forced us to look at the disputes in the community, and find a way of settling them, which didn't involve bringing in outsiders.

HN: I mean now it's very difficult, we can't see this archive, because the videotapes have to be transferred. How can we convince the audience of today, the young generation, that it is important to see those videos?

SH: Well all the issues they're so concerned about are being discussed in this community for the first time – climate change is not mentioned specifically, but, as I said, peak oil, the start of the green movement, the start of self-management. We were very keen on working as groups with particular skills. For instance, there were a bunch of people with building skills, who would get a house ready for occupation by a family, and it wouldn't be up to the council's standards, like the plumbing would be made out of hosepipes, that sort of thing – but it worked. So families would be rehoused within our community – often single mothers or single parents with children.

HN: And will we see all that in the tapes?

SH: You will see discussion about it, and you, I don't know whether you seen any building work actually in the tapes, I wouldn't say, but you will see people talking about it, and you see people occupying the Social Services Department when they tried to evict families from their squats, you will see is occupying the Housing Director's offices at the Town Hall, and how the police behaved toward people then. Now they would Taser you, or shoot you. Then, Hoppy was able to get in and out in the middle of an occupation, because we ran out of videotape – we drove back up Kentish Town, got a blank tape, drove back and got back inside! This was in the Town Hall, with the police surrounding the offices we were in. I don't know what he said to them, but they let him back in! I mean, I understand letting him out, but...it shows a completely different set of social attitudes, both with the squatters trying to develop a new way of looking at society at that time for the first time, but also how the authorities perceived what was happening not as a threat – not that they were pleased about it, or encouraged it, but their handling of confrontational situations was incredibly gentle. And it's important that people today should see that. For instance, we marched on Scotland Yard after the Special Patrol Group had done its first operation on our community, by kicking in every door at 6am one morning, for no reason at all. They lied in the House of Commons, that they thought there were Irish terrorists in one house. They never thought any such thing, it was just an exercise. And we were easy to pick on. So we got together with the squatters in Charrington Street near the Euston Road, who'd been similarly treated on the same day, and we marched on Scotland Yard. And at the front of our march, we had a papier mache round object, with the word 'bomb' written on it. And the march was actually jolly fucking boring. And the only interesting shot was at the end, where the squatters just dumped the bomb in front of Scotland Yard, and we got a shot of 4 police lifting it into a Transit van to take it away! And that is very funny, I mean when you see it in the context of the rest of this video, everyone just burst into fits of laughter. But it's very important to show how our civil liberties are being eroded now, which is not visible, unless you take a big leap backwards, and you say, well how come that in 1973 they could do that? And the police would just put up with it. I think that's quite important, you know, now. Then it wasn't seen as important, it was seen as just how it was, and what was important was that we were trying a new way of living and working together.

HN: That's very interesting...the comparison between now and then.

SH: That's why I wanted to get it out in 2008! I know what's coming here. There will be troops on the streets here. And just like with Bloody Sunday, people won't know what to expect – they won't be ready for what's going to happen, and people will die. I don't want to see that happen.

HN: Can you tell me about other aspects of the archive, other videos which come to your mind?

AP: Can you talk about the Pensioners Tape?

SH: In...at the end of 1975 when squatting was nearly over, because in the end we were evicted, and most of us were rehoused, that was the great triumph – we were the first large squatting community where the majority of people were rehoused, actually by the GLC. Though not me personally, I was rehoused by Camden Council. I mean, Fantasy Factory was, and we lived where it was. There was a council organization called The Neighbourhood Centre, run by council employees, social workers. This was a poor district, and there were people other than squatters there, who needed help. And the neighbourhood centre existed for that purpose. So they had a Christmas party, and we'd partly taken over their local paper for a few editions. And they didn't like us very much, but we got to know them, and they invited us to the Christmas party, because we were part of the community. So I went to the Christmas party, and I met a guy who ran an organization called Task Force. This was an organization that organized help for elderly people – pensioners. I don't know exactly what they did – social day centres, that sort of thing I think. Anyway, he said to me, can we make a video about how people remember this district? And I thought that sounded quite interesting, you know. There would photographic material in the local library, one supposed. Stills – rather than video – but nevertheless. And there were these old people who were going to die soon,

and who could remember, I don't know, the First World War, or whatever at that time. And yeah that sounded like a good idea. It couldn't be done without money, so, that was just around the time the BFI Production Board, which having given out a bit of money for video the year before, suddenly didn't want to do anything. They had this hot/cold relationship with video. They thought it wasn't really proper, like film. And video, what was that? That was some sort of fake coming in to take over the territory, was the general vibe they gave us. They didn't like it. They thought it was inferior, and that we were hustlers. And they were right that we were hustlers, but they weren't right that it was inferior – it was just *different*, not inferior. So, I don't know, I've lost my thread...

HN: Yes, about the oral history project...

SH: That's right – so it turned out they were looking, the Production Board had moved down to the cut, and had been taken over by some guy who had previously been running LWT, which is a television channel here, or was. I can't remember his name anymore.

AP: Peter Sainsbury?

SH: No, it was either after or before. But he was a big cheese at LWT, that was his background. So we went to him with this pitch, with Task Force on board, or did Task Force make the actually application through us? I can't remember what the structure of the plot was in detail, but basically it was a huge grant of about £700, to shoot and edit a 20 minute video, based on the memories of pensioners. And we fell out big time with the BFI about it, because, although we never said a word, they expected it to be all about trade unions, and battles between the workers and the bosses, and we didn't either, we didn't censor what the pensioners talked about. We did ask them questions about trade unions, but it just so happened that out of the 12 people we interviewed, nobody had anything to say [about that]. They were more interested in other aspects of their life, and, you know...

My bottom line, when it comes to documentaries is that you shouldn't direct people what to say. I'm of the non-directive school. That doesn't mean I won't edit afterwards, and be a director in that sense. But I don't think you should go to people and say 'now tell me about how awful your boss was', and how you formed a trade union branch and fought him off. I didn't see that as my role in that situation, it was they would choose their memories from their life, I mean we did this with, it was either 4 groups of 3, or 3 groups of 4, pensioners. That was the source material for the stories, and we were shooting video and recording on open reel audio at the same time.

HN: And what did those pensioners talk about? What did they talk about?

SH: They mainly talked about things like how hungry they were as children, and how food was short, and, you know, what they would have to eat for breakfast in the morning, and where they'd go out, and where they met their husband or wife. And they'd talk about the things that are in the programme now. Anyway when we finished the programme, and took it to the BFI they were outraged, because it wasn't politically what they expected. We never said we were making a political programme, but this was part of the overview of that sector, which was that everybody was a socialist, so everything would be predicated and told from the socialist perspective. Unfortunately nobody told the pensioners, anyway they wouldn't have co-operated. They weren't intellectuals, they were ordinary people who were asked to talk about what was important to them in their lives. I don't they would have put up with someone saying to them, 'and now you must talk about this'.

HN: To whom did you show the tape?

SH: Now that was the first tape that was seen a lot. It got played back in half a dozen of Camden's public libraries. It spent 2 or 3 weeks in each of them, and it was on continuous replay on an Arts Council NTSC U-Matic, which was borrowed from the purpose, on loan altogether for about 3 months. So who saw it? We left sheets for people to fill in – some of them were filled in, you know,

to make comments, and the main thing I found out which, you know, nobody had done this kind of thing before. It's fairly obvious, if you think about it, was it drove the librarians crazy – to have a 20 minute tape on repeat constantly, day after day after day for 2 weeks, of course they turned the sound down. So then people couldn't hear, and we went and discovered this, and put bunches of headphones in, because obviously the librarians couldn't be expected to listen to it day after day all the time!

HN: Did you also have public showings?

SH: Yes.

HN: And how was it when you showed it publically? Was there discussion afterwards?

SH: Yeah, I mean on the whole it was very well received. I don't think it's a very good programme myself. I mean we edited on a home-made system, which was the first sort of properly automated editing we'd used. So we only had 8 hours to do it, 'cos the guy who'd built the system, a guy called Roy Madran, this was like the National Film Board of Canada's modification to half-inch, was 2 3670 half-inch edit decks, mechanically modified and electronically modified, so that they would do insert editing of a sort. But there were lots of problems. They were charging a lot of money because it was unique here in England. So we had to do editing in 8 hours, and you know, we weren't very used to that kind of editing. So there wasn't a chance to sort of think about things, or go back and redo anything, you know, as there was later. So it was a bit crude. But yeah, it works, and you get the general picture, and you hear the old people's stories, and if you live in the district it's nice. We were approached in 2007 by the woman who's the chair of the Kentish Town Community Association, who paid the cost of the experimental transfer we did from half-inch onto a hard drive, which Jens Benstock conceived. You know, it was like, can we do that missing out Digi-Beta, which is expensive. And the answer...we didn't really miss out Digi-Beta, as we did belt and braces because we had a budget. But it would have worked without Digi-Beta - that was the test. So it was like 10-bit full bandwidth video on, directly onto Winchester.

HN: I would like to uh end the interview with 2 questions. One is more uh personal one, what do you hope for yourself for the coming years, what you mission do you have, how could you work with video which you are not involved with any more, at the moment....what could happen to your archive, and to your heritage of Fantasy Factory?

SH: Well I would still like to get the archive transferred. As I said, there's a relatively cheap way of doing it, which we tried, and it works. The idea was to do a pilot. Unfortunately for me, that was all that happened. And it worked extremely well, so I'd like to buy the equipment, and transfer the over a hundred hours of tape, and edit it up into packages, and get it out there! I mean on several levels, one releases material at low quality stuff, an extract for free on a website, puts bits up on YouTube, and then the high quality stuff is for sale. For instance, that's the model Hoppy's used with his photographs, and it seems to work quite well, I don't see why the same model can't be applied to the video. That way, the people who need the information as information can have it for nothing. But the people who want to use it, to make fresh product, or to include in fresh product, pay at the normal rate. And hopefully the money comes back to pay for the cost of the transferring. As to who will use I don't...anybody could. As far as I'm concerned the modern world has got so many different ways of consuming and distributing audio-visual material – it's impossible to list them all, and all over the global village there are people who might be interested in aspects of this work. I mean I think the most important thing with the squatting stuff is that it was all self-organized with very little money. And therefore it's something that can be applied anywhere, if people are interested.

HN: And now my last question which is exactly about this young generation which is not working in this participatory way of video filmmaking. What do you wish for this young generation, which is in a way going through similar experiences like you did at that time, what wishes do you have...?

SH: I wish that they will be standing on our shoulders, and not make the same mistakes – that's why I want to get the stuff out there, so they can see what tried before, and what worked and what didn't.

AP: Can I just ask a question?

HN: Do you want to sit here?

AP: No ...I wanted to just ask about the women's liberation movement....are you aware of the women's movement in your life...have you got anything to say about that, I suppose. Because you were relatively unique, weren't you, for a long time.

SH: Well I didn't really think that I was a woman – I suppose that was part of the problem from the point of view of me living my life. Like when we got to the Lebanon they said, where's the man that brought you? And we said there isn't one, and they said that's impossible, there must be a man. You know, it was a big ontological hole in the universe for them. And they healed it by pretending that I was a man. They knew actually that I wasn't, but, you know it was such a big hole that they had to do something! Uh...I was a tomboy when I was a kid – I led the neighbourhood gang, who were mainly boys. I didn't think anything of it, it was just like, so what, you know, when you're 10 there isn't really very much difference between boys and girls. And then, later, I was always hanging out with boys and men, actually. You know, I don't know why. I mean I'm...sexually what shall I call it, normal, I like men if like anybody. I never fancied any other women, I'm afraid...I could never see the point, it seemed to me men and women were made physiologically to fit each other. It was a very complex detailed design. It seemed to me perverse not to take pleasure in that. I didn't have much sympathy with the women's movement line about how oppressed they were, and how they should all be lesbians together and so on. It seemed to me a bit pointless. I didn't see the need for it. I argued a lot with other women who took that line, I mean why, why don't you just get in there, and go for it, you're as good as they are, meaning the boys. You know, because that's what I thought about myself, I thought fuck them, I'm as good as them, I'll just join in and see who gets there first. So I wasn't very supportive of the women's movement, I mean I was in favour of equality for women, but I didn't see equality as being 'the same', I think that's a big mistake people make. It's much too simplistic – you lose everything. You know, the whole point is that men and women are different, and they're different in different ways at different times in their life, and the best thing is to enjoy those differences to the full, and get the most of out of it. It's like, Hoppy and I had very different skillsets, and that was one of the good things about working together, I could do a lot of things he was no good at, and he could do loads of things that I couldn't do. And it seems to me it's a bit like that, not with work, but with women and men generally. And everything is, we often think about things quite differently, spontaneously, because our brains are wired slightly differently, and to deny that and say no it's got to be the same – that's missing the point for me. And all these women who think they're so great having huge families and running investment funds, fuck them, they've lost the plot, from my point of view. That's not what it's about, that's turning yourself into a complete 24 hour slave, who never has any time to think! I mean, why do that, why pretend? Because it is pretence, because the women who do that all have nannies for the kids, you can't actually do a high pressure full time job and look after the family. That's not...all this stuff about thinking about 2 things at once, that's not possible.

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