

# Oral History Society Regional Network

Annual Report  
2013

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## Annual Network Report and Event 2012

Welcome to this year's annual report and thank you for your contributions. This year's event is in Manchester with guest speakers from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the chance for networkers to contribute to the strategic development of the Regional Network in the morning section. For the afternoon section we've invited local oral history groups to participate. (The programme for 1st & 2nd November is included at the end of this report, together with the minutes from last year's business meeting.)

In response to feedback received from networkers during Kate Melvin's qualitative study last year we are developing an information pack for networkers highlighting the channels of communication they can use for the benefit of the network and keeping in contact with other networkers. It will contain useful information for new networkers as well as long serving members of our network too.

I'm looking forward to seeing those of you who are coming to our annual event and will be in touch throughout the year with the network. Thank you for all your contributions this year, it really is appreciated.

***Juliana Vandegrift, Regional Network Co-ordinator***

## Developing the Network

The last year has seen a natural flow of new networkers joining us while some have left our network for a variety of reasons.

In the last twelve months we've welcomed two new Regional Networkers:

- For Yorkshire we have a new networker, Tracy Craggs, an independent oral historian who specialises in military history
- For South West we have Chris Webb, freelance oral historian and project manager

And some of our Regional Networkers have left the network:

- For Yorkshire there's Nafhesa Ali and Clare Jenkins
- For North East: Sheila Forster
- For London: Soloman Yohannes

We would like to thank them for their contributions and experiences they have shared freely with the network.

Sarah Lowry, our Diversity Officer and Trustee for the OHS, has been leading a review of the current status of the London Network with a view to establishing how it can incorporate the diversity and size of London, increase the size of the London network and work more cohesively. While this review was started earlier in the year we were shocked to hear that two of the oral history posts at the Museum of London have ended. However, Sarah Gudgin is continuing in her role as a London Networker in a freelance capacity and Soloman Yohannes is moving into the nursing profession. We'll keep you posted during the year about the outcome of the London review.

Last year, Kate Melvin conducted interviews with 18 networkers for a study aimed at understanding the present and potential role played by the Regional Network in increasing membership and participation in the OHS. The resulting report, circulated to the Network earlier this year, concluded that the network is probably not the way forward to increase Society membership. However, the findings were extremely interesting and provide a very useful foundation to base our five year strategy for the OHS Regional Network. This strategy will feed into the wider OHS Strategy Plan which is currently being finalised by the OHS Committee. We will update you further after the networker event where we aim to discuss this with those attending.

Finally, as in previous years the OHS Committee still funds a limited bursary scheme to enable networkers without institutional support to carry out activities to support their Continuing Professional Development. Please do contact me for more details.

***Juliana Vandegrift***

## Oral History Society Website and Yahoo Groups site

The Oral History Society Virtual Network has a web-area on the Yahoo Groups site where Regional Networkers can access not only archived messages but files posted onto the site – including this Annual Report. If you don't already have access to this, follow the instructions below:

### **Accessing Files/uploaded material on this email group's Yahoogroups web-area.**

- 1) What happens when you click on (or cut and paste into your browser window) <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/oral-history-network/files/> ?
  - a) You get right in, and see a list of files. You're in, these instructions are not for you!
  - b) You get a bumptious Yahoo! sign-in page. Sign in and try again.
- 2) If you don't have a Yahoo! ID to sign in with:  
Suspend disbelief, read 'Signing up is easy', and click on the link.  
Jump through the hoops. Billions of people around the world have already done it, so it must be possible.

- 3) Try again. The combination of a Yahoo! I.D. and email-address membership of the oral-history-network email group should be enough to get you in to the files, and you should be able to download or upload as you please - even bits of audio file, if you wish.
- 4) If you've done all that, and still can't get to the Files, then get in touch with me directly at [craig@pettarchiv.org.uk](mailto:craig@pettarchiv.org.uk).

***Craig Fees***

## Reports from the Regions

### East of England

#### **Norfolk (Jonathan Draper)**

The Norfolk Record Office continues to support oral history projects in the county, by running basic training, lending equipment and acting as a place of deposit for recorded oral history interviews.

The projects which have been supported by the NRO reflect a diverse range of subjects and locations. They include St Seraphim Chapel in Little Walsingham who are collecting interview's relating to Chapel's life as a railway station and a centre for icon painting. Two other projects reflect the county's maritime heritage. The Wherry Yacht Charter Charitable Trust and the Rescue Wooden Boats project were both seeking to interview those associated with building, maintaining and using different types of boats. The NRO has also supported young people from Norwich to produce a documentary regarding Norfolk's Islamic community. Several Norfolk villages and towns have sought help with oral history projects. These include Shotesham, Aylsham, Thetford, Taverham and Hickling.

The NRO has also received several hundred recorded interviews. Again, the interviews relate to a wide range of subjects and Norfolk places. Subjects reflected in the interviews include the Agricultural Workers Union, Norwich's Baedeker raids during the Second World War, archaeology and Norfolk's black and minority ethnic communities. The NRO has also received several interviews of former players of Norwich City Football Club as well as non-playing staff and supporters.

The NRO has also received over a hundred interviews from the Norwich Living History group, which has decided to finish its activities. This organization has collected many life interviews of current and former inhabitants of Norwich. Another organization which operates in Norfolk, which has received support from the NRO, is the Wise Archive. This Norfolk based organization records and preserves the working life stories of people in the United Kingdom in order to recognise and value the contribution they have made to society.

The NRO has also contributed to a project entitled 'Eighth in the East' which has just received a grant from the HLF. The project aims to explore the impact of the United States Army Air Force's Eighth Army in East Anglia during the Second World War through oral history, community archaeology, drama and local exhibitions.

#### **Suffolk (Juliana Vandegrift)**

As a freelance oral historian I've been working as a project manager since October 2012 with Legasee Educational Trust for their 65th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift project. This has been successfully completed this October and I'm delighted to say we have recorded fifty interviews with British veterans of the airlift. The

interviews are uploaded on the archive page of the Legasee website: <http://www.legasee.org.uk/the-archive/> Bungay High School was involved in filming some of the interviews with days organised at Duxford Museum and the Norfolk & Suffolk Aviation Museum. A celebratory event was held at NSAM for over eighty veterans and their families with a pop-up exhibition. This has been a wonderful project to work on and I've made some new friends with the veterans and their families! Some of their families weren't even aware of their parent's role in the airlift until we began this project and several veterans have passed away since we filmed them which makes their stories even more precious for their families and the archive.

My current project I've just begun working on this week is with Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service who are delivering a major Heritage Lottery funded redevelopment of Colchester Castle. One element of this redevelopment is to film ten oral history interviews with a range of individuals from the Colchester Garrison community, past and present. The museum will incorporate these into an interactive display which will enhance the displays in Colchester Castle which is re-opening in Spring 2014.

In the last year I've received general enquiries from fewer local history groups and museums seeking advice and guidance on which recording equipment is best for their purpose and which oral history elements to include in a bid for Heritage Lottery Funding.

However I have received requests to train oral history volunteers from local history societies and museums who have already been successful in their funding bid with Heritage Lottery. Examples of projects I've personally been involved with are:

**Pascal Theatre:** At the end of last year I was asked by Pascal Theatre to train a group of volunteers to record interviews with families of those connected to Trent Park in the Second World War, known as the [secret listeners](http://www.secretlisteners.com). (*Background: Between 1942 and 1945 German Generals were imprisoned at Trent Park. British Military Intelligence spied on them to try and learn military secrets. Until now this has been kept top secret, www.secretlisteners.com*)

[Little Waldingfield History Society](#) was granted funding by Heritage Lottery to record memories of their village. In January I was asked to train their group of volunteers in an introduction to oral history interviewing and recording skills.

[Ely Wildspace](#): A group of local campaigners for the protection of rural Ely secured funding for their wider project which includes an oral history project collecting memories of how the common was used within living memory and the changes to wildlife and landscape. The group asked me to hold a training workshop in June for a group of volunteers who are gathering the memories of local villagers.

[Mildenhall Museum](#) in Suffolk is managed by volunteers and they asked me to record some memories about one of their early founders and the archaeological finds in their area such as the Icenic coin hoard and the burial graves at RAF Lakenheath.

[Cambridge University Press](#) - is continuing with some new interviews and I've been editing the existing interviews from 2011 for their corporate archive.

## **Essex (Martin Astell)**

In November 2012 the University of Essex hosted two events as part of the Economic and Social Research Council's annual Festival of Social Science. Both events offered opportunities for members of the public to share memories. One event – at which a number of interviews were recorded by Professor Paul Thompson – gathered information relating to the impact of the Marconi factory in Chelmsford. The other commemorated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the East Coast Flood of 1953.

November also saw the publication of *The 1953 Essex Flood Disaster: The People's Story*, a book by local author Patricia Rennoldson Smith which was largely drawn from interviews with survivors of the floods.

Continuing with the sea theme, a number of interviews were recorded with wives of fishermen from Leigh on Sea. Extracts from the interviews were made available via a blog called "The Seagull That Lived in the Shower" [<http://sdoralhistory.blogspot.co.uk/>] which was created in March 2013 to mark International Women's Day.

A number of projects in Essex have benefitted from grants awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. January 2013 saw the launch in Grays of the British South Asian Theatre Memories project. The Silver End Heritage Society has received funding for a project to record the experiences of those living, working and growing up in the village of Silver End which was designed to house workers at the Crittall windows factory. Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has been recruiting volunteers to assist with a project to record interviews with former fire-fighters as well as a number of people who have been affected by major fire incidents in the county.

A touring exhibition on the *History of Jazz in Essex* has been opened. This is the result of a project run by Essex on Tour, which is part of Essex County Council, in which nearly 50 interviews have been recorded with musicians, promoters and venue holders. The project began with sadness and a feeling of a missed opportunity as the first interviewee was to have been Kenny Ball who, unfortunately, died only a month before the project was ready to begin recording interviews.

The Essex Sound and Video Archive at the Essex Record Office has received £53,700 in development funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the *You Are Hear: sound and a sense of place* project. The project will aim to digitise and catalogue recordings held in the archive, focussing on collections of oral history interviews. This wealth of digitised recordings will then be presented in different ways, enabling Essex residents in particular to learn about, interact with and enjoy the recordings, helping them to use the sounds of Essex people and places over the last 100 years to develop or enhance their sense of place.

## **East Midlands**

### **Leicestershire & Rutland (Cynthia Brown & Colin Hyde)**

Oral histories have formed part of several local projects funded under the HLF 'All Our Stories' programme. They include 'For Truth's Sake' by the Leicester Secular

Society, which was founded in 1851 and is the oldest surviving Secular Society in England. Extracts from interviews featured in an exhibition in September 2013, and will be used in other activities to document the Society's history and that of the Secular Hall, which was opened in 1881 and still hosts the Society's meetings and other events. The BU History Group has also received funding under the 'All Our Stories' programme to produce a website, DVD and book based on the memories of former employees of the British United Shoe Machinery Co (BUSM). The 'BU' was once the largest producer of shoe-making machinery in the world, employing 4500 people at its peak. The interviews are being deposited in the East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA).

Other new projects have been funded through the 'Building Shared Heritages' programme in which the University of Leicester's School of Historical Studies aims to widen access to its resources and help local groups with research and access to funding. 'Not Lost the Plot', by the Friends of Queens Road Allotments in Leicester, is exploring the heritage of over 160 privately-owned allotments, purchased from the Craddock family in 1926. A project by the Leicester Mayasa Link Group, 'Reaching Out: the untold story of Leicester's twinning links', aims to explore and record both the civic and social aspects of the City's twinning links with Strasbourg (France), Krefeld (Germany), Rajkot (India), Chongqing (China) and Haskovo (Bulgaria), as well as Mayasa (Nicaragua) itself. It will be recording memories and collecting photographs, documents and artefacts with a view to producing an exhibition, educational resources and a video.

The Hinckley and Bosworth Sound Archive has recently been updated and has a variety of reminiscences and interviews hosted by Hilltop Radio and Earsight. The oral history section features interviews conducted by Rhianydd Murray on the hosiery industry in Hinckley at <http://www.habsa.co.uk/>.

The annual EMOHA Oral History Day was held at the University of Leicester in June 2013 on the theme of 'Oral History: past, present and future'. Organised by Colin Hyde and Cynthia Brown, it also marked the thirtieth anniversary of the original Leicester Oral History Archive and Mantle Oral History Archive in North West Leicestershire, established with funding from the Manpower Services Commission. Colin's reflection on thirty years of oral history in Leicester and Leicestershire was followed by presentations from Simon Dixon and Tom Hulme on 'rediscovering' the history of Leicester's Cultural Quarter through oral histories, and by Terese Bird on the use of oral history with other media in the 'Manufacturing Pasts' website. All three are based at the University of Leicester. Other speakers were Wendy Freer, who talked about the use of digital sound at Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum; Roger Kitchen, who reflected on the origins of the Living Archive in Milton Keynes, and the challenges and rewards of turning oral testimony into dramatic productions; and Nick Hayes, who gave an update on options for recording equipment. Around thirty people attended from across the East Midlands.

EMOHA continues to contribute to a range of University of Leicester projects investigating the effects of deindustrialisation in Leicester. This work includes the history of Leicester's industry for the City Council's 'Story of Leicester' website, which also links to previous projects 'Manufacturing Pasts' and 'My Leicestershire History': [www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/lc/storyofleicester/cityheritage/atwork/](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/lc/storyofleicester/cityheritage/atwork/). Colin Hyde of EMOHA, Liz Blood of Leicestershire County Council, and Burt McNeill of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland (ROLLR) have been recording interviews with members of the

Leicestershire Branch of the British Korean Veterans Association to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Korean War. The interviewing is now finished and a brief look at the recent service of remembrance at Leicestershire County Hall is available on You Tube at <http://youtu.be/pHDA2hgQn8> . The plan is to create a longer documentary using the interviews and the large amount of memorabilia that has been collected during the project.

'Dialect & Oral History: the East Midlands' is a new resource on EMOHA's website. This project was a collaborative research project conducted in 2011-2012 by researchers from the University of Leicester and Nottingham Trent University. Funded by The British Academy, the project identified variation and change in the East Midlands dialect through an investigation of recorded voices from oral history archives. To address a gap in previous linguistic research in the area, the study examined a number of archival oral history interviews from the latter half of the last century and compared those with interviews conducted more recently. Have a listen to voices from across the East Midlands here: [www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/dialect/home.html](http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/dialect/home.html).

EMOHA has also taken in several new collections over the past year, among them recordings made for an exhibition about hair braiding; those made for the Centre for Indian Classical Dance (CICD) Karman Project about South Asian classical dance in Leicester; a project called 'Father Used to Say' that gathered stories from Leicestershire people and set them to music; interviews about the history of Leicester's Cultural Quarter; Leicester Museum's 'Suits & Saris' project about South Asian clothing; Mosaic's 'Our Lives' project, about the lives of disabled people; and 'Mountsorrel Memories of Stone, Steam & Steel', a project by Glassball Arts in partnership with the Mountsorrel Heritage Group and Lafarge Aggregates & Concrete UK. These reflect the wide variety of projects that groups in Leicestershire have been involved with. Although most of these will not be catalogued in the near future, they will be stored safely and made available to anyone wanting to listen to them.

A full list of collections held at EMOHA can be found at [www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue/collections.html](http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue/collections.html).

## **Nottinghamshire (Christina Raven-Conn)**

At the Local Studies section of Nottingham Central Library we continue to support local projects, mainly with advice and use of our collection for research. We are also willing to receive copies of oral history from local Nottingham and Nottinghamshire projects for archiving and also copies for the library's collection where possible.

Nottingham Women's Centre have successfully gained an HLF Grant to carry out a project about the Women's liberation movement in Nottingham and Nottingham Women's Centre when it was located on Shakespeare Street in the 1970s - mid 1980s. They are trying to locate women who worked at/used the centre during this era to interview and record their memories; as well as exploring ways to preserve the archives that they currently hold.

Eleven-eleven-eleven (Part of Nottingham City Council First World war Project - 'From the Trent to the Trenches - Nottinghamshire in the Great War 1914-18) is a community memories project that attempts to gather stories from the many

diverse communities that make up Nottingham as it is today. In 1914 the city was a very different place than it is now, and most of the communities that have settled here since, will not have been present during the years of World War 1. But there will be people from across the city's many communities who have family stories connected to the war. These may be stories of relatives serving in armies, maybe for the British Empire Forces, the Allied Forces, or the Central Powers. Or they may be stories connected to the impact of the war on the countries in which their relatives lived.

The Children of the Croft project has now been completed. This is the history of the Family First at The Croft, Nottingham from 1966 to 1975; it was managed by Now Heritage. The Croft, Nottingham, a large house in Alexandra Park could house eight women and their small children at any one time. More information can be found on their website [www.storiesofthecroft.org.uk](http://www.storiesofthecroft.org.uk) – an online exhibition created from this project (November 2011- January 2013)

Daniel O'Neill, a current PhD student at the University of Nottingham is working on the John Player Advertising Archive that the City Council's museum service holds. As part of this he is conducting an oral history project interviewing former employees of Player's. The aim is to get at the stories behind some of the physical objects we hold.

There is also the Nottingham Green spaces project, supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, this community history project aims to examine the changing social and cultural uses of the Forest, the Arboretum, the General Cemetery, Church Cemetery and some of the other green spaces formed during the mid-nineteenth century. Led by the University of Nottingham and the University of Derby and working with the Friends of the Forest, Friends of the Nottingham Arboretum, Nottingham City Council, Nottingham Women's History Group and other partners, it is exploring the relationship between the parks and the changing communities in their vicinity. The project is directed by Professor John Beckett of the University of Nottingham and Dr. Paul Elliott of the University of Derby. More information can be found at [www.ng-spaces.org.uk](http://www.ng-spaces.org.uk)

## London

### **European Reminiscence Network (Pam Schweitzer)**

#### **Reminiscence Theatre Archive**

Greenwich University has accepted the archive of recorded and transcribed interviews and related theatre work created during my years as Founder and Artistic Director of Age Exchange Theatre Trust (1983-2005) In May 2012, I transferred all the surviving material relating to reminiscence theatre to the University. The archive consists of audio-recordings on key themes in social history of 20th century, including women's war work, working life on the River Thames, inter-war housing estates round London, Health care before the NHS, Jewish East End and Irish memories, plus many more.

In many cases there are matching transcripts and accompanying photos. The scripts formed from these reminiscences are included, plus production photographs, tour schedules, press reports, etc.

## **The Archive and Students**

The University is not only storing the archive, but actively working on it in various curriculum areas, especially Drama. For example, drama students have been exploring the archive as a source for new theatre productions.

Several of these productions have toured to local sheltered houses where they have been very well received. Here, a student records her pleasure in learning about reminiscence theatre and having a chance to play for older people.

### **Wioleta Pietrasik on participating in Reminiscence Theatre**

*Volunteering at university gave me an opportunity to work with archive material, which I have never done before. I read stories that were previously recorded and found it very touching. I had many ideas, which I used to work in my written work and created performances which brought those precious stories to life. Our meetings were full of energy; we improvised with the text, devised movement, decided on the order of the pieces and how to present them in an enthusiastic way, which did justice to the stories' authors. At the end of the day these weren't just stories, but people's lives, or parts of them. Therefore I felt responsible for producing pieces which would not only have historical meaning but also an artistic outcome.*

*We were given a number of opportunities to present our performances to the audience at Care Homes and university meetings. After each performance we were given time to talk to elderly people, which was an amazing experience, as we could hear their response and feedback to our work.*

### **A new website for the Reminiscence Theatre Archive is launched**

During this last year, the University of Greenwich has facilitated the making of a website to reflect the depth and variety of material in the archive. The in-putting work has been conducted by Assistants from Poland, Finland and Spain, funded by the European Commission, and students of the university. The website was due to be launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2013 with a special event. Because of the murder of Lee Rigby outside the Woolwich Barracks, just round the corner from the Greenwich University Drama Building, this had to be cancelled at the last minute, which was very upsetting for all concerned. However, the site is now on-line and can be viewed at [www.reminiscencetheatrchive.org.uk](http://www.reminiscencetheatrchive.org.uk)

We shall have a belated official launch, together with performances of reminiscence theatre at the University of Greenwich on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2014, as part of the forthcoming conference "Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today" (see below).

### **European Reminiscence Network: Reminiscence in dementia care**

This last year, we gained new EU Learning Partnership funding with partners in 8 EU countries to develop a new training and apprenticeship course in Reminiscence in Dementia Care. The project is called "Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today Training (RYCTT) and it runs for 2 years until July 2014. The partner countries are Germany, Spain, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Northern Ireland, France, Poland and UK. We also have 4 associate partners pursuing the same project in Finland, Netherlands, Ireland and Estonia.

There have been three international meetings of this Learning Partnership since my last report. The first was in Prague in November 2012, the second in Perpignan in France in April 2013 and we have just returned from Poznan, Poland. On each occasion, 6 or 7 of us have travelled to these countries to compare notes and catch up with partners developing the same project. This year I invited 2 post-graduates from Greenwich University, and again **Wioleta Pietrasik** has written about her experience of performing the piece in London and in Poland.

*As part of one of my university courses I created a theatrical piece about the life of my grandmother. She was always my inspiration and role model and I have always wanted to create a piece of drama based on her difficult, but also beautiful life. She was an amazing story-teller and I gathered in my memory all those amazing things she told me, added her favourite poems, my favourite songs which she sang to me and cultural elements (such as use of different language) as my grandmother was Polish. My main interest was how dementia, which she suffered from, changed her as a person and what impact it had on her life when the symptoms started to show.*

*I really enjoyed working on the piece itself. It brought back happy memories and made me realize how similar we both were. I received fantastic feedback from my tutor and decided to present my piece at the European Reminiscence Network meeting in October, 2013 in Poznan (Poland). The meeting was about 'Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today'(an international reminiscence project for people with dementia and their family carers) and I thought that my piece would fit in perfectly.*

*Unfortunately a few days before the conference my grandmother passed away. It was a very difficult time for my whole family and I travelled to Poland to attend the funeral. I decided I would still take part in the conference and will present my creative project as a form of tribute to my grandmother. I felt very vulnerable, but also felt like sharing my memories and stories with others as I thought it would help me go through that difficult time. The reception of my piece was overwhelming: everyone was very sensitive and kind and the feedback was amazing. At the end of the conference a few participants said that they found my piece the most memorable thing they will take away from the whole meeting. I am very humble and thankful and really hope I have done justice to my grandmother's life.*

In connection with this RYCTT project, we have piloted in London a 2-day training course based at the University of Greenwich, involving experiential and theoretical learning about Reminiscence in Dementia Care. This course is now being used and certificated across all partner countries. The apprenticeship scheme follows the training course with 10 weeks of involvement in reminiscence workshops with people with dementia and their family carers. This includes taking responsibility for leading sections of the workshops and writing an essay (or other form of submission such as a video diary) reflecting on learning achieved. Those who have satisfactorily completed these requirements receive an accreditation as facilitators of groups running reminiscence in dementia care. Across our whole partnership we hope to have 300 people trained and 100 people gaining accreditation via the apprenticeship scheme.

### **An International Conference on Reminiscence in Dementia Care**

Our latest news is that we have been funded by the European Commission to run an international conference on Reminiscence in Dementia Care at the University of Greenwich on 26-27 June 2014. All our EU partner countries will attend and present their work, together with arts and health professionals from across the UK and well beyond. For further information about the conference, send off to Marta Moreno at this email address [mmlopezdeuralde@gmail.com](mailto:mmlopezdeuralde@gmail.com) or to me at [pam@pamschweitzer.com](mailto:pam@pamschweitzer.com)

## North East

### **Kath Smith, Remembering the Past, Resourcing the Future**

The past year has been a busy one for RPRF with continued and expanding interest in oral history as a medium for recording local history and for making it available to a wide range of audiences across North Tyneside and beyond.

The 'Day at the Beach' project, funded by HLF in partnership with North Tyneside VODA, was hugely successful and saw teams of volunteer oral historians co-ordinating a large scale memory collection exercise based on memories of the seaside. In a wonderful feat of organisation 24 older people were interviewed in a single day. The subsequent recordings were edited by the volunteers and uploaded to the RPRF archive site [www.memoriesnorthtyne.org.uk](http://www.memoriesnorthtyne.org.uk). The recordings also formed the basis for a cartoon film script.

The partnership model worked extremely well for the 'Day at the Beach' project and we are delighted to say that it will be replicated in 2013/14 with a new project which will explore the heritage of the Shiremoor Treat. The Treat has been going for 107 years, providing a special day out for local children on the first Saturday of July. Oral history collection will form a significant part of the project as well as the production of a documentary film. An oral history training programme for new volunteers will take place and we'll be working hard to find memories and memorabilia as part of a celebratory exhibition in July 2014.

The commemoration of the beginning of World War One is also a trigger for a look back at the direct impact of war on local life and we're delighted that the Tynemouth World War One Commemoration project has included oral history as part of their remit as they research the Tynemouth Roll of Honour. The project has already drawn together family members to reflect on how their family history has been influenced by losing a loved one in the Great War. All of this material will be made available in time for the commemoration of the start of World War One in August 2014.

This is just a snapshot of the work going on in North Tyneside and new ideas are emerging on a regular basis.

### **Greater Manchester (Rosalyn Livshin)**

The OHOS and the British Library training course on the *Introduction to Oral History*, was held again in the North West at the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre at the University of Manchester, which is 5 minutes from Manchester's Piccadilly station. The Centre's Oral History Project on 'Yemeni Roots, Salford Lives', funded by the HLF to collect life story interviews and documentation on the Yemeni community in Eccles, was completed in December 2012. 22 life story interviews were recorded and the project also involved arts reminiscence and youth projects utilising other methodologies. The recordings are archived at the Centre. A community website, [www.yca-manchester.org.uk](http://www.yca-manchester.org.uk), contains text and sound extracts from the interviews collected.

The Centre is also participating in an interdisciplinary project between the University of Manchester's department of Archaeology, the Manchester Museum, the Whitworth Art Gallery, and the Friends of Whitworth Park looking at the history and development of Whitworth Park, which was opened in 1890. The project's many outputs include archival research, archaeological digs, poetry workshops for school children, as well as oral histories. The archaeological digs have been taking place and Vox Pox interviews have been recorded during park Open Days, giving a glimpse of the many personal memories that local people have of this space. The Oral History element of the Project is yet to start but preparatory work has taken place with a template being devised, using the innovative mind mapping tool; the KETSO, © University of Manchester, which helped to identify the most important themes. Of particular interest to the Centre will be how the changing communities in the vicinity have been reflected in the park. Anyone with memories of the Park should contact [ruth.colton@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ruth.colton@manchester.ac.uk). And the project's blog at: [whitworthparklife.wordpress.com/](http://whitworthparklife.wordpress.com/) will show how the project is progressing.

Oral History Training Sessions were held with the Working Class Movement Library in Salford which has launched an Oral History Project 'Invisible Histories', recording the memories of people who worked at three Salford workplaces. The three workplaces were chosen as a microcosm of the diverse range of industry once based in Salford. They are Agecroft Colliery, which closed in 1991, Ward and Goldstone's engineering factory, at one time Salford's largest industrial employer, which closed in 1986 and Richard Haworth's mill, which existed for around a century from the 1870s on Ordsall Lane, near what is now Salford Quays. To date the project has conducted 22 interviews with people who worked at these three sites.

In an effort to bring these memories to a wider audience, the Working Class Movement Library has been working in association with teachers and Year 9 students at Buile Hill Visual Arts College to produce a podcast, linking people's actual words with music and song. They will also contribute to an exhibition and work with a musician and creative practitioner to produce a Radio Ballad, based on the memories and stories that have been collected. When the Radio Ballad is complete, it will be added to the project website (<http://InvisibleHistoriesProject.wordpress.com>) and disseminated as widely as possible. The project website includes the full interviews, summaries or transcripts for the interviews and themes will be added with accompanying interview extracts.

Participating in the Oral History Training was also a member of the Blackden Trust, which is aiming to create an archive of documents, photographs, oral histories and artefacts detailing the history of the ancient area of Blackden within the village of Goostrey in the depths of Cheshire. With the help of a group of volunteers, the trust organises events and workshops and hopes to uncover the stories, memories and half-forgotten lore associated with the area.

## South East

### Hampshire (David Lee)

This has been a busy year for new acquisitions of oral history recordings at Wessex Film and Sound Archive (WFSA), prompted by lots of activity in the county. I will highlight some of the more exceptional projects, followed by a brief mention of the others, although that does not mean the latter are any the less important or interesting.

**Hampshire Showpeople:** this has been a major project, led by Dr Jo Ivey and supported by the HLF in conjunction with the Hampshire Archives Trust, to record the lives and memories of travelling fairground families and to create a better understanding of this tight-knit community, their way of life and their contribution to the economy and life of Hampshire. The project team worked with members of the showpeople community, volunteers from the wider population and local schools to gather a picture of showpeople's culture and history. The materials collected will be preserved and made available for all to discover and enjoy at WFSA and Hampshire Record Office (HRO). The archive includes 36 recordings, including members of the famous Cole and Wall families, and over 1,900 fairground photographs collected by fairground enthusiast, Ken Wise, during the course of his lifetime and donated to the Record Office by Steve Bailey, himself a descendent of the Bartlett fairground family of Blissford and Fordingbridge. A DVD and a book resulted from the project and may be obtained from HRO.

**Open Sight:** this is the largest charitable organisation in Hampshire working with people who have, or who are at risk of developing sight loss. Its trustees wanted to record the memories of older people with sight loss, in order to show the difference in their experiences of this condition earlier in their lives and now. The Vision of the Past project, aided by the HLF, reveals how changing attitudes and legislative amendments have transformed the way that blind and partially-sighted people live and work, as well as asking the question whether, in 90 years, VIPs (as they are known) have truly achieved equality despite social and political reform. All these story-tellers describe the devastation of loss, courageous new beginnings and the aspirations, challenges and achievements of leading normal lives in exceptional circumstances. The resulting book, audio book and exhibition will now tour clubs, care settings and schools across the county, whilst the original recordings are preserved and made accessible by WFSA. For more information, see <http://vision-of-the-past-opensight.org.uk/>.

**New Forest Remembers – untold stories of World War II:** as a spin-off from this major project to record and make accessible sites in the New Forest associated with World War Two (of which there are many), oral history recordings were made with people who remember that period. There is a wealth of untapped information about this period and of activities in the memories of those who were living in the New Forest at the time, whether they were evacuees, local residents, or military

personnel from this country or from abroad. Organised by a dedicated team from the National Parks Authority, volunteers are now transcribing over 70 recordings, which are due to be deposited with WFSA in November. In the meantime, you can learn more about the project at [www.newforestww2.org/](http://www.newforestww2.org/).

**Reflections of entrepreneurs with heritage from Asia and the Caribbean:** showcasing the cultural heritage of business people in North Hampshire from Asian and Caribbean backgrounds. This HLF project has worked with support from Hampshire County Council's Archives Service to create and preserve 20 oral histories collected from entrepreneurs. The oral history recordings and accompanying booklet reveal the hidden cultural heritage of entrepreneurs from Asia and the Caribbean who have contributed to the local social and economic area in North Hampshire over the past 50 years. Many of the early business people from the Caribbean and Asia have now retired or returned to their overseas home. An exhibition resulting from the project is currently on display at the Willis Museum, Basingstoke and there has been educational work in local schools and colleges. Click here to listen to some of the interviewees: [www.acehants.org.uk/the-entrepreneurs/](http://www.acehants.org.uk/the-entrepreneurs/)

**The Culture of Kerala in Hampshire:** this HLF project documents the traditions that the people of Kerala in India brought to Hampshire when they settled in the area and what traditions they had to leave behind. The project also took the heritage of the traditional classical and folk dances of Kerala (Kathakali) through practical workshops, lectures and performances, plus a very colourful exhibition of Kathakali costumes at Winchester Discovery Centre. The oral histories of the people from Kerala living in Hampshire are retained by WFSA in the form of an edited DVD and booklet. A full Kathakali Company of major artists from Kerala will be touring England from September to December this year (see tour dates: [www.kathakali.net/](http://www.kathakali.net/) ) with support from the Arts Council of England.

Other oral history acquisitions were received from Basingstoke Talking History, East Woodhay local history group, Macmillans publishing company and the Russell-Cotes Museum and Art Gallery (which was a valuable taped interview made in 1993 with Mrs Lee-Duncan, grand-daughter of the museum founders). We have also recently had deposited a copy of Padmini Broomfield's project to record workers at the Ford Motor Co. plant at Southampton, just prior to its closure – see her report for more details.

## **Kent (Jocelyn Goddard & Manda Gifford)**

### **Telling Whitstable's Story community memories group**

*Cushing at 100!* at Whitstable Museum & Gallery: Telling Whitstable's Story gave a special twist to the centenary exhibition celebrating the town's most famous resident and star of *Hammer Horror* and *Star Wars*, Peter Cushing, by recording memories of him from townspeople and those closest to him. The Cushing listening post now forms part of a very popular redisplayed area of the main museum.

The group is currently busy undertaking an audit of all the previous local community oral history projects it has conducted, dating back over the past 15 years, to ensure that all are copied across to current media and can be used to inform the programme of audio-visual redisplay in the Museum. The latest addition to the displays shows silent footage of the oyster harvest in the early

1900s alongside current interviews with a contemporary whelk-fishing family business based at Whitstable Harbour.

### **Herne Bay Community Memories Group**

At the start of 2013, the group contributed invaluable oral memories and sourced stunning images for an exhibition at Herne Bay Museum & Gallery marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the momentous East Coast Storm of 1953.

Herne Bay Community Memories Group is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with another chance to see one of its earliest exhibitions at Herne Bay Museum & Gallery: *Herne Bay Sporting Lives*. The exhibition focusses on the town's most iconic sports such as sea rowing and swimming, fishing, and the truly terrifying roller hockey! This time the exhibition will be enhanced by the addition of audio memories on a listening post, involving re-editing early recordings which pre-date the acquisition of a listening post.

### **University of Kent**

In 2014/15, the University of Kent celebrates its 50th anniversary. A range of projects and activities are planned, including the gathering of information about its history. Led by the School of History, the *History Projects* aim to document and archive the University's past. This work is being undertaken by students as part of a new module focusing on real world research skills. For example, the *Disability at Kent* project will explore the changing experiences of disabled students and staff at the University of Kent over the last 50 years. Those carrying out research on this project will primarily use the oral histories of disabled students, alumni and past and present members of staff, as well as some archival sources, to highlight the changes to attitude, policy and provision toward disabled people at the University.

Information taken from the University's website:

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/planningfor50/projects/historyprojects/index.html>

### **Surrey (Janet Nixon)**

Surrey History Centre has two Tascam DR40s which can be borrowed by Surrey groups (but not individuals) interested in developing community oral history projects. Surrey recorders have been used for the following projects:

Early this year a small team of volunteers from Mickleham and Westhumble Local History Group began work on a project to record village memories and stories of the village shop. Their recordings show how the village has changed over the past few decades with tales of the past 50 years centred on how the use of the village shop has changed as new people move, children buy different items (not just sweets and comics) after school or in their lunch time, and what role the village shop plays in the community now. It's proving to be a fascinating glimpse in to the life of what was once a very small rural village in Surrey.

Surrey History Centre has a very large collection of archived documents from the Mental Health Hospitals that were once scattered across the County. As a result there are still significant communities of people who were once staff or patients at the hospitals. And as a consequence Surrey History Centre has developed a long-standing interest in working with these communities. Past projects have included oral history recordings many throwing a new light on the documented histories.

More recently supporters of Epsom Mental Health Week have been interviewing visitors to the events held over the week who have been taking part in some of the many activities. This has been their first experience of taking recorded interviews and it is hoped that it may lead to a project with a more formal structure and funding.

Oral history will be taking a significant role in a Surrey landscape project but we're waiting for the results of an HLF bid before getting too excited about that!

Look out for more developments next year as further projects currently being discussed begin to produce what looks like fascinating work.

## **Hampshire (Padmini Broomfield)**

The past year has seen the usual inquiries and requests for advice and training from those applying for HLF or other funding. Several recent projects have focused on the collection of oral testimony for use in art and performance projects.

On a personal note, I am now working freelance after nearly 20 years at Southampton City Council, first at the Southampton Oral History Unit (SOHU) and then on the exhibitions team of the new SeaCity Museum. The archival recordings from the SOHU archive continue to inspire and be re-used in a variety of new formats.

**SeaCity Museum:** Opened in 2012 the museum's two permanent galleries, *Southampton's Titanic Story* and *Gateway to the World*, make use of oral testimony from the SOHU archive. A powerful audio-visual installation uses first-hand accounts from survivors of the events leading up to and following the sinking of the Titanic, while audio posts play memories of those describing the impact on the local seafaring community as the news reached the town. The story of post-war migration through the city's port is told through artistic interpretations of memories of seafarers and present-day communities.

**Between Wind and Water Touring Theatre Production:** This one-hour play, written by Deborah Gearing and directed by Emma Golby-Kirk of Now Heritage, is inspired by oral testimony of shipbuilding, dockwork and seafaring from the SOHU archive and new recordings. Performed by a cast of professional and amateur actors, the show toured shoreline venues along Southampton Water during summer 2013. It is the culmination of the 'My Ship of Dreams' theatre project, led by Now Heritage and funded by the Arts Council England, Hampshire County Council and Southampton City Council. For more information visit: [bwaw-play.tumblr.com](http://bwaw-play.tumblr.com) and [www.nowheritage.org/](http://www.nowheritage.org/)

**Bedford Place Map Project:** This collaboration between Now Heritage and artist and animator Alys Scott Hawkins uses stories and reminiscences of local traders and residents to produce a hand-drawn map of the Bedford Place shopping area of Southampton. The map will function as a visitor guide, promotional tool for businesses and a link for the diverse local communities. The project, supported by Southampton Solent University, and funded by transnational European project VIVID, involves students in the research, interviewing, editing and creation of visual documentation. The audio and visual material collected will also be used to produce animated and other interactive products. For more information visit: <http://bedfordplacemap.tumblr.com/>

**Showpeople of Hampshire:** This project, led by Jo Ivey and funded by the National Lottery Fund and the Hampshire Archives Trust, documented the little known history of the travelling showpeople of Hampshire. Using archival research, family photographs and life story interviews, the project produced a book, a mobile exhibition and an educational DVD. The project also included work in two schools with children from showpeople families on their roles. For more information: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/archives/showpeople.htm>

**Los Niños: child exiles of the Spanish Civil War:** Following the successful completion of this project with the publication of our book *Here Look After Him: Voices of Basque Evacuee Children of the Spanish Civil War* (pub. University of Southampton), the oral testimonies we collected inspired an animated documentary film, *To Say Goodbye*, which uses the original voices ([www.izarfilms.com/news.html](http://www.izarfilms.com/news.html)).

**Ford Southampton Heritage Project:** My most recent project was recording interviews with employees at the Ford Transit Assembly Plant in Southampton before it ceased operations at the end of July. Over 8 weeks in the run-up to closure I recorded 53 interviews, averaging 1 ½ hours each, on site with a cross-section of the workforce representing the different departments, job roles, hierarchy, lengths of service, ages, gender and diverse communities. The interviews, deposited at the Southampton Archives and at Wessex Film and Sound Archive, provide a comprehensive picture of the working practices, changes in technology, economic pressures, camaraderie and the impact of the closure of the plant. The project was part of a wider documentation project led by the Hampshire Solent Alliance Partnership.

## South West

### Devon (Kayeleigh Milden)

**The War in Plymouth: Destruction and a New Beginning** (Heritage Lottery Fund/Plymouth University Vice-Chancellor's Community Research Awards, May 2013 - current)

Dr Kayleigh Milden is currently coordinating the oral history project *The War in Plymouth: Destruction and a New Beginning*. This collaborative project between the Department of History, Plymouth University and The Word Machine (community interest publishing company), is collating an oral history archive of recordings relating to Plymouth in the Second World War and the rebuilding of the City from 1945-1955. Much of the landscape of Plymouth was indelibly altered in the aftermath of the War, impacting upon the physical and social make-up of the City. The project is examining the interplay between the national, community, and individual 'memory' of the Second World War. It is researching how the population of Plymouth reacted to the architectural and social changes that occurred in developments such as the Abercrombie and Paton-Watson 'Plan for Plymouth' that reshaped the city centre. It is also charting the story of the new housing estates that grew around the edges of Plymouth in the post-war era. Over the course of ten years between 1945 and 1955, over 17,000 new homes and 24 new schools were built, creating new neighbourhoods such as Southway and Efford. The research questions being explored include: How did these developments impact

upon the health of the population? Was there a 'sense of community' within the new estates? Project outcomes will include an exhibition, publications and online learning resources.

## West Midlands

### West Midlands (Julia Letts)

There seem to be lots of oral history projects going on in the West Midlands at the moment, but as a networker, I only seem to find out about a fraction of them. I concentrate on Worcestershire and the Black Country, with Helen Lloyd focussing on Birmingham and other parts of the West Midlands.

I have been directly involved in a variety of projects this year, some of which are listed below:

#### **Black Country Stories** – Multistory, West Bromwich

This is a four year project (now in Year 3) to document the working and personal lives of ordinary Black Country people through photographs, films and oral history interviews. The project was created by Multistory based in West Bromwich. This year the focus has been on Dudley. I have been recording oral history interviews with people from various Black Country industries (glass, tiles, leisure) and working with two Year 6 classes at school in Stourbridge to produce interviews with local people. The completed archive will contain at least 75 oral history recordings from the Black Country, available to the general public in each of the four Black Country boroughs. Extracts from the interviews can also be found, along with a vast selection of photographs, on Multistory's website [www.multistory.org.uk](http://www.multistory.org.uk).

#### **Project Pigeon - Birmingham Pigeon Archive**

Project Pigeon has completed an archive of Oral History interviews (audio and video), a book and 3 short plays about pigeon fanciers based on the oral history interviews. Two of the plays were performed in the open air at a pigeon loft in the centre of Birmingham to mark the culmination of the project in April 2013. All the material has now gone to the new Birmingham Library and Archive.

#### **Warley Woods, Smethwick**

This HLF project - to collect oral history interviews about Warley Woods in Smethwick - is also reaching its completion. About 30 interviews have been recorded by volunteers. These have been edited and a book and CD are about to be published charting the life of this much loved park in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In addition to this, I was involved in a project with 2 local primary schools to produce a DVD combining video oral histories with local people, photos and other footage of the park. This will be used as a school resource.

**Hallow History Group** has now published a book and CD on the history of farms and mills around the village of Hallow (just north of Worcester). The CD includes interviews with about 20 people, recorded by volunteers trained by the OHS. The group also worked with Hallow Primary School who created their own CD of interviews with people who had attended the school as children.

### **Chantry High School – 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.**

A group of students recorded interviews with a number of former pupils and teachers who had attended Chantry High School when it first opened in 1973. These interviews were edited and put on display on an audio point during a celebratory weekend to mark the school's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **'Our Droitwich' – Memories of the Expansion of Droitwich Spa**

This is a small project in Droitwich Spa, funded by HLF, to create an archive of photos, documents and oral history interviews on the massive expansion of the town between 1950 and 2000. Due to overspill from Birmingham, the population trebled during this period, rising from seven to twenty thousand in about 30 years. We are attempting to document the changes brought about by this rapid expansion, from the point of view of both the incomers and the old Droitwich families. All the information will be stored in Droitwich Library and local schools will be involved in a 'Super Learning Day' next summer.

### **'We did our bit' – Video Oral History Project, Worcestershire**

I teamed up with an old colleague from Splash TV to work on a video oral history project of WW2 testimonies. The aim of the project, funded by the Worcestershire Partnership, was to create a film, which was played on November 11<sup>th</sup> just after the 2-min silence. We recorded over 20 hours of material with 13 local veterans, all in their late 80s or early to mid 90s. We also filmed the participants out and about in the community. The resulting film has 2 versions; an 11 minute one for school assemblies and Remembrance gatherings, and a longer 45 minute version which gives far more detail and background on the veterans.

### **Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service and Worcestershire County Libraries – Oral History projects in Stourport on Severn and Bromsgrove**

In Stourport, 12 students from Stourport High School recorded interviews with 5 members of the Civic Society about the heritage of the town and 7 students from Bewdley High School recorded the memories of 2 members of the town's Local History Society. In Bromsgrove, 11 students from Bromsgrove School have interviewed 17 local people about their memories of the town's High Street. This is part of Bromsgrove District Council's Heritage Lottery funded Townscape Heritage Initiative and will result in a DVD including oral history interviews and old photos.

### **African Roots, Freshwinds**

This HLF funded project, managed by the African Community Council for the Regions (ACCR), is looking at the evolution of the English language in a number of African countries and the Caribbean. The project team has recruited and trained a number of volunteers aged between 15 – 25 who are gaining work-related skills through the project. The aim is to create a video documentary, an oral history archive, and a website, all charting the changes and uses of English by people before, during and after immigration to this country from Africa and the Caribbean.

### **Aston Martin, A Century of Craftsmanship**

This is an HLF funded project to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the production of Aston Martin cars. The project team is in the process of recruiting volunteers both at Aston Martin HQ in Gaydon and at their factory in Newport Pagnell. The volunteers will be trained in research skills and oral history recording, and they will undertake at least 20 interviews with a variety of past and present workers within the company. A two-year exhibition at the Heritage Motor Centre will combine the

contributions of Aston Martin craftsmen and women with never-before-seen archive material.

### **Heritage Motor Museum, Gaydon**

The Heritage Motor Museum is collecting oral history interviews with former workers and managers in the car industry. A team of volunteers has been given oral history training and is now well underway with recording. The collection will be stored in the Museum's archive and used in current and future audio displays.

### **Counter Culture, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton**

This project created by The Arena Theatre in Wolverhampton has involved two schools, West Park Primary and Penn Hall Special School in a number of oral history related activities. The aim is to record interviews with local people about how they used to meet and do business across counters... for example shopping, post office, job centre, cafe, food bank, credit union... and how this has changed over the years. The children have been trained in oral history skills, have toured the Wolverhampton Archives and are now recording interviews both in school and out and about in the community. The interviews will be turned into a production which the children will put on at the Arena Theatre early next year.

In Wales, **The Llanwyrtd History Resource Group** has recorded more than 30 oral history interviews on the history of Llanwyrtd Wells, in both English and Welsh. The Year 6 pupils at the local primary school also recorded interviews with local people and created a book and CD called 'Memories of childhood'.

### **Birmingham & area (Helen Lloyd)**

Last year I reported on a growing interest among minority groups in recording their history, including one group that wanted to record memories in Somali. This year I've had enquiries about recording memories in several different languages. In some cases potential interviewees speak little or no English and in some cases project organisers feel that even those who speak good English would relate their experiences more eloquently in their native language. They've all aimed to produce English translations but have not usually given much thought to the methods and costs involved. Often the assumption is that bi-lingual members of the community will conduct the interviews and then somehow produce translations - and this chimes with the requirement of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to use volunteers as much as possible. However, professional interpreters and translators - often themselves bi-lingual - argue that being bi-lingual is not an adequate qualification for producing accurate translations. Some also think it's essential to make a transcription before doing a translation, thus doubling the cost of each interview.

The 'Go-Woman! Alliance' CIC (<http://www.gwacic.com>) has chosen to use professional translators for a project funded by the HLF called **Home Away From Home**. Bi-lingual young women volunteers from the Saltley and Washwood Heath areas of Birmingham have been trained to interview Mirpuri/Kashmiri women who arrived in the UK in the 50s, 60s and 70s. The aim is to put on record the lives of women who have often been ignored, to make known their experiences in adjusting from village life and early teenage marriages in Kashmir to city life in Birmingham and to celebrate their achievements in finding suitable food, health care and employment.

The South Asian arts organisation, Sampad, (<http://www.sampad.org.uk>) has submitted a second stage application to the HLF for a project called **My Route** which aims to preserve the history and culture of different groups who've settled along the Stratford Road in Birmingham over the past 60 years. Out of 50 interviews they hope to record at least 15 non-English speakers - in Somali, Arabic, Urdu or Punjabi. If their grant application is successful, they'll recruit and train volunteer interviewers who speak these languages, pay professional transcribers and use a mixture of professional and volunteer translators.

As a self-employed oral history consultant, I work all over the UK, but have also worked on local projects. These have included **The Big Story of Pugin** project (<http://www.pugin.org>), which began with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gothic revival architect, Augustus Pugin (1812-1852). Four primary schools in Oscott, in north-west Birmingham, learnt about his life and his architectural work on the Houses of Parliament and on parts of the Catholic seminary, Oscott College. As part of the project, the children interviewed staff and students from Oscott College and local residents who had memories of the college and the farm attached to it.

The Castle Bromwich Youth and Community Partnership received a grant from the HLF to create a **Graveyard Heritage Trail** (<http://www.thebcpc.co.uk>) to explore the stories behind the headstones in the local graveyard. This will include memories of local residents – of the graveyard itself, of those buried there and of the surrounding area.

Volunteers in the Balsall Heath area of Birmingham are trying to restore an old print-works, JH Butcher, which closed in 2009, and make it available for community activities. I recorded the life-stories of ten people who'd worked there, including the grandsons of the man who founded the factory in 1900, to form part of an exhibition, **Voices of the Old Printworks**, which was held in September.

The new **Library of Birmingham** opened in September and all the collections in the Archives, Heritage and Photography Department are stored in environmentally-controlled conditions inside the Library's 'golden box'. They welcome transcriptions, translations and summaries to accompany oral history recordings.

## **Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (Maggie Tohill)**

### **The Hive, Worcester**

Our involvement in oral history work has continued to be low key, partly because we have not had many approaches from people seeking advice and guidance this year, but also because I have been seconded to a cataloguing project, so have less time to devote to oral history work at the moment. I have given some initial advice to two local groups, Worcestershire Industrial Archaeological and Local History Society and the Friends of Hartlebury Castle, both of whom are hoping to undertake some oral history work and I will hopefully pick things up with them as needed, once they are further forward with their ideas.

We continue to receive deposits of sound recordings and it's very pleasing that local groups and societies do regard us as a place of deposit for recordings. We have received some additional CDs from the **Voices of Croome** project to

complement what we already have. We have also received some tapes of interviews undertaken to support a dissertation on the gloving industry in Worcester and we have just taken in both video and sound recordings made by a local historian to support her research and publications about the Wolverley and Cookley area.

Oral history volunteer work has been somewhat quiet, partly because we have a number of specific cataloguing and outreach projects underway and many of our volunteers are currently assisting with those. It is hoped to recruit some additional volunteers to pick up the various copying, transcription and summarising work we were undertaking prior to our move to the Hive. I am hoping that the project I am working on to catalogue the archives of the Lytteltons of Hagley Hall might have some oral history work as part of the outreach for the project, but it is likely to depend on attracting some additional external funding.

### **University of Worcester**

We have continued to forge links with our Hive Partner, the University of Worcester. This autumn we are planning to include introductory talks on our oral history collections in the University's November study skills sessions to raise awareness of their potential for research. We already have a couple of students embarking on World War II Home Front research using our collections. We will also be hosting a student placement and part of their work experience will involve working with oral history collections and we hope to build on this activity in the future.

### **Engineering the Past**

Jestaminute Community Theatre (JCT) have been awarded HLF money for a one year project to investigate the industrial heritage of Redditch 1939-64, a time prior to the development of Redditch as a New Town, when a lot of new factories were being established there and many people were moving into Redditch to work in them. JCT are working in partnership with Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Redditch Local History Society, Age UK (Redditch) and local schools to record the reminiscences of residents about their working lives during that period. We are undertaking oral history training and workshops for schools as part of the project.

## **Yorkshire**

### **North Yorkshire (Van Wilson)**

York Oral History Society is still involved in a major HLF-funded First World War project. We have 285 recordings which were conducted in about 1980 with veterans from all over the country, but mainly Yorkshire and Cambridge. They were all done by Dr Alf Peacock, warden of York Educational Settlement.

There are also interviews with some conscientious objectors. We will be producing a book and exhibition and commemorative event next June, as well as running workshops in two local schools using the material about the war. A large percentage of the grant has been spent on digitising and transcribing the recordings. Unfortunately the transcribing has been very mixed, with even some professionals producing poor quality results. Admittedly the voices are not always

clear, but we were surprised at the quality, and it meant that a lot of correcting was needed. The best transcriber has been Carolyn Mumford of Harrogate who I would heartily recommend.

Our project is different from most other First World War projects because our activities and publication will commemorate the survivors. Wounded physically, psychologically and emotionally, they still survived the war years. We are now trying to trace relatives of as many of the interviewees as possible, to obtain photos and to give them copies of the recordings. Those who we have traced have expressed their delight in receiving a copy of the interview with their father, grandfather, uncle or other relative. Often these men did not talk about the war with their own families but they were very open with Dr Peacock.

I am also doing some work with Beningbrough Hall, interviewing some of those men and women who had some involvement with the hall during the Second World War when it was requisitioned by the Canadian Air Force. The stories of some of these people form the basis of a trail at the Hall and an archive. Also this month my book on Coney Street, York, historically the centre of the city, has been published by York Archaeological Trust, combining historical research with oral history (I interviewed nearly 50 people).

### **South Yorkshire (Michelle Winslow & John Tanner)**

The past year has seen healthy oral history activity in South Yorkshire, with lots of projects coming to completion, others securing funding, and lots of events happening across the region at which oral history has played a part.

One exciting development is Experience Barnsley, the new Barnsley Museum and Discovery Centre, which has opened and hit its annual visitor targets in the first four months. Most of the objects and stories have been donated by the people of Barnsley. Through large touch-screens, visitors can listen to donors talking about what they've contributed to the museum, why, associated stories and what it means to them. Listening posts have been carefully designed to be changeable, with staff able to change content and rotate tracks on a regular basis. A special part of the Making History gallery celebrates voice, dialect and oral history – including a touch-screen interactive on which visitors can choose an interviewee, then choose effective questions to prompt stories and memories. A new Archives Discovery Centre has been created too, which at the moment offers an initial easily accessible selection of material from the new sound and film archive. This is being extended and a new visitor interface developed over the course of the next few months. <http://www.experience-barnsley.com/>

Two other exciting oral history-related projects have just received funding in Barnsley. These include Barnsley People's Sport, a two-year project to capture memories and stories about popular participation in sport in the town. The new Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership spans large parts of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. This five-year £1.9m project involves improving access to sites, conservation of built heritage and an extensive programme of community engagement and oral history. These projects were represented at our 2013 regional network meeting held at 'Experience Barnsley'. Seventeen people gathered to share and discuss their work, with presentations from John Tanner and

Richard King (Barnsley Arts, Museums and Archives) and David Clayton (Shaw Lane Peoples Sport Project. Kate Burland and Dr Charles West (University of Sheffield) presented work on their projects 'Black Country to Black Barnsley', a study of dialect, and the 'Witness Oral History project', involving a group of students in researching particular aspects of Sheffield's past.

A presenter at last year's South Yorkshire regional meeting, Gary Rivett (University of Sheffield) sends this update about project work focusing on Sheffield's long and vibrant history of community and political activism: Over the past fifty years Sheffield's activists have been vigorous and energetic campaigners on numerous social, economic, ethnic and political issues. This heritage is often lost or little known. Activists rarely archive or record their experiences. Their time and efforts are directed towards the important work of improving and defending the lives and livelihoods of local people. Sheffield's history has long been shaped by an especially strong sense of civic and community engagement, whilst also being well known for its radicalism. The history of Sheffield's activist heritage is an untold part of a much broader story of the City's past. The project collects the campaign stories, memories and objects from activists, who campaigned between 1960 and the present day. Oral histories interviews are performed by volunteers trained by the project. These stories are collected and stored in Sheffield Archives, ensuring their accessibility to the general public. For more information contact Gary Rivett. [g.rivett@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:g.rivett@sheffield.ac.uk)

A further project achieving much success is Researching Community Heritage, an AHRC funded project at the University of Sheffield. The research team have been working with community groups and organisations from across the region on Heritage Lottery Fund All Our Stories projects as well as developing new collaborative heritage projects. University students have also been working with community groups to record oral histories. Archaeology and English Literature students worked with the Heeley History Workshop, a local history group, to record stories and memories of social life in the area. They combined the recordings with moving images and archival photography to create a photo-film with photographer Gemma Thorpe - the film is available to view here: <http://vimeo.com/68523096>. Other projects collecting stories and memories include the Bengali Women's Support Group who have been recording women's readings and interpretations of traditional poetry and song and Woodhead Mountain Rescue Team who have been capturing memories of the World War II tank range at Langsett and Midhope. For more information on these projects and related events see: <http://communityheritage.group.shef.ac.uk/> or e-mail Dr Kimberley Marwood at: [communityheritage@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:communityheritage@sheffield.ac.uk)

An oral history and photography project in the Sheffield Macmillan Unit for Palliative Care continues to work with patients to produce audio life story recordings and photographs, funded by the Sheffield Hospitals Charity. The past year has been particularly exciting due to success in gaining two Macmillan Cancer Support grants. (1) The 'Oral History Pilot Study' is a two year project that is piloting oral history services in six centres in the north of England and Northern Ireland, based on the service in Sheffield. The project completes in September 2014 and evaluation will determine whether oral history as a service can be rolled out nationally. (2) 'How does providing an oral history at the end of life influence well-being of the individual and the bereaved?'. This 12 month study is exploring the impact of oral history in palliative care with patients who make recordings and

family who listen to them in bereavement, it completes at the end of November 2013 and has produced insightful feedback. For more information please contact Michelle Winslow: [m.winslow@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:m.winslow@sheffield.ac.uk)

## **Michelle Winslow, John Tanner**

### **East Yorkshire (Stefan Ramsden)**

This year a growing body of academics and post-graduate students at the University of Hull have formed an informal group meeting regularly to discuss oral history theory and practice, sharing ideas and experiences. Ongoing interview work by members of this group includes research into memories of the fishing industry in the town, and into nursing in the British empire. There have been two community oral history projects that I know of within, or close to, my region. Both are HLF funded. The first is a project to record the memories of workers at Scampston Hall estate, near Malton, for use in the restoration and reinterpretation of buildings on the grounds. The second is an ongoing project by the High Wolds Heritage Group, who have been collecting memories of life in a remote farming area and have just published a collection of these memories in a book 'Voices from the Wolds' with an accompanying DVD. More information about each project can be found at their respective websites: <http://www.scampston.co.uk/> and <http://www.highwolds.org.uk/>. A mention should also be made of the East Riding Museums Service, whose staff and volunteers continue to undertake excellent work collecting, catalogue and making publicly available oral history from residents of the county, on a wide range of subjects.

I have given advice by telephone and email to a number of groups, and I recently spoke about oral history to a meeting of the Archives and Records Association (ARA) in the Hull History Centre, where I of course spoke of the range of services provided by the Oral History Society.

### **West Yorkshire (Heather Nicholson on behalf of University of Huddersfield)**

Heather Norris Nicholson reports:

Much work continues in and beyond the Centre for Visual and Oral History (CVOHR), as projects reach completion and new projects get underway. This report captures some of the variety and apologies for any initiatives that may be overlooked. The University of Huddersfield's Archives and Special Collections has received HLF funding for four years that will greatly boost online and public access to different heritage collections including the archives of the Rugby League and the British Music Collection. From later 2014 the project will develop greater emphasis also on community outreach that will enhance oral history practice across the region. Work has also begun on the *Our Minds, Our History* HLF funded *All Our Stories* project. The project is being carried out by St Anne's Community Services as part of an AHRC funded scheme, *Heritage and Stigma: The History of Learning Disabilities* and involves Drs Rob Light and Rob Ellis and a team of care workers from the Kirklees area in interviewing clients about their experiences and changing

approaches to care for people with mental illness over the last 40 years. Related work includes a recent exhibition entitled *Nothing With Us, Without Us: The History of Learning Disabilities in Leeds* that featured interview clips on themes of changes in care for people with learning disabilities, local experiences and the future of learning disabilities. <http://www.leedsmencap.org.uk/history-of-learning-disabilities>.

On-going individual staff projects involve a range of interviews on different topics including mining apprentices, volunteer nurses with Médecins Sans Frontières and filmmakers. Students are involved in collecting memories of international rugby league at the World Cup Celebration Day in November and also in a pilot oral history project on the history of the co-operative movement in Northern England during the 1956-2013 period. This latter collaborative partnership with the universities of Northumbria, Central Lancashire and Liverpool John Moores has the potential to become a major historical source.

Recent staff oral-history related publications include work on French experiences during World War II, the Miners' Strike of 1984, former intelligence officers, amateur film makers and James Mason. Other current oral history work addresses aspects of Methodist history, local choral traditions, and postgraduates are working on different local migration experiences particularly within the South Asian and Eastern European communities, the BBC in Yorkshire 1945-90, Queer identity, and links with community memories and urban regeneration. Individual postgraduates also contribute valuably to the OHS/British Library led *History of Parliament Trust Oral History* project, as well as different local community initiatives. Recent seminars hosted by CVOHR include a presentation by Michelle Winslow and Sam Smith ( Academic Unit of Supportive Care, University of Sheffield) on the contribution of oral history and palliative care. Jodie William, travelling as a 2013 Churchill Fellow from Norfolk Island in the South Pacific, brought a new dimension to community outreach during her recent visit. Spotting online *The Sound Craft Place Vision* project, her seminar provided an interdisciplinary opportunity to discuss her wishes to develop oral histories, archives and visual projects to record the island's diverse histories and cultural inheritance. Discussions covered issues of identity, cultural retention and intergenerational memory, dissonant heritage associated with penal settlements, and the need for better understanding of Polynesian traditions and the Manxian legacies that derive from the island's nineteenth century settlement by crew members associated with the mutiny on HMS Bounty.

An exploration of Huddersfield's significance in the roots of UK reggae recently culminated in a *Sound System Culture*, a lively multi-media exhibition that features interviews, as well as songs, vinyl records and an interactive DJ booth equipped with turntable, records and recorded voices and a noisy launch that included opening words by Professor Paul Ward at the local Tolson Museum. Another new exhibition at the Tolson focuses on rugby league heritage and again features extensive oral material. In contrast, the *RSPB Dove Stone Memory Bank* project has created a memoryscape audio trail, two publications and extensive interview clips. The result is a fascinating record of lives, livelihoods and landscapes associated with a rugged upland area known as the Chew Valley within the Peak District National Park. It captures the memories and a sense of period in documenting the lived experiences of people directly affected by and involved in decisions associated with building a reservoir (opened in 1967) to supply water to

communities west of the Pennines and in the Greater Manchester region. Further details of these and other initiatives are available via the CVOHR website, <http://www.hud.ac.uk/research/researchcentres/cvohr/news/>

## Northern Ireland

## Scotland

### **Scottish Oral History Centre (Angela Bartie & Arthur McIvor)**

#### **Scottish Oral History Centre**

2013 has been a busy and exciting one for the Scottish Oral History Centre. We formally launched the new Centre facilities on 29 April, with an afternoon of workshops led by community groups and museums that the SOHC has worked closely with. Diane Grey from the HLF also provided a talk on funding opportunities and held a networking session thereafter. The evening was opened by David Goldie (then head of the School of Humanities, in which the SOHC is based), followed by short presentations on the history of the Centre by founding Director Callum G. Brown and the current work of the Centre by current Director, Arthur McIvor. The main event was a public lecture by one of the global pioneers of oral history, Paul Thompson. This was a great way to open the new facilities and inaugurate a new phase in the work of the SOHC. Furthermore, we are also delighted to welcome our newest member of staff, Erin Jessee, who works on the oral history of post-conflict Rwanda and Uganda and is experienced in the use of digital media in oral history.

Staff have continued to undertake oral history in a number of projects in different areas alongside ongoing training and support to a range of community and heritage groups in the greater Glasgow area. Current staff projects include the Wellcome Trust funded coalfield disability project (McIvor; and Angela Turner), the AHRC-funded wartime Reserved Occupations oral history project (Juliette Pattinson, who has recently taken up a new position at the University of Kent, McIvor and Linsey Robb), the AHRC-funded historical pageantry project (Angela Bartie in conjunction with colleagues at King's College London and University of Glasgow), the British Academy/Leverhulme-funded residential childcare services project (Bartie, with Social Work colleagues Andrew Kendrick and Julie Shaw). We are also delighted to welcome two full-time ESRC PhD students: Andrew Clark and Aimee McCullough (supervised by McIvor and Bartie respectively). Andrew will be working on the female factory occupations of the 1980s, whilst Aimee's research project is on fatherhood and masculinity in Scotland, c 1970-1990.

The SOHC has continued providing CPD and training to external non-SFC funded groups, including a series of commissions from Heritage Lottery funded community oral history projects at Govanhill, Paisley, Pollok, Inchinnan, British Waterways (Maryhill) and Scottish Opera (Theatre Royal), Glasgow. This work is led by Susan Morrison and David Walker with training taking place in the new SOHC facilities in Curran as well as in the communities. The SOHC has also ventured into the world

of business undertaking oral history projects for the Clydesdale Bank and Inver House Distillers These have both been led by David Walker.

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