Ground-breaking documentary on Deaf rights



Man using British Sign Language BDA Archive

Power in our Hands, a compilation of historical archive footage of the Deaf community, premiered at BFI Southbank on Wednesday 11 November.

It is part of the wider SHARE: The Deaf Visual Archive, a British Deaf Association (BDA) project funded with an HLF grant of £719,100.

The forgotten footage has been compiled into a documentary about the recognition of British Sign Language (BSL) and Deaf rights. Unlike the Civil Rights movements of other minority groups, is not a well-known subject in the hearing community; the footage gives a fascinating insight into what the Deaf community has experienced in their struggle for equality.

[quote=Rachel Halsted, HLF London Committee member]“*Power in our Hands* is an inspiring documentary which captures the stories of those who have lived through a period of significant change."[/quote]

Dr Terry Riley OBE, Chair of the BDA, said: “To see this old film footage was an emotional occasion for me. For many years, I never really knew or saw my language on screen. So to be able to sit down at the BFI and see BSL on a par with any other language was a wonderful thing. To watch a bygone era - one I thought was lost forever to the world is just magical.”

Rachel Hasted, HLF London Committee member, said: "*Power in our Hands* is an inspiring documentary which captures the stories of those who have lived through a period of significant change. We're extremely proud to be the main funder of this film as well as the wider Deaf Visual Archive which is set to become an important online resource for the future."

Public screenings will take place in cinemas across the UK from February 2016. In addition to the documentary, the BDA has created teaching resources for use in both Deaf and mainstream schools on the SHARE: The Deaf Visual Archive Historypin page.

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