

AHRC/BBC Open Archive Project

The Miners' Strike: A Case Study in Regional Content

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The aim of the Arts and Humanities Research Council/BBC KEP is to develop a long-term strategic partnership bringing together the arts and humanities research community with BBC staff to enable co-funded knowledge exchange and collaborative research and development. The benefits from the outcomes and outputs of these projects should be of equal significance to both partners. To find out more about the AHRC/BBC KEP please visit the AHRC's website at:

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INDEX

Page 3	Forward
Page 4	Introduction
Page 7	The BBC Context
Page 8	The Project
Page 9	Methodology
Page 14	Findings
Page 26	Summary of Recommendations
Page 28	Reflections on the Project
Page 31	Appendix
Page 44	General Bibliography
Page 45	The Team
Page 46	The Partners

Forward-Heather Powell

At any talk, event, careers fair, or even in conversations with taxi drivers, the same questions are always asked when they know you work in the BBC Archives.

"Fantastic job but how can we look at what's in the BBC Archive, how can we use the pictures, how can we relive those moments that were such a formative part of our lives and experiences?"

For decades, the answer was always negative and dispiriting. It involved explaining that the physicality of the collections made access limited and difficult. Then there were the complications of rights and copyright issues, and as the difficulties piled up, the questioner would eventually capitulate and change the conversation. The problems seemed insurmountable with no prospect of revisiting fondly remembered episodes of Dr Who, of seeing again footage of their local jubilee street parties, or of sharing the memorable documentary that had changed their outlook.

As we reach the end of the first decade of the 2000s, the picture is changing. Advances in technology and the development of web-based applications on the internet to handle larger and larger amounts of data make the concept of digitising our vast archives possible. It is an expensive and slow process, but it is achievable. Rights, copyright and commercial interests still need addressing but with the technology in place, the undoubted demand for access is increasing.

Now, a new focus has emerged for the BBC which concerns representation and how the archive can be best presented to realise our public value remit and our ability to engage with our diverse audiences. The interest is not simply in blockbuster dramas but also in the coverage of social content that says so much about all of us as a community.

What subjects or historical events stir our collective memories? Will the coverage be understood by younger generations? With hindsight does the portrayal of events need to be countered by the experiences of those "there at the time"? Can the decisions made at the editing table be redressed by a new range of diverse feedback? Should we tamper with it at all and instead simply make available all we have without commentary or context?

The choice of the miners' strike 1984/5 for this research was an inspired one and came from the University of Leeds. For those who lived through it, few other events had such an impact on their social and political lives. The memories of those events have been translated into folklore by the communities directly involved. Through this research we can begin to understand what is important to communities about how they are represented in the archive. We can also start to understand the passions and sense of ownership the BBC audience has when engaging with what is essentially their archive.

Hopefully, the findings of this research will inform how we archive content now, the future exploitation of the archive and how the BBC can creatively use the archive to be at the centre of its activities.



Introduction

“...it's not really our content - the people of Britain have paid for it and our role should be to help them use it.”

Greg Dyke, BBC Director General, the Edinburgh International Television Festival, 2003

“I think that everything that the BBC has should be in the public domain. All of us have paid for it in the first instance.”

Ex-miner Focus group, 2008.

This project is the result of the first collaboration between BBC Information and Archives and the Institute of Communications Studies at the University of Leeds. Both parties were keen to work together under the auspices of this new AHRC/BBC Knowledge Exchange Programme to undertake research into the potential of BBC archival holdings to generate new digital content, programming and to examine, via a case study of the 1984-5 miners' strike, the issues involved in making content available to the general public, academia and commercial

programmers. Central to this study was a desire to explore the relationships between various stakeholders, between content providers (BBC archives) and a range of public and broadcast audiences. At a time when the BBC is developing new approaches to disseminating archival resources, and engaging with new audiences via a range of digital initiatives and archival supported programmes, the study is extremely timely. The core of the project was designed to look at how the BBC's regional public audiences might interact with 'sensitive' archival sources, in what sense they could access and utilise these materials as part of their own memories of historical events, what issues and problems might arise, and ultimately how these findings could be used to inform future archival activities, digital accession, academic practice and drive programming. Over the 12 months that the project was 'live' many exciting developments took place which both informed our research and began to determine the direction it took.



Figure 1 BBC Archive trial Interface

Our initial focus on the BBC Archive Project¹ as the primary means of dissemination of a 'digital archive' quickly expanded to encompass other complementary developments across the broad spectrum of the BBC's online activities and a set of exciting opportunities to engage with programme makers. Similarly the unprecedented success of i-player and individual programme sites, blogs, mobile

¹ The BBC Archive Project (formerly the Open Archive) has already generated several collections of BBC materials and is currently subject to review. It has undertaken a public archive trial, where 1,000 hours of materials were made available to a sample group of 20,000 members of the public in the UK. Whilst it provides basic contextual information it sees itself as predominantly concerned with content provision, but not with the broader potential to generate independent metadata or provide interactive potential. For further information see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/>

phone content and commercialisation of selected archive via BBC Worldwide's Motion Gallery site have made these issues increasingly important.

Digitisation and digital capture of new programme content presage an instantaneous 'archive', but the question of how to engage with the BBC's vast pre-digital resources offer exciting challenges and opportunities². Traditional debates about the role of the non-digital 'programme archive' (and its ephemeral counterparts) are now at a crucial stage.³ We are on the threshold of new forms of broadcasting and collective engagement in content generation and selective scheduling. Traditional models and orthodoxies, programming and gate-keeping roles are being re-defined, and as this study forcefully demonstrates, a new participant public is keen to engage with the BBC, not just as passive consumers but as active partners. As content holders BBC Information & Archives represent a rich resource which could increasingly act as a point of intersection between the organisation and its funding audiences. Managing that relationship and the expectations which attend it is the biggest challenge.

These broader questions formed part of our study. For example, should audiences have defined points of interaction with the archive? How do audiences make sense of what they are seeing? Should they be able to interact, comment, and contextualise these materials? How can they use them to construct their own histories, mobilise memory and engage with the BBC in a period of exciting change and innovation? Given recent high profile editorial issues and the BBC Trust's new focus on building trust between the organisation and its audiences a top-down model in which the organisation appears solely responsible for the selection, interpretation and packaging of its archive is increasingly called into question. What then should the BBC be considering as a new way forward? The findings of this study provide some clear recommendations and a model project which may offer an exciting partnership-model based future. A recently awarded follow on project will now seek to test some of these recommendations by asking a group of our original participants to work with BBC archival sources to construct a live web resource which tells the story of the miners' strike from multiple perspectives and examines the basis of a new set of relationships with the BBC's archival legacy.⁴

² The BBC has an estimated 400,000 TV and Radio programmes and an estimated 900,000 hours of content (comprising 600,000 of video/film and 300,000 of audio).

³ For example see Professor Nicholas Pronay's recent article in the 2009 *BUFVC Handbook* and the recent *Moving Image Archiving and the Academy* event held at The University of Leeds, January 30, 2008.

⁴ The key aim is to allow a group of our original participants and BBC journalists to select and curate materials which would provide a web-based account of the strike during its anniversary year. This would represent a unique opportunity to bring together miners, other people from mining communities, police officers and journalists involved in events to produce a broadly contextualised resource for the BBC and to allow us to assess key issues such as public engagement with BBC archival sources, additionality in the form of contextual materials and the possibility of reconciliation between participants. The group would work together using original BBC archival sources and produce additional contextual materials including written testimonies and participate in filmed interviews and record stories and memories to accompany these materials to be hosted on regional BBC websites.

The BBC Context



Figure 2 David Wormstone- BBC Researcher, Information and Archives

The working context within the BBC evolved over the course of the year of the project and this had implications for the direction that elements of our research took and influenced our dissemination strategy. We initially began working with the existing FM&T Open Archive Project (since re-named the BBC Archive Project) as our key point of reference. However it soon became clear that the objectives of the BBC Archive Project, in its initial online trial, were moving more towards the provision of programme content rather than in engaging in some of the broader themes and debates that were emerging from our research in relation to interactivity and the role of memory. Rather than see this as a problem we broadened our focus to include other aspects of BBC activity and also began to think about engaging with other online content providers such as regional television and with programme makers who were increasingly keen to use aspects of the research in programming. This has been an exciting and very rewarding development which has led to collaborative work between ICS and the BBC.

It also became clear that once the project had started that the BBC Archive project was undertaking its own usability study involving 20,000 participants and as a consequence our own research became less focused on this element as there was no need to replicate this factor with a much smaller sample.

More recently, and because of the importance the BBC places on making its archives accessible, a new department has been set up within the Vision production division, specifically to realise and define the BBC approach to making its archive content available to the audience. That department will become one of the prime consumers of this research.

The project

The miner's strike of 1984/5 was one of the bitterest industrial disputes in living memory. It challenged the authority of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, threatened to destroy the livelihoods of tens of thousands of miners, occasioned conflict between miners and the police and brought into question the independence and impartiality of the media.⁵ The social and political consequences of this dispute have resonated for the past quarter century and it is still a controversial, contested and divisive event. The strike was selected because of its profound effect on local communities and its strong cultural resonances, both as a regional and national event. It was a contained 'historical' event lasting just over a year, geographically convenient for the partners, and accessible in terms of the archival materials we wished to work with.

The study focussed specifically on how national and regional BBC news reports represented this strike to a regional audience and how they were perceived by communities affected by it and its long term consequences. We wanted to find out how participant communities felt that their own perspectives had been represented through news and documentary records, and discover how their own experiences equated with the original media coverage. We wanted to explore the feelings and memories which these films evoked and use them to provide a number of recommendations to the BBC regarding its archival resources and the potential for public engagement via new media initiatives and programming.

We felt that the strike would offer a model that was exportable to the broader BBC archive and that raised key issues which would encompass other tendentious or controversial materials held within the archives which necessitated sensitive treatment.

Research Questions

To explore these themes we framed our approach around five key questions which formed the basis of our research. We wanted to discover:

1. How the BBC should deal with sensitive historical issues. How they should seek to address key concerns such as accusations of bias and misrepresentation and how this affects the use of archival sources in re-interpretations via new programming and the re-contextualisation and dissemination of footage through BBC Archive and associated new media projects.
2. The role played by memory in the ways in which people viewed, interpreted and might potentially select the materials they wanted to view. We were particularly

⁵ Events like the contest coverage of Orgreave have had a lasting impact on the ways in which audiences in these communities regard the BBC. Len Masterman comments that, "The immediate victims of the BBC's coverage of Orgreave were the striking miners. But the most significant long-term casualty of television coverage of the miners' dispute may well turn out to be the BBC itself." Jones, D., Petley, J., Power, M. and Wood, L., 1994. *Media hits the pits*. Blackrose Press, p31.

interested in the degree to which the choice of what to watch and how to make sense of these materials may be determined by existing memories and experiences.

3. The degree to which the BBC might identify and target audiences for these materials and how they should be packaged. How these materials could be used within regional communities directly involved in events and how the findings of the case study could be adapted as a model for other themes.

4. The degree of potential ethical risks in the form and dissemination of some of the more sensitive materials.

5. How we could identify potential enhancement activities which would benefit future access to and usage of the BBC's Archive.

Methodology

To answer our primary questions we worked with groups of miners, police officers and people directly involved in or affected by the strike. The team used BBC materials as the basis for a series of 12 extended focus groups, interviews and follow-up questionnaires which explored the potential of archival material as sources of media and communications history, memory and education. We decided that a qualitative approach based on interviews, discussions and questionnaires would enable us to explore key themes in-depth and allow participants to fully respond to our questions and engage with a selection of archival materials. As part of the focus groups we produced a compilation film of BBC news items with the full support of BBC Information and Archives.



Figure 3 Project film titles

The project was undertaken in two key stages, the first involved the research and editing of the film. We used an experienced freelance film researcher, and a seconded BBC researcher to undertake an extended review of local (BBC North) and National News broadcasts. They were carefully briefed to identify a range of materials which encompassed key events and broader social and regional issues. We were keen to produce a compilation which worked on several levels. The film is comprised of a selection of news items drawn from the period of the strike from both regional and national news sources.

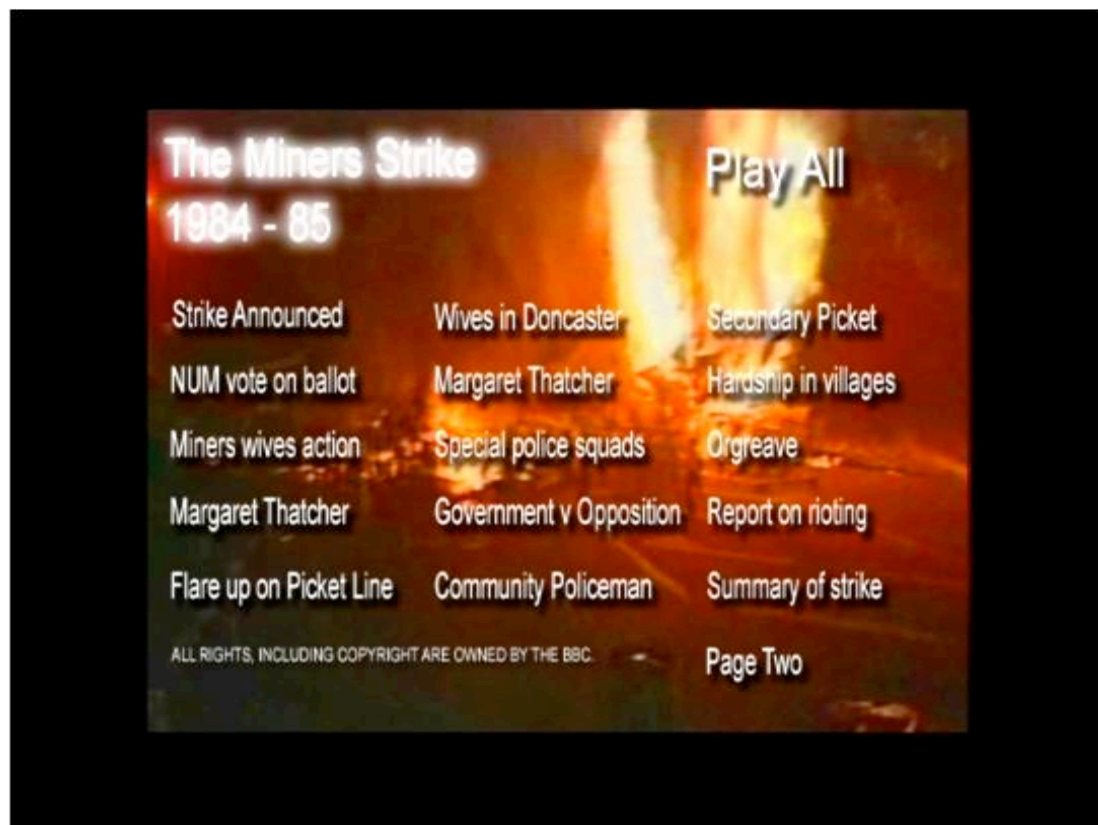


Figure 4 Project film menu

It was intended to provide a chronological ‘history’ of the strike as presented by the BBC to provide a context for subsequent discussions. It was felt that people would need a linear framework into which they could relate their own experiences and memories. It was also designed to demonstrate typical approaches to reporting the strike and related issues. We wanted to avoid editing the material as far as possible and took the decision to use full news items with the introductory links where they survived.⁶ As a compilation it was a subjective selection made by the team and open to the types of criticisms that a BBC compilation or online selection would be.⁷ We

⁶ This was possible with the national news items as the entire broadcast had been archived. Regional news stories were far more problematic as all the survived were the individual items and no public service broadcast context. We did have to edit some sequences from long current affairs programmes such as *Panorama* and clearly indicated on the film where this had occurred.

⁷ The compilation did invite such criticism and this clearly demonstrates the contested nature of the archival holdings in relation to the representation of historical events or themes. For example one ex-senior police officer commented that, “your footage here is far too South Yorkshire orientated. This strike took place in Nottingham, in Kent, in North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and other places in the

were also sensitive to the fact that news items were being presented 'devoid' of their full broadcast context (i.e. as part of an extended series of news items and links) which might have presented counterfactual materials.

The second phase involved the recruitment and execution of a series of extended focus groups. These took place predominantly in the South Yorkshire region which was the primary focus of our study. However one of the consequences of the strike was an extreme dislocation of people following the closure of the pits and the use of police officers from other national and regional forces. As a consequence we also held groups in Manchester and in Devon and the Southwest. The sample was drawn from people who had personal experience or memories of the event, although other groups (such as people already accessing archive material for professional purposes) were also included. Our primary criteria for membership was that people had either been directly involved in the strike as miners or police officers or had been involved in support roles such as women's groups or had an historical interest in the period.⁸

Recruitment was initially difficult as there was a great deal of residual suspicion towards the BBC within mining and police communities and we had to win the trust of key individuals and very carefully explain the parameters of the project. People felt that broadcasters, not exclusively the BBC, had let them down in the way in which the strike had been covered at the time. Once people realised that the project was going to allow them to re-engage with these representations and comment on BBC holdings they displayed a remarkable willingness to facilitate our work. We received strong support from a number of organisations especially the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers), NARPO (National Association of Retired Police Officers), miner's welfare organisations and key individuals within the mining and police communities. Groups were conducted in a variety of venues in these communities which included miner's welfare centres, police clubs, local libraries, community centres, a pub and in one case a private dwelling. The only group we were unable to recruit, despite exhaustive efforts, were those who refused to strike or broke ranks during the strike.⁹

The focus groups were conducted in three sections. We first got participants to introduce themselves, discuss their memories of the strike, and to talk about what they personally thought important or that had left a lasting impression on them. We then moved to a very general discussion about the media and how the strike had been represented. We discussed what newspapers they read, what TV stations they

country which were all different... you're bound to have the impression that it was the same everywhere as it was in south Yorkshire. It wasn't. It was quite different and there were different pressures, and certainly a bit more footage from other places would help people who were just watching it, help them discuss it more broadly." Interview, July 21, 2008.

⁸ The groups included miners, police officers, women's groups, local history groups and political activists. As far as possible we did not mix groups as we were keen to record opinion from defined bodies of participants. We did not attempt to bring oppositional groups together. However this is a part of proposed future activities.

⁹ One of the most compelling aspects of the study was the degree of residual animosity towards strike breakers and the expulsion of them from existing mining communities. As one ex-miner commented, "I mean, 25 years later I can meet people who I work with who crossed our picket line, and I can't bear to see them. I can't bear to talk to them and some of them want to talk. And I just can't bear it." Focus group, June 2008.

watched and whether or not they felt representation had been accurate or partial. We also discussed what their expectations were in relation to viewing the films and why they wanted to see them. Discussions raised a mixture of real emotions and also wry humour and nostalgia as this extract from one of the groups reveals:

Interviewer: What's the one abiding memory that you've got?

Participant A:

Well, I remember t' first time I got beat up by a bobby. Em, I mean there were loads of different memories that I did have, but the, the one thing that sort o' changed me as a person wor, em, I wasn't, I wasn't doing anything particularly wrong ... well, I know I weren't doing anything wrong, I were just stood there. And, uh, bus were coming down t' pit lane to go into, to take the, uh, scabs into work and uh as, as there were a push forward, it were a sergeant, he'd got his lovely leather gloves on, he just *smacked* me a beauty one straight on t' side o' t' face and, uh, me face, it swelled up a bit straight away but, uh, from that day on I became one of the, uh, most ardent stone throwers that you've ever seen in south Yorkshire. I, I used to wait until I saw t' whites of their eyes before I ran away from t' coppers, I were that determined that they've done me that's it, I'm getting me own back.

Interviewer: B...?

Participant B

Em, one of my abiding memories is shop lifting from t' Co-op, ah ... to subsidise t' two pound a month that I got from, uh, NUM, uh, and obviously being arrested at Orgreave.

Participant C:

Yeah, lots of memories like everybody but I suppose the one that sticks in my mind is, uh, I was on the NUM day release course in XXXXX and I'd been on t' picket line in t' morning, and, um, got called away, he was the tutor, um, works at University or did at the time, and he came back into the room and, em, he put his arm round me and he said we've got some police men downstairs, they've come to arrest you. And they accused me of throwing a fifty pence piece at the car of, uh, striking miners, scabs. We were getting two pound a day picket money, as if I'm going to throw...

Laughter

Participant C:

...twenty five percent of me wages away, you know what I mean? But I got arrested, eh, and uh, em, I were, I was only in for the day in the afternoon, and I remember the day because it was when England played and beat Turkey five-none.

Laughter

Interviewer D?:

Participant D:

Em, my abiding memory is the so-called battle of Grimethorpe, um, when a local person and a child got arrested for coal picking and they got locked up in White City Police Station, and word got round and local community laid siege to the, the local police station and the Met came in and, em, laid siege to the village. I were out drinking, uh, in the local pub in XXXX and we went down, and I've never seen anything like it in me life. There were literally hundreds of police just running amok, battering everything that moved, and they weren't local police, they were Met and I were astonished 'cos that were a new level of violence that I witnessed that night, em, really shocking scenes.

Pause

Participant E:

I think my favourite story has to be t' old snowman one ...

Snigger

... which () which you've probably 'eard before, when there wor um several hundred pickets out all night and several hundred coppers in obviously freezing cold weather and they'd built an huge snowman that had got its own riot shield and helmet and full, full job lot that they'd pinched from previous encounters and it completely blocked entrance to a pit and next morning they asked a bloke who were in charge of pickets, one o' t' branch leaders, to move it and, uh, of course he told t' police he weren't prepared to do that so the main man jumped in to move ... t' police man who was... supposed to be driving t' range rover...

... made 'im get out of t' range rover and got in range rover his se'n and steamed into this snowman to smash it to pieces to show other police men this is how it should be done, right, but what pickets had done they'd built it round a fucking concrete bollard...

Laughter

... and it completely wrote his range rover off. And funniest thing wor there were three thousand pickets cheering but you could see that there were three thousand coppers cheering as well...

Focus group, Ex-Miners, April 2008.

The second phase of the groups consisted of participants watching the film and they were invited to make notes whilst viewing. We did not record during this section but there were frequent lively comments, especially when participants recognised themselves or friends or locations. One particularly affecting incident occurred whilst watching a news item which included footage of the aftermath of a police raid on a miner's welfare club. We suddenly realised that we were sitting in the room that had been smashed up during the raid.

Following the screening we began our discussions by asking people for their immediate responses to the film, we asked them to comment on what memories they had brought back, what they felt about the material in terms of its depiction of the strike and their role within it and what they felt about re-viewing it. We then moved to broader discussions of what value they felt the material held, how they would like to use, select and make sense of it. We discussed the possible digitisation of these collections and the value it might bring to communities in terms of memory projects, local history, education, reconciliation and nostalgia.

We concluded by discussing how the BBC could make these materials available, how they should be selected, curated and contextualised.

We then followed up these meetings with a detailed questionnaire which allowed participants to comment further on the themes we had discussed as part of the group and invited more personal reflection on the materials and their own experiences. This was particularly effective in evoking memories and responses to the experience of viewing the footage and how they used online sources, including BBC sites, for study and leisure.

Findings

These are summarised under the original objectives set by the project team.

Question 1

To understand:

How the BBC should deal with sensitive historical issues. How they should seek to address key concerns such as accusations of bias and misrepresentation and how this affects the use of archival sources in re-interpretations via new programming and the re-contextualisation and dissemination of footage through BBC Archive and associated new media projects.

Using the miners' strike as a case study we have been able to undertake detailed discussions with participants involved in the strike and to talk in detail about the key issues of representation, bias and sensitivity. Our initial discussions centred on the role of the media in general and considered how people felt about contemporary representations and about their key memories of the media. Both the miners and their supporters and the police groups we worked with felt unhappy about elements of media coverage and their comments and questionnaire responses reveal a lack of trust and often deep resentment towards key broadcasters including the BBC.¹⁰ Both sides in the dispute felt a strong sense of resentment against press representation of

¹⁰ As noted in *Media hits the pits*, "During the coal dispute the much-vaunted impartiality of the BBC and ITV has been called seriously into question." Jones, D., Petley, J., Power, M. and Wood, L., Blackrose Press 1994. p.18.

them as individuals and as groups engaged in what they saw as an increasingly political struggle which was destroying their trust in the media.

Central complaints included biases both towards the government and the miner's cause, dumbing down of the issues which lay behind the strike, the economic case for closure, the stereotyping of police and miners, anti-northern prejudices in the national news and a disproportionate focus on violence and confrontation.¹¹ One key example was the contested events at Orgreave where the BBC was accused of showing events in the wrong sequence by miners and their supporters.¹² Police commentators were adamant that they were in the correct sequence and that it was the miners not the police who had unleashed the extreme violence and had caused the police to charge on horseback. This contested event, one of many, is a clear illustration of the difficulties faced in presenting materials and in the need for effective and sensitive contextualisation.

In discussions concerning how the BBC should now re-present these materials a great deal of commentary concerned the need to regain the trust of those communities involved by being open and sensitive to concerns and historical ill feeling about the clear perceptions of misrepresentation.

The key findings from all participant groups suggested that there was a strong sense that the broadcast material was partial and that they, as a group or as individuals, had been misrepresented and that the complex and detailed social, political and historical issues associated with the strike had tended to be simplified and stereotyped in the past.¹³

As a consequence the use of these materials within new programming and as accessible archival sources requires sensitive and detailed contextualisation which would be greatly enhanced by public partnership. There was a clear willingness on the part of many participants to talk to programme makers and to offer their own views and experiences for the camera as a means of representing perspectives they felt had been ignored or marginalised. This was seen as crucial to re-building trust with elements of the audience that had lost faith with broadcasters over this particular event. One typical comment was that coverage was:

¹¹ This tendency is also noted by David Waddington, "Typically, media coverage refers only superficially (and usually disparagingly) to the issues involved in a dispute and, far from moderating police aggression, tends to justify hostility towards the pickets." *Contemporary issues in public disorder: a comparative and historical approach*. Routledge, 1994, p-99.

¹² Orgreave was the single most contested event of the entire dispute and the role played by the BBC remains deeply contested and its representation still has a residual effect on how communities regard the BBC. As one striking miner commented: "My mother was disgusted at us throwing stones at police as the BBC showed that first before the baton charge on horseback. In reality the baton charge was first. Ever since then I try and read between the lines of everything I read or see on the news." **Striking miner: questionnaire**. Another miner commented that representation was Orgreave was a typical misrepresentation, "A classic example was the BBC reversal of events at Orgreave. Shots of miners throwing stones at police before showing mounted police charging the miners was wrong." **Striking miner: questionnaire**

¹³ The journalist Triona Holden commented on this issue, saying that "As often happens, the media was brilliant at thumbnail sketches showing extremes, but often rubbish at giving an accurate representation of the less dramatic, broader picture". *Queen Coal*. Sutton Publishing 2005, p 31.

*Distorted, unrepresentative, unfair, previously believed in the BBC because had been taught to do so. **Striking miner: questionnaire***

And that trust in the BBC had clearly been lost:

*I wouldn't trust t' BBC to tell me it were five to five. **Miner focus group April 2008***

These issues were also clearly situated by a number of respondents in the conduct of reporters on the ground. There were several extended commentaries on how people felt they had been manipulated:

*We were conned, tricked into saying things, plied with beer, anything to get us to trip up and seem unsupportive of the strike. **Miner: questionnaire***

Although these are unsubstantiated claims there were comments from a range of groups alleging incitement on the part of journalists and the clear orchestration of incidents for the camera. There was also a strong sense from both sides that violence was often staged for the camera and that situations were often inflamed by the arrival of film crews.

*On one occasion we were chatting with pickets and having coffee. They provided the heat in a brazier, we provided coffee and Mars bars. Some time afterwards Yorkshire Television turned up and started filming. The miners were embarrassed and asked if it was ok to have a bit of a 'push' for the cameras. We agreed (anything to help). **Ex-police officer: questionnaire***

There was also recognition the journalists were often blamed for decisions made elsewhere and that they were just doing their job.

*... And there were BBC man there, and he's still ... correspondent,...I think you call him. Bloke with a beard. And they wanted to lynch him. They wanted to knock seven bells out of this bloke, which ... he were just a bloke on his own. And so ... I stepped in and said well it's not his fault for shit that's coming on telly. (Pause). Anyway, it all calmed down and it, nowt happened. And I were talking to him, this BBC bloke, and he were saying the grief that they'd had ... and he told me this story about ... uh ... when they'd been in Northern Ireland ... there'd been this, a warehouse had been set on fire. And firemen were putting this fire out ... and they sent t' film back to London. But then whoever'd edited it in London ... made out that IRA were shooting at firemen. And so ... BBC men were in the room at this hotel and door got kicked off t' hinges and they got told in no uncertain ... terms to fuck off out of Belfast. But ... he were saying, it weren't us, we just took t' film. And then they've put the words to it when it's got to London and exact ... and he told me that and then the more and more I watched telly, the more I could see what they were doing. **Ex-miner focus group June 2008***

The issue of re-gaining trust was central to discussions which focussed on the re-use of these materials and the ways in which the BBC used its archive. It was felt that making materials freely available clearly offered the organisation a key opportunity to regain the confidence of this extended audience through a sensitively presented

handling of materials which acknowledged some of the interpretive issues attached to them and that allowed for forms of public engagement. As one commenter noted:

Perhaps now 25 years after the event the BBC can 'apologise' and show the 'real' picture — working people fighting for their futures and the state's response! **Miner: questionnaire**

Question 2

To understand:

The role played by memory in the ways in which people viewed, interpreted and might potentially select the materials they wanted to view. We were particularly interested in the degree to which the choice what to watch and how to make sense of these materials may be determined by existing memories and experiences.

The role of memory was central to the ways in which audiences responded to these materials and was the focus of much of our discussions with groups. We were able to establish the role it played in their initial expectations, their approach to viewing materials and in their desire to view certain types of materials.

Initial discussions were centred on their own particular memories of the period and events during the course of the strike, memories of their own actions and key events which characterised their own experiences. These were often extremely rich and had a deep emotional pull. One respondent noted that:

It just comes back as though it was yesterday. It can move me to tears and joy 25 years later. It will always be with me. It tells me we have lost something, a time, a people, an industry, respect for the glue that held many communities together. **Miner: questionnaire**

We then explored how these memories accorded with the archive materials we showed them and what memories were further triggered by these films.

What emerged was a really powerful demonstration of how memories were often supplemented and deepened through engagement with these materials and often how certain memories were challenged or found to be different. People commonly commented on the partiality of the films in terms of memories of events, perspectives and experiences that were absent from the visual record, especially elements like noise, smell, fear, excitement, euphoria and sadness. For example:

You were inside a cacophony of noise, you could not hear your radio, you could not hear the guy next to you talking ... the command and control structure actually at the point of contact broke down. Purely because the amount of noise you could not bring any bobbies back once you'd started them moving, that movement had to be left to complete itself because you couldn't stop it. And the noise, the noise was extraordinary, um ... again from

both sides in that sense, if the bobbies were charging at the time then the existing theory was you make a noise, you shout, you let them know you're coming and ... the good old days of the foot soldiers ... who shouted and screamed and yelled as they went over the top and nothing's changed. But then, the pickets were doing that as well. **Ex-police officer, focus group, 2008**

These were things that they felt should be commented on and should form part of the contextual process for other viewers and subsequent generations. We also found that memories were a key in terms of how people might seek to view further materials and how they might chose to navigate the bigger archive or selections of material. People seemed to mentally cross- reference specific memories of people and events within the frame of the strike within broader historical contexts and events.

The idea of memory was often key to initial engagement with materials and this was very clearly evidenced in the participant recruitment process. The desire to revisit one's own history was a potent factor in wanting to engage with archival sources. The nostalgic pull of much of the material provided a constant source of comment also, people engaged with the footage as a highly potent source for social/historical information and a constant stream of comments flowed from all audiences about the look and sense of Britain in the early 1980's. This was often a source of great amusement as well as sadness and regret.

The role of the archive as a repository for memories was also a strong theme and participants commonly raised the importance of these films as a means of educating future generations and of continuing memories of events, people and communities which were rapidly disappearing. This again raised a central theme in relation to the need to supplement BBC holdings with their recorded memories to ensure the longevity and importance of the archive and to provide added value to materials.

As one respondent noted:

...the footage needs also to be balanced by personal input...by witness accounts. By the voice of people and the opinions of people who were involved. And also things like personal footage...some people must have had video recorders, camcorders...and their home movies...and all this sort of stuff could make a valuable audio and visual archive...I think the BBC stuff would be enormously valuable but I think on its own it's going to be very one-sided. **Focus group, June 2008.**

The loss of communities and ways of life as well as a strong industrial heritage was a constant theme in respect to commentaries on the film materials audience witnessed. Preserving this cultural tradition when whole communities had gone was seen as one of the post important roles which the archive could play.

Question 3

To understand:

The degree to which the BBC might identify and target audiences for these materials and how they should be packaged. How these materials could be used within regional communities directly involved in events and how the findings of the case study could be adapted as a model for other themes.

The strike was chosen as an event that had regional as well as national significance. It had a historical profile as a key domestic watershed with attendant controversy and took place well within living memory. In this respect the task of identifying a regional audience was on one level straight forward. Participants and their families were at the centre of events and were strongly motivated to engage with these materials. It seemed a given that they would want to view materials and archive material could be easily be disseminated through regionally targeted programming and online resources.

The question of how to target regional audiences beyond original participants and those living through or affected by the strike was more problematic. In the group work that we did many saw this as a problem relating directly to their own children and the difficulty in engaging them in what was seen as their historical legacy. Many spoke of the problems of interesting this generation of the lack of comprehension of the significance of this event upon their own lives. Themes relating to the destruction of community, societal cohesion and mining culture were at the heart of these particular discussions. Solutions often centred on the role these materials could play in schools and further education, and the need to package selections with a great deal of contextual material.

History belongs to us all and if such items exist then everyone should have access to them. After all, we paid for it. Miner: questionnaire

One miner described in detail the experiences of talking to school children in former mining communities and their lack of knowledge about their own family's recent history and the dismay he felt that the only thing the children wanted to ask him about mining was what miners ate and where they went to the toilet underground.

The role of women was also particularly highlighted as influential both by miners and police in terms of the support they offered and the leading roles they had taken during the course of the dispute as an area for greater emphasis and recognition:



Figure 5 Miners' wives discuss the strike

And the women that supported us, who did the kitchens in our communities, did tremendous jobs with very little uh equipment to work with and they provided meals for the children and for the lads who went picketing and I think that should go down in the annals of the history of our dispute. – Miner: focus group, 2008

Women in all communities were seen as under-represented in previous accounts of the strike and an audience which should be directly targeted to engage with and help enhance the understanding of archival materials and to contest missing or incomplete histories.

Key triggers such as anniversaries were seen as important means of remobilising these histories and in the opportunities to re-examine events through new programming opportunities and a growing engagement with web based resources and through i-player.

The task of reaching regional audiences with this material thus lies with a combination of the development of online resources including archival sources and interactive opportunities, historically based radio and television programming and education packages targeted at schools and colleges. The use of other bodies such as trade unions, professional organisations, libraries, history and social welfare groups would be key. Their role in the project itself proved invaluable. Above all else we would advocate the participation of elements of the audience, however limited, in the development of these materials and in the curation of packaged materials. This would lend greater authority to subsequent archive based outcomes as well as evidencing the BBC's commitment to a dialogue with their audiences.

If the facts have been distorted along with the truth, the archive (any archive) is worthless unless it is explained that there were reasons for the distortion. Questionnaire

The packaging process itself requires a combination of contextual commentaries, memory based frameworks and other contemporary sources – such as programmes and news items drawn from the archive. The presence of other news items in some of the selection we made caused constant comment and allowed participants to place their memories and experiences in a much broader framework, for example to the conflict in Northern Ireland or social or sporting events.

One of the other key uses of these materials emerged through the general theme of reconciliation. What developed in many of our conversations and via written submissions was the potential of these materials to allow people to appreciate the perspectives of others within the strike. Whilst there was still a very large degree of hostility and a legacy of mistrust there were constant references to the respect that did exist, especially from Police Officers for their perceived adversaries.

You've got to forgive and you've got to forget **Miner focus group June 2008**

Well, my abiding memory of the strike really is respect for the mining community in that I don't think that there is another group of people in this country who would stick to their guns with regard to the strike as they did. **Police commander Interview July 2008**

I remember one morning in the winter standing outside a colliery, might have been xxxx. We had been chatting with the pickets, just a few old, retired maybe, miners round a brazier. It was cold, dark and the younger pickets were missing. The first coaches went in and the TV cameras were there that day, no idea why. Anyway these few pickets shouted and it was all pretty pathetic really. The next bus that came in a few minutes later the Met Police officers joined in shouting 'Scab' sort of made it sound better for the cameras and the press. I am not sure what reaction was better our boss 'oh no what have they done' or the pickets trying to understand what was happening. Another incident was being parked in the colliery car park about mid-day waiting for the shift to go home and the miners kids come along, playing cricket with them and the rest of the police officers and sending the kids home with boxes of the snacks that we had been given. They contained sandwiches, fruit a bit of cake and a packet of crisps. I can still see a kid with packed lunch up to his chin walking off. One of them bought his ferret onto the bus to show us, when that thing hit the floor twenty policemen got out of the bus through two doors in about 3 seconds. We used to practice 'debusing under fire' we never got off the bus faster than that day. I also remember a trip to a colliery when was passed a number of cars parked in a field and something was thrown at the bus and smashed the window next to someone's head. We went back and searched all the people in the car park they were flying pickets from South Wales but found nothing and in the end they went on their way. There are dozens of things. Starting work at 0200 in the morning the 'operational feeding', chatting with the older strikers. I think the older strikers were for want of a better phrase more professional. I have spoken with WW2 veterans and while civilians hate the Germans and soldiers understand that it was a job. The same with us and the older miners for the most part we liked them and understood but the law had been broken, we had no axe to grind. I think some of them maybe ex forces understood and had the same attitude. **Police officer: questionnaire**

I, I believe there should be, I believe in reconciliation, I really do believe in reconciliation, em ... em, and it's got ... it's got to happen if communities are going to be...ever going to be communities again. But I don't know whether communities are ever going to be communities again because of what's happened **Miner: Focus Group April 22**

The miners used to turn up on the picket line at 2.00am in trainers and inadequate top clothing. The police had top of the range boots, clothing and heated vehicles. So when it came to confrontation the miners did not stand any chance at all. The police could have wiped them away any time they wanted if they had so desired. Remember most policemen in Yorkshire are closely related, in family, to miners. So they had great sympathy. **Police officer: questionnaire**

... the general body of miners are a wonderful crowd of people. I have great respect for them. No other employment group in this country would stand together for as long as the miners did in this strike. **Police officer: questionnaire**

This potential for reconciliation will be explored as participants from both communities work together on the current Fusion Funding project.

(In terms of expanding the audience beyond the region we would have also have liked to carry out some further groups with non regional participants as a means of looking at how to more directly target national audiences in relation to these materials.)

Question 4

To understand:

The degree of potential ethical risks in the form and dissemination of some of the more sensitive materials.

I have no concerns and think that digitalised versions of the entire footage now held by the BBC both at national and regional level should also be made available for serious researchers. **Campaigner: questionnaire**

The editorial guidelines in relation to the use and reuse of archival materials are well established within the BBC and subject to regular review. The responsibility of the broadcaster in terms of published materials and their broader public reception are less defined, (something the Open Archive Project was testing) and the potential impact of sensitive or contentious materials is less clear.

Our objective in this respect was to understand the potential issues which might have arisen from the publication or re-editing or rebroadcast of archival materials within a participant community. We were particularly interested in issues relating to the identification of individuals engaged in criminal acts, engaged in violence, strike breaking or other acts which might put them or their families at risk.

On the whole participant views were largely unconcerned by these issues.¹⁴ There was a general sense that the material had already been seen and should be available again. (i.e. That it was already in the public domain)¹⁵ There were clear concerns that material should not be restricted or in any way censored and that the material was independently selected and interpreted.

Whether that archive goes up or not, you're not going to get other people's point of view, you're still going to get editorial policy of the BBC. Miner: focus group April 2008

When pressed on issues of the identification of individuals there was little or no sympathy for their current situation. Concerns instead focussed more on the ways in which the material would be made available and how it would be used. For example, one participant commented:

1. *The BBC footage is often biased, often extremely selective.*
2. *There is so much footage that people may be reluctant to 'trawl' through it all. There has to be some process whereby viewers can make intelligent and informed selections.*

Miner : questionnaire

We had expected the issue of risk (especially the identification of individuals) to pose a much greater source of anxiety for participants. This was an unexpected finding and impacted on the way in which this question became inflected within the group discussions. Participants were far more concerned by what they saw as negative representations of their communities or colleagues in terms of some of the materials we showed. For them the ethical risks lay in the nature of the material and its editorial approach, fears they felt could be allayed by careful contextualisation and a "right to reply."

¹⁴ However we were unable to talk to strike-breaking or non-striking miners and would see this as a key area of concern for them. Further attempts need to be made to engage with these communities.

¹⁵ There was a clear sense that much of the material was available unofficially on *You Tube* and other online resources. People clearly had their own sets of recordings taped at the time and these were still circulating in communities.

Question 5

To identify:

Potential enhancement activities which would benefit future access to and usage of the BBC's Archive.

We identified a number of key enhancement activities in relation to the access and usage which both involve the general public and programme/content providers. Some of the strongest evidence drawn from our participants was a desire to engage with these holdings via a number of interfaces which went beyond the basic ability to view and search online materials. People expressed the desire to be able to interact, comment on and contextualise archival sources.

*I took part in a number of documentaries toward the end of the strike and I would be willing to record my experiences. **Miner: questionnaire***

*My experiences are there to be retold to anybody with an honest interest in the events who wishes to ask me about them. **Campaigner: questionnaire***

*My father was a Normandy Veteran, the memories of people like him are fast disappearing. Witnesses to any significant event should be interviewed and the records retained. **Police officer: questionnaire***

As a means of exploring this, and of testing the value of these interactive activities we are now undertaking a follow-on project which will allow a group of participants to select and curate materials which would provide an account of the strike during its anniversary year. This project is being undertaken in conjunction with BBC Leeds and will be published via regional BBC websites. Newly created content, including filmed interviews will be hosted alongside BBC archival materials and will also be available to programme makers and regional news sources (television and radio). This raises the potential of additionality, and will lead to further reflection on how similarly generated materials might be added or linked to existing BBC collections.

The key aims of this project are to:

- Investigate processes by which BBC audiences can be involved in the use of BBC archival materials to produce new content.
- To assess their role in its contextualisation including how their own memories are used to provide deeper understanding of events and themes.
- To assess the potential of these materials to offer additionality to the BBC's archive, and by extension other important collections.
- To assess how involvement can be facilitated and how the public interact with archival sources.
- To assess how the BBC can supplement this process and provide an institutional context for their materials.
- To assess the role of this sort of activity as a means of re-establishing trust between certain audiences and the organisation.

The main deliverable will be a web-based resource to be hosted by regional BBC websites and this will be live throughout the duration of the 25th anniversary of the strike which runs between March 2009 and March 2010.

The project will also deliver a series of newly recorded interviews and written contextual materials which are available to BBC programmers and these have already been identified as being of use in the generation of regional news items for both radio and television. BBC regional broadcasters and BBC archives will be the key target audiences of this project in relation to the BBC but there is obvious potential for it to have a national impact in relation to the development of future archive based online activities and other forms of programming.

As one discussion suggested:

Participant C: Now I think the thing is that you need to have a different sort of mode of selection. I think there's got to be some sort of way that you can maybe put together two groups of people, maybe if they're...okay, you know, scabs and police on one side and people who were involved ...

Participant A: As long as they're in different rooms!

Laughter **Miners' focus group June 2008**

The results of this AHRC/BBC Fusion funding project will be available mid-2009 and will be used to produce tested recommendations on this question. The project has also raised the profile of this body of materials within the broader context of the BBC, particularly amongst programme makers. This has seen the development of a series of ongoing relationships which generated programme ideas which are now reaching commissioning stage. We participated in an event held for programme makers in June, and several subsequent meetings have taken place and are still ongoing.

Summary of Recommendations

In relation to the use of archival sources and potential online access to the material covered by this study the recommendations are that:

- The use of ordinary voices and testimonies should be used to contextualise these materials.
- Materials should be selected not just by the broadcaster or academic researchers but by people involved.
- Broader historical, political and economic contexts need to be established through contextual commentaries and through links to other BBC holdings.
- The material needs to be presented within the contexts of the BBC itself. The BBC needs to reflect on its own actions and include information about how programmes were made at the time, technological and editorial constraints and the contested nature of some of these archive materials.
- The sensitivities of key communities need to be respected and material should not generalise or patronise audiences.
- Archive content users should seek to represent the key issues and debates of the whole period and not just focus on single events or personalities like Orgreave or politicians and miners' leaders.
- Regional material should be included in coverage of national events as it deals more effectively with the social consequences of events and reflects the impact on communities involved.
- There should be recognition that much of the material appeared not to represent key events or issues and that there was a lack of representation within the BBC material which might be bridged by other materials and testimonies-particularly those might also illuminate the long term consequences of events for all communities involved.
- That the BBC should develop forums in which the broader role and usage of archival sources can be discussed which will allow for strategies to be developed for the broader roll-out of archival materials.
- Some participants raised the prospect of editing or collating their own histories drawn from this material and public (not-for-profit) activities should be considered by the BBC as a means of allowing interactivity with their materials.

- Outside of the usual producer-guidelines issues deemed sensitive or contested should, wherever possible, be discussed with constituent communities via community leaders and organisations.
- Neglected or marginalised audiences need specific encouragement to engage with these materials to enhance archival holdings and to register obvious areas of mis/under-representation.
- On-line activities need to be linked to other areas of BBC activity, especially through regional networks.

Conclusion

Greg Dyke's¹⁶ landmark commitment to open up the archive seems more and more like an achievable reality through the development of initiatives both targeting the public and programme makers. The initial steps must of economic prudence, intellectual and logistical necessity, be selective and targeted. But they demonstrate the huge potential of the archive as a key repository of the nation's memory, broadcasting history, and as a means of re-engaging with events and personalities which shape our collective identities. In many respects the 'archive'- its holdings, time capsules of memory, editorial policy and prevailing representational attitudes- needs public interpretation and engagement. That interpretive element has traditionally been the task of the programme makers, web providers and academics who make use of this rich resource.

All act, to some degree, on behalf of the licence payer. The next step is to examine ways in which this stakeholder group can become part of the interpretive process and how the archive can ultimately become accessible to all.

¹⁶ Greg Dyke's speech at the Edinburgh International Television Festival Sunday 24 August 2003.

Available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/speeches/stories/dyke_richard_dunn.shtml

"The BBC probably has the best television library in the world.

For many years we have had an obligation to make our archive available to the public, it was even in the terms of the last charter. But what have we done about it?

Well, you all know the problem.

Up until now, this huge resource has remained locked up, inaccessible to the public because there hasn't been an effective mechanism for distribution.

But the digital revolution and broadband are changing all that.

For the first time, there is an easy and affordable way of making this treasure trove of BBC content available to all."

Reflecting on the project

The KEP scheme has enabled us to work together on an exciting and mutually beneficial project which promises to develop new areas of research and collaborative creative work. We feel that there has been an equality of benefit to both partners and that important knowledge exchange has taken place which both benefits the BBC and ICS. The obvious benefits in relation to the BBC's use of its archives and its ability to deal with sensitive or contested events are we feel, clearly demonstrated and have been successful. The impact on the work of ICS and its abilities to work creatively with the BBC Archives and programme makers has also been a success and has far exceeded our initial expectations. Both partners feel that the scheme has allowed us to work collaboratively in a manner which would not have been possible in other circumstances and has allowed for both intellectual and creative exchanges which we wish to continue to develop.

Measured against these aims our key achievements were:

- The establishment of a key strategic relationship.
- The development of collaborative programming opportunities.
- The development of case study materials for curricular development.
- A dissemination programme which builds on this initial research and will enable both partners to engage in new projects.
- Knowledge that benefits both partners, particularly in respect to collaborative partnership working.

This project has already impacted on several important areas related to research within ICS, curriculum developments and is stimulating new research bids and conference activity. We feel that project has exceeded our own expectations in terms of future activities and has really demonstrated the value of this new scheme. The key findings in relation to the uses of archival sources and the ethical and memory based management of such materials has fed directly into discussions about the development of our new MA in Audio visual Archiving (currently being validated for 2010) which will use the miner's strike as a key historical case study. These findings will be explored with wider academic audiences through a series of proposed articles, conference papers and our own conference on the strike in 2010. The first of these was a panel on the miners' strike and the media at the MeCCSA conference held at the National Media Museum in January 2009. More generally the outcomes have fed into the undergraduate curriculum and have impacted on the ways in which we teach media and communications history, media institutions and research methods. It has crucially taught us the need to re-enforce ideas about representation, production and political broadcasting contexts, and to explore the role of the public in relation to major historical events. In much broader terms this will allow for us to develop research into the role of archival sources as historical repositories of memory, and to look at how those involved in presenting the archives to the wider audience, as many do now via on-line interaction, might develop strategies to add 'real voices' to those already represented. It will allow us to examine more closely to role of different types of meta-data and how best to

present the contexts in which materials were created and how their 'meaning' is affected by the same.

In terms of methodological experience it has been invaluable in terms of helping to frame focus group/questionnaire activities within resistant communities. It also has an impact beyond our immediate concerns in relation to the growing potential to engage in collaborative practice based work within the department, and with people and agencies external to the university.

The emotional nature of many of the exchanges and the richness of the memories which came out of the fieldwork have also had a major impact on the development of our planned conference and in the need to find different outlets for these voices. It has directly led to us beginning to work with artists and writers who can use these testimonies to enrich their own explorations of these historic events which can complement and comment on institutional collections and archives.

In relation to the BBC:

- The project allowed us to look at how we might do things from a completely different perspective. The research at times challenged and reinforced the way we collect our archive, the way we describe it, and the way we might help BBC Production make it accessible in the most effective way in order to connect with the audience.
- The findings provide a set of qualitative data which can be fed into the strategy of the new Archive Content department as it explores creative and innovative ways of presenting the archive across a variety of existing and emerging platforms. As the current focus of this department will be on making connections at a very local and personalised level, the knowledge gained is timely.
- Of interest for further analysis will be the way the project was perceived by those consulted as part of the focus groups. To many, the academic partner became an "honest broker" and therefore providing a way into talking to communities who had become suspicious or disassociated from the BBC.
- More immediately, and as the findings were always planned to coincide with the significant anniversary of the strike, the research provides added value for the BBC Yorkshire programme teams whose task it is to provide insightful and relevant local programming to mark the event. At a practical level, the initial BBC-based research which collected data about the archive holdings provides a definitive list of what content actually exist and can be re-used.
- From a purely Information & Archives perspective, the finding will be of use to support our future metadata capture: for example, the priorities for the cataloguing of regionally-produced social and peripheral items in addition to the main political events.

- The subject matter of the project generated much interest from within the BBC from those involved in covering the events at the time, often in very different roles from the one's they currently hold. This exposes the value of collecting evidential experience which can improve understanding of the coverage - the filming, editing, transport and technical limitations - and fully explain the story to existing and newer audiences. Again, this may help us define our strategy on contextualisation.

A final point of note is how the project has brought together the content managers (Information & Archives) and the programme-makers outside of our daily routine co-operation. The KEP provided a very good way of highlighting the value of collaborative arrangements which provide a productive creative platform across the organisation.

This appendix contains an edited selection of comments drawn from focus groups and questionnaires produced during the initial study. They have been organised into four sections which correspond directly to the first four research questions. They are intended to provide an indicative impression of the range of comments and opinions expressed in our field work and to allow readers to relate to the material we drew on in the preparation of this report.



Figure 6 Arrest at Orgreave

Comments from Participants relevant to Question 1

To understand:

How the BBC should deal with sensitive historical issues. How they should seek to address key concerns such as accusations of bias and misrepresentation and how this affects the use of archival sources in re-interpretations via new programming and the re-contextualisation and dissemination of footage through BBC Archive and associated new media projects.

Views on the media, reporting and representation.

*It was a lot about sensationalism and sought to highlight confrontation, it never looked at or for the 'peacemakers' which were present on both sides. **Police officer: questionnaire***

*Because much of the input was from the miners' side I think the input was biased. But the media only had what they were given. I am sure that some of the police acted badly, I know the miners' side did. I think the media found it hard to understand the professional side of feeling for the miners but enforcing the law. Perhaps that reflects on the professionalism of the media. It is hard to be impartial when people are throwing rocks at you. **Police officer: questionnaire***

Terribly biased to the point of being fabricated to support the governments view. Miner: questionnaire

On the whole 'shocking'. Although Channel Four did try to be more investigative. If my memory serves me right, Channel 4 was the only one to explore the issues with a modicum of journalistic seriousness!! Miner: questionnaire

The reporting set relations (and hence our ability to do the job as it was) with the public back many years. Police officer: questionnaire

It was often misleading. They often told their own versions of events which were often contrary to what I had witnessed. Miner: questionnaire

It was appalling. Only the radio BBC 4 or local radio gave a balanced view. Miner: questionnaire

I think that the coverage appeared more in favour of the miners however the news has to find something to report. It was not the job of the police to express an opinion. I think the Unions used the media best, with new stories etc rather than the Government. I thought at that time and still do that serving officers should have no political bias. I think the Government just ran out of new things to say. Police officer: questionnaire

I really believe media coverage was selective, biased, heavily influenced by government. In the south of England the coverage was diminutive. Family member and friend of miner or their family: questionnaire

Well, it's not news worthy, me giving a mars bar to a miner or giving him a couple of pound for his, to buy his kids some food. It's not news worthy, is it? Police officer: focus group

We were represented as an unthinking mob, the media had no intension of telling our story. Miner: questionnaire

Portrayed as a group of thugs that wanted to bring a government down. Miner: questionnaire

I still feel now ... that ... (pause) ... we were portrayed as the bad guys in all this and uh ... we were never ever collectively or individually given an opportunity to represent how we felt at all. My dad was killed by the pit, my grandfather was killed in the pit. And it also saw my other grandfather off. As it has done with a lot of fathers of a lot of my friends that I grew up with and went to school with and still ...correspond with now. And to be portrayed as some kind of fanatical storm trooper doing the bidding of a deranged political figure sticks in the throat... and what makes it worse is, is nobody would ever listen. Retired police officer: focus group

Locally the media sympathised with the miners, but nationally they sometimes depicted the miners as inferior beings who needed checking. Former mining employee: questionnaire

And the police are intimidated and they overreacted and it was impossible to ever get it right. But nobody bothered talking to the police in depth enough to actually ... have that point made and broadcast, and, and it was just full of bully boys/. And it all reinforced the union assertion that we were Thatcher's bully boys. And there was nothing further from the truth, we hated it. **Retired police officer: focus group**

Mostly biased against the strike and the leadership of the NUM. The London based media treating the miners as they had discovered a tribe of troglodytes and their inability to treat the miners and families as normal human beings. Their failure to truly expose in MacGregor as an incompetent maverick. **Miner: questionnaire**

My memory is that the coverage of the miners strike seemed to cover a lot of violence. My memory isn't that at all. I found that I could speak to miners, communicate with them and ... although sometimes it would get a little bit out of hand. In my opinion, it wasn't miners who were causing the trouble. **Police officer: Focus group**

I never felt represented. Women were either miners' wives, for or against the strike. The failure to discover any of the women employed by the National Coal Board, either at pit or office level. **Supporter: questionnaire**

As brick throwing underclass people. 'The enemy within' was the phrase Thatcher used. **Miner: questionnaire**

Comments from Participants relevant to Question 2



Figure 7 Christmas in Goldthorpe

To understand:

The role played by memory in the ways in which people viewed, interpreted and might potentially select the materials they wanted to view. We were particularly interested in the degree to which the choice what to watch and how to make sense of these materials may be determined by existing memories and experiences.

Comments on memories and emotions of the strike and those evoked by the film.

Sadness, tiredness and the destruction of a way of life **Police officer: questionnaire**

Pride in what I and my colleagues did, and fond memories of the humour. **Police officer: questionnaire**

Anger, fear, hunger, comradeship, pain, anger at the media **Miner: questionnaire**

How we as a family survived for 12 months with no money from the state. Eating at soup kitchens. Getting food parcels from various sources (family and trade unions here and abroad). Chopping trees down for fuel. **Miner: questionnaire**

Solidarity, community spirit, police brutality. As a 19 year old, it was a marvellous time, reinforcing long held socialist beliefs. To go picketing was a great adventure. The weather was fantastic too! **Miner: questionnaire**

Community spirit even though finances were almost non-existent. **Miner: questionnaire**

A mixture of the bonds made between colleagues and the hidden tragedy of a proud group people whose way of life was being destroyed **Police officer: questionnaire**

That both sides could have handled it more effectively. That generally the police should handle it with local officers who understand the mining scene. **Police officer: questionnaire**

That the police were well trained and well equipped. The miners used to turn up on the picket line at 2.00am in trainers and inadequate top clothing. The police had top of the range boots, clothing and heated vehicles. Co when it came to confrontation the miners did not stand any chance at all. The police could have wiped them away any time they wanted if they had so desired. Remember most policemen in Yorkshire are closely related, in family, to miners. So they had great sympathy. **Police officer: questionnaire**

Being arrested and imprisoned twice. Being beaten by police officers. The birth of our second daughter in July 1984. Picketing all over the country. Trying to keep my family warm in winter by scavenging for wood and coal. **Miner: questionnaire**

Numerous strong memories stand out. Orgreave, National Headquarters, Nottingham collieries, soup kitchens, standing at your own colliery gate, 9 members went in to work after 10 months, going in to talk to them, assisting to bring a couple out. Assisting families with support, seeing hardship, helping in every kind of way to keep their hopes and morale up. Taking bags and bags of Christmas toys to children, dressed as Father Christmas. **Miner: questionnaire**

The strength and numbers of police that were mustered and the brutality which they used on young lads. To this day I have no respect for the police force. **Miner: questionnaire**

*My strongest memory is the crazy hours I worked. Breakfast was normally 1.30am. As I have previously said I did duty in working areas and strike areas. In working areas I was the lowest form of human life. I just did my job to the best of my ability in whatever area I was posted to. **Police officer: questionnaire***

*The violence and passion of the striking miners. **Police officer: questionnaire***

I started locally and just for a day at a time. They pushed a bit and we pushed a bit and it was all good natured. Remember Police Officers are also working men and women so we used to have a good banter between ourselves and the miners. I went to Orgreave for a couple of days and I remember a miner getting crushed by his colleagues and when about 4 of us went in to help him the others all spat on our backs as we were crouched down.

*We then started going away for a week at a time and as the strike went on so the miners became more aggressive. We went to Nottingham to a pit just off the A1 near to the Bawtry Round-about. There was just one police unit of 23 men and in our off time the miners loaned us some cricket gear and we played cricket. Then halfway through the week about 4 hundred Yorkshire Miners turned up and started overturning cars, throwing bricks through the canteen windows and trying to get to the pithead where men were underground. Luckily 23 of us held them off until reinforcements arrived. What would they have done if they had got to the pithead I have no idea. I would like to think nothing? When I was billeted at York they had prisoners cooking our food. I can only imagine what they were doing to it. **Police officer: questionnaire***

*Watching the media lie and learning the depths they will go to get a story. **Miner: questionnaire***

*Evading the police road blocks we became excellent map readers, thwarting the police efforts to stop us getting near collieries by using public transport and bluffing our way in. The soup kitchens (without these I think many young men may have gone back to work we had little support) although our families supported us many were mining families. The kindness of people from all walks of life, the support from the Asian community in Bradford was immense. The hatred shown by a few people mainly Tories or so called law abiding citizens who have never seen conflict. The sheer friendliness of people who had never met who supported the miners especially people from London and from abroad. **Miner: questionnaire***

*Comradeship, sense of togetherness, the majority of people were in the same situation, some people were heroes, some who I had previously respected were not. Thrill of outwitting the state despite the resources ranged against us. The violence that was present especially off camera. Tears and laughter. The spirit of the women. The soup kitchens. First real interest in politics. **Miner: questionnaire***

*The total exhilaration of being involved in something enormous and momentous. Not working for a year gave me great freedom from a 9 to 5, five day a week routine. The comradeship and support on our small daily picket line gave me strength to get up each day and face a stream of what had previously been friends and co-workers going into work. The spirit and inventiveness of (town) Women Against Pit Closures. The anarchy and conservatism of the miners and their families. **Miner: questionnaire***

*Digging for coke to keep the fire going. Very little money coming in and all the bias propaganda the media put out. And my wife doing two jobs. **Miner: questionnaire***

*Violence caused by non miners at picket lines. **Police officer: questionnaire***

*The Miners only shouted and threw objects when the flood lights on the front of the TV cameras came on plus I photographed a communists official handing out £20 notes to the miners from the back of his car after the TV crews stopped filming **Police officer: questionnaire***

*I have many happy and sad memories. One of our lads wives gave birth to triplets. But my main memory was a member who with his young son walked the streets all night because his wife locked him out because he wouldn't return to work. Memories of 3 of our members who died during the strike. I was on duty at the Junction strike headquarters when on the 15.3.84 the sad news Davey Jones had been killed at Ollerton. Being arrested and locked up for the weekend. **Miner: questionnaire***

*The fact that the government were willing to let the strike go on forever. From the start I was informed by a production manager it would be a very long strike. The fact that family and friends would never talk to one another again. **Miner: questionnaire***

*Not having much money — the birth of my second child. Waiting for the £1 picket money that my husband would bring home so I could buy bread and milk. Scratting around for fuel for the fire. Awaiting the outcome of two trials for which my husband was arrested (innocent on both counts!). Mass police presence outside my home (across the road from the mine). Riots across the road on the pit-tip. M Thatcher lying thro' her teeth and being so smug and smarmy on TV. **Wife or partner of a striking miner: questionnaire***

*The dishonesty of the NUM and some politicians. The unjustified mob violence AND occasional retaliatory violence from Police Officers. **Police officer: questionnaire***

*The Orgreave battles during which my ankle was cracked, and a decisive confrontation at Maltby. The variable accommodations my units were billeted in. The variable reactions of people in various towns, ranging from open hostility to massive support. The 'black humour' of the my colleagues. The organisation of so many police officers from different forces into cohesive units. **Police officer: questionnaire***

*Early mornings (dawn) being in the middle of nowhere dealing with angry miners for the periods in the day when working miners were trying to get access. After entry was gained the striking miners became friendly again, sharing stories as well as tea and biscuits. One of the strongest memories was when about 600 of us were penning in about 400 miners and it was about to kick off when a very young bobby decided to do (and sing) the 'hokey cokey'. All 600 bobbies in full uniform joined in and this completely disarmed the situation with all the miners applauding the police at the end and all went home in a good mood. **Police officer: questionnaire***

Receiving letters from home depicting mayhem, deprivation and horror. To my eternal shame I thought them greatly exaggerated and dramatised. I thought if things were really

that bad, the news media in the south of England would surely have to tell us wouldn't it? The first doubts crept in just before the regiment embarked for N Ireland. An army wife from another regiment with family in Barnsley came knocking door to door begging for baby food, Vaseline and nappies. Imagine this. I was going with my children to N Ireland to be with my husband who I well understood could be called on to kill or be killed, to give his life for his country, the government of which was willing to starve babies of the mining communities we had left behind. Horror indeed. **Family member and friend of miner or their family: questionnaire**

Comments from Participants relevant to Question 3



Figure 8 Scavenging for coal

To understand:

The degree to which the BBC might identify and target audiences for these materials and how they should be packaged. How these materials could be used within regional communities directly involved in events and how the findings of the case study could be adapted as a model for other themes.

Comments on the value of the archive, issues relating to its contextualisation and how it should be presented to both regional and national audiences

*Can be used by students studying everything from politics to media studies to English language. **Miner: questionnaire***

*To reignite the debates around the coverage of the strike. **Miner: questionnaire***

As long as it is fair and balanced, it should depict both sides of the story. Miner: questionnaire

The archive would be accessible to more people. Miner: questionnaire

It would be excellent education material. Police officer: questionnaire

It is part of history and even if it may be biased one way or another, it's for the viewer to take that into account. Police officer: questionnaire

I think the events are important for the historians but then I think all news footage should be available. It is a publicly funds historical archive. Police officer: questionnaire

Should be good. To remember the media, of working class people fighting to maintain their very own industry. Miner: questionnaire

People can see the old footage now and will have had more opportunities to actually find out the real story and then make their own mind up. Miner: questionnaire

History should not be hidden and this was certainly part of our social history. Miner: questionnaire

Yes if it is put together by miners. Miner: questionnaire

At least people will know what we did, it may encourage another generation to stand up and fight. Miner: questionnaire

The greater access people have to information, the better. Police officer: questionnaire

It will show future generations how one man's ego will use any means to get total control no matter what the cost to others. Police officer: questionnaire

(Not a good idea): It is still likely to open wounds that don't need it. Police officer: questionnaire

People can access moments of real living memory. Miner: questionnaire

People will have to form their own opinions of that. Miner: questionnaire

People can see what happened in the mid 80s the political outlook the violence from both sides who started what can be debated. Miner: questionnaire

There must be some form of archive to give future generation 'a feel' for the events at that time: provided with explanations. Miner: questionnaire

This is our history. History that we, the strikers and our supporters, made. We need to reclaim the strike as our event. People need to be able to see real people trying to take on the power of the state to understand the forces that stand in the way. Miner: questionnaire

*It will be available to lots of people to study and also help with research. **Miner: questionnaire***

*Perhaps the BBC could be made accountable to its license payers and not be seen to be the tool of the government. **Miner: questionnaire***

*The strike is a piece of history. **Police officer: questionnaire***

*It was an important part of our industrial heritage and people have a right to access coverage of such an impactive part of UK history. **Police officer: questionnaire***

*It can be educational. My grandchildren have asked me what happened in the strike. Other children could use the archive to learn and it's always wise to look back. **Miner: questionnaire***

*Nothing to gain. Need to wait another 20 years or it will stir up old problems. **Miner: questionnaire***

*The most positive aspect of all is that it should serve an educational function, informing those using it of what happened in the period leading up to the strike, during the strike itself and in the aftermath. **Miner: questionnaire***

*Any archive is better than none, but try to find the stuff left on the cutting room floor, our story is that lot. **Miner: questionnaire***

*Future generations should be able to view it as a historical document. **Miner: questionnaire***

*Part of our history and as long as it is balanced. **Miner: questionnaire***

*This was a major turning point in history for the unions industry and the government, it also was the first large scale deployment of police under the mutual aid banner for a prolonged period and noticeably improved relations between officers and men. **Police officer: questionnaire***

*Younger people today should be able to make their own minds up. I know I was fair at the time and have nothing to hide. **Police officer: questionnaire***

*We haven't to forget the hardship given by the miners on strike and the support they gave to their union. **Miner: questionnaire***

*No: Would it be any use to see how manipulative the media can be? I think people now know that what they see or read can be presented in a way that gives only one view. **Miner: questionnaire***

*Make all BBC news footage available. Let us edit it and have use of it. History is never unbiased. **Miner: questionnaire***

Yes, but with a warning. Many strikers believe the footage was anti-strike and anti-union. It's history, not always recorded fairly but that too is part of the legacy and we should never forget it. **Miner: questionnaire**

So younger people can see the oppression suffered by people fighting for their rights. **Miner: questionnaire**

As a historical background its fine, only people who have an interest in the strike or someone who is studying would probably go on line to look at the footage. **Miner: questionnaire**

No: because it gives an unbalanced distorted view. **Miner: questionnaire**

It's part of our country's history also maybe it could help some of the general public to understand and realize why we went on strike when you look at the industry today. **Miner: questionnaire**

It may make a good social history lesson. It could be compared with the media in 1926: pro-government, anti-trade union. **Miner: questionnaire**

It's important to save it, it is part of history. **Miner: questionnaire**

It is part of our social history even if is biased. **Wife or partner of a striking miner: questionnaire**

If it is fairly reported then hopefully it will give both sides and let people make their own mind up and because it should not be forgotten. **Wife or partner of a striking miner: questionnaire**

Not a good idea: it's time it was relegated to the history books. **Wife or partner of a striking miner: questionnaire**

Every historical atrocity should be remembered. Lessons learned. Traditions, way of life and communities simply wiped out. Ensuing sink estates lost to crime, despair and heroin. In the words of a young Gordon Brown: 'Thatcher's thrown away generation'. **Other family member and friend of miner or their family: questionnaire**

Because the 1984/85 miners' strike was arguably the most decisive domestic political struggle and conflict in the UK since 1926. It marked the end of the first stage of the "Thatcherisation" of British society. A balanced presentation (certainly not after the fashion of the presentation during the strike itself) should be made available online to the computer-conversant general public. At the same time, producing this "balanced" account will be a thankless task because even today one feels compelled to take sides. While I support in principle the idea of an online presentation, I also firmly believe that the BBC's regional archives of footage from the strike should not be "binned" or put into cold storage but should be digitised and stored as a digital archive both on hard discs and on DVD. As the BBC was able to find £18 million for Jonathan Ross, there should be no reason why it can't find the funds to employ a small team of people to transfer video footage from tape of whatever format to a digital format. It is my opinion that if any of the currently held video footage archive material sitting in any of the BBC's relevant regional studios is

disposed of, that this would be an act of intellectual and televisual folly bordering on the criminal. **Campaigner: questionnaire**

How should it be contextualised?

As history, as industrial and cultural history. As politics, as power and the imbalances of power. As a challenge to a norm which implies workers just take it, they may not like it but they can be assimilated. As a psychological study. There are so many facets which could be explained in so many ways. **Miner: questionnaire**

Very carefully. After discussion with people actually involved at the time. **Police officer: questionnaire**

Explain that these scenes shown are what was portrayed at the time as the miners were the enemy within but it is not necessarily the real truth. Note how well prepared the miners were for trouble in their battle dress short sleeves and sun glasses compared to their counterparts. Who were the villains? **Miner: questionnaire**

As an example of how flawed editorial thinking can influence public opinion and distort facts. **Police officer: questionnaire**

They should be explained that it was a watershed in British industrial relations in which a right wing government took on the esprit de corps of the trade union movement. **Miner: questionnaire**

With some input from miners who are still around giving their first hand information on what they saw, what happened. **Miner: questionnaire**

I think this would be difficult. This strike had both economic and political roots. It is my strong opinion that the miners were used for political ends. No-one has ever explained to me why the trade union movement did not support the NUM in the dispute. This I feel would have to be explained to future audiences. **Police officer: questionnaire**

That they are a record from a particular viewpoint. I am most definitely of the opinion that the BBC should not try and pass their selection off as a 'balanced' or non-biased account. **Miner: questionnaire**

How can your own information and experience become part of the archive?

One part in a catalogue of evidence against the 'myths' portrayed at the time. **Miner: questionnaire**

All personal experiences should be part of an archive be it written or other. **Miner: questionnaire**

Wide experience from the front and knowing of what was required and working yourself to a frazzle, hoping to keep open collieries and maintaining jobs for our families and communities. **Miner: questionnaire**

Everyone has a right to put over their side of the story what people believe is up to them. My experiences are first hand truthful in my mind and accurate to the best of my knowledge. **Miner: questionnaire**

Because I was there and spoke truthfully to the researchers. **Miner: questionnaire**

As a woman, a white collar worker and trade unionist, I could be a rarity. Another angle, another story which says sometimes you have to stand and be counted for your values and principles. **Family friend/spouse: questionnaire**

Comments from Participants relevant to Question 4



Figure 9 Community policing during the strike

To understand:

The degree of potential ethical risks in the form and dissemination of some of the more sensitive materials.

Comments on ethical concerns

But you know, if you, if you recorded second world war. There were a guy on there with an SS uniform on, right? And he were the SS. Now is it right to show him in t' SS, given that he survived war and he's still living today? I think it is. **Miner focus group**

... if you're relying on the BBC to put the facts, fuck me, what sort of facts are we gonna, you know what sort of facts are we going to be looking at? **Miner focus group**

... if you went on internet to look at this footage and you did actually see somebody doing something like that, somebody you knew, would there be like, eh, repercussions from that? **Women's group focus group**

There could be consequences, yeah. You may be finding that people hate the police even more. People have that propensity ... **Police officer Interview**

Concerns about the material being made widely available online.

If it's not well produced it will give the wrong impression. My concerns would be inaccurate information. **Police officer: questionnaire**

That it will be hijacked by left wing opportunists and turned into a police bashing extravaganza. **Police officer: questionnaire**

To just watch coverage of the strike without explanations of what and why would be criminal. Don't miss the chance to look at the events objectively (if this can be achieved!). Tell the miners story and don't fall into the myth of it being an undemocratic insurrection led by Scargill to overthrow parliamentary democracy. **Miner: questionnaire**

No: History will prevail on the miners' side. **Miner: questionnaire**

Many of us are still around to tell it as it really was. In 100 years time there will only be the story with BBC bias on it. **Miner: questionnaire**

Only that they might swallow whole the violent picket – undemocratic strike nonsense – but that's a chance worth taking. **Miner: questionnaire**

Some of the public will not understand the issues above about how the press was used by both sides and trust it. But that is a concern for the public not the material. **Police officer: questionnaire**

For me, I think things should be open. People will see things that they don't like, will see things that they want to shout about. I take on board the views of people who I fervently disagree with. But I can't hope to try to put them right if we don't create the debate **Senior police officer interview**

No: the strike was a learning curve of life and politics, it should be available to all who want to view. **Miner: questionnaire**

It gives an unbalanced distorted view. **Miner: questionnaire**

Nothing to gain. Need to wait another 20 years or it will stir up old problems. **Miner: questionnaire**

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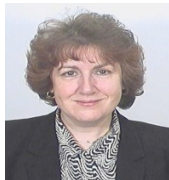
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The partners

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The Institute of Communications Studies (ICS) has its origins in The Centre for Television Research, established in 1963 by the noted political communications scholar Jay Blumler. Reconstituted as an Institute in 1988 by Professor Nicholas Pronay, the ICS is now one of the largest departments of its kind in Europe, currently offering five undergraduate degrees and five postgraduate taught degrees. It combines strengths in communications and media research with the teaching of communications history, theory and practical skills. The Institute's total student population is currently over 700, including more than 20 research students from all over the world and over 100 taught postgraduate students.

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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/knowledgeexchange>

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