

Andy Porter
Full LCVA interview
Interviewer: Heinz Nigg

HN: I'd like to start by asking you about the town, the suburb you came from, your upbringing in the suburbs of London...

AP: Yes, I grew up in Bromley, which is a South London suburb, right on the edge of the country...the country was next to us...my parents had moved there before the war, from what was called the Medway towns. It was a three-up, two-down house in a suburban street, called Meadway...other things were Cherry Tree Walk, Bourne Vale, and all those slightly bucolic names. And it was kind of a dream suburb for people to live...I remember seeing the adverts for it in the '30s, it was promoted as somewhere to realize your dreams, you know, both town and country in one place....

HN: What did your parents do?

AP: My Dad, by that time, was a civil servant – he'd started off as a carpenter, or a shipwright in a dockyard in the Medway, and uh he'd made his way up to be a draughtsman, and then he'd become a more white-collar...more on the technical side as a civil servant. My Mum was, well she worked in Boots, but then when she got married they weren't allowed to work anymore, as a wife. So she then became a housewife, and was a housewife for the rest of her life, basically.

HN: Can you tell us something about your family, about your upbringing...the values that were important in your family?

AP: The most distinguishing thing about us is that we were Methodists. And very serious Methodists...and Methodism was a kind of tribe, really. So, although I lived in a suburban street, a lot of the rest of the street went to the tennis club, or did those kind of things, actually, whereas my parents went to the church. My father was a lay-preacher, my grandfather was the equivalent of a bishop, my brother became a Methodist minister, my Dad was the head of the Sunday School, and I used to go to church two or three times a week, and I wasn't allowed to go out and play on a Sunday. So they were quite strict – at that point – quite strict Methodists, they didn't drink. So I always felt slightly outside, or I was aware the family was slightly outside the kind of norms – if you like - of the street.

HN: And how was that for you as a boy?

AP: Well I used to be pissed off on a Sunday when I was looking out the window and I wasn't allowed to go out to play and other people were. How did it feel? Well it felt like a, I suppose yeah, up to a degree, in a small kind of way I was an outsider really, although I got on with the boys, and up to about 11 or 12 I had two or three friends in the street, which we all played together, cowboys and Indians and all those kind of things. It was never comfortable - we were never comfortable as part of that kind of suburban scene. I'd see them go into each other's houses for drinks on Sundays, and things like that, and my parents didn't, and so, I was at church, and so..funnily enough, what was interesting was that my parents had originally moved to Bromley, and they'd gone to the church in the middle of the town, which was a kind of much more middle-class church, and they weren't comfortable there, and they moved to the north part of the town, which was a more working-class area, where there was a Methodist mission hall, and they felt much more comfortable. Because in fact they were much more working-class in origin, than the people...

HN: Where did they originally come from, your parents?

AP: My mother was half-Welsh and half-Cornish. And that was probably the biggest influence on my family, 'cos my grandfather who became the Methodist minister – he started off as a carpenter, and

eventually became – as I said - the equivalent of a bishop. My other...father [grandfather?] came from a self-made man who ran a bakery, a not-very-good bakery in the Medway towns, and they come from Lincolnshire originally. Yes my Dad grew up there, it was a corner shop, I remember it now...they used to keep a horse, because they used to have a horse and cart, and they used to keep rabbits. I...could only have been about 4 or 5...some of my earliest memories were going there, this place that was very different from anywhere else that I knew.

HN: So you knew *both* grandparents in your family, both sides?

AP: Yes I did, but I didn't have a close relationship to them, at all really.

HN: What did you get from your parents?

AP: I think I got from my mother a very big sort of caring for other people...thing. Her, the arc of her relationships to other people is to be caring for them, really. And that's the kind of, as I recognize in my life, that's a kind of power move anyway. And my father I got a very strong sense of moral rectitude. He was very moralistic. He would always get in trouble in the church, where he was a figure for occupying the moral high ground. I remember even – this is when I was a teenager – people, Methodism had liberalized a bit, and he was preaching in one of the local churches, and they were really pissed off, because he was preaching against alcohol, and he got in a bit of trouble about that. People said we don't want to hear this stuff. So...moral rectitude - which has got its advantages and its disadvantages....

HN: When you remember yourself as a child, what were your talents, what did you like to do? What were your memories...? And what was difficult for you...?

AP: I think the most difficult thing for me, was that my brother failed the 11-plus. Which, if people don't know, in those days...the 11-plus, and you either went to a secondary school or grammar school. So he failed the 11-plus, and hadn't had a happy time at secondary school. He was a lot older than me – he was born before the war, and I was born after the war. So the war was definitely hangover, it particularly hung over my mother I think, because the house had been bombed – she'd been bombed out in the war, and fortunately was in the shelter in the garden, but my brother was temporarily blinded by the blast. And our front door was in the kitchen – it was blown right through to the kitchen. So that house was destroyed...she then moved back to where her parents were, and stored what was left of the furniture in a church hall there, and then that was hit by a doodle-bug bomb, and that all went up. I actually think, looking back, my mum was seriously traumatised by the war. And, of course, no-one recognized trauma at that point. Even as a kid I could remember when a plane went over, she'd duck under the table, as a reaction. So I sometimes think that affected a certain emotional defensiveness, fragility so that was the war...what was your other question?

HN: Your good memories of childhood...

AP: What took me down there was, because actually they were worried about my brother, so they sent me to this little crammer school, which must have cost them more money than they could hardly afford, but it was [must have been] very cheap, I don't know...It was in a suburban house just round the corner, and there was like 23 boys in what was about the size of my lounge, run by this really fat...I mean when I think about it, she had, I can remember the hairs in her nose, actually. She was a very frightening figure. I had been running along, a dreamy 8 or 9 year old in the other school, and suddenly I was in this world, and she was, I was...they'd been told I was quite bright, but I completely, I didn't live up to expectations when I got there 'cos I was frightened to death, to be honest. She was an immense, immense bully, basically...during that period, I don't know if you want to know this or not, but during that two years I actually worked out how to play that system, I ended up top of the class. But I think it was the most destructive thing that ever happened to me, as a child. I remember, I cried solidly every night for two weeks when I first went there. And I always felt like

my parents didn't hear me. I understand now, they were trying to do their best for me, but that was a difficult and horrible experience for me.

HN: Interesting about school, this is not a very good experience you had with someone in school. What about your other years in school, do you have good memories of teachers?

AP: At the grammar school, I went to the grammar school which was 7 miles away from me. I have a memory of one really good teacher, who really believed in me and my brain I suppose. He was a history teacher, he used to just get up and talk...about history, he was so passionate about it. I was in the sixth form by then...School was OK...it wasn't the happiest days of my life, that was for sure.

HN: Were there other people in your life in your childhood, which were important to you, besides your parents?

AP: Yes I went to this Methodist youth club, around 14 or 15 I picked up with 3 or 4 other guys, and we had a really good time together in the youth club, and in the town, sort of thing...

HP: What was this about...?

AP: We played table tennis...we went on trips, we listened to music, that kind of thing...and that was before I left the church, really. And the next stage was that I got to...you get received into membership, it's like being confirmed in the orthodox, in the Anglican church, you get received into membership. So you go to membership classes...and I was getting quite precocious, if you like, intellectually...and I was challenging it...why believe in God? Why would God let this happen? Letting all these bad things happen in the world...And I went all the way through, and I was starting to advocate, slightly later, I got in trouble for supporting abortion. So I had begun to become quite a rebel. But, despite that, I went ahead and got confirmed into membership and I remember...you have to take communion, and you take the bread and wine...and he passes down the row...and the minister put his hand on top of you...and I remember thinking, if I actually get a message now, if I actually feel God in some kind of way, I'll believe. And actually I thought, I felt bugger all, basically. And so from that point onwards, although I'm sure it's not as...in my memory...that was the week I kind of left the church...it probably wasn't quite as clear [-cut] as that, but that's the kind of myth I tell myself about my upbringing...in the absence of God I left the church. That was major for my parents...because that upset them, obviously. I then joined CND...

HN: What age was that?

AP: I think I was 16. It must have been '61 – I was born in '45. There had been a couple of Aldermaston marches before that, but there was this very active Youth CND. And my parents, to this day, blame a guy called Stephen...I can't remember his second name, who turned up at the door one day, big bushy hair. And it was the greatest door-knocking canvassing I've ever met; because he actually recruited me on the door to join...he obviously came at exactly the right moment for me. So I plucked up my courage to go with him to the YCND...meeting that happened every week, that's the Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

HN: And what did they stand for?

AP: The end of the arms race...so we went on the Aldermaston marches, we sat down on the street opposite military depots. I got arrested when I was 17 for doing that...We went on marches...to, yeah, ended up at Trafalgar Square, various things...

HN: Do you remember what attracted you...?

AP: I think it was a straight translation of being slightly religiously moralistic, to finding another church, another set of beliefs – another church to belong to, in a kind of way....

HN: At that time, when you were around 16, what kind of ideas did you have about what you wanted to become, of your professional future?

AP: I had no idea really. I mean I was, obviously, I was the first person, like so many of that generation, to go to university. My family, my parents had no understanding of what university was or what it meant – nor did I. I thought I was going there to find the truth...and to sort of like, yeah, I suppose to find out what the world was about, but it wasn't...obviously that's not what university is about...

HN: Was it for you quite clear what kind of universities you wanted to apply for?

AP: Yeah I went for the new ones...at that point they were called red-brick universities, and I was keen to go to one of the new universities, 'cos it felt like it was new and fresh and whatever... They'd just been built basically [laughs]...They had Schools of American Studies, Schools of European Studies, there was a breakdown of the schematic style of education, more academically sectioned-off kind of stuff. So that appealed...

HN: I would like to go into this university life, but before that...something that I'm curious about, in your childhood, you didn't talk about yourself yet, you as a child, you haven't talked about yourself yet, what were your interests and talents as a child and as a youngster?

AP: [Grimaces slightly] I don't know really, I was never conscious of having any, really...I can remember a great period of reading, when I was 13 or 14...I loved playing with balls...I still play with balls with my grandchildren and my kids, I played tennis – I did play tennis for the school, and the local tennis club, and I enjoyed tennis and table-tennis. And I used to go to the local football club with a couple of guys up the road, so I was quite into sport really. And then when the friendship groups broke down after, when everyone went to different schools at 11, I remember spending summers on my own a bit more, and I really got into reading crime fiction. I remember being in bed all day and reading crime fiction. I always worked, from about 13...no I must have been a bit older than that. I did a paper round, I did a milk round, and then quite early on I worked in a shop, when I was about 15 or 16, on Saturdays. And I always worked in the holidays, I had a scooter, I really liked riding Lambrettas, that was slightly older...I was in the Cubs and Scouts. Music was the...I suppose music has been the most major thing in my life altogether, really. I remember first hearing...I remember it came out of my brother's room...it was a really thin bit of trumpet, it was Louis Armstrong...strange music to come out of my house, which was full of hymns, and The Messiah, and religious music of a kind, or light operetta, Gilbert and Sullivan, my mum used to sing sometimes. And that was the start of my interest in music...as you talk about it, my passion actually became for rhythm and blues, and blues music. So I...this must have been about 16 or 17, and jazz, yes. And that made me aware of a completely...and I suppose this went along, in some sense, with CND, because part of CND culture was jazz culture, and it was the whole world of black people and black culture, and I have to say I think black culture is one of the biggest influences of my life altogether. And it started off with the blues. So we used to go to, there was two blues clubs in Bromley at that time, and I used to go 2 or 3 nights a week. And someone would pay to go in, and then they'd open the window at the side, and then we'd get in for free. I heard all the early blues artists, Sonny Boy Williams, Blind Lemon Jefferson I think...not sure, John Lee Hooker, yes, give me a chance I'd tell you a lot more. And that led in to the whole English blues explosion, the acme of which was the Rolling Stones, but there was a lot of other bands around. One of the bands I followed, which my mate was in, was The Pretty Things. Music was, and continues to be, a major part of my life. I always wanted to be a drummer, and I used to practice at home on tin cans, and a violin case and some sticks. But for some reason I never had the confidence to get a drum-kit, or think I could be a drummer. Because I used to intimidate myself by thinking that Gene Krupa...started at 13, and I was already 16...it was ridiculous.

HN: I'm glad we talked about the music.

AP: Yes... 'cos I still, funnily enough, recently I've just started playing again, I used to be in a band for a couple of years. I play every Wednesday night percussion – in Portobello Road, it's been fantastic, the highlight of my week.

HN: This is now an additional input by Andy...

AP: Just in terms of the street, I did become quite an embarrassment to my parents, as a kind of black sheep – I had long hair, and in those days, it was not on, to have long hair. I remember I bashed my scooter up. I remember people were commenting to my parents... they felt sorry for my parents to have a son like me, basically. But I suppose I could do anything... I just wanted to get out of the place, I felt really... the biggest image I've got of myself at that point, is a teenage image of Friday night, Tamla Motown in my ears, bursting through the door, running across the garden, leaping over the wall, and *out*. It was like I was confined, and I just needed somewhere to breathe... and it was *CND*, it was black culture, it was music. I think that was true of so many of my generation. I think after the war, that generation, up to a point, had closed down – they wanted their garden, their fence and their stable kind of world. Wouldn't you, after that?

HN: How did your life change after you went to college?

AP: I went to Sussex University, I had a year off, well kind of, because I didn't do too well on my A-Levels, but I got accepted... 'cos I obviously did a good interview, I got accepted at Sussex. So I had the rest of that year off, I went hitchhiking around France on my own, which was a major... my Mum actually said she thought I grew 2 inches during that time I was away. And, yes I went down as far as Spain, and got very stoned in... 'cos obviously marijuana had come on the scene at that time, I got stoned in a hostel in Alicante I remember. And I went... I'd been reading *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway. And he'd described the earth moving for him when he had this relationship with this woman up a mountainside during the Civil War. And I went in search of this mountain, which was... in the back of Valencia actually. I went all the way there, and got half the way up the mountain and realized I couldn't get to the top that day, so I slept in a cave. And finally got to the top of the mountain the next day, great, came down and someone told me it was the wrong mountain! [laughs] So I was very influenced at that time, intellectually, by people like Hemingway, Kerouac, Ginsberg... yes, beat culture. That was very much tied-in to the *CND*, which was associated with beat culture as well. So it was beat culture, pre-hippy... I was a slight generation before hippie...

HN: Was it mostly young men, or were there young women?

AP: No there was definitely young women in the *CND*, in fact yes - my first girlfriend outside of the church was someone that lived round the corner, through the *CND*. Yes... and I met my now-partner, actually, on a mixture of *CND* and music outing, to Westcliff-on-Sea in Essex [Southend-on-Sea], following The Pretty Things. And that's quite interesting, in terms of a cultural turning point. We went by coach, arranged by the drummer of the band, to support the band, and we went to this little dive in Westcliff-on-Sea, this little club, and the first [laughs], the first band was a sort of Cliff Richard type of twangy-guitar band, and the next band were The Pretty Things, who were really grungy, long hair, greasy looking, R&B band. It was almost like that was the cultural turning point. And that was the point at which I met my partner, my wife of God knows how many years now, we were both still at school. Yes, and I met her because she... I was dancing with someone called Jackie Faircloth, who I fancied; she obviously didn't fancy me too much. And then they went, and she was Sue's friend, and I didn't know Sue at all at that time, and they went to the loo, and Sue didn't like who she was dancing with, and Jackie wasn't that keen on me, so they swapped when they came out of the loo. I ended up with Sue, and Jackie ended up with that other guy... we've never looked back after that...

HN: You were quite young when you met your future wife...

AP: Yes, I was 18 and she was 16. We used to meet in the Wimpy Bar after school!

HN: When you went to college, you went away...?

AP: I went to Sussex...we broke up halfway through that, for reasons I probably don't want to go into...want to know about university? University didn't sit very easily with me, and I kind of ended up...and I've written this history for myself, so this is obviously my version of my history, as we know...I ended up really with about 3 friends, all of whom were working-class or lower middle-class...the predominant thing at Sussex, it was kind of a trendy place to go...there were politician's daughters there, and all this stuff, and I didn't really fit into that. I didn't have the confidence to, to be honest. And then one of my friends got sent down for having a girl in his room, and I ended up with 2 other friends, Fred – who's just recently died and who came from Tunbridge Wells – and this other guy, who was an ex-welder from Chelmsford, who got in on a special scheme, you didn't have to have A-Levels. I got progressively isolated from the university. People talk about college as being the best days of their life, I'm afraid I...I ended up feeling quite lonely there, really. And, as I say, isolated from the mainstream of college life. In the first year, we did actually occupy one of the rooms, I can't even remember what...it was a disciplinary issue, and we were self-proclaimed anarchists, and we refused to...although the students were involved in the disciplinary committee, we refused to leave the room, so we actually forced them to leave the room. So there was, this was all before student revolts later in the '60s, but obviously that was the first kind of murmurings of it. Why were we revolting? I don't know really – a general discomfort I think, with who we were, and where I'd found myself...Next?

HN: Well, what's next, yes? Interesting – so what did you do next after that experience in University...?

AP: I ended up taking my finals in a medical room, actually...I was depressed and lonely. Sue came down actually, although we split up, we had made up towards the end of it. She was there when I took my exams, and uh I moved in with here, actually, eventually, from this horrible little bedsit I was in, and I had no real ambition to be anything in particular, except to possibly be a writer or do something creative or, whatever...And uh, so I signed on at the Labour Exchange, which the guy couldn't believe, I remember the guy at the the Labour Exchange: 'why, you've got a degree? You could have my job!' Eventually I ended up working for the Water Board, digging trenches basically...I then started to, to be honest, to over-identify with the working class that I didn't really belong to anyway. And I did a series of jobs on building sites, driving lorries eventually, around sort of, and pretended I hadn't been to university. So I suppose, looking back now, I had quite an identity crisis really, about who the hell I was. And I think, looking that far back, it was because my parents...had...I didn't know how to process the wider society. I had grown up with this really narrow little tribe of Methodism, and really...if someone came to the front door they weren't let in, you know what I mean, and if they stayed talking to long, it was like oh they're staying a long time. I don't think I was equipped somehow to deal with the wider world, which kind of drove me into myself and made me quite lonely I suppose, which explains the university experience. And so I think I then over-identified with the working class, but I ended up in Notting Hill...after meeting, I met this black guy called Courtney Tulloch in Brighton, and I used to josh him about being James Baldwin and that kind of stuff, and we got to be friends. And then he moved up to Notting Hill, which was beginning to explode with radical ideas at the time, and he said, why don't you come up? So I came up...

HN: What year was this?

AP: ...The beginning of '68...I started working on a, what was a black community newspaper with him, actually, as soon as I got there, and got involved with all the community politics...I found myself

a home in Notting Hill, and in the community politics of Notting Hill, and something called The People's Association. Doing things like pulling down fences, squatting, pulling down fences around private squares, squatting housing, street demonstrations to create traffic crossings. There was a whole, incredible outburst of community activity around that period of time, particularly in Notting Hill actually.

HN: This must have been, for you, very astonishing, coming from your background, all of a sudden all those people, how did you cope with that?

AP: Well...I was very naïve, to be honest, I just couldn't understand...I mean there was 1-9 Colville Gardens, which was a kind of slum, just at the back of Portobello Road, and I really thought, you know, conditions were so bad, compared to where I'd come from, my rather neat semi-detached house, although I'd lived in a slum in Brighton, I'd been a student in a slum in Brighton...I really thought because of this action that the revolution was going to come and that people were bound to rise up, because they couldn't stand these conditions. So I was there, full of revolutionary fervour of sorts, but not of the kind of Trotskyist, I'm never interested in the party stuff; I was always community-based. I think I was looking for another community to belong to...which I found, and I was there from '68 until the '80s really, when I finally moved to Shepherd's Bush...

HN: And how did you survive? Were you still unemployed?

AP: I was unemployed a lot of the time...in those days you could belong to something called the...Professional Executive Registrar – 'cos you'd got a degree (how different it is today) they kind of left you alone, because they thought, well you're a professional person, you'd find your own work. So for a long time you weren't under the same kind of restrictions the ordinary Joe was under, who didn't belong to the Professional Executive Registrar. I worked in Parks and Gardens for, twice, for a number of years, drove a lorry, so lived hand-to-mouth, basically. And lived in a, someone had moved out of their flat for a time, so managed to live there. And Sue lived with me, we'd moved up from Brighton together.

HN: What you missed out is the whole thing about Goldsmiths....

AP: There was this incredible outburst of community activity, which was like...and there was The People's Association, and we locked in the councillors at one point. So I was absolutely engaged in this...at the same time I'd got interested in youth work, and started doing work informally with a bunch of skinheads from Portobello Court, which was an estate just to the side of Portobello Road. And uh eventually they started meeting round our house, because Sue, in the same kind of way, was interested in young people and teenagers, and we have been ever since really. And we used to have 15 or 16 young people, twice a week. When I look back, the poor person who lived underneath, clumping about on this very small, virtually one-room flat, on the top of Artesian Road in Portobello...and I'd seen my role as getting them involved in The People's Association and politicizing them in some kind of way! They did get involved in one or two demonstrations, standing at the back...and I did my first bit of audiovisual, which was a total flop, on Super 8, with them – I think I overexposed the film...and went out on outings with them. I became interested in youth work. By the early '70s, that whole dynamic of community development had kind of lost a lot of its...I didn't know what to do with myself. I worked for a year in the Community Printing Press, which had been set up by two women, in '68, '69, as a means of getting information out, so, for instance, The People's Association, the People's News, a weekly newsheet that went out around the community, and they printed posters and banners and leaflets, so it was a tool for community development, and community action, social change. And that, I believe, was the first one in the country actually. At that point Notting Hill was a kind of pioneering place for a lot of this kind of activity, 'cos of something called The Community Workshop had set up there, which was a kind of...a development out of the New Left and uh the CND movement, really, the Committee of 100 movement, which then

decided that instead of working nationally they need to work in communities. And they'd arrived in Notting Hill in the mid-sixties, and started developing community action, very much based on the Saul Alinsky model that he was pioneering in Chicago...

HN: I didn't know about that, you never mentioned that...was it at that time or afterwards that you read him?

AP: I think it was afterwards...I was instinctively part of community development, but not intellectually engaged with it, until I went and studied Community and Youth Work at Goldsmiths College.

HN: What year was that, that you went to Goldsmiths?

AP: '72-'74. Quite a radical course. I was very over-qualified, you didn't need a qualification to get on it, it was very much group-based, it was very much about self-initiative. That's actually, interestingly enough, when I learned about video. Because there were 5 half-day sessions on using video, because the Sony Portapak had just become available, and someone at the college had got into it already. I can't remember his name now...anyway, so suddenly this thing arrived...I remember taking it out for the first time, went to the Roundshaw Estate in Croydon, and having this camera and not knowing where to point it. It wasn't a very targeted exercise...but I remember having this camera and being scared shitless...because I didn't know quite what I should be pointing at, what I was holding it for, in a way, but that's how I first got involved in video...

HN: Why did they start to use video?

AP: It was an option – it was my choice to do that. I'd always been interested in filmmaking from way back, when I was at university, the French avant-garde, Direct Cinema, I'd been aware of, and I loved all that, Godard and Antonioni, I'd got into...alternative filmmaking I suppose, in my head. So I'd always liked the idea of being a filmmaker, really.

HN: Why did they offer video, what was the idea?

AP: Well it was very much self-directed. If you could get enough people interested to do something, they'd allow you to do it, and sort of hire in the people to do it. So, I obviously can't remember quite how it happened, but I was obviously one of those people that saw video as a tool. Because I'd already seen, because video had become available, because I'd already seen the use of, in community development of the press, photography, silk-screen printing...it seemed a natural thing that video...especially because television for me was the prime cultural thing that I grew up with it, it was the hearth in the corner that we watched all the time, that my parents watched. I was always attracted to television, because in terms of wanting to get my message across, or other people's messages across, TV always seemed the vital format, because my parents or people like them didn't really go to the cinema very much, but everybody watched television. The idea that we could get our hands on the equipment, so that we could make television, rather than someone making television about us, I suppose in some kind of way was the philosophy behind it at the time.

HN: It would be interesting now to see, if you still remember the next steps, of how to do video...You mentioned the situation where you were out in the Estate and holding the camera...how was your development in community video?

AP: It was pretty rough, really, it was largely self-taught. I came out of the Youth Work course, and someone in Notting Hill Theatre Workshop, West London Theatre Workshop had got a very cranky bit of video gear, and I said can I use that, and then using that raised some money to...initiate a project using video. Because, as part of what was then called the Community Action Centre, which was a development of the People's Association, so it was always seen as a tool for the local

community to use, so I was working out how it might develop that tool, how people might have some ownership of that tool, in a kind of community development kind of way. And uh we raised some money, and we got a Portapak, and recruited...other people came on board...uh a guy called Ken Lynam, who'd been working with older people in the area, and one of the young guys that I'd worked with, one of the skinheads (who will hopefully be interviewed as part of this project) Alfonse, short name 'Fons', came on, who I'd know since he was 12 or 13, came on and worked with us, on a regular basis. And he was the son of a, actually there were from Gibraltar, a mixture of Spanish and Gibraltar, so he'd been an odd person in that skinhead culture, and also a very, very bright boy who'd dropped out of grammar school, because it didn't suit...wasn't him really, I suppose. So yeah so we formed what became known as, amongst various names, the West London Media Workshop, and we started to devise projects for working with the local community, and making the community aware that they could create their own television, really. And there I think, it was probably said before, but that is slightly different to, from a lot of other people who started working in video who came from a film background. I came much more from a community background, and uh that had its strengths, because I think it, in a sense although we did a lot of the hands-on stuff there was a genuine sense that the community owned this equipment, and owned our time, and that we had to do what they'd say, rather than necessarily what we wanted to do. On the other hand, we lacked some of the skills of filmmaking, which could have created better 'product' I think, because we had to learn on the job, basically, yeah.

HN: The inspiration of that time...was it a whole group of people who were actually working in community video, how did you know about the different [groups]? Or was it this course in Goldsmiths, was it also linked to the States?

AP: I can't remember how I got into touch with other groups using it. The first person I ever saw using it was Hoppy – or John Hopkins – who features large in the history in the time, and the history of community video. I'd seen him on skates actually, skating around Notting Hill, with his camera. So that was my first awareness of the Portapak. How I found out about...the seminal document was the Challenge for Change document, which Hoppy had done, and introduced...he wrote for the Home Office about the use of video in community development. That was a seminal document, I think was a result of him going out to Challenge for Change, and possibly George Stoney, in America...other people can tell you more about that. So that was one of the thinking influences. And then the first person I was really aware of was a guy called John White, working in the Albany, because we were developing it at roughly the same time, working with the same equipment, and applying to the Greater London Arts Association for equipment, and slowly got to know other people round London, all of whom were having the same ideas of using the equipment for social/art purposes. And, yeah, Hoppy was very influential in...the Association of Video Workers, this is going into the '70s, and then we set up the Community Video Workers Collective. But you have to see all this, in some senses, in the light of the '68...there were community printing presses, silk-screen workshops, bookshops, we were part of a whole community arts, community photography, part of a whole community arts movement, which post-68 really burgeoned and flourished for a number of years. So we were working very much, and I saw myself working very much in that context, and ended up being on the Greater London Arts Association community arts panel.

HN: So we are going back to Notting Hill, to talk about the video project, the people who inspired you, the people who you were working with...Can you tell us a bit more about individual projects you were involved in, in the beginning of community video, I remember youth video, I remember Murchison [Road]...

AP: One of the first projects we did, which was very much, very similar to a project we subsequently did with the Murchison Road tenants, can't remember the actual name of the programme, but it was about housing conditions in the North of the Borough, where certain developments had gone on, and people were living in horrible conditions – damp on the walls, floorboards falling away...and we did a series of interviews, it was my first experience of doing this, based on the sort of Challenge for Change model. We went round and interviewed and shot material with people in, in their homes, talking about how conditions were affecting their lives and the lives of their families. We then - as best as we could in those days, because it was very crude – edited it all together, which was a tremendously hard thing to do because you were running from machine to machine, and having to stop it, and it was quite difficult, there wasn't any easy way to do it. And I can't remember who the actual worker was we were working with at that time, but they called a public meeting with the councillors, and there must have been upwards of 40 or 50 people there, at the local hall, and we played it back on a television monitor, and it forced the councillors to confront the conditions, which they were not doing anything about. And in that sense it was very successful, on that level, because it brought people together, it strengthened the campaign for it, and it had a slight pay-off in the sense that it was picked up by the BBC, who then...came down and virtually made their own programme, in a much more 'professional' kind of way, which involved their announcer John Stapleton – who's still around I think – waltzing, as I put it, around the streets of Notting Hill with a kipper tie on, introducing people to the poverty of North Kensington over their teas in a 6 o'clock news magazine programme. And I guess in some senses that was a pay-off, in the sense that anything that gave it more national publicity and got it out there, strengthened the arm of the people that wanted something done, and I think the conditions did improve. And there's one thing, just about that, that I wonder about, because we actually had the shot, there was a young girl who had a permanent wound in her head, she lived in a damp house, and it was really kind of horrible, and we did do a close-up of that as part of our material, shot on video. And they did the same shot but they actually defocused the image of the wound, and I thought this was probably because they couldn't think that people wanted to see that over their teas at 6 o'clock at night.

HN: What was the name of that video?

AP: Do you know, I cannot remember the name of that video, but we followed it up with a similar one. Because, as a result of that being a success, a bit further along, there was another group of]people suffering housing problems, and the local Liberal councillor was a bit of a maverick at that point – Ken Raysen – he said he wanted to do a programme with the tenants of that particular community. And he actually – along with myself and Fons, Alfonse, who'd joined us – we went and shot that, the same kind of thing was shot with the tenants there. We still have that tape, so you can see that tape. And that was an interview with women living in the Murchison Road, about how they were being affected by the building works that were going on opposite them.

HN: And what effect did this video have?

AP: Well they did clear up the building site, to a degree. I'm not sure how big of an effect it had, but it did make them modify their behaviour, I know that much. So that was that, and then for survival reasons, we got into really inventing our own project. This was, a lot of this

stuff was really being made in response to - and once we got it there and people saw what we could do – we ended up being a kind of response to the community, and people were working out what they could do with it. So we did film a lot of marches, and then you wondered well...’cos people wanted them, they wanted their marches to be filmed. And then you did wonder, well why, and why we’re doing this, because, actually, who’s going to look at it? And then, for survival reasons, ’cos obviously there’s only so much you can do with so little money, and living on the dole, they, I don’t know if it was the first of its kind, but a whole series of government initiatives were starting up – and this one was called the job creation programme, to particularly get the unemployed, and particularly young people, into some kind of work disciplines, or some kind of working environment, and helping them into work. This was the first of a series of initiatives which continue until this day, actually, and they would be one of the sources where people could actually find money to do this sort of community video, community arts work. So, we put in a proposal, it got accepted, and we embarked on what I think was a 6 months scheme initially – I think, I can’t remember exactly how many months – to create something called News at West 10, which was to be a locally produced news programme, about events and issues in the local community in the West 10 area, which was the kind of North Kensington area, in and around the Golborne Road, if people know it. And, to do that, we took on 4 trainees, and it’s a lesson I kind of learned, took me a long time to learn is, we, in our naïveté I think, we thought, we’ll take on the 4 trainees who most look like they need something, rather than taking on the 4 trainees who like they can most benefit from the project. So the trainees we took on, it was, to be honest, looking retrospectively, it was quite a struggle, to keep them engaged...I think they had a job to see what the point of this thing was, it was just like a mad left-field idea as far as they were concerned. They were being paid a bit of money, so they would turn up. But, you know, it was a bit like going to school for them. Some of them got into it more than others. It wasn’t just about their lives; it was about the lives of the wider community, which at the age of 16 or 17, you’re not much interested in. So, to be honest, at that point, it was a struggle. ’Cos they weren’t people that, after 6 months with us, were going to go on and develop themselves in the media, or in associated work. So we ended up running a youth project. Which was fine, but it...did mean as an experiment in running a local television news service, it was not the greatest success. We managed to play back stuff in the local laundrette, but mostly to – and I think this is true of community arts a lot of the time – is that the people that are around during the day are either older people, younger people, and sometimes mums. And so we ended up playing back in, to old people’s associations and to sort of adventure playgrounds, those kinds of audiences. So I never felt like it was a fair test of the idea, and of course, I think over the years I’ve been trying, time and time again, to reproduce that idea somewhere, and still are doing it in some degree, but obviously now on the web, in East London, where I do some work with a guy, a group called The Geezers. Obviously it’s a very viable idea, because everywhere now, not everywhere, but many places, because of the advent of the web, have got their own local, locally-produced news, sort of service, yeah.

HN: That’s, in a way, amazing. I remember you have, one of your publications at the time has this idea of community video – you see a drawing of your neighbourhood, and you see all kinds of video activities on a map. And then there is a question to it – our own television? And at that time there was also the idea of having a television network in Trellick Tower, one of the projects. I mean, if you look at this, and also look at what you

said about News at West 10, one can say in a way, the expectations have been fulfilled, more than what we dreamed of at that time? [AP: Yes, of course]. At the end of our talk I'd like to come back to that point – what was the relevance of that work, now looking back, and what would be the relevance for future work?

AP: I think one of the things which really sticks out for me is that...the...one of our things was, come and see yourself on TV – I think I've still got one of the posters – which nowadays is means nothing to anybody. In those days, people didn't see themselves, they didn't see themselves on any kind of TV! So it was almost a cheap sell in a kind of way, but also a true sell, even though you might not see yourself on BBC TV, you would see yourself on a television monitor. And you could feel that your voice was being heard, by someone somewhere, in a way, through the medium of television. So...come and see yourself, now everyone's got mobile phones where they can shoot as much as they want that is no longer at all relevant, you're not going to get people along to meetings by saying 'Come and see yourself on TV'. I just say this, to remind people who weren't there at the time, how potent is was, that sense of exclusion from any form of audiovisual representation, for the majority of the population. That everyone was seeing themselves only through – and this was our argument at the time – they were all being mediated by a professional body of broadcasters, the majority of whom had probably come from Oxford and Cambridge, so I was learning about, you know, I in society, or community A was learning about community B only through, the spectacles or the mediation of this third body, who were then sort of censoring, or the gate-keepers of what I could find out.

HN: Looking back at those late 70s activities, you mentioned the Murchison Road tape, you mentioned the whole programme, the West 10 programme, are there other projects in the late '70s and early '80s that you were connected with?

AP: Oh I think what was quite interesting was, that we, towards the end of the '80s, the actual, the push for that whole explosion of community action and community activity had, kind of died away...

HN: Are you talking about the '70s or the '80s?

AP: I'm talking about the '70s. The '60s, the early '70s and also the kind of political culture at the time, had moved from, in some sense on the Left anyway, had moved from a focus on community to the whole issues of identity, which were beginning to become predominant in the culture – you know, race, gender, disability. So they were becoming people's concerns...and I suppose how that was most articulated in terms of West London Media Workshop, in what became the Irish in England...two-part film. We were doing that anyway, with some money I think from the GLC. Ken Lynam, who worked in West London Media Workshop, was Irish, and along with a guy called Don McGee, they wanted to do a programme about that generation of Irish people that had come over here, post-war, in the '50s, to build the railways and build the infrastructure of the country. To combat some of the still-existing anti-Irish racism that existed, and had existed historically. So they actually formed, with me as the only non-Irish member, the Irish Video Project, slightly further down the line. But we were making this anyway, and along trotted Channel 4, who'd just begun to operate, and the person involved at Channel 4, which was Alan Fountain liked what he saw of the stuff we were doing about the Irish in England, and said he wanted to do it as a commission. So suddenly from being a sort of community video group doing stuff just for

the communities we were serving, we were launched on the more national stage of Channel 4, and I remember I had to use a colour camera for the first time and suddenly we were having to produce a level of professionalism I think which was rather intimidating at the time. So that marked an evolution in some sense in terms of the political culture of that time, but also in terms of the possible outlets for the material. Whereas before the material had been shown back to community that you'd made it with, and then sometimes those tapes, if they'd got more resonance than that, would be actually, physically transported and shown somewhere else in London. A network had grown up, during the late '70s, of actually people showing other people's material, and we actually produced, as the Community Workers Video Collective, a directory of video tapes covering issues, community issues. And then the Irish in England became the first of what was called the People to People series on Channel 4, and we had Part 1 and Part 2.

HN: And what was it about?

AP: It was about that generation that had come over post-war, particularly, and what contribution they'd made to building up this...so it was their memories, their memories of the journey, the whole psychology of emigration, and the emotions and the politics that goes with it. And so it represented, it was a way of giving that community a voice, and that's what obviously the People to People series was about, on Channel 4. It did, through Channel 4, what we were doing on the grassroots level, trying to get people to talk to other people.

HN: And as I understand this video production was the beginning of a whole series of video productions you did for Channel 4. What did it mean for you to change your focus from working and living in North Kensington, in Notting Hill, then you moved to Shepherd's Bush, and later on you started to work in different parts of the country doing your video programmes for Channel 4, what's the difference between those two ways of working?

AP: Yes, it's quite funny really, because without that kind of, without that community push, from the community that developed, from that activity, you can't make that activity happen with video, video can only help to complement and help develop that activity. So when that activity kind of dies - in a sense - I was, I personally was a bit lost. And obviously it was picked up by the Irish in England, and the Irish Video Project for a time, but then interestingly enough Channel 4 really liked those films, but they said well, we've done enough on Ireland now. And so there was nowhere else for that to go. So I was, kind of, also had to make a living, because at that time I had two kids, and we were living very much on the poverty line. And, fortuitously, the film industry started to take on video operators on film sets, because there was now a feed out from the film camera to a video camera inside the tube, which could actually relay the picture out to a screen, so that the director actually could see on the video what the film was taking. So they needed people to operate these video systems - there was very few people around, and fortuitously I came into contact with someone that needed someone. So I started to work in the film industry as a video operator, just as a way of making some money, and for me it was making some money I'd never dreamed of, out of where I'd come from. So I managed, for a time, to do a bit video op work and between that and doing some independent filmmaking, community-based filmmaking around different parts of London, and particularly with the Albany workshop in South-East London. And certainly towards the end of that we made a programme called

Beyond Our Ken, which was about the abolition of the GLC – I worked at Albany on that but also much more working for social agencies rather than working from grassroots communities. So I did one for Birmingham Social Services on food provision for the ethnic elderly I did one about the mental health community units in the Health Service, I did one about counselling in local government authorities. The best one for me, the most interesting was early on, Stop-over Housing, which was about young homelessness. So I managed to make a bit of a living doing that, not knowing quite how, where to move with all these ideas of community involvement. It was only when the technology became available in the early '90s called Hi-8 – a non-professional format that the broadcasters would accept for broadcast – that it occurred to me that we could actually do some of that community-style filmmaking with it. I've always had an interest in doing drama, rather than just...I had done documentary, in fact I did a further documentary for the Irish in England...but documentaries for me it's always been a bit tricky, because it's so much about people rather than with people, in some kind of way, and it relies on a bit of, a kind of manipulation – which I can see as necessary, and I don't have a moral attitude about it, I just don't feel that comfortable with it myself. So I was interested in developing something that was in a fictional form, so people could tell their stories through a fictional form, to work out a way of doing that through improvisation, so people could do improvised dramas, and then perform these dramas, non-professional people, with a professional crew, and tell their stories through that fiction. Because camcorder material had become broadcast-able, I joined up with a guy in Birmingham called Jonnie Turpie, who'd been doing a lot of stuff with young people in new formats, programme-making, and we started developing these camcorder dramas. Over the '90s we did 5 of these, all around the country, with Channel 4 and Arts Council money, developing devised dramas with local writers, local drama workers, but bringing in a professional crew to work with them. And then latterly we then attached to the professional crew a series of trainees from those local communities. Although it was done on a community basis, it wasn't long-term community development, it was definitely parachuting in and parachuting out again at the end, but hopefully leaving behind a very strong sense of people having achieved something. And obviously people were very attracted to it, because it meant they got their stories on television.

HN: And what were the stories about?

AP: These stories were...funnily enough the first one we did was in Protestant East Belfast, with young people from there, and the one thing they said is 'We don't want this to be about The Troubles'. The war, some people call it, was still going on at the time. And they were fed up with pictures of marching bands, and the background of the war. They devised a story, but that's the environment they lived in, and they came up with a story that involved both marching bands and the background of the war, and helicopters and stuff like that. But it was an amazing experience to do it, because it was a completely new place to me, I learned so much about Northern Ireland, and the youth worker said it's the best piece of youth work he'd ever done. And we worked with an amazing writer, which was one of the reasons why it was such a success, Marie Jones, who went on to write Stones in Your Pockets, and become a millionaire actually, and she lived two streets up from where these kids were. And it was an amazing experience, and uh, very successful, which meant that we managed to go on and do four others, during the...

HN: Could you tell [us] a little bit about those other...

AP: Yes, one was made in...the interesting that was that they were all made - the only way at that point, so much in television is conditioned by scheduling, so you had to adapt what you wanted to do to the schedules. And unfortunately for us at that point they were running these things called seasons, so they could attach these one-off dramas - which were very difficult to place – in association with seasons. So we had a Violent Britain series, so we went to work in Afro-Caribbean Coventry. Do you really want to go somewhere and say, you know, 'We've got a programme to make in this series called Violent Britain, would you like to join in?' And so when we raised this with the Commissioning Editor, he just said, 'Oh don't worry about it, just put a burning car in the background somewhere'! And so, we made a programme there that they devised around someone nicking some trainers and some money, and what they did with the money at the end of it all. And so they weren't directly issue based. Another one we made- The Visit, which is probably my favourite of all, on the youth wing of Hull Prison, and we were only allowed there 2 hours in the morning, and 2 hours in the afternoon. And we shot this film over 3 weeks with this group of young prisoners, which was a very, I think a very – truthful, actually – representation of life in the prison. And I don't think when it came out, when the kids saw it, they really liked it that much, which is slightly counter what we set out to do, in a sense, because in fact I think they would have preferred a much more glamour version of them being young prisoners, than was actually presented. We did one there, we did one with the Asian community in Birmingham.

HN: What was that about?

AP: That was about a young woman, who works in a fast food, Asian fast food house, cutting up chicken, chicken, chicken and her dreams, her customers. So each customer comes in, she makes up a story about them, so it's about the dreams and ambitions of young people, Asian young people in Birmingham. And the following one was in Manchester, for the Drug Season, which was when we ran into a kind of problem, because we ended up working with a load of young people who hang about the inner city in Manchester. And the Commissioning Editor, they wanted, it was called the Drug Season, but in fact, drugs weren't really...that wasn't really, that was just part of their lives, it wasn't a big issue in their lives - the big issue in their lives was their sexuality. So some of them were transvestites, there were drag queens – and we're talking about 17 or 18 year-olds, who were on the game in some form or another, on Canal Street. If you had an open-ended brief, we would have got in there, and that would have been what they were discovering and talking about. And then again, by that time, the schedulers or the...Channel 4 had changed so dramatically that they were much more in control of stuff. So we were due to make 3 half-hour programmes. They then, I think the commission went out in September, and they said they wanted it by April, so we had to compress 3 into 1. We had 12 weeks to devise and shoot a drama, an hour and a half drama, and to be honest, it's not a great result, and it never got shown in April anyway, it didn't get shown for another 8 or 9 months. So I always felt, at that point, we got forced to a point where it was no longer credible to do what we were doing, really.

HN: OK, interestingly enough, much later you started to work back in the community context here in London, and now you are working with older men, in East London? Can you tell us a little bit about your present work, and how it relates to the work of the '70s and '80s?

AP: At the same time I was doing this, I was also in a company with Tony Downmunt and Paul Morrison, called APT, where we were doing other forms of TV, though my main focus was on these camcorder dramas. To do these camcorder dramas, we set up a company called Hi8us with Jonnie in Maverick, which was a Maverick-APT company at that point. And we were kind of pioneering work with young people, and these new digital media. And I went back almost to regionalism at that point. We set up Hi8us Midlands and Hi8us South, which was in East London. And then for 10 years I worked with young people in East London, around E3 and E14, making videotapes, making a whole variety of stuff on European money, social regeneration money, Arts Council money, anywhere we could get money from, some reasonable budgets. And so we made dramas, we made documentaries with them, and...some of it was where they were totally hands-on themselves, some of it was professional, we did something called Poplar Film School, where they made all the films themselves, devised and shot themselves, we had something called Beats, Camera, Action! Which was music videos, where they used professional crews, but where they were directed by the actual music-makers themselves. And the most interesting thing for me was the UK Sound TV, which was, as far as I know, the first young people's broadband channel, which we ran out of Roman Road in Bow, and that was youth-run, that was another great bit of youth work, actually. They did 2 shows in that, as well as having the websites – they did 2 live shows, which they actually streamed. It was great. A live show requires so much co-operation and development. We had so many fallings out, and so many coming back together. And they were providing all the...what do I know, it was all, a lot if around the Grime scene, which I was at best an observer of. So they produced all the artists, created all the material themselves, which was great actually.

HN: And so you spent those 10 years in the East End....

AP: Sorry, I meant Roman Road in Bow...

HN: All of a sudden there is this fire in your talk....it's relating somehow to the '70s and early '80s...

AP: Well...in some senses that Hi8us period in the East End...it enabled...it was all that stuff from the late '70s, with the new technology around, and some decent European money, at that point in time, and me being that much more experienced, having a) worked as a video op in the film industry and understood how you made films and b) my experience in the camcorder dramas. I personally brought much more experience both of working with people, and technically, of how you do that stuff. And I was very, we were very fortunate...we landed in this incredibly dynamic music scene, which was when Grime music, which you may or may not know about, which is like an underground hip-hop in this country, was just burgeoning, just starting. Dizze Rascal. Tinchy...Stryder was in one of our early films, so there was this incredible...I mean, if you want energy, go to a Grime gig, man. It's just fantastic. I absolutely adored it actually, just because so much energy came out of it. And so that energy burst out into everything we did round there...you talk about me having energy, it's 'cos it gave me energy, and it was...Also it was about recreating that...living in a community again, and that kind of community, and although I don't think we...it was a coherent community around there where we were working, we had a community around the organization. So...I think one of my... the characteristics of what I've done is created, or been part of working in families, or creating families, because probably I needed one, and

need one. And certainly Hi8us was a family; it was a really powerful experience. And out of that is 5 or 6 young people who are now working in the industry, and uh...that was tremendous, that was one of the most satisfying things in my life.

HN: When you look at this whole time of video, community video, or...community in a wider sense of the word....communities of interest and identity politics, as well as local communities. What is the potential of this for the present times and the future times?

AP: Actually it is kind of peculiarly...it feels like in the light of current political events in terms of the number of people who've voted for us to leave the European community, and what that vote represents, which for me is less about leaving the European community than the voice of people who feel completely voiceless and left behind by contemporary society, whether it be the money establishment, the social establishment, the cultural establishment or whatever. And you know it's an opportunity for them to make a statement and get their voice heard. And I heard that a lot, because subsequent to working with the young people, which finally got... a) we ran out of money, but b) I think I'd started to embarrass myself, actually at my age, scurrying round the floor, working with 14 year-olds. I'd met these older guys in Bow, one guy in particular. Subsequently, since that period I've been working with this bunch, called The Geezers, who are all, to a person, Brexiteers, and do in some sense represent the old white working-class in East London, that feels completely disenfranchised by their community being overtaken by other communities, whose sons and children have had to leave, or have chosen to leave, and feel they don't have a voice anymore. And so, we do have a lot of jokes, because they're obviously aware I'm a kind of Leftie, and they're definitely not Lefties of any sort or description, but we co-exist.

HN: Why do they accept you?

AP: Because I deliver the goods for them, really. I provide, I do their fundraising for them. We made, one my favourite films from the recent past, is called Bow Then and Now, which is when we, I did a series of interviews with the older guys, then they did a series of interviews with younger people from a local school— about growing up in Bow. And then we put the two different films together. So you get the old people talking about clothes in their time, young people talking about clothes during their time, same thing with housing. Of course they're all old and mostly white; in fact they're all white, indigenous white Eastenders. And most of the young people, with the exception of two people, are from different ethnic...all over the world, basically, or their origins are from all over the world — they're English, but they're from all over the world. And to put these two films together, and to show them back to back was tremendous, and actually won them a prize. So, and then they got invited along to the Royal Society of Arts, they got wined and dined. So, up to a point, they buy into me because I'm delivering something for them, you know what I mean? And um and I've been there, and I consistently do it, and now we have a website that I run for them. So they put up with me like I put up with them, because actually we really like each other, and underneath it all, Ray, who's actually a Liberal councillor, but he is actually one of the most community-minded people I've ever met.

HN: Do you see the possibility for projects like you did for many, many years? To play a role...for a more participatory culture in the UK?

AP: I think what's happened with the work that we've done, it's become far more instrumental over the...let's face it, if you look at the ups and downs of the work, over the period since the '70s. As soon as Thatcher came in, you know, the funding dried up, it was hard to get work done...then, Channel 4, fortunately, through the '90s provided money for it. Then when the Blair Government came in a lot of money became available....and then that's died out now, after the 2008 crash? So a lot of the work is about what funds are available to do it. But during that last period, and even going right back to the Job Creation Programme, there's...from the people giving the money there's a kind of instrumentalism about it. They want that money to produce young people that can move into jobs, and that was never more true than since 2000. That everything was seen as training for young people to go into the media industry, or to get jobs in some form or another, to get them job trained. So there's this kind of instrumental use of the media, which, so you're all the time, you're playing, for me I'm playing a tactical game. I can see the advantage of that for some young people, but I don't think, for me that's not what it's all about, it should be about giving them a voice, and allowing their culture to express itself, in some kind of way. So I think there is absolutely a role for that, and I think there's a role for it at the moment, to give those people around the nation, who don't have a voice or who that they're being heard...they certainly made their voice heard on June 23rd, on the...Referendum day, of course. And you could say, that, well everyone's got media now, but you still need, what shall I say, you could say that because everyone has got mobile phones, everyone can make audiovisual pictures, we're all franchised into media. That's not true, to communicate with a wider audience, up to a point you need some skills, and those skills need to be developed by someone, somewhere. So I don't think just because we've got the technology it means people have a voice, although you could argue that...well it's just an example in point – at one point during UK Sound TV, I came in, in the morning, and all the guys were gathered around the monitor. And I thought, this is great, you know, there's music coming over the monitor, I thought, they're really into what they're doing. I looked at it, and it was MySpace, and I knew nothing about that at all, and suddenly MySpace, which was the first of those kind of...music sharing platforms that had come on board. And that had immediately become more attractive at that point than what they were doing...So you could say there is far more scope for it...I don't know the answer to this. But, I think one answer, I have to admit, is localism, where people work locally in their communities, and develop a community sense of identity and belonging...

HN: What do you wish for the young generation now, for this area of work to flourish?

AP: Well, one generation that I wish....small inroads have been made, in terms of black and ethnic minority representation, in media as a whole. It's still, even though we've got young guys coming through, they've got the skills, it's still very hard actually for them to get jobs in the mainstream industry, looking at that particular area of work. Looking at community video, what do I see...I don't know, to be honest. My fantasy is that every community has its own little internet TV station, and broadcasts local TV – that would be my fantasy of a world that...And I think in some sense that's much more reflected in the world of radio, I think community radio is succeeding quite well, relatively speaking, in providing an alternative, community-based radio service. I think it would be great if in future that could be extended to TV, and involve local people in the making and the training and the expression of their identity...

HN: Thank you very much.