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Conference
of the**

**ORAL
HISTORY
SOCIETY**

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Oral History @Work: RECORDING CHANGE IN WORKING LIVES

ABSTRACTS

PLENARY

INDUSTRIAL WORK AND THE BODY: TOXIC LEGACIES, ILLNESS & DISABILITY STORIES

Arthur McIvor, Professor of Social History and Director of the Scottish Oral History Centre at University of Strathclyde, Scotland

Industrial work is inscribed upon workers' bodies. This presentation reviews the oral history literature on work and embodiment and draws upon a series of work-life interviews of British heavy industry employees to explore ways that workers remembered and narrated how work impacted upon their bodies, their health and well-being. In bearing witness, such testimonies facilitate understanding of the complex, multi-layered effects of work on the body and mind – on how industrial work could positively forge identities and hone fit bodies, whilst also undermining them. The discussion pivots around the structural violence inherent in the industrial workplace and the cumulative toxic legacies of heavy industrial work, on prevailing and mutating work-health cultures and on the lived experience of chronic work-related disease and disability. In these shared personal stories some workers were represented as more vulnerable than others and workers were depicted as agents as well as victims. The final part of the talk reflects on ways workers mediated risk and danger and mobilised anger in resistance and advocacy in the struggle over the body at work and campaigning on reparations, social justice and raising awareness of the toxic legacies extending beyond the industrial workplace in the wider community and environment.

PARALLEL SESSION 1

PANEL 1A: ORAL HISTORIES AT THE NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM: COLLECTING, RESEARCHING AND EXHIBITING THE ORAL HISTORIES OF WORKING LIVES

Railway lives, stories and change in the National Railway Museum oral history collection

Angélique Bonamy, National Railway Museum, York, UK

The National Railway Museum, York, holds a significant railway sound archive, together with

important paper and photographic archive collections. The sound collection is made primarily of railway sound recordings and oral history.

The main part of the oral history collection was created between 2000 and 2006 with an ambitious project led by the Friends of the National Railway Museum who began gathering the National Archive of Railway Oral History (NAROH). A large team of volunteers conducted the interviews, collecting the life stories of men and women railway workers. About 600 interviews were recorded on MiniDiscs and at least 500 have now been digitised.

The Friends of the museum and the Retired Railway Officers Society started a new project in February 2018. 'Britain's Railways All Change' (BRAC) focuses on the later period covering the privatisation of the railways.

The museum, as a member of the Science Museum Group, contributes to an oral history working group aiming at harmonising the guidelines and policies for all the five museums within the group.

This presentation will explore the different aspects of the museum's oral history collection. Whilst giving an overview of the contents, the paper will present how we are changing the way we manage this collection and ongoing projects, how volunteers have been contributing to projects and the benefits of working together with colleagues in the Science Museum Group. Finally, this paper will address how we provide access to oral histories and our ambitions for the future of the collection.

Privatising British Rail – recalling working at the face of change

Oliver Betts, National Railway Museum, York, UK

Privatising British Rail, begun in 1994 and concluded in 1997, came as the culmination of more than a decade of agony, upheaval, and challenge for railway workers, managers, and passengers. The changes were social and cultural, economic and political; as factions in both Conservative and Labour parties, both in states of transition, wrestled with the perception of and motives for change and the general public experienced it, Britain's railway workforce had to come to terms with the new realities of the privatised railway.

Drawing on interviews held within, and gathered in association with, the National Railway Museum in York, this paper aims to draw out the lived working experience of the men and women who faced this process of transition. Although there is a growing literature on how this change affected working practice on Britain's railways, this paper will explore the understudied broader impact of the move to private ownership on work structures, experience, and identity in what had once been a cohesive national industry. In doing so it will reflect on how memory of this period can be brought into conversation with museum archives and objects to tell a fuller picture of the functions, identities, and lives of rail workers in 1980s and 1990s Britain. Both the designed

and the unintended consequences of the move to privatise British Rail had real implications for working lives in the rail industry, the story of which, this paper will argue, can only be reached through oral histories.

Oral Histories on Display

Lorna Hogger, National Railway Museum, York, UK

This paper will discuss how oral histories have been used within the National Railway Museum's exhibitions to date and what our ambitions are to make better use of our extensive oral history collection in the future.

Oral histories can play a great part in enhancing the visitor experience within an exhibition. Personal stories can add both context to the narrative and a personal connection to the story. There are however practical considerations and challenges such as how interviews are edited for time, and technical considerations such as maintenance and sound bleed into neighbouring displays.

Our own research shows that people enjoy making personal connections to a story, with oral histories providing a human context to often abstract or static themes. In this way, interviews (both as audio and video) can enrich our storytelling presenting the experience of real people, at the same time adding authenticity by means of a voice or voices, other than that of the museum.

The museum's Vision 2025 will see both the Great Hall and Station Hall redeveloped and it is our ambition to draw on our extensive oral history archive as part of our enhanced visitor offer. Station Hall, in particular, will showcase a staff and passenger story and we hope to bring this to life with personal recollection alongside our other collections of rail vehicles and large and small objects.

Proving them wrong: railway women in WW2

Susan Major, Independent Scholar, UK

During the Second World War, men went off to fight and many thousands of British women were recruited to replace them on the railways. As well as jobs seen traditionally as 'women's work', such as clerical, cleaning and catering, many were now employed in work completely new to females, such as porters and guards, maintenance and works operations. Research exploring the experiences of these women has been limited, compared to those of munitions workers in factories, and women in the military services for example. However, the National Archive of Railway Oral History at the National Railway Museum in York provides an under-used resource for the researcher to explore these women, who have now disappeared from history.

This paper draws on interview extracts used in my book (*Female Railway Workers in World War II*), where these women share their individual stories. Inevitably they represented women who were young in wartime, as older wartime workers had died by the turn of the century, when the interviews were carried out. Responses by women to the male interviewers

were shaped by how they chose to make sense of their wartime work, so many years before. Audio clips bring alive their experiences, demonstrating the rigours of railway work in wartime, aspects of workplace culture, and how they had to prove they could do the job. The paper will reflect on how their voices contrasted with their portrayal in railway company magazines and the contemporary press, with issues of femininity, and how they were represented. But this source celebrates the individual, highlighting their feelings about the work, their values and perceptions.

PANEL 1B: WORK, HEALTH & TRAUMA

Communicating Crisis in the National Health Service (NHS)

Stephanie Snow & Angela Whitecross, NHS@70, University of Manchester, UK

In 1981 eight Public Relations officers worked in the National Health Service (NHS); today, NHS England alone employs over 1,000 Communications staff. Since the 1980s and particularly since the 2000s new technologies have brought dramatic changes to the practice of public relations worldwide and the NHS has had to respond to the challenges of 24-hour news coverage, online public forums and social media. The NHS has always been at the centre of public service responses to disasters and terrorist attacks, most recently the Manchester Arena bombing and the Grenfell Tower fire. During these moments of crisis, communications staff are pivotal actors who choreograph multiple sources of data to communicate information about fatalities and the injuries of people affected by the incident. They are often bystanders to the arrival of casualties to hospitals and the distress of families and friends. What is the emotional cost of this work? How do communications professionals manage emotions during crises? The concept of emotional labour, understood to be part of any kind of work associated with sentient beings (Strauss *et al* 1982), is well-established in literature with regard to the work of traditional care-givers such as doctors, nurses and other clinical staff but little attention has been paid to the phenomenon in NHS staff outside clinical roles. This paper draws on interviews with NHS communications staff, collected as part of the NHS at 70 project (nhs70.org.uk) to explore how emotional labour during moments of crisis is experienced, articulated and remembered in a group of workers where there is little public recognition of the emotional impact of work upon the individual.

Working Dogs: Guide Dogs, Disability and the Affective Labour of Multispecies Companionship in Modern Britain

Neil Pemberton, University of Manchester, UK

Do animals work? Historical scholarship has tended to ignore this question assuming that animals' cooperation is automatic, nothing more than an outcome of conditioning. However, animal studies scholars are developing new ways

of thinking about animal cooperation that does not so easily erase their agency, research that challenges our ideas about what constitutes legitimate work. This paper historically explores the question of animal work in relation to the question of multispecies work cultures generated by guide dog partnerships. In particular, the paper focuses on the history of working lives and experiences of trained dogs and their human handlers, and how these relations have changed over the last thirty years in modern Britain. The paper draws upon 15 interviews with guide dog owners who have had guide dogs since the mid-to-late 1970s to the present, and these interviews were both audio-recorded and filmed. I filmed the interview to capture the affect and intentions of canine partner of the dyad and how their presence affected the dynamics of the interview, and clips will be shown to illustrate its intersubjective and triadic nature.

Critical Incidents and Emotional Fallout

Andrew Morley, The Physiological Society, UK

The potential for error is inherent to medical practice. Contemporary research consistently shows high levels of concern among healthcare staff about the personal consequences of making mistakes. High-profile prosecutions of healthcare staff for gross negligence manslaughter have been extensively discussed in medical journals. Suicide among doctors facing investigation by the General Medical Council (GMC) has been the subject of a recent enquiry within the organisation. This paper draws on oral history interviews with retired and current operating theatre staff from Guy's hospital to explore emotional responses to critical incidents: unexpected events occurring in clinical practice which lead to potential or actual patient harm. The oral history approach proved highly effective at eliciting the context and detail of many incidents. More significantly, the freedom of expression afforded to participants allowed us to record compelling evidence of the emotional impact on healthcare staff of medical mishaps as the clips will show. Distress was common in both groups. Other responses included the desire to disclose for purposes of absolution or professional solidarity; prospective indignation at a perceived lack of fair process; determination to improve; satisfaction at successful mitigation of the clinical outcome; the perception of an honour code between professionals and the conscious sublimation of negative emotions after incidents. Developing an understanding of such emotions and their impact on both the individual, and medical practice more widely, is imperative in a climate where the GMC imposes a duty of candour on doctors and the reporting and analysis of incidents is central to quality improvement programmes. The paper concludes by discussing the value of oral histories as an instrument for engaging doctors and patients together in discussions on medical error.

Physicians and Stress – causes and outlets, 1950-2010

Sarah Lowry, Royal College of Physicians of London, UK

This paper will investigate what oral history recordings in the archives at the Royal College of

Physicians, Oxford Brookes University and from Manchester University's NHS at 70 project (nhs70.org.uk) reveal about the changes in physicians' experience and management of stress during the period 1950-2010. It will also explore how the causes of stress for hospital doctors shifted in these years. I will examine factors such as the European Working Time Directive and its impact on physicians' working patterns and professional relationships, the rapid development of modern medical techniques and the public's increasing familiarity with the National Health Service and the affect these had both on patients' expectations and clinicians' workloads and anxiety levels. The paper will also consider the facilities and services available to doctors in hospital settings, such as the doctors' mess, on call rooms and counselling services, the ways in which physicians utilised these to manage stressful situations, and how provision changed over time. The session will promote discussion on several conference themes including the effects of changing conditions of employment on working lives and the impact of changing technologies on the nature of work. I will use audio clips from all three collections referred to above, recorded at different points across the six decades in question, to illustrate key points in the debate.

PANEL 1C: WORK & LOCAL IDENTITY

A tale of two ranches? From John Wayne to JR Ewing: de-industrialisation, nationalised industries, and local firms in St Helens, Merseyside

Pierre Botcherby, University of Warwick, UK

St Helens is 'a product of the industrial revolution'. Until the late twentieth century, employment in nationalised coal mines or in large private companies with local origins (Pilkingtons Glass, Beechams Pills, etc.) predominated. The work, whilst rarely glamorous, was plentiful and supposedly for life. Industrial concerns were local institutions, heavily influencing the surrounding area and community. Their collective decline as of the 1980s precipitated changes not only in the town's labour market but in its way of life more generally.

This paper makes use of two oral history collections: one created shortly after the 1984-5 Miners' Strike by St Helens library staff documenting residents' memories of the town and the other from the author's own research into communities, industrial decline and post-industrial regeneration. The paper's title in fact comes from one of these latter interviews, a former collier's comparison of state-run and private sector employment.

This paper will use these oral interviews to explore the general evolution of employment in St Helens across recent decades. It will then pick out excerpts concerning particular issues, such as the benefits of nationalisation, workers' reluctance to swap state-run industry for the private sector, or the community-orientation of large local firms. It will contend that losing nationalised industries and large local firms has

led to a more insecure and fragmented labour market, whilst the town overall has, like many others, lost the benefits these companies brought to their local communities. Elements of this evolution have, of course, been afoot for many years and not everybody's industrial employment was secure and stable. Nevertheless, recent industrial decline has created a context alien to that experienced by many workers of the past, one which has left St Helens searching for a new direction and a new identity as it enters the post-industrial era.

Trawsfynydd: creating a new 'Welsh way of life'? Hope, modernity, and 'nuclear culture' in the rural Welsh Heartlands

Seán Aeron Martin, Bangor University, Wales

The application to build a 500 MW nuclear power station near the small village of Trawsfynydd, Meirionnydd was given royal assent in 1958, bringing the 'Atomic Age' right into the heart of rural Gwynedd. Seen by local people as a way of tackling the 'twin scourges' of unemployment and rural depopulation, Trawsfynydd nuclear power station, or 'Traws' as it came to be known by its employees, was part of a wider social and cultural mission of the political leadership of North West Wales, to save the so-called 'Welsh Way of life', an oft-revered – and somewhat mythologised – culture rooted in the countryside, Nonconformity, and, of course, the Welsh language. Indeed, some of the rhetoric supporting the scheme pointed towards far higher social and cultural aspirations: the hopes of forming, through the 'merging of an intelligent, educated community into the traditional pattern of the Welsh way of life', a new and modern Welsh rural society.

This paper will assess the extent of Trawsfynydd nuclear power station's success in achieving this goal of rural regeneration by recording the experiences of individuals who worked there, spanning from its construction in the late 1950s, to its closure in 1993 and beyond, thereby deliberating Traws's long term legacy on the region. Using oral history interviews, ranging from senior managers to lorry drivers, it will be analysing the social, economic, and cultural impact the nuclear power industry had on these small rural communities, discovering how a powerful sense of community emerged, while also exploring challenges the region faced in attempting to 'merge' the 'Atomic Age' with 'The Welsh Way of Life'.

Recording Change in Coalfield Societies. Work, Migration and Deindustrialisation in the French Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield

Ariane Mak, EHESS (PSL Research University), Paris, France

In many ways, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield in Northern France has come to epitomise the French industrial mining world. It was famously depicted in Émile Zola's *Germinal*, and has been the site of some of the worst mining disasters, from the 1906 Courrières disaster to the 1974 Liévin disaster (Fontaine, 2014 and 2018).

This paper seeks to analyse the multifaceted changes that have affected the French Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield society over the last sixty

years. Particular emphasis is laid on the ways deindustrialisation processes intersect with gender, as well as race and ethnicity issues (High, MacKinnon, Perchard, 2017).

The paper draws on ninety interviews of French coal miners, coal miners' wives and widows. These oral history interviews were conducted from the 1980s to the 2000s in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais area by the son of a miner. They shed light on the work changes in the mining industry, and the profound impact of pit closures on communities. They also allow for an in-depth examination of the ways local solidarities and identities were shaped by successive waves of migration: the massive immigration of Poles from the 1920s onwards; the arrival of workers of Moroccan and Algerian descent in the aftermath of the Second World War. In that respect, this paper seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature dedicated to migration and ethnicity in coalfield history (Knotter, 2015). This research is part of a wider project which sets up to establish a comparative history of deindustrialisation in the French and British coalfields.

PANEL 1D: WORK AND AFTER: NARRATIVES OF WORK, IDENTITY AND SOCIETY

Working with cattle and sheep: using a combination of archived and new oral history interviews to learn about changes in livestock keeping

Sue Bradley, Newcastle University, UK

The British Library's Millennium Memory Bank catalogue includes a high number of references to cows from non-farming interviewees, evidence of what was often an intensely sensory but common enough experience in the days when beasts were driven through the streets and local children helped on farms that served their neighbourhood. Such first-hand encounters have become rare; within living memory the agricultural sector has been transformed. What changes have occurred on farms? And what have they meant for animals and their keepers?

The oral history strand of the Wellcome-funded FIELD (Field-level Interdisciplinary approaches to Endemic Livestock Disease) project will contribute insights from first-hand accounts of working with cattle and sheep in the north of England since the 1940s. It includes two layers: a review of oral history interviews in regional and national collections, and the creation of a new collection of audio life stories to be archived with the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL).

This presentation will reflect on some of the benefits and practical challenges entailed in this two-pronged approach and highlight the value of reviewing life-story interviews that were recorded from other perspectives as well as those that deal more obviously with the topic in question. I will also raise questions about the presence or absence of farm – and other animals – in life-story interviews. Audio extracts will be included.

Apprenticeships and life history trajectories: The Sigmund Pumps Wartime Apprenticeship Scheme

Andy Clark, Newcastle Oral History Collective, UK

Studies that focus on the experiences of vocational training and apprenticeships overwhelmingly concentrate on the specific period of training (see Hyland, 2014 and Vickerstaff, 2017). The vast majority of publications in this area consider the specificities of the training programmes, the importance of going into a working environment and the development of political consciousness. There is much less understanding of the impact that apprenticeships have on career paths, or the ways in which 'serving time' is reflected upon later in life.

In this paper, I will consider the ways in which former apprentices reflect on their time served learning a trade through the course of life history interviews. It is based on a series of interviews with wartime apprentices in Sigmund Pumps, an engineering firm based in Team Valley. Each individual – now in their 90s – went on to have vastly different career paths following their apprenticeship, yet all gathered in 2016 at a reunion of the wartime apprentices, demonstrating some lasting connection with their vocational education. I will analyse the factors that influence the construction of narratives among the apprentices, examining how their subsequent career developments and life experiences shape their reflections throughout the oral history interview. In particular, the paper will assess what is remembered and why experiences are remembered in a certain way, considering the impacts of social and economic change over the last forty years.

Between Eating and Sleeping: alternative methods for capturing oral histories about work

Toby Phips Lloyd, Newcastle University, UK

I am an artist by trade but have come to oral history through creating art projects that prompt conversation by posing questions that aim to challenge perceived notions of everyday life. At the conference I will present my project, *Between Eating and Sleeping*, as an alternative method for capturing oral histories. The project forms part of my practice-based PhD research into public attitudes to work (paid & unpaid), the value of free-time, asking if Universal Basic Income could enable people to become more active citizens.

Documenting the Fall: Swan Snappers as the Tyne's Memory Keepers

Alison Atkinson-Phillips, Newcastle University Oral History Collective, UK

In 2010, the last cranes at the Swan Hunter shipyard on the banks of the Tyne were demolished. Within view of the Segedunum Roman Fort heritage interpretation centre, this industrial heritage was just the latest in a series of demolitions and erasures of the Tyne's industrial heritage. This paper reflects on the work and agency of the Swan Snappers, a loose

affiliation of amateur photographers who came together to document the end of the Swan Hunter shipyard for posterity. Almost daily for the two years it took to demolish the infrastructure of the site, they visited and recorded the changing landscape. Their photographs have since been used in two local exhibitions, and as a resource for ongoing reminiscence work with ex-shipyard workers. Some members of the group have continued to document the life of the river in the decade since the cranes' demise. Through a year-long process of interviews and other less formal conversations with surviving members of this group, I have worked with the Swan Snappers to answer Tim Strangleman's question: 'What is being celebrated, lamented and mourned here?' from the perspective of 'ordinary' residents of a deindustrialised locality.

PARALLEL SESSION 2

PANEL 2A: HEALTH SERVICES

General Practitioners and the communities they serve: Julian Tudor Hart and the changing face of general practice in the era of the National Health Service

Sharon Messenger & Robert MacGibbon, Royal College of General Practitioners, UK

This paper will explore the profound changes in general practice over the past 70 years. The GP surgery provides a fascinating environment to explore some of profound changes in working practices. The RCGP Archive is actively creating an oral history collection which seeks to go beyond the institutional history of the college and tell the wider story of the changing face of general practice in the UK and its contribution to society.

These themes will be illustrated through one of the life story interviews within the collection. Julian Tudor Hart (1927-2018), a key figure in the history of general practice in South Wales, dramatically shaped practice through his work on the 'inverse care law' which documented how those most in need of high quality health care are the least likely to receive it (Lancet, 1971) and as the author of a number of significant books and articles relating to social inequalities of health. The interview charts the dramatic changes experienced in the NHS and general practice more specifically over the last seventy years. Tudor Hart was committed to community-based medicine in Glywcorwg, West Glamorgan, and his interview reflects on both his practice and the issues faced by the community he served over a period in which the mining industry declined and then almost totally disappeared. Some of the changes that will be discussed are the marketisation of medicine, changes in out of hour care, continuity of care and medical research ethics.

Changing Nature of Work and NHS as Institutional Work Site

Alicia J Rouverol, NHS@70, Manchester University, UK

This paper will examine the shifts occurring between the late 1980s/1990s in the US, when I undertook earlier oral history studies of work, and now, in contemporary Britain in 2017-2020. With HLF funding and based at the University of Manchester's Centre for Medicine, Science and Technology (CHMST), NHS at 70 features 10 localities, a core staff team of 15, 160 volunteer interviewers and 2,000 interviewees. It aims to create a legacy in the form of a digital archive documenting a vital (if challenged) institution. Interviews with NHS workers — from surgeons and policymakers, to lab techs and janitors — illustrate a kind of institutional work life. As a study, NHS at 70 reveals not only the organisation's importance within the nation (one in 35 UK workers are employed by the NHS); it secures an institutional legacy of that organisation and the contested nature of its future. The interviews suggest at once the significance of health/health care as part of a greater social fabric and the interdependence of staff within this work world, featuring the concomitant complexities and mixed emotions inherent in it. NHS at 70 is also taking place in a time period in which the study of work itself as an oral history endeavour has declined due to the decline of traditional industries themselves. The paper will raise questions about the kinds of work worlds we might look forward to documenting in subsequent decades, and in the contemporary work world, in light of the new 'gig economy', Brexit, and the recent announcement on the loss of 400,000 jobs in the UK automobile sector. I will address several of the conference themes, but most especially the changing conditions of employment on working lives and will include audio and/or film clips as well as photographic images that will enable the audience to reflect on the changing worksites.

The impact of AIDS on traditional roles and professional boundaries of UK healthcare workers and the emergence of new models of health care

Sian Edwards, Northside Clinic, Melbourne, Australia

'The AIDS Era: an oral history of British health care workers' is a current project, comprising 61 life history interviews with healthcare workers from across Britain. The interviews cover the wide range of health care professions who were involved in HIV/AIDS care and treatment between 1985 and until 1998, when effective antiretroviral treatment was established. The project team consists of three nurses – Jane Bruton, Sian Edwards and Nicky Perry – who were involved in HIV/AIDS care from the 1980s. The interviews are held in the British Library Sound Archive.

This presentation will focus on the exploration from many of the interviews of the new relationships which emerged between patients with HIV/AIDS and the healthcare staff who cared and treated them. The presentation will consider why, and in what ways, HIV/AIDS healthcare challenged traditional roles and

professional boundaries, particularly for nurses, and how those challenges prompted new models of health care. The models that emerged were based on a dynamic partnership, as patients and healthcare workers together engaged in research to find effective treatments and sought new more appropriate ways to care for those dying of AIDS, their friends, families and partners. Whether this was universal across the country will also be considered.

...although the HIV pandemic resulted in the deaths of millions of people, the way in which societies around the world addressed it was a stress test for their humanity and for their ability to understand that confronting an infectious disease which was sexually transmitted, as well as blood-borne transmitted, was something that required more than just a medical response.

Simon B. Doctor

I was very grateful for the experience, even though some of it was a bit whacky and, fuzzy round the professional edges.

Sarah M. Nurse

Nurse education: Preparing for the future by learning from the past

Louise Bowden, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

Historically there have been a number of significant changes to nurse education and it has been well documented how these have affected nursing students and practitioners but less so upon the actual nurse educationalists themselves who have taught nursing. The current direction of nurse education is unclear and very unsettled and as a nurse educator and PhD student, I am particularly interested in how changes to nurse education have affected the day-to-day working lives, personal experiences and professionalism of nurse educationalists. This presentation will discuss my own doctoral research to date that has captured the experiences and opinions of five individual nurse educationalists. The specific focus of the paper will be on oral history interviews exploring their own life history and stories and experiences of nursing, some of whom are currently still in post on the cusp of retirement and others recently retired. The ability to listen to those with previous experience is vital for us as nurse educationalists in order to prepare for the future and to give voice to those who have previously been unheard. A central tenet of oral history is the archiving of data and archiving with the Royal College of Nursing will provide a personal and permanent account of the past for future generations to learn from. The oral history interviews central to this presentation have shown many interesting themes such as the experience of women being educated in the 1960s and 1970s, nursing as a vocation, what it means to be a nurse and the experience and challenges of hierarchy and career prospects. Employing an oral history methodology has been extremely enjoyable and rewarding. Being able to listen and learn from the experiences of those who have performed a similar role to myself has been both enlightening and emotive.

PANEL 2B: MIGRATION

Front stage, backstage: the power of oral history in revealing how Irish immigrants negotiated their sociocultural identity at work in England and the USA in the 1950s and 1960s

Angela Maye-Banbury, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

Everyday social interactions are integral to the production of daily social realities. Most obviously, if we are favourably received by others, opportunities may be facilitated for us. Conversely, if the encounters confirm negative cultural stereotypes, the impression we make may give others the mandate to judge us harshly. This paper using a variety of sociologist Ervine Goffman's rubrics to explore the similarities and differences between Irish immigrants' experiences at work in England (Leicester, Manchester and Sheffield) and the USA (New York) during the 1950s and 1960s. The paper will draw on Goffman's theory of 'impression management' (notably the concepts of 'front stage' and 'backstage') and 'sign vehicles' to explore these work-related representations self-contained in the oral histories of the Irish in England and the USA. The way in which public and private reconstructions of work experiences in both countries helps yield new insights regarding Irish sociocultural identity is considered. The extent to which stories of employment captured in oral history either facilitated or inhibited integration of Irish immigrants into their new host countries is critically assessed. Audio playback extracts alongside visual representations of the Irish immigration experience will help demonstrate the importance of the workplace in facilitating, challenging and sustaining Irish sociocultural identity following immigration.

Killing the craic: Risk in Irish migrant narratives.

Anna Walsh, University of Liverpool, UK

From working through extraordinary pain to fighting; from arriving on site for driving night shift the worse for wear to disregarding health and safety rules, the working and social lives of Irish men who migrated to Yorkshire in the 1970s were riven through with risk-taking. Almost full employment meant that moving from job to job had more appeal and fewer drawbacks. In interviews, links are consistently made between risky behaviour and financial and social reward: less attention is paid to the costs, such as financial hardship, social alienation or even hospitalisation. Migrant oral history narratives reminiscing about this time show us the context of this behaviour and open up conversations about masculinity, danger and consequences. The narratives also lead us to question the way in which these memories are reconstructed, and whether the behaviour is exaggerated or excused by older, wiser narrators.

This paper will examine these questions, and the part risky behaviour choices play in helping to frame perceptions the self, and of regional, cultural and vocational identity at a time when Irishness in Britain was a troubled and conflicted concept in and of itself.

Experiences of Syrian Refugee Workers: The Case of Istanbul

Arzu Güldöşüren, Türkiye Diyanet Foundation/Centre for Islamic Studies, Turkey

After the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011 Turkey conducted an open-door policy for Syrian people fleeing from the war. Syrians were initially placed in camps with Turkey focusing on their basic needs. In Turkey it was assumed that the war would last a short time and that the Syrians would return to their country. As the Syrians began to settle in the cities, other needs emerged. The right to work for Syrians was one of these basic needs. Although work permits had been granted to Syrians, after some time many workplaces preferred not to employ Syrians legally because they constituted cheap labour power in Turkey. That fact that Syrians who work for an employer cannot apply for a work permit themselves and the employer has to apply for the work permit makes Syrians vulnerable and open to exploitation. The study will focus on the problems faced by Syrian workers. Oral history interviews with Syrian workers in Istanbul are presented as a case study.

The working lives of Chinese female migrants in Post-war Britain

Sha Zhou, King's College London, UK

Chinese migration to Britain has a history of more than 200 years, with a population of over 430,000 in 2011. However, they have long been regarded as 'invisible' and Chinese women, in particular, have seldom been studied from the historical perspective.

This paper explores how ethnicity, gender, class and places of origin have shaped ethnic Chinese women's working lives in post-war Britain, examining in a chronological order what has changed over time. My research so far shows that Chinese women from Hong Kong and South East Asia arrived with little restriction before 1962 to fill the labour shortage in catering or the NHS. Female graduates from the same area took up professional occupations. Their exposure to sexism or racism led to their determination in uniting fellow Chinese women from the 80s onwards. Immigration of women from China only proliferated after restrictions on travelling abroad were loosened in the 1980s. Those students who decided to stay were usually able to take up professional jobs whereas those arriving in Britain by marriage might have to take up non-skilled occupations before obtaining a permanent residence permit if their marriage broke up.

I recruited 27 first generation ethnic Chinese women from Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Malaysia, Brunei and Vietnam currently residing in London, Sheffield, Swansea, Huntington and Gloucestershire for semi-structured interviews. 15 of them shared their life stories with me and the rest were brought together in groups to recall the history of Chinese women's organisations. As existing interviews commonly focus on Cantonese speaking Chinese in London, my interviews raise wider questions concerning women's migration experience, and include Mandarin speaking newcomers since

the 90s and female settlers in smaller towns. This paper will also reflect on my experiences of interviewing, including concerning the interview languages, the age gap and interviewing women from different countries of origin.

PANEL 2C: MARITIME MINORITIES: CHANGING STATUS, CHANGING RESPECT

Re-visibility of maritime 'minorities': emerging issues in representing BAME seafarers' oral history in UK public projects

Jo Stanley, Liverpool John Moores University, UK

This paper explores changes in seafaring life but more particularly the changes in recording and disseminating seafarers' accounts of their lives. Public projects are now representing BAME seafaring life as never before.

The recent recording and publicising of pre-1990s 'minority' seafarers is improving in quantity. Such success results from three general changes: new support for inclusivity; ready availability of digital publishing and social media; and HLF funding for 'community history'.

This paper examines several recent projects that have used the oral histories of seafarers and their families:

- Merseyside Maritime Museum's 2017 -18 exhibition Black Salts: Seafarers of African Descent
- Liverpool John Moores University's Homeward Bound project, now a microsite.
- The Sound Agents' Blue Funnel China Town project, a forthcoming book
- Great War to Race Riots project, incl. book & film.

The historiographical issues involved in such projects include:

- How can the academic rigour of oral history methodology be combined with populism, arts, & reminiscence to reveal the complex story of these invaluable witnesses of global change?
- How can deep findings – about these people who lead two lives and are silenced by habitual loyalty to shipmates – be explored and widely disseminated, given the severe funding constraints?
- What are the ways to handle the problem that white workers are the only staff available to work with BAME interviewees?
- This is a climate where fear of being politically incorrect is prevalent and where racism is on the rise. How can interviewees be enabled to speak out honestly about changing race relations on the segregated ships and in divided port cities?

'It made me very angry': Sex, maritime labour and changing gendered attitudes.

Diane Kirkby, La Trobe University, Australia

This paper focuses on a changing maritime workforce and the oral history of a relatively new sort of seafaring worker: women. In interviews conducted for a book on the Seamen's Union of

Australia, union officials (all men) and some rank-and-file seafarers (mostly men) claimed that recruitment and integration of women crew involved only minor obstacles that were easily overcome. Women recounting their experience speak of much greater difficulties that needed to be overcome in their new, very masculine workplaces. An explosion of anger by one of them on reading about the union's self-congratulation and minimisation of the difficulties has prompted this paper's further exploration of those different gendered perspectives. As women discuss their experience – of being the only woman on board, confronting the opportunities and risks of sexual activity, and handling the inequalities of power implicit in a long seafaring tradition of male bonding – their interviews expose the crucial nuances that can be unhelpfully covered over when undertaking oral history without sufficient attention to gender.

The 'Golden age' in Norwegian seafaring: stories about its ending.

Bjorn Enes, Memoar, Norway

During the 1970s and 80s, the number of Norwegian employees in the merchant fleet was reduced from about 60,000 to about 10,000. The 'Golden Age' of seafaring had ended.

This paper discusses the findings of the life stories work about seafarers, living in western Norway. Begun in 2015, the project 'Sjøfartsminne' («Seafaring memories» <http://sjofart.memoar.no>) is a partnership of the oral history organisation Memoar, the Maritime Museum of Bergen and Bergen's Captain's Association. This kind of project was quite unusual in Norway in 2015 where oral history was normally done for a specific product only, such as an exhibition or a documentary film.

Observations about the historiographical process will include: how we handled some seafarers being very motivated to narrate 'heroic' experiences rather than speak of the daily job and industry; the effectiveness of our evolving interview methods, including panel conversations in front of an audience, with up to eight interviewees being questioned together; and our interviewees' responses to seeing/hearing their private stories represented in a public place,

Seafarers, who often feel stigmatised or neglected by society at home, still strongly identify as seafarers, even decades after active sailing. This can lead to the maintaining of 'double sets' of stories – one shared in seafaring communities and other shared in public settings (for example, in stories about other cultures or races). The project dealt with this possible duality by offering interviewees the choice between one-to-one studio interviews or/and interviews with audience in the museum. They could also choose between delivering the recording to the museum only, or sharing it in the public (internet).

Surprisingly often they choose to share it with the public. Very few interviewees wanted to retract or revise statements, or to stop recording to clarify things off-record during the interviews. This may be due to these particular interviewees and their characteristics such as professional pride (and some contempt towards

the 'landlubber' majority). We will be addressing the problem of imbalanced stories – for example, too many by older captains – by widening the range of interviewees – and by making it very clear that a basic value in our project is freedom of expression.

The paper will include typical statements, using video clips with subtitles (all the interviews are in Norwegian).

PANEL 2D: WORKING IN ORGANISATIONS

Fragile points of university history – experiences from a documentation project

Jyrki Pöysä, University of Eastern Finland, Finland

My presentation is based on an ongoing project of documenting and writing history of a research institute within a Finnish university. Within the academic world, oral history interviews are seen as a promising, new way to add personal views to official records' testimony about universities as a working place. However, our experience shows that there are also many fragile points of university histories, topics excluded from the interview talk or evaluated as too sensitive for archiving afterwards. How to deal with this kind of materials, 'dark side' of the university work? Is it a problem, that the obvious need for an authentic, honest description about university work is in conflict with the frustrating experiences of university work, traumas caused by unfair competition, lost applications etc.

Also, other types of conflict might be rising up from the forgotten history: political contradictions is one interesting example of the changing contexts of university work (today politics seems to belong to the 1960's and 1970's). And do we need to tackle with all kinds of traumas, if there is plenty of forgotten history waiting for an oral historian documenting cooperation, joint production of ideas, working late in the evenings and helping each other in difficult life situations or success stories of saving the organisation in a windy university environment? Here questions of ethics interestingly merge with questions of the due focus of oral history research.

'100 years of work: revelations and discoveries from conducting a university oral history project'.

Sam Blaxland, Swansea University, Wales

In 2020, Swansea University will celebrate its centenary. To mark this occasion, I am writing a history of British society, youth culture, and the development of academia using the university as a case study. The material for this book draws extensively from an oral history project I have been conducting since the beginning of 2017 entitled *The Voices of Swansea University, 1920-2020*. Something this collection has revealed is that not only has the nature and tone of academic and student work and culture changed beyond recognition since 1920 (and even since the immediate post-Second World War period), but that 'work' in a university involves so much more than teaching, research

and study. It encompasses many other jobs and roles, from technicians and secretaries, to groundsman and solicitors representing the institution during legal disputes. Therefore, this paper will explore, using the perspectives of those who lived through it, what it has meant to 'work' in a university, particularly in the years after 1945. In particular, it will discuss how academics from the profession consider higher education to have changed in the past several decades, and will question how much the general narratives of 'decline', 'slipping standards' and the passing of a 'golden age' in which to work and research are conditioned by reality, or by nostalgia and the fallibility of memory. Secondly, the paper will discuss my original intention to broaden the Voices project out so that it was less top-down and less focused on elite professorial figures. It will demonstrate how the voices of those marginalised from typical university narratives reveal so much about the layers and texture of 'work' in higher education by playing oral history clips from interviews conducted with secretaries, administration assistants and laboratory technicians. As a result, the paper will offer a glimpse into a world of work in a university that is so much more diverse and colourful than presented in most institutional, top-heavy histories.

Being Westminster: Working Life at the University of Westminster

Claire Brunnen, University of Westminster, UK

Since 2011, the University of Westminster Archive has been running an oral history project interviewing alumni and long serving or former employees. The project was originally established to enhance an official institutional history, published in 2013, and to provide some first-hand experiences of life at the Polytechnic/University. Since then, the project has continued and now consists of over 90 interviews, including interviews with 27 employees. The participants have included a range of academic and professional services employees at different levels of the institution. Many of the employees interviewed have spent most of their working lives at the University. Consequently, they have seen considerable change to the student body, their workload and the institution as a whole.

Using excerpts from the interviews, this paper will consider two questions. Firstly, what have we learnt about the history of the University from the project? I will discuss what the testimonies of employees have taught us about working at the Polytechnic/University over the last 50 years and how these memories have enhanced the institutional archive.

Secondly, what have we learnt from interviewing employees? I will explore how effective oral history has been as a method of capturing the essence and ethos of the workforce. I will consider what impact the status of former or current employee has had on the testimonies given. I will also discuss whether the project has met its aims and any limitations and challenges we have met along the way.

Backstage at the Albert – Capturing the diverse narratives of work from the Royal Albert Hall

Alex Duthie, Royal Albert Hall Archives, UK

The Royal Albert Hall [RAH] is due to celebrate its 150 year anniversary in 2021. To mark this event the RAH Archives launched the Albert Speaks! Oral History Project in 2017 to capture, store and make accessible interviews with people who have performed on stage; attended as part of the audience; promoted shows; worked; or owned seats; at the RAH. By doing so we have aimed to record anecdotes and facts, to build up a picture of the Hall through generations, and significantly, to enhance our knowledge of those who work in and are a part of this institution.

This is a deeply egalitarian project which seeks to uncover the diverse narratives of individuals who have shaped the RAH thus creating an authentic institutional memory of this much-loved venue. We have interviewed people at all levels of the organisation, acknowledging the contribution of cleaners and technicians, Chief Executives and Council Presidents. We feel that oral history provides a way to better comprehend the inner workings, significant changes and internal culture of the Albert Hall.

A strong focus on work has endured throughout this project. The gathered interviews allow us to peek behind the curtain and perceive the daily activities of the Hall's staff, as well as the high-level decision making which has formed the organisation. Themes that have emerged over these interviews include; changing working cultures, the professionalisation of work and the meaning and pride that individuals derive from their employment.

This brief paper will seek to outline the findings of Albert Speaks! in regard to work, reflect on various methodical challenges faced and give voice to the workers behind one of the world's most iconic venues.

PANEL 2E: DEALING WITH CHANGE

'Jesus, it's like an insurance office!' – changing technology and journalism in Ireland

Daniel Carey, Dublin City University, Ireland

In his book 'Breaking News: The Remaking of Journalism and Why It Matters Now', Alan Rusbridger says that the *Guardian* he took over in 1995 involved printing technology that had 'changed little since Victorian times'. More than two decades on, things are a little different.

Drawing on extensive oral history interviews with various Irish print journalists, this paper gives an insight into just how much changing technology has impacted on the nature of their work. The presentation will include audio clips from these interviews.

Contributors recall the smell of ink and lead and the sound of printing presses and typewriters in Dickensian buildings 'unchanged from a hundred years previously', in the words of Brian Trench. The era of carbon paper, case

rooms, tubes and ticker tape is contrasted with the quiet 'insurance offices' in which the newspapers of today are produced. Geraldine Kennedy, former editor of *The Irish Times*, reflects on a period when employees could get 'lost for life' in the cavernous offices and remain on the payroll. The difficulties of filing from abroad in the era before instant communication are explained – John Horgan went off the radar for weeks in Nigeria and posted his articles from Rome to Dublin. The industrial world of hot metal, Linotype and 'hair spaces' is remembered by Maureen Browne, who remarks on how much 'easier' computers and mobile phones made life for journalists.

Liam Mulcahy mentions 'Rosco', the mobile darkroom used by Irish Independent photographers at the 1990 football World Cup and describes the game-changing nature of digital cameras. The impact of 'direct input' or 'new technology' on both working practice and industrial relations is discussed. And amid fears about the future of newspapers, Kieran Fagan notes that while production has become much more efficient, 'people have stopped reading the wretched things'.

'It's Like a Hole Opens Up in the Ground': Oral Histories of Job Loss and Reproductive Labour in Deindustrialising Montreal

Fred Burrill, Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, Concordia University, Canada

Much has been written in recent years about working-class identity in deindustrialising contexts, both as part of the ongoing 'end of work' debate and through broader studies of the cultural 'half-lives' of deindustrialisation in working-class communities. Less focus, however, has been dedicated to the alteration of gendered reproductive labour occasioned by tectonic economic shifts and the implementation of new strategies of accumulation, as formerly industrial women workers face the dual hardships of job loss and the re-structuration of their working lives on the home front.

My paper is based on a series of interviews with former textile worker Carole Orphanos, a life-long resident of the deindustrialised and rapidly gentrifying Montreal neighbourhood of Saint-Henri. Her early adult life dominated by industrial union struggles for decent wages, Orphanos' sense of herself as a single-parent provider was heavily impacted by the decimation of the neighbourhood's industrial capacity in the 1980s and her subsequent relegation to precarious domestic and service work. On the other hand, Orphanos, like many low-income women in the neighbourhood, became centrally involved in local struggles for housing and welfare improvements emanating from the reproductive labour of the household. As the area gentrified, this community-focused militancy acted as a buffer against new, post-industrial strategies of accumulation, but also disciplined and constrained working-class organising into forms more easily managed by state and capital.

Viewing anew the question of class identity in deindustrialisation through the lens of reproductive labour, and engaging closely with the life history of this one former textile worker,

will hopefully allow for an expanded understanding of the complex and contradictory ways in which working people contested and enabled the vagaries of capitalism in late twentieth-century Montreal.

Not Just a 'Bobbie'

Christina Young, University of Glasgow, Scotland

This presentation will combine audio clips with a discussion, which is based on my recent oral histories with British scenic artists. Most are in retirement and are skilled in traditional painted stage scenery but have also worked in contemporary practice. These scenic artists who have had a distinctly creative role in the execution of the stage cloth and have worked through a period of change in the profession over the last sixty years; describe their working practices and roles as designer, interpreter, and painter. All are skilled in the traditional method of glue tempera painting, a technique probably very close to that used by scenic artists in the service of Sir William Davenant's Dukes Theatre in 1660. They provide a crucial link with the history and context of the profession, and indeed the cloths. The visual aesthetic and emotional impact the cloths produce is unique, if still ephemeral. However, it is the people who ensure that this legacy is not lost. Their oral histories cover their personnel history, identity, training, materials and methods of their profession, changes in their social and working environment and their views on the future of their profession in the light of changes in values, aesthetic and advances in production technology.

The oral histories are part of a major research project which focuses on painted stage cloths and the scenic artists who designed and painted them, tracing the development of this art form and the profession in Britain, from the mid-17th century to the present day. My research will explore the contribution of scenic artists and the significance of their production to our cultural heritage.

Change in the Cloisters

Sarah Hollingdale, Hereford Cathedral, UK

The Cloisters of Hereford Cathedral have been home to members of the cathedral community for over 500 years; they've gone from being a home to the men of the Vicars Choral, to a place where men and women from all sorts of backgrounds live and work.

As part of the NLHF funded Eastern Cloisters Project, we are conducting oral history interviews with past and present residents, to record the changes that have taken place. 'Change in the Cloisters' will share these interviews for the first time, giving a fascinating (and often lighthearted) insight into life in the Cloisters.

The talk will also examine how oral history has allowed us to represent the many facets of cathedral life in a way that no other recording method could. We are fortunate enough to have Acts Books recording the activity of the Vicars Choral as far back as before they moved into the Cloisters in 1475. However, these only record the extremes – the fights, the deaths, the new appointments – and as a result they

are often reduced to 'angry old men'. 'Change in the Cloisters' will look at how the Act Books depict the community, compared to the new oral history recordings. Hopefully we will see how oral history allows us to give a truer, more rounded, picture of the Cloisters of Hereford Cathedral.

PARALLEL SESSION 3

PANEL 3A: DEALING WITH CHANGE

Deindustrialisation, gender and memory in the East Durham coalfield

Pete Hodson, Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK

Drawing on the oral testimonies of coalfield women, the paper examines women's reflections of growing up in pit villages and their perceptions of the Durham coalfield's closure. Coalfield women also had a stake in pit closures and recalled this rupture in myriad ways. Particular reference is made to a group of Women Against Pit Closures activists who established a Greenham Common-style camp at Vane Tempest Colliery in 1993. Despite deep ambivalence about the ingrained misogyny and patriarchal power structures evident in pit villages, these women politically supported the NUM for 'a greater good' – the preservation of local colliery employment. Although excluded (by act of Parliament) from working underground, many coalfield women displayed deep emotional attachment to the industry and powerfully narrated memories of demolition operations. This attachment extended to miners' welfares and social spaces. Coalfield women expressed contradictory opinions about the post-coal labour market. Some portrayed pit closure as liberation, enabling women to participate in the economy on equitable terms and sometimes assume 'breadwinner' status. Others highlighted the low wages and narrowed economic opportunities available to both men and women. The paper concludes by overviewing public memorialisation of Durham's coal mining heritage. Sculptures and art installations fall back on strongly masculine imagery. Women's role(s) in the coalfield economy have been rendered invisible, yet calls for their portrayal in public art has caused tension: how should women be represented as autonomous actors, without falling back on 'miner's wife' tropes?

Privatisation, or the entry of predatory capitalism and its impact on the lives of factory workers in eastern Poland

Natalia Pomian, Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw, Poland

The privatisation of state-owned factories has left a big impact on most Polish towns. Although almost thirty years have passed since the

breakthrough of 1989, changes related to it still have an impact on life and work. The fate of the inhabitants of one small town in eastern Poland was experienced during the ethnographic field research conducted in 2015-2016. The paper contains an analysis of narratives of my interlocutors about changes connected with political transformation and privatisation. The narratives are contextualised by the experience of working in a factory making windows and doors. Privatisation was described with the language connected with war, in opposite to socialistic times – while talking about the factory they used familial language. In order to fully understand the changes that took place after 1989, I must first show to what extent the factory was involved in the lives of employees and the town. This will allow us to understand the scale of changes that, according to Piotr Sztompka, caused social trauma (1999). Through the analysis of the strategies of action used by my interlocutors to find their place in the new reality, I will wonder if this is a valid statement. When thinking about the past and its impact on the present, I cannot overlook the role of memory and perhaps even a more important process of forgetting. Classically, two types of memory are distinguished: individual and collective, but during the research I noticed that the socially constructed story of the factory is really the sum of individual narratives. All of the interviewees told me about their private experiences, but each of these stories contained common elements that can be regarded as created by social reinterpreting meanings and giving them the sense to maintain the group's identity.

'We gotta have work': Stories of Skill, Schooling and Making Do in Uncertain Times

Mark Jury, Siena College, USA

In the US, conversations about 'school-to-work' paths and opportunities tend to be framed in a language that is global, 'unlocated,' inattentive to the particularities and peculiarities of place. This generic discourse contributes to deficit notions of students and workers. Drawing on research in a rural community long dependent on the timber industry, this paper offers an analysis of local narratives about school and work and considers how these stories help us rethink notions of workers and their abilities, notions that drive policy and programme design. In particular, I analyse one family's collective, cross-generational work history, a history collaboratively constructed by a trio of retired brothers over the course of long summer afternoon and evening. Sitting in the shadows of the North Cascades Mountains in Washington State, the brothers locate themselves in place and time, narrating themselves within a changing landscape. Their collaboratively constructed oral history offers a counter-narrative to the dominant discourse that paints displaced workers as lacking the 'flexibility to take advantage of the opportunities being presented in the new economy.' The brothers' narrative challenges received wisdom about the value of 'schooled learning,' especially in a rural community with few opportunities for 'schooled work.' Instead, they place a premium on

experience born of necessity. Their narrative provides insight into the ways folks are trying to re-imagine and re-invent themselves as workers, family, and community—indeed, how they are trying to invent work out of the dust of crumbled economies.

Politics, Work and the Museum

Matthew Partington, University of the West of England, Bristol; V&A Museum, UK

By separating knowledge, care of what the objects were from physical care of the objects, they were in effect planning to destroy the curatorial profession as I understand it (Curator 2-T19/09).

This paper will explore the seismic institutional changes that culminated with the National Heritage Act of 1983 when the V&A Museum staff ceased to be a civil service department administered by the Department of Education and Science. The Act devolved the management of the V&A to a Board of Trustees appointed by the Prime Minister's office. Marking a shift from long-term, secure civil service employment to the increasing demands of a market economy, this paper uses testimony gathered as part of the Curators' Lives at the V&A project to reflect on the transformation of the working life and culture of the curatorial profession. Whereas museum life had once been ruled by patriarchal conventions where 'There were minions, and at our grade we were supposed to be gentlemen scholars and we sort of came and went pretty much as we fancied', curators became museum professionals answerable to a corporate environment with different standards of accountability.

This paper will include audio playback from selected interviews in the Curators' Lives at the V&A archive.

PANEL 3B: ACTIVISM

Unemployed protests meet the women's movement: a life-story approach

Laurence Hamel-Roy, Concordia University, Canada

Canadian unemployment policy has long been heavily criticised for its shift from protecting workers to work incentives. The recent Quebec campaign *De travailleuses à chômeuses: même injustice, même combat!* [From working women to unemployed women: the same injustice, the same fight!] led by the national group of the unemployed, *Mouvement autonome et solidaire de sans emplois (MASSE)*, however, takes a new turn by placing women's experience at the centre of its claims. Central to this movement is a feminist critique of the sexism enshrined in the Canadian Unemployment Insurance Act (UI). This campaign highlights labour market gendered and racialised restructuring dimensions, and how such process is amplified by public policies such as the UI.

Based on life-story interviews with organisers and educators taking part in this campaign, my paper aims to understand the rise of what appears to be a novel

convergence between unemployed advocacy groups and the women's movement in Quebec. To do so, my paper will focus on the role of informal and non-formal learning experiences taking place in social movements and activist networks, and the way they have contributed to the framing of the campaign and to its strategic actions.

The worker as activist? Oral histories of paid and unpaid community activism since the late 1960s

Marion Bowl, University of Birmingham, UK

This paper is based on 10 oral history interviews with community activists of different ages and cultural backgrounds. It focuses on patterns of activism and work since the 1960's. The interviews explored patterns of community activism and employment in a range of policy fields: from the workplace to immigration and nationality issues, the women's movement and community arts. What emerges from these testimonies is a picture of blurred boundaries between paid work and unpaid activism, and the workplace as a location for both professional interventions and grass roots action.

Common themes emerged over the decades in terms of activist trajectories, from voluntarism to paid work and back. This reflects the origins of community development in volunteer settings and its subsequent incorporation into public services, broadly defined. One of the consequences has been the depoliticisation of activism, as direct action was increasingly constrained by the requirements of funders – not least, government itself.

These trajectories reflect a changing 'spirit of the times', from the activist-worker as a norm to a dislocation between paid work/professional practice and campaigning/activism. This change was precipitated in part by withdrawal of funding, particularly from advocacy as a paid professional role post-2008. The activists explored the implications of these shifts for their work and their activism and the strategies they adopted to survive in changing times.

The aim of this presentation is to explore the meaning(s) of grass roots community activism, and its interface with paid employment from the perspectives of those involved, the ways in which community activists' ideas were shaped, the impact of changing social and political climates on their involvement over time and the implications of this for work and activism.

Collective action and collective work: feminist and lesbian housing activism and its transfer to workplace practice.

Christine Wall, University of Westminster, UK

In London in the mid-1970s large numbers of squatters, connected in what Vasudevan (2017) has termed 'a radical urban social movement', included many young lesbians and single mothers excluded from suitable housing in both the private rented and public sectors. This paper uses oral history testimony to reveal how women who organised collectively to open up and repair new squats, prevent evictions and initiate

housing co-ops, carried this praxis into their workplaces. Here, a number of women who went on to work in built environment occupations reflect on the connections between housing activism and paid work, revealing how activist practice shaped and informed workplace organisation. The audio extracts describe hopes of combining their political objectives with work through the creation of non-hierarchical collectives and non-profit co-operatives working to achieve feminist change in the built environment. These in turn operated as part of a radical, alternative, economic network in exchanging services and goods but also as places where lesbian women worked without fear of discrimination and assault. The interviewees recount the difficulties encountered and successes achieved and their subsequent work-life histories. The author was once an embedded insider in the community depicted, returning after an absence of many decades to re-connect with friends and work colleagues on this project. The pitfalls of insider interviewing; over-identification, the conformity associated with collective memories, reticence and omissions are also addressed.

'If you like, my activism was now focused professionally': charitable, voluntary and professional work as a form of HIV/AIDS activism.

George Severs, University of Cambridge, UK

In 1991, the Department of Health funded a review of the closure of the AIDS group Frontliners which had ceased operations that year. The review's authors noted that 'many people working with or for AIDS organisations argue that these organisations are different from other voluntary organisations, being subject to very distinctive problems. The authors were right, and questions regarding the distinctiveness of HIV/AIDS work continue to interest the epidemic's historians. A considerable amount of historiographical attention has been paid to HIV/AIDS activism, especially radical direct-action groups such as the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP). As a result, less analysis is being directed at the 'AIDS worker', a person professionally involved in delivering services to people living with HIV/AIDS (PWAs). AIDS workers were not always paid, a great many were volunteers. This begs the question: what distinguishes an AIDS volunteer and/or worker from an AIDS activist? This paper takes up this question, arguing that we need to consider 'AIDS activism' as a broad spectrum of activity incorporating both paid employment and radical direct-action. The paper draws on several interviews conducted over the past three years with people professionally and politically involved with HIV/AIDS in England during the late-twentieth century. It foregrounds the testimony of individuals in danger of being overlooked as 'AIDS activists', such as those politically motivated to pursue careers as social workers (in order to work with PWAs) and volunteers at AIDS centres such as the Terrence Higgins Trust, the London Lighthouse and Manchester's George House Trust. In doing so, the paper will not only seek to broaden the generally accepted image of activism but also of

work, by arguing that work (both voluntary and paid) was a real and meaningful source and means of activist expression during the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s.

PANEL 3C: COMMUNITIES/PLACE

Winds of Change: histories of farming, fishing and the energy industries in Caithness

Doreen Leith, The Wick Society, Scotland

Wick Voices is a voluntary organisation aimed at preserving the past for future generations.

Dounreay became the centre of the United Kingdom's fast reactor research and development programme. The people of Caithness left the traditional industries of farming and fishing to seek employment and found new skills in construction, scientific research and monitoring data. From the early days of construction through to the present-day decommissioning phase, Dounreay has had a dominant impact upon the economic and social development of Caithness. Now in its final phase, the site has become Scotland's largest nuclear clean-up and demolition project.

The people of Caithness have once again adapted to change, seeking employment, in the offshore oil industry and recently in the renewable energy sector. Onshore wind farms have changed the landscape of Caithness, but some local people have embraced the opportunity, recognising that Caithness has an unlimited supply of wind energy. Recently, development of the Beatrice Offshore Windfarm, Scotland's largest offshore windfarm, has seen a transformation in Wick harbour and the surrounding area.

The Wick Society's oral history project Wick Voices has gathered a series of recordings which illustrate the profound change in working life in Caithness over the past sixty or so years. The personal stories illustrate the manner in which changing conditions of employment and technology have not only had an impact on working lives but capture an element of hope for future generations.

Voices of The Past: a community history of the Barton Hill (Bristol) cotton factory

Garry Atterton, Barton Hill History Group, UK

Since 1983 the Barton Hill History Group has taken the lead in recording, gathering and presenting the history of Barton Hill and surrounding areas of East Bristol. During the 1980's the group made many hours of audio and video recordings of the memories of local people. Until recently, the Voices of the Past have been locked away in a cupboard, unheard for over twenty years. We have recently started to digitise some of this unique collection, and we hope to give new life to these memories with multi-media performances project called Voices of The Past. Extracts from the performances will

include insights from local historian and co-founder of Barton Hill History Group Garry Atterton and live music, sound art and production from composer Jakob op den Brouw, as well as songs from Charlotte Atterton, which all together reimagine the voices into a new and original narrative.

A key theme of *Voices* covers people's experiences and memories of working lives. For over a hundred years, Barton Hill was dominated by The Great Western Cotton Factory which employed up to 2,000 workers, many of them women. The voices and images of the cotton works, cover employer and employee relationships, working conditions, industrial change, decline and redevelopment. Other *Voices* include the strong, bright and intelligent women who ran the local shops and businesses. Many of the voices are captured and preserved forever in the wonderful Bristol dialect.

'The End of the Shift' – Recording Former Industrial Workers in Fife and Perthshire

Margaret Bennett, University of St. Andrews, Scotland

The industries that made modern Scotland are rooted in traditional skills, ingenuity and natural inventiveness that helped shape the world of engineering, technology and manufacturing. In Fife and Perthshire they included coalmining, brick-making, paper-making, textile manufacturing (linen, jute, cotton, silk, wool and rayon), dyeing and bleaching, linoleum-making, watch-making, glass-making and bottling, all supported by precision and heavy engineering companies. A rail network connected centres of industry until the Beeching cuts closed down several lines in the 1960s.

Newspaper reports over the years record the closure of one industry after another, soon forgotten by the nation, yet remembered in communities directly affected by the loss of employment, income, and, for many, a way of life. In Fife, for example, folk talk of the Miners' Strike of 1984 in terms of 'the end of a way of life' and once thriving communities are now known as areas of 'mass deprivation', with high rates of unemployment and suicide among the young.

This paper is based on an oral history project recording the voices of 80 former workers, both skilled and unskilled, who lived through the closures. Possessing first-hand knowledge and experience of being part of a vibrant work-force, most are now elderly, with stories not found in 'official histories'. While several tell of the hardships of conditions, they also affirm that having a job was preferable to being out of work. Among the skilled workers, those who began as apprentices speak of a training 'second to none', a 'work-ethic' and 'pride in a job well done', and all lament the passing of the traditional apprenticeship in favour of a college-based degree. (Illustrated by recordings made during the project)

Threads of Memory: Paisley People's Poetry

William Burns, University of Glasgow

Paisley was once the global centre of the textile

trade. The town gained fame for producing shawls bearing the teardrop pattern; later, it was home to the largest thread manufacturer in the world. Whole families and communities worked in the two main mill sites at Anchor and Ferguslie. Globalising forces meant that the thread industry in Paisley was slowly wound down during the twentieth century. In 1993, the final mill closed its doors after what one worker described as 'the death of a thousand cuts'. Today, Paisley is home to some of the most socially disadvantaged areas in Scotland: Ferguslie, once the workplace of thousands, has successively topped the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation since 2006. In 2015, Renfrewshire Council announced the town's application to become the UK City of Culture 2021. Despite making it to the final shortlist, Coventry was awarded the accolade. A noted optimism and pride in Paisley was reborn through the bid, with the belief that the town's untold stories could pave the way to a brighter future.

Very little work has been done on recovering people's memories of working in Coats's Paisley mills; many of the mill buildings now no longer exist. There is a growing interest in creative applications of oral history sources and methodology. Due to the old age of individuals who possess memories of working in the thread mills, it is urgent that their voices are captured, and their stories shared while there is still time. I will discuss my research into women's experiences of working in Paisley's thread mills and explore how creative writing based on transcripts and interviews can represent work and industrial history in innovative and engaging ways. Audio playback will demonstrate how transcripts can be worked into hybrid artistic and historical forms.

PANEL 3D: WORK & THE ENVIRONMENT

Extreme Changes in Fish Populations Affect Working Conditions on the River Wye

Marsha O'Mahony, Herefordshire Lore, UK

Tales of the Wye 'churning with salmon' have entered local folk lore along the River Wye. As a salmon river, the Wye is a pale imitation of its former self. Once upon a time anglers would talk about how much their last salmon weighed; today it's more likely to be how many months since they last took a bite. At the other end of the social (and often illegal) spectrum, a night's elver fishing could net a lucky angler up to £50,000 in just a few hours. Yet, in recent years, both fish have seen drastic drops in their numbers.

In the spring and summer of 2017, interviewers from Herefordshire Lore travelled up and down the River Wye in Herefordshire, interviewing those who live and work by the river. It became clear very quickly that the declining numbers in the fish population – most particularly salmon (the 'gentry' fish) and the eel (the 'working man's fish') – has brought significant changes in the

occupations that served the pursuit of these fish on the Wye, including ghillies, bailiffs, poachers, retailers and, of course, the anglers.

What changes in the work of agricultural scientists and engineers?

Paul Merchant, National Life Stories, British Library, UK

This paper draws on extended oral history interviews recorded by National Life Stories at the British Library, it makes two arguments about the nature of change in the work of agricultural scientists and engineers in the period 1950 to the present. One, while these experts tended to stick with their objects of study (whether tractors, soil carbon or potatoes) over the period, the reasons for studying those objects changed drastically due to major shifts in farming and in concerns with the rural environment in Britain. Two, the accounts of these scientists and engineers, though very different in detail, reveal a striking common pattern in the way in which change at work is recalled and discussed. In particular, there is often considerable uncertainty about causation – about precisely what determined the kind of work they were doing at any particular point in time.

The Labour of United States National Park Rangers

Lu Ann Jones, National Park Service, USA

Oral history interviews with United States National Park Service rangers complicate the traditional image of stoic male rangers as narrators describe parks as places of labour as well as places of recreation and address how gender and race shaped experiences of work. The interviews, conducted between 2011 and 2018, focused on employees who joined the agency in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s and worked during decades of great change. During their tenure, the NPS expanded significantly, the country adopted laws that challenged the Service's management policies, and the demographics of the agency's workforce and its visitors underwent a significant shift.

Narrators imbued national parks with multiple meanings as they described their jobs, and how they changed over time. For some rangers, the majestic landscapes of the Grand Tetons or Yosemite were places where they learned to deal with death as they joined search and rescue missions. Other rangers recalled parks as neighbourly communities where employees lived in government housing and enjoyed raising their children in places of scenic beauty. Some of the first women to serve as backcountry rangers and law enforcement officers described how they had to prove to male peers that they could do the job. While some employees were sticklers for the rules, others bent them when the ethics of a situation called for it. Silences also marked the interviews; while many narrators disparaged aspects of the NPS work culture, they also proved remarkably loyal to the organisation and reluctant to criticise it.

PARALLEL SESSION 4

PANEL 4A: PRIVATISATION

Privatisation and promotion: how organisational change affected scientists' careers

Emmeline Ledgerwood, University of Leicester / British Library, UK

Many scientists who became civil servants during the 1960s and early 1970s were attracted to the well-defined hierarchy of grades through which they could steadily rise during their working lives, with every expectation of reaching the 'career grade' by retirement.

However, by 1980 government scientists' dissatisfaction with their career prospects was highlighted in the Review of the Scientific Civil Service. Streamlining of the various classes across the civil service in 1972, a consequence of the 1968 Fulton Report on the service's structure, had disrupted the established patterns of advancement. In the next two decades, as organisational change turned some government research establishments into executive agencies and then private entities, the traditional grading system and processes of appraisal and promotion were also transformed.

Existing studies on the workplace changes associated with privatisation pay little attention to its effects on government research establishments and the scientists who worked in them. A new series of oral history interviews with government scientists who experienced privatisation is addressing that gap. Interviewees speak about how commercialisation of their workplace, accompanied by the introduction of new job levels and efforts to implement performance-related pay, affected their career prospects. As they began working in business groups, the need to make money affected group managers' ability to offer promotions to team members, with the consequence that staff might seek opportunities for promotion and pay rewards elsewhere.

Using sound clips from the researcher's interviews with government scientists and the archived collection at the British Library, *An Oral History of British Science*, this paper will argue that only now are some effects of privatisation becoming apparent. What emerges from these interviews is that changes in staff appraisal and promotion have had a long-term impact on the development of deep expertise within these privatised research organisations. This is in contrast to the period of government ownership, when uninterrupted careers within the civil service provided an ideal environment for scientists to become specialists in their field.

The NHS and Privatisation – voicing the experience of NHS staff

Angela Whitecross, The University of Manchester, UK

This paper will examine a selection of oral history

interviews collected by 'NHS at 70: The Story of our Lives' to explore the impact of privatisation on the everyday working lives of staff within the NHS.

The impact of privatisation on the NHS continues to be extensively discussed in political and policy terms, with academic work focusing on the broader conceptual theories around provision of health care and recent historical analysis of the effects of privatisation. This paper will focus on the everyday experiences of staff to explore at a micro level the personal implications of privatisation on NHS staff. From porters to surgeons to nurses to administrators to dentists it will consider the lived experience of staff in relation to privatisation to add a personal aspect to discussion on the NHS and privatisation. More broadly however, the oral histories shed light on wider cultural questions around the NHS and its identity, as both an employer and a service provider. Issues such as whether the NHS has a particular worker culture, underpinned by its foundations of being 'free' and 'equal' with an emphasis on care, which transcend profession, trade or status are raised, and moreover, how is this identity and culture challenged when aspects of the health care system are privatised?

NHS at 70 is a UK wide oral history programme based at the University of Manchester, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. To date (December 2018) it has collected over 200 interviews from people about their NHS experiences as staff and patients. These oral histories create a diverse yet shared, personal yet national picture of the changes in the NHS throughout its history. Edited extracts from the collection will be played throughout the paper.

Privatising Power Workers: Changes and Continuities in Working Lives in the Oral History of the Privatisation of the British Electricity Supply Industry

Tom Lean, National Life Stories / The British Library, UK

In this paper I use oral history interviews recorded as part of the National Life Stories collection *An Oral History of the Electricity Supply Industry* to explore some of the ways in which privatisation changed the working lives of people in the electricity industry. The privatisation of the British electricity supply industry (ESI) in the 1980s and 1990s was about more than just selling off the nationalised industry to the private sector. To the politicians, industry leaders and economists driving the process it was also intended to reform an allegedly inefficient public utility, with the demands of the competitive market anticipated to drive new efficiencies. A conscious process of culture change filtered down through the industry, placing profitability at least on par with public service, shifting the balance of power from engineers to businessmen and causing great changes to how people in the industry went about their work.

I explore how the aspirations of privatisers to shake up the industry and introduce more efficient ways of working were experienced in

the daily working lives of engineers and craftsmen in the electricity industry. In particular, I touch on how cost cutting and target meeting challenged the traditional industry ethos of public service and high engineering standards, and how demands for a more flexible workforce required workers to widen their skill sets and take on new responsibilities. I also explore how the drive for more efficiency led to an influx of new technology and new methods designed to increase staff utilisation and deskill traditional craft and engineering roles. Overall, I suggest how the privatisation of the ESI can be seen as a microcosm of the changes that Thatcherism promised to bring to the British economy.

The voices of rail privatisation

Tim Strangleman, SSPSSR, University of Kent, UK

The rail industry was one of the last great privatisations of the Conservative administrations from 1979-1997. Vastly complex and controversial then and now the process involved tens of thousands of redundancies, a huge process of organisational restructuring and the deliberate targeting of workplace culture in both the workforce and management. In 1993, in the early stages of the privatisation process, the author embarked on doctoral research aimed at understanding the experience of change and placing this in a wider context of railway culture. This involved interviewing 55 railway workers about their working life and the process of change they were experiencing. These interviews illustrated how railway workplace culture had emerged over time and was a complex shared social understanding, often transmitted generationally by oral means. This workplace culture was often the target of ridicule by the new management and politicians imposing their ideological framework on the industry; those who defended the past were declared nostalgic, romantic or portrayed as dinosaurs. The railways, and organisational culture became a battlefield over rival interpretations of the past and present and visions of the future.

This paper will re-explore and re-examine this material a quarter of a century after it was collected and attempt to understand how workers made sense of change at the time. Oral history is implicated here as a method (the collection of oral histories) and as an object of study (the oral tradition within the railways). It will ask wider questions about the value of oral approaches aimed at collecting immediate processes with those collecting material at distance from events.

PANEL 4B: WORKPLACE CULTURE

Glowyr Mynydd Newydd : Cofio'r Cyrddau Gweddi Dan-ddaear (The Miners of Mynydd Newydd: Remembering the Underground Prayer Meetings) *

Gethin Matthews, Swansea University, Wales

* This will be a Welsh language presentation

with simultaneous translation

Ar un olwg roedd glofa Mynydd Newydd yng ngogledd Abertawe yn ddigon cyffredin. Suddwyd y pwll yn y 1840au, ac am bron i ganrif roedd yn cynhyrchu glo o'r gwythiennau 'pum troedfedd' a 'chwe troedfedd' gan gyflogi, ar ei uchafwyt, o gwmpas 400 o ddynion. Fodd bynnag, roedd gan y pwll un nodwedd rhyfedd, sef bod y glowyr am 80 o flynyddoedd wedi trefnu cwrdd gweddi cyn dechrau'r gwaith bob wythnos. Dengys y dystiolaeth fod y glowyr, a'r gymuned ehangach, yn falch o'r traddodiad. Ceir nifer fawr o adroddiadau cyffredol mewn papurau newydd a chylichronau, gan gynnwys rhai y tu hwnt i Gymru. Roedd bodolaeth y cyrddau gweddi tandraearol yn destun balchder i'r cymunedau lleol, fel rhywbeth a oedd yn gwneud eu pwll nhw'n unigryw.

Yn y degawdau wedi i'r pwll gau yn 1932 fe barodd yr atgof am yr oedfa dandraearol wythnosol. Roedd nifer o erthyglau yn y papur newydd lleol am y cyrddau, gan gynnwys rhai gan George Parcell. Mae hefyd nifer o recordiadau o gyfweiliadau a wnaethpwyd yn y 1960au gyda chyn-lowyr pan maent yn disgrifio'r cyrddau gweddi, yng nghasgliadau cyhoeddus ac mewn casgliad teuluol. Mae llais George Parcell ar dâp yn archif sain Sain Ffagan ac Archif Gorllewin Morgannwg. Ceir hefyd lleisiau Morris Jones a Thomas Thomas yn y casgliadau hyn, a Dan Matthews mewn casgliad teuluol. Wrth gwrs, erbyn hynny roedd y llofa wedi hen fynd ac roedd tueddiad i gyflwyno darlun rhamantaidd o'r gwasanaethau, gan anwybyddu agweddau peryglus a brwnt y gwaith. Mae'r rhain i gyd yn adrodd stori am eu teimladau gan ddisgrifio awryglch rhyfedd y cyrddau. Mae hefyd tuedd i bwysleisio bod llai o anafiadau a marwolaethau yn y pwll – fel y dywedodd Morris Jones, 'i fi, Duw â'r awennau – fe gysegrodd y llofa 'na'.

In many ways the Mynydd Newydd colliery in north Swansea was fairly typical. It was sunk in the 1840s and for almost a century it produced coal from both the 'five foot' and 'six foot' seams, employing at its peak about 400 men. However, it did have an unusual feature in that for 80 years the colliers organised their own prayer meeting before undertaking the week's work. The evidence shows that both the colliers and the wider community were proud of this tradition. There are a number of contemporary accounts in journals and newspapers, including some outside Wales. The existence of the underground prayer meetings was a source of pride for the local community, being something that set it apart from others

In the decades after the pit closed in 1932 the memory of the weekly underground services was treasured. There were further articles in the local newspaper about the services, including some by George Parcell. There are also a number of recordings done in the 1960s with former miners who describe the prayer meetings, both in public and private collections. The voice of George Parcell is on tape in the oral collections in St Fagans and the West Glamorgan Archives. The voices of Morris Jones and Thomas Thomas are also in these collections, and that of Dan Matthews in a family collection. Of course by that stage the colliery had long disappeared and so there was a tendency to portray a romanticised version of the

services, which played down the dangerous and unpleasant nature of the colliers' work. These recordings all recount their feelings, describing the special atmosphere in the meetings. There is also a tendency to emphasise that there were fewer injuries and deaths in this pit than in others – as Morris Jones said, 'for me, God had the reins – he blessed that colliery.'

Finnish Factory 'Homers' 1945—2000 — Oral History from the Grey Area

Pete Pesonen, Finnish Labour Archives, Finland

This paper discusses changes in working lives of industrial workers' by focusing on history of factory 'homer's' in Finland. A 'homer' is an object made for one's own benefit by a worker using his or her factory's equipment and materials. Homers were considered exist in the grey area between perks and pilferage from the workplace. Homers are part of less researched workers' culture which demonstrate workers' 'self-will'.

After the first part of the 20th century, a period marked by a shortage of goods caused by the economic depression and wartime rationing, the typical homer objects changed from utensils, tools and home supplies to leisure time supplies and ornaments. This change, caused by the increased significance of leisure time and prosperity of workers, depicts how the Finnish society transformed from agrarian into a modern consumption society. Expansion of the supply selection of markets, the discount of prices and automatising of the industrial production has decreased making of homers. Homer making was contracted as method of express oneself by making handicraft.

The main source of this paper is the collection of interviews of retired industrial workers. The collection includes 99 different informants who were interviewed either privately (63 informants) or in the groups (36 persons). Interviews were conducted in 2016—2018. This oral history project has had positive feedback from participants. The collection has been archived to the Finnish Labour Archives for the secondary use and it has been already reused as material for the theatre play, master thesis, and several non-academic articles.

The changing culture of work and workplaces

Niamh Dillon, National Life Stories / The British Library, UK

This paper will explore how architects and architecture engaged with the workplace in the second half of the twentieth century. This period saw a radical departure in how design and the built environment reflected and adapted to changing ways of working. Architects in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s who had grown up as part of the welfare state, wanted their buildings to reflect an increasing democratisation taking place in the workplace. As such, buildings such as Willis Faber Dumas designed by Foster Associates for an insurance company, used open floor plans, access to light, and staff facilities such as crèches and swimming pools, and staff canteens open to all, to reflect this changing

approach to staff relationships within organisations. By the late 1980s and 1990s the effect of privatisation could be seen in the workplace as the headquarters of newly privatised companies similarly used architecture to both reflect the ethos of their companies while encouraging new working practices. Purpose built headquarters for organisations such as Cable and Wireless and Powergen in Coventry illustrated not just the centralisation of the business, but also increased accountability and 'transparency' demonstrated by greater accessibility to staff members through new circulation routes and locating offices near stairwells or lobbies. These wider social changes were also accompanied by a continuation of the process of the 'building representing the brand' which began at the beginning of the twentieth century. Architects who were part of the high-tech movement were selected by furniture companies like Vitra and Herman Miller to design buildings which visually demonstrated a commitment to technology and design and thus creating a symbiotic relationship between the building and the brand.

Nicknames as a 'Micropolitical Portal': Remembering 'The Lazy Solicitor' and 'Horse Shoe Ned' on Liverpool's Docks.

Emma Copestake, University of Liverpool, UK

In 1987, a dock worker from Liverpool claimed that 'Then They Were Gone' would be the title of his book if he ever wrote one. The significance of individual characters and the necessity of humour on the city's waterfront has been highlighted repeatedly in oral history interviews conducted in the 1980s and in more recent years. This paper employs Barbara Rosenwein's concept of 'emotional communities' to reveal that nicknames were used as social tools and consequently came to be represented as part of a bygone era of work. Firstly, the nature of dock work throughout the twentieth century is highlighted to understand the norms and values underpinning the relationships between men and the context in which nicknames were created. Two broad categories of nicknames are then examined: nicknames based upon working practices and nicknames that arose spontaneously from forms of shared knowledge. Within these categories, the paper examines how class, gender, religion and other aspects of working life were drawn upon to reinforce norms, regulate group behaviour, socialise new workers and build camaraderie. Therefore, the origins and purposes of nicknames explain their usefulness in the dock community whilst providing an insight to the normative systems underlining it. This paper contends that the phenomenon on Liverpool's waterfront constituted a form of resistance and relief as it allowed dock workers to claim ownership over their strenuous job. The use of nicknames as a form of ownership explains why they have been represented as part of a broader jocular repertoire that failed to survive the upheavals of technological change, deindustrialisation and neoliberalism. In the words of one dock worker, 'the docks industry has changed beyond recognition and those days are gone forever' along with 'the humour'.

PANEL 4C: RECOVERING AND REMEMBERING

Recovering the People's Past: The Manchester Studies Oral History Collection

David Govier, Manchester City Council, UK

The Manchester Studies Unit was a pioneering, multi-disciplinary centre for the methodical collection and study of at-risk working-class histories in the North West of England, based at Manchester Polytechnic in the 1970s and 1980s. The family of resources built by Manchester Studies includes films held by the North West Film Archive, photograph albums held by the Greater Manchester County Record Office, over 750 oral history interviews held by Tameside Local Studies and paper archives deposited at record offices across the North West.

The oral history interviews cover topics such as childhood, marriage, school, work, leisure, politics, trade union activity, the cotton industry, poverty, housing, Italian immigrants, domestic service and the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. They focus on working lives within life stories and are comparable in ambition and scale to the 1970s work of Elizabeth Roberts in Preston, Lancaster and Barrow.

A 2016 Heritage Lottery Fund project, Made in Greater Manchester, has helped to digitise and provide access online to 42 interviews relating to the cotton industry. These concentrate on social relationships in the workplace, gender issues, supervision and control, working conditions and routines, the relationship of the mills to the wider community and the politics of cotton communities. Hundreds more interviews from the collection are scheduled to be digitised as part of the North West hub of the Unlocking Our Sound Heritage project, based at Manchester Central Library, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

This paper will introduce the collection and analyse the methodology of the interviews. The presentation will draw together oral testimony from the cotton industry interviews and corresponding family photographs to illustrate the ambition and foresight of the Manchester Studies Unit, while looking forward to more of its resources becoming accessible.

Remembering Lost Trades of Islington 1936-94: exploring workplace identities and attachments

John Gabriel & Jenny Harding, London Metropolitan University

This paper explores the experiences of work in the latter half of the 20th century as told by those who were employed in industries and trades in the London Borough of Islington that have since declined or disappeared. The 'Lost Trades of Islington' project collected ten oral histories of men and women who lived and

worked in the Borough against a backdrop of deindustrialisation and urban change. Their stories, inevitably informed by an understanding, and seen through the lens of subsequent developments, illustrate a range of predominantly skilled and semi-skilled manual and technical jobs and the ways in which, through a sense of place, workplaces are seen to intersect with gender, and wider sense of belonging. 'Loss' is understood in ambivalent terms by the participants and explored through Raymond Williams' notion of 'structures of feeling'. The above themes will be illustrated with sound clips from the 10 interviews

Migration of hop pickers to rural Herefordshire from the 1940s to now

Richard and Julia Goldsmith, Catcher Media Social CIC, UK

Today the hop industry is vastly diminished and seasonal workers come from Eastern Europe but in its post-war heyday, thousands would decamp to the county from South Wales, the Black Country, and the Gypsy Roma community to hand-pick the hop harvest. Focussing on this mass movement of labour and the subsequent mechanisation that changed working lives forever, we will present filmed interview extracts from this community of workers and explore their reactions to seeing their lives on screen.

The Herefordshire Life Through a Lens project explores the huge collection of photographs and negatives of photographer Derek Evans, digitising the archive and creating an extensive oral history video collection from Herefordshire people, about the memories they evoke. Evans was a photographer, who earned an international reputation with his agency work, but first and foremost he was a visual chronicler of a rural way of life that was rapidly coming to an end. His photographs of the dying days of the hand-picked hop harvest in the 1960s and the unprecedented migration of labour to this agricultural county are un-equalled. In the first film from the project, 'Stories from the Hop Yards', Evans' photos are used to illicit and illustrate the social history of the industry, with a line-up of industry old hands and pickers telling their stories to camera. The effect is a glorious evocation of rural life, in its pre-mechanised days and an essential addition to the historical record and bringing it right up to date with interviews from current workers.

'Real people with rich memories, beautifully portrayed' audience member.

The images capture smudgy-faced children, cooking over campfires, babies in hop cribs, bushelers, bookers and baggers. The film has provoked an outpouring of memories, photographs, and affection, as one interviewee put it, 'I thought it was about hops, but it was about my life'.

The Labour of Remembrance during the Centenary of the First World War – oral history and the stories of commemoration within military life

Eleanor O'Keeffe, Historic Royal Palaces, UK

This paper explores the shifting interface

between history, memory and identity within the working lives of serving personnel in the armed forces. The centenary of the First World War has involved and concerned military publics to a degree unprecedented in recent times. For the past four years, British society has foregrounded the considerable sacrifice of the First World War in arts and cultural events, often linking the deaths and purpose of the 'million' dead to the occupational demands of contemporary serving personnel. The military has 'remembered' too: Operation Reflect, the British army's programme of education and commemorative events, has systematised First World War remembrance within army infrastructure. Commemoration has also been placed at the forefront of the Army Covenant's delivery on its promise of 'recognition', with grants facilitating 'integration' through local remembrance projects.

This paper explores the implications of this cultural activity for military personnel, sharing the preliminary research of an oral history project of two events that were central to the centenary: Blood Swept Lands & Seas of Red (2014) and Beyond the Deepening Shadows: The Tower Remembers (2018). Through personal accounts, this paper analyses the link between remembrance, military identity and experience: what do serving men and women think about within commemorative spaces of the First World War? Do the public scripts of trauma and sacrifice, so associated with war's cultural memory, reactivate personal traumas? Does war memory contribute to what one General has called an 'ethical up-armouring' of military purpose? This paper also addresses the considerable challenges of researching across military/civilian lives and institutions, inviting thoughts and reflections from oral history researchers.

PANEL 4D: 'ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE': THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF UNDERTAKING A MAJOR ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH PROJECT ON WORK

The history of the British coal industry revisited: mining, memories, heritage and conflict in Lancashire and North Wales

Keith Gildart, University of Wolverhampton, UK

This paper draws on 20 interviews with ex-coal miners from Bickershaw Colliery (Lancashire) and Point of Ayr Colliery (North Wales) which were undertaken in 2018/19 as part of a large AHRC funded project on the post-war history of the coal industry. The life stories conveyed by the ex-miners provide entry points to various aspects of the industrial, social and

cultural life of coal communities. However, the focus here is on the ways in which the miners themselves are striving to create and curate their own stories and experiences through local heritage projects in the town of Leigh and the former mining villages of the north Wales coast. The interviews are indicative of the sense of the isolation the ex-miners continue to experience in the contemporary economic context of deindustrialisation and challenges to their sense of class, community and nation. Tensions between miners themselves and the wider social and political culture of their communities hinge on narratives and histories of the 1984/5 miners' strike. Heritage projects developed by ex-miners in both localities have become battlegrounds for what kind of history should be presented to the public, where memorials should be located, and which memories and experiences should be preserved. Miners who took part in the strike understandably want to centre their histories and narratives through the lens of 1984/5, while those who continued to work through the dispute argue that the strike should be given a more marginal position in commemoration and heritage. The interviews offer more complex readings of the social and cultural politics of the coal industry and challenge some of the prevailing orthodoxies in the historiography.

Liminality and Locality: Living with the 'half-life of deindustrialisation' in the Scottish coalfield

Andrew Perchard presented in absentia, University of Wolverhampton, UK

Drawing on interviews with miners and officials in the former Scottish coalfields, this paper will explore the centrality of place and the liminality around, and 'half-life of', deindustrialisation (High, 2003; High and Lewis, 2007; Linkon, 2018) against the backdrop of the contraction of the Scottish coalfields. The 'half-life of deindustrialisation' (Linkon, 2018) denotes the after-effects of industrial closures as ongoing rather than an abrupt state of stasis.

Building on earlier work in this area (Perchard, 2013; Gibbs, 2017; Perchard and Gildart, 2018), this paper explores how miners and officials spread across the Scottish coalfields have made sense of the collapse of deep coal mining in Scotland and how that affected their sense of belonging, place, and identity, within the broader context of the lived experience of deindustrialisation (Cowie and Heathcott, 2003; High et al, 2017). The paper examines how the evolving politics of place and space (as well as occupational identity) continue to mediate the act of remembering (and collective and individual narratives) in Scottish mining communities, alongside those of key sites of memory like the 1984-5 miners' strike and mining accidents. In Scotland, as elsewhere (High et al), Perchard (2013) and Clark and Gibbs (2017) have noted that remembering has taken place against vigorous debates over Scottish national identity.

Oral history within the complex landscape of remembering coal

Grace Millar, University of Wolverhampton, UK

The 'On Behalf of the People' oral history project has taken place within an environment of active memorialising and remembering. Markham, a mine in North Derbyshire, has an on-going memorial project, a new website and a Facebook group called 'Faces of Markham colliery'. Professor Gildart's paper details the ways in which miners have created their own history; this paper explores the implications for oral history practice of navigating a complex landscape of remembering.

This paper will discuss the different ways that members of the 'On Behalf of the People' project team have engaged with other memory projects. Initial contact was often made with the intention of recruiting participants, but since then project members have given workshops, attended meetings, and participated in a range of memory activities. While participating in, and working alongside, other memory projects provides opportunities for shared authority, it also forces us to confront the differences between remembering and oral history. These issues are particularly pointed in the coal industry where remembering has been particularly shaped by the industry's hugely contested and traumatic decline. Existing memory projects tend to either recontest or erase the conflict of the 1984/5 miners' strike and events that followed, approaches that directly contradict our intentions with this research project. What does it mean to try and share authority in such an environment? Is it possible to share authority when memory is being contested? And if oral historians are the making the decisions about how to navigate the landscape are we sharing authority at all? The fierceness of remembering of coalfield history provides an opportunity to consider the complexities of the relationship between oral history and other forms of remembering.

Our Tower: An Oral History of Life and Work at Tower Colliery, 1947-1995

Ben Curtis, University of Wolverhampton, UK

Tower Colliery, near Hirwaun in the upper Cynon Valley, is the project's case-study colliery for the South Wales coalfield. The story of Tower in the second half of the twentieth century is a remarkable one: in addition to participating fully in the national miners' strikes of 1972, 1974 and 1984-5, the colliery's community experienced two disasters in this period (an explosion at the colliery itself in 1962, which killed eight miners, as well as its participation in the rescue efforts in the aftermath of the nearby Aberfan disaster of 1966), before the pit was famously bought as a cooperative by its workforce following the privatisation of the coal industry in 1994. Notwithstanding its prominent (and, in some respects, iconic) role in the modern history of the South Wales coalfield, though, Tower Colliery itself has hitherto received surprisingly little specific historiographical attention.

Drawing upon on-going fieldwork from the 'On Behalf of the People', this paper will utilise oral history testimony to examine lived experiences of work at Tower Colliery in this tumultuous period. It will also make extensive use of audio playback of extracts from these interviews. In addition to tracing the key points in the history of Tower in this period, this paper will show how important national developments were experienced and understood at the colliery level, as well as reflecting upon changes in the nature and organisation of work there over time. In addition to this, this paper will reflect upon the links between colliery and community: the interactions and connections between the Tower workforce and the upper Cynon Valley, as well as the ways in which this picture became a more complex one over time as Tower became a 'receiver pit' following the dramatic contraction of the South Wales coal industry in the 1980s and 1990s.

4E: DOCUMENTARY SCREENING

OUT OF THE SHADOWS: THE GOLDEN AGE OF BRITISH FILM LABORATORIES

(Andrew Dawson/Sean Holmes, 2019)

The era of the film laboratory is over. The memory of the laboratory fades and with it goes our understanding of the vital importance of film labs in picture making. Forgetting is made easier because, even in their heyday, labs were the Cinderella of the industry, the poor cousin to the film studio, overlooked by a public and an industry attracted to glamour and spectacle. Labs were seen as dull monotonous places churning out hundreds of print copies for general exhibition.

But the reality is a good deal different: inside the labs was a complex and changing world – part mass production and part craft. Just as the studio made 'movie magic' so the lab was a locus of creativity in its own right.

Alongside a celebration of the pride, skills and perseverance of those working inside the labs, this is a story of the clash between workers and management in the battle for decent conditions. It is also a revealing account of the confined space occupied by women in the job hierarchy and how a handful of women tried to improve their lot.

Our documentary blends the oral histories of the men and women who worked in film laboratories, archival film footage, as well as written documents to tell the story of the heyday of British film laboratories from the ending of World War Two to 1980. Since the start of our project we have interviewed over a dozen lab workers, in addition to drawing upon interviews from the British Entertainment History Project. We hope that the screening will stimulate discussion of how best to utilise oral evidence and memory in telling 'industrial history'.

SATURDAY 6th JULY

PLENARY

When work is history and history is work: Museums, oral testimonies and authenticities

Beth Thomas, former Keeper of History and Archaeology for Amgueddfa Cymru- National Museum Wales

Like oral history, museums are often created from a sense of loss. This is especially true for museums which reflect the monolithic industries which so defined regional and national identities. However, what is being lost is multi-layered and complex and what we aim to achieve in response to the loss is constantly changing. Museums are given the almost impossible task of preserving the past, reflecting the present, and collecting for the future. Whatever narratives they produce from this, especially if they are national museums, have an enormous power of definition. What and who they include in their representation of history becomes the authoritative and 'authentic' version of national or regional identity.

This paper is a reflection not only on how museums have used oral history to reflect the history of work, but also on how the work of museums has changed over the last fifty years. Drawing on over 40 years' experience of curatorship at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, it will explore the role of museums in engaging people with the history of work through oral sources – from recorded interviews to participatory practice and face to face interaction. With large scale industries, long term preservation of material evidence is fraught with practical difficulties, thus putting a greater load on oral testimonies as a badge of authenticity. Museums have always focussed on the primacy of the object, but with large scale and globalised industries, there is likely to be a greater reliance on oral testimonies and participatory approaches in order to understand and interpret the significance of material heritage to people's histories and identities.

PARALLEL SESSION 5

PANEL 5A: PUTTING ORAL HISTORY TO WORK

Caring for Brodsworth: Using oral history archives to interpret conservation work in action

Eleanor Matthews, English Heritage, UK

Focusing on the innovative use and development of the extensive oral history archive at Brodsworth Hall to inform the interpretation of a major infrastructure project, this paper will

explore how oral history interviews with both current and former servants, staff and tradesmen at Brodsworth Hall & Gardens were a key resource for interpreting the house for visitors during a recent project. Playing sound clips from Brodsworth's large oral history archive of over 150 recordings, this talk will demonstrate how parallels were found to explain how both working at a country house and the different techniques of caring for historic objects and interiors have changed over the years. From Wallace Breedon (stone mason and handyman 1920s-1950s) recalling an old sailor splicing the Victorian roller shutter ropes to mend them through to Les Trott (handyman and then Estate Foreman from 1974 to the present day) who remembers clearing snow from the roof before it melted, the oral history archives were used to trace the historic maintenance and care of the house. The paper will use case studies to show how and why a new approach was taken to develop and bring the oral history archive up-to-date during the project by recording current employees and contractors who have been involved with Brodsworth whilst it has been in the care of English Heritage, ranging from conservation scientists to a master carpet fitter. Sharing what it takes to care for a large country house through the actual voices of the past and present staff who undertook the work was an important part of the conservation in action exhibition. The nature of working in a country house has changed considerably over the last century, and this paper will show how Brodsworth's oral history archive is developing to reflect this.

Oral histories of women in publishing: remembering and forgetting feminist business histories

Margaretta Jolly, University of Sussex, UK

The UK Women's Liberation Movement [WLM] of the 1970s-80s was critical of patriarchy and capitalism alike. Yet it needed business enterprise, particularly in cultural and creative sectors, to help spread its messages. This presentation will introduce the work of 'The Business of Women's Words', a Leverhulme-funded project which is examining the history of women's publishing as simultaneously a political and entrepreneurial venture. We focus on two businesses, Spare Rib Ltd and Virago Press, both lauded as exceptional cultural achievements of this period of feminism, but which have been less considered in relation to their business models and their place in the history of work.

Oral history methods are critical to unearthing this largely untold history. Our presentation will highlight our findings through interviews with activist-editors, publishers, writers, managers and accountants, offering new accounts of feminist workplace organisation, culture, labour relations, as these were defined by production. While the document-based archive is also vital to piecing together the story, we argue that the dynamics of memory offer special insight into the pressures involved in the struggle to square egalitarian ideals with the need to run viable businesses. In examining what has been lost or

repressed to the record until now, we also speak to debates over corporate memory and how oral history methods can take their place in creating ethical business models for the future. Here we will also consider the role of business archives and curatorial initiatives as they can bring such stories to a wider public, drawing on our own work with The British Library's Learning Programme.

Foodbank Histories: Recording Experiences of Food Poverty, Work and Community at the Newcastle West End Foodbank

Jack Hepworth and Alison Atkinson-Phillips, Newcastle University and Silvie Fisch, Northern Cultural Projects, UK

Since March 2018, Newcastle University's Oral History Unit & Collective has collaborated with Northern Cultural Projects and Newcastle West End Foodbank to record 30 oral history interviews with foodbank clients, volunteers and supporters. From the start, the emphasis of this project has been on developing tangible benefits for interview participants and the Newcastle West End Foodbank (NWEF). For example, as part of the Being Human Festival in November 2018, NWEF hosted a Foodbank Histories exhibition at their Newcastle city centre collection point at Grainger Market. The exhibition combined an audio track from interviews with extended transcriptions on display. Coinciding with UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston's visit to Newcastle for a report on extreme poverty and human rights, the exhibition received considerable media attention, leading to new volunteers and donations to NWEF. Other cultural outputs are currently in the planning stage, with various levels of co-production involved.

Foodbank Histories has navigated practical issues of establishing multi-organisational partnerships and explored the political agency of oral history for 'transformative social change' (Groundswell 2018). The project accesses individual and collective memories of place and work (Strangleman 2017: 479), amplifying individual experiences of broader socio-political shifts amid neoliberalism and deindustrialisation. Considering Michael Frisch's conception of 'shared authority' (Frisch 1979), this presentation will discuss the challenges and potential of bearing witness to accounts of a very live political issue. FRISCH 1979: Michael Frisch, 'Oral History and Hard Times: A Review Essay', *Oral History Review*, 7 (1979), pp. 70-79
GROUNDSWELL 2018: www.oralhistoryforsocialchange.org/about/
STRANGLEMAN 2017: Tim Strangleman, 'Deindustrialisation and the Historical Sociological Imagination: Making Sense of Work and Industrial Change', *Sociology*, 51 (2017), pp. 466-482

Looking Back at Redundancy

Bill Bytheway, Researcher, Wales

This paper is based on 'Retirement Through Redundancy', an ESRC-funded project that I undertook in 1984. At that time, I was a

Research Fellow in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Swansea University. I carried out 108 semi-structured interviews with men who were aged 55 or more in 1980 when, working in the Port Talbot Steelworks, they were made redundant as part of a major redundancy programme that had followed a 12-week national steel strike. The interview focused on the subject's working life, his comments on the strike and redundancy deal, his subsequent economic activity and sources of income, and the extent to which he thought of this as his retirement. At the time, the miners' strike was front page news and about a third of the interviewees had previously working in the coal industry. I will describe the experience of depositing the cassette tapes of these interviews with the Qualidata Archive at the University of Essex. This was complicated by constraints on time and expense both for myself and the Archive and, as a result, digitisation of the tapes was only partly completed. I am hoping that, following discussions with the Richard Burton Archive at Swansea University, the completeness of the Qualidata material will be checked and these interviews will be made more readily available to local historians. In conclusion I will argue that this is just one example of many interview-based projects that have been undertaken over the last fifty years that should be more readily available for secondary analysis. Unfortunately, many are currently archived in ordinary lofts and spare bedrooms, as researchers such as myself busy ourselves with other retirement activities.

PANEL 5B: WOMEN AT WORK

Lleisiau o Lawr y Ffatri (Voices from the Factory Floor)*

Catrin Stevens, Archif Menywod Cymru Women's Archive Wales

* This will be a Welsh language presentation with simultaneous translation

Bydd y papur hwn yn trafod prosiect a ariannwyd gan Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri ac eraill i gofnodi hanesion llafar menywod fu'n gweithio yn y diwydiannau gweith-gynhyrchu yng Nghymru rhwng 1945 ac 1975. Sylweddolwyd bod y garfan hon o fenywod dosbarth-gweithiol wedi ei hanwybyddu gan haneswyr er iddynt gyfrannu yn sylweddol tuag at economi Cymru yn y cyfnod dan sylw. Recordiwyd 200 o fenywod ledled Cymru a weithiodd mewn dros 200 o ffatrioedd yn cynhyrchu ystod ryfeddol o nwyddau. Wynebwyd sawl her wrth gynllunio a gweithredu'r prosiect, e.e. cael hyd i siaradwyr addas; perswadio menywod fod ganddynt stori gwerth ei hadrodd ac wedi casglu'r defnydd perswadio cynulleidfaoedd mewn cymdeithasau hanes / lleol a.y.b. bod gwerth i hanesion 'merched ffatri'.

Bydd y papur yn canolbwyntio ar un agwedd o'r cyfweiliadau, sef agweddau'r menywod at undebau llafar a'u profiadau o anghydfodau yn y gweithle. Pam fod cyn lleied o ddiddordeb ganddynt mewn undebaeth yn y pumdegau ond i hyn newid wrth i'r chwedegau fynd rhagddo? A gafodd safiad menywod Ford Dagenham effaith ar fenywod yn ffatrioedd Cymru? Beth oedd prif

achosion yr anghydfodau? Pa rôlau chwaraeodd menywod yn eu hundebau a beth oedd agweddau eu cydweithwyr gwrywaidd at hynny? At hyn bydd y papur yn ystyried a oes angen mwy o waith ar yr agwedd hon ar hanes diwydiannol Cymru.

This paper will discuss a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and others to record the oral histories of women who worked in Welsh manufacturing industries between 1945 and 1975. It was realised that this group of working-class women had been ignored by historians even though they had made a considerable contribution to the Welsh economy during that period. Recordings were made of 200 women from across Wales. They had worked in over 200 factories producing a remarkable range of goods. Planning and undertaking the project involved many challenges, e.g. finding suitable interviewees; persuading women that their story was worth telling; and after collecting the data persuading audiences in historical and local societies etc that the stories of 'factory women' were of value.

The paper will focus on one aspect of the interviews, namely the women's attitudes to trade unionism and their experience of disputes in the workplace. Why did they have so little interest in trade unionism in the fifties only for this to change during the 1960s? Did the stand made by the women of Ford Dagenham have an effect on women in the factories of Wales? What were the main causes of dispute? What roles did women play in their unions and what were the attitudes of their male colleagues to this? The paper will also consider whether further work is needed on this aspect of Welsh industrial history.

Women's stories on working in heavy industry. A Cieszyn-Silesia case (in Poland and the Czech Republic)

Grażyna Kubica and Alina Doboszewska, Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University, Poland

We would like to present results of the international project carried out in 2014 in Cieszyn Silesia. The Industrial Revolution began there quite early, in the end of the XVIIIth century. The country became the one of the most important industrial regions of Austria. Generally, Silesians were working for blackmoney there. Foremen and managers were Czech and Austrian men. The situation was the same in many families: a man was working in a factory and a woman staying with children, working at home and on a farm. In 1920 Cieszyn Silesia was divided between Poland and Czechoslovakia. During the interwar period industry on both sides of the border was growing and after World War II even more so because the communist governments were greatly interested in having advanced and especially heavy industry.

When there were no enough men to work, they started to employ women in industry, too. During communist times a third of the staff were women. People know little about women working in heavy industry and that is why we wanted to talk about it. We were talking to

elderly women, who remembered what was it like to work during communist period. But we were talking also to young women, who work now in industrial plants using new technologies.

The project resulted in the oral history film 'Living near the border. Women's stories on working in industry' realised by Dobra Wola Foundation (Kraków) in cooperation with Petrklíč help o.s. (Český Těšín).

Voices of female cinema employees during the Second World War

Linda Pike, University of Worcester, UK

The phenomenon of 'going to the pictures' during the Second World War was an intrinsic and popular leisure activity within British social life. But whilst cinemas were 'picture palaces' for entertainment, they were also places for employment, with 75000 employees who helped create the cinema-going experience. This paper will focus on the experiences of women's roles as cinema employees: the often 'hidden from history' Front of House staff (usherettes, kiosk attendants, managers), whose work was feminised and domesticated, and film projectionists, working in what was perceived to be a male dominated profession.

Oral testimonies, complemented by other archival resources, such as newspapers and cinema trade magazines, will be utilised to explore and interpret the changes, opportunities and expectations of the working lives of women employed within cinemas in the Midlands.

Usherettes and attendants were, from the 1920s, respectable jobs which fitted around family commitments as women, in their stylish uniforms and Hollywood glamour, contributed to the escapist world of cinema until the latter part of the twentieth century. However, it was male conscription at the outbreak of the Second World War, which led to a lack of trained cinema operators and the Cinematograph Exhibitor's Association organising schemes to train women as female operators – 'projectionettes'. Many women seized these opportunities despite unequal pay and promotion and were patronised by the press. However, once hostilities ceased, there was no lasting transformation for female operators. Appointments had been made for the duration of the war only and few female operators remained in the projection box.

Women's Narratives of Work in Authoritarian Greece, 1965-1974

Eleni Polychronakos, Concordia University, Canada

My PhD dissertation project is rooted in family history. In 1969, at age 20, my mother moved from her northern-Greek village to Thessaloniki, where she worked in a zipper factory before enrolling in a nursing assistant training programme. Life story interviews with her and her contemporaries contradict the traditional ethnographic narrative (by Ernestine Friedl, 1959; Jill Dubisch, 1984) according to which social and family mores pressured young rural women into early arranged marriage and domestic life.

As the Greek economy transformed from an

agrarian system to one integrated in world markets, women benefited from new professional opportunities. The Red Cross, the YWCA, and other institutions offered training in professions such as social work, nursing, and accounting. At the same time, the country remained under the authoritarian rule of corrupt governments whose Christian and nationalist ideology culminated in the Colonels' Dictatorship (1967-1974). Traditional gender roles were strictly enforced in state discourse.

How did my mother and others navigate this paradox? My interviewees reveal that, as they came of age in the 1960s and 1970s, they did not feel confined to the domestic sphere. Liberation, however, did not mean abandoning the private for the public. They often relied on family and village connections to obtain work in urban settings. These personal networks protected them from patriarchal state structures and sexist work environments. Their life-course narratives also suggest that their rejection of the dowry system in favour of romantic love constituted a complementary aspect of their identities as modern professionals. Thus, these women's experiences in 1960s and 1970s Greece troubles the trope of distinct private and public spheres.

PANEL 5C: WORK AND HERITAGE

Materialising Memory – The Industrial Heritage of the Ruhr as Place for Narrative Engagement in the Age of Deindustrialisation?

Jana Golombek, LWL-Industriemuseum, Germany

The collecting of oral accounts plays an important role in (re)constructing the history of the industrial and deindustrialising Ruhr. Several oral history projects have been conducted since the 1970s and have influenced the historical culture of the region. What also cannot be underestimated is the role of place in making these stories heard and thus be part of the regional memoryscape. This paper addresses the importance of the industrial age's material remains as basis and impetus for narrating the past and thus the connection between memory and place. It focusses on the LWL-Industrial Museum (Westphalian State Museum of Industrial Heritage) and its work as an example for the role of oral history at a museum and on how material and immaterial heritage influence each other. Founded in 1979 the museum consists of eight different sites. Its mission statement puts the working-life and the everyday culture of the workers in the centre. In order to document those living and working conditions oral history was an important method from the beginning for understanding the diverse interactions between technical, social and political developments in the region and also the eight different sites of the museum. The interview-database that is currently being digitised forms a unique immaterial heritage for the region with over 1,500 interviews since the 1980s and it is constantly being expanded. By

servicing scientific and educational work in the museum the different voices get heard and at the same time the museum as physical place comes to life and is more likely to stay relevant when it comes to the interpretation of the rapid changes the region has lived through. Touching key issues like gender, class and migration the interviews are also an important source for research and constitute an important part of the region's memory.

Forming the Industrial Past and the Meanings of Oral History

Katarzyna Nogueira, History of the Ruhr Foundation, Germany

Since the late 1970s personal testimonies play an important role in historicising, forming and remembering the mining past of the Ruhr region in Germany. During the decline of the coal mining industry local history workshops, museum practitioners and academics began to use oral history as a tool to reconstruct the social, cultural and political life worlds and transformations of the Ruhr. Oral history became an important way to integrate critical perspectives 'from below' to the historiography and representations of mine work, mine workers and mining communities. The long decline of coal mining came along with new concepts and practices of 'Industriekultur'. Regional institutions and associations have created a grand narrative of industrial heritage which became a focal point of attraction to draw tourists (inter)nationally but also a key element to regional collective identity.

In this context the paper explores the meanings of oral history from a democratic and participatory 'history from below' to an increasingly institutionalised approach in museums, media and regional tourism. It examines the role of oral history and personal narratives in regional historical and public culture of the last three decades of deindustrialisation and structural change: What role does oral history play in forming the industrial past? Who are the different narrative agents involved in this process? What is the interplay between personal testimonies and industrial heritage in the Ruhr? Did the long process of heritagisation change the general narrative to the depiction of an increasingly nostalgic past, further boosted by the end of German coal mining in 2018?

Voices from the Mint

Abigail Kenvyn, The Royal Mint Museum, Wales

On a cold Welsh winter's day in December 1968 the new Royal Mint at Llantrisant was officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen. The announcement, a couple of years previous, that Britain would be adopting a new system of decimal currency set in motion a period of change the Mint had not experienced for over a century.

After 150 years, ever-increasing output began to place a strain on the four-acre London site of Tower Hill.

But it was the Government's decision to introduce a modern decimal currency that would bring matters to a head. To cope with the production of the enormous quantities of

decimal coins needed by 'Decimalisation Day' or 'D-Day' as it was more simply known, and to safeguard its export business, it was decided to build a new, and much larger, mint outside London. A greenfield site, more than 30 acres in size, was identified in Llantrisant, South Wales, and last year marked the 50th anniversary of the royal opening.

To celebrate this milestone the Royal Mint and the Royal Mint Museum initiated a number of events and projects and, notably, the establishment of an oral history archive.

The anniversary provided an excellent opportunity to acquire a personal insight and perspective about the Mint at Llantrisant.

The Royal Mint has been traditionally associated with long-serving members of staff and these, plus retired colleagues who made the move from London to Wales were invited to take part. Their memories have featured in a temporary exhibition at the Royal Mint Experience, on a purpose-built website, and in a publication written about the anniversary.

The interviews with staff continue, providing a personal dimension to the story of an internationally important organisation.

Island Voices: capturing memories of life and work on the Isle of Wight

Lisa Kerley, Freelance Community Oral History Practitioner, Isle of Wight, UK

This presentation will explore two Heritage Lottery Funded community oral history projects based on the Isle of Wight linked to the 'green' and the 'blue' of the Island – recording the oral testimony of people who have earned their living from the land and sea. These projects are a partnership between local landscape project Down to the Coast and Carisbrooke Castle Museum and the interviews conducted are forming part of the Museum's sound archive of 'Island Voices'.

In my presentation I will explore a number of aspects of undertaking museum-based community oral history projects and will use soundbites from these two projects to illustrate challenges, surprises and emotional responses within interviewing.

I will also explore the legacy of oral testimony and hope to promote discussion on the ethics of the interpretation of oral testimony with a particular focus on museums. In my presentation I would also like to explore something with the audience which I feel personally particularly passionate about – preserving the integrity of memory.

PANEL 5D: WORK AND IDENTITY

'The right not to do prison work': Changing attitudes to prison work of IRA prisoners, 1971-2000

Dieter Reinisch, Webster University & University of Vienna, Austria

When Irish republican prisoners fought for the reintroduction of 'Special Category Status' between 1976 and 1981, one of their five demands was 'the right not to do prison work'. These five demands are widely considered as

preconditions for Irish republicans to accept their prison status. Recent research has provided a fresh understanding of the camp and prison experience of political-motivated convicts during the Northern Irish Troubles. However, little attention has been given to the purpose of these demands, how they were perceived by the prison population, and how the attitudes towards these demands changed over time. In this paper, I will focus on the changing attitudes of IRA prisoners to prison work based on Oral history interviews.

Between 2013 and 2017, I conducted 35 interviews with former prisoners belonging to the Provisional IRA and the republican-socialist INLA. I will draw on these recordings to analyse the role the prison work played for the republican prisoners in the internment camps and high-security prisons in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland during the Troubles. In these interviews, ex-prisoners tell about their interest in prison work, their problems with acquiring suitable tools and material, and how the demand for no prison work was formulated by the prisoners.

To be sure, republican and loyalist prisoners almost never refused to work in prison, instead, their understanding what kind of work was acceptable for a self-proclaimed 'political prisoner' and what kind of work was unacceptable changed over time. Based on these interview recordings with IRA prisoners, I will introduce this under-researched aspect of prison work during the Northern Irish Troubles, and, in so doing, I will show that 'the right not to do prison work' was not a precondition of IRA prisoners to accept their status.

Discovering the silent minority. Studying the historical experiences of the Swedish-speaking workers in post-war Finland.

Matias Kaihovirta, University of Helsinki, Finland

The history of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland has rarely been studied from the perspective of class and ethnicity. Yet, this minority is in no sense homogenous and ethnic mobilisation has not been an integrated political project among the Finland-Swedes.

This presentation takes the use of oral history to discover the forgotten history of the Swedish-speaking minority who belonged to the working class and were active in the socialist labour movement. How did the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland position themselves as an ethnic minority in the Finnish labour movement and as a political minority, as socialists, in the predominantly bourgeois and non-socialistic Swedish-speaking minority? In my project I'm focusing on the rank and file members, their relation to socialist politics and ethnic Swedish identity and how it was integrated in their everyday life and in their communities after 1945 up until the 1970s, this is a time-period when Finland underwent a large socio-economic transformation from a rural to a modern industrial welfare state.

Oral history is an important method in my current research project. I use interviews but also memoirs and diaries to study the historical experiences of class and ethnicity among the Swedish-speaking working class in Finland.

Their experiences have usually been shadowed by the 'grand' narratives in Finnish history, retold from the perspective of Finnish majority-nationalism or Finland-Swedish bourgeois minority-nationalism. Although this presentation empirically focuses on a Finnish case, I will however address questions and problems of more general character, such as the relation between class and ethnicity in the everyday life of and the politics of ethnic minorities and how they can be interpreted.

'There's no 'I' in team – unless you're a journalist'. Contextualising collective bargaining in regional newspapers through oral history.

Rachel Matthews & Kristopher Lovell, Coventry University, UK

Much has been written about unions and the introduction of computers to the newspaper industry (Griffin, 1984; Littleton, 1992.)¹ However, less attention has been paid to this transition in the regional newspaper, despite the fact that local titles acted as test beds for this process. This paper suggests our understanding of this radical period of change can be extended using oral history methodology; it will draw on evidence gathered via a pilot project² focussing on the Coventry Telegraph to demonstrate differing attitudes towards notions of 'team' and 'individual' which can be related to the outcome of collective bargaining.

These differences are particularly marked when comparing the testimony of print workers and editorial workers during the 'hot metal' era of newspaper production. For the former, the workplace is described as a site of 'belonging' which gives rise to social relationships. For editorial though, the 'lone' journalist may be a member of a team, but only if they have the space to retain their individuality. These varying attitudes are significant when viewed in relation to the strategies of unions for printers and journalists. Despite attempts by the National Union of Journalists to implement a national agreement, the majority of members were 'persuaded' (Gall, 1993) to sign personal contracts. This saw the potential of their collective position subsumed to managerialism (Simpson, 1981); arguably, it is this which paved the way for the current decline of corporate-owned regional and local titles (Matthews, 2017).

Reconciling Professional and Feminine Identities: Oral Histories of Women in Biochemistry

Benjamin Palmer, University of Leicester, UK

The number of women working in biological sciences is much closer to gender parity than in the physical sciences. Despite this, oral histories of women biochemists show that even they struggle to reconcile femininity with their scientific identities, demonstrated by the ways in which they attempt to find composure within their narratives. Drawing on recorded interviews carried out with British women biochemists, this

1. This is also captured via the British Library's Oral History of the British Press.

2. A total of five workers from the *Coventry Telegraph* were interviewed during the summer of 2018.

paper will explore their narratives of childhood interests and motherhood in relation to their professional careers.

Firstly, these women's narratives often showed discomposure in their subjective understandings of their own motivations in pursuing scientific careers. In Paul Merchant's 2013 article 'Scientist's Childhoods', based on oral histories of male scientists, he argues that accounts of the childhoods of adult scientists tell us more about their current identities as scientists than about their early development of scientific interest. The recordings used in this research suggests that women scientists also struggle to express a narrative of their childhoods that fit with their own views of what childhood interests a scientist should have had. Some participants felt the need to contextualise a youthful interest in the arts in relation to their decisions to study scientific subjects, or 'cherry-picked' memories of playing with scientific toys.

These women further struggled to reconcile their ideals around motherhood with their scientific careers. Some participants spoke of the guilt of 'owing many volunteer hours to the PTA' or having to have the 'constitution of an ox' in order to balance child-rearing with the demands of professional research. The women who chose not to have children showed discomposure when attempting to reconcile this decision with their careers.

Through these narratives, this paper will examine the ways in which women struggle to find composure between their success and achievements in their professional lives with societal markers of femininity.

PANEL 5E: HEALTH AND SERVICES

The community within Cefn Coed Hospital: How oral histories revealed the personal history of a mental health hospital.

Rebecca Kelly and Martin Thomas, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Wales

In 2017, ABMU Health Board Heritage Team successfully applied for a grant from Heritage Lottery fund in order to create an exhibition celebrating the legacy of Cefn Coed, a mental health hospital in Swansea, which opened in 1932 and is now being de-commissioned.

As part of this exhibition, the Heritage Team were committed to reaching out to several groups or 'cohorts', to collect oral histories about the hospital from different perspectives. It was from these oral histories that ABMU were able to research previously unrecorded and unknown stories and that we were able to 'unlock' the doors of a hospital that has become part of local folklore to the public, and also help to dispel some of the myths pertaining to Cefn Coed; it has also helped to reveal some of the amazing lives that lived within it.

Collecting people's memories has been invaluable in helping us to understand the community within Cefn Coed Hospital, for many, it was considered to be their only home. Cefn Coed itself could effectively be considered as 'Swansea in microcosm', owing to its

diversity and its self-sufficiency, where both its staff and its patients contributed to its working life. This paper will discuss how the oral histories help us to understand how Cefn Coed worked, not just as a hospital, but as a community and as a result, they have helped to bring alive the objects being used in the upcoming, immersive exhibition opening in Swansea Museum. The oral histories will be accessible to the public using interactive installations throughout the exhibition.

'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,': Working in a warzone

Ruth Elisabeth Coon, Ulster University, Northern Ireland

From 1968-1998 violent conflict raged in Northern Ireland. The Troubles led to the death of over 3,600 people and injured more than 40,000 others. The health service had to provide care for those injured, as well as treating the general population.

Quoting A Tale of Two Cities, one staff member recalled the period as such: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.' The paradox of the working experience of medical professionals in this period will be the topic of this paper. It brought many challenges both personally as well as professionally and their voices are rarely heard, nor their important contributions recognised.

For many involved, the conflict brought major changes to their working lives. New challenges medically had to be faced including injuries not previously seen by professionals there, caused by bullets, bombs, as well as the often-distressing results of paramilitary punishment methods. Staff at hospitals such as Altnagelvin (Londonderry) and the Royal Victoria (Belfast) had to learn on the job as an influx of patients with violence related injuries arrived at their doors, changing completely what was the 'norm' day-to-day in the A&E departments and theatres.

Staff themselves had to face many dangers. Hospitals were not immune to the violence and the presence of the security forces, paramilitaries, and civilians at times caused problems. Some hospitals and staff were also attacked during the conflict and deaths occurred. Even travelling to work could be fraught with dangers, with checkpoints, barricades, and snipers being common obstacles to navigate.

Yet despite the difficulties, staff also look back fondly on the camaraderie of the time. The rewards of their hard work, saving the lives of the seriously injured. As well as pointing to the benefits brought by their experience: the skills, the new techniques and technologies developed during the period.

'Local AIDS Suspect': memory, locality and Australia's HIV and AIDS crisis

Geraldine Fela, Monash University, Australia

On January 22 1985 AIDS panic erupted in Warrnambool, a small coastal town on Australia's South West Coast. Beneath a deceptively calm image of grazing sheep,

Warrnambool's local paper the Standard carried the headline 'Local AIDS Suspect'. The article that followed broke the news that '[a] young Warrnambool homosexual' was the first Australian nurse to be 'identified as an AIDS suspect'. The young nurse, Paul, had confided in a close friend after testing positive for HIV, he was outed to the town by the newspaper report and lost his job. Paul moved to Melbourne where he continued to work as a nurse in a dedicated AIDS unit, his health deteriorated however as his HIV developed into AIDS. Paul died in 1992.

In the process of collecting oral testimony from nurses who worked with HIV and AIDS patients during Australia's AIDS crisis, I have talked to nurses in both Warrnambool and Melbourne who worked with Paul. In their testimonies there are inconsistencies in the stories they tell, particularly about his death. Drawing on Alessandro Portelli's exploration of the death of Italian trade unionist Luigi Trastulli this paper will consider the ways in which Paul's colleagues narrate and give meaning to his death. How, in Portelli's words, 'memory goes to work to heal this wound'. Paul's life and death is a window into how HIV/AIDS was responded to in very different ways across Australia, a country of vast distances. It is also an insight into the uneven role nursing unionism played in responding to the workplace issues raised by HIV/AIDS in Australian hospitals.

Voices of the Windrush Nurses: reflections on a dramatisation of the oral histories of Caribbean Nurses

Leroi Henry, University of Greenwich, UK

The Windrush scandal in early 2018 highlighted the importance of preserving the legacy of the Windrush generation of Caribbean migrants, particularly their support for the NHS and the transmission of values to younger generations. With this in mind a team from the University of Greenwich embarked on a case study exploring and recording the intergenerational legacies of Caribbean migrant nurses who arrived in the UK between 1948 and 71. Objectives included the identification of the contribution and legacy of the working lives of the Windrush nurses in post-War Britain's labour market and the consideration of the impact of the nurses' legacy for successive generations of people of African Caribbean descent.

As part of a pilot study, eight biographical taped recorded interviews and secondary analysis of existing oral history archives on the Windrush Nurses were used to capture the role, contribution and legacy of the working lives of these nurses. In Black History Month 2018 the University of Greenwich hosted a symposium celebrating their intergenerational legacy which included a dramatisation of the narratives of informants performed by five professional actors in front of an audience including the research participants. This dramatisation developed from interview transcripts brought to life some of the key narratives of the nurses.

This paper presents and discusses audio recordings of some of the narratives articulated in the dramatisation and audio recordings of the nurses' responses to hearing their words

articulated by actors. It then goes on to discuss the process of producing the play and reflects on some of the challenges of using drama a means of foregrounding these women's voices.

OPEN SESSION

SESSION A: NATIONAL LIFE STORIES INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

The changing work of oral history: a reflective workshop exploring the impact of technological developments on our own practice

Mary Stewart, Rob Perks, Charlie Morgan and Camille Johnston, National Life Stories at The British Library, UK

In the year where Oral History journal celebrates its 50th anniversary it seems apposite that the conference gives attendees the opportunity to consider the impact of technological changes in our own work, complementing the wider focus in the conference of how our discipline has documented the working lives of interviewees. From the vantage point of the British Library Sound Archive, the core archival and curatorial team from the oral history department want to explore these questions further.

This reflective workshop is centred on active attendee participation including individual reflection and group discussion. It is aimed at anyone working in oral history – including those working as interviewers, project managers, archivists & librarians and broadcasters, and is open to those working in community, institutional and academic settings.

In order to understand and meet future challenges in oral history, we feel it would be helpful to pause, reflect on the current landscape and also look back to the roots of current working practices.

Please come and join us to discuss and reflect, as we hope to explore as a group:

- if and how changes in recording technology and audio capture have influenced our everyday practice when interviewing and archiving oral history (as we've moved from open reel to cassette, flirted with minidisc and CD in the 1990s, and now use digital recorders and smartphones). Has anything been lost along the way?

- changes in how we document, log and catalogue our recordings. How has the shift from paper records and box files to electronic documentation and digital catalogues affected how we document describe our recordings? What are the implications of these changes?
- the spectre of wider access, especially online access. In what ways has this altered our working practices in the field, archive and in creative spaces for oral history?

SESSION B: UNITE INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

UNITE the union centenary history project: the oral history dimension

Mary Davis, Marx Memorial Library, UK

This interactive workshop will provide an opportunity to discuss and explore the oral history dimension to an extensive and intensive

examination of the history of UNITE the union. The oral history dimension is an important complement to six volumes (currently being written) which explore eight decades of the Transport and General Workers Union, now UNITE the UK's largest trade union.

Oral history is a vital element of the project because it reflects the often ignored fact that in the labour movement, those who have been 'hidden from history' – the workers themselves – are the ones who have made their own history. Thus, this oral history represents the local and workplace history of UNITE and its predecessor unions. It covers the period from the 1960s to the 2000s.

For this we have trained UNITE members as research volunteers, from all parts of the UK, who will help gather together as much oral and written historical evidence as possible. They have all had oral history training at national and regional level. The themes and issues our regional teams will cover have been discussed and elaborated with the regional volunteers. Amongst the themes which volunteers will be focusing on will be issues of women and Black workers rights, internationalism, anti-trade union laws, the shop stewards' movement, occupations and community involvement, union militancy and political involvement relating to Clause 4, nuclear weapons and the social contract and the employers' response.

The project is unique in pioneering a new way to research and write trade union history involving activist members, not just national leaders, and will form an important element in UNITE's future education programme. The national story will be written and edited by historians coordinated by the Marx Memorial Library in London, to be published in stages from 2019 to 2022. Further details can be found on our website www.theunitehistoryproject.org

With some of the volunteers we will present early results from the interviewing programme and discuss some of the challenges and rewards of running a national oral history project recording the history of a union whose men and women members have been at the forefront of struggles in factories, dockyards, transport and workplaces across the UK. The entire project aims, therefore, to write a history of a powerful union through the lens of its members, and not solely in terms of its national focus and leadership.

SESSION C: CAMPUS TOUR **One hundred years of history: building a campus in the park**

Sam Blaxland, Swansea University, Wales
Swansea University opened its doors to its first cohort of 89 students in 1920. In its first years, most teaching and research took place in the neo-gothic 'Abbey' building, and some temporary huts in the nearby grounds, before the site started expanding in earnest in the 1950s. The tour will begin at the Abbey and will trace the development on the Singleton Park site. It will demonstrate how Swansea was one of the first British 'campus' colleges

and will point out areas, items, and buildings of particular interest like the 1937 'new' Library, the foundation stone, the original halls of residence, the impressive Natural Sciences building and its botanical gardens, as well as the spots where some of Wales' most notorious student protests took place at the end of the 1960s. The information in the tour is drawn from Sam Blaxland's extensive research on the history of the University, which is part of the book he is writing to mark the institutions centenary next summer.

SESSION D: LLAFUR SESSION, **Organised by Llafur: Welsh People's History Society** **CHASING DAYDREAMS – Putting workers on film**

Colin Thomas, Llafur

In 1942 a group of film makers – all men – attempted to put the experience of women workers in an armaments factory in Newport on film in *Night Shift*. Occasionally the women were allowed to be heard directly but delivering lines that had been written for them by the film makers.

Sixty years later Iris Watts, one of the women who had appeared in *Night Shift*, was able to talk directly about her experience in *Shooting the War*. By then video had superseded film and there was no longer the cost constraint that had inhibited early documentary makers.

But was cost the main factor – or was it the attitude of the film makers to their subjects? Ruby Grierson was an exception amongst the early documentary makers because she encouraged her subjects to speak directly to camera.

In 1978, when I was still a BBC employee, I suggested making a documentary on working class culture. It involved filming for a year with four workers in transition, about to take up scholarships at Ruskin College Oxford, and encourage them to speak for themselves. One of them, Bill Pritchard, was a shop steward on the Ford production line in Swansea, and I filmed another of the four on his last day at work.

I had not anticipated how difficult the three men and one woman would find their transition from workers to – as they saw it – middle class students. And I had not anticipated their attitude to me. On the last day of filming, at the Yorkshire Miners Gala, Bill Pritchard told me on camera that if I thought this was a way of making a film on working class culture I was 'Chasing Daydreams'.

This presentation will include extracts from *Nightshift* and *Chasing Daydreams*.

SESSION E: SPECIAL INTEREST **GROUP MEETINGS** **LGBTQ SIG meeting**

Clare Summerskill, Alan Butler and George Severs, LGBTQ SIG, UK

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have been developed in response to increasing interest among members for ways to develop networks and facilitate discussion and activities with others who share common interests and concerns. All those interested are welcome to attend.

PLENARY

After Coal: Welsh and Appalachian Mining Communities

Tom Hansell, documentary filmmaker and author, Appalachian State University, USA

Author and director Tom Hansell will share stories from his project *After Coal*, which explores changes in the coalfields of Appalachia and Wales over the past half century.

What happens when industry collapses? How do communities and cultures survive? These are the central questions addressed by the *After Coal* project. From 2011 to 2018 author and filmmaker Tom Hansell worked with an interdisciplinary team of scholars and residents from the coalfields of south Wales and central Appalachia to explore strategies for community regeneration on both continents. Hansell will provide an overview of five decades of exchange between these two coal mining regions, share video clips from the *After Coal* project, and discuss how the process of documentation can help working class communities adapt to change.

PARALLEL SESSIONS 6

PANEL 6A: WORK AND FAMILY

Everyday life strategies families with children used while working in Finland's textile industry in the 1950s to 1970s

Maria Vanha-Similä, University of Turku, Finland

The presentation examines everyday life in the small textile industry community of Forssa in Finland from the 1950s until the 1970s. Usually, both parents worked in the textile industry. The paper focuses on childcare using oral history to gain precise information about these families and their everyday lives and experiences. How did employees arrange childcare when they worked? These narrators frequently described everyday life in terms of family and the various arrangements they made to manage needed childcare. The fathers also played an important role in the flow of everyday life in these Forssa families with children.

Working Dads? Work, Family and Fatherhood for Australian Men in the 1970s and 1980s

Alistair Thomson, Monash University, Australia

In response to second wave feminist politics, increasing economic pressures and rising rates of married women's employment, and the changing circumstances of intimate family relations, by the 1970s and 1980s some Australian men were beginning to take seriously

a family role that transcended that of the breadwinner and engaged them more seriously in childcare and domestic work. Drawing upon Australian Generations Project oral histories recorded in the 2010s with Australian men who became fathers in the 1970s and 1980s, this paper will investigate the circumstances that encouraged or required some young fathers (though not all, and perhaps not many) to question the role of paid work in their lives and consider new ways of combining work and family life. What factors motivated or forced such role shifts, and what factors continued to work against men who challenged the breadwinner role? How did men who tried out new ways of combining work and family life experience their changing role and how were they impacted by the responses of employers, work colleagues, partners, family members, other parents and the wider society? What can we learn from their example that might contribute to current debates about how men might best combine work and family responsibilities?

Labours of Leisure: Masculinity Within and Beyond the Workplace in post-war Britain

Richard Hall, University of Cambridge, UK

Asked in a recent oral history interview to sum up what he had inherited from his parents, David Shotton replied 'Just being a hardworking person I suppose, like my dad was'. David was born in Newcastle in the 1960s, during a period of considerable social and industrial change; however, his testimony reflects a common understanding about masculinity, work, and intergenerational succession that has held for centuries. In the post-war period, the transfer of the male-breadwinner model from father to son withstood various challenges, including increasing numbers of women in the workforce, deindustrialisation, and broadened cultural and educational horizons for the younger generation. I will argue in this paper that male breadwinning endured amid the tumult of post-war society as consequence of psychic, social and cultural influences, within and beyond the workplace.

Oral history is a uniquely privileged methodology to assess these patterns. Using interviews with father-son 'pairs', from a range of social backgrounds, about their experiences of post-war family and work life, I have been able to uncover particular, intersubjective and emotional dynamics surrounding intergenerational succession. Practices and mentalities of work were transmitted in various ways and contexts, incorporating the jobs of both adults and children, family leisure, and childhood play. From the perspectives of later life, men were able to locate their experiences of work across life-courses, assessing how they interacted with interpersonal relationship within families and with their families' evolving position in the post-war social order. Male-breadwinning over this period remained the prevailing mode of adult masculinity to which all boys were expected to aspire. By listening to the memories of both generations in oral history interviews, we arrive at more expansive appraisals of this reciprocal intergenerational dynamic.

PANEL 6B: DEINDUSTRIALISATION AND WORKPLACE CULTURES

Occupational Identity and the Post-redundancy Employment of Scottish Steelworkers

James Patrick Ferns, Strathclyde University, Scotland

This paper will explore occupational identity in relation to the post-redundancy employment transitions of Scottish steelworkers. The general lack of archival information which encapsulates the often emotional narratives of redundancy and displacement associated with job loss makes oral history an indispensable tool in understanding the true significance of this transition.

Scottish steelmaking is well-known for its comprehensive occupational identity, defined by trade unionism, camaraderie, masculinity, and a powerful sense of community embeddedness (Walley, 2013; McIvor, 2004). Strangleman (2008) argues that heavy industries exerted a strong cultural influence over the communities in which they were embedded. Indeed, Brown (1985) contends that heavy industry workers report a greater sense of occupational identity than workers employed in other occupations – partly attributed to their long period of service, which allows time to develop strong occupational bonds.

Steelmaking experienced a sharp decline in the face of the rapid deindustrialisation which typified the 1980s and early 1990s, forcing workers into early retirement, unemployment, or the pursuit of alternative employment. Former steelworkers generally found their post-redundancy employment inferior to steelmaking: conditions were eroded, trade unions were disempowered, occupational communities were underdeveloped, and workers were atomised. Although largely negative, interviewees' employment transitions did engender some positive outcomes, specifically in relation to a healthier working environment, as well as a greater sense of occupational autonomy. This coexistence of both positive and negative narratives not only emphasises workers' often nuanced experience of deindustrialisation, but also highlights workers' often contradictory understanding of work itself, as a simultaneously liberating and oppressive experience.

Oral History and Mining Culture in deindustrialisation context: the narratives of miner-musicians, early 1960s'-1984

Marion Henry, Sciences Po, Paris, France and University of Strathclyde, Scotland

Brass bands in coalmining areas are often perceived as the embodiment of traditional British working-class culture. Their marginalisation in popular music throughout the second half of the 20th century was interpreted by cultural studies as the product of the combination of the deindustrialisation process and the success of American influenced mass culture. However, the long rejection of popular music as a legitimate

object by academic historians left this interpretation little explored. This oversight can be understood by a reluctance to use the amateur literature but also by the difficulty to find and gather written sources on musical activities in coalmining areas.

Relying on 20 interviews conducted with brass band musicians connected to the British coal industry (National Coal Board's employees or their relatives) in several former coalfields (Scotland, Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire) this presentation will show the value of oral history methodology to reflect on working-class culture, communities and identities related to working lives. More broadly, this paper will analyse the role of music in defining coalmining identity and working culture between the early 1960s' and 1984, while the British nationalised coal industry was affected by restructuring and pit closures. First, it will analyse the uneven impact of pit closures on brass bands in mining areas as a way to deepen historians' understanding of the cultural and social effects of deindustrialisation. The analysis of British coalfields through the lens of brass bands is also a way to question the perception of industrial decline and to highlight the articulation between music and working culture outside the strict sphere of work.

'I enjoyed work. I enjoyed the banter, you know, working with the girls round about me': Women, Work and the Textile Industry in West-Central Scotland, c 1970 – 2000.

Rory Stride, University of Strathclyde, Scotland

In Scotland, women's experience of industrial employment during the second half of the twentieth century has received significantly less attention within the dominant narrative of Scotland's industrial past which has centred around the male-dominated industries of coalmining, shipbuilding and steelworks. However, the textile and clothing industry, which was dominated by working-class women, also played a critical role in cementing Scotland's position as an industrial, manufacturing nation throughout the twentieth century. In Glasgow, the world-renowned Templeton Carpets employed almost 3,000 workers – around two-thirds of which were women – across seven factories in the city's east-end in the late 1950s. However, from the 1980s onwards, deindustrialisation in the west of Scotland deepened, with the city of Glasgow losing 40,000 manufacturing jobs between 1979 and 1983. This economic contraction was pronounced in the textile sector with significant job losses, disproportionately impacting women across the region. In the west of Scotland, the most notable closures included Coats Viyella, Paisley in January 1993, Claremont Garments, Pollokshaws in October 1996 and Bairdwear Clothing, Polmadie and Springburn, in Spring 2000.

This paper will draw upon oral testimonies conducted with women employed in the west of Scotland's substantial clothing and textile industry during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s

and consider how workplace cultures were cultivated in female-dominated textile factories and mills and examine how these workplace cultures impacted working-class women's sense of identity as industrial workers and the value they assigned to paid employment. Additionally, it will explore workplace culture in relation to deindustrialisation, considering the variance in workforce's responses to downscaling and plant closure.

'By this time I'm quite emotional, you know what I mean?': Reliving experience of redundancy and transition from shipbuilding in Govan, Glasgow

Valerie Wright, University of Glasgow, Scotland

In 1999 following years of uncertainty the workers at Fairfields Shipyard in Govan were again threatened with redundancy when the current owner decided to sell the yard. Although the government eventually intervened to broker a deal to ensure that BAE systems would take over, there was a high profile and drawn out campaign by workers to try and save their jobs. Shipbuilding and Govan are synonymous, therefore saving the yard was a highly politicised issue. Central was the fate of the workers if the yard closed. Back in 1976 Tam Brady had started in the yard as an apprentice welder. Many of his friends and fellow workers had opted to take redundancy over the years but Tam liked being a welder, he was good at it, he enjoyed the camaraderie and helping to mentor younger workers. He wasn't ready to give up his trade until taking voluntary redundancy in 2002, after the yard had been saved. This paper, a close analysis of Tam's life narrative, recorded in October 2017, will highlight, using audio playback, how Tam was able to use the oral history interview as a way of gaining composure and closure over a traumatic experience in his life, and how he was able to assert his agency in the decisions he made over the future of his working life. The intersubjective relationship is particularly important in this analysis as I've known Tam all of my life. Tam and my dad, also a former welder at Fairfields, are friends. Even though they've had different trajectories in their working lives, they are bonded by their shared experience of coming of age in the shipyards. This paper will also explore the advantages and possible disadvantages of this intersubjective relationship.

PANEL 6C: WORKERS' RIGHTS

Britain at Work: the significance of oral labour history

Linda Clarke, University of Westminster, Chris Coates, Joanna Bornat, Oral History Society and George Fuller, UCATT member, UK

Britain at Work (B@W) is an oral labour history network, following the Workers' War project (2004-06) which was under the auspices of the TUC and the National Pensioners Convention on the initiative of Professor Nina Fishman (1946-2009) of Swansea University. Recordings of interviews with World War II civilian veterans were placed on the TUC Library Collections website (www.unionhistory.info/workerswar). Since then

B@W, set up by historians, social scientists, community history groups and librarians, has become an umbrella for oral history projects recording the experiences of people at work and trade union activities in the post-war period. Projects under its aegis are free to deposit materials at: www.unionhistory.info/britainatwork.

B@W's annual oral labour history day brings to life struggles and changes at work and in the trade union movement during an increasingly hostile political climate. Post WW2 economic reconstruction was a watershed with traditional industries, such as coal mining and shipbuilding, co-existing with the expanding NHS, Post Office and telecoms. The construction industry grew with the building of social housing and motorways whilst entertainment created jobs in television and film. From the late 1960s, industrial conflict intensified with changes in the labour process, de-industrialisation, restrictive union legislation and racism and sex discrimination. The 1972 NUM strike, the UCATT national building industry strike, and the long-running strikes at Trico and Grunwick in west London were key examples.

Through its work B@W shows why oral history, both verbal and visual, is valuable for trade unionists and trade unions to: understand battles fought; honour and appreciate the work of trade unions; reassess the interpretation of trade union history; learn from past mistakes and successes, and above all discover the role labour has played in creating our environment.

Members of B@W will outline some of the projects it has supported at the same time acknowledging challenges faced by those seeking to research the history of work and trade unions in their locality or industry.

The past is before us: Women's working lives and the campaign against state pension inequality

Anna Cole, University of Portsmouth, Kathryn Rimmington and Shelagh Simmons, Solent WASPI, UK

Since the post-Second World War women increasingly participated in the paid workforce. Legal reforms in 1956 stating that women in teaching and the civil service should receive equal pay with men; the Ford factory worker's strike of 1968, the subsequent Equal Pay Act in 1970 and the 1975 Employment Protection Act, making it illegal to sack a pregnant woman, all suggest a new era of equality for women in the paid workforce. Yet more than four decades after the 1970 Act, studies show a 24% gender pay gap (Gender Pay Gap Report, 2016: HM Treasury) translating into average lifetime's earnings shortfalls of £299,000 for female employees. The gap widens for women over forty years of age becoming a significant 'pension's penalty' in retirement. The gender pay-gap, the disproportionately high number of women in the part-time and temporary contract workforce, the continued preponderance of women responsible for unpaid caring work and the maladministration of increases to women's State Pension age since 1995, have significantly affected women's employment and post-employment experiences. Oral histories of 1950s-born women living in the Solent area bear witness to a changing landscape for women workers as they review their choices, constraints and campaigns in recent years. This paper puts women's voices at the centre of a

history of workplace change and highlights gender as a central category of analysis. Women's personal testimony about their working lives and, specifically, the impact of legislation affecting the end of their commitment to the paid workforce provides insight into the changing experiences of work and retirement for Solent-based women.

Between 'Pit Militarism' and Workplace Democracy: Hierarchy and Mentality in German Coal Mining

Stefan Moitra, Deutsches Bergbau-Museum/German Mining Museum Bochum, Germany

Based on oral history interviews conducted between 2015 and 2018, this paper will discuss perceptions of workplace relations in the (West-)German coal mining industry from the post-war era to the recent closure of the last collieries in 2018. Coal mining in Germany always had a reputation for exercising an authoritarian workplace regime. After 1945 trade unionists and shop stewards, but also exponents of the management boards attempted to alter this top-down conception, either as a 'democratisation of the workplace' or as a means to optimise labour relations for the sake of modern production measures. This paper analyses how miners from different generations and different positions within the hierarchy remember and narrate these changes. Their memories make apparent the non-synchronicity between legal measures of changing industrial relations and the lasting mental dispositions 'pit militarism' had created. The foreman as bully did not simply vanish, neither did the stark perception of class distinction between workforce and pit management change easily. However, the interviews highlight how generational change, new requirements of skill to handle new technologies and changing power relations in the context of growing economic pressure on the coal industry led to changed notions of authority, agency and empowerment. This sheds light on a variety of factors which play into the understanding of workplace relations, such as class, education, masculinity, automation, the role of unions and shop stewards and, ultimately, the reshuffling of the mining industry in the increasingly accelerated process of de-industrialisation.

A Case Study on the American Garment Worker: Oral History and the Demise of the Ladies' Apparel Industry in North-eastern Pennsylvania

Robert P. Wolensky, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, USA

I have been conducting research on the rise and fall of Pennsylvania's anthracite coal industry, as well as the rise and fall of its ladies' garment industry. Both projects have drawn upon oral histories with miners and garment workers. Most recently, I have turned to the garment interviews for a forthcoming book, *Sewn in Coal Country*.

The garment industry arrived in the coal region during the 1930s in the form of runaway shops from New York City who were searching for lower production costs. Working under the banner of the International Ladies' Garment

Workers' Union (ILGWU), New York's workers were the highest paid in the nation. To counteract the union, manufacturers saw an opportunity in the large supply of un-unionised female labour in the economically depressed anthracite towns of North-eastern Pennsylvania, located some 150 miles from Manhattan's Garment Centre. The manufacturers used middlemen (called jobbers) who, in turn, contracted with small entrepreneurs (called contractors), to establish nearly 300 shops that employed over 12,000 workers in and around the city of Wilkes-Barre.

As had been the case in New York, persons associated with organised crime became involved as shop and transportation company owners, a situation that led to considerable conflict between labour and management (which the oral histories detail).

The purpose of my presentation will be (1) to describe the runaway shop trend of the 1930s-1960s; (2) to analyse the ILGWU's response and the resulting labour-management conflicts, including with organised crime; (3) to examine the outcomes for wages and working conditions; (4) to discuss how and why the strategy of solidarity unionism (as opposed to business unionism) proved most effective; and, finally, (5) to describe the decline of the industry as a result of globalisation and American foreign policy.

PANEL 6D: DISCRIMINATION

Can you hear us? Uncovering the work experiences of people with cerebral palsy.

Teresa Hillier, Swansea University, Wales

Employment is a natural next step after leaving education, but for many individuals with disabilities this was not immediately achievable. Historically, employment opportunities for many school leavers with cerebral palsy, in the 1960s and 1970s, were limited. Identifying employers who were willing to accept an individual with a disability as part of their workforce was a challenge. As a result, sheltered employment became the only option for many and further segregated this group of individuals from the realities of everyday life. The voices of these individuals have been largely hidden from employment narrative and their voices still struggle to be heard.

In recent years, through heritage funded projects, a number of oral histories of people with cerebral palsy have been collected. Recording individual experiences often requires specific consideration of potential issues and individual needs. These include safeguarding of vulnerable adults and communication with individuals who have speech limitations.

This paper considers how the absence of recorded real-life experiences has contributed to the perception that many of these individuals were only capable of limited types of work. It is argued that whilst community and heritage projects have enabled some individuals to record their experiences through oral history, many voices are still overshadowed by others speaking on their behalf. This paper will also

examine approaches to engagement, interpretation and logistical issues when carrying out oral history interviews with diverse groups.

Working with a disability

Judith Garfield, Eastside Community Heritage, UK

This paper will look at the contribution of disabled workers to East London's rich industrial heritage. For almost a century, local and national governments have provided different kinds of sheltered employment for workers with disabilities.

Our project 'Working with a disability' explored the experiences of blind and disabled workers in East London, at the Newco and Remploy factories where a wide range of manufactured goods were produced from boots through to furniture and recycled electrical appliances.

With disabled workers far more likely to live in poverty and isolation, Remploy and Newco represented an opportunity for independence and active contribution to society, away from the 'assisted life' of benefits. Our interviewee Andy says that working at Newco was the chance 'to do something with your life and maybe not have to rot on benefits'. Our contributors from Remploy strongly emphasised a sense of equality, achievement, and the positive impact of belonging to 'a little community of its own'.

Factories exclusively employing people with disabilities have come under fire from disability charities who point to the segregative nature of such workplaces. However our oral histories tell a different story, one of employers adapting assembly methods to suit the needs of their workforce, and of workers finding a safe haven where they weren't singled out as different or discriminated against.

Since 2008, successive governments have overseen the closure of 65 of the 83 Remploy factories with 1,752 employees taking compulsory redundancy. The overwhelming response of workers was to unite and organise against the closures.

In the UK today, people with disabilities under the age of 26 are four times less likely to work than their non-disabled counterparts. This makes the Remploy workers true role models for this generation, standing up for their livelihoods and their right to an equally fulfilling life.

Lifestyles inconsistent: reflections on change experiences of workplace homophobia

Alan Butler, Plymouth University, UK

LGBTQ lives have changed beyond recognition in the last two decades. The arrival of the 21st century saw not only the welcome abolition of the oppressive Section 28 of the Local Government Act which had, since 1988, actively opposed dialogues that might intentionally promote homosexuality or lead to the publication of material with the intention of promoting homosexuality but also the onset of civil partnership laws, the gender recognition act, the equalities act and same sex marriage. Colin Richardson, writing in *The Guardian* in 2002, referred to this time as an era of "violent homophobia inspired by the advent of AIDS in the early 80s, inflamed by the tabloids and indulged by Thatcherism, [which] had fostered in gay Britain a siege mentality. And if we may have

seemed paranoid, we had good reason: they really were out to get us".

Conversations in workplaces have changed from this time, when people could be actively dismissed from employment because their "lifestyles were inconsistent" with company policies and norms, to a time when individuals now feel more free and able to talk about their gender identity and sexual orientation freely with colleagues and co-workers. This era where people had to actively think how much they could share around their family circumstances, and what they did at the weekend, seems a long time ago, but the effects of those times are still very much in people's minds and there is still some distance to travel. This paper explores conversations and interviews carried out with individuals over the last five years to chart this transition and looks towards where we can go from here.

'Regrettably Up-to-date': The Patterns of Discrimination against Women in the Film and Television Industries Report (1975) in Historical Context

Frances Galt, Early Career Researcher, UK

The Patterns of Discrimination against Women in the Film and Television Industries report by the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT) was a seminal report on gender discrimination in the workplace. Published in 1975, it was the product of a two-year investigation into gender discrimination in the British film and television industries conducted by the ACTT's Committee on Equality. The report quantified women workers' experiences of discrimination in the industries and union, analysed the structures and attitudes which facilitated gender inequality, and outlined an extensive list of recommendations for collective bargaining. Upon its publication, it was heralded as 'by far the most comprehensive and informed to have been produced within the trade union movement so far' by feminist film scholar and activist Claire Johnston (1975: 124-25). However, by the time of the ACTT's first women's conference six years later, in 1981, Gillian Skirrow described the Patterns report as 'regrettably up-to-date' (1981: 94), indicating that little had changed.

This paper will examine the relationship between women and the ACTT between 1968 and 1981 to situate the report in historical context. Firstly, it will consider the catalysts for the investigation, in particular examining the influence of the wider political climate and the emergence of feminist organisations outside of the labour movement on women's activity within the ACTT between 1968 and 1973. Secondly, it will explore the process of the investigation to illustrate the logistical challenges women encountered in producing the Patterns report. Finally, it will interrogate the inertia that followed the report's publication to identify the reasons for slow progress around the implementation of its recommendations between 1975 and 1981. To do so, this paper will draw extensively on new oral history interviews with ACTT women activists – documentary film-maker Sarah Boston and Patterns researcher Sarah Benton – conducted by the author.