Raploch Stories: continuity and innovation for television documentary production

Alistair James Scott

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I dedicate the thesis to the memory of my daughter, Kirsten, who also lived through the production period, and later discussed with me the ideas of developing this creative practice as a research project. Kirsten died in 2011, just twenty five years old. She remains our inspiration.

Abstract

This thesis provides an 'insider account' of the process of making contemporary 'observational' documentaries from within the broadcasting industry. *Raploch Stories* (2002) and *Raploch Stories Revisited* (2007) are seven television documentary programmes written, produced and directed by me for BBC Scotland. This critical appraisal examines the pathway from the formulation of the creative idea, through project research and development, filming, post-production, delivery and transmission, in order to assess and demonstrate the originality of these published works. This is supported by a reflexive commentary which examines the influence of the wider 'community of practice' on my development as a film-maker. The study identifies ways in which these films demonstrate innovation and progress in technology and production methods, and examines the development of new hybrid forms of programming in the television documentary genre. These new developments are placed in the context of the history of the documentary film, and the on-going academic debate about the definition of the genre and the question of whether it is possible to achieve an authentic record of real life. By comparing *Raploch Stories* with other examples of social documentary film-making, such as *Housing Problems* (1935), *Lilybank* (1977), *Wester Hailes – the Huts* (1985) and *The Scheme* (2010), the thesis analyses how films in this sub-genre have evolved and assesses the ways in which there has been continuity in content and in the approach to filming. Finally, the thesis seeks to establish the significance of the published works and to demonstrate how these programmes contribute to the development of documentary television production in Scotland, and to the representation of Scottish working-class communities by the media. Through the reflexive examination of creativity, practice, production, textual interpretation, cultural impact, institutional history, and policy and regulation, the thesis provides a critical perspective on these overlapping areas of knowledge.

Introduction

The aim of this research thesis is to present a critical appraisal of the television programmes *Raploch Stories* (BBC 2002) and *Raploch Stories Revisited* (BBC 2007) and to assess ways in which these seven programmes make a contribution to television documentary film production in Scotland. The evaluation of this published creative practice demonstrates how, in researching, writing, producing and directing these films, I developed new ways in which to portray life in a Scottish working-class community on screen. In particular the thesis argues that the seven *Raploch Stories* programmes demonstrate innovative contemporary developments for this genre of television, such as the impact of the use of new technology in cameras and post-production, and new approaches to story-telling as a result of the re-framing of the observational television documentary in new hybrid forms (Biressi and Nunn, 2005; Hill, 2005; Kilborn, 2003).

The thesis investigates how *Raploch Stories* demonstrates continuity in subject matter and content, and innovation in production methods, across the history of film and television documentary production up to the present day. The analysis examines the contemporary production process and reveals connections between these programmes and earlier examples of factual film making. I identify ways in which there are tensions between theory and practice for this genre of film making (Bell, 2011; Tracey, 2009). The thesis also considers how *Raploch Stories* contributes to the continuing evolution of the documentary television programme (Kilborn & Izod, 1997) and to the debate about the potential future directions for the documentary (Baker, 2006;

Bruzzi, 2007; Ellis, 2011). This is supported by an assessment of how my personal development as a practitioner led to the creative innovation realised in *Raploch Stories* through a reflexive account of how these programmes link back to my previous work. This draws on the approaches of accounts by other practitioners (Chapman, 2007; Vaughan, 1999) and demonstrates how the work on *Raploch Stories,* including selection of subject matter, production methods, editing style and narrative structure is a culmination and synthesis of my creative practice over many years.

Defining the territory

Raploch Stories is a series of six 30 minutes programmes, filmed over twelve months from October 2001, which follows the everyday lives of children, teenagers and other residents of Raploch, a working-class housing estate on the outskirts of Stirling, during a period when a large-scale community regeneration project for the area was in its early stages. Transmission of the series took place at 10.35pm on BBC 1, in an opt-out Scotland-only slot, over six Wednesday evenings from 13 November 2002. *Raploch Stories Revisited,* is the seventh film in the creative practice submitted, a one-off 60 minutes television documentary, for which I returned to the Raploch area five years after the original production to find out what changes there had been in the circumstances of the main contributors, trace new developments in the life of the community, and show the continuing impact of the regeneration initiative. This programme was transmitted at 9.00pm on Monday 12 March 2007 in an opt-out slot on BBC 2 Scotland. These seven television documentary programmes were commissioned, fully-funded and broadcast by BBC

Scotland. These are all programmes which were researched, written, produced and directed by me, working in close collaboration with cameraman Douglas Campbell. They are independent productions for the BBC from the small Scottish independent production company Lomond Productions Limited which was owned by me and operated from 1997-2010. A DVD with all seven programmes is presented with this critical appraisal. There are full details of the published work in Appendix 1.

The thesis places these programmes in the context of the historical development of factual film making. I argue that there have been threads of continuity in how this type of subject matter has been treated within this genre, however, this examination of these programmes also demonstrates that the territory of documentary television is constantly undergoing change. The thesis investigates the conceptual frameworks which have been postulated both by film-makers and by academics at different stages of the development of the genre. This has resulted in an on-going polemic around the principal aims of documentary production (Chanan, 2007; Renov, 1993). These debates have sought to categorise and differentiate the range of approaches to both content and form adopted by documentary practitioners (Nichols, 1991, 1994). The thesis examines these ideas in the context of these specific productions. There is also an examination of the ethical questions facing film makers. *Raploch Stories* presents an insight into current attitudes to the rights of the subjects and responsibilities of producers (Ellis, 2011; Nichols, 2001).

The production process and filming real life

A fundamental problem for both film makers and academics throughout the history of the non-fiction film has been to agree on what is meant by ‘an authentic record’ of the real world and whether this can be achieved in a film (Cowie, 2011; Rosenthal & Corner, 2005; Winston, 2000). The thesis seeks to establish the place of the *Raploch Stories* programmes within the context of this academic discourse. The aim is to interrogate this issue from a practitioner’s perspective, and through this analysis of the production process and our strategies for filming, to provide critical reflection on the wider debate (Chapman, 2007). By tracing my own creative development the thesis also reflects on factors which have shaped my career as a film maker and influenced the approach which I took in the production of these seven programmes.

A number of studies have identified how the television documentary genre has been ‘reframed’ in the period since 1995, with the introduction of new approaches to storytelling and the introduction of hybrid formats, such as docu-soaps and reality tv, which borrow and adapt the techniques and frameworks of other programme genres such as drama and entertainment (Biressi and Nunn, 2005; Hill, 2005, 2007; Kavka, 2012; Kilborn, 2003). The thesis will examine the process of hybridisation for *Raploch Stories* and assess how this series demonstrates a new approach, influenced by other genres of television, but establishing an innovative, distinctive style and thus contributing to the continuing development of documentary film making in

Scotland and beyond. This provides a way to consider and evaluate future directions for the documentary on television (Baker, 2006; Beattie, 2004).

The evolution of a sub-genre

Raploch Stories belongs to a sub-category of documentary films dealing with social issues. The programme content reveals aspects of ordinary everyday working-class family life and examines the concept of *'community'* by creating a portrait of a specific neighbourhood. In particular the programmes investigate the aspirations and ambitions of children and teenagers. There have been films focused on this subject area at every stage of the development of the documentary, from the earliest pioneers of the documentary film movement (Aitken, 1998). In every period there have been documentaries which have sought to show life behind the closed curtains of the homes of real people. This study aims to trace how the characteristics of this sub-genre have developed, to investigate if there are ways in which there are continuities in the treatment of the topic and the content of the programmes, and also to assess how institutional changes have influenced these types of films (Winston, 2008).

By comparing *Raploch Stories* with four other documentary projects, *Housing Problems* (1935), *Lilybank* (1977), *Wester Hailes – the Huts* (1985) and *The Scheme* (2010/11), the thesis analyses how the forms used within the genre have developed and how production methods have changed. This analysis reveals changes in the objectives of programme-makers, variations in the rhetorical tone of the programmes, and new types of response from the audience to the programmes. The research also assesses the importance of

on-going technological innovation on media practice and investigates whether there are direct links between developments in camera, sound recording and editing practice, and how these developments lead to new approaches in form and content. The appraisal evaluates how *Raploch Stories* moves forward from the three earlier examples and assesses whether the structure and style adopted in *Raploch Stories* can be shown to influence *The Scheme* (2010/11) which portrayed life on another Scottish estate and was produced several years later. On the basis of this analysis the critical appraisal assesses ways in which the *Raploch Stories* programmes demonstrate creativity, originality and innovation, and evaluates the contribution of new knowledge made by the research overall. In the examination of this process I also reflect on the development of my earlier creative practice as the director of previous films which portray Scottish communities including, *Playspace (*1977*), Getting in on the Action (*1982*) Leithers* (1987) and *Postcards from Sighthill* (2001), all of which fall within this sub-genre and place my work in a wider context.

Scotland, the documentary and television

The thesis examines *Raploch Stories* within the historical development of documentary production in Scotland, together with an overview of the evolution of documentary film (Aufderheide, 2007; Ellis and McLane, 2005). John Grierson's film *Drifters* (1929)*,* about the Scottish herring fleet, is acknowledged as the earliest example of a British documentary film and marks the starting point for the British documentary movement (Aitken, 1998; Winston, 2008). The continuing importance of the genre to Scottish film

makers is examined (Blain, 1990; Hardy, 1990). The thesis gives an assessment of the contribution of *Raploch Stories* to the debate about cultural identity and representation of Scottish community life in film and television (MacArthur et al, 1982; Petrie, 2000). There is also an evaluation of how *Raploch Stories* is relevant to the concept of public service broadcasting in Scotland, and an assessment of the role of the funding organisation, BBC Scotland, and the constraints which result directly when undertaking a commission for the national broadcaster. The institutional history of BBC Scotland has been documented (Briggs, 1995; Harvey & Robbins, 1993; McDowell, 1992), although despite the fact that 2012 marked the 60th anniversary of television broadcasting in Scotland, there has been little examination of the development of programmes and production in the period since 1993.

A focus of recent attention has been the debate about policy and media regulation for broadcasting in Scotland. The Enquiry of the Scottish Broadcasting Commission (2007) was established by the SNP Scottish Government to produce an audit of the television production industry and conduct a broad consultation process seeking public opinion about a range of matters involving broadcasting. A number of causes for concern were identified in the Commission's final report, *Platform for Success* (2008), including audience attitudes to the ways in which Scotland's identity is currently defined and represented on screen (Scottish Government, 2008). The thesis investigates how the representation of a specific working class community in *Raploch Stories* relates to the on-going debate about the role

of film and television in creating, reflecting, reinforcing and sustaining concepts of class, community and national identity and how these documentary programmes reflect the issues which are at the heart of these debates about the need for a different landscape for broadcasting in a devolved, or possibly, post 2014 referendum, independent Scotland (Blain & Hutchinson, 2008; Schlesinger, 1998).

Research Methodology

In evaluating my practice my approach throughout this thesis is reflexive. The aim is to make a considered and systematic assessment, using the tools for qualitative research in the media as set out in a range of current studies (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). A number of 'inside' studies of television production have adopted a participant-observation ethnographic approach in order to present accounts of the creative processes, and institutional and industrial protocols which shape television programmes. This is a tradition of media ethnography which 'opens important questions about the cultures of television production including the practices of textual interpretation' (Couldry, 2002: 15). This approach is useful in revealing the overlapping influence of a number of factors which shape the impact of broadcast media, the creative role of the producer and director, institutional constraints, new business models, and changing technology and production methods. Previous media ethnography has examined the internal workings of the BBC in a number of research projects with Hetherington (1992) reflecting on his time as Controller of BBC Scotland, and others, (Born, 2004; Hood, 1994), examining the internal structures and

‘institutional ethos’ of the BBC at different times over the past 25 years. The methodologies of these studies have informed my critical reflection on making *Raploch Stories* and helped me develop a reflexive approach with which to assess my own practice.

I am also drawing from the work of others who have developed strategies for ‘practice-based-research’ in the arts to examine, document and assess creative work (Barrett and Bolt, 2007; Pickering, 2008; Smith and Dean, 2009). The framework for the reflexive account of my own practice is also informed by research on a variety of television genres in the contexts of the broadcasting industries in the UK, Australia and the USA of which a number were undertaken by ‘insiders’ (Alvarado & Buscombe, 1978; Dornfeld, 1998; Hampe,1997; Gitlin, 1984; Schlesinger, 1987; Tulloch & Moran, 1986). The value of these insider accounts, written from a participant-observation perspective, builds on the anthropological approach first devised by Geertz (1973 and 1988) and his concept of the ‘thick description’ which draws together a rich and deep appraisal in a qualitative research study. Geertz’s ideas have been incorporated and validated in the framework for a range of research practices across the humanities and social sciences (Silverman, 2000) and across the art forms in order to construct new frameworks to interpret creative work and the development of practice in the real world (Atkinson and Coffey, 2003; Knowles & Cole, 2008). This is integrated with an auto-ethnographic methodology, which can be summarised as research by a practitioner through reflexive writing (Chang, 2008). This methodology has been formulated as a strategy for gathering evidence to identify and

capture the new knowledge, creativity and innovation, embedded in the often 'messy' process by which creative projects emerge. This approach recognises that there are a 'plethora of sources, stimuli, interaction, commission-demands and client demands' which impact on the creative process (Munro, 2011: 156).

This methodology requires the use of the first person singular and plural pronouns throughout the thesis, and the acknowledgement that I am both researcher and subject. It also acknowledges the importance of collaboration for the production of these films. This is research which cannot be undertaken 'with the classic detachment of positivism'. The challenges presented by this approach have been analysed by Starfield and Ravelli. They argue that the 'situatedness of the researcher…can, and must, shape the choices the writer makes as to authorial self'. (Starfield & Ravelli, 2006: 234). They identify an acceptable method for this type of enquiry in which there is a construction of an embodied reflexive self, in order to present the autobiographical content embodied in the research project. My writing style draws on their study. This thesis recognises that a critical appraisal of the interdisciplinary contexts of my published work depends on my re-examination of my personal history, nevertheless, I contend that this is the appropriate way, based on these precedents, in which to evaluate these documentary programmes. The study of television is concerned with many forms of knowledge such as: creativity; practice and production; the interpretation of the text; cultural impact; institutional history; policy and regulation (Miller, 2002). This thesis gives an informed perspective on these

overlapping areas of knowledge with the insight possible through reflexive examination of past practice.

The development of my creative practice

This appraisal surveys the influences which have shaped the development of my creative practice through my training and career as a professional documentary programme-maker, and as a participant within a wider 'community of practice' (Nichols, 1991). Commentators who have produced this type of reflexive account of working in film and television have often approached the analysis of their work from specific viewpoints. For example Vaughan (1999) sets out to reflect on the range of questions which face film editors and draws on examples from his own experience to provide the context of his answers. MacDougall (1998) approaches this type of evaluation through the combined viewpoints of anthropologist/film maker. There have been few published 'insider' accounts which set out to provide critical reflection on the changing territory of British documentary television. In addition to drawing on 'insider' accounts it has been useful to examine ways in which some practitioners have engaged in dialogue with academic writers, such as Chris Terrill's interview with Bruzzi (2003) which evaluates and analyses the development of his documentary practice working for the BBC. The scope and structure of this interview has assisted me in identifying a thematic approach to assess my own practice. My aim is to examine how documentary television in Scotland has developed, drawing on my autobiographical experience, rather than just providing a descriptive account of the projects on which I have worked over the years. The main challenges

have been finding a coherent structure for the thesis which enables me to synthesize the deep knowledge I have of my own published creative practice, to bring this together with my knowledge of the wider contexts and history of the television documentary; and to link recent theoretical debates my analysis of the actual production experience of making these specific programmes.

Landmarks in my personal training and professional career reveal the influences which led me to the creative approaches and innovation which are realised and brought to fruition in *Raploch Stories.* My interest in film making first developed in the 1970s when I used black and white reel-to-reel porta-pak video and Super 8 film as a community arts worker in Edinburgh and Sunderland. My awareness of the challenges of filming in a working-class community setting was established at the start of my career with *Playspace* (B/W 30 mins 1977), an agit-prop, non-broadcast tape, produced with tenants and children at the high rise blocks, Grampian and Cairngorm House, Leith, to campaign for new recreational facilities. A number of factors have influenced how my practice developed. During post-graduate study at the National Film & TV School (1980-84) I was introduced to the wider 'community of film-school trained practice' (Petrie, 2011). I was a student delegate at the 1982 conference at the Musee de l'Homme in Paris at which Jean Rouch outlined the ideas and methods of cinéma verité, which were formulated through his ethnographic work with tribal communities in West Africa. My NFTS documentary project *Getting in on the Action* (30 mins 1982) was a film about the people of the village of Pennan, during the period it was

used as the location for Ferness, the fictional village setting for Bill Forsyth's *Local Hero* (1983). From this early training I was absorbing influences from a range of film makers and observing different ways of representing Scottish life and culture (Manderson and Scott, 2011). The connection with Forsyth provided a link to the earliest Scottish film makers such as Stanley Russell, who had given Forsyth his first job at Thames and Clyde Films, and who, himself had worked for John Grierson directing films for the 1938 Empire Exhibition in Glasgow. Throughout my career my practice work was part of the on-going debate, which looked backwards and forwards across the documentary tradition in Scotland and internationally (Scott, 2009).

My early professional work in the 1980s coincided with the launch of Channel 4 and involved working on programmes for the channel at the time when it pursued a remit to bring new voices and new creative approaches to network television (Lambert, 1982). Through Edinburgh Film and Video Workshop I directed *Leithers* (52 mins 1987) for Channel 4's *People to People* series, which was one of the projects for which the channel worked in close co-operation with the film and video workshop movement around the UK. Other examples of my subsequent creative practice further developed my experience in documentary story telling with themes focusing on Scottish communities. *Disaster at the Pit* (30 mins 2000 BBC) is an oral history of the rescue of coal miners after an accident at Knockshinnoch Colliery, Ayrshire. *Postcards from Sighthill* (25 mins STV 2002) observes a week in the lives of asylum seekers from six different countries creating a new community, alongside local people, in high-rise flats in central Glasgow. In this way a

recurring thread of my professional practice has been to make film documentary portrayals of community life.

The thesis examines the creative journey I made as the director and producer of *Raploch Stories,* in order to critically reflect on how new ideas are developed, new knowledge is gained and new ways of working are employed, and how these are brought together in the production of the series. A key innovation relates to the modifications to the style of observational story-telling used in these programmes in order to give a contemporary representation of Scottish working-class community life. The thesis explores the step-by-step process undertaken to make the programmes, from initial idea, through filming and editing work, to completion and impact on the public sphere. The aim is to place the work in historical context and assess how the programmes contribute to the development of content and form for the television documentary.

Chapter 1

Creative idea, research and project development

This chapter examines the research and development of *Raploch Stories* during the pre-production period of this television documentary series from initial idea to programme commission. As the producer and director of these programmes I am able to give an 'inside' account which throws light on contemporary professional media practice for an independent producer developing content for a major broadcaster. Barrett and Bolt (2007) and Knowles and Cole (2008) contend that practice-as-research can contribute to the investigation of creativity and originality in the arts and media, arguing that this is an effective method of gaining insight into the decisions and processes which shape creative work. This thesis reflects on *past* practice in order to consider these themes, to examine how the planning of our proposal took shape, and to explore the process of how we found the 'territory', for our work as documentary film practitioners.

This practice work was devised in a commercial environment and created within the institutional framework of the broadcasting industry in Scotland. Producers are always aiming to present ideas which will appeal to the current commercial requirements of a broadcaster. This can lead to frustration as the criteria to determine which ideas will gain support and which will be rejected is never fully transparent. In the competitive professional context of identifying and pitching a suitable programme idea, carrying out fieldwork research, liaising with the commissioning editor, preparing programme treatments and budgets, my objectives during that

time were pragmatic, focused on the viability of the project, both as a practical creative endeavour and as a business proposition. The critical reflection to assess and to analyse *Rapploch Stories* within the sphere of academic research on the media, has come through careful evaluation of the project some years later and depends on the reflexive awareness possible after completion of the published work. The evidence is based on re-examination of written notes and documents from the period, and documents detailing the negotiations with the broadcaster, and the agreement of access with contributors. I have also reviewed and analysed the completed programmes. Previous media ethnography, such as Silverstone's (1985) account of the making of a BBC science documentary, established a methodology which broke down the production process in a chronological timeline: research; filming; editing; commentary; expectation and response; and over the following chapters I will adopt a similar framework.

The importance of collaboration

Instructional handbooks emphasise the importance of the initial creative idea as the starting point for documentary film production (Joliffe and Zimmer, 2006; Rabiger, 2004; Rosenthal, 2005), however, in this case the catalyst for the project came, not from an embryonic idea about subject matter, but from a decision to work together by myself and cameraman, Douglas Campbell. Television production is a collaborative process and the importance of the interaction and overlapping changing roles of the creative team has been analysed in recent studies (Ursell, 2006). The idea for this project took shape subsequent to taking the decision to work together and the impetus came out

of establishing a partnership. Kilborn (2010) observes that the working relationships of the principal members of the film crew are fundamental to the making of documentary programmes which are produced over an extended period of time. Hesmondhalgh (2006) argues that new styles of working relationships, in small teams working in independent television production, have been a pre-requisite for changing production methods and other innovations. As a producer/director I had worked with Campbell, for more than ten years prior to *Rapploch Stories*. Our first experience of working together came when we were both employed directly by the BBC working on documentaries for the Music and Arts Department. Later after we both became freelance we started to make a conscious decision to work together, across a range of programme genres. In the period 1999/2000 I was commissioned to produce three education series for Channel 4. These were all filmed in other European countries and each entailed six weeks, filming on location abroad with teenage children. As a result of this previous experience we were both familiar with the skills and working methods of the other person. By the time of the beginning of the development period for *Rapploch Stories* *w*e no longer operated in strictly delineated separate roles as cameraman and director, rather we had become collaborators. We had developed an awareness and respect for each of our strengths as professional film makers, and this mutual trust was essential in a process which would take several years.

Having agreed to collaborate, from the autumn of 2000 we began to discuss potential programme ideas. We wanted to identify a suitable documentary

project which would be the best fit with our previous experience. Analysis of commissioning guidelines led us to target BBC Scotland as they had published a brief stating their commitment to make documentaries 'telling compelling stories about the contemporary lives of real people, which can resonate with the audience across Scotland' (BBC, 2000). Their recent previous output included series from other Scottish independents such as: *Blue Heaven* (2000 Saltire Productions for BBC Scotland), a 6 part series about teenage boys who had been selected for the Rangers Football training academy; and *Cancer Stories* (2001 Handpict Productions for BBC Scotland), about the lives of patients and relatives at Edinburgh's Western General Hospital. We wanted to develop a proposal which would bring a fresh viewpoint to the type of programming which addressed this brief. Our initial research sought to identify an institution which would allow us access to make films which would reveal the challenges facing teenagers from difficult circumstances. This was a creative idea which drew directly from the documentary tradition.

The documentary tradition

Our understanding of the territory which we intended to explore and the way we could treat this subject area on film came from our knowledge of previous work. The history of all film and television is a story of how contemporary practitioners learn from their predecessors. Through successive iterations, conventions have become established, which have been adopted by film makers, accepted and understood by audiences, and which shape the content, method of production, and narrative structure of every film. The

result is a complex palimpsest in which new approaches constantly modify the techniques used in earlier work.

The process of the evolution of the documentary through the work of key protagonists from previous eras has been analysed in surveys by each generation (Barsam, 1992; Ellis, 1989; Ellis & McLane, 2005; Jacobs, 1971). Previous studies have identified three founding fathers of film documentary whose ideas continue to have relevance for film makers today (Winston, 2008): Robert Flaherty in the USA, Dziga Vertov in the USSR and John Grierson in the UK. They have been categorised by their contrasting philosophies and approaches (Aufdeheide, 2007). Grierson is credited with coining the term documentary in his review of Flaherty's film *Moana* (1926), using the word both as an *adjective* describing the content, and a *noun* giving a name to this type of film, and defining the form as: 'the creative treatment of actuality' (Hardy, 1979). Grierson's approach has been characterised as that of an idealistic advocate. In his writings and in the films he produced, he emphasised the educational and civic purposes for documentary films, making a moral argument that these films should be didactic tools to create an informed electorate within a democratic society (Barnouw, 1993). The movement which he led in the 1930s shaped the development of the documentary in the UK (Aitken, 1998). He believed that government and industry should sponsor production and that, by showing the public how society worked, films with an overt utilitarian social purpose would lead to a more progressive society (Sussex, 1975; Ellis, 2000). Films reflecting the social and educational experiences of young people were

made during this early period such as *Children and School (*Wright 1935). This type of subject matter has been revisited on many occasions since the 1930s, for example *Children of the City* (Cooper 1944), and *We are the Lambeth Boys* (Reisz 1958) (Sussex, 1975). In particular, in the development period, we were influenced by the approach of film makers from the 1960s, with examples such as Fred Wiseman's *High School* (1968) and *Juvenile Court* (1973) which portrayed the system by filming inside a single location. There had also been a number of other previous television exemplars which had shown life behind the closed doors of these types of institutions. In the UK, the work of producer Roger Graef, included a number of relevant examples. Drawing on the approaches developed by these film makers we wanted to approach this subject area in a contemporary Scottish context.

The research journey

The progress of our research to identify a fully developed programme idea involved taking a circuitous route in which, in response to various external factors, we were forced to re-define the territory on which we wanted to focus. There is a detailed account of the research period in Appendix 2 which reflects on the progress towards a viable proposal, with access confirmed and with the informed consent of the key contributors agreed. Studies of many documentary projects indicate that an extended period of development work is common to many projects (Holohan, 2012; Rosenthal, 2005).

This process of adaptation and modification during our research period led us to identify a subject area and content which had not been previously filmed. After coming up against resistance to our plan to film in a secure

boarding school from the School governing body we learned of radical new initiatives in the provision of services for young people in the community. Gordon Jeyes, Head of Children's Services, Stirling Council, had written about their innovative policy linking the work of the Council's Education; Social Work; and Community Development departments in order to provide a coherent, integrated framework of services centred on the needs of children, with a philosophy of positive action, and with the flexibility required to respond to the families at risk (Jeyes, 2003). Instead of filming in a single institution, as had been the approach of previous film makers, we reshaped our idea into a proposal to film young people in a community setting and reveal how the various departments of the local authority, such as Education and Social Services, could work together. In this way we could reflect the most recent innovation in policy through the experience of young people.

The account of the research period reveals that it was unpredictable and fragmented. In common with many other cultural projects the successful gestation of *Raploch Stories* did not follow a clearly worked out plan. For much of the time this was a speculative unfunded project and we were undertaking the research work part-time in parallel with other paid work. The development of new creative practice projects is often a 'messy', non-linear collaborative process, with a trajectory of unsuccessful dead-ends and unplanned, haphazard connections, leading to the ultimate emergence of the new work (Munro, 2011). At this stage it is important to allow space to re-formulate ideas and adapt to changing external constraints. The creative

idea was shaped in response to a wide range of influences many of which we could not control.

Access and ethical considerations

Access and consent are key elements in the development of any television documentary. They are linked intrinsically to the relationship between subject and film maker and are fundamentally important during the research period as it is essential to negotiate and agree these permissions prior to any filming (Graef, 2011). Our expectation was that, as our principal subjects would be vulnerable children and teenagers, their lives would be chaotic, complex and intense. Our original programme idea required access to the institutional setting of Ballikinrain School and the school authorities were concerned about the possibility of controversial content involving children. The difficulties in the detailed negotiation ultimately led to the school authorities refusing access for the project. This did result in on-going discussion of issues of ethical responsibility between ourselves and with our commissioning editor at BBC Scotland, with questions being raised about who would make a final decision about whether footage could be used and detailed consideration of how to treat contributors fairly (Hibberd et al, 2000; Hill, 2004). An open explanation of our attitude to these issues became embedded in our subsequent approach to the authorities from Stirling Council and in our dealings with all our contributors and with their parents and guardians. This is examined further in Appendix 3.

Programme Treatment

The final outcome of the research period was a programme 'treatment', mapping out a blueprint of the content, the structure and tone of our proposed documentary series. In an eight-page document dated 31 July 2001, I outlined the proposed approach to the idea for *Raploch Stories*: filming over a twelve month period; following five individuals all based in the same community; with each programme interweaving sequences involving all five *characters* and a final programme telling the story of a community event at which I anticipated that all five would come together as participants.

At this stage I identified four of the five contributors, described in the treatment as our *characters*. This indicates that in drafting the treatment I was already attaching a constructed narrative structure to the, still hypothetical, future lives of these real people. The new premise for our series was that rather than focusing on a single institution, the films would show the ways in which several different services operated in a community setting. We would reflect the integrated approach of Stirling Children's Services, following initiatives which aimed to provide pre-emptive interventions for vulnerable young people, without the need to explicitly state the policy objectives. The treatment made clear our intention to create an opportunity for the voices of young people to be heard, for them to express their personal aspirations for the future, and their hopes for the area where they lived. In the treatment I linked this to the broader objectives of the community regeneration initiative. We had learned of the proposals for the development of new housing and new community facilities in Raploch, and so the idea of

making a series which presented a portrait of a community became embedded with our original intention of filming teenage life.

Raploch Stories - a local film

The working title for the series, *Raploch Stories,* was first proposed in a meeting with Ewan Angus, the BBC commissioning editor, on 19 June 2001. This title referred back to a previous ground-breaking BBC network series, *Soho Stories* (Terrill 1996), which had featured a cast of quirky, individuals living alongside the strip clubs and porn shops in that part of central London, with each programme in the series focusing on a different character (Kilborn & Izod, 1997). With encouragement from Angus, the idea of portraying the community of Raploch, as well as following the lives of young people, became more clearly stated. We discussed how this type of neighbourhood, which had suffered from stigmatisation, could be found in every town and city across Scotland. Many were undergoing similar processes of urban regeneration. By focusing on this one specific single neighbourhood we could represent the wider community and address BBC Scotland's goal to 'get close to its audience' and reflect contemporary life (BBC, 2000).

The appeal of this approach dates back to the 'local film' from the earliest period of factual film making, the pre-documentary era (Winston, 2008), and reveals continuity between past and present. Arriving in a new town, the fairground film exhibitors of the 1900s would immediately take their camera around the locality to film as many townspeople as possible. Local content would be publicised in order to attract people to come along to see themselves and their neighbours on-screen, and therefore be drawn in to the

‘new’ media of cinema through the novelty of viewing familiar everyday life from their own community (Toulmin and Loiperdinger, 2005). In Australia pioneer film makers, Gibson and Johnson, created a portrait of the town of Hawthorn as a promotional tool, to be screened alongside the feature dramas (MacDougall, 1998: 98-102). Local content was also part of early film exhibition in Scotland (McBain, 2005: 113-124). These portraits of local neighbourhoods, in which everyday life is recorded, are the original precedents for our portrayal of a community in *Raploch Stories*. Just like the early exhibitors, BBC Scotland identified a strategy to attract the audience by reflecting contemporary life, filming people whose lives the audience might recognise. At the end of the development period our project took shape as a re-invention and up-dating of the ‘local film’ approach dating back a century.

Filming over an extended time

Our intention to film over an extended period in order to follow the lives of individuals over several months and to observe developments in the community became clearly defined during the research period for *Raploch Stories.* This approach was used from the earliest days of the documentary film and also demonstrates continuity in the approach to subject matter for the genre. An example of this from the British documentary movement was *Shipyard* (1935) directed by Paul Rotha, portraying working life in Barrow-in-Furnace, and following the building of Job Number 697. The focus is on a passenger liner gradually taking shape but there are contrasting scenes intercut to give a fuller portrait of the community. Establishing shots of the changing seasons are used to indicate the passage of time. The editing

approach employs a variety of techniques and rhythms including fast-cut sequences; dissolves; sound overlays. In the summer months we see greyhound racing and other scenes of workers at play. On the sound track we hear the voices of the men at work: in voice over a riveter gives a personal reflection on the future passengers on this liner: “Don’t suppose they’ll think of the bloke who made it.” A portrait is carefully constructed, using short sound clips, to give a rounded view of individual characters in the workforce to enable the audience to get to know people from a section of society they might not encounter otherwise (Aitken, 1998; Sussex, 1975). The continuity of the documentary form is demonstrated by the fact that similar strategies would be deployed seventy years later in *Raploch Stories*, to create a portrait of a community and to signify the passage of time, but adapted to incorporate a different narrative framework and with the innovative use of contemporary technology.

Scottish communities on film

Portrayals of working-class life and local communities have always been important themes for documentary film in Scotland. A number of the earliest documentaries, produced by John Grierson, told the stories behind Scottish subjects but with an apparent emphasis on fishing communities and the sea, *Drifters* (1929) and *Granton Trawler* (1933). The formation of ‘The Films of Scotland Committee’ in 1937 marks a significant development for the representation of Scottish life on screen. The Scottish Office engaged Grierson to produce seven films to be screened at the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow in July 1938. Grierson co-ordinated the project and involved film

makers from London and also commissioned Glasgow producer Stanley Russell. The films for the 1938 Exhibition all continue the British documentary movement approach and ethos developed by Grierson at the Empire Marketing Board and GPO earlier in the 1930s. *The Face of Scotland* (Wright 1938), *Wealth of a Nation* (Alexander, Grierson, Legge 1938), *Sea Food* (1938), and *They Made the Land* (Mary Field 1938) are four films which establish a tradition of presenting a confident, progressive view of modern Scottish life (Petrie, 2000; Sherrington, 1996). *The Children's Story* (Stuart Legge 1938), and *Scotland for Fitness* (Russell 1938) and *Sport in Scotland* (Russell 1938), present accounts of the themes which we would go on to re-examine in *Raploch Stories*.

The first decade of documentary film making had established a genre recognisable through the choice of topic, filming techniques and narrative tone. Since that time there have been continuing threads of continuity in the subject matter, basic film grammar and visual treatment; however, each new generation has refined their approach within the constraints of changing institutional frameworks, with more sophisticated technology, and by modifying and adapting styles of story-telling. For Grierson, the utilitarian purpose of the documentary was the defining feature. Early assessments of these styles of representation were partisan in their declaration of confidence in and support for the validity of this objective (Hardy, 1979). Later re-assessments have identified examples of weak story-telling and a stifling paternalistism in much of this work (Blain, 1990; Butt, 1996; Caughie, 1982; Petrie, 2000). McArthur makes the case that these films generally appear to

present the notion that progress is based upon an assumption of a consensus for social continuity and labels this as ‘the Scotland on the move’ discourse (McArthur, 1982: 115).

With the outbreak of war in 1939 the first ‘Films of Scotland Committee’ was disbanded. The documentary film movement was now required to produce propaganda films for the Ministry of Information and Crown Film Unit in order to raise morale on the home front. Through his company, Films of Record, funded by the Scottish Office, Paul Rotha was involved in a number of Scottish projects during the 1940s. *Land Girl* (1941), *Power for the Highlands* (1943) and *Highland Doctor* (1943) all showed how community life must go on despite the war. They develop the approach taken by the Films of Scotland Committee of 1938 and make their focus specific individual stories. *Children of the City* (Budge Cooper 1944), directed by a woman film maker and produced by Rotha, investigates the issue of juvenile delinquency in Dundee (Petrie, 2000). The film gives a snap-shot view of the contemporary ideas about discipline for teenagers and the perennial challenge of inter-generational tensions which *Raploch Stories* examines, in the context of much changed attitudes to social policy, sixty years later.

In *Dunfermline, a plan to work on* (Manders 1946), another sponsored film presents a view of urban regeneration in which planners describe their ideas for a small Scottish town. Our approach to the regeneration of Raploch is to reflect the aspirations of the young generation whose lives will be changed by re-development. The urban regeneration is the background context rather than the central topic itself, as the focus is local people rather than the

bureaucrats. *Raploch Stories* forms part of this chronological timeline of the documentary in Scotland. The significance and originality of our programmes derives from the ways in which we update the treatment of this subject area, working-class community life, previously explored by earlier film makers, and make a contribution to the genre and to the 'Scotland on the move' discourse with an approach shaped by the contexts of the 2000s. We were taking up the challenge set by McArthur and Caughie to adopt new approaches to film making which were no longer nostalgic or backward-looking (Caughie, 1982: 122).

Working methods

During the summer of 2001, at the same time as researching *Raploch Stories,* I was commissioned to produce a television programme for the Scottish Screen/Scottish Television *This Scotland* documentary film initiative. The proposal was to film a portrait of the Sighthill flats in Glasgow then being used by the City Council to house refugees and asylum seekers as part of a Home Office contract. At the time there was intense public debate about the Labour Government's approach to the issue of the deportation and detention of some families. There had also been tension in the area after the murder of a young Kurdish asylum seeker in June 2001. The budget for this documentary was restricted and meant that we were limited to only five days filming which took place at the start of September. Nevertheless, this film *Postcards from Sighthill* (24 mins STV 2001), gave me the opportunity to work with cameraman, Douglas Campbell, to rehearse the approach to our contributors, the methods of filming, and the equipment we would use on the

Raploch project. Across five consecutive days we filmed with five families from different countries and developed our partnership so that we practised and refined the style of unobtrusive film making which we felt would be appropriate for the Raploch project. The editing of the film also enabled me to experiment with the interwoven narrative structure which I had proposed for *Raploch Stories.* Finally the completed programme was important in confirming our access arrangements with Gordon Jeyes, from Stirling Council, who used a tape of *Postcards* to show to councillors and other officials, whose agreement was required, to clarify to them our intentions for Raploch and to give them an understanding of how the approach we had outlined might work in practice.

Institutional framework: budget and contract

The final stage of development defined the institutional framework for *Raploch Stories*. At a meeting 17 August 2001 Ewan Angus indicated approval in principle, subject to detailed budget negotiations and written confirmation of access, for a six-part documentary to be delivered in the autumn of 2002. This creative idea and proposal now became a business proposition with funding released to enable it to go into production. The next stage of liaison moved to the BBC Business Affairs department. A contract was drawn up between the BBC and Lomond Productions Limited. This took place in the framework of terms of trade and a budget template agreed with the BBC by PACT (the Producers' Alliance for Cinema and Television). Lomond Productions was a member of this trade organisation and benefited from standard agreements which set out the responsibilities of both parties.

The final budget, dated 16 October 2001, sets out the planned approach for the production: a small crew filming for a total of 72 days (12 days per programme) over a 12-month period; shooting with a Sony Digibeta camera; using an estimated 180 tapes (30 x 30 minutes per programme) giving a shooting ratio of 30:1; 18 weeks off-line edit on a digital computer-based non-linear edit system giving 15 days off-line edit per programme; office administration costs covered for 36 weeks (full time for 18 weeks, 0.5 for 36 weeks). In this way business negotiations, culminating in this financial document, defined the style of filming and approach to production work with greater clarity than in the treatment. The project total including production fee was £240,000, giving a unit cost per 30 minutes programme to the BBC of £40,000, exactly the guideline budget for this genre of programmes which had been published on the BBC website (BBC, 2000). With the project development agreed and contractual negotiations completed filming could now begin.

The research period reveals how we adapted our original creative idea, a portrait of teenagers in an institutional setting, and changed the focus to a community setting. This happened as a result of our research uncovering new initiatives for the provision of services for young people in Stirling, linked with proposals for wider community regeneration in that neighbourhood. This led us to find a territory for our project which fell within several strands of continuity in the tradition of documentary film, such as ‘the local film’, whilst at the same time addressed a contemporary topic, and

examined new institutional policies and contemporary practice which had not been shown previously.

Chapter 2

Making the series: the contemporary production process in context

This chapter outlines our production methods and techniques, and examines the ways in which subject and content are shaped during filming, with reference to theoretical models and the history of documentary production. I consider the concept of 'technological determinism' with the aim of investigating if new technology influences the cultural form of the television documentary, and consider the challenges of recording and capturing 'reality' (Joliffe, 2006; Rabiger, 2004; Rosenthal, 2005, Williams, 1974). The aim is to reflect on our experience as practitioners and show how work on this production relates to theoretical debates about the different modes of documentary production.

Modes of documentary

Examining traditions established over a period of seventy years, Nichols (1991: 32-75) identifies six primary modes of documentary film: expository; poetic; observational; participatory; reflexive and performative. Since the time of the pioneer documentaries there have been attempts to define the genre (Renov, 1993). In the early years practitioners had produced critical accounts of their practice in professional magazines and journals such as *World Film News* and *Cinema Quarterly* (Aitken, 1997). Grierson, in extensive writings, covered many aspects of documentary theory, from his enthusiasm for Pudovkin's montage theory, to the social purpose of film (Hardy, 1979). In contrast Rotha (1935) argued for the need to have an explicit ideological,

engaged political purpose. In her interviews with pioneers of the British documentary movement Sussex (1975) captured their memories of the wide ranging debates around the construction of reality in the expository, poetic and reflexive films of the early period. Debate about how best to capture and present real life on film has been on-going since that time (Corner, 1996; Grant and Sloniowski, 1998; Nichols, 2001; Winston, 1995, 2008). Bruzzi (2007) has challenged the discrete typologies identified by Nichols, arguing that, rather than fit into neat single categories, most documentaries simultaneously exhibit and combine the features of several modes in their form. This examination of *Raploch Stories* demonstrates our engagement with this debate as contemporary practitioners. The tradition within which we identified our work was the observational television documentary, however, we were aware that due to institutional pressures, and the brief from the commissioner to deliver a series which would engage with a BBC 1 audience, the final form of our work was likely to be a blurred compromise of this definition.

A documentary culture

The centrality of the documentary for film culture in Scotland has been acknowledged by contemporary commentators for the past seventy years. In 1945 a survey of film making by Norman Wilson listed a local ‘band of documentarians’. A leading member of Edinburgh Film Guild, Wilson had been editor of *Cinema Quarterly* and he argued that because of Grierson’s influence Scotland had made a major contribution to cinema through the documentary. Under Wilson’s leadership, film documentary was central to

the creation of the Edinburgh Film Festival in 1947, with retrospective screenings and a conference at which Grierson presented his account of the genre. The Film Festival persisted with a remit to promote the genre over the following decade with further conferences in 1952 and 1957, and the perception of Scotland as the home of documentary continued to be fostered by Forsyth Hardy, in his writing, in which he gives a hagiographic estimation of Grierson (Hardy, 1981; Petrie, 2000), and in his role as the Director of the re-established Films of Scotland Committee 1952-82.

During the 1950s, whilst the surveys of the film documentary in Scotland looked backwards elsewhere new ideas were being promoted. Attacking the formulaic approaches and the patronising tone of many sponsored expository documentary films, critics such as Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz wrote in *Sight and Sound* (1955) about the need for a new style of documentary. They argued for films which would truly reflect the lives of young people and record the vibrancy of popular culture for the young working-class of the mid-1950s. *Momma don't Allow* (1955) and *We are the Lambeth Boys* (1959) show how these directors first established themselves as documentary film makers prior to working in feature films. The key development in their approach was to use cameras and lighting in a flexible and less obtrusive way. The real-life teenagers they followed seemed uninterested in the camera; and the activities shown were emblematic of how life was changing for young people. The films created impressionistic portraits of their subjects without the constant, insistent presence of a narrator's voice. They called their approach 'Free Cinema' and the subjects

and visual style strongly influenced their development as successful fiction feature film directors in the 1960s (Macdonald and Cousins, 1996: 211-213).

Partly the new style was made possible through technological innovation: the cameras became more light-weight and could be hand-held (rather than always static on a tripod); the zoom lens was introduced; and with faster film stock it became possible to shoot without necessarily rigging additional lighting. Their stylistic approach remains relevant to the ways we filmed teenagers for *Raploch Stories,* following everyday activities, playing football, singing at a talent contest. We tried to capture the personalities of our contributors through these events at the centre of their lives following the types of free-flowing sequences first seen in the films of 'Free Cinema' movement. Despite the committees and conferences, these important developments for the British documentary in the post-war period, such as the Free Cinema movement, had little impact in Scotland where there was a continuing anachronistic mismatch between the 'declared intention and corresponding achievement' (Blain, 1990: 60).

The observational documentary

The term *observational* was originally applied to documentary films from the early 1960s, with *Primary* (Drew 1960), the first film of a movement labelled 'Direct Cinema' in the USA; and *Chronique d'un été* (Rouch 1961) in France where the approach became known as 'Cinéma verité'. These film makers radically adapted the conventions established by their predecessors with a new approach to filming on location and new ways to structure narrative in post-production. They wanted to bring a higher level of authenticity to the

genre. In the USA, Robert Drew aspired to make documentary films which could witness important political events with the same powerful impact as photo-journalism. In France, anthropologist and film maker, Jean Rouch had used film to record the rituals and lives of tribes in francophone West Africa since the 1940s. Like Drew he wanted film to enable the audience to feel they could share a rich experience of events in the lives of his subjects (Levin, 1971).

In both the USA and in Europe at this time there were parallel developments in camera and sound, for example with the Éclair NPR camera and Nagra tape recorder, which meant that these film makers could experiment with synchronous shooting in ways which had previously been impossible. The larger film magazines and new batteries meant that the camera could be hand-held, follow unanticipated action with long, uninterrupted shots. Faster 16 millimetre film stock and new methods of processing meant it was possible to shoot in ordinary locations without the need for additional lighting. At the same time, new methods of encoding the sound recordings meant that it was also possible to record live synchronous sound, without any physical connection between cameraman and sound recordist, giving them both full flexibility to move and respond to events as they unfolded in front of them. Later in the editing room the footage was selected, using the unbroken takes and synchronous audio without narration or non-diegetic music, so that a viewer might draw all the information required to understand the story from the actuality recorded. Their aim was to record events to give the audience a

view of the scene as close as possible to being present at the time of filming (Saunders, 2007).

In the USA, many of those who worked together on *Primary* went on to develop further this approach to film-making with their own individual projects: Richard Leacock, D. A. Pennebaker, and the Maysles brothers all made major contributions. Initially these films were associated with the exhibition of documentary in the cinema and developed outside the institutions of television broadcasting; however, from the 1970s onwards the 'observational film' would gradually be introduced into broadcasting such as with the work of Fred Wiseman funded by PBS television.

Fly-on-the-wall television

A number of key exemplars have defined the ways television documentaries have filmed real lives. In the USA, producer Craig Gilbert conceived the idea of following closely life in a 'typical family'. The series *An American Family* was screened on PBS in 1972, following life for the Loud family, adopting a similar approach to the Direct Cinema movement. Camera operators Alan Raymond and Joan Churchill, (ten years before taking on her role as my tutor at the NFTS), and sound recordist, Susan Raymond, effectively lived with the Louds over several months and were filming constantly. The high ratio of footage filmed to final film used in the completed edited programme was a feature of the observational approach. The programme was controversial from the first transmissions and has had a lasting influence on the television documentary (Ruoff, 2002).

In the UK, BBC producer/director Paul Watson sought to adapt this approach for British television, first with *The Block* (1972 BBC) about a council flats building in London, and later with *The Family* (1973 BBC), a series following the lives of the Wilkins family in Reading. In Britain this observational style was labelled 'fly-on-the-wall' film making with the producers claiming to observe participants without intervening in the events taking place (Graef, 2011). A number of producers attempted to adapt this approach in ways which were acceptable to British broadcasters and appealed to the viewing audience, most notably Watson and also Roger Graef with the 1982 ITV series *Police* (Izod and Kilborn, 1997).

The authentic depiction of reality

With Direct Cinema and 'fly-on-the-wall' television programmes, film makers argued that they were establishing a new grammar for film to depict an authentic record of real experience (Corner and Rosenthal, 2005). Our approach in Raploch was based upon updating this approach through the use of current technology. We worked in a small unit with no more than three people filming on location, either just me (as sound recordist) with cameraman Douglas Campbell, or, when we planned more complex audio recording we were joined by recordist, Allan Young. The same unit worked together over twelve months enabling us to establish a close rapport with the subjects. Often television crews are engaged from shift to shift (particularly in the ways crews are rostered by broadcasters); however, we purposefully avoided this type of short-term approach to give consistency for the contributors. By having a small regular team, we all got to know the subjects.

It was important for them to feel comfortable with everyone on the crew and trust us, as we would spend long periods of time with them in their homes and workplaces. We devised strategies to be as unobtrusive as possible. We used available light rather than rigging additional television lighting. We developed a style of fluid, long takes with a hand-held camera, rather than using a tripod, so that events unfold in front of the lens and the action is never specially staged. The objective was always to allow the audience to observe ordinary life.

Working within the institutional framework of BBC Scotland, we knew that the programme commissioner would expect the programmes to have a voice-over narration in order to provide the audience with additional information, in the expository mode (Nichols, 2001), rather than the purist versions of the original observational film makers. We were familiar with the range of approaches which had been absorbed by television documentarists as a result of *Soho Stories,* such as additional commentary and use of background music (Kilborn, 1997b).

Technical innovation

In *Raploch Stories* during the first three months we established a number of innovative techniques designed especially for this production. We shot with a Sony Digibeta digital video camera. Some television documentaries in the period 1996-2000 had experimented with low specification digital video cameras such as the Sony Z1. This was attractive to producers as the (very) lightweight cameras were small, inexpensive and could be used over long periods; however, both the limitations of the videotape format and the quality

of lens could result in a deterioration of the image in poor lighting conditions. This picture degradation could be adjusted using post-production techniques so that the edited programmes would comply to broadcast standards but the pictures were inferior. Rather than follow this route we chose a high specification camera to film in this style but still achieve high quality, widescreen pictures with a full range of exposure and depth of focus. This was possible due to the high-speed lens of the digi-beta camera, then at the leading edge of technology, and skill of the cameraman. Even in difficult situations such as the sequence in programme 1 when Kendall sings at a birthday party, the picture quality was satisfactory for broadcast and the high contrast images reflected the harsh lighting conditions of the nightclub setting.

The quality of actuality sound was also crucial to our attempt to capture an authentic record of reality. Live synchronous location sound has been fundamental to recording real life and ordinary people since Anstey and Elton's first attempts in 1935 with *Housing Problems* (Winston, 1995). Recording the sound on twin tracks on the digibeta tape we developed new approaches to sound mixing on location. We placed radio mics on key contributors and after a short period realised that they would quickly relax and act as normal, even though they were aware that every word might be recorded. We devised an approach enabling a sound receiver to be attached to the camera so that it was not necessary for camera and sound recordist to be linked by cable. This restored the independence of movement for camera and sound for filming on video which was previously a feature of shooting documentaries on 16 millimetre film, where the sound was synchronised and

recorded on a separate machine. With this approach it was possible to mix sound from a number of radio mic transmitters, carried by our subjects, along with an open boom mic recording actuality sound and for the recordist to send this as two separate tracks to be recorded with the picture on the videotape integral to the digibeta camera. At the same time, the cameraman could monitor sound using earphones and therefore, with the advantage of hearing close-up dialogue from a distance, he was able to respond to that action and adjust the framing as appropriate.

We had planned for a high ratio of filming (30:1) and therefore had the flexibility to film without limitation. We were aware that in the early stages it was important that our contributors should become familiar and relaxed with being filmed, so that we might observe them behaving as they would in ordinary life, just as they would if we had not been present. The robust flexibility of the camera and sound equipment had a direct impact on the style of filming and the intimate way in which some sequences could be filmed, using radio mics for close sound and zoom lens for close-up shots, even when cameraman and recordist might place themselves unobtrusively some distance away.

From the outset we decided that we would always carry camera and audio equipment with us, so that contributors would get to know us carrying equipment at all times. We hoped that this would lead to an acceptance and familiarity with the filming process. We wanted them to feel that they were *collaborators* rather than *subjects* and we spent time with them discussing plans for filming and agreeing as to what would be the kind of events that

should be covered. In this way we developed our approach to include filming short interviews as part of our on-going dialogue with these main contributors. In the period up to Christmas we filmed on 15 days, recording around 20 hours of material (32 tapes). Having set out to film *Raploch Stories* following an observational approach, in this first period we had to establish what this meant in practice.

Establishing our film grammar

We reviewed the rushes together after each day's filming and, as we gained experience working together as a team, we identified a preferred approach which influenced our decision-making about styles of framing, about the purpose of our interview material and about the types of candid moments we were aiming to capture. This was crucial in helping me decide when to start, and more importantly when to stop, filming. It became possible to identify, during shooting, the beginning, middle and end of potential scenes. We soon saw that technical choices, such as shooting handheld without lighting and using hidden radio mics, would leave contributors quickly ignoring our presence. This was slightly different in each of the 'story settings'. With Kevin and Kendall it was important for us to build an individual relationship with them and their families in order to be accepted and even welcomed into their homes. At first, in the community centre and in the schools, whenever we were filming we became a focus of attention, but soon we became a familiar, unthreatening, 'part of the furniture', as we refined our own version of the 'fly-on-the-wall' approach.

As each subject gained experience of being filmed, we developed a technique of following them with me occasionally interjecting with a direct question so that they might comment on the action which had just been filmed. An example of this is the end of the sequence in Programme 1 in which two P1 girls are sent to the head teacher to show how well their reading is progressing and Anne Stewart comments, “That’s the fun part of my day. That makes the job worthwhile”. In this way we aimed to prompt events in front of the camera, enabling the audience to witness the encounters between the contributors and film makers, moments when contributors expressed their feelings and revealed their personalities. In this way we hoped to show everyday life through these types of responses. We developed an approach in which conversational interview material supplemented observational footage, acknowledging our presence as film makers with whom contributors engaged to share their thoughts.

With each of our subjects we also left space in our schedule for impromptu visits, and hoped that, through these spontaneous encounters, we would to be able to reflect the full dimensions of community life. As with all documentary filming, this would often entail long periods of inactivity when there was nothing happening of any importance or relevance. It was at these times that we began to look for a range of vantage points, positions from which we could take panoramic shoots of the neighbourhood architecture and landscape, at different times of the day and in different weather conditions, to build up a number of shots which could give a sense of place and convey the idea of time passing. In this way we were establishing our

‘film grammar’ and style of shooting and framing, gathering images which were unique and specific to these programmes and which could provide building blocks to punctuate the narrative framework.

Post-production: institutional oversight, commentary and music

The schedule for *Rapploch Stories* integrated off-line editing into the process of filming and shaping the programme content during the shooting period. It is normal practice for editing work on documentary projects to start after the completion of filming (Dancyger, 2010); however, for this project I had planned that the off-line edit be spaced in blocks during the period of production. This innovation enabled us to condense the material and start to shape the stories as early as possible, and to use the editing process to identify new directions which the project could take, in order to modify our plans during the production period. The process of filming led us to expand from the five ideas outlined in the treatment and follow-up new stories and characters. During post-production we identified four new ‘story elements’ which would be interwoven to create our portrait of this community. There is a detailed account of these in Appendix 4.

Although the treatment had provided an initial blue-print, the commissioning editor, Ewan Angus, had acknowledged his expectation that the stories would develop and change. In its role as funding body, the BBC monitored the progress of the production. To manage progress I was required to deliver quarterly cost reports giving a breakdown of expenditure with a narrative of anticipated spending. Also, during each block of the off-line edit, Angus came to view material to have a sense of how the stories were developing and

taking shape. In this relatively informal way the commissioning organisation provided feedback and influenced the structure, tone and style during post-production work. During the early stages, sequences would be viewed with a ‘scratch’ commentary using my voice over. It was at this stage we started to experiment with the tone of commentary script, aiming to use the voice-over to provide the audience with essential information and also, on occasion, to introduce a lightness of tone, irony and sense of humour. We also tried out various pieces of non-diegetic music. At an early viewing of sequences from both the Kevin McKinlay and Raploch Primary stories, we discussed with Angus the use of pop music tracks by groups such as Blue and Travis. The aim was to create contemporary soundtrack using the type of music that might play on the radio in the houses where we were filming. In this way we modified the ‘fly-on-the-wall’ approach adding music and humour to create an up-beat, entertaining tone for the programmes. By the time of the final edit block, this feedback process from Angus became a more formal relationship through which the structure, content and voice-over commentary script for each programme was ‘signed-off’ and agreed.

The final stages of editing, the recording of the commentary and sound dubbing took place in October 2002. Angus indicated his preference for a ‘recognisable’ voice for the commentary and after some discussion about possible narrators it was decided we should approach Dougie Vipond, a BBC on-screen sports presenter, who we all felt had the kind of accent and lightness of tone which would be appropriate to the style of narration for a series aimed at a mainstream BBC 1 audience. This illustrates the impact of

a commissioning body having the final control of a documentary programme. Nevertheless the creative idea, the approach to filming, and the structuring of the programmes resulted from the collaborative work of the production team. There were minor changes and revisions right up to the time of delivery.

Confirmation of transmission dates was given in early October and at this time we informed contributors and made arrangements to screen programme one and highlights from the other programmes in the Raploch Community Centre in advance of transmission. We were agreed that it was important that the community should have an opportunity have a chance to see themselves on-screen prior to transmission. The community screening proved to be a celebration attended by several hundred local people.

Our changing mode of approach

This account of the production has outlined how our original creative idea and the subject matter of the series continued to be modified and refined from the beginning to the end of the production process. The transformation of the concept into a business venture occurred at the time of commissioning and on signature of formal contracts, but the informal flow of ideas continued. From a business perspective the project was completed on budget in terms of filming days and editing schedule. There was some non-budgeted expenditure, such as the aerial filming which we carried out to bring a dynamic energy to the ‘establishing shots’ of the local landscape used in the programme introductions. This was possible through under-spending in other categories.

Our approach combined pure observational filming alongside interview, intervention, and interaction, mixing together several theoretical modes of documentary. Our aim was to film an authentic record of the life in the community even although our approach acknowledged that the film crew was always an additional presence. As practitioners, our working methods were pragmatic, with a focus on reflecting our encounters and the engagement with our contributors. There were many areas in which we developed innovative bespoke production methods and techniques. Filming and editing in parallel had a direct impact on our approach to the material, influenced our selection of footage, and resulted in our strategy for how the form of the programmes took shape. This gave me the flexibility to adapt and refine the types of sequences which we arranged to film and to respond to events in the lives of our main contributors. The development of the narrative content and the originality, style and tone of this series was a result of the flexible, close relationship of a small crew getting to know the contributors in their everyday lives over a sustained period and working with the light touch support of the BBC's commissioning editor. Throughout the production filming period, apart from the limitations of the overall budget and the requirement that we complete the project within a fixed time period, there were no constraints or problems resulting from the remit we had been given by the BBC.

Chapter 3

Raploch Stories and new developments for the television documentary

This chapter analyses the edited programme content of *Raploch Stories* and reveals how the programmes took shape in a new hybrid documentary form during post-production, with a narrative structure influenced by other television genres. The chapter also examines how the success of the original 6 part series led to a further programme five years later, *Raploch Stories Revisited*, and assesses the impact of the programmes.

The development of new types of factual programming, such as docu-soaps, has been noted as a trend in UK broadcasting in the period 1996-2000. A feature of these programmes was a 'hybridising impulse' of cross-genre raiding, in order to construct entertainment-oriented formats which could appeal to the mass audiences required in the competitive environment of the television scheduling of the period (Kilborn, 2003: 86). Docu-soaps and, from 1999 onwards, new reality tv formats incorporated narrative devices and filming techniques first found in other genres (Hill: 2007, 2005) and they were 'consistently top-rated' (Biressi and Nunn, 2005:2) There has been a debate about whether the influence of docu-soaps declined after 2000, and how new reality tv formats, such as *Big Brother* (1999), continued to transform the territory for factual programming. Corner (2002) argues that these developments marked the beginning of a 'post-documentary culture' in which there was a new populist realist formula. Kilborn (2003) notes how the new formats were accused of 'dumbing down' factual programming, resulting in a 'commodification of the real', and a perception that attempts to make

challenging, serious documentaries would suffer as a result (Kilborn, 2003: 87). Biressi and Nunn (2005) note how the formats rely on revelation and exposure and the creation of new style celebrities, just famous for being themselves on television. They observe that this marks a shift in how the place of politics in factual television becomes 'implicit' and concerned with 'social difference' rather than with the aspects of being 'working class' (Biressi and Nunn, 2005: 35-58). There is a recognition that these developments continued to have a wider influence and 'could be adopted to serve a more serious purpose' (Kilborn, 2003: 90) and that popularity and public service values were not necessarily at odds with each other.

This analysis of *Raploch Stories* (2002) offers an in-depth view of how this process of responding to the impulse for hybridisation happened in a distinctive way in the context of Scottish documentary programming. I reflect on the ways in which I adopted an approach which utilised the narrative conventions and structuring devices, such as segmentation and interweaving of storylines (Kilborn, 2003: 100)

Constructing a new reality

The programme content we filmed for the series is *factual*, a representation of reality; nevertheless as a film maker, together with my collaborators, I am the author of the completed edited films. Setting out without a script, I have made a careful selection of the filmed material in order to construct a narrative based on a depiction of real life. For *Raploch Stories* we filmed more than one hundred hours of material which was edited down to three hours comprising six thirty-minute programmes, less than three per cent of

the film ‘rushes’. In the research period and during filming I identified a number of discrete story elements, characters and locations which we filmed unobtrusively, aiming to capture the drama of ordinary life and moments of revelation which would create compelling stories. The completed programmes are made up of scenes familiar to many people in the audience: for example at the start of Programme 1, a mum busy getting her children ready for school; a training session for a local football team; rehearsals for the school pantomime; teenagers larking around at a youth club. The choice of shots within each sequence and the way the footage is edited condenses and shortens the incidents which have been filmed. We aimed to create discrete sequences, each with an internal dramatic structure, which could form building blocks within a developing narrative framework. The sequences are juxtaposed in order to create pace and rhythm, and to establish an unfolding story in which each episode has a resolution.

In real life our sense of a ‘bigger story’ is fragmentary and incomplete. This approach to factual film-making has to utilise story-telling techniques in order to provide the structure to present an (incomplete) view of the complexity of ordinary lives. It is as though we create a script after filming, using the raw material of the key moments the camera has witnessed. For *Raploch Stories* we cast ‘characters’ and hunted for ‘locations’ just as a film crew prepare to film a fictional drama. In selecting our contributors and in the choices we made of the incidents which were filmed and edited, we tried to identify sequences which had a clear beginning, which developed the story of the character, and would to lead to a resolution (Bernard, 2007). The television

audience does not consciously analyse a programme's structure in order to understand the medium. There is a common awareness of the conventions required for the audience to accept and understand how the documentary television programme depicts reality. This media literacy is the result of the engagement of film makers and audiences with the genre of documentary films over the past century (Miller, 2002).

At times the contributors acknowledge the presence of the camera, and at times we use interview material, but mostly the camera and microphone *observe* and *listen in* on segments of everyday life which, the audience understands implicitly, have been chosen as significant moments. A scripted narrated commentary from a male Scottish voice provides additional context and information. Background music is used to help establish the mood of the film and build rhythm and pace in some montage sequences. The narrator's voice places the audience in the present tense, the now of the reality presented in the film:

> "It's early morning in Hawthorn Crescent……..
>
> "It's the end of the Christmas holidays in Raploch…….

The information conveyed by the script ranges from simple facts about time and place to other occasions when the narration comments reflectively on the scene which is being depicted, for example, using irony and humour to create a lighter tone. Music is also sometimes used to reinforce the mood and tone of the sequences, to contribute to the rhythm and sometimes comment on the action. Some of these techniques are well-established

elements which can be observed in previous television documentaries, but we bring them together in *Raploch Stories* to create an approach which is unique to these films and used for the first time in a portrait of Scottish community life. This was not an attempt to produce a 'tartan' docu-soap. The ways in which I adapted new ways of framing a documentary about a Stirling working-class estate followed a pattern which has been termed as 'the generic evolution of realist representation' and can be traced back to the Grierson tradition, to Direct cinema, and to community access television (Biressi and Nunn, 2005: 37-58). I did not adopt this approach to fit a pre-existing template, rather it was the means to producing a portrait of a community which I hoped could appeal to a wide audience.

Characters and story elements

We set out to film with an observational approach, and yet the edited *Raploch Stories* programmes use techniques associated with several other modes of documentary. For example, the programmes use a voice-over commentary in the *expository* mode. There are aspects of the *poetic* mode, as sequences following individual characters are intercut to create a narrative structure adopting the model of fictional dramatic story-telling, and, as previously indicated, non-diegetic background music is used to set the tone and bring pace and rhythm to montage sequences. Also, contributors directly acknowledge the film crew, and refer to our presence, as in the *participatory* mode (Nichols, 2001). In practice our approach confirmed the analysis made by Bruzzi (2003) that it is possible for several modes of

documentary to co-exist in a single film and it is problematic to assume that a film can fall into a single category.

Each programme intercuts between sequences from nine different story elements, with on average twelve sequences per programme, a maximum of thirteen in Programme 4 and nine in Programme 1, (for a detailed account see Appendix 4). The duration of each sequence is between 1 minute 20 seconds and 5 minutes. The pace and rhythm is established by the way each 'story element' develops within each programme and by the juxtaposition of contrasting moods as the film intercuts from sequence to sequence. With interwoven short scenes, each with internal story beats, this approach to factual storytelling adopts techniques used in fictional television dramas, particularly in the continuing series or tv soap (Kilborn, 2003).

There are a range of different types of 'reality' television, from game shows such as *Big Brother*, first launched in the UK in 1999, to scripted re-enactment programmes such as *The Only Way is Essex,* or *Made in Chelsea.* A key feature of many of these approaches is the creation of television programming which follows a pre-determined *format* which can be copyrighted by the producer. This has led to an international market in formats which can demonstrate their appeal, and high ratings, to audiences in different territories (Kavka, 2012). Although *Raploch Stories* does not have a single format repeated from programme to programme there is a consistency of style across the series. The approach has similarities with the intercutting of scenes in a 30 minute television soap opera with a structure of 'story beats' throughout each episode.

Narrative structure – a new hybrid form

These completed programmes offer an example of the hybridisation of the television documentary which is a significant and original new development in the portrayal of a Scottish community on television. Documentary series and soap operas are both ways in which television transmits a view of contemporary society back to the audience, creating a picture in the media of everyday life, and reflecting the cultural links that draw people together into communities (Hobson, 2003). At the time of the post-production of *Raploch Stories* we were not consciously influenced by the soap opera genre in our approach to the factual material which had been filmed. Together with the film editor and commissioning editor, I explored strategies which were intuitive responses to shape the programmes so that they would have a contemporary appeal rather than set out with a clearly expressed intention to take a tv soap approach. However, around the time of transmission I was able to reflect on the influence of fictional forms on our series. *Raploch Stories* was launched on BBC Scotland in October 2002, the same month as *River City,* a new soap opera set in a fictional working class Glasgow community. The proximity of these two new series enabled me to compare the narrative structure and the representation, in documentary and drama, of community lives in contemporary Scotland, contrast the ways in which storylines are developed, and identify similarities in the ways the narrative structure operates in both series (Scott, 2004).

River City, developed by a group of writers led by Stephen Greenhorn, is based in a fictional neighbourhood in Glasgow called Shieldinch. The name

echoes a number of real places in Glasgow, designed to present a carefully constructed view of reality in an imagined community (Hibberd, 2007). There are a number of similarities with Raploch, as the stories in both series follow close-knit working-class families and the two areas are undergoing the process of urban renewal. Soap operas such as *River City* are like mirrors reflecting society through stories which contain at their heart social issues: unemployment, dealing with addiction, coping with bereavement, infidelity, divorce; racial tension, teenage delinquent behaviour, and occasionally a big community celebration such as a wedding. This is a genre which can touch every aspect of human behaviour (Henderson, 2007). The format depends on interwoven storylines which manipulate the characters so that they repeatedly confront situations which highlight concerns and social issues which are current in Scottish society. The impact and appeal depend upon our 'suspension of disbelief'. We have to accept and believe that people can move on from one crisis to another with a speed which would be impossible in real life (Hobson, 2004).

Raploch Stories puts a real community under a magnifying lens showing, in microscopic detail, the experience of the contributors taking part. The subject matter in the two series often covered similar types of social issues but, in the documentary form, the point of view is always individual and specific. The process of development for drama and documentary was very different. For *River City* the creation of the image of the community came before filming started and was a carefully calculated fictional construct providing a blueprint which was the starting point for the characters and storylines of the drama

(McKissack, 2004). For our documentary programmes the process of film-making itself was the journey of discovery to uncover the identities to be found under the surface of the community.

In both drama and documentary the central characters are crucial in establishing the appeal of the programmes. The characters inhabiting these communities enable the audience to identify with the experience of living there. In *River City* the stories originally featured twenty six recurring characters and four main families, the Hendersons, the Donnachies, the Rossis and the Maliks. The lives of these families interlinked, and the writers consciously put together a close-knit community in order that stories could develop and overlap. In *Raploch Storie*s, the main contributors also came from several key families, the Stewarts; the McKinlays; the McGuigans, and the McGowans; however, without confrontation between these families, the drama in our stories came through following the individual stories. Although we could not predict the outcome of the stories we intentionally started with people with strong personalities and aspirations. Two of our key characters, Kevin and Kendall, were young people who dreamed of fame and fortune, familiar ambitions in every working-class community, although we had no control over the outcome. The reality for Kevin was that the impossible dream, of signing to play for a premier league football team, did come true. If this had been a soap opera this would have seemed like an unbelievable storyline.

Both *River City* and *Raploch Stories* featured stories about teenage pregnancy. In a *River City* storyline in 2003 a desperate lonely young girl

abandoned her newborn baby. Our depiction of reality is less sensational but just as complex. *Raploch Stories* follows a family of three sisters, all under twenty-one years, who have five children between them. They all live close to their mother and support each other. They are self-aware and articulate; for example, without prompting they comment on how young women like them are often depicted in the media as 'feckless' and 'irresponsible' and how they are sometimes accused of getting pregnant just to get to the head of the housing queue. The statistics about teenage pregnancy in Scotland reveal that this is a major issue for society. The two types of representation of this issue in drama and in documentary enable the television audience to make sense of the issue in different ways (Hobson, 2004).

In *Raploch Stories,* our characters, the scenes shown from their lives, and the interweaving framework of the story telling have similarities with the television soap drama. The series exhibits the characteristics of a new *hybrid* genre; however, this genre did not involve scripting or re-enactment. However good the script writing and acting in *River City* it presents fictional characters through a mirror which magnifies and distorts to create a make-believe looking-glass world which exists in parallel to reality, dramatising heightened versions of the conflicts and dilemmas faced in life (Henderson, 2007). In *Raploch Stories* the camera lens becomes a microscope which enables the audience to look directly into the eyes of real individuals and get to know them. As programme makers, we hope that the audience will care about their stories, and gain an empathy and understanding for real situations in contemporary everyday life in the communities around us all.

Raploch Stories Revisited

From the first time local residents viewed the completed *Raploch Stories* programmes, at the screening at Raploch Community Centre in October 2002, programme contributors and local residents were eager to know when the film crew would return. They wanted to know when life in Raploch would be reflected once again on national television. In some ways the response at this community screening was a demonstration that the 'local film' still has the appeal of the days of early cinema (McBain, 2007) as outlined in Chapter 1. At the same time, this audience also revealed its innate media literacy with requests for the return of a familiar subject. The appeal of re-cycled programme material has been an aspect of television programming for over fifty years. This demand for archive material was a catalyst for us to develop *Raploch Stories* into *Raploch Stories Revisited* and transform the project into another form of television documentary.

Across every genre, television has looked back and repackaged archive material to create new programming, which comments and reflects on the past. Holdsworth (2008) argues that television is an inherently nostalgic medium, noting that, for most people under sixty, this may be due to associations between our memories of childhood and family life and the familiarity of the television programmes from previous decades. During the 1950s, the first decade of television in the UK, this was an ephemeral medium with most material transmitted 'live' and unrecorded; however, from the early sixties, the broadcasters began to archive material more systematically. Since that time broadcasters have found ways to continue to

use pre-existing material. In genres such as sport, the archive programme has been a way to commemorate and celebrate. In entertainment it is a convenient method of gathering together the highlights and memorable clips from a wide range of shows. It has been a way to exploit library material effectively with a relatively low cost for the clearance of any outstanding copyright material.

The longitudinal form

The kernel of the creative idea for *Rapploch Stories Revisited* depended upon taking the original series as a starting point for a film which could reflect how life in this community had moved on in five years. This could be built around an update on the lives of the contributors who had been filmed in 2001/2. The new programme was entering the territory of the longitudinal documentary form. The best known British exemplar of this form is *Seven Up,* the Granada documentary series which originated in 1964. The first *Seven Up* featured interviews with fourteen seven year old boys and girls from different class backgrounds talking about their hopes and aspirations for the future. Michael Apted, a young researcher on the 1964 programme, has returned as director to film with this group every seven years since and the resulting programmes give a unique portrait of the ways in which life has unfolded for these people over the past half century, and in so doing provide a record of changing attitudes to class and family relationships (Kilborn, 2010). The eighth series of this project, *56 Up,* was screened in June 2012.

The series established the device of intercutting sequences from the archive of previous programmes in which the contributors talk about issues such as

ambitions, work, relationships and family life in order to show how their attitudes have changed over time. This use of archive material gives this sub-genre a powerful impact, made possible through juxtaposing interview clips of the same person talking about themselves as a young child, as a teenager, and through various stages of their adult life (Bruzzi, 2008). *Seven Up* was originally produced as a one-off for the ITV *World in Action* series to create a snap-shot vision of the British class system through the eyes of children. The idea to develop it in a longitudinal form came later. Apted had a vision of how this material had potential as a series that would return at seven year intervals. The idea for *Raploch Stories Revisited* was for us to devise a template, which would acknowledge the structure and devices used in the longitudinal form, but would also involve adapting the filming techniques and hybrid story-telling framework which we had devised for the first series. In contrast to the way in which *Seven Up* was filmed, we wanted to continue with an observational filming approach for the new sequences which we would record, and combine this with commentary and voice-over from interview material, to reflect on how life had changed.

The one-off film and flash-back structure

Our original series had followed life in Raploch for a full calendar year. With our new proposal, filming over this length of time would not be possible due to budget restrictions. We planned to contact all our original contributors and follow their activities over a shorter period. Raploch Primary School had been a central location for all six programmes in the series. As part of the urban renewal programme a new school campus was under construction and

2006/7 marked the final year for pupils in the original school buildings. For this reason we decided to start our documentary from the start of the school year and film over the course of the autumn term. Within this time frame we planned to film sequences with the nine different story elements from the original series. For the series we had adopted narrative techniques from the television soap genre in a type of hybrid format; however, with a single film with a duration of sixty minutes we anticipated that stories would unfold in different ways and that the pacing and rhythm would change.

Raploch Stories had been based upon interweaving sequences from nine different stories. This led to us to juxtapose sequences with contrasting moods. In *Raploch Stories Revisited* we wanted to use archive material to create linkages between past and present. It was essential that the programme would appeal to the audience who had watched the series in 2002, however, it was also important that we could attract a new audience and could produce a self-contained film which did not depend on viewers having to remember the content of the earlier programmes. Therefore, it was our intention to use flash-backs of archive material to establish the background context of the characters and the setting. In this way *Raploch Stories Revisited* was a different type of challenge for filming and production, and also involved new approaches to editing and story-telling.

Institutional contexts

Prior to submitting the treatment we had contacted Stirling Council's new Head of Children's Services, David Cameron, who had replaced Gordon Jeyes in 2003. After liaising with staff from Raploch Primary School and

Raploch Community Centre, Cameron was happy to give his support and facilitate similar access across council facilities to what had been allowed in 2001/2. The commissioning process with the BBC was negotiated in a short period after Angus indicated approval of the creative approach of our brief treatment.

In the period since the issue of the contract for the series, the legal framework for independent commissions for the BBC had changed following the Broadcasting Act 2002. As a consequence of this legislation, independent producers, such as Lomond Productions, were now given greater control of the rights in programmes commissioned by and produced for UK broadcasters. Copyright in the *Raploch Stories* programmes was held by the BBC. In a campaign prior to the Broadcasting Act, the Producers Association for Cinema and Television (PACT) had lobbied to secure these rights in order that companies might more fully exploit programmes in other territories (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). The contract for *Raploch Stories Revisited* outlined the terms on which BBC Scotland would allow us to use material from the original series. The new contract also redefined the agreement between the broadcaster and producer. In 2001 the BBC fully funded, and took ownership of, the project. In 2006 the BBC paid a licence for two screenings of the programme but copyright remained with Lomond Productions. This change in regulation indicated a major shift in the relationship between broadcasters and independent producers, which has led to the formation of larger independents through a process of merger and acquisition by bigger companies, in order that these so-called ‘super indies’

can fully exploit the international business potential of their rights libraries. However, for a small company such as Lomond with a relatively low turnover, this change had little impact on the funding of a single film. The licence fee agreed was £116,000, which fully funded this project with costs plus a production fee. The cost per minute for the project represented a modest increase from the 2002 contract, reflecting the higher costs of salaries and hire of equipment and facilities. The contract was signed and dated 16 May 2006 with a delivery date set in February 2007.

Contributors – old and new faces

We established contact with all nine ‘story elements’ featured in the 2002 series. Second time around they had a clear idea about the potential impact of filming on their lives and routine. At Raploch Primary School, head teacher Ann Stewart and her staff were happy to participate once again and keen to record some school events which would be taking place for the last time in the original school building. The team at Raploch Youth Initiative was also enthusiastic; Archie Wilson and the Stewart brothers at the Raploch Pigeon club all welcomed our return. However, some individual contributors were initially reluctant.

Footballer Kevin McKinlay had left home at the end of the first series and since that time there had been a serious rift between him and his parents. Kevin was happy for us to follow his football career but was nervous about agreeing unrestricted access for us to follow his personal life at a time when his girlfriend was expecting their first baby. Steven McGowan was keen to participate but wanted to consult his children, Dylan and Jerry-Lee, and

explain to them that he felt this would be a positive step for them as a family. Now teenagers at high school, Dylan and Jerry-Lee were nervous about their father publicly acknowledging on camera his history of addiction; however, Steven persuaded them to change their minds when he explained his deep pride in the family's achievements.

Kendall McGuigan and Claire Young who featured with major contributions to *Raploch Stories* both met with Douglas Campbell and me, but explained that they were adamant that they did not want to participate. This is a problem facing all longitudinal documentary series, for example in *Seven Up* several participants have refused to participate at different times over the past forty nine years (Kilborn, 2010). The reasons given by both Kendall and Claire came from a desire to protect their privacy. One of them was now living with a woman partner and the other had been in a relationship with a man who was currently in prison. They both wanted to avoid the risk of exposing themselves or their families to any sensational press coverage which they believed would result from allowing us to film and follow their lives. After meeting with both contributors we respected their decision. This type of documentary depends on and cannot proceed without securing the trust and co-operation of participants.

The challenge in the research period for this programme was to identify ways to replace these two stories with alternatives. At one of our pre-production research meetings Claire was joined by her sister Cheryl Rainey. Cheryl indicated that she would be happy to be filmed for the new programme. We already had archive footage of Cheryl and her son, (then aged three) from

2002, and although the main focus originally had been Claire, both sisters had similar stories, having been single mums as teenagers. To take the place of Kendall, we approached Stephanie Simpson who was also aged twenty. A young single mum, Stephanie was working on a construction industry apprentice scheme which was part of the community regeneration programme. She lived with her own mum in one of the newly built houses which were replacements for the demolished 1930s council housing. Stephanie's life and aspirations, juggling the demands of motherhood with attempts to complete a demanding apprenticeship scheme, gave a personal story which revealed a positive human impact of the urban renewal initiatives. It was very different from Kendall's attempts to get a start in the music business and yet it reflected the types of life choices facing many young women in Raploch.

A chance meeting during a research visit to the community in July 2006 led us to Holly Smart. In 2001 Holly had been a homeless single mum, with a four-month old baby and two toddlers whom we had filmed on two or three occasions. However, because of her chaotic situation at that time it had not been possible to film sufficient material for inclusion in the series. By 2006 Holly had established a secure and stable life for her family and had returned to Raploch, with the daughter who had been a baby now about to start in the first year of Raploch Primary School. Thus we found a new contributor for whom we also had archive material, providing insight into significant developments in her life during the previous five years.

The children of the ‘Tuesday Club’ had all now moved on and were scattered across Stirlingshire. We had maintained contact with Ashley Cameron who was about to make the transition from living in care to establishing an independent life for herself. In the original series, for reasons of confidentiality, we had not been given information about Ashley’s background. Now that she was able to give consent, Ashley was determined that she wanted to be part of the new documentary and to speak openly about her background and about her experience of spending a childhood in care. The final story element involved making contact with the community police officer, Gerry McMenemy, who had featured in the 2002 series as part of the Raploch Youth Initiative sequences. We were introduced to his replacement, PC Blair Rennie. The police perspective provided a way to reflect on the tough reputation of a community in transition.

Through this process we established story elements for the new programme which included follow-ups to our original contributors and also introduced a number of new characters. The territory we had mapped out for our creative work continued to develop and change, with the creation of a new hybrid form which brought together a longitudinal framework which combined new material with an observational filming approach. In this way we aimed to produce an innovative and distinctive new type of film which would reflect the progress of young people in the neighbourhood.

Filming period

Filming began in mid-August and I brought together the same crew; me, Douglas Campbell as cameraman and Allan Young as sound recordist. This

continuity was important to enable us once again to establish a relationship of trust with contributors. The technology and approach which we adopted was closely based upon the methods which we had used for the earlier series with the same digibeta camera and sound recording techniques. Also, the way in which we operated as a unit followed the pattern we had established during the first period of filming in 2001/2 when we developed a number of strategies to film as unobtrusively as possible.

Filming did involve returning to some situations similar to those covered in the autumn of 2001. Once again we followed preparations for the Primary School pantomime, which was always a highlight of school activities in the autumn term. It was possible to link this back to *Raploch Stories*, as the lead role was taken by Fionuala Wilson, now in the Primary 7 class, who had featured in Programme 1 as the little girl getting ready to walk to school and as a young pupil selected to read for the head teacher. The familiar progress of the pantomime rehearsals enabled the new film to reflect the continuity which is an inherent part of school routine. We also covered the community celebrations for the switch-on of Stirling's Christmas lights for a second time. In 2001 we had filmed Kendall as one of the singers entertaining the crowd gathered in Stirling town centre. In 2006 Jerry-Lee McGowan was part of a troupe of dancers taking part in the outdoor show and our filming with her followed her involvement in stage school music and dance classes.

Post-production

For the series we had planned edit blocks to take place in parallel with our location filming. For *Raploch Stories Revisited* I chose to adopt the traditional

approach of editing in a single block after the conclusion of filming. This was because, for the new project, I had a well-defined idea of the path we were following with the new material. For the 2001/2 series we had set off on a journey with no idea of how the lives of our contributors might develop over the year. In 2006 we were filming with contributors with whom we had worked previously and our principal objective was to reflect on how life had changed during the intervening five years. There was not the same need to find the narrative sequences during the filming period. We were still not working from a script but on this occasion we had a clear picture of the material we wanted to show.

In the edit during December/January I worked with the original editor, Gary Scott, to select material and re-view archive footage from the original series. We made the decision that we would not just consider material that had been included in the completed *Raploch Stories* programmes and would also include material, such as the sequence with Holly from 2001, which had not been used previously. In this way we used the full library of material available, exploiting the edit list data from the non-linear computer editing software. This was a method for the rapid retrieval of archival material which we were designing from scratch, giving us the flexibility to experiment with the widest possible choice of material.

Programme breakdown

As previously observed, *Raploch Stories* adopted a hybrid form influenced by the story telling approaches of television soap series. For the one-off single film, *Raploch Stories Revisited,* I needed to create a structure which would

modify this hybrid in a new way. The interwoven sequences have durations of between 1 minute 20 seconds and 5 minutes, and the pace of story-telling is fast moving and develops in a similar way to the series; however, the key new device for *Raploch Stories Revisited* is the flashback. Within each sequence we use flashbacks of archive material as building blocks to set up the background context for each character. In this way there is a different approach from the story beats, borrowed from the continuing drama serials, which were a feature of how we created a sense of an unfolding story in the sequences of *Raploch Stories*.

With twenty four sequences from nine stories, in this film the number of sequences from each story element is not equal, whereas in series one there was a greater balance across all the different elements. Life at Raploch Primary School over the autumn term forms the spine to this film in more defined way than in the series. Rather than punctuate the interwoven sequences with general views around the community, many scenes are linked by a connection to activities at the school. We are introduced to Holly Smart's story after we see her daughter, Tanya Lee, register for the Primary 1 class. School pantomine rehearsals link to a flashback to Ashley Cameron aged eleven and this leads to the introduction of her current situation. *Raploch Stories Revisited* is centred on the place of the school as a focus of community life.

Rhetoric and impact

All documentary film finds a rhetorical approach which sets out to persuade the audience of a viewpoint from which they should consider the important themes which are revealed by the subject matter and the style of filming. The 'voice' of the film is important in helping the audience understand and empathise with the reality which has been depicted (Nichols, 2001: 49-60). In *Raploch Stories* the 'voice' for the series was shaped from the vantage point of the docu-soap narrative style in which the lives of the contributors were presented as unfolding stories, and in which the commentary could introduce humour and irony, apparently confiding with the audience. In *Raploch Stories Revisited* the voice-over gives this programme a different style of address. We made a decision to use a more anonymous commentary voice-over rather than the familiar BBC Scotland presenter Dougie Vipond who was employed on *Raploch Stories*. The aim was to set a tone which was more reflective and authoritative. This expository mode was integrated here with a selection of observational material. The resulting structure establishes that the film is presented by a narrator representing the views of the film makers, reflecting on the insights which we had gained from recording life in this community. We hoped to avoid patronising the contributors and sought to address the audience with our view of this community shaped by our encounters with local people.

The impact of all television is notoriously difficult to measure. It is difficult to get an accurate indication of the audience response, and, without defining the criteria and methodology, the reputation of different programmes is often

a subjective assessment by reviewers. The industry relies on measurements carried out for them by the Broadcasting Audience Research Bureau (BARB) which analyses overnight ratings and also surveys audience appreciation through a range of tools including individual viewing diaries and regional viewer panels. The BARB audience ratings and audience appreciation for *Raploch Stories* series one was acknowledged by the BBC audience research department as high for a factual series in this slot in the transmission schedule, with an average of around 390,000 viewers in Scotland (BBC notification of BARB overnight ratings, 2002). There was also wide press coverage in both the local and Scottish national press, although, as with most television criticism, this was often limited to short preview articles, some of which focused on the 'notorious' previous reputation of this community (*The Herald* and *Daily Record* 13/11/02). By contrast, the local paper, *The Stirling Observer* (12/11/02), gave a full page preview of the first programme, with five colour photographs featuring contributors, and the Raploch-born deputy editor, Donald Morton, stated that he was: 'hopeful that the rest of the series won't go down the 'let's-knock-the-Raploch road'. This was in a period during which on-line chat-rooms and blogs were gaining in popularity and there was some on-line audience response to the series, in this way which indicating that the appeal of the narrative framework gained support for the contributors of the programmes – for example "the wonderful headteacher" .

In their BBC Scotland Annual Report 2003 the *Raploch Stories* series was cited as a successful example of how BBC Scotland the corporation wanted:

"to reflect contemporary Scottish society through *observational documentaries"* (BBC, 2003). My analysis of the series demonstrates how it should be more accurately defined as a hybrid documentary rather than a programme with a pure observational approach. This new approach enabled us to represent working class community life and reflect the real lives of our contributors in a fast-moving, entertaining style without exploiting them or exposing them to the ridicule of the audience. The series gained through the opportunity to construct programmes with pace and variety which delivered successful ratings in a BBC 1 audience. The hybrid form did not lead to any compromise in the selection of contributors or content. The success and impact of the first series with the Scottish audience did lead to the commissioning of *Raploch Stories Revisited*. The programmes have also had a lasting legacy through the public engagement and impact on the community in Raploch. In a research project for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, local people talked about how these television programmes accurately captured the spirit and resilience of this community (Robertson et al, 2008). Another legacy of the programmes has been the on-going commitment of BBC Scotland and other agencies. In 2008 the community was chosen for a pilot project to introduce the Venezuelan 'Sistema' approach to teaching children to perform on musical instruments. The seven documentary programmes had demonstrated to the BBC, Creative Scotland and other organisers of this project, the strengths of this neighbourhood and the aspiration of the local young people. 'Sistema' has now brought musical tuition to several hundred local children and led to the formation of a new

children’s orchestra which performed alongside the Simon Bolivar Orchestra in an outdoor concert in June 2012 to launch the UK Cultural Olympiad.

Chapter 4

Raploch Stories and its antecedents

The *Raploch Stories* programmes are examples of a sub-genre of the social documentary, films which portray working-class communities and the problems faced by local residents. In this chapter I compare and contrast *Raploch Stories* with four other case studies: *Housing Problems (1935); Lilybank (1977); Wester Hailes -The Huts (1985); The Scheme (2010/11)* in order to assess how this sub-genre has evolved. The films have been selected because of the similarity of theme and because each is from a different period and I place each example in the context of the development of the documentary at the time of production. With the exception of *Housing Problems* the programmes were made in Scotland, depicting Scottish housing estates. The aim is to explore the ways in which the declared objectives of these films differ; to examine how the institutional frameworks in which they were produced have changed; to identify how technological advances and innovation have influenced the way real life has been recorded; and to understand how the film makers have developed new types of narrative structures and adopted different rhetorical positions for these films. The intention is to assess the balance between continuity and change in the content and form of the films. In this way it will be possible to make an assessment of the originality and significance of the seven *Raploch Stories* programmes within the context of this sub-genre. I will also assess its influence on *The Scheme* (2010) which was made three years later. As with all types of broadcasting, audiences approach this sub-genre with a ‘horizon

of expectations' shaped by the time in which they are living and the material conditions of the world around them (Jauss, 1982). Audience awareness of the subject matter is also influenced by its knowledge of ways in which similar content has been previously treated in other forms of media.

Intertextuality

Raploch Stories, and this sub-genre, follow a tradition which pre-dates film. There is evidence of a fascination in understanding how ordinary working people live, and in observing and recording life in their communities, which dates back before the invention of the camera, movie or still. The representation in documentary films of the home and working lives of the lower classes, and issues of social justice, have been influenced by intertextual antecedents such as literature, journalism, painting and photography. These other types of text have established a tradition of 'generic verisimilitude', influencing the ways in which audiences have a pre-formed overview of relevant contexts, which helps shape their understanding of the meaning(s), and authenticity of experience conveyed by these films (Izod and Kilborn, 1997).

The intertextual territory for these case studies can be traced to a number of different strands. William Cobbett's *Rural Rides* were journalistic sketches of the everyday lives of the workers of the English villages and countryside in the 1820s. Later in the mid-19th century, in *The Conditions of the English Working Class,* Friedrich Engels recorded the harsh daily routines and overcrowded housing of urban factory workers in Manchester. After the

invention of the camera in the 1840s, portraits depicting *characters* in their working lives in urban landscapes showing slum housing conditions became a familiar *genre* subject for many photographers. In Scotland the photographs by Thomas Keith of people in the back closes of Edinburgh was a leading example of this approach.

The tradition of individual writers recording their observations of the everyday life of people living in poverty continued as an important strand of polemical non-fiction into the twentieth century with examples such as *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) by George Orwell. Orwell wanted to uncover the hidden misery caused by inequality in society and sought to do this with a first-hand observational account detailing the lives and hardships of the lower classes. Also in the 1930s, Mass Observation was being set up by Spender and Jennings and aimed to record an accurate picture of the living conditions, the speech, the opinions and aspirations of British people from all sections of society (Hubble, 2006). From the earliest days of the British documentary film movement, films which investigated the everyday lives of working people and their housing conditions were building upon a tradition of naturalistic social realism which had first been established in journalism and non-fiction literary writing (Aitken,1997). The approach taken in *Raploch Stories,* constructing a narrative framework linking observational sequences, in which the film crew records everyday encounters with our selected characters, is a contemporary updating of this tradition of naturalism.

Housing Problems

The origin of the type of content depicted in *Raploch Stories* goes back to the early years of the British documentary film movement as outlined in previous chapters. *Housing Problems* (14 mins Elton & Anstey 1935) is one of the earliest films to use synchronous sound recorded on location (Winston, 1995). It is a short, black and white film, produced by Arthur Elton and Edgar Anstey, which depicts for the first time ordinary working-class men and women filmed in their own homes, addressing the camera directly, and making the case for social reform (Aitken, 1997). With this film, funded by the Gas Association and London County Council, John Grierson had convinced the sponsors that the demolition of derelict slums and their replacement by government-financed housing would inevitably bring modernisation and increased use of gas. As well as having the expository narrator, characteristic of Grierson documentaries, the slum-dwellers speak for themselves. 'In their rat infested kitchens, unheated living rooms, crumbling hallways, they talk directly to the camera and provide a guided tour' in a blunt and moving protest (Barnouw, 1983: 94). Despite being produced before television broadcasting began, this approach would have a lasting impact on the form of television factual programmes (Winston, 2008).

The film opens with voice-over narration explaining the problem of slum housing and a Labour Councillor from Stepney outlines the scale of the problem, speaking over shots of decayed housing with inadequate sanitation. This type of commentary-led approach was familiar from other early film documentaries; however, the film then introduces the new device of allowing

ordinary people to tell their own stories. Mr Norwood, Mrs Hill, Mrs Gray, Mr Burner, Mrs Reddington and Mrs Atribe, describe for the camera the hardships caused by poor housing. Due to the technical requirements for both sound and camera, the contributors are static, looking directly into the lens, addressing the camera as they might speak to an official in authority. According to interviews with the production team, the contributors were encouraged by assistant producer, Ruby Grierson, to speak out and express their anger and frustration (Sussex, 1975). The film follows these accounts with sequences in which voice-over narration, with pictures of architect's model buildings, outlines the advantages of the modern designs for social housing such as those at the Quarryhill Estate, Leeds, and Kensal Rise in west London. The film concludes with Mrs Reddington and Mrs Atribe talking to camera about their pride in their new homes after re-housing, with facilities such as gas cookers; but they also say they will not forget the horrors of the slums. With the introduction of the new device of direct testimony, this short film has been identified as the prototype of the television documentary (Sussex, 1975: 61). Other commentators have noted how the powerful testimony of these ordinary men and women resonates as a way that contemporary audiences can connect with past experience (Cowie, 2011).

Housing Problems represents the establishment of this sub-genre, despite the fact that rather than setting out to portray a community, it is focused on the issue of slum housing. The impact of contributors filmed in their home surroundings, giving the audience a picture of everyday working-class life, remains a key element of the genre (Macdonald and Cousins, 1996: 122).

The other examples were all made in Scottish housing estates but the direct engagement of these contributors makes these sequences, filmed over seventy five years ago in east London, relevant to the later evolution of the television documentary leading to *Raploch Stories*. The connections between my programmes and films made during the early years of the British documentary have been outlined in Chapter 1. In this chapter I examine how the sub-genre developed and assess further links with *Raploch Stories.*

Television and the documentary

Television was fundamental for the development of the documentary form from the 1950s onwards. At the same time as Grierson had formulated the social purposes of his approach to film making, John Reith was shaping the ethos of public service broadcasting for the BBC, with the underlying principles of impartiality, accuracy and fairness, and a commitment to providing the audience with information and education programming alongside entertainment. With the advent of television, these principles converged and the place of the television documentary as an important element of public service broadcasting was gradually established (Briggs, 1995; McDowell, 1993). The first transmissions in Scotland began in 1952 and over coming years the documentary and the medium of television would become co-dependent. From the outset, television gave precedence to topicality, and programming was structured around 'live' presentations including many outside broadcast events. There was an emphasis on the immediacy of the journalistic style of treatment and many of the approaches depended on the role of a presenter mediating the output, a format based on

a combination of the authored essay familiar from the wireless, and from newsreel reportage. The editorial structures followed the departmental patterns already established in radio such as news, current affairs, sport, education, religion, drama, and variety, with 'the documentary' sitting across several areas (Briggs, 1995). The creation of a production base in Scotland was a costly, slow process and gave priority to setting up studio and outside broadcast facilities rather than establishing dedicated film units. Television did use and transmit films made on 16 millimetre, but it was the 405 line black and white image from electronic cameras which defined the medium (McDowell, 1993).

Documentary content produced by BBC Scotland from 1952, and STV from 1957, was often a mix of items filmed on location using reversal film with an on-screen reporter, linked together by studio presentation and interviews. This is the now familiar structure of the topical magazine programme, with a varied mix of subject matter. It was the dominant format for the production of documentary subjects in the first two decades of television in Scotland. Grierson himself became involved in a version of this type of television programming. He was recruited by Roy Thomson, the Canadian newspaper proprietor, who set up and owned Scottish Television from 1957, for the series *It's a wonderful world* (1958-72) in which he introduced short clips from documentary films from around the globe (Blain, 2008). There were a number of producers working for the BBC in London, such as Dennis Mitchell and Richard Cawston, who did start to explore the unique ways in which television could present an in-depth examination of a single subject both

through single films and in extended series (Creeber, 2001), however in Scotland the sponsored film, made for government and industry, remained the dominant form of documentary production until the mid-1970s (Sherrington, 1996).

Films of Scotland re-established 1952

In 1952 the Films of Scotland Committee which had commissioned the productions for the 1938 Empire Exhibition was re-established to promote documentary films with a utilitarian social purpose. McArthur (1982) Blain (1990) and Butt (1996) have identified how these films indicate the clichéd ways in which Scotland, Scottish life and culture was represented. The romantic, nostalgic tartanry of *A song for Prince Charlie* (1958) remained a familiar formula to represent Scotland's culture as dominated by tradition and history. The importance of industry was celebrated in films such as *From Glasgow Green to Bendigo* (1958) about Glasgow's Templeton's Carpet Factory, *Seawards the Great Ships* (1958) about shipbuilding on the river Clyde (awarded the Oscar for Best Documentary in 1961); and *The Big Mill* (1960) about steel production at Ravenscraig. These were all sponsored productions celebrating the ingenuity of engineering and nobility of labour. The content, form and tone almost unchanged from similar productions from the documentary movement in the 1930s.

The *Rapploch* programmes focus on a single community in the midst of change and re-development, emblematic of ways in which housing schemes have been modernised across Scotland over the past decade. During the 1960s and 1970s there were many films about the modernisation and

infrastructure building projects of the period, all displaying the features and tone of the ‘Scotland on the move’ discourse identified by McArthur (1982). Films of Scotland, the Scottish Office and the local councils combined to finance documentaries such as *New Day Glenrothes* (1959); *County on the move* (1960), *The Tay Road Bridge* (1967), *Town for the Lothians* (1970), *Cumbernauld, town of tomorrow* (1971), *Keep your eye on Paisley* (1975) all of which presented the view of the authorities in power as to how life could be improved. *Heart of Scotland* (1960) written and produced by Grierson and directed by Laurence Henson displays all the archetypes of this era with a sonorous, literary script, and panoramic views of landmarks around Stirling, including Raploch. As a boy, Grierson had lived in Cambusbarron, a small village a few miles from Raploch. His method of portraying these communities was through a personal authorial viewpoint conveying a sentimental nostalgia for the historic character of the area (Petrie, 2000). Our aim in *Raploch Stories* was to show everyday life from a fresh perspective and reveal the character of local young people through their activities rather than by illustrating a predetermined script which focused on history.

Documentary production in the 1970s

By the 1970s the production community in Scotland was increasingly frustrated by limited opportunities on broadcast television and the rigidity of the sponsored documentary remit of the Films of Scotland Committee. Producers protested against a quasi-feudal system of dependence (Eadie, 1973) and began find ways to escape from this structure. The 1976 Film Bang Conference and Exhibition in Glasgow brought together professional

film makers and production companies to express a communal sense of ambition across different types of screen practice including documentary. In the same year Viz Films produced the feature length documentary *Big Banana Feet,* directed by Murray Grigor and filmed by David Peat, following forty eight hours in the life of Billy Connolly on tour in Northern Ireland, and consciously inspired by D.A. Pennebaker's *Don't Look Back* (1966). Finally the influence of Direct Cinema had arrived in Scotland. Tree Films, run by Charlie Gormley and Bill Forsyth also pursued the international documentary market with a project to film in South America in 1978. At the same time the industrial film market had expanded to include films about oil companies and the exploration of the North Sea. As a result of this widening range of experience Scottish documentary makers now sought to escape the strait-jacket of the sponsored format (Petrie, 2000). The in-house television producers of this era were also determined to reach a wider network national audience and presented programme ideas which were designed to make headlines and catch the attention of viewers and critics.

Lilybank

Lilybank – the fourth world (3 x 50 mins, Tosh, 1977) is a documentary series about problems faced by residents in a neighbourhood in the east end of Glasgow at the start of a period of extensive urban regeneration (GEAR: Glasgow East Area Renewal). In *Raploch Stories,* voices of community residents are of central importance; however, these programmes, produced by the BBC, demonstrate approaches typical of television documentaries in the 1960s and 1970s where the assumed position of public service

broadcasting was to take an impartial, external view (McDowell, 1992). As with *Housing Problems* the title bluntly identifies the cause for concern, namely the contention that social conditions in parts of east end Glasgow at that time were worse than in a developing third world country. Programmes 1 and 2 trace the efforts of a new local tenants' group to influence the local council planners and other bodies who are starting to improve and upgrade the area. The problems facing residents include poor housing, overcrowding, unemployment, alcohol abuse, and teenage delinquency.

The form of the programmes is based around a number of well-established documentary narrative devices which are interwoven to construct an argument like an essay, theme by theme. A well-known presenter delivers authoritative pieces to camera on location. He conducts three extended interviews with an expert witness which are used in short segments commenting on the ideas issue by issue. His voice-over commentary links the different themes and is used over montage film sequences which show the area and illustrate the authorial view he is presenting. There are supporting location film sequences with a small number of local people, often unidentified. The presence of the presenter on screen was a key device by which the form of the early film documentaries evolved on television. It adapted an approach to factual programme content which had been successful for talks and features in radio broadcasting (Briggs, 1995).

The programmes are presented by Magnus Magnusson delivering a pre-scripted commentary with confident and assured authority. Evidence about the social conditions is given in the interviews with the expert, the social

worker and writer, Kay Carmichael. Prior to filming in 1976, Carmichael previously spent twelve weeks living anonymously in a rented tenement flat in the area, with a weekly income based on supplementary benefit. Following in the tradition of Orwell (1937), she was attempting to experience at first hand the problems of unemployment and poverty. However, since this social experiment came to an end before filming started, she makes her observations in conversation with Magnusson whilst walking the streets of Lilybank, and in a local café which she had frequented during her stay, but most often from the comfort of an armchair in a flat in Glasgow's west end. Gently encouraged by Magnusson, Carmichael reflects on her experience and the issues are mediated through their opinions and prejudices.

The explicit tone is that of an encounter between concerned middle-class professionals, appalled by the problems facing the underclass, seeking to identify suitable social reforms. Director Michael Tosh and film cameraman David Peat shoot some location sequences with local residents. In vox-pop style clips they describe problems such as damp housing, overcrowding, lack of amenities for children and teenagers, glue sniffing, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. These short interviews have similarities with the direct testimony in *Housing Problems.* There is the same authenticity of experience captured in the voices, accents and appearance of local people; however, the sequences, filmed at various locations around the housing scheme, have a more fluid relaxed style and do not appear to be specially staged. Developments in technology mean that it is no longer necessary to have the bulky equipment required in 1935. The 16 millimetre colour film camera and

sound recording equipment of 1977 are easily portable and can be carried around the streets and set up quickly to record an encounter with a group of teenagers playing on derelict waste land. The frank comments in these clips are conversational responses, rather than prepared and pre-rehearsed statements.

The third and final programme in the *Lilybank* series takes a different approach, more familiar from current affairs broadcasting than the film documentary. It is a debate, filmed as an outside broadcast multi-camera shoot. It is recorded on videotape ‘as live’, on location in a local school hall, and there is an ‘expert’ panel chaired by Magnusson and including Carmichael, other experts, and representatives from the council, the police, and the planning authorities. There is an invited audience of residents, some of whom have made contributions and featured in programmes one and two. The script for the previous programmes followed a journalistic structure, issue by issue. In programme three Magnusson raises these issues and invites formal contributions from the panel. Throughout the programme there is a division between the experts and local people but towards the end, as time is running out, a member of the tenants’ committee makes a heart-felt plea for greater engagement with the community. He expresses the frustration residents feel when they are excluded from decision making by council, planners, and also from the formation of opinions by outside experts. In order that the voices of local people are heard, the tenant activist is forced to intervene and interrupt proceedings.

New types of community programmes and Channel 4

There is a real contrast between *Lilybank* and the non-broadcast agit-prop film making in which I was active in the late 1970s at the start of my career. Due to the closed-shop union structure of the industry, these were outside of mainstream media. Instead these were community arts projects, such as *Playspace* (25 mins 1977) the same year as *Lilybank* was broadcast. This was a campaign film about the lack of amenities for children and teenagers at the Grampian and Cairngorm House high-rise flats in Leith, Edinburgh. The video sought to give a voice for the local young people and their parents. Making the programme led to the creation of a tenants' group which screened the video to local councillors and campaigned successfully for funding for new play facilities. Similar community experiments were happening across the UK which influenced the remit adopted for the new television channel proposed by the Annan Committee (Coyer et al, 2007). Links between the movement of community access television and new styles of factual programming have been noted (Biressi and Nunn, 2005:17). In my case this was my earliest film making experience and already the elements of working in collaboration with local people and focusing on social issues were at the centre of my practice.

Channel 4 began broadcasting from November 1982 in the same year as the Films of Scotland committee was disbanded. The year marked a turning point for the Scottish film making community. The creation of a channel with a publisher/ broadcaster structure and a remit for distinctive programming, under the leadership of Glaswegian television producer Jeremy Isaacs, led to

new opportunities for Scottish film makers. The experience of Scottish independents and freelancers in sponsored film making meant that companies were well-placed to pitch for business from the new channel. The success of producers in gaining a range of commissions led to an expansion of the Scottish independent sector and to different types of opportunities for documentary film makers on television (Brown, 2007). There was now a greater variety of potential subjects and an appetite for film makers to experiment. Companies such as IFA Scotland, Pelicula Films, Reality Films, Viz and Freeway Films were commissioned to produce several different types of documentary. Also several returning series offered ways to develop the talent of documentary film makers in the sector such as *Years Ahead, Down the Line, Scottish Eye.* These were all programmes on which I worked as a new entrant to the professional industry after graduation from the National Film and TV School.

Channel 4's commitment to new approaches to the documentary was demonstrated by the introduction of the Independent Film Department. The policy of commissioning editor, Alan Fountain, supported by chief executive, Isaacs, was to develop the types of programmes first attempted in the 1970s by the BBC's Community Programmes Unit. With programmes such as *Open Door*, this unit had given local communities an opportunity to present films from their point of view (Isaacs, 1989). Now with *People to People,* Channel 4 made a commitment to fund documentaries which gave a voice to sections of society which had been previously under-represented on television (Izod & Kilborn, 1997). With the *People to People* series they developed

programming in partnership with local community organisations and with the Film & TV Workshop movement across the UK. A number of programmes in this series presented portrayals of Scottish communities such as, *Wester Hailes – the Huts*, , *The Work they say is Mine* (Gibson 1985); and *Leithers* (1987), which I directed for Edinburgh Film and Video Workshop. These were documentaries which were explicitly striving to represent Scottish communities on network television.

Wester Hailes - The Huts

Wester Hailes - The Huts (52 mins Bradley 1985) is a single film documentary about community organisations in the Wester Hailes housing estate on the outskirts of Edinburgh. The huts are the temporary porta-cabin style buildings, for which local groups have secured modest funding, to provide a base for community development in the area. Directed by Des Bradley, it was produced by Trevor Davies, community activist and local councillor, by the independent production company Skyline Film and TV for the Channel 4 series *People to People.* During its early years, Channel 4's commissioning policy encouraged experimentation in form, as well as content, across the programme genres (Stoneman, 1992, 2005). *The Huts* is an example of a film which attempts a radical alternative structure combining several different modes of documentary. Shot on 16 millimetre colour film the film interweaves a number of different approaches and uses reflexive, performative and participatory modes of documentary production. There are several recurring sequences which feature various local tenants' organisations, such as a community arts circus workshop, which provides the

device by which the landscape and buildings are shown with the camera following a teenage boy, in clown costume make-up and walking on stilts, as he makes his way around the estate. Members of a local drama group are filmed re-enacting role plays which depict aspects of life on this estate such as, the isolation of single parents, problems dealing with housing administrators, and the powerlessness felt by the long-term unemployed. These sequences are delivered by amateur actors, filmed on stylised sets with expressionistic lighting, as direct to camera monologues, or short dramatised scenes. This is intercut with interview material and documentary sequences which follow meetings of a tenants group and editorial discussions about the production and publication of the *Sentinel,* the local community newspaper. The background music, which features throughout, is a specially-composed jazz score by young saxophonist Tommy Smith, who grew up in Wester Hailes. This range of different elements combine to produce an impressionistic portrait, devised and expressed through a mix of community arts activities by local residents, focusing on the participation of residents in initiatives set up to change and improve the quality of their lives. The film engages with local people to produce a portrait of a community which is far from the outsider's view of the journalistic reportage of *Lilybank.*

A later Scottish programme for Channel 4's *People to People* series was *Leithers* (1987) which I directed for the Edinburgh Film Workshop Trust. This was an oral history programme which traced the changing face of Leith's industrial heritage and celebrated the community identity of Edinburgh's port. Whereas *Wester Hailes – the Huts* used a wide range of different

documentary modes and styles of filming, *Leithers* was produced in a more conventional style, mixing interviews, archive footage and recording a number of community events. It shows how my practice was developing, beginning with *Playspace*(1977), followed by *Getting in on the Action* (1982) to *Leithers* (1987), with a range of documentary films which present portraits of different Scottish communities taking a position of engagement with the community, as opposed to the external journalistic stance embodied in the approach taken in *Lilybank.* My approach to *Raploch Stories* came as a direct result of my previous production work.

The Scheme

The Scheme (4 x 50 mins 2010 and 2011) is a later example of the sub-genre produced three years after *Raploch Stories Revisited*. It is an independent production for BBC Scotland from Friel Kean Productions which portrays the lives of people living on the Unthank Estate in Kilmarnock. As with previous examples the series deals with issues such as unemployment, inter-generational conflict, and drug addiction, and this is revealed by following the interlinking lives of six families over several months. The form of these programmes adopts the type of structure established previously by *Raploch Stories.* The programmes interweave observational sequences with each of their story elements. Sequences are punctuated by establishing shots filmed around the estate. There is non-diegetic music which reflects the tone of sequence. There is a voice-over narrator who gives an ironic commentary on the scenes which have been depicted. The influence of *Raploch Stories* is evident; however, the content of *The Scheme*

demonstrates how in an increasingly competitive environment for broadcasting this sub-genre has moved on and developed since 2007.

Rather than representing a cross-section from the Unthank community, the contributors in *The Scheme* all come from dysfunctional households and the focus of interest is on observing and recording anti-social behaviour. The process of casting these characters has identified households where the majority is unemployed and the family units have at least one member living a chaotic, criminal lifestyle. The observational style of filming is similar to *Raploch Stories* but new technology has led to higher specification smaller cameras and this has allowed a higher ratio of filming on location. The approach of the production team was to spend long extended periods on the estate and to ensure this could be covered by the majority of filming being undertaken by a solo camera/director (Friel, 2012). In this way the film maker is present late at night and early in the mornings. The main contributors, the Cunningham family, Marvin Baird and his girlfriend Dayna, and the Cree family are all filmed at moments of intense crisis.

The focus on recording anti-social behaviour in the community led to public debate about the series at the time of transmission. Some commentators branded the series ‘poverty porn’ (*The Scotsman* 28 May 2010). As with *Raploch Stories* the narrative framework of the story structure was influenced by television drama; in this case reviewers and audience commented on similarities with the Channel 4 comedy drama *Shameless*. This related to the selection of characters and the type of incidents featured in the programmes. Furthermore, the first screening of *The Scheme* was curtailed in June 2010

when episodes three and four of the series were withdrawn from transmission due to the fact that one contributor was facing criminal charges in the High Court and the programmes were deemed to be potentially prejudicial. The full series was finally shown in 2011 and was followed by an additional studio programme, similar to *Lilybank* Programme 3, at which a panel of experts and an invited audience discussed the wider social issues raised. Neither the film makers nor the contributors took part in the studio programme.

The evolution of the sub-genre: the intention of the film maker

The aims of the film makers working in this sub-genre started with the overt civic propaganda of *Housing Problems*, with a production sponsored by public bodies to support the campaign for improved public housing. The objectives behind the *Lilybank* programmes demonstrate the commitment of the BBC, as in many traditional television documentaries of the 1970s, to provide public service broadcasting by producing an impartial, objective, journalistic examination of a social problem rather than overtly taking sides with residents. With *Wester Hailes - The Huts* the intention shifts again with a programme in which the film maker engages directly with the local community and presents a portrait of the area and its problems which is expressed on film through a range of art forms, not simply through journalistic reportage. This type of experimentation was nurtured during the first few years of Channel 4 and did not always appeal to the mass audience. My own practice demonstrates a progression of styles of documentary films made in local communities from agit-prop community action with *Playspace*

(1977), the observational documentary approach on video with *Getting in on the action* (1982), and the oral history approach of *People to People* with *Leithers* (1987). These were followed with two further examples prior to *Raploch Stories.* I directed *Disaster at the pit* (BBC 1999) which was an oral history programme portraying the impact of a pit accident and rescue on the Ayrshire town of New Cumnock. In this programme I developed further the approaches adopted earlier work combining archive footage with oral history interview recollections to present a view of a community brought together in adversity. In *Postcards from Sighthill* (STV 2002) I directed a a single documentary which would rehearse some elements of the hybrid approach of *Raploch Stories*, such as the interweaving of observational sequences with a number of different contributors.

From the mid-1990s, in a competitive multi-channel environment, it was increasingly important for documentary programmes to appeal to a wider audience and commissioning editors sought to find popular factual programmes and formats which would entertain as well as inform. This demand from the broadcasters defined the background for *Raploch Stories.* By the early 2000s in order to secure a commission for a programme about a local community, it was essential for us to demonstrate the personal stories which would be central to our programmes and through which social issues would be revealed. In this way our aims were not to produce propaganda for social improvement, nor take the detached view of an external journalist, nor to engage with community organisers to facilitate a kaleidoscopic survey of local groups. For *Raploch Stories* our aim was set in the context of the

explicit demand by the broadcaster for programming led by compelling story content which would appeal to a broad audience. The public service broadcasting remit was delivered by the fact that this was presenting life in a typical community, demonstrating that BBC Scotland was close to its audience all across the country. This focus on these human stories led us to develop the distinctive new hybrid framework, adopting devices from other genres.

The evolution of the sub-genre: institutional framework, technology and form

The institutional framework for films in this sub-genre progressed from public sponsorship for the producers of *Housing Problems,* to working within the framework of internal BBC departmental structures for *Lilybank,* to independent productions commissioned from proposals which matched programme briefs of broadcasters Channel 4 and BBC Scotland for *The Huts* and *Raploch Stories*. In every case the approaches taken by these films can be seen to be a result of the tension between constraints set by the funding organisation and the creative ideas of the film makers.

Throughout the period, camera and audio equipment has progressed and become more flexible, leading to more effective ways to record real life. Each production demonstrates ways that producers adapt contemporary technology to design the most unobtrusive methods available at that time. *Housing Problems* used 35 millimetre film and modified studio sound equipment so that it could be taken on location. For *Lilybank* the production team used both 16 millimetre location filming technology and outside

broadcast equipment. *Wester Hailes - The Huts* was filmed using a16 millimetre film camera, with a technical approach similar to the location work on *Lilybank.* Cameraman, Martin Singleton, had worked as camera assistant on the earlier programme. However, the later film demonstrates a more mannered construction of the film sequences. This was a result of consciously varying the camera style from sequence to sequence for the various different documentary modes. In this way the form makes an important contribution to the narrative style of the film. By the time of the production period for *Raploch Stories* in 2001/2, almost all television documentary work had switched from film to videotape. The technical innovations which we introduced are outlined in Chapter 2.

Changes in technology had a direct impact on the structure of the edited films. With *Housing Problems* every shot entailed careful planning and rehearsal following a pre-agreed script. *Lilybank* takes the form of a journalistic investigation and the ratio of film for the short clips was limited. Similarly the reflexive approach of *The Huts* indicates how the director has planned and structured the film in advance. The impact of shooting on video led to the high ratio, improvisational observational style, filming over an extended period with no advance script, which was the method we adopted and modified for *Raploch Stories*. The introduction of non-linear computer editing for digital video from the mid-1990s led to major changes in the possible approaches for film makers in post-production. In every genre this led to faster pacing of shots, the possibility of tighter editing of the audio behind picture, and changing rhythms of story-telling on television (Dancyger,

2010). In this way this sub-genre was constantly evolving and *Raploch Stories* represents a distinctive new approach to filming this type of content.

The transition from *Raploch Stories* to *The Scheme* demonstrates ways that television documentary film making is constantly evolving. *Raploch Stories* had established new ways to record and represent life in a Scottish community which were unique in the context of Scottish broadcasting in 2002 and 2007, and yet within three years this had moved on. *Raploch Stories* influenced and led on to *The Scheme,* a series in which the subject matter was more sensational and highly-charged and for which the technology had been adapted to allow new approaches to filming. The response of the audience to *The Scheme* also reveals how developments in media technology are having an impact on broadcasting. There were a limited number of on-line comments about *Raploch Stories.* By 2010 the use of social media has grown exponentially and provides an insight into the audience reaction to the series. At the time of the first transmission of *The Scheme,* there was extensive commentary about the programmes on Facebook and Twitter. This included special Facebook groups in support of the plight of Bullet, the long-suffering pet dog belonging to recovering heroin addict Marvin Baird (*The Scotsman* 24 June 2011). Interaction with the audience through social media has now become an essential element for television documentary.

This sub-genre has reflected life on housing schemes throughout the past seventy years. Other recent examples demonstrate that there is still a range of different ways for film makers to approach this content. *Colin and Justin on*

the Estate (Channel 5 2007) is a series in which Scottish interior decorators and television presenters, Colin McAllister and Justin Ryan, undertake an ambitious make-over to bring about improvements for the residents of the Arden estate in Glasgow. It is a different style of hybrid in which a presenter-led lifestyle format is combined with a documentary subject. Other types of programmes include *Shakespeare on the Estate* (Woolcock 2008) which portrays a community through recording local people participating in an aspirational new activity. This type of new factual, challenge-based, programme has been a trend of the past three years. The subject also continues to be presented in more traditional authored treatments such as *The Great Estate* (BBC 2 2012), the history of the council house written and presented by Michael Collins. *Raploch Stories* and *Raploch Stories Revisited* should be viewed in the context of the time of our production. Through the innovation of introducing a hybrid observational style of story-telling to the sub-genre for the first time in a Scottish context, we demonstrate a significant, original representation of life on a Scottish housing estate which can be seen to have influenced later programme makers.

Conclusion

In writing this thesis I have evaluated my creative practice in the context of the continuing evolution of the television documentary in Scotland. The auto-ethnographic research methodology has required a detailed reflexive analysis of the published work and an assessment of the contribution made by the *Raploch Stories* and *Raploch Stories Revisited* programmes. These programmes reflect the periods during which they were in production and the institutional constraints and demands which existed in 2001-2 and 2006-7. The content and form of the film documentary is in constant flux with a rich variety of approaches and multiple production strategies now available to film makers (De Jong, 2011). The technical innovations of *Raploch Stories* have already been superseded with new developments in technology which have led to new approaches to story-telling, however, these are programmes which did make an impact. They represent and embody the contemporary state of documentary in Scotland at the start of the 21st century and are part of a tradition which goes back over eighty years. The published works were created and produced to be self-contained, to be transmitted and stand on their own, and to convey a coherent, well-structured story, portraying the community in Raploch in a single viewing. This critical appraisal has a complementary purpose, seeking to show how the programmes are part of the continuing process of the development of the television documentary.

This appraisal shows how the *Raploch Stories* programmes can be placed the chronology of documentary production in Scotland. These seven programmes contribute to an on-going discourse on themes of

representation and cultural identity. They are part of the film and television output which has created, reflected and sustained concepts of working-class community and national identity in the period since the late 1930s. The *Scotch Reels* event at the 1982 Edinburgh Film Festival marked the moment when academics and practitioners began to scrutinise the modes of representation of Scotland in a new way. In the subsequent publication (McArthur, 1982) the opposing positions are set out. An interview with Forsyth Hardy presents a detailed overview of the history of the documentary in Scotland, from the point of view of this eminent critic and administrator, whose career began with Grierson in the 1930s, and who played a major role as director of the *Films of Scotland* organisation (McArthur, 1982: 73-92). Hardy is in no doubt of the central role of documentary, and the importance of John Grierson, to Scottish cultural life and promulgates his view that the purpose of the documentary is as a tool for social progress (Hardy, 1979, 1981). McArthur and Caughie develop a critique of this view stating that Scottish film and television production has repeatedly reproduced and depended upon nostalgic and regressive subjects, identifying dominant prevailing categories which they label *Tartan kitsch,*and *Kailyard nostalgia* (McArthur, 1982: 4-8). McArthur argues that documentary film-makers and the television broadcasters were guilty of transmitting stereotypical, unrepresentative images of contemporary Scotland by sustaining the 'Scotland-on-the-move' style of programmes in which 20th century Scotland is presented as modern, industrial and urban, forward-looking and optimistic, with a total absence of analysis, or recognition of conflict (McArthur, 1982: 59-64). Caughie presents the case for an alternative discourse, in both film

and television, which might genuinely reflect the diversity of real experience and engage with the genuine struggles and stories of resistance which were important to ideas of class, identity and Scottishness (Caughie, 1982: 112-22).

The *Scotch Reels* event was important to the development of my own practice. I was then a post-graduate student at the National Film and Television School and my student film *Getting in on the Action* (1982 25 mins) about life in the village of Pennan during the making of Bill Forsyth's *Local Hero* (1983) was shown at the event. Pennan served as one of the film's main locations and my documentary observed how the real villagers responded to a feature film which depicted life in a small coastal village. This student practice engaged with the key issues raised and placed my work in the context of the wider debate. *Getting in on the action* was a student exercise firmly based on the tradition of observational film making. My tutors were Joan Churchill and Herb diGioia, both film-makers with wide experience who had made individual contributions to the development of this tradition. Even during my time as a film student I was developing an awareness and understanding of the two pathways of 'Scotland-on-the-move' discourse and the observational tradition. In the production of *Raploch Stories* twenty years after the *Scotch Reels* event I bring together and combining elements of these two strands of documentary practice, in order to achieve a meaningful engagement with the community and reflects real experience through the practice of film making.

These are films which show contemporary everyday life by filming an unscripted journey of discovery. The ways of reflecting the aspirations of young people have become embedded in the narrative framework and selection of recorded sequences and the programmes also reflect the pride that local residents have in their community identity. *Raploch Stories* develops the genre through adopting new narrative frameworks which construct these stories of real life using a range of modes, and reframing the approach to story-telling.

In the period 1989 – 2000, leading up to the commissioning of *Raploch Stories,* there had been a rejuvenation of local output, including documentaries, from BBC Scotland and Scottish Television. At STV under the leadership of Gus MacDonald there was expansion in production across all genres. This led to the development of in-house documentary film makers such as Ross Wilson who followed up network series, written and presented by Jimmy Reid, with a BAFTA award-winning documentary about *Lockerbie* (1994). Throughout this period I continued to work on a range of television arts and documentaries absorbing influences from the community of practice around me including the work of Wilson and of David Peat. Peat trained as a cameraman with the sponsored films of the 1970s and gained parallel experience working on television projects for the BBC in Northern Ireland. The new factual Channel 4 series gave him opportunities to direct and these were programmes on which we worked together. Peat's work captured an authentic and natural picture of the world based upon acute and perceptive observation. His television films, such as *This Mine is Ours* (STV 1994),

Around 17 (STV 1994), *Heartland* (BBC Scotland 1999) and *Gutted* (BBC Scotland 2004), demonstrate an intimacy of approach and humanity of feeling, based upon mutual sense of trust.

With *Raploch Stories* and *Raploch Stories Revisited* I was influenced by these examples of committed film making and sought to produce documentary programmes which, although made for primarily local audiences, aspired to escape the confines of any parochial limitations and which could represent the rich complexity of contemporary Scottish life. The representation of Scottish working class life in *Raploch Stories* is part of an on-going tradition. These programmes represent the community in a unique way, shaped by the contexts of the broadcasting industry and the available technology at the time they were produced. The creativity and originality embodied in the programmes draws together the threads of my engagement with the wider community of documentary film practice, and my place as a Scottish film maker producing work in the period from 1977, and reflects my contribution to this tradition.

Depictions of Scottish life and communities and national cultural representation are at the heart of current political debate about the institutional framework and regulation of public service broadcasting in Scotland, following the establishment of the Scottish Broadcasting Commission in 2008. The ‘Culture’ section of the SBC’s report *Platform for Success* (2008) identified a current deficit in programme content reflecting contemporary life in Scotland. The draft SNP policy for broadcasting, currently a reserved area, indicates a number of strategies to remedy this

including the creation of a Scottish Digital Network. My programmes show the lives of young Scots and aim to reflect identity from within the community rather than, as with much of broadcasting, presenting a distanced external view. On a number of web-sites and in on-line chat-rooms the Scottish audience commented that the characters and stories from series presented accurately the community life in these types of Scottish working class neighbourhoods (Robertson et al, 2008).

The innovation demonstrated by our programmes overlaps in a number of areas. The programme idea was developed by modifying a pre-existing type of film in order to portray contemporary social policy and urban regeneration at work in a specific single community. The work of the production team in a small crew led to a close, flexible relationship with contributors. Techniques for filming were adapted and shaped by the team to take greatest advantage of current ‘state of the art’ technology for camera, sound and post-production. Changing technology influenced our approaches to filming on location and to the way in which the programmes were edited. The type of equipment available is constantly moving forward and recent programmes, such as *The Family* (2008) and *Educating Essex* (2012), have brought the multi-camera rigged recording of ‘live’ feeds, first used in reality entertainment programmes such as *Big Brother* to the observational documentary. Our innovations in this field were a result of the equipment available to us at the time. We put this technology to work effectively by developing an approach of recording unobtrusive encounters, in the way in which we followed the lives of our contributors (Ellis, 2011). The style of our approach was

fundamental to the style of address from the participants and the ways in which they acted and expressed themselves.

Our key innovation for the television documentary in Scotland was in constructing a fast-paced, interwoven narrative framework which adopted some of the techniques of other programme genres in order to present an original, entertaining fresh style of story-telling in documentary. The critical appraisal has revealed that this new style can be linked to other examples of the re-framing of factual programming but my treatment was the first time this had been seen with a Scottish subject. Having established this with *Raploch Stories* I modified and transformed the approach in order to produce *Raploch Stories Revisited.* The territory of the television documentary continues to evolve. As a practitioner, this is reflected by my pragmatic responses to the new possibilities presented by technology, and from intuitive responses to shaping the filmed material. My examination of this process has also given me an awareness of the wider 'community of practice' of which I have been part for thirty five years and an understanding of how the influences of others has been synthesised in my approach to these productions. These all contribute to the creativity and originality which I have invested in the programmes.

The significance and impact of the programmes lies in the way in which they have influenced and helped shaped later documentary series in Scotland, such as *The Scheme*. *Raploch Stories* and *Raploch Stories Revisited* embody the creative contribution which I have made to the 'community of practice' of documentary film making in a career which began with local

community development projects. I have brought together my training, professional skills and experience to research, produce and direct seven programmes which represent a significant and original contribution to the tradition of television documentary production in Scotland.

Appendix 1 - The Published Works

Raploch Stories Programme 1:

Transmitted BBC 1 Scotland 10.35pm 13 November 2002

Raploch Stories Programme 2:

Transmitted BBC 1 Scotland 10.35pm 20 November 2002

Raploch Stories Programme 3:

Transmitted BBC 1 Scotland 10.35pm 27 November 2002

Raploch Stories Programme 4:

Transmitted BBC 1 Scotland 10.35pm 4 December 2002

Raploch Stories Programme 5:

Transmitted BBC 1 Scotland 10.35pm 11 December 2002

Raploch Stories Programme 6:

Transmitted BBC 1 Scotland 10.35pm 18 December 2002

Raploch Stories Revisited

Transmitted BBC 2 Scotland 9.00pm 12 March 2007

All the programmes were researched, directed and produced by Alistair Scott, working in collaboration with cameraman, Douglas Campbell. Produced by Lomond Productions Limited.

Appendix 2 - The Research Journey

In January 2001 we approached Ballikinrain School near Fintry, Stirlingshire, a boys' boarding school run by the Church of Scotland. Ballikinrain provides secure accommodation outside the family home on behalf of social services departments from local authorities across Scotland. We took part in several research meetings to meet staff, explain our objectives and talk about our proposed working methods. The headteacher indicated his approval in principle, subject to confirmation from the BBC, clarification of the editorial process and final approval from the School's governing body, the Church of Scotland Social Responsibility Committee.

With this positive message in April we met with BBC Scotland's Head of Commissioning, Ewan Angus, and pitched our idea. The programme pitch is acknowledged as a key to success for independent producers attracting funding and support (Rosenthal: 2005). It is the first hurdle in selling a project and is an opportunity to tell the story of the film, demonstrate the passion of the producer and explain how the subject will capture an enthusiastic audience. The importance of the pitch is embedded in events such as the Sheffield and Amsterdam Documentary Film Festivals, with workshops and public events for film makers to demonstrate their pitching skills presenting in front of an audience to panels of commissioning editors. In this case Campbell and I made our pitch in a private meeting at BBC Scotland. I outlined how we would film in the school, identify around five main characters, teenage boys from difficult backgrounds, and follow their lives, their interaction with the teachers and friends at the school and their

contact with their home lives. Angus indicated his interest based on our pitch and informed us it would be suitable project if we could follow the subjects over an extended period, of at least six months, with delivery some time in 2002. At this stage, inevitably the requirements of the commissioning body began to influence the shape our proposition.

Our expectation was that the lives of boys at Ballikinrain would be complex and intense.Our negotiations about access the possibility of controversial content involving children led, however, to an on-going discussion of issues of ethical responsibility and to questions being raised about who would make a final decision about whether footage could be used. In order to obtain access from the school, and also the signed, informed consent of the boys and their parents/guardians, we needed to provide satisfactory answers and gain their trust. The school wanted direct contact with a BBC representative to give a full explanation of their editorial guidelines. The head teacher requested the right to view completed programmes prior to transmission in order to veto any unsuitable material. Angus spoke to them by phone to outline BBC policy that the corporation would retain final editorial control. He assured the school that it was BBC policy to treat contributors fairly and accurately but that he was not able to allow participants of any documentary to hold control over a completed programme. Campbell and I sought to reassure the head teacher, explaining that we would guarantee to change any factual inaccuracies but, as with all funded independent productions, we were constrained by the BBC that they would have final editorial control. The school authorities were now reluctant to give us access and run the risk that

we might film potentially controversial incidents involving bad behaviour since they would have no control of this material. After the meeting of the Church of Scotland Social Responsibility Committee in late May we were informed that they would not allow us access to the school. Despite a successful pitch we were back at stage one with research carried out over six months proving fruitless.

With access denied it was essential to identify a replacement creative idea. At the BBC Angus indicated he would back our pitch if we could develop a proposal about young people with a ‘similar feel’. We had now had a detailed understanding of the current policies of social services for young people and had become aware of a radical new initiative. Gordon Jeyes, Head of Children’s Services, Stirling Council, had written about their innovative policy linking the work of the Education; Social Work; and Community Development departments in order to provide a coherent, integrated framework of services centred on the needs of children, with a philosophy of positive action, and with the flexibility required to respond to the families at risk (Jeyes: 2001 & 2003). Instead of filming in a single institution we reshaped our idea into a proposal to film young people and reveal how the various departments of the local authority worked together within a community setting. In this way we could reflect the most recent innovation in policy through the experience of young people. We met with Jeyes and colleagues on 14 June and presented our proposal. They responded with a cautious approval and gave permission for us to contact possible schools and community projects in Stirling.

With their introduction we visited a number of Stirling schools, including Raploch Primary and Wallace High School, and made a number of other contacts in the weeks before the summer holidays. Even after a short meeting it was clear that Anne Stewart, head teacher at Raploch, had a forthright enthusiasm for the project. We visited the leaders of the Raploch Youth Initiative, based at the local community centre, and met Youth Worker, Emma Lowe, born and brought up in the area. We also talked with Youth Outreach worker, Gerry McGarvey, employed by Aberlour Trust charity with a remit from the Social Work department to support vulnerable children.

Throughout the research period we had monitored the local press for possible leads. A cutting from *The Stirling Observer* 25 April 2001 informed us of Kevin McKinlay, a teenage schoolboy from Raploch who was tipped as a rising soccer star and 'set to break into the big time by becoming one of the youngest players ever to sign for Chelsea'. We made contact with the McKinlay family who were intrigued by media interest in their son's success and agreed to participate. By early July we felt that the research had brought together sufficient elements to write a detailed Treatment. We had been given verbal agreement that we would be granted access across all Children's Services facilities, including schools, community centres and social work offices. We had identified several potential characters for our series.

A written treatment outlining the proposed structure of the series was now required to convince our commissioning editor that our research had resulted in a creative idea which would lead to a documentary series which met their

requirements. The Treatment is a proposal, following up the Pitch, which maps out a blueprint of the narrative, the structure and tone of a documentary (Joliffe: 2006; Rabiger: 2004). In an eight page document dated 31 July 2001 I outlined the proposed approach to the idea: filming over a twelve month period; following five individuals all based in the same community; with each programme interweaving sequences from all five *characters* and a final programme telling the story of a community event at which I anticipated that all five would come together as participants.

At this stage I identified four of the five contributors, described in the Treatment as *characters,* indicating that I was already attaching a narrative structure to the, still hypothetical, future lives of these real people. We would trace the progress of Kevin McKinlay, a teenager pursuing a dream future as a professional footballer. We would reflect life for primary school children by following the work of head teacher, Anne Stewart, over a school year. Filming at the youth club run by Raploch Youth Initiative, we would show the lives of young teenagers through the eyes of youth worker, Emma Lowe. We would also follow Outreach worker, Gerry McGarvey, and his work with vulnerable families. The fifth proposed character was a teenager, as yet unknown, in the Children's Panel system. From earlier research we had established contact with the local Children's Panel Reporter, and remained confident we could negotiate access. The new premise for our series was that rather than focusing on one institution the films would show the ways in which different services operated in a community setting. We would reflect the integrated approach of Children's Services by following their initiatives

which aimed to provide pre-emptive interventions for vulnerable young people.

The Treatment made clear our intention to create an opportunity for the voices of young people to be heard, express their sense of identity, their aspirations for the future, and their hopes for the area where they lived. In the Treatment I linked this to the broader objectives of the community regeneration initiative which had been brought to our attention at our June meetings. We had learned of the proposals for the development of new housing and new community facilities, thus the idea of making a portrait of a community became embedded with our original intention of filming teenage life.

Appendix 3 - Ethical considerations

The ethical issues raised by these programmes are examined in the context of wider consideration of ethics, the media and the particular problems faced when making documentary programmes with an *observational* film making approach (Graef, 2011; Hibberd et al, 2000; Hill, 2004;).

The ethical approach for this thesis is based upon four key principles: 1/ Do no harm; 2/ Make an assessment of the potential benefits and risks to participants; 3/ Obtain the informed consent of the participants; 4/ Treat all personal information confidentially and only identify participants if they agree to this (Edinburgh Napier Ethics, 2012). However, the question of what is an ethical approach to documentary is subject to a range of interpretations. BBC Guidelines mean that producers are obliged, to obtain signed Release Forms from all programme contributors. But how to assess whether the uncompleted programmes have any potential for harm, or whether filming may pose any risk to contributors in advance of production; whether contributors can ever be fully informed or aware of the potential impact resulting from how the audience might view them after seeing the completed programmes (or how they may view themselves); and how to deal with any confidential information divulged during filming – these are all problematic areas. Graef (2011) emphasises that the key ethical issues for film makers are to always be open and honest with contributors in order build a relationship of trust, guarantee them that they will be treated fairly, and that events filmed will be accurately depicted; and ensure that there will be no exploitation of participants. His view is that it is a privilege to film the lives of

real people and the film maker should always treat this relationship with respect.

Two years after the submission of our Treatment Ballikinrain School did reconsider and agreed access for filming but with a different independent production company, Saltire Productions. They produced a 6 part documentary series for BBC Scotland with a similar approach to the content outlined in my treatment, however, ethical and legal constraints had an impact on transmission. In their programmes the faces of a number of participants, some teaching staff and some children, were anonymised. Two of the completed programmes were cancelled, never to be shown, due to legal action by one boy and his parents, despite the fact that the producer had obtained the signed informed consents required to give permission for filming. Access permission and the trust and fully informed participation of all contributors are essential at every stage and the BBC guidelines and consent forms are liable to different interpretations. The definition of the informed consent of contributors and the implementation and governance of editorial guidelines was revised in the Broadcasting Act (2002) when Ofcom was appointed as regulator, replacing the BBC Board of Governors, and continues to be a matter of debate by the Leveson Inquiry (2012). This case study also shows how fierce is the competition between independent producers for suitable projects and the fact that similar creative ideas can be presented from a number of sources.The realisation of the idea, however, will vary from producer to producer.

Appendix 4 - Story ideas and filming

By mid-October 2001, with the budget agreed and draft letters of agreement exchanged between the producer (myself at Lomond Productions) and BBC Scotland, the production insurance was in place. We sent out permission letters to the parents/guardians of every child at Raploch Primary and the Raploch Youth Initiative. With this consent granted the period of filming could begin.

The process of on-going research and the modification of the creative idea continued throughout the filming period. We accepted we were undertaking a journey which was likely to shift direction during the making of the project (Munro: 2011). The Treatment had outlined a rough anticipated storyline but our intention was to follow the lives of the subjects and not to attempt to shape them. We were setting out without a script and with no way to predict what would unfold. The absence of a script, which would provide the structure of filming in other types of film, meant that we were always questioning what material to film, and crucially, when to stop. Three of the five 'story ideas' from the Treatment became the fundamental elements of filming carried out in the period October-December 2001. Youth worker Emma Lowe was the original focus of our interest in the Raploch Youth Initiative (RYI), although as filming progressed we looked at the activities of the project more broadly. Based at Raploch Community Centre the RYI project brought us in direct contact with local teenagers and gave a portrait of their everyday recreational activities. Our first day of shooting was at RYI on 25th October 2001 nine months after our first research meetings. Filming

began with preparations for the Halloween Party, a sequence towards the end of Programme 1.

Raploch Primary School (RPS) also provided a location through which we could show the lives and aspirations of local children and families. Head teacher, Anne Stewart, proved to be a willing participant and we were able to identify developing stories, such as the rehearsals and preparations for the school pantomime, around which we structured a planned schedule for filming. Kevin McKinlay was also a key focus and we could follow his progress at Wallace High School, with two local football clubs and with the Scotland Schoolboys team. This gave us a continuing story which seemed emblematic of many teenage boys' aspirations to become a professional footballer. All these three stories provided material throughout the twelve month period and are featured in all six programmes.

Two of the stories from our Treatment proved to be more problematic. There was no immediate focus for filming with outreach worker, Gerry McGarvey, as issues of confidentiality made our initial contacts with his clients difficult to establish. We continued to liaise with the office of the Children's Panel in order to identify a possible family, however, this was unsuccessful. By spending time in the community our research did establish new leads from which we developed alternative 'story ideas'. We learned of unemployed school leaver, Kendall McGuigan, aged sixteen, who local people suggested was 'good enough to be a professional singer'. We saw Kendall's story of her attempts to get experience in the music business as a parallel to Kevin's bid for football success. In the first few months of filming her selection to take

part in the Stirling Council Christmas pageant provided a number of filming opportunities. This continued as she pursued other singing projects with the Tollbooth Art Centre, a talent contest in Motherwell and with the Prince's Trust training scheme. Kendall features in five out six programmes.

As an alternative to following a family going through the Children's Panel system we were introduced to the McGowan family by staff at Holy Trinity Primary School. Steven was an unemployed single dad, bringing up two primary school children, Dylan and Jerry-Lee. As he was a volunteer helper with school activities this provided a good way to link school and home. Steven was open about the problems he faced in attempts to recover from his previous addiction to heroin. This was a powerful story which featured in three programmes. Although he gave signed consent from the outset Steven was a volatile subject and sometimes unreliable as a contributor. The story of the McGowan family features in three of the six programmes. As with the other stories this enabled us to film young people who were receiving support from Children's Services, reflecting the integrated approach of the council working in a community setting.

With 18 weeks off-line editing time allocated I arranged three four week blocs during the filming period (December/January, April, June) with a final six week bloc scheduled to begin in the second half of August. The first edit bloc was the first opportunity to familiarise the editor, Gary Scott, with the footage shot. The role of the editor in these types of projects is to provide an assessment of the footage from the viewpoint of someone who has not been influenced by the contributors and not present during filming who can look at

the material in a similar way to the audience. With the high ratio of filming it was important to identify as early as possible how we would construct scenes and sequences from the actuality which had been recorded.

After digitising and logging the tapes we created a system modifying the non-linear computer edit software giving each shot a unique address, linking the 'story sequence' and the date of filming. Having digitised the material we began to edit rough scenes with durations of around five to ten minutes. Using the rough notes made during filming I worked with Gary to identify 'key moments' from the reality we had filmed. The first bloc of editing enabled us to start to assess how our 'characters' came across on-screen. This gave us confidence in our main stories and in our approach to filming but also left us aware that we needed to expand the range of stories further in order to start to reflect the whole community.

The first new 'story' which we followed in January 2002 was a new initiative led by Youth Development worker, Gerry McGarvey, working with a small group of vulnerable children from both Raploch Primary and from St Mary's RC Primary. This session called 'The Tuesday Club', provided intensive support for a group who teachers felt would benefit from support in preparation to moving up to secondary school. In this way the proposal to follow McGarvey in the community was adapted to show how this development work linked the schools in the local cluster. Filming took place over the full term with a total of seven sequences over three programmes. This story reflected the integration of Children's Services by showing Youth development work within a school setting and, in one sequence following

McGarvey on a home visit. Thus the integration of services became an element of the narrative, rather than a statement of policy.

A second new story element was to follow workers at AF Cleaning. Through our research we learned that a number of young people from Raploch were working as office and hotel cleaners and this gave a picture of work expectations which contrasted with the aspirations of Kevin and Kendall. We did secure permissions from the Cleaning company management and from the premises where they worked, Stirling Castle, a holiday complex in the Trossachs and the Edinburgh Sheraton Hotel.It proved to be difficult, however, to capture the personalities of those at work. Thus despite a number of days filming this story provided only two completed sequences, one in programme two and one in programme six.

The third new story element was based around a new community health initiative ‘Just Teenagers’, which was a regular local drop-in centre for pregnant teenagers run by midwife, Ann Clubb. The initiative was planned to start in March and during February we negotiated permission to attend with the key proviso that we would not film without the consent of patients and that professional staff would ask patients/clients prior to any approach by the film crew. Through this project we got to know Claire Young and her family. We followed Claire, aged twenty, and expecting her second baby from a first visit to ‘Just Teenagers’. It seemed appropriate to expand the production team for this filming and we recruited Assistant Producer, Beatrix Alexander and researcher Ruth Bebbington. We were aware of a gender imbalance on the production team and wanted to try to off-set this. Beatrix worked on a

freelance basis and was involved in all the filming with Claire from March up to the birth of her baby in July. This led to seven sequences in programmes four, five and six.

The final story we identified was based around the Raploch Pigeon Club. The pigeon racing club was a long-established part of this community and by following the preparations of the Stewart brothers as they trained their pigeons we hoped to reflect life for some of the men in Raploch. This also led us to Archie Wilson, another local man active in country pursuits. These outdoor male hobbies became the ninth ‘story element’ for our filming and feature in three programmes. These nine ‘stories elements’ would be interwoven to create our portrait of this community.

Appendix 5 - Narrative structure

Programme one comprises of nine sequences from four different story lines. It begins with a prologue in which anonymous vox pops introduce the setting in their own words and accents, telling the audience that here you'll find "such a feeling of community". It is as though the series is starting early one morning. From the outset the scenes filmed show examples of innovative support from Stirling Social Services such as a school Breakfast Club but shown from the children's point of view. Having established the tone the commentary provides more detailed information.

The four initial story settings are introduced together with the device of interweaving sequences, with punctuation linking GV shots (general views) between these scenes which convey a sense of time and place. In this programme there is a longer sequence to introduce Kevin McKinlay's backstory and establish the legitimacy of his professional ambitions. We establish a strategy of using interview material to provide voice over which is underlaid behind the actuality footage to convey background information such as how Kevin was previously spotted by Chelsea scout, Harry Dunn.

To create a sense of pace, as well as the present tense of the commentary, it is as though we are progressing through a single day, returning to school for an afternoon class, later moving to the Community Centre for an early evening youth club party and finally following a late night disco where Kendall entertains family and friends. This is an overlaid chronology to create development for the narrative as the events, although all from this period, took place on a number of different days. Also we establish in this

programme a convention of using background music to give a rhythm, which helps condense and ellide sequences at the same time as setting the mood. Thus Elvis Presley's *'A little less conversation a little more action'* provides an implicit comment on the football match sequence which is supported by the irony in the commentary: 'It's a funny old game football……'. Using these techniques real life is reframed within a constructed narrative.

The key objective of the first programme is to introduce the setting and main characters. From Programme 2 onwards the pace and structure adopt a structure in which each programme has around 12 sequences all between 1½ to 3½ minutes. This style of pacing mirrors the story-telling in the television soap format, with a structure of fast moving intercut scenes, usually around eighteen in each 30 minutes episode, and an overlay of story beats creating tension and drama. Our programmes provided similar beats. For example, in the sequence introducing Steven McGowan as a single father volunteering to help at PE classes, his interview provides the information about his struggle to overcome his addiction to heroin and how: 'Sometimes the kids were frightened of me'. With the editing of these sequences we sought to heighten the drama of the reality. We sought out the moments where the poignant comments to camera of our real life characters crystallized the moment and expressed the central reason a sequence was included. At the end of programme two, we see Ashley in her role as Dick Whittington after the performance of the school pantomime, proud and elated: "I just want to do it all over and over again. I just want to do it forever". Through observed moments such as this, purposely placed as the climax of

the programme, we reconstructed reality into stories which had a similar pace as in television continuing drama series.

This was the narrative style throughout the series, with the introduction of the new story elements (the Tuesday Club, Just Teenagers and the Pigeon Club) in programmes three and four, and the narrative structure following a similar pattern. The defining feature of television soaps is that they run continuously, our first series was limited to six programmes and in the final episode it was important to find a way to construct a natural ending. Three story elements gave us material which helped to provide a sense of conclusion and also imply the continuity of life in this community. The scenes of the primary school children welcoming the Queen on her Silver Jubilee tour, the induction at the High School and the leavers' ceremony at the end of the school year all gave us opportunity to draw this story to a close. Kevin's leaving party and his journey to Chelsea's Stamford Bridge stadium to sign his contract as a professional also gave an ending to this chapter of his story. The birth of Claire's baby also provided an event which signified the renewal and continuity of life.

Appendix 6 - *Raploch Stories Revisited* - Programme Pitch

The research and development for *Raploch Stories Revisited* depended on a different type of pitch from our original idea. Rather than research and create a new programme idea our task was to convince Ewan Angus, still the commissioning editor at BBC Scotland, that the changes in the lives of our original contributors and in the wider Raploch community were significant enough to appeal to an audience eager to find out how lives had changed and create a new type of compelling film. It was also important to make the argument and that five years on was the right time to undertake this project. The research for the programme depended on our continuing contacts with those contributors. The result of this was that the process was quicker than in 2001. Campbell and I had maintained contact with most of the people who had appeared in series 1. In particular there had been developments for Kevin McKinlay and Ashley Cameron which we believed would capture the interest of the audience. At the end of *Raploch Stories* we left Kevin in the Chelsea FC dressing room on the first steps of a professional career in first class football. In the autumn of 2006 we knew that he had left Chelsea and was now playing for Ross County, a small Scottish club. This provided a starting point to show, through Kevin's story, the resilience and focus required to face the challenges of professional ambitions. We were also in contact with Ashley, who had been in P7 at Raploch Primary School in 2002. Ashley had featured as the lead in the school pantomime and had also been a member of the Tuesday Club. At the time of filming the first series we were aware that Ashley was in care but, for reasons of confidentiality, this

information was never referred to in the programmes. In the summer of 2006 Ashley had left school and was eager to establish herself as an independent young woman. She was now old enough to give her own informed consent to take part in filming and she was determined to talk frankly about the experience of living in foster care since she was a baby.

On the strength of our pitch of these two stories and our proposal to re-contact the other original contributors Angus began the process of commissioning a one-off 60 minutes programme in April 2006. The brief was significantly different as BBC Scotland's commissioning needs had changed and their focus by 2006 was on producing programmes for fewer 'opt-out' slots but aiming for greater impact with the smaller number of programmes. Therefore, from the outset we were told that this would be a single programme rather than a series. The process of writing the treatment for the programme was conducted over a short period and required a simple, short account of our proposal.

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Wester Hailes -The Huts (1 x 52 mins Channel 4 1985) Director Des Bradley Skyline Productions

Leithers (52 mins, Scott, Channel 4 1987) – for Channel 4's *People to People* series.

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Postcards from Sighthill (30 mins, Scott, STV 2001) - documentary about the everyday lives of refugees and asylum-seekers living on a Glasgow housing estate

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