

Reports from the Regions 2009

East of England

Bedfordshire

Since April 2008 I have been working at the Greensand Trust on a very special project, 'Sands of Time'. This is an oral history based project to collect interviews, artefacts and photographs from residents of the Leighton Buzzard area. The aim is to celebrate and make known the contribution to the economy and local heritage that the sand industry has made over 100 years. I have done most of the interviews and collection of material, and I am now working on the second stage of the project: the selection, preparation and collation of all the material for dissemination. This will happen in a variety of ways to maximise access to the material locally and internationally:

- Virtual Museum holding the bulk of audio/visual material collected. Part of this will be a Sound Trail available to download.
- deliver all material collected in print & CDs to Leighton Buzzard Library, and deposit all material collected in print & CDs to Bedfordshire & Luton Archives; and service and facilitate international access by inclusion in their website catalogue
- deliver education resource packs to schools to enable teachers to utilise material collected in line with the National Curriculum
- permanent sand trail marks and plaques to include interpretation and art work
- installation of plaques and art work to provide further knowledge of the sand heritage to people who might not gain information in other ways
- have a massive launch party before I leave the Greensand Trust!

Since September 2008 I have also been working part-time as a Community Historian at Bedford Museum. After the initial stage of meeting, getting to know and form partnerships, I have been working with a lot of groups and individuals on various projects in the community part of the Audience Development Project. The oral history interviews I am doing at the moment are going to be part of the Museum Archive, and next year some extracts will be used in a major exhibition on 'Working in Bedford'. Watch this space...

Carmela Semeraro

Essex

This year saw the launch of a CD called *How to Speak Essex*. It was created by the Essex Sound and Video Archive at the Essex Record Office, and contains examples of Essex accents and dialect from all over the county. When the CD was launched it achieved widespread media coverage in East Anglia, in London and in a number of national newspapers. The initial run of the CD sold out within four months, demonstrating a widespread interest in accents, dialect and the voices of ordinary people. The Record Office is planning a reissue.

The Essex Sound and Video Archive has received recordings from two major oral history projects: the 'Circles Memories Project' and the 'Castle Street Project'.

The 'Circles Memories Project' gathered memories of residents of the Woodgrange Drive Estate in Southend-on-Sea. This estate was built on the site of the former Kursaal pleasure park, so memories were also gathered relating to its former life. The project was funded by the housing association which runs the estate, employing a project leader to carry out most of the interviews and marshal a group of volunteers. It involved a number of group sessions where people could share memories, and resulted in an exhibition at the estate's community centre.

The 'Castle Street Project' has been carried out entirely by volunteers in Saffron Walden. Its aim has been to document the history of every house and shop in one of the town's most interesting streets. Castle Street has recently become somewhat gentrified, but within living memory was one of the poorest areas of the town. According to much of the testimony collected, the street had a self-contained community and a particular character within the town. In addition to the recordings themselves we have also received two very nicely bound volumes containing transcripts of each interview.

An oral history project gathering memories of Witham Town Park is continuing. This project is being carried out by Braintree District Council with funding provided by Essex County Council. The Chelmsford and Essex Museum has recently launched new popular culture galleries housed in a newly-built extension. These galleries include oral history and other recordings collected by the museum staff relating to popular music, youth culture, and other forms of entertainment in Chelmsford.

The Essex Sound and Video Archive has also received a treasured recording from the University of Essex. It is an open reel tape recording of a lecture given at the university in October 1972 by George Ewart Evans. The author of *Ask the Fellows Who Cut the Hay* – whose centenary was celebrated in Blaxhall this year – delivered the 8th Burrows Lecture on the subject of 'Oral Tradition and History' including a number of recordings he had made as part of his research.

Martin Astell

Suffolk

In the last year I have been contacted by various oral history projects for advice about interviewing techniques, budget proposals for oral history projects and recording equipment. Oral history seems to become more and more popular each year, which is good news! These projects include 'Lap of Honour', which is a Suffolk Artlink project supported by Suffolk County Council, English Heritage, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, Babergh District Council and Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service.

'Lap of Honour' celebrates Suffolk's Olympic and Paralympic heritage from 1948 - 2012. In the county of Suffolk there are many people who have either taken part in past Olympics or who are hoping to compete in the 2012 Games. The project is recording and preserving these athletes' stories, as part of a wider project. You will be able to hear and see these interviews through TV and radio broadcasts, websites, pod casts and a touring exhibition. The team is also developing an education package for children in Suffolk.

I have worked on four main projects as an oral history consultant in the past twelve months. The first was 'Holding Back the Tide', which captured oral history recordings of coastal communities in East Anglia on behalf of an environmental charity called CoastNet. A touring exhibition was put together using the material and has been exhibited in towns such as Great Yarmouth, Colchester and Aldeburgh.

Two of the other projects have involved working with Bishops Park College in Jaywick, to produce two short films inspired by the heritage of Jaywick as a holiday resort and coastal flood area. I taught the students interviewing techniques and helped them to conduct historical research and oral history interviews which were filmed. A media person was hired to teach the students filming skills and sound recording. Both films (*Jaywick: Living on the Edge* and *Lost Treasure in Jaywick*) were 'premiered' at the historical Electric Palace Cinema in Harwich, which the students really enjoyed.

A fourth project was with Eastern Angles Theatre Company as an oral history interviewer for a play called *Getting Here*. The play was inspired by true stories of members of Ipswich's Portuguese, Polish and Afro-Caribbean communities. *Getting Here* is a promenade performance lasting just over an hour, and was premiered at the Ip-Art Festival in June/July 2009. The play is based on ten oral history interviews from each of the three communities and the idea is a pilot play for potentially a similar one in Peterborough later in the year.

Finally, 2009 is the centenary of the birth of George Ewart Evans and the Blaxhall Archive Group held a weekend of celebratory events including a programme of talks from key oral historians, workshops, folk music and dancing, films, plays and exhibitions celebrating Suffolk local history.

Juliana Vandegrift

East Midlands

Derbyshire

A new project, 'Living Normanton – the Journeys of our Faith communities over the Last Century', aims to 'document the experiences of people of different faiths as they came to Normanton and began to establish their faith communities in the area. It is a joint project between English Heritage and the Forum of Faiths for Derby. It will record and share these experiences, though the format in which these will be published will be decided in consultation with the participant groups. Interviews will be conducted with both groups and individuals from a diverse range of faith communities. The interviewers will be local people who have previously worked as community researchers for the Forum of Faiths for Derby and will learn new skills during this project.

Community historians visited groups based at faith venues in order to facilitate and record reminiscence discussions, and individuals were then invited to participate in more in-depth interviews. Segments from these interviews were displayed or played at Heritage Open Days events as part of the Normanton faith trail. This is the first phase in what is intended to be a longer-term project, with the phase one output presented at Heritage Open Days 2009.

A second project, 'Derwent Valley Threads', is based on the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS), inscribed as such by UNESCO in 2001 as a place of 'Outstanding Universal Value to Humanity'. It aims to capture the memories of people who used to work at the textile mills between Masson Mill in Matlock Bath and the Silk Mill in Derby, or who lived nearby. The site contains a mix of mill complexes, the watercourses that powered them, and the settlements developed for the workers, but as the project summary notes: 'Most of the Mills closed in the 1980s, so the mill workers are now all ageing and are therefore an "at risk" resource. There has, as yet, only been limited work done to preserve the

memories and stories of the area. The two year project will tackle this in new and innovative ways, developing artist-led inter-generational work that will enable artists and young people from the area to work with older people in preserving the stories on the web, rather than in a printed publication.'

The project plans to train young people in interview techniques, oral history and reminiscence work, and to provide workshops for all ages in writing for the web and meeting the technical requirements of the *artsderbyshire* website on which the memories will be published alongside sound, art work and photographs. It is hoped that the project will also encourage more people to visit the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and learn more about it.

'Derwent Valley Threads' is being organised by a partnership, working together as Derwent Valley Arts, which includes arts officers from Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council Arts and Derbyshire Dales District Council; the DVMWHS Coordinator; representatives from Amber Valley Borough Council & Derbyshire Dales District Council; and local independent arts development organisations including Fleet Arts and QUAD. Fleet Arts is managing the project, which is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council and the Derwent Valley Mills WHS Partnership.

Cynthia Brown

Leicestershire & Rutland

The East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA) held a one day event, 'Using Oral History', on 12 June 2009, with support from the Centre for Urban History at the University of Leicester. Speakers covered subjects such as regional dialect, creating audio tours, using oral history recordings at Southwell Workhouse, Nottinghamshire, the Northampton Black History Association, and the Japanese 'Genki' reminiscence project. A summary of the day can be found at <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/news/ohday.html>. Feedback from participants was very positive and planning has already started another event next year.

EMOHA has now digitised Market Harborough Museum's oral history collection, which is available to the public now that the Museum has re-opened after a major refurbishment. The Museum's oral history collection was created in the 1980s and contains around 200 interviews, making it one of the largest collections in Leicestershire. Among the many subjects, interviews in the collection cover Welland Valley agriculture, domestic service, life in Market Harborough's courtyard 'slums' in the 1920s, shops and shopping, and experiences of World War One and World War Two.

The 'Mines of Memory' project, which interviewed former coal miners in North West Leicestershire, has come to an end. A CD of extracts from the interviews has been compiled and the material gathered during the project has been added to the extensive collection of mining information held at Snibston Discovery Park, Coalville.

The 'Legacy of Partition' project co-ordinated by the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland (ROLLR) has also been completed, and some of the interviews conducted for it are now available on the ROLLR website at http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/recordoffice/recordoffice_exhibitions/legacy_of_partition/legacy_partition_stories.htm, along with educational materials and other resources.

Memories of being Jewish in Leicester in the 1940s and 50s have been brought together in a book, website and touring display in a project funded by the

Heritage Lottery Fund and managed by Writing School Leicester. Rosalind Adam and Miriam Halahmy initially ran a series of writing workshops, and training in oral history was provided by Colin Hyde of the East Midlands Oral History Archive as the project progressed. Seventy people ultimately contributed spoken or written memories, many of whom first came to Leicester during the Second World War.

One recalled that: 'My first memory of Leicester was steaming into Leicester station from London to escape the buzz-bombs and breathing in the peace of the place. It was a fluke that I came here. My husband was in the army in Palestine when the buzz-bombs came over so I sent a telegram to my sister in Leicester and said "Can you put me up for a few weeks?". It was only temporary – I'm still here!' Another recalled that 'In each of the schools I attended I was one of a very small group of Jewish children... I was expected to be very knowledgeable and to be able to answer everyone's questions about Judaism. I wasn't very knowledgeable and I often didn't know the answers.' For another 'though I was born and bred in London and I loved London, I had the happiest time of my life in Leicester because first of all there weren't many Jewish girls so I was sought after'. For details see www.leicesterjewishvoices.co.uk/index.html.

Cynthia Brown

Lincolnshire

Colin Hyde at EMOHA reports that the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology (SLHA) has produced a CD of Tennyson's poems in Lincolnshire dialect. This is a digitally re-mastered version of long-playing records (LPs) produced 40 years ago, and can be bought from the SLHA at Jew's Court, Steep Hill, Lincoln LN2 1LS for £9.00 each inc. p&p. The SLHA website is at <http://www.lincolnshirepast.org.uk/pmwiki/pmwiki.php>.

Cynthia Brown

Northamptonshire

Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA) reports that one of its members, George Watley, is currently interviewing people as part of the three year project researching the consumer behaviour of Northamptonshire Caribbean people c.1955-1980. Presentations of initial research findings have been made within the last few months to local and regional audiences, including the East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA) and the Historical Association of Northamptonshire. A travelling roadshow is planned for the future, and it is also hoped to present the research to international audiences in Barbados, the Czech Republic and the United States.

Cynthia Brown

Nottinghamshire

The Local Studies section of Nottingham Central Library continues to support local projects, with advice to individuals and groups. We are also happy to have copies of oral history from projects for archiving and copies for the library's collection where possible. At a different level, advice has been provided to local history and community groups in Nottingham seeking funding to record various aspects of their local communities. Some have needed guidance on compiling their bids: what to include, for instance. They have also needed the support of the library as a place willing to archive material for them.

Currently, we have a new oral history project in progress, which the library is leading on, 'The Italian Connection: a story of identity and integration in post (Second World) War Nottingham'. It is funded by Nottingham City Council and Big Lottery funds and supported by the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council (MLA) through 'Their Past Your Future' phase 2. There are strong Italian links to Nottingham over many years, including the existence of an Italian Prisoner of War camp during the Second World War. The difficult economic conditions in Italy, which followed this war, led many people in the 1950s and later to seek a better life in Nottingham. Their story is not well documented and this project will establish a record of their experiences through engagement with senior members of the community and their families. Oral history recordings will be made, facilitated by staff and volunteers. The focus of the project will be on the social challenges and opportunities that can arise out of a period of world-wide conflict. It will offer an Italian perspective of post-war England. There will be a strong inter-generational element to the project, working closely with 2 local schools (Year 5 pupils) to create a publication, toolkit and resource pack along with web-based resources, based on the oral history recordings.

The project is being delivered through a partnership of Library staff, the City Regional and International team, two Italian organizations (the Basilicata region Association in Nottingham and ACLI Patronato) and the EIP (Education Improvement Partnership) Manager for St. Ann's and Sneinton. We have volunteers from within and outside the Italian community through whom we aim to reach a significant number of people within the relevant age groups and to complete what we realise is an intensive programme of work. In this, members of the Italian community, several of whom we have consulted, are already playing an important role.

Two more projects currently in progress by local groups are 'Old Gardeners' Tales' and 'Nottingham's Rainbow Heritage'. 'Old Gardeners' Tales' is organised by St Ann's Allotments (or Hungerhill Gardens as they are sometimes known), the most ancient of Nottingham's allotments sites. Established around 1835, they are probably the oldest and largest in Europe. Their unique history and heritage has been recognised and it is a Grade 2* listed site. The 70 acre site has 670 plots, based on original layouts.

The project is working to preserve the heritage of the site, and includes an oral history project to capture the stories of current and past allotment holders and other local people. They have just recruited a team of volunteers to help with this work, and developed themes to explore with those we interview. They have found a man who has raised pigeons for 40 years, someone who used to live on the allotments, and a woman who has built a glasshouse out of recycled bottles. The project is running until 2013, and it is hoped to use this information to provide a human story to the historical landscape. For more information contact Mo Cooper 0115 911 0207, mo_heritage@staa-allotments.org.uk.

'Nottinghamshire's Rainbow Heritage' is sponsored by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It started in January 2008 and will run for at least three years. It celebrates Nottinghamshire's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) lives, hidden history and culture. Part of the project includes interviewing local people about their experiences and opinions on all things LGBT. This may include clubs, parenting, bullying, crime, civil partnerships, work, and school. For more information contact Nottingham Lesbian and Gay Switchboard Tel 0115 934 9529, or e-mail nottsrh@hotmail.co.uk.

Christina Raven-Conn

London

European Reminiscence Network

In October 2008, I organised the 'Lifetimes Festival', a festival of reminiscence theatre in Greenwich involving around 150 ethnic minority elders. Two groups of elders performed plays based on their personal and group memories specially devised for the occasion. One was a group of 20 men and women aged between 65 and 80 from Nigeria belonging to the Ajoda group in Greenwich. They worked with me over several months, piecing together a joint story based on their individual and shared memories of growing up in Africa and later moving between Africa and London during the early years of Nigeria's independence. The scenes were linked with songs which the group sang beautifully, spontaneously harmonising and with dance steps... all very animated and warm. Working with this group was not always easy as there were tensions within the group and people's attendance was erratic, but the end result was terrific and justified all the effort involved.

The other group was much smaller and more focused: a group of eight Caribbean women aged 63 to 79 from the COFA group, all of whom had worked as nurses in the NHS. Their play, also with songs, was based on their experiences of growing up in different Caribbean islands and coming to England to train, work and bring up their families. The play explored their past and present lives, the things they were proud of and their hopes and fears for the future. Both plays were performed in Charlton House for an audience of 100 ethnic minority elders and others as a highlight of Black History Month 2008. After the plays, the players and audience shared a lunch and in the afternoon worked together sharing memories and songs.

The afternoon workshop used many different reminiscence activities including moving along a time-line and marking out significant journeys and memories and sharing them with others they encountered in the exercises. If anyone would like to see the short film shot on this day, it is on my websites under the title Lifetimes. www.pamschweitzer.com and www.europeanreminiscencenetwork.org.

The entire project, of which these productions and the festival were a part, was called 'Sites and Signs of Remembrance', a two-year reminiscence and remembrance project with German and Polish partners which ended in November 2008. To read about the project, please visit www.sisie.eu and click on the sign for each city to learn more about how the project was pursued in each country and internationally.

'Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today: reminiscence in dementia care' (RYCT) is a research project supported by the Department of Health Research Institute. It is evaluating the effect of reminiscence on family carers and people with dementia, meeting over a 12-week period followed by seven monthly

meetings. The project, which began as an action research project initiated by the European Reminiscence Network in 1997, has developed over the years with support from various trusts, from the Medical Research Council and now from the Department of Health. Twenty four RYCT groups have been established across the country each involving up to 12 families, including the person with dementia and their main family carer who attend together. Control groups match those involved in the intervention and researchers at five universities are evaluating the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the project, reporting in 2010.

I have been operating as trainer and consultant to this national project and also co-leading, with Caroline Baker, the south London groups, in association with the Memorial Hospital and Oxleas Trust. The North London groups, based at North East London Mental Health Trust, are running in Barking, Havering, Waltham Forest and Redbridge, co-ordinated by Jen Wenburn of NELMET. A training film featuring this project is in preparation and will accompany the project book *Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today* (by Pam Schweitzer and Errollyn Bruce published in 2008 by Jessica Kingsley Publishers).

I have taken oral and written testimony from people with dementia and carers and created a series of monologues, *Stories from the Front Line: a video-training/education pack for the Alzheimers Society*, each about three or four minutes long. They are performed by two professional actors, Pam Lyne and Godfrey Jackman, and accompanied by discussion ideas for use by groups of family and professional carers of people with dementia. The monologues have now been performed at several conferences including the September 2009 AGM of the UK Alzheimers Society. They are performed between key speaker presentations in plenary sessions in order to keep the discussion focused. The monologues have now been professionally filmed and the edited result will be launched at the Dementia Congress of the *Journal of Dementia Care* in Harrogate in November 2009.

'Transitions in Later Life' is a project in preparation. The idea is to explore through reminiscence and through enactment how to make the transition into partial or complete retirement. Using Reminiscence and Life Review approaches, the aim is to explore concepts of identity, status and imaginative projection into the future in a small and trusting group. Anyone interested in exploring this idea further with me, please contact me at pam@pamschweitzer.com.

Pam Schweitzer

Museum of London

The new £20 million Galleries of Modern London will be opening in spring 2010. The new displays cover the period from 1666 to the present day, and in the galleries which focus on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, oral history and video play an important and informative role. Our aim was that the foreground voices of Londoners themselves would help to personalise history and reflect multiple perspectives, by revealing the stories, experiences, and opinions of Londoners from all walks of life. An immersive oral history-led audio-visual exhibit does this through the personal experiences of people living through the Second World War.

A number of video oral history exhibits also feature within the post-1950 gallery. Oral history A/Vs include 'Portraits', which looks at values amongst people in the capital contrasted against interviews carried out by Peter Davies in the 1960's. New material collected for the 'London Liberationists' interactive reflects upon civil rights movements of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, which were aimed at

achieving social and economic equality for women and legal and social equality for LGBT people.

The opportunity to 'Challenge London' poses six audio debates with new material collected around themes such as energy and climate, identity and integration, homelessness, religion and schools, death, and alcohol and entertainment. Oral history, including material collected as part of the 'Refugee Communities History Project', will also feature in 'Collections on Line', a database that will be available both in the galleries and online.

'Homeless in the Capital', which opened in December 2008 was the outcome of a joint oral history project at The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields. The Connection helps homeless and ex-homeless people by providing specialist services and activity programmes to 200 people in central London every day. The project, which began in April 2007, set out to enlighten the public about the reality of homelessness and about the individuality of people who are or have been homeless. Also this year, the second phase of the 'Refugee Communities History Project', in partnership with the Evelyn Oldfield Unit and London Metropolitan University, is underway. This will focus in particular on learning resources and schools sessions and on developing a toolkit for community organisations interested in undertaking oral history projects.

We were delighted to receive a substantial grant from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation to assist us in carrying out the 'Recorded Media Strategy Project'. The Museum of London Group and the Sainsbury Archive hold a number of important recorded media collections, and intend to develop and implement a new strategy and plan for the long-term conservation and preservation of, and improved access to, those collections.

We are intending to carry out several contemporary collecting projects in the coming year. 'Olympic Collecting' will focus on the impact of the 2012 Olympics in the capital, concentrating on community sports organisations. We hope to record new oral histories, collecting photographs and objects relevant to this important event in the capital. 'Market' will explore London's global context and connections through street trade, using oral history, photography and new collecting to build up a record of the character of one of London's most colourful market places along the Portobello Road. 'Mixed' will be a new oral history and contemporary collecting project which will consider the rich and varied contributions of people of mixed and multiple heritages to London's diversity over the past 30 years. It aims to provide an opportunity to collect relevant new material reflecting a growing shift in society and to consider how far this mirrors attitudes towards communities, race and identity.

In July of this year, Annette Day, our Senior Curator of Oral History and Contemporary Collecting, left the team after many years' service to become Head of Programmes at the Museum of London. The oral history department is currently made up of Sarah Gudgin and Solomon Yohannes. We continue to build on the Museum's oral history collection, with new interviews and projects. We will also continue to provide advice in response to a steady stream of enquiries from people from a range of backgrounds and sectors working on oral history collecting and display projects as well as from an increasing number of students looking at oral history as part of museum studies and migration studies courses among others.

Sarah Gudgin & Solomon Yohannes

Other London projects

This year saw the completion of the 'Belonging in Brent' oral history project in which I recruited, trained and supported a group of ten volunteer elders to record 45 hours of life histories of Irish, Jewish and West Indian people who came to settle in the Borough of Brent from the 1930s onwards. The project culminated in an audio-visual exhibition showcasing text, sound, photographs and objects that reflect on the interviewees' life stories, with a particular focus on the themes of settling and belonging. The exhibition is open to the public at the community gallery, Brent Museum, Willesden Green, London, until 21 February 2010.

I also worked as an oral history consultant for Black Cultural Archives' project 'The Black Women's Movement in Britain', which has focused on collecting the testimonies of women involved in the movement for the rights of black women, including activism, organising, campaigning and lobbying at a grassroots, national or international level. The project has been themed around the seminal black British feminist book *The Heart Of The Race* by Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie & Suzanne Scafe (Virago, 1985), which examined black women's lives in Britain using oral testimony. Those involved in the production of the book were interviewed about their experiences and the legacy of the book, including the authors and original interviewees as well as a number of other key figures in the movement. For more information please contact: info@bcaheritage.org.uk.

I have been providing oral history, transcription and sound editing training to the volunteers of the project 'Do you Remember Olive Morris?' by the ROC (Remembering Olive Morris) collective. This takes as a starting point the historical figure of community activist Olive Morris (1952-1979), a key figure in 1970s South London. She was part of the British Black Panther Movement, set up the Brixton Black Women's Group, was a founding member of the Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent (OWAAD) and was central to the squatters' campaign of that decade. The project aims to contribute to making public a history of black activism in 1970s South London through the focus on the charismatic yet under-documented figure of Olive Morris. At the same time, the project explores the current state of young women's involvement in politics and community leadership against the backdrop of migration in post-colonial Britain. For more information about the interviews carried out so far, please visit: www.rememberolivemorris.wordpress.com.

I have been training volunteers on the 'Minding Histories' project organized by Mind in Bexley. The project works with individuals and communities to record the testimonies of up to 60 individuals from BME groups, including the Vietnamese, Chinese, Bangladeshi, Indian, Russian, Polish and Irish communities who reside in the London Borough of Bexley. The project will focus on resettlement experiences and their related impact on mental health since the 1950/60s, with a particular focus on discrimination and racism, poverty, isolation and stigma. Audio and video recorded interviews will be carried out with individuals from these communities who are experiencing, or have experienced, mental ill health/distress, including those who were residents of the now demolished Bexley Psychiatric Hospital. For more information visit: www.mindinghistories.org.uk.

I have also been managing the collection of the oral histories of the 'plinthers' as part of Antony Gormley's 'One & Other' project, which ran from 6 July to 14 October 2009. The project was conceived as a portrait of the UK, using Trafalgar Square and the Fourth Plinth as an instrument through which 2400 individuals drawn from all regions of the UK were invited to represent themselves by occupying the plinth for an hour each in whatever way they liked. It is envisaged that the digital audio interviews will be placed on a micro web site linked to the

Wellcome Trust main site and Artichoke Productions' website hosting the videos of each 'plinther', and together will go to create a long term resource not dissimilar to Mass Observation.

Verusca Calabria

North East

County Durham

The audio archive of Beamish Museum continues to grow, with the notable donations of the Billingham ICI interviews from the 'Teesside Industrial Memories Project' (see last year's report), the 'Easington Past and Present' recordings (dating from Manpower Service Commission work in the late 1970s) and interviews associated with the 2004 development of 'Locomotion', the National Railway Museum at Shildon.

On site, the new lamp cabin exhibition space showcases audio of mining memories, with three sound cones – themed around 'first experiences', 'lamps' and 'accidents' – playing while visitors look at an array of lamps, safety equipment and other mining objects. The museum has also played a part in a set of complementary projects to mark the 25th anniversary of the 1984 miner's strike, collectively called 'Striking Times'. Oral history was used in a variety of ways by different groups within this – school children recorded ex-miners, members of the Mining Institute recorded each other, and other groups listened to oral history to gain inspiration for artworks. A travelling exhibition was made incorporating elements of these groups' work.

Jo Bath

The County Durham History & Heritage Forum is a voluntary association of local history groups, heritage organisations and individuals. The Forum, which is in its early stages of development, aims to promote and facilitate member organisations in celebrating, researching and raising awareness of the history and heritage of the County. It hopes to host a range of training and networking opportunities for its members over the coming years. A recent oral history training session held at the Head of Steam, Darlington Railway Museum is an indication of the level of interest in the subject amongst the local community. More of these events will be hosted by the Forum in the future. See <http://www.durhamweb.org.uk/historyforum/>.

Sheila Forster

Tyne & Wear

Living History North East continues to operate from The Regional Oral History Centre, Sunderland across the North East region, offering guidance, advice, information, networks and training for oral history projects. A North East Regional Network meeting took place on 23 September 2009 at Beamish Resource Centre, and future meetings are being planned. Age Exchange training opportunities were offered through the North East Network, and the links between reminiscence and oral history were explored.

North Tyneside Council's intergenerational project, 'Memories of the Second World War', in partnership with Living History (North East) and St Thomas More RC School, has produced a DVD and additional resources of regional memories of 1938-1945. The DVD is aimed at primary schools and incorporates a collection of personal stories from both the home front and servicemen.

As part of a wider program of celebration of the history of North Ormsby, friends and volunteers of the Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Centre, has established the '150 Years in North Ormsby' project. They have undertaken training to record local memories of a changing community. At the heart of this was the church and its role and development over the last century.

The Pakistan Cultural Society has received support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for its 'Islamic Heritage Project'. The aim of the project is to collect stories and testimonies from various Islamic communities living in the North East of England and to present them to Tyne & Wear Archives for the social and educational benefit of the community. The project is also offering professional oral history training for community volunteers, who will work alongside an experienced team to gather stories and testimonies from Islamic communities living in the North East. Using interview techniques, volunteers will find out about all aspects of people's lives and heritage including childhood, environment, work, lifestyle, family, traditions and culture. Further details: Hengameh Emami, Project Worker (Islamic Heritage), infopcs3@yahoo.co.uk.

RIVERSCAPE is a community engagement project and exhibition with the National Glass Centre, which worked with the community of Sunderland and local school children to develop an archive of collected memories, stories and ideas of those whose lives have been shaped by the River Wear. The project aimed to involve those who had worked in various industries such as coal, glass and shipbuilding. As well as aiming to preserve memories before they are forgotten and create an archive of local history, the project also aims to encourage the local community to look forward to what the future holds for the River Wear. Details from Alison Cleland, Creative Producer: Education & Audiences, www.nationalglasscentre.com.

Members of North East Labour History (NELH - <http://www.nelh.org>) are involved in various projects, including the mapping of workers' history in the region since the Second World War. NELH has a strong interest in recording the lives of people who contributed to the history of this region, with a strong commitment to oral history. NELH are keen to find and save personal effects and papers of relevance to North East history. The organisation publishes an annual journal, *North East History* and a series of Newsletters. A recent publication, *Don't you hear the H-Bomb's Thunder?*, by Merlin Press and the North East Labour History Society, is based largely on over 60 interviews conducted by John Charlton with participants in north east radical politics from 1955-1965. NELH have continued to interview local labour movement activists, and transcribe and publish in *North East History*.

'Remembering the Past Resourcing the Future', North Tyneside, have produced a 'Memory Box' collection for schools that includes a compilation of thirty four images, twenty one written memories, and a DVD with video and audio recollections. The collection has been produced by Learning Days and is curriculum-linked for teachers. The project has been funded by Northern Rock and the Heritage Lottery Fund. For more information, contact Kath Smith, krskms@bleyonder.co.uk.

Janette Hilton

North-East Oral History Network

Interest in recording oral history is still very much alive in the North East of England, as was evidenced by the number of people from all over the region who attended the North-East Oral History Network Event hosted by Beamish Open Air Museum in September 2009. The Network had gone through a quiet period but is now re-energised and bringing new and old members together to help and support each other.

Regional Networkers are frequently approached to give advice and guidance by people interested in applying for funding for their heritage projects, but there are increasingly more enquiries from students and post-graduates who either want to collect oral history or access existing collections in order to support their research. The topics covered by individuals in this region have included the role of women in the 1984 Miners' Strike and recording the history of the South Shields Borough Police Force before its incorporation into the County Durham Constabulary.

Sheila Forster

North West

Greater Manchester

The 'Refugee Voices' Project, on which I worked in the North of England, was launched at the Wiener Library in June 2009. The Archive contains 150 video interviews with refugees and survivors of the Holocaust, of which over half come from the Manchester area, the North of England and Scotland. All of the interviews are fully transcribed and catalogued and a website has been created at www.refugeevoices.co.uk The Archive will also be deposited at the Universities of Leeds and Leicester and negotiations are underway with other institutions.

Over the past year I have been contacted by a number of fledgling projects for advice and training and I have worked closely with the HLF Funded Windermere Project 'From Auschwitz to Ambleside'. This project has undertaken interviews with child survivors of the Holocaust who were brought to hostels in Windermere to recuperate after the war. It has also conducted interviews with local people who remember their stay. It is intended to develop a website and to make a permanent exhibition of the testimonies and copied photographs at a venue in the Lake District. For more information about the project see www.anotherspace.org.uk.

In Manchester, the Museum of Science and Industry started a new HLF Funded oral history project in February 2009 called 'Connecting with People's Histories'. The project focuses on the food processing, entertainment and gas and electricity industries of Greater Manchester. The project aims to capture stories of people's working lives within those industries and these will be hosted on a website. To date 40 interviewee stories have been uploaded onto the website at www.mosi.org.uk/collections/explore-the-collections/oral-histories-online. The recordings will also support the museum's collections and provide relevant content for its exhibitions; and the interview process will help to identify potential new acquisitions.

The Irish Diaspora Foundation has been working with local schoolchildren collecting oral history testimonies from the Irish community focusing on the impact of Irish migration on the local food heritage, with particular reference to the

Cheetham/Crumpsall Allotments. They also recorded memories of the changes in building use in their local area over the last 50 years.

A number of museums have engaged in some oral history work for exhibition purposes. The Manchester Museum has been developing its practice of video recording conversations showing people's interpretation of the objects within the Museum's collection and of doing outreach work within schools and communities. A new permanent Manchester Gallery has been opened to focus on aspects of Manchester's history, as seen through the collection and as experienced by communities, and to this end local school children interviewed residents of Gorton on the changes that have taken place in that area.

The Imperial War Museum North has been interviewing Second World War veterans with Prisoner of War experiences for their special exhibition gallery 'Captured' and it will conduct more interviews with veterans who were in the Royal Navy for a forthcoming exhibition on the War at Sea.

The Salford Lifetimes Project conducted video interviews with musicians and fans for use in their popular music exhibition, 'Quiffs, Riffs and Tiffs' and they are about to start the Ordsall Hall Oral History Project to provide content for new exhibitions when the Hall reopens after renovation.

Ros Livshin

North West Sound Archive (Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside)

For the past two years North West Sound Archive has been based in temporary accommodation while extensive building and renovation work has been undertaken on the Clitheroe Castle site. This has now been completed and the Sound Archive has recently moved back to its permanent home back at the castle.

The North West Oral History Network continues to grow and now has over 230 members, with many oral history training sessions being held throughout the year. Although some recording projects have again reached their natural conclusion and have left the Network many more have joined. There are, at the current time, a sizeable number of projects awaiting a decision on funding, and it is hoped that a significant number of these will gain funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Besides these HLF funded projects, several Local History Societies have begun their own recording work.

Most of these projects are depositing either their master recordings with North West Sound Archive or allowing the Archive to take 'security' copies of the resultant collection, thus ensuring the long term preservation of the material. About 5000 oral history recordings have been deposited with North West Sound Archive in the previous year. Throughout the year North West Sound Archive has continued its own recording programme. Besides many 'one off' recordings the Archive is undertaking recording work in conjunction with Pilkingtons Glass at St. Helens and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

Andrew Schofield

Hampshire

The past year has seen many changes here in Southampton. Following a major restructure of the Arts and Heritage section at the council, Southampton Oral History Unit (SOHU) was closed down. The collection of interviews and photographs has now been transferred to the City Archives section where it will continue to be available for public access.

SOHU manager, Sheila Jemima, retired in March 2009 after 25 years of enthusiastic and dedicated service. Sheila had worked for the unit since its beginnings in the early 1980s and had been instrumental in its continuing success over the years. Sheila's retirement party also doubled up as a celebration of SOHU's 25th anniversary and was attended by almost all of the original team (of 1983) of oral historians, as well as many later colleagues and volunteers who had contributed to the unit's success.

The past year has also seen several oral history projects being set up in the South East region. Museums, local history groups, and other organisations have sought advice and support to set up their projects. This has involved providing advice on funding applications, training and advice on equipment and using recordings. Training workshops were provided for the Museum Development Service in Winchester, Enham Alamein project in Andover, and other projects listed below.

The Friends of St James' Park (FoSJP) in Shirley, Southampton have set up a project, 'The People's Park', to document the history and memories of their local park and to share these with the local community and schools. Project Co-ordinator, Michaela Lawler-Levene writes: 'A park reminiscence day event had resulted in the donation of a local history archive and during the Park's centenary celebrations in 2007, FoSJP produced a history display, which brought members of the public forward with stories to tell. These included the last full-time park warden and members of the ARP unit based in a building on the site during the Second World War.

'Wanting to share the history of the park with the wider community, the group included a history project in a lottery bid that was being prepared to improve the general park facilities. Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund the group has just put 14 people through an Oral History Training Course, provided by Padmini Broomfield of Southampton City Council. Over the next year the group will be recording more people's stories and publishing extracts on the Friends' website www.fosjp.org.uk. FoSJP have organised an Autumn 2009/Spring 2010 public talk series, bringing local historians and academics to their local community. In 2011 the group will also be publishing a book on the history of the park and its people'.

The University of Southampton, in collaboration with Hampshire Archives and Local Studies, has received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to record and preserve the memories of the 'children' (Los Niños) who arrived in Southampton in May 1937 fleeing the Spanish Civil War. The 'Los Niños – Child exiles of the Spanish Civil War' project is in the process of recording the life stories of those niños who were evacuated to Britain and eventually settled here. In March 2009, volunteers received training in oral history techniques. Since then they have carried out twelve interviews across the country.

In recent years, many of the niños have been interviewed by journalists, film makers and writers for their memories of the evacuation and early years in the 'colonies' across Britain. By focusing on a life story approach, this project is

succeeding in going beyond that story – to memories of life in Spain before and during the civil war. Interviews are also revealing how their evacuation experiences affected their later lives and those of their children. The recordings will be archived in the University Library's Special Collections, to be joined next year by the extensive archive collected by the Basque Children's Association of '37 UK. The project will also result in a publication, a website and educational resources.

In January 2009, I gave a presentation on community-based projects in Southampton at the Life (Hi)stories seminar to an audience of academics, researchers and students. The Life (Hi)Stories research cluster (www.soton.ac.uk/ml/research/staff.html) gathers a group of academics and community-based researchers working in different study areas and disciplines who are interested in life stories. The group draws on a wide range of primary sources from oral data collection techniques, such as oral history, language biographies, and ethnography, to written narratives in the form of diaries, memoirs and autobiographies and other modes of life writing. Regular seminars at the University's Avenue campus profile the work of one of the group's members or invited researchers.

Padmini Broomfield

Surrey

As I have just joined the Network, this is the first annual report from Surrey. Surrey Oral History Network's first meeting was held at Surrey History Centre in July. Rib Davis gave an inspiring talk on using oral histories for community drama. The turnout was smaller than promised, but still had representatives from across the county. The purpose of this meeting was to test the interest in such a group in Surrey. The conclusion was affirmative! There will be further meetings to network, share ideas and concerns and to propose ideas for training beyond the basic practical techniques. The current feeling is to hold a meeting about every six months. The date for the next meeting has not yet been fixed, but is likely to be in the early part of next year. Anyone interested in taking part should get in touch with me (janet.nixon@surreycc.gov.uk).

There have been a number of oral history based projects in Surrey over the past years. Among the most recent are 'Buried Battles, Veteran Voices', an HLF-funded project based on the archive of the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment. As part of this project Surrey Heritage and the Regimental Museum at Clandon House videoed a number of past members of the regiment. Clips from these videos can be viewed on <http://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/video/index.html>.

'Keeping Memories Alive', a project steered by Godalming Museum and funded by the HLF, is recording and exploring the development of a hidden area of the town. This project has developed the skills of an active and enthusiastic group of volunteers who are now turning their attention to discovering and recording people who worked in now lost industries of Godalming. The AONB Surrey Hills 50th Anniversary celebrations also included collecting recordings from countryside and farm workers recalling working life in Surrey over the last 50 years.

'The Vision' is an HLF-funded project using archive material and oral histories recorded by Rib Davis, who is also writing a community play based on the work of the Ockenden Project. Partners for this are Surrey Heritage, The Lightbox, Ockenden Project and The Winston Churchill School. This project was launched at the end of September 2009. Plans for 2009/10 include (funding permitting) a project to record the work of a charity foundation, and an intergenerational project involving current Girl Guides and their predecessors.

Although staff do not have time within their 'day-job' to do much collecting of recorded oral histories, Surrey Heritage is actively encouraging others who do, to deposit their recordings as archive or as safe storage copies at Surrey History Centre in Woking. I have given advice to a number of interested individuals and community groups in the past few months, and after a lull in the holiday season I expect more enquiries in the Autumn.

Janet Nixon

Wessex Film & Sound Archive

An interesting but slightly less eventful year to report this time. The annual Oral History Seminar was attended by 35 people, some from as far away as South Wales and London, who were given presentations on project management, technique and equipment by Georgina Babey, a New Forest oral historian (amongst other things) and David Lee. The other sessions concentrated on the use of video recording for the 'Hampshire Coppice Craftsmen' and 'No Diving' projects respectively, in lively presentations by Phil Allen and Jez Stevens. Lots of questions were asked and answered, with much of value learned by those attending. Jez reprised his presentation for the Society of Archivists' Conference in Bristol this year, which went down very well.

An introduction to oral history has also been provided for groups of 'Living Links' Archives Ambassadors at the Record Office and on the Isle of Wight. 'Living Links' is a three year project to set up sustainable partnerships between Hampshire Record Office and the Isle of Wight Record Office and the communities they serve. The Archive Ambassadors are volunteers from these communities who disseminate information and co-ordinate projects, after training by staff at the Record Offices in the various skills associated with basic archive work such as preservation and digitisation, including oral history recording.

Advice and information has also been given to groups involved in planning oral history projects, including Hampshire Scouting, for their Hampshire Scout (and Guides) Heritage Project, and colleagues from Surrey History Centre who wish to establish a county oral history network. A local history group from Brook, Isle of Wight, have also sought advice and support for their Heritage Lottery Fund application, which was successful, and have visited Wessex Film and Sound Archive (WFSA) for some training in oral history techniques.

I was interviewed on Radio Haslar about the work of WFSA, and on BBC Radio Solent regarding the '100 Lives' recording project, which will be deposited with WFSA soon. The latter in particular has provided constant publicity for WFSA throughout 2008, and involves a selection of the listening public who put themselves forward to talk about their lives 'on air'. It provides an interesting snapshot of modern life in the South of England in 2008 through the voices of a wide section of the community, young and old.

I have also assisted the Hampshire Archives & Local Studies Education Officer with a number of projects, including the 'Basque Refugees 1937' project in collaboration with Southampton University, which aims to record interviews with surviving refugees and produce an exhibition that includes archive footage, amongst other outcomes. Existing video interviews by documentary TV producer Steve Bowles have been added to the collection, held by WFSA, telling the compelling story of children evacuated to Britain from Spain during the Civil War, arriving on the ship *Habana* at Southampton and staying at a local transit camp before finding temporary homes elsewhere in the country.

WFSA has also been pleased to receive a number of oral history recordings during the last year from local history societies like Basingstoke Talking History, which publishes books based upon reminiscences, such as one about the National Health Service in the town. The 'Living Links' Community Archive Development Officer (CADO) has helped local groups with various projects, including 'Favourite Places'. This project is working with the Ethnic Minority Learning Disability (EMLD) programme and is progressing well.

The CADO has worked closely with the Proud2b group (part of the EMLD umbrella) in South East Hampshire, drawn from diverse minority communities, to devise a project outline, consisting of a series of short oral recordings. The group received training and were supported during the interview process. A textile artist subsequently worked with Proud2b members to form three panels inspired by the oral recordings which were displayed in the Ashcroft Arts Centre in Fareham. A presentation event will also occur at Hampshire Record Office (HRO) with the interviews being deposited with Wessex Film and Sound Archive (WFSA). User friendly invitation letters and instruction sheets had been devised. The interviews were conducted from mid-June to the end of July. The work with the artist will take place during September and the exhibition will run in October.

Another supported project was 'Madat Shamuha'. Work is continuing with this Nepalese group in Farnborough. A series of oral history interviews took place in June 2009. Training, loan of equipment and support has been given. Volunteers from the group and from Living Links undertook the work. Living Links (with help from WFSA) will download the recordings onto CD and copies will be provided for the group to form the basis of a community archive and also deposited with WFSA. The group are keen to develop this area of work and, dependent on the success of this pilot, further involvement with Madat Shamuha might develop.

Lastly, an online display on Home Dressmaking is now available on the WFSA website at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/wfsa/sound/dress-making.htm>. It will be complemented by an illustrated presentation at HRO later this month, given by Barbara Burman and Sarah Unitt, formerly of Winchester School of Art. Barbara recorded all of the interviews for this project a few years ago and deposited them with WFSA, so this display is a celebration of that really.

David Lee

South West

Cornwall, Plymouth and the Tamar Valley

The 'Britons and their Pasts' project is conducting multi-generational research on family memory through a cross-section of oral testimony interviews located in Mid-Cornwall and Plymouth. It is incorporating a number of families from a variety of social backgrounds from two contrasting rural-urban environments, and has included participants aged from 19 to 93. I am co-ordinating this project alongside Dr Anna Green (University of Exeter).

The 'Truro Community Oral History Project', an AHRC Knowledge Transfer initiative, is creating a partnership between the University of Exeter and Truro City Council. The project was established as it was thought that Truro's history has concentrated too much upon the story of the *centre* of Truro, and has ignored the story of the housing estates that circle the city, which have also played an important part in Truro's history in the post Second World War era. The project team is working with residents to create an oral history of five council estates

around Truro through 70 recorded interviews. It explores topics such as family, community, health and crime. In addition to academic publications, this project is disseminating research through a public history exhibition and website with downloadable teaching packages.

In May 2009, the National Trust opened a new museum at Cotehele Quay in the Tamar Valley. It incorporates an oral history exhibition about the history of servants' lives at Cotehele House and of river transport on the Tamar (which was an important element in the distribution of produce from the local mines and market gardens). It also includes oral testimony regarding a barge named *The Shamrock*, which is still docked at Cotehele Quay. Oral history interviews were recorded by me on behalf of the National Trust.

Kayleigh Milden

Gloucestershire

The Planned Environment Therapy Trust Archive and Study Centre in Toddington, Gloucestershire, celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. It was founded in 1989 to gather, look after, and make available the archival and personal memory of an area of life and work which is indicated by terms such as therapeutic community, planned environment therapy, milieu therapy, and alternative/democratic/progressive education generally.

Oral history has been at the core of the Archive and Study Centre's work from the outset. During the course of this year it has added 62 recordings to its oral history/audio-video collections, raising the total number to just over 1,600 (not counting films and production videos). As the archivist, I have been supporting oral history locally as the Gloucestershire representative for the Oral History Society Regional Network since 1998; and, through training, as an Oral History Society trainer since 2003. I have conducted three training sessions during the year, and responded to a wide range of queries by phone, email, and personal visit.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the Archive and Study Centre in 2009, the Archive hosted a series of events, submitted a major grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, and concluded with a presentation by the archivist on 'Value-Added Archiving' to the Society of Archivists' annual conference in Bristol in September 2009, a key element of which was the contribution of oral history to the sustainability and growth of the Archive and Study Centre. The proposed oral history project for which HLF funding has been sought is entitled 'Therapeutic Living With Other People's Children: an oral history of residential therapeutic child care c. 1930- c. 1980'. A full description of this is available on the project's website, <http://www.otherpeopleschildren.org.uk>.

There were three 20th anniversary Hosted Events of relevance specifically to oral history. The Founding General Meeting and inaugural Conference of the Child Care History Network was held on October 23, 2008. The conference theme was 'Child Care: The Need for History', and both audience/participants and speakers came from the wide range of those concerned: former children; academic historians; child care workers, managers and consultants; information and memory professionals (museum curators, archivists, librarians, oral historians); national organisations; students and researchers; therapists. Recordings of the talks are on RadioTC International at <http://www.tc-of.org.uk/wiki/index.php?title=20081023>.

The Oral History Society Regional Network business meeting and Annual Event was hosted by the Centre on 21 – 22 November 2008. Regional Networkers

came to the Centre in Toddington from around the country, and regional oral history projects were represented during the Saturday Event by Geoff Bishop and Alison Hobson of the Fairford History Society; Eliza Botham of Droitwich's Community Mind Map project; Elizabeth Cowley and Genevieve Pearson of Bewdley Museum; Ann-Rachael Harwood of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum; Dr Lindsey McEwen, Professor in Physical Geography at the University of Gloucestershire; and Jackie Sims and Jane Tozer of Filton Community History, all of whom spoke about their various projects, and mingled with Networkers and featured Speakers during breaks and lunchtime.

The featured Speakers, with prepared presentations on their areas of expertise and discussion afterwards, were D. Rob Perks and Mary Stewart of the British Library Sound Archive; Dr Viv Cothey, Digital Archivist for Gloucestershire Archives; John Benson, Archivist at the Cheshire Record Office; Dr. Joanna Bornat of the Oral History Society Committee and the Open University; and Colin Hyde of the East Midlands Oral History Archive.

In a departure for the Regional Network Events, the format of bringing together a range of experienced oral historians with local projects appears to have been a success. A member from one of the local projects wrote afterwards 'I came away feeling really enthusiastic and inspired'. Another commented 'how helpful everyone was at the conference. They seemed to adopt us and we got a lot of advice. It is good for us to see and hear the big players in our game'; while a third called it 'invaluable'. A Networker sealed the experience, reflecting on the 'Wonderfully tranquil setting, very comfortable accommodation and a warm and friendly welcome by all ...The food was great too'.

The Oral History Society residential Review and Forward Planning Weekend was also hosted by the Centre on 6 – 8 February 2009. Every five years the Oral History Society Committee meets with a facilitator to conduct an organisational audit - examining the charity's work and progress over the previous five years, looking to and planning future developments, and reviewing the working of the organisation itself. This year's event was enlivened by a massive snowfall, laid on especially to enhance the sense of community and adventure.

I also travelled to Cambridge to record the reminiscence and discussion of women who had been involved in the founding and work of the National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital, or NAWCH. NAWCH celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding and of the influential Platt Report from which it took its name (*The Welfare of Children in Hospital*, Ministry of Health, 1959), with a conference of remembering and shared experiences at Lucy Cavendish College.

A number of other projects have been active around Gloucestershire. Oral History – at least as an aspiration - appears in Cirencester's Townscape Strategy, *Our Future*, (http://www.cirencester.gov.uk/ofc_townscape_strategy.pdf) and has been part of Cheltenham-based FairGame Theatre's HLF-supported 'Low Spirits' production, which toured Gloucestershire pubs during the Spring, 'conducting an oral history project, gathering memories, anecdotes, stories and ghost stories of pubs (past and present) from across the county', with the recordings to go into Gloucestershire Archives.

The Yate and Sodbury District U3A History and Social Studies Group has enlisted Filton Community History's Jane Tozer to help with an oral history on 'Our School Days' in Spring 2010, and the South Gloucestershire Mines Research Group is seeking interviewees. The Chipping Campden-based Campden and District Historical and Archaeological Society (CADHAS) celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2009 with a special exhibition in the Society's Museum and Archive, located in the old Campden Police Court. CADHAS has a long-standing, active oral history programme. The Society's new Chairman, Judith Ellis, is a Campden native, whose

mother Dorrie Ellis took the lead in and was a founding member of the Society's oral history programme, making her first recordings well before the Society itself was founded in 1984. Dorrie Ellis was present and an honoured guest at the official opening of the Exhibition on April 18th.

Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum's *Zeitgeist* project kicked off in 2007 to record living memory and experience "from a vast array of Cheltenham people in order to capture a range of unique perspectives on what it is like to live or work in Cheltenham today", and continued to spill over into YouTube during the past year (<http://www.youtube.com/virtualarts>).

Professor Lindsey McEwan of the University of Gloucestershire has been working with Sue Wilson of Gloucestershire Women's Institute, and Radio Production students under Jason Griffiths, to record Women's Institute members' memories of the extreme 2007 Gloucestershire floods, transforming them into short pieces suitable for broadcast and combining audio and visual materials into broadcast quality digital stories. Students presented their digital stories at the recent 90th anniversary celebration of Gloucestershire Women's Institute in Tewkesbury Abbey, which had itself been surrounded by the floods. The intention is to build on the past year's experience to develop the collaboration between the University and the Women's Institute further.

The Regional Network Event in November 2008 brought together and helped to illustrate how lively oral history is in the Region. It would be good to hear from anyone doing or planning oral history in and around Gloucestershire, not least with a view to networking, and meeting more regularly to share experiences and discoveries (and good food) on the Regional Network Event model.

Craig Fees

West Midlands

This year Julia Letts and Maggie Tohill, both West Midlands Networkers based in Worcestershire, are combining their annual report.

Julia has been involved in two main projects, one in a rural part of West Worcestershire and one in Droitwich Spa. 'Harvesting the Past: Memories from Rural Worcestershire', funded by Worcestershire County Council, has two main aims: to record (for the Worcestershire Record Office Archive) at least 25 oral history interviews reflecting the lives of those who farmed and lived in West Worcestershire in the 1930s, '40s and '50s, and secondly to share some of these stories with the local community through a specially written 90-minute play, staged at the local school and performed by local people and students. The interviews have been done and will now be edited for various purposes (a CD, website, local talks, travelling exhibition). The play has been written by a local playwright and auditions are underway at the school. Rehearsals begin in October and the play will be staged in April. Two of the interviewees, both in their 80s, will have main parts in the play.

'Our War: An Oral History Archive for Droitwich' has been developed by an older people's group in Droitwich, which wanted to encourage some of the more isolated members of the community to come along to its meetings. The group, the Droitwich Area Forum for Older People, decided to focus on collecting wartime

recollections and experiences, and successfully applied for an 'Awards for All' grant of £10,000 to enable them to collect about 25 recorded interviews and create an oral history archive for the library, along with a sound post and compilation CD. The project was launched on the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of war in September with an event in Droitwich Library. Recording is now underway and the group has already uncovered some extraordinary stories. The project will also be working with students in two local schools.

On the whole it has been a quieter year for oral history at the Worcestershire Record Office, with us supporting other projects such as 'Harvesting the Past' mentioned above rather than embarking on new projects of our own. One of the reasons for this is that the project to build a new Library and History Centre in Worcester moved on a further stage this year and actual construction work may begin before the year is out. As the project progresses Record Office staff will have to scale back other work, including oral history, to concentrate on preparations for moving to the new building and then pick up tasks again once we are settled.

In the meantime we have decided to put our main energies into working with what we already have. The Oral History Team therefore continued checking the transcripts of the 160 World War II project interviews with the help of our volunteers. The transcribing work has been a very time consuming task, much more than we imagined when we embarked on it, but once it is completed we will be able to look at how we make the collection more widely available to researchers, possibly tying it into our efforts to establish an online catalogue of our archive collections generally.

We have been concerned for some time that, excluding the World War II project, we only have one copy of the majority of our sound recordings, and that some of our older material is at the mercy of technological obsolescence. We have therefore embarked on the task of making a preservation copy of recordings for which we do not have a second copy. This also gives us the opportunity to check generally on the condition of our sound recordings. Our volunteers have started with the Redditch Dialect Society's recordings, and will progress to other collections as time and resources allow.

We have continued to make recordings of individuals wishing to have their reminiscences recorded but for whom there was no suitable local project they could join. One particularly interesting and lively interview involved two ladies in their 80s who had met when they were five and had kept in touch ever since.

During the course of the year we were contacted by a small number of local projects and individuals looking for some advice and guidance, information about our holdings for their research or for a place to store the fruits of their work for posterity. We are pleased that increasingly local projects are looking to us as a place of deposit for a copy of their recordings even if we haven't had direct involvement with their work and as part of the work on the new building we will be looking at how to make our holdings of sound recordings more readily available for research.

In terms of our overall role as networkers, we have had fewer enquiries than usual and do not have a very comprehensive picture of what is going on in the huge West Midlands patch. This year we had hoped to set up informal regional meetings to discuss projects and share best practice, but this has yet to get off the ground due to everyone's extensive commitments.

Other projects that we do know about taking place in the West Midlands include Enterprising Minds' 'Our Roots', a collaborative intergenerational radio project based around six schools in Coventry. The project will focus on recording oral history from people who have moved to the city and settled there from the 1950s onwards. They will be working with two facilitators, one with audio expertise

and the other with video production expertise (and with a heritage and broadcast background), who will support the schools in researching, professionally recording, and eventually archiving, each story for a specially commissioned website designed for public use. A DVD will also be made available to the schools and to the Oral History and Archive societies so that they have a master copy for their records.

The 'History of HIV in Birmingham' is an HLF-funded oral history project with an aim of recording at least 50 interviews with people living with and affected by HIV in the region, and with professionals who have worked within the sector. The main outputs are a website, a PSHE pack for schools, an exhibition, and two theatre productions – as well as the archive itself. Birmingham Central Library will be taking the interviews and associated materials, and the archive will be launched in December 2010. Project leader Catherine O'Byrne is working with a team of about 12 volunteers who are helping with the research and undertaking some of the interviews.

A huge amount of preparation work has been completed on the 'Evesham Mop Fair' project to record people who have had an involvement with the Mop Fairs in and around Evesham in Worcestershire. Mop Fairs are an ancient tradition in this part of the world. Young unemployed men and women would go along to the fair bearing the tools of their trade (a mop for housemaids, a fork for field hands etc) and try to find work. The fairs still take place annually in the autumn. The project seeks to conduct life story interviews with show people, using an experienced oral history producer and trained volunteers. There will also be interviews with residents, including those who met or courted at the fairs. The material will be used to create an archive, an exhibition in Evesham's Almonry and to work creatively with young people producing art and drama related outcomes.

'Grand Memories, Grand Theatre Wolverhampton', a major project funded by a £43,000 grant from the HLF and coordinated by Louise Bent, has just been completed at the Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton. The aim was to capture memories from patrons, performers, theatre goers and anyone else involved with the Grand in order to chronicle the building's history. Over 130 interviews were conducted by oral historian Helen Lloyd and film-maker Phil Brown. Young local volunteers were trained in interviewing and filming techniques so that they too played an important part in this process. These interviews were then painstakingly edited to provide wonderful material for a booklet and film. Photographs, old programmes, tickets and autograph books were donated by patrons and local establishments to illustrate these memories. The information has also helped to shape the development of an online resource and in-house display. The 'Grand Memories' website is at www.grandmemories.co.uk.

The aim of the 'Gypsy Wagons Project' was to enable a group of traveller children at Stourport High School to interview some of the older people in their community to get first hand accounts of living in gypsy wagons. The students did some training and worked with Julia Letts to record interviews. They then voiced up their own tracks for an audio guide. This was used in the Wagon Shed of the Worcestershire County Museum at Hartlebury on an extremely successful gypsy heritage themed open day in June.

Julia Letts & Maggie Tohill

South Yorkshire

The South Yorkshire network held a successful 10th regional meeting on 27 June at Sheffield Hallam University. Much stimulating discussion arose from three fascinating presentations. Julie Beresford introduced the 'Women in South Yorkshire Industry' project, which is mapping existing collections and creating a new archive of twenty interviews. Carrie Ford gave insight into volunteers' experiences on the project. Emily Uren, Doncaster Gate Hospital Heritage Project, explored the benefits and challenges of interlocking oral history with a wider community-focused project. The project poses interesting questions about interviewees' identification with institutions such as hospitals. Interviewees have recalled experiences that are transient at the time, but life-changing in their impact.

Jayne Dowle spoke about supporting groups and individuals wanting to publish community oral history in Barnsley. Discussion ranged from the practicalities of what can be a difficult process to complex questions raised by editing transcripts into a publishable and accessible form. During the course of the day, participants reported on developments across the region, including the Centre for Oral History Research at Huddersfield University, which is going from strength to strength, and the launch of the project to create the new Barnsley People's Museum and Archives Centre (opening 2012).

Opportunities for future development of the OHS network in the region were identified, for example, support for new projects, a means to identify opportunities for volunteers and interviewees when a project ends, and working with archives to support the digitisation, documentation and depositing of existing and new oral history collections.

We can also report on a number of projects in the region. 'Time on My Hands', Withernsea Lighthouse Museum is a project based in Holderness that is recording memories of life from the turn of the last century until the late 1970s. The stories are video recorded and illustrated with contemporary images to produce DVDs by Lyz Turner, Project Officer (email lyzt@msn.com). The films are screened in the area and archived at museums in Withernsea, Hornsea and Hedon, and the Treasure House in Beverley. Lyz is also developing audio content for the 'Walking with Wilberforce' tour in Hull, which will be downloadable from the website early in the new year at <http://www.wilberforcetrail.co.uk/>. Additionally, for her MA at Huddersfield University, Lyz is researching Prisoner of War camps in Holderness, interviewing people who remember the camps as well as surviving prisoners who chose to remain in the area.

During 2009-10, the Heritage Lottery-funded South Yorkshire Transport Museum Oral History Project aims to create an archive by recording and transcribing memories of around 30 former South Yorkshire based transport employees. With volunteer interviewers and a project transcriber, Sam Smith, it is recording and presenting the stories of individuals at all levels of employment. Between them, they represent many forms of transport - tram, bus, coach, rail, road haulage, and waterways. The recordings will be used with photos and artefacts from the

museum collection to create displays and interpretation material for the museum. There are plans to develop an interactive website and make recordings available on CD. The project is still in its early stages and would be very pleased to hear from anyone in the South Yorkshire region who has an interesting transport story to tell. If you would like to know more, please contact the project manager, Liz Smith, email lizsmit@gmail.com or visit the website at www.sytm.co.uk.

'Wortley Heritage', with Jenny Marchant, involves workers and volunteers from Heeley City Farm, Sheffield, in the collection of memories about Wortley village. The farm brought the walled gardens at Wortley Hall back into production in 2004 and Heritage Lottery funding has since allowed them to explore the history of the site. The oral history project aims to gather information about village life, Wortley Hall, the hall's walled gardens, and the American Servicemen who were stationed at the Hall during the Second World War. Selected clips of recordings are available on the project's website, with more to follow. For more information visit www.wortleyheritage.org.uk.

The South Yorkshire Women's Development Trust have completed an intensive project that has mapped existing collections relating to women's role in South Yorkshire Industry and created a new collection of interviews carried out by volunteers. The completion of the project has been marked by a touring exhibition, public oral history workshops across the region and a website that is being completed at the present time. See <http://sywdt.org/pages/home.htm>.

The Doncaster Gate Heritage Project, recently completed, has explored the history of the former Doncaster Gate Hospital in Rotherham through oral history, research and creative activities with a host of schools, colleges and community groups. See the website at www.doncastergateheritage.org.uk.

Rotherham United Football Club have been awarded a Heritage Lottery grant to run an oral history project exploring the fascinating links in the borough between the coal industry and football in the 1940s and 1950s. This was a time of considerable change in the area and the project promises to produce exciting results. Information at www.hlf.org.uk/English/MediaCentre/Archive/Bradford+and+Rotherham+Sporting+Heritage.htm.

An award of almost £3 million has been given by the Heritage Lottery Fund to transform the distinctive Barnsley Town Hall into the first-ever Barnsley Museum. It will have an integrated archives centre and will be preceded by a major community engagement campaign over three years to create new collections. A key focus is on facilitating multi-voiced interpretations of the collections and exhibitions through community-led oral history. This includes a new 'Barnsley: Past and Present' Sound Archive, including the full digitisation of existing holdings, which is already taking place in line with new policies and procedures for the depositing of digital collections.

The Cooper Gallery in Barnsley has also been awarded a Heritage Lottery grant to re-interpret their collections, a focus of which will be volunteer-led oral history with staff and visitors involved with the gallery over its 90 year history, allowing multiple voices to interpret both the site and its collections. University Campus Barnsley has also submitted a bid to the HLF to support a project exploring its

history, which goes back to the early 1930s when it was established as one of the first technical colleges in the country.

Sheffield Archives has accepted a large oral history collection created by Sheffield historian Bill Moore, who died recently. Bill was widely recognised for his work over many decades after graduating from Cambridge in the 1930s. This is an excellent collection charting the history of the labour movement and a fascinating array of social movements throughout the 20th century, with interviews ranging from suffragettes and peace campaigners to leading trade unionists and political activists. OHS Regional Networker John Tanner and Janette Martin from the University of Leeds and Society for the Study of Labour History are working with Bill's family and Sheffield archivists to document and provide contextual interpretation for the collection, and hope to mark its completion with an exhibition and publication in early 2011.

Museums Sheffield and Barnsley Museum and Heritage Service are two of the partners delivering 'Precious Cargo', Yorkshire's contribution to 'Stories of the World', a major constituent of London 2012's Cultural Olympiad. Over forthcoming years, a host of activities and projects will be taking place, focusing on intergenerational activity to explore museum and archival collections in the region, with oral history playing a key role.

The oral history service of Sheffield Macmillan Unit for Palliative Care is in its third year of working with people with life-threatening conditions. We now have Karen Hitchcock, Freelance Photographer, on the team and can therefore offer audio recordings and photographs to people who, due to their disease condition, may find it difficult to communicate their individuality. For information please contact Michelle Winslow, email m.winslow@sheffield.ac.uk.

Michelle Winslow and John Tanner

West Yorkshire

The MA in Oral History at the University of Huddersfield has just finished its first year with six part-time students who will now be going into their final year. The Friends of Beaumont Park, Huddersfield has just received a £17,000 development grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in order to take it forward for a larger submission for £200,000. The project is primarily based around reconstructing Beaumont Park's old bandstand but there is a small oral history element attached to the bid. The group have received some training and are about to embark on conducting twenty or so oral history interviews which will be uploaded onto their website. See <http://www.fobp.co.uk>.

The three year 'Up and Under' Rugby League project finished on 30 September 2009. It is anticipated that the website will be uploaded onto the Rugby Football League's main website and that it will be maintained by the RFL. More than 100 interviews have been carried out and most of these have been uploaded onto the project's main website (<http://www.rugbyleagueoralhistory.co.uk/>). Many of these interviews have also been transcribed and a book of the interviews will be published early next year. This has been a highly successful project that has attracted viewers and comment from all over the world. It is also anticipated that the transcripts and original interviews will be archived at the University of Huddersfield. A conference on oral history and sport was held earlier this year at

the university. The success of the project is largely down to Project Manager, Dr Rob Light.

'Two Minutes Silence', an MLA-funded 'Their Past, Your Future' project, was set up to mark the 90th anniversary this November of the Remembrance Day two-minute silence. The team, based at Huddersfield University's Centre for Oral History Research, have worked with pupils at two schools within the town, university students, college students at the Imperial War Museum North, and one group of elderly people, to produce interview clips, photographs and poems about conflict and peace. To date, there are over 20 edited interviews on the website – www.thetwominutesilence.co.uk – with more awaiting uploading. Some of these were with refugees and asylum seekers, including a woman from Iraq who has first-hand experience of war. One member of the team is now making a Radio 4 programme on the silence, whilst another put together an appropriately two-minute PhotoStory about the project which is now on the My Yorkshire website at <http://www.myyorkshire.org/>, together with some audio clips, transcripts and photographs.

Asian Voices is now in the second year of a two year HLF funded project collating memories of the first Asian immigrants into Huddersfield. The website (<http://www.asianvoices.org.uk/>) is continuing to expand with more than thirty interviews and many more ready for uploading. The website also has a successful blog written by Project Manager Nafhesa Ali which is currently receiving 10,000 hits per month! Nafhesa has been working with various schools in Huddersfield and is planning to produce an educational pack as one of the outcomes of the project. Barnsley College has put in a bid for Young Roots funding from the HLF to carry out an oral history of the former Mining and Technical College. It is anticipated that a decision will be known by November.

Stephen Kelly & Clare Jenkins

Northern Ireland

Peter Carson and myself have provided help and advice to several individuals interested in conducting oral history work in Northern Ireland this year. The RUC George Cross oral history project has seen considerable progress, with a publication anticipated soon. *Making the Difference: an Oral History of Probation in Northern Ireland*, compiled by former PBNI Assistant Chief Officer Brendan Fulton and edited by Trevor Parkhill was published by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

Linda Ballard

Scotland

Scottish Oral History Centre

The Scottish Oral History Centre (SOHC) at the University of Strathclyde has been busy with a range of activities over the past year, not least co-organising and hosting the 2009 conference of the Oral History Society, *Hearing Voice in Oral History*.

A great deal of the Centre's efforts have been focused on developing research projects and applying for funding over the last year, with considerable success. Recently, the SOHC has attracted some £230,000 of external revenue from the AHRC for two projects – a three-year Collaborative Doctoral Award to explore 'Glasgow's War' (recipient is Alison Turnbull) and we were really delighted to be awarded a two-year AHRC Knowledge Transfer Fellowship (KTF) to work with Glasgow Museums on the project: 'The Voice in the Museum: Personal Oral Narratives and Social Identities in Public History (with particular reference to work and workplace cultures)'. The SOHC Director, Arthur McIvor, is the Knowledge Transfer Fellow and Dr David Walker (previously employed by Glasgow Museums on the M74 Oral History project) the Research Assistant. The latter applications were made possible by generous internal funding of the SOHC by the University of Strathclyde in 2008-2009.

The SOHC Deputy Director, Dr Juliette Pattinson, continues her work on the Special Operations Executive in the Second World War – see her book *Behind Enemy Lines* – and recently completed an oral history project funded by the ESRC on the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry in the Second World War. Dr Angela Bartie has continued to work as the senior Research Fellow in the SOHC over the past year and has been involved in the day-to-day running of the Centre: amongst other things coordinating the training; developing the website; organising the regular SOHC seminars; giving advice to a wide range of community oral history projects; and scoping out and writing up oral history funding applications – including the AHRC applications noted above.

She is continuing her research on the post-war history of the Edinburgh Festivals, on the Glasgow gangs in the 1960s/70s and is currently developing a new funding application for the ESRC for an early career fellowship to investigate the Glasgow Mayfests in the 1980s and 1990s. Dr Wendy Ugolini (an oral history specialist on the Italian community in wartime) joined the Centre as part-time Research Fellow for the period Sept 2008 to Sept 2009 and in that time worked with Arthur McIvor (Director) and Juliette Pattinson (Deputy Director) to develop a significant new research project on the Reserved Occupations during the Second World War. Seven pilot interviews have been undertaken, a first paper written and a full-scale UK-wide oral history project is planned - if we can just obtain funding!

Another Research Associate of the SOHC, Dr Andrew Perchard, has recently finished a draft of his new book, *Aluminiumville*, which incorporates the results of extensive interviewing in the Aluminium communities of the Scottish Highlands. Look out for the publication of this important new monograph in 2010 (Carnegie Press). Andy also has plans to integrate oral testimony into a Highland heritage trail. Arthur McIvor and Ronnie Johnston continue their oral-history based research on male workers, gender identities and health in traditional working class communities and are currently interviewing occupational health professionals, including works doctors and nurses. A big new project on the oral history of deindustrialisation is also in gestation.

The SOHC has continued to provide oral history training seminars for academics, students and interested individuals and groups from the wider community. Our regular training seminars always attract a range of participants, although recently we have also provided a number of tailored packages to specific groups embarking on oral history projects. These have included 'Rainbow Lives', a community based oral history project for minority groups in Fife (www.rainbowlives.org.uk) and we are scheduled to provide training for an exciting new oral history of the deaf community in Scotland, organised through the auspices of the Scottish Council for Deafness.

Requests continue to grow for assistance from groups undertaking new oral history projects, with the following examples giving a snapshot of the diversity of new work being developed in Scotland.

- Tall Ship Museum, Glasgow: 'Glenlee' oral history project - SOHC have been commissioned by the Clyde Maritime Trust and have primary responsibility for oral interviewing in relation to this project.
- Almond Valley Heritage Museum, Scottish shale oil oral history project - oral history of the shale oil miners and digitisation of existing interviews done in the 1980s (project coordinator John Holt).
- Denny and Dunipace Heritage Society & Community Green Initiative - HLF funding bid and training provision for volunteers for oral history project bringing children and elderly in the community together to explore industrial heritage.
- Scottish Council for Deafness oral history project - advice and feedback on HLF funding bid and organisation of training provision.
- Oban War & Peace Museum oral history project
- Bash Art Creative (Basharat Khan) - advice on getting started with an oral history project on South Asian immigration into Scotland during the 1950s and 1960s
- Scottish Freemasons oral history project - Conference presentation on oral history methodology and advice and guidance regarding a full-scale oral history project on Scottish freemasonry.

The SOHC has also continued to develop its close links with Glasgow Museums over the past year and the AHRC-funded projects referred to above will see such 'knowledge exchange' relationships nurtured and extended considerably over the next few years. Apart from advising on collecting policy and new oral history projects, we will be producing an oral history resource pack and CD for Glasgow schools and starting up a new 'work and community placement in oral history' undergraduate class at the University of Strathclyde as outcomes from this collaboration. Glasgow Museums' commitment to expanding oral history is reflected in their recent audit of their oral interview collections (Tracey Hawkins) and a number of ongoing community projects, including the 'Red Road Flats' oral history project (see <http://www.redroadflats.org.uk/>).

SOHC staff continue to supervise a number of PhD projects involving oral history interviewing, including new projects starting September 2009 on 'Glasgow's War' noted above, a new PhD project on 'Cultural Representations of the Reserved Occupations 1939-45' (Linsey Robb), a PhD on the 1989 Czech Revolution (David Green) and a new PhD project on the work of the pressure group, the Society for the Prevention of Asbestos and Industrial Disease (William McDougall). Alison Gilmour – now working on the water industry oral history project for the British Library Sound Archive – has recently submitted her PhD on the oral history of the Linwood car plant and Fiona Frank continues in the SOHC with her innovative inter-generational study of the Jewish community through the Hoppenstein family over five generations.

Amongst other oral history work emanating from the West of Scotland, keep an eye out in 2010 for what promises to be a terrific new book by Prof. Lynn Abrams of Glasgow University. This has the provisional title: *Oral History Theory*, will be published by Routledge, and will include chapters on self, inter-subjectivity, memory, narrative, performance and power.

Angela Bartie and Arthur McIvor

Wales

We are now three Regional Network representatives in Wales: Julia Fallon and Beth Thomas based in Cardiff, and Andrew Edwards at Bangor. We will be meeting soon to co-ordinate our efforts and create a Welsh oral history network which will enable us to better monitor and advise oral history projects in Wales.

Among the projects seeking advice on oral history practice this year have been Cardiff University's Centre for the Study of Islam, who are undertaking research into the history and settlement of Muslims in Cardiff. Julia has been recording a 100 year old man who was a medic in the Polish underground movement and spent time within concentration camps. His is a moving story of human kindness both to and from him amongst a mixed nationality group of people all experiencing war, either as oppressor or oppressed.

The archive at St Fagans: National History Museum has benefitted from a number of external oral history projects over the last year or so. These include a collaboration with TRAC (which promotes Welsh traditional music) to record the testimony of Mick Tams, a prolific recorder of English-language folk music in Wales; a project by David Williams to record the experiences of the Norwegian community in Wales; Gruffydd Roberts' recordings of Welsh speakers in the Gaiman, Patagonia; and ACLI ENAIP's Italian Memories in Wales project. This last project is the result of a grant aided project from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It concentrated on the testimony of Italians who moved to Wales after the second World War, and during the 1950s. It unearthed the stories of a great number of families and has resulted in an extensive collection of images and recordings. The resulting exhibition is on tour around Wales and will finish its journey at St Fagans in the New Year.

Andrew Edwards, Julia Fallon & Beth Thomas