

Reports from the Regions

North West

Cheshire

I have dealt with several enquiries re equipment, sources of funding etc but the main area of activity that I have been involved in is within our own Cheshire County Council Cultural Services Department. The Home Library Service in Cheshire is currently delivered in partnership with WRVS and their volunteers. Home Library Service clients had expressed a wish in a recent survey to participate more actively in local history and so the idea for an oral history project was born. Funding has been secured through Access for All, an archive home for the project has been identified at the Salt Museum and Networker Ros Livshin has been contracted to provide training for the project. The project is currently running as a pilot in the Northwich area but it is hoped that it can be rolled out to other parts of the county in the future.

Emma Chaplin

Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside

The North West Oral History Network continues to grow and now has around 150 members. During the last year many new projects and individuals have joined the Network recording a wide variety of subjects across the north west. Many of these projects have been established with Heritage Lottery Fund grants. About 25 oral history training sessions have been held for Network members and others undertaking recording projects. An Open Day was held in May for Network members and, although not as well attended as in previous years, it proved useful for those who did attend, in that members could meet and exchange information and ideas. Many proposed projects are awaiting decisions from the HLF and it is hoped that a significant number of these will gain funding and begin recording soon.

Many of the projects are depositing either their master recordings with North West Sound Archive or allowing the Archive to take security copies of the material produced, thus ensuring the long term preservation of the collections. Various members of the North West Composers Group have also started depositing copies of their works with the Sound Archive. Besides these deposits the Sound Archive has taken in several new collections and continues with its own recording programme. However the Sound Archive's own recording has been somewhat curtailed after the retirement of the Sound Archive Support Officer. This post has now been filled and recording work has restarted.

Also curtailing the recording work is the fact that the Sound Archive has had to move into temporary accommodation while major building and renovation work takes place on the Clitheroe Castle site. It is hoped that we will be moving back to the Castle site towards the end of 2008. (All

contact details remain the same whilst we are in the temporary accommodation).

Enquiries to use the collections have risen considerably during the last twelve months with various television and radio stations using the material as well as museums, libraries, students and members of the public undertaking local history research.

Andrew Schofield

Greater Manchester

In the last year I have continued working with the Association of Jewish Refugees, bringing their Refugee Voices, Audio Visual Project to a conclusion. By the end of December 2006 all 150 interviews had been completed throughout the country and the Project entered its next phase of transcribing the interviews and checking the transcripts. One should never underestimate the time spent on the checking process, which can be quite arduous, especially if there are foreign words or names. The project is due to finish by the end of 2007 when the Archive will be made available in different repositories in the UK and in Europe.

Following the report commissioned last year, I have been helping to advise Manchester City Council together with Manchester Metropolitan University on their plans to apply for funding for an Oral History Information Hub in the City which will be a central source of information, providing advice, resources, training and opportunities to share experiences and good practice. This project would be a focus for established projects and a stimulus for new ones, documenting ideas of identity and belonging at a key moment of change and transition. The project aims to establish the hub at MMU, to develop a database and website and to be involved in outreach activities.

Over the last year I have been contacted by a number of fledgling projects for advice and for training where projects have received funding. The Oral History Online Network has been invaluable in providing advice and information, ensuring that the most up to date advice is given to proposed projects on equipment etc.

Ros Livshin

North East

County Durham

Oral history continues to thrive in the North east thanks mainly to Heritage Lottery funding. In the last twelve months I have been involved in a variety of oral history projects funded by HLF either in an advisory capacity or delivering training.

'Up and down the Street' Project - Chester le Street

The Heritage Group of Chester le Street has embarked on a major new project called 'Up and Down the Street'. The social history of the Front Street over the last 100 years will be explored and a collection of still and video images will be combined with oral testimony collected from the people who worked and shopped Up and Down the Street. In time this will be available to the public through a searchable database using Comma software (<http://www.commanet.org/English/Default.htm>).

Durham High School for Girls

Durham High School for Girls will celebrate its 115th anniversary in 2009. School librarian, Jacqui Durcan, wishes to mark the occasion by producing a social history of the school using the oral reminiscences of 'old girls' who attended the school over the last eighty years.

'Let us think of tomorrows past' - Kelloe Community Partnership

This 'Your Heritage' project has been established to raise awareness of Kelloe's heritage and to encourage the local community to become involved in its preservation. A major feature of this project will be an intergenerational oral history project in which the memories of miners and their families will be collected.

Seaton Sluice and Old Hartley Local History Society

As a result of this Heritage Lottery funded project the future of the Grade II listed Watch House building in Seaton Sluice and its unique collection of maritime exhibits has been secured. The collection includes photographic and documentary evidence relating to the activities and social history of the Seaton Sluice Volunteer Lifesaving Company (SSVLC). Part of the grant was used to train the members of the Seaton Sluice and Old Hartley Local History Society in the collection, preservation and presentation of the oral testimonies of the members and families of the SSVLC (<http://www.seaton-sluice.co.uk/>).

'Whose town is it anyway?' - ARC Stockton

Young Roots is a newly formed theatre group from Stockton-on-Tees. The group is made up of teenagers from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Young Roots has been working with Theatre Cap-a-Pie to create a new performance based on the cultural history of their town. They have combined historical research with intergenerational oral history interviews to highlight the wide variety of settlers who have contributed to the making Stockton (<http://www.arconline.co.uk/news-story.php?id=37>).

'Distinctly Durham' - Gainford

This project has been designed to culminate in a touring community exhibition that will celebrate the diversity and distinctiveness of County Durham's heritage. Gainford Local History Society is one of several groups, including one made up of HMP inmates, who will be researching Durham's history and heritage to discover what sets it apart from other counties. The Gainford group in particular were interested in exploring the use of oral history in their research.

Centenary Celebrations - Annfield Plain Library

Annfield Plain Library is the only Carnegie library left in County Durham and will celebrate its centenary in 2008. A programme of events to mark the occasion will begin in January and continue through to December. A cross-section of people of Annfield Plain will be interviewed to discover what the library means to them and their testimonies will be included in a DVD of still and moving images of Annfield Plain and district which will be distributed in the community throughout the centenary year.

Sheila Forster

Sunderland - Living History North East

The North East Regional Oral History Centre

Living History North East will officially launch the new Regional Oral History Centre later this year. We have established a centre that can be used to encourage and develop oral history projects throughout the region. LHNE continue to offer guidance, advice, information, and training to other organisations or small community groups embarking on new oral history projects. The centre incorporates a state of the art media facility that will be used to further develop our audio and video projects/training. LHNE continue to work in partnership with Tyne and Wear Archives attempting to digitise some of the 6,000 reel to reels held in their collection. This is a long term piecemeal project. The Regional Oral History Database continues to grow as other organisations recordings are logged onto the system.

The North East Oral History Network

MLA North East has now officially handed over the responsibility for the network to a steering panel currently comprising, Janette Hilton of Living History North East, Jo Bath, Beamish Museum; John Sadler of the DLI and Julie Hawthorn Durham Community Heritage Officer. The panel aim to continue the regular meetings and to review the changing needs in within the north east network. Summaries of other projects in the North East are provided by colleagues below.

Janette Hilton

Building Bridges of Understanding: an interfaith Oral History Project

The Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund financed this project which recorded and documented over 25 interviews of individuals from the six major faiths. This was an intergenerational project that produced a seven banner exhibition; a documentary DVD; and six educational resource boxes. The project was launched from the National Glass Centre and has since been on loan across the region.

'Shipwrights and Singin' Hinnies Project' Northumbria Coalition Against Crime and The Hendon Young People project

In January 2007 the Northumbria Coalition Against Crime and the Hendon Young People's Project started the 'Shipwrights and Singin' Hinnies Project' to research the history of shipbuilding in Sunderland and the

impact the industry made on local families. The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery through their Young Roots Programme that encourages young people to research their local history. At the end of the project the young people will produce a DVD and book that will be distributed free of charge to the local community.

The research has taken two forms - visits to maritime sites and interviews with former shipyard workers and their families. The young people have been made very welcome at the Sunderland Maritime Heritage Centre, Sunderland Fish Quay and the former Doxford's Shipyard and witnessed first hand the work going at these sites. Interviews with former workers and experts have given the young people an insight into an industry that earned Sunderland the title of 'the biggest shipbuilding town in the world'. Their DVD will be available in November 2007 and the book published in March 2008.

Andrew Clark

Rediscovering communities & community life through reminiscence

This award-winning user-led project records the memories of older people in North Tyneside in the North East of England and disseminates them on a website to a world wide audience. The project has been running for over five years with support from a variety of grant funders and we have been able to create an archive of over 400 local memories.

Much of the work is undertaken by volunteers and the project offers new opportunities for leisure and learning for older people, encouraging them to make links with others to combat social isolation and enabling them to become more familiar with computers and the internet. Volunteers manage the project, give talks on the material in the collection and contribute to other local history activities in the area.

Recently our reminiscence work in sheltered housing schemes, undertaken in partnership with the GIFTT project, has produced wonderful oral history material, some of which has been published on our website and in booklet and CD format. Collaborative working and a user-led approach has deepened our understanding of contemporary community life and made us realise that 'community' means different things to different people, especially where reminiscence is concerned.

Kath Smith
Pip McKeever

Beamish Museum

Beamish Museum's oral history archive has grown at an unprecedented rate this year. We have worked in partnership with Newcastle City Library to ensure survival and cataloguing of their oral history collection (including a notable set of interviews with world war two female shipyard workers), and with the North Pennines AONB Trust to produce and safeguard oral histories of "Haytime Memories", charting farming practices on the rare upland hay meadows of the Pennines. We have also made a

home for the Tyneside life collection of author Jim McGurn, and the oral histories resulting from the Doggarts Project, which in 2005 produced an exhibition on Doggarts department store and its role in the life of Bishop Auckland. More audio material is now available through the Collections Online website, while full access remains available through the Regional Resource Centre.

Jo Bath

Yorkshire

North Yorkshire

We have been working with York Archaeological Trust who are using some oral history in their work. There is a big five year dig in the Hungate area of York, and I have updated the oral history book about this area, 'Rich in all but Money', to complement some of the early 20th century items found there. Up until the 1930s, this area was the poorest in York with literally thousands of houses crammed into a very small area. The houses were eventually demolished. It was also the location for a lot of industry and there will be an oral history project on 'Working Hungate 1938 to now', starting later this year, interviewing those who worked there.

I am now working on a Second World War book which will include some of the oral history I collected in 2005-6 about York on the Home Front. I am also hoping to interview one of the German pilots who bombed York in 1942, and who has recently visited the city, which will give a different perspective on the subject. Both of these projects involve some work with local schools.

Another of our members, Mike Race, is interviewing owners of small businesses in York which have closed down. York was once the scene of a lot of industry, which is now almost gone, and local businesses which have been forced to close down by bigger conglomerates coming here.

We are awaiting the result of another application to Awards for All to digitise our collection. We have 500 interviews on tape, and need to make them available to a much wider audience as well as preserving them for the future, but obviously we need funds to do this. There are not many avenues for this kind of funding, especially as York is perceived to be a 'rich' area. If we are unsuccessful again, we will have to search for other sources, so if anyone has any advice that would be very useful.

Van Wilson

South Yorkshire

In March 2007, South Yorkshire's 7th Regional Network meeting brought oral historians to Dore village to share ideas and practice. Dore Oral History Group hosted the day and presented an exhibition of their work. Oral presentations were given by Tony Wright, Wild Rose Heritage and

Arts, who spoke about a substantial Heritage Lottery Fund project in Hebden Bridge, 'Generations Talking', as well as the launch of their website: <http://www.wildrosearts.net>. A fascinating talk by Brian Elliot presented oral history work with ex-miners: 'Pit Voices: A Yorkshire Mineworkers' Oral History Project'. In a lively discussion, the group considered recording equipment, specifically, issues affecting choice, purchase and experience of use. The next event, our 8th, is in November and will be hosted by a project documenting the history of Kiveton and Wales, an ex-mining community: www.kivetonwaleshistory.co.uk

The following projects provide just a few examples of oral history in South Yorkshire, but they give a flavour of the range of work currently in progress:

The AHRC funded **Theatre Archive Project** (www.bl.uk/theatrchive), a collaboration between the British Library and the University of Sheffield, is reinvestigating the key period of British theatre between 1945 and 1968. To this end, a unique archive of interviews with leading theatre practitioners of the period has been created. Full transcripts of these are available online, together with a description of the British Library's key holdings of the period, relating to leading figures such as John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson and Cedric Hardwicke. A further strand of the project has aimed to make good the deficiencies in the British Library's scripts collection, focusing on the (often ignored) post-1968 requirement that a copy of every new play script performed in a licensed theatre venue be deposited at the British Library. The project aims to compare lists compiled from theatres of plays performed with the Library's holdings and track down missing scripts, and has identified over 1,000 missing scripts and recovered nearly 300. The project recently hosted an event looking at an institution that until recently has been relatively neglected by conventional theatre histories: the ground-breaking company led by Joan Littlewood, Theatre Workshop. It explored recollections of practitioners and audience members from this period who have been interviewed by the project.

A joint project between the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Macmillan Palliative Care Unit has established an oral history service. Led by Michelle Winslow (m.winslow@sheffield.ac.uk) and Bill Noble, the service is enabling people with life-threatening illness to produce audio life story recordings. A copy of the recording is made after the interview and given to the interviewee. Recordings are stored securely and made available to family and friends with the patient's permission, and may be used in research with consent. Outcomes for patients can include raised self-esteem, sense of worth, attaching meaning to life experiences, creation of a personal family record, recognition and validation of experience. Outcomes for health professionals include better understanding of living with life-threatening disease, awareness of impact on identity and lifestyle, and insight into relationships between patient, family and professionals.

Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Oral History Project, led by Liz Smith, (lsmith@northern.ac.uk) aims to conserve and use the rich

oral history of the Wentworth estate which is in danger of being forgotten and lost for ever as a generation of previous estate workers pass away. To date, the project has recorded the memories and recollections of a number of older people who have either lived or worked on the estate. This has enabled the Trust to begin to build up a detailed and lasting picture of what it was like to be an estate worker during the 20th century. The project has successfully involved volunteer community archivists who have worked with individuals or groups to record the memories of a range of people from different cultural and social backgrounds.

Volunteers have been able to develop their skills in researching and recording interviews in a digital format and in summarizing and transcribing key sections of the recordings for future use in the interpretation of the site. The outcomes of the project will be shared with local community groups, encouraging community interest in and involvement with the Heritage Access Project and the wider restoration project at Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park. The recordings will be preserved by the Trust, making a valuable contribution to the Trust's future interpretation and educational material.

This year, **Dore Oral History Group** have published *Dore Old School in Records and Recollections*, by John Dunston, and hosted an Old School reunion attended by hundreds of past pupils who reminisced with former classmates. In January 2007 the group took part in the South West Area Panel Road Show (an initiative in Sheffield to improve links between communities, the Council and other agencies) and were awarded a discretionary monetary award for their sound archive. In February, they linked with Sheffield Hallam University, joining a scheme whereby history students take placements with community oral history groups as part of their degree programme. The students recorded and transcribed interviews, resulting in positive outcomes for all involved. An exhibition and further school reunion will take place in October.

The **China in Yorkshire Project**, Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, aims to uncover Chinese treasures and make them widely accessible in exhibitions in the Yorkshire region. A community events programme is planned with publications underpinning each exhibition and web based resources incorporating a heritage trail and educational resources. Key outcomes will be local exhibitions showcasing Chinese treasures within the region, strong links with new audiences and increased curatorial knowledge and expertise. The project is engaging with local Chinese communities in this process, exploring their sense of identity and cultural heritage. A team of volunteer interviewers have attended an oral history training day and the interviewing process is under way.

Kiveton and Wales Oral History Project is recording the heritage of the mining industry in a major community history project that is bringing together the past of this area as a record for future generations. Key outcomes of this HLF project are: a picture museum of photos and local memorabilia; exhibitions of photos, memories, memorabilia and documents; an oral history archive; activity weeks in local schools to

teach local children and students about the area's past; a local history festival; an industrial heritage trail of local historical sights; community coach trips, such as to the National Coal Mining Museum; a book of local people's memories and photos. www.kivetonwaleshistory.co.uk

Michelle Winslow

West Yorkshire

Up and Under Rugby League Project

(www.rugbyleagueoralhistory.co.uk).

This is the largest project in the area. It was awarded a grant of £85,000 by the University of Huddersfield last year with work officially commencing in September 2006. This is an oral history of rugby league in the West Yorkshire area and is organised by the University of Huddersfield. In particular it is collecting the oral memories of players, fans and officials of the game. The intention in the future is to extend this study beyond West Yorkshire. An office and website have now been established with a project manager in post. A PhD student is also on board looking at the Irish influence in rugby league. During the past year some forty face-to-face interviews have taken place and many of these interviews have already been posted on the website.

Cricket History of Calderdale and Kirklees Project

This project was awarded a £43,300 HLF grant in 2003. It is producing a history of village and club cricket in the Calderdale and Kirklees area and is run by the University of Huddersfield. Official funding has now ended but work continues, particularly on the website (www.ckcricketheritage.org) where a number of oral testimonies have been posted. Pamphlets and booklets have been produced and various events held over the past year.

Ethnic Voices: an oral history of the early immigrant communities in the Huddersfield area

The project, which is run by the University of Huddersfield, was last year awarded a grant of £12,000 by HEFCE as a start-up grant to investigate the possibilities of further work in this area. Work commenced in August 2006 and a report has subsequently been produced outlining suitable areas for future focus. As a result, an application has now been made to the HLF for further funding. An office and website have been set up (www.ethnicvoices.org.uk) and some oral testimony has been posted on the website. A PhD student is also involved in the project.

Coxley Live

Funded by the HLF, the project commenced in 2006 and comes to an end in December 2007. It is aimed at collecting and storing a local oral history archive around the local mining communities of Middlestown, Netherton, Overton and Midgley, close to Wakefield. Some training has already taken place and work is now under way on finalising specific areas of study.

The Lawrence Batley Theatre Project

This is a project conceived by the Lawrence Batley theatre in Huddersfield and managed by the University of Huddersfield, and is aimed at archiving as much material as possible to do with the Lawrence Batley theatre and building. Documents, photographs and some oral testimony have been collected in the process. The project had initial funding from the HLF for one year only. This funding has now ended but some work still continues on it.

The Huddersfield Architecture Project

A project run by the Huddersfield Local Architecture Heritage Group and the University of Huddersfield, it received a £43,000 grant from the HLF to document the architectural history of Huddersfield from 1860 onwards. A database has been established with an archive of plans and other documents, including some oral testimony. A website is to be set up in the near future.

Sport in Past Times

A one-year project funded by the HLF to the tune of £49,000 and run by Age Concern Calderdale. This project primarily involves young children from three local schools in recording the memories of older people about sport and leisure in the Calderdale area. The project has now launched and an exhibition is on display at the Piece Hall in Halifax.

Stephen Kelly

East Midlands

Derbyshire

I have not been active in any major projects this year so I have asked the Local Studies Librarian for the county to submit this personal report on my behalf.

Judy Kingscott

For Derbyshire's libraries oral history has again been an important part of our activities, with the Ashover Recording Project expanding to include Clay Cross. Readings from the Clay Cross recordings at the library brought a hugely enthusiastic response and we hope to publish a booklet of local memories next year. This year's publication project has been a book of farming memories from the area between Matlock and Chesterfield. 'Milk, Muck and Memories' should be in the bookshops by November 2007.

We have created a presentation using extracts from the Ashover recordings, entitled 'Life in a village'; it is proving to be popular with local groups. It is interesting to discover that the memories are evocative even for people who do not know the village itself. For example a Welsh woman told me recently they had transported her back to her childhood on her grandmother's hill farm.

In March 2006 we made a long tape recording of Horace Kirk, a man from Cromford, then in his 90s. We were greatly touched to receive a telephone

call from his daughter recently. She told us he had died and she was so very grateful the tapes had been made. She had been trying to persuade him to do it for 20 years and they are now very precious to her. She had talked to one of his friends who had come to the funeral and realised that he too had a wonderful story to tell (he worked in the lead mining industry), and has put him in touch with us. We plan to record his life story shortly.

In terms of donations and publications there has not been a lot. *Memories of the Derbyshire Coalfields* by David Bell (Countryside Books 2006 ISBN 978 1 84674 003 9 price £7.99) is a well-produced and readable collection of oral memories.

We also had a donation of a DVD of the war memories of a Sherwood Forester, Bernard Ellis of Riddings (1911-1985), together with a folder of transcripts and photographs. This was produced and donated by his son Ronald Ellis.

Ruth Gordon

Leicestershire & Rutland

The Media Archive for Central England (MACE) is now sharing office space with the East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA) at the Centre for Urban History at the University of Leicester. MACE is the recognised body responsible for collecting, preserving and making accessible the moving image heritage of the East and West Midlands, and was previously based at the University of Nottingham. Have a look at the MACE website at <http://www.macearchive.org.uk/Home.html> for more information.

This arrangement enables EMOHA to work more closely with MACE to make the audio-visual heritage of Leicestershire and the wider East Midlands region more accessible to the public. A joint one day event was held in September 2007 to explore Leicester's history since 1918, covering subjects such as the Leicester pageant of 1932, the Second World War, the post war redevelopment of Leicester, and more recent events such as migration into the City. Recorded memories in the EMOHA collections stretch back to the late 19th century, while the earliest film of Leicester in MACE's collections dates from 1912.

The content of the Leicestershire Villages website has been considerably extended over the past year with the addition of new extracts from oral histories at <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/leicsvillages.html>. The EMOHA website is also hosting content from the National Forest LANDShapes project, which was completed in 2006, and the East Midlands Economic Network's Preserving Asian Heritage project.

Thirty six recordings and transcripts from LANDShapes can be accessed at <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/resources/landshapes/index.html>. The Preserving Asian Heritage tells the story of the Asian Diaspora from Uganda, and their arrival in the UK and Leicester in particular. It does so through an oral history DVD, an exhibition in partnership with Leicester

Museum Services and the video and photo clips available at <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/resources/asian/index.html>.

In September 2007 De Montfort University hosted a symposium as part of the Writing British Asian Cities AHRC project, with contributions on oral history from Cynthia Brown, Co-ordinator of the Oral History Society Regional Network, and Colin Hyde of EMOHA. Further details of the project can be accessed at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/brasian/leicester.htm>.

The Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS) has established a project based on the National Diving Centre at Stoney Cove Quarry, Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire. This will look at the various aspects of re-use of quarries as dive centres once they are flooded. One of the aims of the project is to examine the effects on the local population with regard to historic employment in a working quarry, the effects of its closure and subsequent re-use as a dive centre. The contact for this is Ian Barefoot, Project Officer, 'Diving Into History', www.nasportsmouth.org.uk, 02392-818419, 07876-355121.

Leicestershire County Council's Community Heritage Initiative, which conserves and documents the county's natural heritage, is embarking on a programme of interviews with natural historians, including collectors and those involved in nature conservation and biological recording. The aim is to get a balanced picture of natural history studies from practitioners in the post-World War II period, and to capture some of the personal experience and insights that have traditionally been excluded from the 'scientific' recording of natural history. The interviews will be conducted in partnership with EMOHA, and placed in its archive. It is also intended to transcribe parts of the interviews relevant to the Council's natural history collections, and to keep the transcripts alongside the specimens.

Cynthia Brown

Nottinghamshire

Although I have not been involved personally, there are currently many local history societies in Nottinghamshire recording oral history as a part of their projects. The following projects are just a sample of what is currently happening: Pancake Hill project, East Bridgford (the possible site of a motte and bailey castle); Lambley Historic Heritage Project; Warsop Vale Village: a history of the village and Warsop colliery from 1900 to the present day.

As part of my work in the Local Studies section of Nottingham Central Library, I am able to support local projects such as those mentioned, by the loan of equipment and providing advice. Unfortunately the equipment we have available to loan out is a little out of date as it comprises of minidisc recorders, which have obviously been superseded now. So if the group are bidding for funds for their projects I will advise them to include funding for more up to date equipment in their bid. However some still opt to use the minidisc recorders. Two other current project groups that have

borrowed library equipment are the Hucknall Heritage Archive project, and the 'History of Tollerton Airfield from inception to the present'.

The Rediscovering the lost village of Greasley project has now been completed and CD copies of the oral history recordings have been given to the Local Studies library. I believe that they may create a DVD, a copy of which I hope they will also donate to the library.

The Nottinghamshire Oral History Collection, stored in Nottingham Local Studies library, continues to be accessed on a regular basis by students and readers, either at the library or by using the loan system. Examples of this use are as follows:

- Recordings showing the range of jobs and industries within Nottingham were recently used at the library with a class of teenagers for a school project.
- The recordings about DH Lawrence, of interviews with his elder brother George and his niece, continue to be used in exhibitions about the writer.
- Transcripts of the oral history collection recordings continue to be used for research and also in publications, especially those that relate to the lace industry.

So, there is a lot of oral history being created currently around Nottinghamshire and that which has been created and archived already is also being accessed and used too.

Christina Raven-Conn

West Midlands

Overview by Julia Letts

I conducted a survey for the MLA West Midlands earlier this year, to establish the extent, scope and value of oral history activity currently going on in this region. It revealed a large number of existing oral history collections and on-going projects, some well-funded and professionally managed, others coping on a shoestring and run by highly motivated volunteers. My report listed approximately 95 groups or organisations, which responded to the survey.

Areas of concern most commonly highlighted in my report were: lack of time and funding, mixed advice/ general confusion on best practice and what equipment to buy, need for better guidance in digitisation and long-term preservation of recordings, capacity to make recordings and transcripts more accessible to public, and lack of technical or specialist knowledge.

Many organisations in the West Midlands echoed the thoughts of Coventry Arts and Heritage, who wrote: 'As with many other organisations, our main difficulty is that we have been collecting oral history for many years

with no formalised strategy and therefore there are many different formats, recording procedures etc... We would most appreciate a central body for the region, which could provide assistance, networking opportunities etc. in a similar manner to something like the North West Sound Archive. We feel we do have a wide array of skills within our own organisation, but it would be useful to have a central source of support and advice'.

Other projects in the region that I have had some contact with this year include:

Croome Court, Worcestershire – an oral history project, run by a volunteer group 'Friends of Croome Park'. Interviews have been carried out with over 30 people involved in the Court's diverse past, as an RAF base, special school, Hari Krishna commune and private estate. Open Days have been held, and there is a permanent display of photos and captions at the Court. A booklet is in the process of being written.

Worcester Porcelain Museum, Worcester – 'The Workers' Story'. 30 Oral History interviews completed so far on life behind the scenes at the Royal Worcester Porcelain factory from 1930 onwards. Interviews include memories of casting, engraving, painting, gilding, burnishing, printing, packing, and working the old bottle kilns. Photos and artefacts have also been collected and a reunion held.

North Arden Heritage Trail, Warwickshire – this project, covering 12 parishes, hopes to combine oral history, sculpture, natural history, photography etc, in several parish 'walks'. The first trail loop, The Quarryman's Walk, was launched in June. Footpaths have been improved and sandstone sculptures installed along the route.

Marton Past and Present, Welshpool - this small group of volunteers have been involved in putting together a display of archive photographs, and are now about to embark on interviewing people with memories of the village.

Hereford Cider Museum, Hereford – 'Apples and Pears Past'. Over 50 interviews have been gathered and processed on all aspects of cider production, from traditional farm cider-making, to large scale production by companies such as Bulmers and Westons. The oral history has been fully integrated into the Cider Museum's displays, with audio clips from interviews available through sound posts and computer terminals.

Women from the Vale, Evesham – an oral history project run by WiNN Evesham (a group involved in improving the health and well-being of older people in the Evesham area). This project is just starting. Thirty life-story interviews are planned, which will be turned into a radio play by a professional script writer. The group is working in partnership with Evesham High School and Evesham Library.

Views from Shropshire, Telford – Mana from 'Bridges' in Telford has been running a Black and Minority oral history project 2006/7. Amongst

other things, she has collected various interviews with groups and individuals, and has produced an exhibition of photos and artefacts.

Holy Trinity Catholic Media Arts College, Birmingham – This school has been awarded HLF funding for a project called 'Urban Voices', which will involve students recording oral history interviews with members of the community, with a focus on the area's Caribbean and Irish heritage.

Smethwick Heritage Centre – this group is just starting up an oral history project focusing on the recent history of Smethwick.

Primrose Hill Park Heritage Project, Coventry – this group started an HLF funded project in December 2006, recording memories about the park, its use in the past and impact on the surrounding area. They are working with young people who will be recording the interviews.

The Rural Media Company, Hereford - a large-scale 'digital stories' project is currently in development, covering rural life and farming in Herefordshire, and potentially other parts of the West Midlands.

Worcestershire

Worcestershire Record Office

The office's oral history team has been meeting on a much more regular basis this last year to reassess our role and to look at how best to use our time. None of the staff who comprise the team work solely on oral history but have an array of other Record Office tasks to undertake as well. This does mean that oral history work falls off the radar from time to time. The prospect of the Record Office being moved to a brand new building is also looming larger on the horizon and will inevitably affect what we are able to do in the short term, but it will provide us with much improved facilities in the longer term including for audio visual material.

Earlier this year we acquired some excellent, easy to use CD recorders, together with a 'listening post' for taking out to events so that up to six people can listen to a recording simultaneously. Last time we had taken recordings out to play at an event, staff had found it hard to give everyone who wanted to listen the opportunity to do so with a machine with only one set of headphones - so this can only be an improvement.

We have continued the ongoing task of checking the transcripts of our World War II project interviews. This has been a long task. Tom Bomford, one of our regular volunteers, has been very much involved in this task. As we have no staff whose time is wholly dedicated to oral history work, we are always very grateful to the help given to us by volunteers, and are currently looking to recruit more to help us with a variety of oral history tasks.

Although we are not presently engaged in a specific oral history project we have nevertheless found ourselves approached by individuals from a

variety of walks of life who would like to have their reminiscences recorded and added into the county archives. We are therefore adding these recordings as we do them to a small collection of 'life stories' recordings which we did a number of years ago.

We have followed up the work we did last year with a local primary school, which we helped to undertake some interviews of ex-pupils as part of their events marking the reopening of their school in its new building. This year we are undertaking some in depth interviews of some of the people who came forward to be interviewed by the pupils. As well as ex-pupils we also have others who have been involved in school life such as a teacher, a governor and a parent. We hope these interviews will add a different dimension to the material that the school already has.

We have also revamped the oral history training sessions we offer to our volunteers and to local groups and societies. Previously we had done training sessions all on one day. This year we decided to try a slightly different format and split it into two half days with the gap in between being used as an opportunity for participants to go away and undertake an oral history interview themselves. They would then return for the second half-day to evaluate the experience of planning and carrying out the interview. We road tested the new approach with the office's Education and Learning Group, as they were interested in being able to undertake some oral history work which they could use with local schools or incorporate into teaching packs. The new format got the thumbs up, so is one we will use again in the future.

This year is the 60th anniversary of the Worcestershire Record Office. As part of the celebrations we are hoping to produce a CD relating to life in the 1940s in conjunction with the office's Microfilming and Digitising Team. This is a new venture for us all, so we are still feeling our way with this task and learning new skills.

Local projects in Worcestershire

During the course of the year we were contacted by a small number of quite diverse local projects. Initial contact often came from someone who used or had written to the Record Office with regard to their research, or had worked with the office on other activities. The following projects made contact:

Cookley Local Agenda 21: a Space for All

Earlier in the year we were contacted by Dr Elizabeth McDonnell of Cookley Local Agenda 21 who was interested in setting up an oral history project as part of work researching and interpreting the history of the recreational and play facilities provided as part of Phase 1 of the project. She was interested in obtaining some help and guidance with the planning process of the oral history project so we arranged to spend a morning with her.

Callow End Historical Society – Powick Hospital project

Members of the Callow End Historical Society are embarking on a small oral history project relating to Powick Hospital, in conjunction with the

George Marshall Medical Museum. This project is just beginning and the group is hoping to get started on interviewing shortly.

St Wulstan's Oral History Project

Worcestershire County Council's Countryside Service are working with a group who are researching the history of St Wulstan's nature reserve. The project is expected to last a year. The site had included a World War II military hospital and the group are keen to record the reminiscences of people who had worked or been treated there. Interviewing should start shortly. We are looking forward to hearing more about the end results.

Droitwich Spa Area Forum for Older People

Earlier in the year we were visited by members of the Droitwich Spa Area Forum for Older People who were interested in undertaking some oral history as a way of keeping their members active and involved in the community. Again, this is a project very much at the planning stage and we look forward to hearing more.

Droitwich Library

Val Booter, one of the librarians at Droitwich Library who ran an oral history project for 10 years recording local people's reminiscences, has retired. As no one in the library was going to be continuing the work she offered the material she had collected to us, so we have now taken this collection over.

Maggie Tohill

East of England

Bedfordshire

Marston Vale Oral History Project 2001-2005: 'Changing Landscapes: Changing Lives'

This four-year Heritage Lottery Fund Oral History Project, which began early in 2001, was successfully completed in July 2005. As a project officer, I conducted over 270 tape-recorded interviews with a range of men and women who have lived and worked in the Marston Vale, Bedfordshire. The aim of this project was to create an Oral History Archive that shows, through the voices of individuals who have lived and worked in this area over the last one hundred years, how life and the physical environment have changed. Brickmaking, farming and local village economies have all changed enormously and with them the lives of communities, families and individuals.

Each of the interviews cover a wide range of topics relating to individual life experiences, as well as the developments within agriculture, horticulture, village life, and the expansion, consolidation and contraction within the brickmaking industry through the twentieth century. Topics raised include childhood, home, family life, schooling, adolescence, courting, wartime experience, immigration, work experiences, further

education, social life and changing attitudes, religious belief and church and chapel-going, housing, shopping, leisure pursuits and entertainment, married life, redundancy and retirement, old age and death.

The largest subject dealt with is, not surprisingly, the brick industry, since London Brick Company became the largest brick works in the world. Interviews have been conducted with a large range of workers from labourers and immigrant workers, through the various specialist craft workers to supervisors, office staff, catering staff, transport managers and drivers, scientists, and managing directors.

Farming and market gardening are also covered extensively, charting the ups and downs of the industries, increasing mechanisation, reduction in the labour force and changing market conditions. Village life and the changes, which have occurred from Victorian times to the present, are viewed from the perspective of individuals who experienced them, or heard their parents or grandparents talk about them. Aspects of rural life and the countryside, which have long disappeared, are touched on, as are social attitudes and behaviour reflecting the age in which they lived. Interviewees have ranged in age from centenarians, to those born in the 1950s. Public debate issues such as pollution and the threat to the countryside, land filling, disappearing village facilities and housing development are all aired in the interviews, revealing a wide range of attitudes and perspectives.

Some extracts from interviews can be viewed and heard on the Marston Vale website at www.marstonvale.org/oral_history and on the BBC web pages www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/work. The complete Oral History Archive summaries are also accessible on line from the Bedfordshire & Luton Archive & Records Service at www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/archive (search for catalogues ref. No. Z1205/). If the complete transcripts are needed, these are available from Bedfordshire & Luton Archive & Records Service, and also at Bedford Central Library in the Heritage Room www.bedfordshire.gov.uk

Unfortunately, since the above project came to an end I have not been able to become involved in any other major project. Nevertheless I am still very busy as volunteer to digitize all the 270 interviews so that they too can soon be accessible at Bedford Central Library. I am still busy promoting the Oral History Society by giving talks, as well as responding to requests for information and advice on making bids for oral history projects and dealing with requests from the media.

The Bedfordshire Women's Land Army Archive has been researched by Stuart Antrobus who is well known in Bedfordshire for his interest in Bedfordshire's 'home front' experience during the Second World War. Stuart works as an adult education tutor and speaker and has contributed a number of articles to national and local historical journals. The Women's Land Army Archive is the culmination of his five years' primary research. See http://www.galaxy.bedfordshire.gov.uk/webingres/bedfordshire/vlib/0.wla/wla_home.htm.

Carmela Semeraro

Essex

Having recently taken over the role of Regional Representative from my colleague Sue Cubbin, this is my first report. This year the Essex Sound and Video Archive has been completing its HLF-funded 'Making of Modern Essex' project. The audio and visual exhibition created as part of the project has now been shown at three large museums in Essex: Chelmsford, Southend and Colchester. The exhibition will continue to have a life after the project as it is booked to tour other museums and libraries throughout the county until October 2008.

We are currently providing training and support for two video projects in the Southend area, both funded by the HLF's Young Roots scheme. The first is 'Re-Form: Challenging the Essex Image' in which young people will be interviewing people from Southend about changes experienced in the town. The second is 'Breaking the Rules' in which young people will be investigating youth groups and subcultures in the past.

We have received a number of significant collections of recordings. For instance: recordings used by Anne Cowlin to compile *Halcyon Days of Cod Liver Oil: An Oral History of Great Waltham in the 20th Century*; over one hundred recordings with accompanying transcripts, biographical notes and pictures relating to Witham; the recordings of the 'Changing Perceptions' project completed by Epping Forest District Museum; and sound recordings, photographs and written reminiscences collected by Bawdsey Radar Group's oral history project called 'Shout & Whisper'.

We are also pleased to have received the book *Sea Change: Wivenhoe Remembered* by Paul Thompson with Teresa Crompton, Brenda Corti, Don Smith and Janet Turner (Tempus, 2006).

We continue to lend recording equipment to groups and individuals wishing to make oral history recordings. We were fortunate enough this year to be able to update our equipment, so we now have three digital recorders which can be loaned.

We have received requests for advice from a number of people planning projects outside Essex. Most of these have been from groups seeking funding from the HLF and my impression is that they have been advised by the HLF to talk to us. Two of these potential projects are large landscape conservation projects which will include an oral history element. Enquirers are usually looking for advice on equipment, training in interview techniques and a permanent home for recordings at the conclusion of their project.

Martin Astell

British Library Sound Archive

Demand for oral history training remains high and phone calls from community projects seeking advice for an application to Heritage Lottery Fund show no sign of abating. To help respond to enquiries about HLF funding for oral history in the London area, we helped organise a day seminar with HLF's London team earlier this year at the Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green, which was well-attended despite being held on the only snowy day of the winter. Workshops led by several BL and OHS staff focused on different types of project and aimed to provide examples of best practice to would-be applicants. HLF also led a 'beginners' session' at the annual OHS conference in July.

Despite the announcement in March of an additional deduction by government of £90m from HLF (as a contribution to the 2012 Olympics), the fund will continue to be a key supporter of community oral history, as emphasised in HLF's document just published: 'Our Heritage, Our Future: Towards the HLF's third Strategic Plan, 2008-2013'. It is intending to continue all the current programmes including: Your Heritage (£3,000-£50,000), with a simpler application process and a shorter assessment timetable; Heritage Grants (£50,000 upwards), with a simpler and shorter application process in two assessment rounds but with no development grants; and Young Roots (£3,000-£25,000) for projects with 13-25 year olds. But with an expected annual reduction in available funds of £40m (from £220m in 2008-9 to £180m from 2009 onwards) the application process will inevitably become much more competitive. Funding guidance at <http://www.ohs.org.uk/funding.php> has recently been updated.

Rob Perks

Moroccan Memories in Britain: an Oral and Visual History

Since January 2007 I have been working on an oral and visual history of Moroccan people in Britain, a two year project which is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and run by the Migrants and Refugees Community Forum, an umbrella organization made up of 40 migrant and refugee community groups in London. Seventeen 'insider' interviewers have been recruited and trained to carry out life history interviews across three generations of Moroccans across five British sites, namely London, Crawley, St. Albans, Trowbridge and Edinburgh. The aim is to collect and have fully transcribed 100 life stories which will be deposited at the British Library Sound Archive. The team of interviewers will also benefit from reminiscence training in October. The interviewers have received feedback on their interviewing skills based on their first two interviews.

I have also helped organise and coordinate a number of workshops in each site to seek out potential interviewees, with the help of volunteers who gave more than 150 hours of their time to support this project. Visitors were encouraged to write something about their life history on wooden jigsaw pieces coloured by school children and themed according

to the life history model, and examples of oral history interviews and publications were also available as a tool to explain how oral history sources can be used.

From a visual history perspective, a promotional video has been produced including footage of both interviewers and project staff discussing the aims and objectives of the project, in an attempt to encourage people from the community to participate in it and to tell their story. Furthermore, another video is in the making which captures the process of interviewers interviewing members of their community, which will serve as a resource to other oral history projects.

A number of art sessions using photography, creative writing and collage have been run with children of Moroccan origins to encourage them to explore their own cultural heritage and identities. An exhibition of the art work took place at the Migrants and Refugees Forum in July 2007. The aim is to run a further five series of workshops composed of seven sessions in which children will produce art work that will tour both nationally and internationally in 2009 (provided the funding is secured in the meantime). Information on the Moroccan Oral and Visual History Project can be found at www.moroccanmemories.org.uk. Information on the Migrants and Refugees Community Forum can be found at www.mrcf.org.uk.

Lastly, I have been contacted as a Networker for the Oral History Society for advice mainly on technical questions, such as acquiring and using recording equipment - namely the Marantz PDM 660 - career opportunities in oral history, and studying oral history at postgraduate level.

Verusca Calabria

Museum of London

Belonging: voices of London's refugees was a major exhibition held at the Museum of London from October 2006 to February 2007. While there is a huge amount written and spoken about refugees today, too much of this is based on misconceptions, stereotypes and fear, and too little on a real engagement with refugees. Through oral history, *Belonging* placed the voices of refugees centre stage, providing a public space where they could be heard and where the challenges they face and the contributions they make to London could be acknowledged.

The exhibition was part of the Refugee Communities History Project, a major partnership project led by the Evelyn Oldfield Unit (a refugee agency) and involving the Museum of London, London Metropolitan University and fifteen refugee community organisations, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Trust for London. Between 2004 and 2006 this groundbreaking project collected, archived and disseminated more than 150 in-depth oral history interviews, in more than fifteen languages. The interviews were conducted by fifteen fieldworkers, many refugees themselves, each of whom was based at one of the partner refugee community organisations. The fieldworkers received accredited MA-level

training in life history methods at London Metropolitan University before conducting at least ten interviews with people from their communities.

In addition to *Belonging*, each refugee community organisation created its own film, exhibition or interactive and organised an event. The process of developing *Belonging* was highly collaborative, with staff from the Museum of London, the Evelyn Oldfield Unit and London Metropolitan University, the fieldworkers and representatives from the refugee community organisations working together closely over two years to create the exhibition.

During its four-month run, *Belonging* received 32,235 visitors, while 19,644 people visited its website during this time. It achieved more than 100 items of press coverage, including television, radio and print media, with this coverage being overwhelmingly positive. The exhibition has now been shortlisted for a Visit London Award 2007 in the category of 'Best Celebration of Cultural Diversity'.

The aim of *Belonging* was not to provide a chronological history of refugees in London. Rather it was to bring personal narratives and perspectives to the fore; to reflect the complexity and multiplicity of experiences and opinions among refugees; to offer visitors from refugee backgrounds a source of pride, inspiration or encouragement; and to help visitors from all backgrounds to better understand the realities of life for refugees and the contributions they have made and continue to make to London.

An external evaluator, Emily Johnsson, was engaged to undertake evaluation of visitor responses to the exhibition through exit interviews, focus groups and analysis of the visitor book. Her conclusions underlined the value of oral history: 'It is unusual, as a visitor researcher, to encounter such engagement and impact during and as a result of one single experience of an exhibition. This is unique and extraordinary and shows the power of museums to move, engage, educate and inspire into action. It was suggested by participants that one of the key interpretative media that had encouraged this impact was the emphasis on people's own stories, in the form of oral history, in combination with photographs and personal objects.'

Further information about the exhibition and the project can be found at www.museumoflondon.org.uk/belonging and www.refugeestories.org.

Annette Day

Making Memories Matter

'Making Memories Matter', the exhibition of the European Reminiscence Network will be in London between 29 October and 7 December 2007. It will be the opening exhibition of the new Stephen Lawrence Gallery at Greenwich University's Maritime Campus. Opening hours are Mon - Fri 10am – 4pm and Sat 11am – 4pm. Admission is free.

This exhibition of Memory Boxes has been touring Europe over the last two and a half years, showing in galleries, museums, cultural centres and at conferences concerning life history and creative ageing. The boxes were made in 2004-5 in seven countries (Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Poland, Romania, Spain and the UK). The armies in each country donated redundant grenade and ammunition cases to the project to be used for purposes of peaceful co-operation as a symbolic gift to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of hostilities in Europe. A total of 120 boxes were made and each box was the result of a collaboration between an artist and an older person. They met over a six-week period to put together a representative three-dimensional life-portrait featuring an aspect of the elder's lived experience.

Joanna Bornat will speak at the opening on Monday 29 October (6-8pm) and Pam Schweitzer will give a curated tour with some of the elders and a related workshop on visual representation of reminiscence and life history on Remembrance Sunday 11 November (12-4pm) at the Stephen Lawrence Gallery.

The catalogue of the exhibition Making Memories Matter with full colour plates of the Memory Boxes and life-story texts is available at the exhibition or can be ordered via Pam Schweitzer, European Reminiscence Network, 15 Camden Row, London SE3 0QA, email Schweitzer@beeb.net

The Sites and Signs of Remembrance project of the European Reminiscence Network

This Network project has been running over the last year, with partner meetings in Dresden, Berlin, Poznan (Poland) and London, supported by the European Commission's Grundtvig project. In London, this has involved conducting interviews with a range of elders from minority communities about their sites and signs of remembrance on leaving home and coming to England. Interviews with African, Indian, Chinese, Caribbean and Irish elders have been conducted and transcribed and, where necessary, translated. The interviews have also covered the setting up of important community centres for the minority elders' groups, the stories of these struggles being graphically told by the protagonists. When the European partners visited London, they visited these community centres, sheltered houses and places of worship of the elders and attended a community history workshop at Greenwich University. The interviews will form part of a new 'Sites and Signs' website, featuring recorded memories and comparing methodologies of the partner countries which will be put together in the second year of the project.

Passage of Music

This is an Arts Council funded programme of events for Black History Month 2007 related to celebrations around the 200th anniversary of legislation against slavery. The European Network, based in London, won a small amount of funding to run a short programme involving African and Caribbean elders working with primary school children in Woolwich, south east London. Rehearsals have been held during the autumn term, led by James Thomas (musician) Jennifer Lunn (educational drama specialist)

and Pam Schweitzer (reminiscence theatre director) in which the elders have taught the children (many of them also African and Caribbean in origin) songs and stories from their countries. The resulting programme 'Home Again' was presented as part of Black History Month at the Tramshed Theatre (by Woolwich Arsenal Station) on 19 October 2007.

Pam Schweitzer is now teaching a course in Reminiscence Theatre at Greenwich University where she has been made an honorary research fellow. The students will be working with local elders to create original theatre pieces to be performed at a theatre festival in Greenwich 5-8 March 2008. This event will tie in with the next London meeting of the European Reminiscence Network.

Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today

This is a project initiated by the European Reminiscence Network exploring the role of reminiscence and life story work with families coping with dementia. The project has been running in partner countries across Europe for ten years now and it has recently received funding from the UK National Institute of Health Research (DoH) for a full three-year trial, involving over 500 people with dementia, expected to report in 2010.

In this project, family carers and people with dementia attend weekly workshops over a 3-4 month period (followed by monthly meetings for a further year) in which they retrace their life stories together through a wide range of topics, often using non-verbal and creative approaches. They are led by trained practitioners with backgrounds in the arts and dementia.

The project is running across eight centres in the UK with research teams in six universities analysing the results. The trial platform for this project has been supported over the last two years by the Medical Research Council and this gave an indication, through results from 50 people with dementia and their caregivers, that the 'Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today' approach to reminiscence work was associated with a significant increase in autobiographical memory for people with dementia, and a significant reduction in depression for their caregivers, compared with a control group receiving no intervention.

A new publication entitled 'Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today: reminiscence in dementia care' by Pam Schweitzer (European Reminiscence Network) and Errollyn Bruce (Bradford University Dementia Unit) will be published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers in May 2008.

Pam Schweitzer

South East

Buckinghamshire (and beyond)

Living Archive Milton Keynes continues to undertake oral history projects. Just about to be published is 'The Story of *the original* CMK' told by the

architects, designers, planners, landscape designers, engineers, surveyors, architectural technicians, finance and project managers - the people who shaped the initial ideas of Central Milton Keynes as young men in the late 1970s. It is based exclusively on the words from 22 interviews carried out last year by Roger Kitchen and edited into book form by Marion Hill. It was commissioned by the Central Milton Keynes Partnership, the organisation that is about to make radical changes to the original city centre design.

Milton Keynes has just got itself a brand-new football stadium (it bought the club a few years ago from Wimbledon!) and you would think that this was the first football ever to be played in the area! An HLF 'Your Heritage' funded project on the History of Football in the area should put that right and it was launched with over 200 people attending a 'Down Memory Lane' event at the new stadium a few weeks ago. One of the problems with a project of this scale is deciding which people to interview as time and the transcription budget is limited. The opening event's experience was that it is going to be a hard choice – so many interesting reminiscences being shared.

Living Archive has also submitted a large funding bid to HLF for a three year project that would include three large scale collection projects involving socially excluded groups, the cataloguing and digitisation of the archive that has been collected over the last 30 years and which includes well over 1,000 hours of oral history recordings, and the creation of e-learning materials from this collection. The Milton Keynes Community Foundation has promised finance for the Archivist/Digitisation Officer, so fingers crossed for the HLF decision – expected in December.

Roger Kitchen

Kent

The Coalfields Heritage Initiative Kent (CHIK) marked the completion of its first phase with the opening of the Miner's Trail in April 2007. In the past three years the project, hosted by Dover Museum, has collected over 5,000 images of the Kent collieries and their associated communities. In addition, the oral history archive has over 200 hours of recordings of life in the coalfields communities and pit-life. The community groups, having received training in basic oral history techniques, are continuing to collect both images and oral histories from within their communities. Excerpts from the collected oral histories are being trialled on the website www.kentcoal.co.uk, which also hosts an online history of the coalfields, access to the collected images through the Commanet site and a downloadable education resource for Key Stages 1-3. The site and the project have been extremely successful. Dover Museum is now exploring the possibility of continuing its links with the communities through future projects that would involve both oral history and reminiscence work.

The community memories group 'Telling Whitstable's Story' is celebrating the news of a grant of over £8,000 from the Lottery distributor Awards for

All. The voluntary group will use the grant to fund a project – ‘Shop Talk’ - celebrating the town’s much-loved independent shops. This will include creating an archive of memories and pictures, a major exhibition at Whitstable Museum, and a publication. The group has been in existence for 10 years and has worked on a number of previous projects in partnership with the Museum. The grant will make it possible to buy recording equipment and copy images, and then to share the results with local people and visitors alike via the exhibition, book and a loan collection for schools and community groups. The exhibition will include maps, photographs and adverts, plus hands-on activities (including a children’s themed play corner) and a glimpse inside a traditional shop.

Herne Bay Living History Group is continuing a pilot around the theme of ‘These Sporting Lives’, gathering information on a variety of sports in which local people participated from casual engagement to county level (such as sea rowing) and the nationally renowned (eg rink hockey).

Ian Coulson sent this report about oral history activities in Kent schools:

The history department at St John’s School, Gravesend have produced a second collection of interviews taken by pupils from those who experienced the conflict between 1939 and 1945: *Life at the Sharp End Memories of World War II Volume 2*. The testimony in this book, the result of 36 interviews with veterans, covers experiences of WW2 from the Arctic Convoys to the Home Front. The book represents the sustained efforts of pupils and staff as well as the veterans, who gave generously of both their time and emotions to record for posterity the experiences that all generations hope they will never have to live through themselves.

South East Grid for Learning and the Advisory Service Kent supported the Kent and East Sussex Railway in three days of ‘Evacuation’ activity in May 2007, recognising that the railways played an enormously important part in war-time Britain and many thousands of young people were transported from our cities to escape the bombing. Over 600 Key Stage 2 school children were given the opportunity to find out what life was like on and around a war-time railway, by travelling on the trains, meeting photographing and interviewing evacuees and veterans. Schools unable to attend were able to video-conference direct with the Evacuees. For more information: http://www.segfl.org.uk/microsites/view_project.php?id=18 and ian.coulson@kent.gov.uk.

Manda Gifford & Jocelyn Goddard

Southampton Oral History Unit

The past year has been a busy and interesting period, which included threats of closure in the budget cuts. But we are still here and continue to work on new and exciting projects. Thank you all for your support.

Here are some of the projects we have worked on since the last annual report:

Titanic – 95th anniversary

To mark the 95th anniversary in April of the sinking of the *Titanic*, Southampton Maritime Museum opened its newly redesigned permanent exhibition, '*Titanic – Southampton Remembers*'. Contemporary artefacts, photographs, documents, film and voices tell the story of the disaster and its impact on the city. Newly obtained material has been added to the museum's display to provide a fresh and exciting interpretation. A cinema booth features archive film footage and voices of survivors to bring the poignant story to life. Audio posts offer extracts from interviews collected by Southampton Oral History Unit.

SOHU also launched the third edition of the book *Titanic Voices* with the addition of a DVD and many previously unpublished photographs. Based on recorded memories, photographs, first-hand accounts and letters, the book tells the story of the sinking of the *Titanic* on her maiden voyage. The DVD (45 mins) contains rare archive film footage of the *Titanic* and the voices of some of the officers of the ship.

The unit also supported the publication of a new book, *The Crew of the RMS Titanic*, by local historian and *Titanic* expert, Brian Ticehurst.

Hello Sailor! Gay life on Ocean Wave

This touring exhibition from Merseyside Maritime Museum was on display at Southampton Maritime Museum earlier this year. The exhibition looked at the period between the 1950s and 1980s, when homosexuality was illegal. Additional photographs and oral testimony from the SOHU archive provided a local dimension to the display.

Hidden Histories

An exciting new project led by the Solent Centre for Architecture + Design, in partnership with Hive Networks, and funded by SEEDA, is using material from the SOHU archive for an innovative new exhibition in the new 'Cultural Quarter' development in Southampton city centre. The exhibition will use 12 wireless 'transmitter nodes', which form a media-rich walk that transports people through the changing life of the area. Audio will be delivered via FM radio to equipment distributed to visitors via the Tourist Information Office and the City Art Gallery. Alternatively people can tune in using their own radios or mobile phones. The images will be transmitted using Bluetooth to any mobile phone or laptop computer, which has been suitably enabled.

NEW EPOC

The EU funded NEW EPOC (Renewing Economic Prosperity for Port Cities) project, which the unit has been involved in since 2003 has now ended. As lead partners for the Culture component, SOHU organised several activities over the past year:

A Study Day, 'Tudor Warships and Basque Whaling Boats', was held at the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton in June. Maritime experts from Southampton, Portsmouth and the Basque port of Pasaia presented their work on underwater archaeology and preserving maritime

heritage – including submerged archaeological sites in the Solent; the discovery, excavation and preservation of the *Mary Rose*; and Southampton's international trade links over the centuries as seen through archaeological finds. Xabier Agote from the Albaola Society of Maritime Heritage described his sea-expedition around the coast of Newfoundland in a replica of a 16th century Basque whaling boat, built and navigated using traditional techniques. SOHU staff presented our activities during the NEW EPOC project.

We have **exchanged exhibitions** with our partners in the Basque port city of Pasaia. Our exhibition, *'Riveting Stories from the Vosper Thornycroft shipyard'*, was translated into Spanish and Basque and exhibited at the Casa Victor Hugo in Pasaia in June. *'Pasaia: Port of Basque whalers, fishermen and shipbuilders'*, an exhibition created by the Albaola Society of Maritime Heritage, was displayed at the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton.

In May we were invited to deliver a two day **training workshop** at the Muséu del Pueblu d'Asturies in Gijon, Spain. Many of the participants collected oral testimony for academic and anthropological research. The workshops were an excellent opportunity for us to exchange information about our different approaches. We learned of the variety of projects in the region - video interviews of rural communities, recording information on the fast changing language, dialects, traditions, legends, myths and music of the region and documenting memories of the repression during the Spanish Civil War. In turn the participants were interested by Southampton's approach of community involvement, educational and outreach activities. They were keen to learn about the new Marantz equipment and sound editing software, which we demonstrated.

We had meetings with representatives of other cultural organisations in Bilbao, also dedicated to collecting linguistic and cultural material of the Basque Country. We are maintaining contact with all these organisations to exchange information and hope to work together on future co-operation projects.

Training Workshops

Over the past year we have been approached by several organisations as well as students to provide oral history training workshops for their volunteers. We held several workshops for projects in Southampton, the New Forest, Godalming. Following training, we have continued to provide advice, support and sometimes equipment to these projects. Local groups generally deposit their collected material in our archive to be available in our public archive. Material from the Weston Shore project, the Nuffield Youth Group's Polish project and Art Asia have recently been added to our archive.

Albania

We have also travelled abroad to provide training to organisations interested to learn from our projects. In November we conducted a three day training workshop at the University of Tirana, Albania. Funded by the British Council Albania, the workshop participants included staff and

students from the university, and curators from the National Museum and National Archives. Following training, the volunteer interviewers recorded life story interviews with older people who had lived through the Second World War and the Communist period. The material was then presented in a series of radio programmes broadcast across the country, which looked at how political ideology had influenced fashion and lifestyles over the decades.

Sheila Jemima & Padmini Broomfield

Wessex Film & Sound Archive

Activity levels for oral history in Hampshire remain high, as indicated by the following group and individual projects which have deposited recordings with us since the last report: Aldershot & District Bus Interest Group; Emsworth Museum; Fordingbridge Museum; Basingstoke Talking History; St Barbe Museum, Lymington; Theatre Royal, Winchester; Whitchurch Silk Mill; West End Local History Society; Rowlands Castle Historical Association; the Book Trade History Group; North Waltham, Steventon, Ashe and Deane History Society; Petersfield Museum; and a sound + video interview (on separate occasions) with Terence Trickey, blacksmith, about the old Winchester Forge at Hyde. Video history projects were also represented by the Hampshire Coppice Crafts Group and Portsea Living History Project, respectively, the latter concerning memories of the Blitz and D-Day preparations in Portsmouth during World War Two.

Recordings from past projects were also received during the year, notably regarding New Forest residents, the Isle of Wight Rifles, and British Army Chaplains, the latter including a tape of a reunion of those who were incarcerated in Changi jail by the Japanese during the War. Although not strictly an oral history recording as we now understand it, tapes like that reunion do contain reminiscences of the past from individuals' perspectives, so I regard them as related to what we do. I have received an interesting example of this in the form of a gramophone disc cut in 1958. It features Vic Hutfield of Gosport remembering the early days of aviation and motoring in that area, and takes the form of a radio-type interview conducted by a professional broadcaster who, unfortunately, is not identified. All I know about this particular disc is that it was done for the benefit of Mr Hutfield and his family, but whether it was actually broadcast is a matter of speculation at the moment.

The BBC Sound Archive is full of such material, of course, thanks to Marie Slocombe, whose efforts to retain important - including 'ordinary' people as well as the famous - voices from the past were featured in a Radio 4 programme on 1 September. Marie is an inspiration to us all, especially those involved in saving audio-visual recordings from decay and destruction. BBC local radio also broadcast 'remembrances of the past' and we hold a particularly fine series produced by countryman Norman Goodland for Radio Solent. His poignant and often humorous tales of rural life were immensely popular with listeners, and helped inform 'townies' and younger generations about conditions in the countryside and on

farms, starting from the 1930s, based upon his own experiences. Sadly, he died in 2005, but I was able to commemorate him in an illustrated talk, helped by his son Jim, who told us about the man himself.

The 2006 Oral History Seminar once again attracted people from the wider region to see and hear fascinating accounts and informative sessions, as well as enjoy entertaining presentations. Sheila Jemima from Southampton Oral History Unit told us about the many interesting community and maritime projects going on in the city, including the publication of the third edition of *Titanic Voices*, this time accompanied by a DVD of personal testimonies and film footage of *Titanic* and her sister ship, *Olympic*. In the afternoon, Roger Kitchen showed us how personal testimonies can be turned into musical stage plays using original words recorded with local people, and illustrated by video extracts of performances at Milton Keynes. It is not an easy process, but the end results are always worthwhile, and his work certainly inspired some of those attending the seminar. Lastly, representatives from Whitchurch Silk Mill explained how they used oral history to help make up for the lack of historical sources about activities there, due to the destruction of written records in the 1950s. On display was a beautiful silk banner, made at the Mill for display at Winchester Cathedral during the 450th anniversary commemorations of the marriage of Philip of Spain and Mary Tudor in 2004. The oral history project is ongoing and is already helping to inform a revised history of the Mill, and is being used for educational activities.

I have been assisting groups and individuals by giving advice and holding training sessions, as well as taking part in a Hampshire Field Club Local History workshops day in Winchester, at which Field Club members examined the value of oral history and listened to a few extracts from WFSA collections. Oral history training sessions were given to groups at the Record Office and on the Isle of Wight, enabling local volunteers to be better informed about the subject prior to various projects taking place in the region. I also helped deliver an oral history/reminiscence event at SEARCH, the Hampshire County Museums education centre in Gosport, generating a small amount of income and exceptionally good feedback from those who attended from museums around the region. During these sessions I hope to reveal the importance of preparation, listening skills, empathy with the interviewee, and other qualities needed to bring out the best in recording sessions. The ability to challenge statements sensitively and seek meaningful insights, where possible, is what makes this field of enquiry a powerful tool in the right hands.

Mentioning 'tool' reminds me of the Regional Network Event that we were privileged and pleased to host last year at Winchester. I shall never forget Craig Fees' presentation about Wiki websites, involving pieces of paper and members of the audience to graphically illustrate a complex (well, to many of us, anyway) subject and make it comprehensible. The use of traditional 'tools' to explain new technology was quite apt for some of us 'oldies', I think, as we now grapple with solid state recorders, flash cards and computer software in our work, and try to pass it on to others...

Last, but certainly not least, Portsmouth has been a hive of activity with regard to oral history. The Royal Naval Museum, in partnership with other related local organisations, has begun a project called 'Sea Your History', which will run until November 2008. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Museum is developing a website www.seayourhistory.org.uk/, focusing on the history of the Royal Navy during the 20th century. During the course of the project, 90 new oral history recordings will be made and accessed via the website.

I have not received a report from Portsmouth Museums & Records Service, but note that John Stedman gave a talk in May this year about their ongoing project, Portsmouth Voices, involving 400 people being recorded on audio and video talking about a huge range of topics – 'from working in a corset factory, running Chinese and Indian restaurants, singing in a rock band (and jumping up and down on John Lennon's bed), to policing Portsmouth's streets and what goes into school dinners - the result is a rich and fascinating insight into people's lives'. The Service has also published one of a series of oral history books covering life in Portsmouth, *Voices from Landport*, a collection of the memories and stories of 32 people who were interviewed about this area of the city from 1925 to the present day.

David Lee

South West

Gloucester

2006-2007 has been a normal Network year for Gloucestershire – a number of queries, largely by phone, but one or two by email, with several requests for feedback and support on HLF grant applications and proposals. The example of other regions shows that our 'normal' is fairly quiet, however, and that there is scope for considerable development in networking and other activities. I'd be very pleased to hear from others working within Gloucestershire and the near Southwest who would be interested in developing a more assertive programme of mutual awareness and support. Perhaps this time next year we could even be preparing for our first regional conference!

Outside the Network, it has been a crowded year around oral history in one form or another. I was External Evaluator for the exciting, video-based HLF-funded community oral history project 'Generations Talking' being conducted by local charity Wild Rose Heritage and Arts of Hebden Bridge. In my day job as archivist for the Planned Environment Therapy Trust Archive and Study Centre I continued to oversee the oral history recording programme, lending several sets of recording equipment over the course of the year, taking in recordings, and making a number of audio and video recordings myself. The Archive and Study Centre hosted a third in its annual series of residential archive long-weekends with members of the Wennington School Old Scholars Association, who worked

on the archives of the school held at the Archive, and recorded interviews as part of the event.

In an exciting development, the Planned Environment Therapy Trust has joined with the Centre for the History of Medicine in the Medical School of the University of Birmingham to establish a new Institute for the History and Work of Therapeutic Environments (IHWTE) as a research and study centre of the University of Birmingham, hosted by the Trust. One of our first activities has been to set up a PhD studentship on the history of a particular therapeutic community, in which oral history will play a key role. A second studentship, also involving oral history, is on the way. In a related development, a major investment of time has gone into the creation of RadioTC International, an online 'radio station' devoted to therapeutic community, where audio and video recordings from the Archive and Study Centre oral history collection can be uploaded alongside specially recorded interviews and other contemporary programmes by professionals, clients, and others involved with the field of therapeutic environments.

Within the Oral History Society, I have been re-elected a member of the Committee, am a member of the Trainers Group, maintain the Virtual Network (the email discussion group for Regional Networkers), chaired a session of the 2007 Oral History Society annual conference, and made a series of recordings for the Society's 'Oral History of Oral Historians' project.

Craig Fees

Devon

At Wren we are a community and folk music organisation and oral history is a major tool in our community and cultural development tool kit, and an easy companion to folk song collecting.

As a Networker, I have advised and visited the Appledore arts video oral history project. The interviewing team is experienced in TV filming etc and were delighted to discover a more intimate people centred approach. Another potential project I have advised on is the oral history and song recording for a local Baptist church, linking the oral testimony with other family history such as gravestones etc. I have also worked with Newton Abbot Museum, to help them with inducting their new volunteers.

My direct involvement during the year has been with the Okehampton Community Play, we are at stage of defining our in depth research topics, which will include the impact of two waves of Polish immigration.

At Wren we are hoping to establish a new folk song collecting project for a new wave of song collectors, and to digitise our existing collection.

Marilyn Tucker

Cornish Audio Visual Archive

Over the past year the Cornish Audio Visual Archive (CAVA) has been involved in a series of outreach and research initiatives. In March 2007 the archive's annual conference was held at Saltash Guildhall on the subject of border identity in the Tamar Valley. This event marked the conclusion of a successful oral history project supported by the European Social Fund and the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Service which resulted in new oral history interviews, video recordings and research working papers.

In June a delegation from CAVA visited La Cinematheque de Bretagne and the University of Western Brittany in Brest. The aim was to highlight areas for future collaboration, and a symposium was organised by the Breton and Celtic Research Centre focused on oral history, folklore and film representations.

This year also saw the launch of a public education programme. A series of workshops on oral history, film studies, storytelling and music was organised by the CAVA team at the Tremough Campus of the Combined Universities in Cornwall. The series proved popular and there are plans to organise similar events in the future. In addition, a bi-monthly seminar series has been held by the archive. This included a presentation by Paul Thompson entitled 'Jamaican Hands Across the Atlantic: the Changing Families and Identities of Migrants' in September.

A new project exploring Cornwall's family traditions through oral history recordings started during the summer thanks to a grant of £45,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Entitled 'Narratives of the Family', this initiative is supported by the Cornwall Family History Society, Royal Cornwall Museum and Cornwall County Council's Ethnicity & Diversity Service. A team of volunteers will use historic photographs, existing oral history interviews and new audio-visual recordings to create an education programme based on a travelling exhibition, CD-ROMs and Internet presentation. A public conference at County Hall in Truro will mark the end of the project in the second half of 2008.

Garry Tregidga

Northern Ireland

Ulster Folk & Transport Museum

The collection of oral history and narrative for the archive of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum (National Museums Northern Ireland) during 2007 included a series of interviews conducted by Linda Ballard to document the work and activities of several people invited to participate in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival's programme featuring Northern Ireland. These audio interviews are accompanied by extensive photographic records made for the archive of the Museum. Topics covered include millinery, embroidery, lace making, Irish dance dress making, banner painting and eel fishing. While the focus is on oral history, some

interviews also include narrative material relevant to the study of belief systems.

An interview was also conducted with story teller Mick Quinn, who attended the Folklife Festival, recording traditional aspects of his narrative repertoire. In terms of the archive more generally, work is under way to produce digitised transcripts of interviews together with digitised indexes to these transcripts. These resources are being made available through study facilities at the museum.

The audio archive held at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum houses 18,000 recordings made by BBC Northern Ireland and almost 5,000 Irish language recordings made by Radio Telefis Eireann. It also includes the Living Linen Archive of oral recordings documenting the history of the Ulster linen industry in the twentieth century. Further information about the archive is available at http://www.uftm.org.uk/collections_and_research/archival_collections/.

Northern Ireland Migration Narratives

This project is a partnership initiative organised by the Centre for Migration Studies (based at the Ulster American Folk Park) and the School of History and Anthropology, Queen's University Belfast under the direction of Johanne Devlin Trew. It is funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (2006-08) and the HEA North South Programme for Collaborative Research, Strand 1 (2004-06).

'Life narrative' interviews were conducted during 2004-2007 with more than 90 migrants from Northern Ireland, both returned and not returned, who responded to advertisements placed in a variety of publications and electronic media. Participants represented a variety of class backgrounds and geographic origins within Northern Ireland, and were evenly distributed between the two major denominational groups (Catholic and Protestant), exhibiting varying degrees of personal religiosity (e.g. from devout to secular); and in the case of Protestants, care was taken to include representation of denominational groups.

Since the researcher was aware of the lack of Irish migration research relating to Northern Protestants, the research targeted areas where Protestants comprise a significant proportion of the Irish migrant group: England (Liverpool and London), Scotland (Glasgow – Edinburgh belt) and Canada (Toronto and Southern Ontario). The focus of the research was to interview primarily people still of an age to participate in the workforce, and emphasis was particularly placed on those who had migrated during the 1970s and 1980s, decades of intense upheaval in Northern Ireland.

Since the life narrative or biographical approach was taken in the research, the interviews cover the individual's life from birth through adulthood, and a specific effort was made to gather memories of childhood, much of this located in the pre-civil rights era. As such, the interviews stand as important and unique documents of the social history of Northern Ireland as well as of Northern Irish migration specifically, and thus will be of interest to researchers in a wide variety of disciplines.

The interviews are housed in the 'Narratives of Migration and Return Oral Archive', which features an SQL database that allows keyword searchable access across the entire interview corpus to individual track level (2-3 minute intervals) of streamed audio (over 300 hours of audio). The pilot database is currently operational and will, upon completion, be made available to the public via the Internet.

Linda Ballard

Scotland

Oral history activities in Scotland continue to flourish. Prominent among these currently are the Forestry Commission 'Touchwood' Oral History Project now entering its second phase following a pilot interview and training phase carried out in the past year. A number of former foresters are recording interviews and it is hoped that the project will eventually cover all the forestry areas in Scotland. Other projects include the Isle of Gigha, in which, again, local people will carry on recording interviews following a pilot project now completed; and the Glendoe Hydroelectric Dam Construction Oral History Project which is being carried out as the dam, probably the last of its size to be built in Scotland, is completed over the coming year.

The Scottish Oral History Group (SOHG) plans a round-table symposium early in 2008 on the state of oral history in Scotland. Invited speakers from different areas of oral history activity will discuss current issues and plans for oral historians in institutional and community work.

AROHA, the Aberdeen and Region Oral History Association, is - as you can see at its website <http://www.arohascotland.org/> - as active as ever. With the SOHG and other groups, it will be involved in the 2009 OHS national conference to be held in Glasgow on the theme of 'Hearing Voice in Oral History'.

Finally, an exciting development is the development in Inverness of a new archive which it is hoped will incorporate an audiovisual centre that will act as an archive and service-point for oral history projects.

Hugo Manson

Orkney

Over the past year or so I have been carrying out basic oral history training for the Skills Building for the Future, a museums based training programme for the Highlands and Islands. The training programme has revealed a healthy interest in oral history across the region with local museums, community radio stations and community history groups

actively pursuing recording projects. Training took place in Stornaway, Shetland, Ardrishaig, Strathpeffer and with one scheduled to take place in Forres and an additional day in Fochabers. There is a year to run for the training project and further workshops are scheduled. The days have proved to be a unique opportunity for groups from different areas to meet up to compare notes and share experiences and hopefully the networks started on these days will provide a fruitful base for mutual support for years to come.

In Orkney Sanday still has an active recording project with two more in the development stages in Eday and Hoy. Orkney and the Land, an oral history survey of farming in the islands hopes to come to fruition this year with an exciting collaboration with a photographer in residence, Rebecca Marr (working with the agricultural community) providing an additional perspective to the project.

Kate Towsey

Wales

It may seem that things are quiet on the western front, but that is mainly due to distractions on my part rather than a lack of oral history activity in Wales. I have been answering constant enquiries by would-be oral historians – most of them passed on to me for advice by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Many of these do not stay in touch afterwards, but I know of others have gone on to deliver worthwhile projects.

The Sleeping Giant Foundation is a community regeneration charity based in the Upper Swansea Valley, which works to actively promote the area through community-led projects in New Media, Oral History/Heritage and Community Events. The Foundation's Oral History Project, sponsored by the Heritage Lottery Fund, aims to record the memories of the older generation of the community. A group of very dedicated volunteers attended two OHS-accredited training courses, and their well-documented recordings have now been archived at both Powys County Council Archive Department and at St Fagans: National History Museum. The Foundation's New Media Group have produced a number of DVDs, examples of which can be viewed on their website (<http://www.sgfnet.co.uk/media.htm>):

- *Brecon Beacons National Park 50th Anniversary* - commissioned for the National Park's 50th Anniversary, this DVD contains interviews with people of all ages, sharing their memories, stories and hopes for the future of the Park.
- *Home Front Recall Evacuees Reunion* - produced in partnership with students of the Department of Film and Media at University of Wales Lampeter. This DVD features footage from the Evacuees Reunion Event held at Abercraf on 25 November 2005, with moving interviews from people who were evacuated to the valley.

- *Memoirs of Abercraf* - an interview with Bella Mills and David Williams on their childhood growing up in Abercraf.

Another community project to undertake the OHS introductory training course was Aberaeron's Bicentenary Oral History Project, which is part of the Heritage Lottery Fund Celebrating Heritage programme. This is a cross-generational project involving Year 10 pupils from the local comprehensive school, adult volunteers, and nine senior citizens who agreed to be interviewed. Performing and visual arts workshops, based on the recordings, were organised at Aberaeron Primary School and formed the basis of a concert at the local Memorial Hall in July.

As to St Fagans: National History Museum, we have been busy preparing a new gallery, Oriel 1, which is an experimental gallery exploring the theme of Belonging. It includes community-curated exhibits which will change regularly and a strong element of oral testimony. We have also appointed a Curator of Contemporary Life, Owain Rhys, who has already embarked on a community curation project in Johnstown, Wrexham and will be using oral history as an essential tool in recording contemporary life in communities throughout Wales.

Beth Thomas