

MR A. D. HOULSTON

LEVENSHULME  
MANCHESTER

23 Dec 02

Dear Annette,

Thank you for your Christmas card and remembering me. Your kindness and thought is much appreciated.

I shall be 86 in February and I am still interested in cinema although, with no local cinemas, I rarely attend. Expense, reliant on public transport, social conditions and most cinemas being in the city centre, preclude me.

I am partially deaf in both ears and belong to the 8 millions in the U.K. many of whom feel excluded from social events. About 3 years ago I was co-opted to represent the 'deaf' deaf on a panel considering suggestions to improve our lot. Full Circle Arts based in Manchester first called upon me for sessions with North-West Film Archives at M/C Metropolitan University.

We considered whether sub-titles on all films would distract normal hearing persons; what size and colour of subtitles, where to be positioned, etc. We also considered showing signs on the

film tracks with the same problems of size, position etc.

I understand the film-makers, distributors, cinema managers are slowly realising we are a potential market. In Manchester, the boomerhouse is leading the way in their 3 small cinemas. They are training their staff, particularly the Booking Office staff to cope. They have Induction Loops for which they have explanatory leaflets for issue to their patrons. I'll try to send you one of their excellent leaflets in which I recall one is advised to consult a staff member to assist in moving to a better seat. (for hearing.)

Several of our sessions have been held at the boomerhouse but we don't have regular meetings. It's more a case of "as and when".

In October we had a "reward" treat of a day trip to Glasgow to a cinema especially adapted for an excerpt from "Star Wars - War of the clones". It was an interesting culmination of some of our ideas e.g. subtitles indicating which character speaking was off-screen.

Our sessions are rare, - months apart, - but I enjoy them.

My wife Evelyn and my sister Joyce join me in wishing you belated seasons greetings and a happy New Year with good fortune.

Sincerely  
Denis