***Bugle Documentary Journal***

For the second radio documentary, I wanted to create a piece I personally found interesting and engaging for a younger audience, as I feel that looking back on my previous project it was more suited to an older age group. The research took several weeks to identify a topic that young people would enjoy. Although in my opinion there was little inspiration and options within and near to Lincoln that were easy to gain access to and manage independently. After the first few weeks, I had a meeting with my tutor who told me about a local sound artist Amie Slavin who was looking for students to work alongside her for her latest sound piece entitled “Call up the Men”.

The piece is based around the Bugle, an instrument that is well known among an older age group and was used within the armed forces and military for hundreds of years. Amie wanted to capture what it was like for soldiers reacting to and responding to the Bugle calls within battle. Contact was made with Amie to ascertain how she wanted me to contribute to her project.

Amie was looking for another project to be in conjunction with her own, which will act as a “behind the scenes” look at “Call up the Men”. This would involve me gathering interviews with the people who worked alongside Amie to create the piece. The main interviews will be conducted with Alan Tamblyn a member of the National Buglers Association and Major Chris Lawton, a retired officer at the Durham Light Infantry. Other interviews will be gathered for example a recording with Amie herself, and various other people helping with the production of the piece.

The intention is to discover more about their experience with Bugles, find out Amie’s vision for the “Call up the Men”, as well as gaining snippet clips of the team recording “Call up the Men” in the radio studio. After discussion, I was happy to take on this project as a radio documentary as I think it is a major advantage to work alongside a “real-life” client who will be able to give advice and guidance where necessary. Although slightly disappointed with the topic of Bugles being a theme as this instrument is not associated with a young target audience. It was decided to look at this in a positive light and aim to target the piece at young people to inform them about the Bugle instrument, as well as target to an older age group.

List of interviews

* Interview with Alan Tamblyn on The National Bugle Association
* Interview with Amie identifying what she hopes to achieve from Call up the Men
* Interview with Chris Lawton about his experience with reacting to Bugle calls
* Sound Clips from various recordings of “Call up the Men”
* Recording of a Bugler describing their instrument in comparison to someone who knows little about the instrument
* Sound clips of the instrument being played for background audio

Within a few weeks of contacting Amie, she put me in touch with various interviewees. A date was organised to interview Alan. As Alan lives in Bath, the original idea was for travel expenses to be covered when going to record, however it was decided this option would be more time-consuming and expensive. We overcame this problem by organising a phone interview instead. I devised a set of questions for Alan, however when I tried to book a recording studio to carry out the interview, there were none available for the time slot we agreed on. It was decided to take the matter into my own hands and use a phone-recording app and a Zoom Mic to alternatively record the interview.

Unfortunately when I listened back to the audio, I realised that due to using two pieces of electronic equipment close to one another, the audio was of extremely bad quality therefore making it unusable. Fortunately, Alan was very understanding of the situation and was happy to record again a few days later.

Another problem I came across whilst in the recording process was interviewing Major Chris Lawton. At first I struggled to remember how to use Radio Studio 1 in the Media Building, as I had not had the need to conduct a phone interview since first year. However I managed to get help from other media students and some staff that were available at the time and began to proceed. Yet when we began the interview it was obvious that the audio quality was not as good as the rest of the audio recorded. It was unsure whether this was due to a bad phone signal, the type of phone Chris was using or a problem with the recording desk. Luckily the interview itself was quite short in comparison to the others I had previously conducted and it may be possible to adjust this problem in the editing stage.

The majority of interviews went well overall; a problem that I managed to avoid throughout was talking to my interviewees whilst recording. As mentioned in my previous documentary journal, a problem I came across last time was that I chose to speak and acknowledge comments during the interviews. I did this because I did not want the interviewee to feel uncomfortable by me remaining silent throughout the interview. I wanted to gain more of a conversational interview to put them at ease. However this led to difficulties during the editing process as after listening to the piece I realised this made the audio sound unprofessional. This year, I learnt from my errors and ensured I remained silent throughout to avoid making the same mistake again.

As predicted the editing stage proved to be difficult, after listening to the audio clips and several interviews it was obvious that the recording was not of a high quality therefore the editing proved to be difficult. One of the main reasons was the sound of the air conditioning unit along with other background noises intruding on the recording. Fortunately two recordings were made simultaneously, one in the official recording studio, therefore without air conditioning noise and that is the copy that was used.

In the recording with the two main people for the documentary there was too many filler words and too much rambling. It is important to cut out for filler words to ensure a smooth interview and less rambling. The first edit was too drastic and the interviewees sounded robotic. I rectified this by checking the edit more regularly to ensure a more natural flow of dialogue.

Another problem encountered was with Major Chris Lawton’s interview, which was almost inaudible, despite using the same recording software as with other interviewees. On reflection it was decided to include the clearer parts, as it was an important and integral part of the documentary.

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