



The Annual Conference of the
Oral History Society in conjunction
with the Centre for Life History and Life
Writing Research, University of Sussex



CORPORATE VOICES: INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ORAL HISTORIES

Fulton Building, University of Sussex, Brighton UK
Friday 5th – Saturday 6th July 2013

ABSTRACTS



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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Abdel Aziz EzzelArab, Professor of Political Economy at The American University of Cairo and a former corporate and sovereign debt banker in Egypt and the Gulf (1978-1990)

THE USE OF ORAL HISTORY IN EXPLORING EGYPTIAN BUSINESS HISTORY: AN INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIMENT

In January 2004, five economic historians of the Middle East were hosted by the ME Institute of University of Pennsylvania to explore ideas for opening up new directions in their field. The meeting culminated in adopting a proposal from Cairo to initiate a project in Egyptian business history that would aim at assembling material on the over 150 years of corporate heritage of Egypt that had experienced various structures of ownership, international business interests, and state involvement. The five scholars from Harvard, Princeton, U Penn, University of Washington, and the American University in Cairo (AUC) mobilized support from their respective institutions. Built largely on the unfaltering energies of groups of outstanding seniors and fresh graduates of the AUC, the Economic and Business History Research Centre (EBHRC) was formally established in June 2004 following a brief pilot phase that was show-cased in the first of what became a series of annual fora that convened in May of every year.

At its initiation, oral history was only one of the perceived tools of sourcing EBHRC's archive of primary material. As the centre's experience unfolded, OH soon became its single most important tool for a variety of factors. Over a period of the seven years on which this talk will focus, EBHRC accumulated some 300 hours of narratives by corporate executives and state officials that served during different periods since the late 1950s (and in a couple of cases from the 1940s). This came in various formats and through channels that varied from individual meetings to various round-table encounters during the centre's Annual Forum on the Economic and Business History of Egypt and the Middle East. EBHRC's collection served as source material for visiting international graduate students, provided substance for the centre's non-periodical magazine, *The Chronicles*, and was the nearly exclusive pool from which a seminar on business and politics in Egypt was structured and offered since 2006.

Egypt has always been a vital centre of business activity and the global economic impact of the Middle East and North African region, with its reserves of oil and gas, is immense. How does oral history offer a more personal and complex insight into these histories? This talk by one of the five founding scholars of EBHRC aims at providing insight into the experience of the centre during the period when he served as Founding Director (2004-2011). He will also touch on the possible impacts of unfolding political dynamics in the context of a dramatically-changing Egyptian political landscape.

Bruce Weindruch, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, The History Factory, USA

THE VALUE OF CAPTURING LIVING HISTORY. WHY COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISES INVEST IN ORAL HISTORY PROGRAMS

Drawing upon 33 years of experience in executing a wide range of history-based programmes for global organizations, pioneering corporate history counsel Bruce Weindruch will trace the arc of the oral history discipline from academic mainstay to corporate social media tool. In addition to discussing the evolving technologies to capture, manage and deliver oral history assets, Weindruch will address the opportunities, challenges and occasional tensions of retaining the essential integrity of the historical endeavour in a for-profit environment. Do the products have an impact on the collection strategies of oral histories? Could cultural differences between the US and UK affect the acceptance of The History Factory's model? What functions in a competitive enterprise can most benefit from oral history? Has the Great Recession dampened corporate enthusiasm for oral history and historical programming in general? Weindruch will address these and other issues in a provocative and interactive session.

PAPERS

DON'T BANK ON IT: MAKING THE CASE FOR ORAL HISTORY IN A BUSINESS ARCHIVE

Mike Anson, Historical Researcher, and Sarah Millard, Bank Archivist, Bank of England, London, UK

Using the experience of the Bank of England Archive, we address some of the issues that can arise when making a case for oral history in a business archive. There are two main themes: first, the use of oral history in relation to the writing of the most recent volume of the Bank's official history; second, the practical issues faced by an archive when seeking to gain institutional support for an oral history programme, especially in the face of competing resources needs. In both strands, it is apparent that questions about the 'value' of oral history need to be properly addressed.

The fourth volume of the Bank of England official history was published in 2010 and as part of the research, over 50 interviews were recorded. Use was also made of 35 interviews dating from the mid-1990s. We discuss how the oral history was conducted and used, and whether there are any special considerations when the institution involved is a central bank. We also consider the differences between interviews undertaken specifically as part of writing a book, and those which form part of a more general oral history programme.

All archives face resources constraints, and in the case of a business, it may not even be accepted that there is a need to have an archive. Oral history programmes have to compete for resources against other projects and it may not necessarily be the case the oral history comes out on top. Furthermore, even if an oral history project is desired at a senior level within a business, this might still not be the best use of limited archive resources. Perhaps this is deliberately provocative, but arguably there is little point embarking on oral history until the value of having a corporate archive has first been established.

BEYOND BOARD MINUTES AND ANNUAL REPORTS: THE ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CREDIT UNION ARCHIVES

Ben Arnfield, Archivist, Australian Credit Union Archives, New South Wales, Australia

Credit unions are retail financial institutions wholly owned by their members, who typically share a common bond of association such as religion, trade, industry or community. Founded on the principle of mutualism – promoting self-help through co-operation – the first modern credit unions appeared in Australia in the late 1940s. Since growing to a peak of over 830 organisations in the early 1970s, credit union numbers in Australia have steadily declined to fewer than 90 organisations today. This has been largely due to significant merger activity and a trend towards demutualisation.

The oral history collection of the Australian Credit Union Archives (ACUA) first began in the early 1980s, involving many of the credit union movement's founders and early participants recording interviews amongst themselves in an attempt to preserve the movement's early spirit and development. The project was later expanded with the engagement of a professional oral historian and over the following 20 years the collection grew to a total of over 650 recorded interviews documenting the formation and development of individual credit unions, and credit union industry and representational bodies nationwide.

In this session I will consider ACUA's oral history collection in relation to the growth and evolution of the Australian credit union movement, in addition to examining how the collection serves to illuminate the foundational principles of an industry continuing to undergo significant change. I will also consider the issues from an archivist's perspective, in particular the linking of an oral history collection with wider archival holdings, and challenges regarding collection management and digital preservation.

THE BRITISH STUDIO SYSTEM 1927-1960: THE IMPACT OF VERTICAL INTEGRATION ON BELOW-THE-LINE FILM WORKERS

Will Atkinson, PhD candidate, Hertfordshire Business School, University of Hertfordshire, UK

The main theme of this presentation will be: What was the impact of vertical integration on below-the-line film workers in the UK film industry from 1927-1960? And what can oral history interviews tell us about this unique period in the organisational structure of film studios?

The organisational structure of the film industry has long been shaped by a division between creative ('above-the-line') and technical ('below-the-line') labour. These terms emerged from studio-era Hollywood in the 1940s and have been central to labour organisation in the European and American film industries (Dawson and Holmes 2012). During the period of study large vertically integrated combines like the Rank Organisation dominated employment in the British film industry. However there is very little literature on the way labour was organised by these combines in studios such as Pinewood, Elstree and Ealing. Much of the research on the industry from this period has been in the film studies field and has focused on the product – the content and meaning of films - rather than production and the labour processes involved. The BECTU history project was started in the

1980s by a group of film makers keen to record the working experiences of, mainly retired, colleagues in the industry and includes an archive of over 650 interviews.

Part of a wider study exploring the labour processes of below-the-line workers in this period, this paper will focus on the interactions between interviewer and respondent in twenty insider interviews from the BECTU archive. What can these workers tell us about the labour market and labour process during this process and what can an interactional analysis tell us about the relations of production and the construction of history in the film industry?

‘A VERY PECULIAR PRACTICE’: COMMISSIONING A HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

Lorraine Blakemore, Research Fellow, University of Leeds, UK

The University of Nottingham is one of the leading research universities in the UK and for a number of years the most popular in terms of undergraduate admissions. In 2011 the University Registrar commissioned a written and oral history in which it was anticipated that the resulting publication would bring the University’s story up to date and provide an original look at the period since the late 1980s when unprecedented changes occurred across the Higher Education landscape and especially so at Nottingham.

A key consideration in framing the research was the need for an intellectually open space for historical inquiry balanced alongside clear understanding of ethical issues and institutional demands; negotiating control was as much a feature of the project as the research itself. Collection of oral histories was central to research, as means to make sense of the official institutional record but more importantly as a way to give expression to current and former members of staff and students, whose memories of the University are at once vivid, powerful, emotional and irreverent. Interviews reveal the human response to and impact of the University’s rapid growth since the 1980s, with the move towards a more corporate identity and managerialism. Oral accounts of Nottingham’s distinctive and leading approach to Internationalisation, with campuses in China and Malaysia and changes to the student demographic present a fascinating history of an institution which can be seen to both mirror and to some extent shape government policy. The recordings reveal something of the quotidian and everyday in the lives of students in Hall or the routine of the departmental secretary, yet also provide a glimpse of the most high-level decision making and planning.

COMPENSATING A MEDICAL DISASTER: THE EXPERIENCE OF THALIDOMIDE

**Anne Borsay, Swansea University, Wales, and Ruth Blue, Wellcome Trust/
Thalidomide Society, London, UK**

In summer 2012, the German drug company, Chemi Grünethal, unveiled a bronze statue of a child without limbs to commemorate those who had died or been born impaired due to the drug, thalidomide. The accompanying apology was greeted with derision. Between 1957 and 1962, Chemi Grünethal had licensed the worldwide manufacture of thalidomide as a safe treatment for women suffering from morning sickness and sleeplessness during the initial stages of pregnancy. However, the drug had not been robustly tested and early warning signs were ignored.

In Britain, the whisky producer, Distillers, took up a licence and marketed thalidomide under the Distaval label. As a result, over 650 babies were born with thalidomide-induced impairments, which ranged from extra digits to tetra phocomelia where both arms and legs were incompletely developed. It took the families of these thalidomide children more than a decade to win an acceptable compensation agreement from Distillers, but in 1974 the Thalidomide Trust was eventually set up with charitable status to administer the award.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the corporate dimension of the thalidomide disaster. Fifty years on, how do thalidomiders view the companies that manufactured and distributed the drug? What do they recall of the campaign for compensation? And how have they engaged with the charitable Trust whose function is to mediate their right to support?

These questions will be answered by drawing on testimonies from an oral history of thalidomide funded by the Wellcome Trust. The project has collected life stories from a quota sample of 20 people impaired by thalidomide. It has adopted a multiple biographies approach with a semi-structured schedule of questions focused around family and relationships, medical intervention, education and career, and disability prejudices. The transcripts and the recordings will be available in the Wellcome Library.

TRANSFORMER LIVES. THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A FACTORY

Janet Bowstead, Waltham Forest Oral History Workshop and Robert Wilkinson, Freelance Oral History Interviewer, London, UK

Hawker Siddeley Power Transformers (and under its earlier names of Fuller Electric and ASEA Electric) was an important Walthamstow employer for nearly 100 years, until its closure in 2003. The factory provided jobs for thousands of local people, producing power transformers, tapchangers and electric motors

Originally the British representative of a Swedish company, visits of engineers between the two countries continued at least until the 1950s; and the works in Walthamstow supplied an overseas market stretching from Abu Dhabi and Argentina to the USSR and Zimbabwe. Major projects included designing and supplying the transformers for the CERN synchrotron in Switzerland and the smoothing reactors for the first Cross-Channel power supply.

To explore the history of the factory and the achievements of its workers, we carried out an oral history project to interview former employees about their memories of working for the company, as a record of local working life in the 20th Century. Interviewees covered nearly seventy years of the factory's life, from those who started in the mid-1930s and worked through to the 1980s, through those who joined in the years of expansion in the 1960s, and to those who started in the 1980s and were there at the final closure. Their interviews cover both technical details of their work and memories of the work atmosphere and social activities of the company.

Using sound extracts of the recordings, the presentation will describe:

- the organisation of work and roles within the factory
- the importance of apprenticeships for working class boys
- social life and friendships – the role of the on-site clubhouse
- rundown and closure – inevitable or avoidable?

- Women's roles in the factory
- Decline and closedown

We hope to have a sample of photographs taken by the company photographer, Albert Bale.

'LOOK AT OUR HANDS': UNWRITTEN HISTORIES OF VETERINARY PRACTICE
Sue Bradley, Research Associate, Centre for Rural Economy, Newcastle University, UK

The majority of the veterinary profession in the 20th century spent their working lives running practices as small independent businesses, but few records of these survive and resources for veterinary history are confined largely to institutional records, professional journals, and other official documents. If we wish to reconstruct a history of everyday veterinary practice, spoken testimony becomes a prime resource. This is the rationale for *Veterinary Lives in Practice*, a project to record the life stories of veterinarians who have worked in practice, run in collaboration between the Centre for Rural Economy at Newcastle University and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Charitable Trust, with support from the Wellcome Trust.

Fundamental aspects of veterinary expertise have traditionally been passed on through personal contact and practical experience – through showing and doing rather than written instruction – and then been developed throughout working life. These include sensory skills, such as hearing and touch, which have always been intrinsic to the medical diagnosis and treatment of animals, especially in the era – still within living memory – when it was rare for veterinary practices to own even such basic equipment as an X-ray machine.

Also, in a striking correlation with the dearth of written records, the testimony shows that the spoken word has played a significant role in veterinary practice – in knowledge brokering, in building relationships with clients, and in the use of 'word of mouth' at a time when the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons prohibited its members from advertising.

This paper will use audio and text extracts from the recordings to explore how life-story interviews can offer a means of revealing elements of professional activity that may be absent from the written record and hard for it to capture – in this case, the embodied knowledge and social interactions which are key components of expert veterinary practice.

BRINGING MODERN FURNITURE TO THE PROVINCES: THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH RETAIL FURNISHING FIRM AND ORAL HISTORY.
Jon Brown, Brighton University, UK

The history of the provincial independent retail furnishing firm has to date been largely overlooked. Whilst long established and important in their own localities, often engaging with innovative business practices, their provinciality and small scale have contributed to ensuring that they have remained obscured from retail history accounts. The scarcity of archive material on such firms has not helped matters and with many such shops now long closed their histories have often been forgotten. Orbell and Perks highlight how engaging with oral history can help reveal a unique understanding of the way a business operates, potentially offering a far greater insight than a paper record can. These factors helped dictate the route my recently completed PhD thesis investigating provincial retail furnishing

firms, their modernization and Scandinavian specialism in the period 1945 to 1975 which successfully employed oral history as an integral research method.

Interviewing the former managing directors, their families and employees from provincial retail furnishing firms, the topics covered encompassed all aspects of their corporate histories. Meeting interviewees also brought access to their privately held archives relating to their firm's histories. Major research discoveries gained included insight into the process of the transformation of the stores into modern specialists, the networking of the managing directors via membership of trade bodies, the development of innovative stock supply chains, the operation of in-house contract furnishing divisions and firm failures and closures.

The oral histories proved a rich and unique resource for analyzing the corporate history of these independent furnishing firms, an accomplishment that would have been impossible without engaging with this research method. This paper will examine these experiences, both positive and negative, as a case study for the practical engagement of oral history in a retail businesses context.

THE TRANSLATORS' ROLE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
Siobhan Brownlie, Lecturer in Translation Studies, University of Manchester, UK

This paper is based on interviews of 14 translators in the English and French sections of the Directorate General for Translation (DGT) of the European Commission in Brussels. The DGT is the world's largest institutional employer of translators with approximately 1700 in-house translators working into the 23 official languages of the European Union. A historical perspective was obtained due to the fact that many of the interviewees had been working for the Commission for a long time, commonly more than twenty years. The focus of the paper will be on two types of memory: autobiographical memory and transnational memory. The interviews with translators revealed how they have been affected by and contribute to the fundamental objectives, development, and operation of the Union. Communication is at the heart of the development of the European Union, as well as the continuous increase in the range of portfolios it covers and in the number of member countries and hence official languages; these changes have important practical consequences for translators detailed in their autobiographical memories. The multilingualism policy expresses the European values of democracy and unity in diversity. As well as being intimately involved in constructing these values, translators propagate other European values such as freedom, justice, well-being and harmonization through translating texts which embody the values. Translators' comments reveal that they feel they have been responsible for promoting the European project. Despite their general pro-Europeanism, translators sometimes do not agree with EU policies expressed in texts they are requested to translate. However, in no circumstance do they refuse to translate, since as European officials they are bound by loyalty to the Union. Although the role of translators is generally not fully appreciated, they have played an important part in the transnational construction of the European Union since its inception.

ADMINISTRATION, CREATIVITY & SCHOLARSHIP: REFLECTING ON THE ASSOCIATION OF ART HISTORIANS' ORAL HISTORIES

Liz Bruchet, Independent Oral Historian, London, UK

The word 'administration' carries with it a range of definitions and connotations: from the work of high-level civil servants and senior decision makers, to the routine paper shuffling, emailing and minuting of meetings required in most organisations. Yet in academic communities, administration is typically characterised as a necessary evil, evidence of a perceived rise in bureaucracy that impinges on scholarly pursuits, a tedious area of activity best left undiscussed.

Using the Association of Art Historians' Oral History Project as a case study, I will explore the characterisation of administration among art historians to help re-evaluate the place of administrative activities and those who undertake them. Accounts of art historians' professional working lives complicate clear divisions of labour to reveal a dynamic play of power and intention in scholarly and museum work. They highlight the importance of interviewing administrators whose creative contributions, ingenuity and support of scholars often go unacknowledged in written histories. A close reading of how administration is talked about also sheds light on the role of narrative in the creation of scholars' professional biographies, in the definitions of their practice, and in the related writing of institutional histories.

A SHARED HISTORY: ENHANCING A CORPORATE ARCHIVE WITH ORAL HISTORY

Gillian Cooke, Group Archivist, Cambridge Assessment, Cambridge, UK

Cambridge Assessment was set up as the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in 1858 as a non-teaching department of Cambridge University. Gillian Cooke, Cambridge Assessment Group Archivist, will investigate why and how an oral history project developed within the traditionally private culture of an examination board and give a general archivist's view of embarking on an oral history project, without specific funding, where the project has been fitted around general archive work to enhance the traditional corporate archive.

The presentation will cover

- The motivation for beginning an oral history project in 1996 and the difficulties of tackling a traditionally private and dry culture to unlock a more personal history.
- The practicalities of selecting and interviewing; the need to create a representative balance of positions, types of work, gender and politics; approaches to individuals, meetings, recordings and agreements for subsequent use of material.
- The limitations presented by time, funding and experience and the inevitable impact this had on the extent and quality of the interviews and transcriptions.
- The culmination of the initial project in the 150th anniversary publication of sound-bites in 'Staff Recollections' in 2008 and the enduring benefits this has had to the archives and on the organisation.
- The challenges in keeping up with oral history work at Cambridge Assessment today

INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY AND LIVING MEMORY IN MINING HERITAGE: UNRAVELLING THE COMPLEX CONSTRUCTION OF ORAL HISTORY NARRATIVES IN AN INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Bethan Coupland, PhD candidate, University of Exeter, UK

How can oral history help us understand institutions whose purpose is already to represent their own pasts? Are there differences between personal memories and institutional accounts? This paper investigates the relationship between individual memories and institutional narratives at two prominent mining heritage sites; Pit Mining Museum in South Wales and Geevor Tin Mine in Cornwall. At these former mines (now operating as heritage attractions), there are already fixed institutional histories, articulated in museum displays and tours guided by former miners. Drawing on a number of oral history interviews carried out with miner-guides, this paper explores the relationship between living memories of the mining past and the existing 'official' heritage representations. It draws out the complexities of the dialogue between these different sorts of 'memory' and how they may consolidate, contradict or in fact shape one another.

It is argued that because miner-guides are already engaged in the business of telling their stories for a living, they do so in a relatively limited way which is, in turn, inherently shaped by institutional values and priorities. However, oral history interviews with miner-guides also revealed more nuanced accounts which often emphasised different aspects of their experience. As a result, it is suggested that there is a complex relationship between living memories and institutional memory, where institutional economic and political agendas play a part in the way the miner-guides construct their narratives. Finally, the paper offers some methodological reflections regarding the process of carrying out oral history interviews with ex-miners in the context of their employment in a heritage institution and how this may have impacted on the stories they were prepared to tell.

TESCO: AN ORAL HISTORY: UNCOVERING INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVES IN A CORPORATE SETTING.

Niamh Dillon, Project Interviewer, National Life Stories, The British Library, UK

Tesco is now a large global corporation. It began on a market stall in East London in 1919. In 2005 as part of a wider oral history research project on food production, manufacture, retail, and consumption in Britain in the 20th century I carried out thirty nine life story interviews with Tesco employees past and present. From the outset the aim was to interview across all major sectors of the company, and from top down, from Chairman to checkout. The original objective was to cover the history of the company from its early market stall origins to the international corporation it is today. The aim was to tell that story in the words of those who were involved in that evolution.

However, by using extracts with long serving Tesco employees this presentation will examine some of the hidden narratives located within Tesco, that, I will argue, could only have been revealed using the life story approach: such as how the tradition of strong leadership which originated with the founder, Sir Jack Cohen, continues within the company, how that early entrepreneurial and decisive decision making is part of the company ethos, and how the company is still very much a meritocracy with many of the current board members starting life on the shop floor. The value of the project to the British Library was a unique insight into Britain's largest private sector employer; the value to Tesco was to create an archive of recordings that illustrate the history of the company, when previously no archive existed. However this two-year project took place against the

backdrop of a series of investigations by the Competition Commission and a huge amount of press scrutiny. In this presentation I will discuss the challenges of interviewing elites against such a background and some of the key findings that emerged.

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY AS CULTURAL MIRROR: HOW THE ANNIVERSARY HISTORY OF A FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS REFLECTED SOCIAL, REGIONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Peggy Dillon, Assistant Professor, Department of Communications, Salem State University, Massachusetts, USA

In 2001, Rockville Fuel & Feed Co., Inc.—a three-generation, family-owned business in Rockville, Maryland—celebrated its 75th anniversary. The company, which in 1926 started out by selling home heating fuel and livestock feed for farmers, evolved over 75 years to becoming a major supplier of ready-mix concrete. Its changing business focus reflected in large part demographic and cultural shifts in Montgomery County, Maryland (USA), the company's base of operations, from a rural farming region to a booming suburban region north of Washington, D.C. While working as a Senior Historian from 1997 to 2001 for History Associates Incorporated, a historical consulting firm also located in Rockville, I wrote a book that commemorated Rockville Fuel & Feed's 75th anniversary and documented the company's origins and evolution. In addition to using primary print sources, photographs, newspaper articles and other documents, I conducted oral history interviews with key members of the Ward family who were instrumental in the founding and continued leadership of the company. This paper will show how important those interviews were in revealing how and why the company's growth and changing focus reflected the greater community changes taking place, as an agrarian way of life gave way to post-World-War II development. The paper will also show how those oral histories not only helped provide context for the company's own evolution but also reinforced and expanded the existing historical narrative about Montgomery County, whose population growth—and attendant boom in building and road construction—dovetailed the massive growth in the Federal government given the county's proximity to the nation's capital. Finally, the paper will include an update since this 2001 project was completed to include interviews with the company's principals to show how Rockville Fuel & Feed has continued to evolve amid the ongoing growth of Montgomery County over the last 12 years.

INVISIBLE HISTORIES: SONG AND STORIES FROM SALFORD'S LOST WORKPLACES

Neil Dymond-Green, Invisible Histories Project Learning Co-ordinator, Working Class Movement Library, Salford, UK

Salford, Manchester's 'invisible' twin city, was an industrial powerhouse for much of the 20th century, employing thousands of local people. And yet today these industries have vanished, leaving behind only memories. 'Invisible Histories' is the Working Class Movement Library's first foray into oral history. This HLF-funded project aims to capture the stories and experiences of people who worked in three different Salford workplaces: Agecroft Colliery, Ward & Goldstone engineering factory and Richard 'Dickie' Haworth's cotton mill. There are many questions we have, including:

What was it like to work in these places? How did it feel when they finally closed their doors? What impact did the workplaces and their closures have on individuals, their families and the community as a whole?

We have located people who worked in a variety of roles, and are keen to share their memories. These stories and experiences are being captured by our trained volunteer interviewers, all with connections to Salford. Already we have heard fascinating stories, made connections between people and heard new angles on everyday life and working conditions.

But collecting these memories isn't enough. We want to find ways of make these Invisible Histories visible and keep these stories alive. An innovative way of doing this will be through working with students from a Salford high school. They will listen to and interpret people's stories and compose music and song to accompany them in a new version of the pioneering 1950s BBC Radio Ballads www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/radioballads/original/ as created by Salford folk singer and political activist Ewan MacColl. We will present an exclusive preview of our own Radio Ballad, which we believe will help people engage with these memories in a new and meaningful way.

INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY AND THE OWNERSHIP OF IDEAS: THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Sarah Dziedzic, Carnegie Corporation of New York Project Coordinator, Columbia University Center for Oral History, New York, USA

In documenting the history of social movements, oral historians ask individuals being interviewed to recall the impetus for their participation and their unique contribution in terms of action or support, and to reflect on the synergy that led to social changes. Yet this project framework does not translate neatly to institutional histories, where individuals often work within teams, are directed by someone else, or feel otherwise defined—or confined—by their service as an employee. Furthermore, institutions within the field of U.S. philanthropy are responding to globalization by downplaying the notion of hierarchy and emphasizing instead the tenants of partnership and cooperation—at times making it even more difficult to locate the individual within the institution.

The Carnegie Corporation oral history, a decades-long project of the Columbia Center for Oral History currently in its third phase, was commissioned to document shifts in programming and operation; to trace the emergence of new ideas about need and philanthropic strategy. However, as we endeavor to attribute agency and envision a historical narrative from our current project interviews, we are faced with fundamental questions about approaches to documenting the current state of U.S. philanthropy within a global context. How can we adapt our approach to reflect the ways entrepreneurial philanthropy and partnership on a global scale have changed the shape and potential of philanthropic institutions? How can we adequately respond to a need to document hierarchical institutions in a less hierarchical way? Expanding the traditional approach of interviewing figureheads—the president, vice presidents and trustees—to also collecting narratives from grantees, informal advisers and partners, we will explore new models for documenting philanthropy and will raise methodological questions about how to better understand the birth and development of new ideas in philanthropic and institutional contexts.

REFUGEES OR ALIENS? THE RECEPTION OF REFUGEES FROM NAZISM BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER WORLD WAR TWO

Barbara Einhorn, Emeritus Professor of Gender Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK

In 1938, the Evian Conference, called to explore ways of assisting the desperate Jews of Europe, was dissolved without any solutions being found. The corporate voice of this mood of anti-semitism was exemplified by the Australian delegate, who stated that ‘as we have no real racial problem [sic!], we are not desirous of importing one.’ This paper presents early research findings in the exploration of official government policies erected to deter European Jews fleeing Hitler from ‘emigrating’ to other countries. It also examines the reception of European refugees from Nazism, both before, during, and after World War II. It integrates the experiences of the refugees themselves with corporate voices, specifically official government pronouncements and media articles and editorials. New Zealand is used as a case study which illustrates the more universal nature of institutionalised as well as cultural, informal anti-semitism during the 1930s and 1940s.

CENTRE FOR POPULAR MEMORY (CPM): INSTITUTIONAL DILEMMAS OF ORAL HISTORY IN THE ACADEMY

Sean Field, Senior Lecturer, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Portelli remarked years ago that, ‘A spectre is haunting the halls of the academy: the spectre of oral history’. From its outset in 2001, the CPM at the University of Cape Town (UCT) has been committed to the following core aims: *Teaching* oral and visual history methods of research; *Research* conducted through sound and audio-visual recordings of oral histories; *Dissemination* that contributes to strengthening the public voices of marginalized peoples; and *Archiving* multi-lingual recordings of people’s stories for scholarly and public access. This paper will discuss the achievements of the CPM and the contradictory tensions of sustaining an oral history organization within a society-in-transition where technocratic skills - as defined by a ‘developmental state and economy’ - are demanded of higher education institutions. These pressures sharpen epistemological issues that have historically been at stake for oral historians within universities. On the one hand, universities pursue scientific research practices that privilege ‘measurable’ forms of knowledge that have ‘impact’. On the other hand, most oral historians prioritize the recording of peoples’ stories that have been marginalized from elitist definitions of knowledge. This epistemic contradiction is faced by university based oral historians across the globe but in post-authoritarian South Africa it takes on a peculiar dynamic. The CPM has argued that there are significant reasons why sites of knowledge and critical voices outside of the academy should be prioritized. These arguments are not ignored at UCT but appropriated under the guise of ‘social responsiveness’ while retaining a ‘core business’ emphasis on publication output to the detriment of meaningful community/academic collaboration.

WORKING WITH A VOLUNTARY CORPORATE BODY: THE GAELIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION 2008–2012

Regina Fitzpatrick and Mike Cronin, Boston College-Ireland

Between 2008 and 2012 we undertook an oral history project of the GAA, Ireland's largest sporting and cultural organisation. The GAA is entirely amateur and voluntary, with only a small professional staff at its headquarters. Over the four years the project team completed

interviews 850 interviews, and also collected some 40,000 pages of documents and photographs. All this material was digitised and entered into a fully searchable database that now resides at the GAA Museum in Croke Park, Dublin.

The paper will explore our relationship with the GAA as the funding body of the project. As a voluntary organisation, members from across the country offered to assist us as interviewers, and these people produced 30% of the total number of interviews, with the remainder completed by researchers employed directly by the project. In particular we will address the relationship between us, as the project team who worked with interviewees and voluntary interviewers and addressed their ethical questions over ownership etc., and the GAA who were the corporate body and the custodians of the archive.

‘ALL THESE STORIES ARE PERSONAL STORIES IN THE END’: AN INDIVIDUAL’S VOICE WITHIN AN INSTITUTIONAL BODY AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Rosalind Grooms, Archivist, Cambridge University Library/Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

These words, spoken by a former Chief Executive of Cambridge University Press, express the aims and the tensions in an initiative to capture human stories behind momentous events in recent Press history. Interviews conducted by Juliana Vandegrift with long-serving employees and Press pensioners preserve a sense of ‘being there’ on special occasions, evoking details of daily working routines, charting the introduction of new technologies, and recounting funny incidents, eccentric characters and unique traditions. Voices of the Press are varied in accent, lively and engaging.

However, the Press is also a ‘body’ with a message to convey – the word ‘corporation’ derives from *corpus*, the Latin word for body, or a ‘body of people.’ This presentation will suggest an occasional tension between the stories told and the message the institution seeks to present to the world, with the ethical dilemma this presents for the oral historian. What are the implications when the over-arching institutional body may not be best served by the voices of its constituent parts? Selective editing of audio clips? The difficult decision that an interview is ‘too close to the bone’ for distribution in any form? Self-editing by employees who feel they have spoken rashly about colleagues and ask for their recording to be withheld from publication?

I will present case studies, with audio clips, so the humour and insights of these personal stories can come alive. As the project was envisaged as an integral part of the Press Museum, presenting the business to visitors, customers and suppliers, I will ask whether it is prudent to wait until time has passed and a historical perspective calms the turmoil, and whether the oral historian is complicit in quieting individuals’ voices for the reputation of the corporation.

‘VOICES FROM ABOVE: THE WARWICK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT’
Andrew Hammond, Institute of Advanced Study, University of Warwick

This paper will review some of the major challenges and rewards of designing and conducting ‘Voices of the University’, Warwick’s oral history project. The project aims to establish an oral history archive of 200 interviews with former staff and students at Warwick as well as local residents, in anticipation of its fifty-year anniversary in 2015. The problem of competing expectations, as regards the purpose of institutional histories and

the role of oral history in the construction of institutional histories, will be explored. Further to this, the dynamics between researcher and interviewee will be discussed in relation to a range of participants, but particularly those involved in the administration and management of the university.

AN ORAL HISTORY OF BARINGS: ENHANCING A BUSINESS ARCHIVE

Katharine Haydon, Oral History Interviewer, National Life Stories, The British Library, London, UK

In 2009 The Baring Archive commissioned National Life Stories at the British Library to record a set of in-depth life-story interviews with a number of those who had worked for, or been associated with, the Baring Group. This paper outlines how the partnership between National Life Stories and The Baring Archive operated, how the interviews were conducted and, on completion, archived and accessed. It explores some of the challenges and benefits of the application of the life-story approach to the interviews which seeks to see the individual's working life in the full context of their background, childhood, education and domestic life. Attention is also paid to the dynamics of the interview process itself and the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. With records dating back to 1772, The Baring Archive is recognized as one of the most outstanding and complete archives in the City of London and is of great value to economic, banking and business historians. This paper will suggest ways in which oral history can enhance and augment such a collection with the capture of details not readily found in paper-based records, whilst at the same time questioning the value and reliability of personal testimony. Some of the material gathered was very specific to Barings but this paper considers the value to organisations and a wider general audience for what such material can tell about business culture, working practices and the evolution of an organisation over time particularly as it responds to changes in internal and external environments including technology, communications and regulations. The inclusion of short audio clips will demonstrate the significance of being able to listen to recordings, thus hearing a layer of information transmitted through the voice but impossible to represent in the written word.

'DOING IT FOR BRITAIN': SERVICE AND DUTY IN THE SCIENTIFIC CIVIL SERVICE FROM WORLD WAR TWO TO THE 1990s

**Sally Horrocks, Lecturer/Senior Academic Consultant, University of Leicester/
National Life Stories and Tom Lean, Project Interviewer, National Life Stories, The British Library, London, UK**

Our paper draws on life story interviews with British government scientist collected as part of An Oral History of British Science to examine the way in which scientists who worked in British government research establishments from the 1940s to the 1990s viewed their role and responsibilities as government scientists. Using the life story approach enables us to explore how they saw their role within the Scientific Civil Service and how changing policies and structures were understood and experienced by those who lived through them. We will argue that the way in which the Scientific Civil Service developed during and immediately after World War II fostered a distinctive ethos of duty and service. This created a particular mindset and world view that encompassed a shared understanding of the goals and purposes of their work. Because they were recruited at a time of rapid expansion and were often promoted rapidly at a young age, they were able to foster this ethos among subsequent generations of government scientists and to carry it with them into senior posts. From the mid-1960s a changed conception of the goals and expectations

of government research, along with constraints on expenditure, started to change the role of government scientists and challenged their assumptions about the purpose of their work. Further changes during the 1970s and the dismantling of many organisations during the 1980s and 1990s were viewed with disquiet and regret by many of the war-time and immediate postwar generation of government scientists. Some elected to take early retirement rather than attempt to adapt to a world they viewed as alien while others sought to find acceptable niches in which they could survive until retirement or engaged with the opportunities offered by these changes to branch out in new directions.

WHO ARE WE? THE ORAL HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Margaretta Jolly, Reader in Cultural Studies, Dorothy Sheridan, Fellow and Stuart Robinson, University Photographer, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK

An oral history of the University of Sussex was first conceived of in 1999 by Dorothy Sheridan and Alistair Thomson, with Alun Howkins, the same year that they launched the pioneering Centre for Life History Research. It has taken nearly 15 years for it to come to fruition, and in very different circumstances, as part of the University's 50th anniversary. While the Centre has continued as part of a now flourishing global field of oral history and life writing studies, the University's shape has been drastically affected by the marketisation of higher education, intellectually, administratively and politically. Many staff that formed 'old Sussex' have left; new staff and students bring differing relationships to the narrative and identity of the university. What remains of Sussex's image as the quintessential 'new university' of the swinging 60s? How does this image become mythologised and to what degree do interviewees construct or challenge this mythologisation? What, too, is the function of an oral history in this context?

Dorothy Sheridan and Margaretta Jolly will reflect on these questions, drawing on their experiences as instigator-administrators of the project, as employees who have lived through these changes, and Dorothy also as an interviewee. They will briefly describe the practical and economic steps towards creating the archive and its public face as a website. Principally, they will situate the project in the context of debates about institutional memory and the oral history of professions, as well as the development of Higher Education. They hope, too, to involve a discussion of the role of portraiture in institutional commissions, via a short further presentation from the University photographer, Stuart Robinson, who was also an interviewee and whose father worked at the university as a boilerman in the 1970s.

ORAL HISTORY IN THE UNITED NATIONS -A NEGLECTED DIMENSION OF INTERNATIONAL CORPORATE HISTORY

Sir Richard Jolly, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK

The UN is often thought of as a faceless bureaucracy, caught up in endless political debate, without wit or wisdom, going nowhere. In fact, the international organisation has been home to a group of creative, clever and culturally sensitive people, grappling with some of the planet's most basic economic and social problems. Over the years, the UN has achieved results and impact, far beyond what most of the media and public realises. To get behind the misleading generalities, the UN Intellectual History Project interviewed the four living Secretaries-Generals and 75 others who had held senior positions in different parts of the organisation, asking about their early lives, their formative experiences and motivations, as

background to their later work, struggles and achievements within the UN itself. The project was independent of the UN, based in the Ralph Bunch Institute of the Graduate Center of City University of New York and independently funded by a number of foundations and governments.

The complete interviews are available on a CD-ROM and selections have been published in "UN Voices- the struggle for international development and social justice." There is also a summary volume of the other 16 books which arose from the ten year project.

Richard Jolly will present an overview, focused especially on the lessons learned from applying oral history methods in an international setting.

DUPONT COMES TO TOBACCO ROAD: ORAL HISTORIES OF POSTWAR INDUSTRIALIZATION IN THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES **Lu Ann Jones, Independent Scholar Washington, DC, USA**

When the DuPont corporation opened "the world's first polyester plant" in the heart of eastern North Carolina's flue-cured tobacco country in 1953, the *Kinston Daily Free Press* forecast "the beginning of a new industrial era." The plant, the editorialist wrote, was "a dream come true for Kinstonians who have long hoped and planned for an industrial renaissance which could march hand in hand with the agricultural progress of this section and make it truly a place flowing with milk and honey." The newspaper surely cast its hopes in hyperbole, but for many young white men and women and a few African American men, a job at the Kinston Plant offered an unprecedented alternative to farming and low-wage work at sawmills or garment factories.

Oral history interviews with some 30 retired DuPont workers reveal how a branch plant of a multi-national corporation transformed the economy and culture of an underdeveloped area of the rural South—and how employment practices at DuPont's Kinston Plant both challenged and reinforced local gender and racial hierarchies. My paper explores how the plant's new job options coincided with postwar changes in agriculture; how local men and women, blacks and whites, experienced new job opportunities and developed new communities at work; and how DuPont supervisors who were newcomers to the area responded to and shaped life and labor in the rural South. The paper also addresses how the plant's downsizing in the early 2000's, at the time of the interviews, shaped narratives of the industrialization and de-industrialization process.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY BOTANIC GARDEN: VOICING A GARDEN THROUGH TIME **Pippa Lacey and Juliet Day, Cambridge University Botanic Garden, Cambridge, UK**

There are two current oral history projects focusing on the history and development of the Cambridge University Botanic Garden since the 1950s.

One project focuses on the ideas, philosophies and individuals behind the shaping of the eastern section of the Botanic Garden - from the post-WWII period to the twenty-first century. This project, '*Changing Perspectives: a garden through time*' utilizes both archival sources and oral history interviews with directors and other key members of the Garden management. Stories about the Garden landscapes and plantings are being sought from key people associated with the Garden. The '*Changing Perspectives*' project is funded by

the Arts Council England (ACE) through the University of Cambridge Museums' Connecting with Collections initiative.

The second project, '*Voicing the Garden*' is an oral history initiative funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) 'All Our Stories' small grant programme. '*Voicing the Garden*' focuses on the people behind the plants through the stories of former staff, Friends of the Garden as well as visitors of all ages. Interviews are being collected under three strands: Making the Garden; Growing up with the Garden and Enjoying the Garden. Making the Garden collects the stories of past and present members of staff; Growing up in the Garden relates the stories of children connected with the Garden, including the offspring of past directors of the Botanic Garden; while Enjoying the Garden allows the stories and memories of anyone who has had experience of the Garden.

Together these two inter-connected yet distinct projects will present a broad picture of the developments in the Cambridge University Botanic Garden over the past six decades, giving colour and texture through the memories of those who worked, lived and played in the Garden.

ORAL HISTORY AND THE MAKING OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC HISTORY IN SWEDEN
Per Lundin, Associate Professor/Researcher, Uppsala University, Sweden and
Gustav Sjöblom, Assistant Professor, Chalmers University of Technology,
Göteborg, Sweden

When oral history emerged in the late 1970s its advocates presented their methodology as something novel and unconventional, and as a corrective to previous historical research. They accused business historians in particular of still writing the history of Sweden as the history of its business managers, on the basis of the authoritative voices preserved in the written records. In fact, business historians had nearly always relied on oral sources, but they had never promoted their oral history practice to the formal status of historical method. In this paper we investigate why oral history was adopted as a methodological tenet by social historians but disregarded as a historical method by business historians, despite their practical applications of oral history being not too dissimilar.

On the basis of a historiographical analysis, we argue that oral history – here broadly defined as “oral context” rather than formal interviews – has been an important but rarely transparent part of business historians' practices at least since the early twentieth century. While the use of oral history has been more or less constant, the way in which it has or has not been presented as a historical method has varied over time. These shifting representations of oral history as historical method can tell us something important about the development of economic history as an academic discipline.

The paper begins with the encounter in the mid-twentieth-century between the already well-established practice of writing corporate monographs and the institutionalization of economic history as an academic discipline with a radically positivist source criticism as scientific guiding rule. We then discuss the challenge mounted to business history by the social historians of the oral history movement from the late 1970s. In response, business historians turned the formal interview into a reluctantly accepted historical source, while the wider oral context was increasingly defused.

INDIVIDUAL-INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY AT THE BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY

Paul Merchant, Oral History Interviewer, National Life Stories, The British Library, London, UK

This paper considers relations between individual and institutional identity in the lives of scientists and technicians who worked at the British Antarctic Survey [BAS] in the later twentieth century. Ice core scientists, glaciologists, atmospheric scientists (including the man who found the hole in the ozone layer) and computer assistants understand and *represent* themselves – as we might expect – in relation to BAS as an institution. But life story recordings are more than just *representations* of the self; they contain clues to practical, embodied, ‘non-representational’ ways of being. I argue in the paper that interviews with BAS scientists, recorded for *National Life Stories* ‘An Oral History of British Science’, suggest that individual identities were bound up with particular ways of standing, sitting, communicating, moving (and so on) in the Antarctic, in BAS’ headquarters in Cambridge, and elsewhere.

ORAL HISTORY OF POST-SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION. PRIVATIZATION AS BIOGRAPHICAL EXPERIENCE.

Karolina Mikołajewska, MA Student, Kozminski University/University of Warsaw, Poland

The proposed speech is based on an analysis of biographical narratives of Polish managers of E. Wedel factory in Warsaw, a very well-known confectionery producer. This firm was one of the first to participate in the privatization program introduced as an element of the liberalization of the Polish economy in the early 1990’s and was sold to PepsiCo Ltd.

The main question, which sets the scope of the analysis is how the socialist managers (to some extent are co-authors of the changes, who worked in the factory in the privatization period) describe them from today’s perspective? What meanings to the new capitalist institutions do they ascribe today – how do they legitimize or delegitimize it? I am particularly interested in finding out how the managers reconstruct the process of manufacturing consent over capitalism (Burawoy 1979) in their narratives in hindsight and how they reconstruct their professional identity in the changed economic environment.

The influence of the transition upon the managers’ biographies will be discussed.

“THE SPIRIT OF THE CONFESSONAL IS HERE”: LAW, ETHICS AND THE UNIVERSITY AND LIFE EXPERIENCE PROJECT AT GIRTON COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Hazel Mills, Principal Investigator, University & Life Experience, Cambridge, UK

My title quotation is drawn from an interview given to the University and Life Experience [ULE] project, based at Girton College, Cambridge University. The interviewee, aged over 60, is remembering her student days and subsequent life. Her words powerfully suggest the window oral testimony can open onto aspects of the history of an institution and its members – employees, students, managers – that may otherwise be lost. However, they also hint at the potentially complex relationships between oral historians, interviewees and sponsoring institutions.

The ULE began in the mid-1990s, gathering quantitative and qualitative material on Girton graduates 1900-1985, including 60 recorded interviews. In 2009 further funding was

secured to create a website through which much of this material will be made available to researchers.

The project has operated within an increasingly complex legal framework concerning copyright law, data protection and the right to privacy. In addition, our group of interviewees has a distinctive, important and continuing relationship with the College, which has in turn given considerable support to the project. This paper focuses on three particular legal and ethical challenges we have faced:

1. Institutional history versus personal history.

We are not creating an institutional history but have been trusted as the repository for often sensitive memories, some related to the college, others to life before and after university. I will outline editorial and ethical judgments this has raised.

2. Copyright and Consent.

Since 2009, renewed contact has been made with the interviewees (or families if deceased), to seek outstanding copyrights, but also to inform them about digital publishing. This led to significant discussions and raised new ethical issues. Where should the parameters of consent be set?

3. Third-party privacy.

Many of our interviewees speak about third parties with great directness. We will suggest that the evolution of the legal right to privacy, embedded in European human rights legislation, has extremely significant implications for the ULE and other oral history projects.

WORKING LIVES IN A NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY: THE END OF A GOLDEN ERA.

Ida Milne, Independent Researcher, founder member and Director of the Oral History Network of Ireland

From the 1970s to the early 1990s, Dublin's Independent Newspapers became the largest news organization in Ireland, and extended its foreign holdings, buying into media businesses in the UK, South Africa and Australia, under the control of Anthony O'Reilly. In the core Irish business, workers enjoyed some of the best terms and conditions of any Irish employees, with high salaries, a four day week and six weeks' annual leave. But as the economic climate changed, so too did the working lives of the 'Indo' people. Radical changes in work practices, the introduction of new technologies and the outsourcing of many functions traditionally performed in-house decimated the workforce, and destroyed the strong sense of collegiality with the business, which had typically employed family and friends of employees. This paper would explore, through interviews with employees, including some from management, the growth and decline of this, once Ireland's most successful newspaper industry. It will look at editorial, clerical, print and other staffs within the business, to see how their functions and powerbases shift over the time period 1970-2004.

ANOTHER COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY: THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, MY ROLE?

**Catherine O Connor, Course Director Certificate in Oral Heritage Studies,
University of Limerick, Ireland**

The University of Limerick was established in Limerick, Ireland in 1972, as the National Institute of Higher Education, (NIHE), with the appointment of a young and inspirational Director, Dr. Edward Walsh, formerly Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. From the outset, the Institute fought to attain university status, employing the 'duck' principle; if it looked like a university and worked like a university, then it must be a university. Considering itself equal to the existing Irish universities, the NIHE differed radically in objectives and curriculum.

Drawing on a four year University of Limerick Oral History Project (ULOHP), commissioned by the University to celebrate its forty years in existence in 2012, this paper highlights some of these ground breaking developments, as recalled by founding academics, staff members, students and local public figures from the mid-west and Limerick region. Interesting issues of personality, conflict with existing institutions, Irish Department of Education mandarins, and the impact of rapid and expeditious growth are explored.

The conflicting and varying egotistical elements revealed in both the recordings and the often, strongly revised, authorised transcripts, provide for a fascinating insight into the use of the recorded interview for personal testimonial purposes, broadcast through digital media to the public arena. The paper will address two distinct aspects of this institutional project, one, the methodology, funding and encouragement of the oral history, and two, the subsequent attitude and behaviour of initially, willing and enthusiastic participants. Finally, the subjectivity of the researcher, exposed for the first time to working with individuals with high public profiles, as well as personal employers, will be explored.

BEST KEPT SECRETS: ORAL HISTORY AT HSBC

Rachael Porter, UK Archives Manager, HSBC Archives, London, UK

An overview of HSBC's oral history activity to date.

MAKING COMMEMORATIONS COUNT: ORAL HISTORY AND ANNIVERSARIES AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

**Anne Ritchie, Senior Archivist and Oral Historian, National Gallery of Art,
Washington, USA**

Institutions tend to be present and future-minded, only rarely reflecting on their past. Even the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, D.C., with its collection of centuries of artworks often loses sight of its origins. A pending 50th anniversary of the Gallery in 1991 encouraged the creation of an oral history program. Interviews were conducted with early staff members, some who began their careers with the Gallery even before it opened. These included everyone from the director to the administrative staff and curators. Other archival responsibilities eventually diverted attention away from the oral history project, which waned for a number of years until the Gallery approached its 75th anniversary. Anticipated retirements spurred interest within the Gallery to capture the life stories of those who would be leaving. Both anniversaries prompted exhibits on the histories of the

buildings. While the project was too new to influence the 50th anniversary exhibit on the classical West Building, it became part of commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the modern East Building. Interviews with the architect who designed the building and the engineers and workers who constructed it provided substantial and accessible information for the exhibit. This presentation will examine what the oral history project collected, and how it changed between the two milestones, and will reflect on the significance of institutional anniversaries. I will discuss strategies for creating and continuing institutional oral history programs and convincing those institutions of their utility.

MEASURING CHANGE IN A TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION: ORAL HISTORY INSIDE THE U.S. SENATE

Donald Ritchie, Historian of the Senate, United States Senate, USA

As a legislative body, the United States Senate is defined by its continuity and adherence to its precedents and customs, but oral histories have documented significant changes that have occurred in this highly traditional institution. The Senate retains all of its original constitutional powers, making it the most powerful “upper house” in any democratic government. Only a third of its members run in any election, so the Senate regards itself as a continuing body that does not change its rules with each new session, making it very difficult for reformers to revise the rules. It retains its historical furnishings, formal legislative language, and arcane methods of operations. Despite its outward image of resisting change, a series of oral history interviews conducted by the Senate Historical Office have documented change—sometimes gradual and barely perceptible, and other times sudden and glaring. Interviews reveal that the forces for change have generally come from outside the institution. They include political and social pressure and technological advancements, from television, jet planes, and computers to the women’s movement, and the modern realignment of the American political parties. All have produced an institution that is strikingly different from the Senate that existed fifty years ago. Drawing from the testimonies of senators and staff, this paper will explain the Senate’s transformation and suggest ways in which other institutions can use oral history to recognize and understand the sources of their internal changes.

LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCE: EXECUTIVES INTERVIEWING ENTREPRENEURS

Beatriz Rodriguez-Satizabal, London School of Economics

Executives interviewing entrepreneurs: why not? The main concern of a business historian in Colombia is to find the best way to deal with the little trust of the entrepreneurs when they have to give information about their companies and themselves. Moreover, the challenge is to get them to keep archives for future research. As an exercise for an EMBA course at the Universidad de los Andes School of Management, the students were challenged to interview entrepreneurs in order to write a short biography and become aware on the importance to keep archives for future strategic decisions. Divided in small groups (2-3 students), using a guideline provided by the academic team, and the information gathered from a short list of theoretical readings, the task was to interview an entrepreneur, make a presentation, and write out the questions and answers. As a result of six continuous years doing the exercise with different groups, the results have shown that executives find practical ways to learn more about the entrepreneur connecting their own experience and helping to gather information to those willing to research on business history. The purpose of this paper is to present the use of oral history as both a course exercise and a methodological tool to build entrepreneur’s profiles. Understanding that the

use of the information differs between a student and a researcher, this document presents both the experience of the academic team and the students, showing the heterogeneity of questions, the challenges of interviewing, and the general characterization of a group of entrepreneurs in Colombia between 2003 and 2008.

THE HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Paul Seaward, Director, Priscila Pivatto, Research Associate, and Emma Peplow, Web and Communications Officer, History of Parliament, London, UK

The History of Parliament Trust has been working with The British Library on recording the reminiscences of former Members of Parliament. The project is inspired by a project initiated by the Trust's founder in the 1930s, Josiah Wedgwood, who circulated a questionnaire to living MPs from the period 1885-1918 about their lives and careers. The new project will create a sound archive, to be held at the BL, which will provide a unique record of post-2nd World War British political history. There are over 900 living former MPs, and our ambition is to interview as many of them as we can. We have been using volunteer interviewers, mainly postgraduate, post-doctoral or professional historians.

The presentation will describe how we are going about the project and some of our strategic choices. It will raise some of the issues surrounding interviews of politicians, many of whom have already set a narrative of their lives through autobiographical writing, and almost all of whom are professional interviewees, and narratives of politics, where many of the details are already well-established, and confusions and myth-making can be easily detected.

The Trust is also hoping to sustain and extend the project through a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which will aim at collecting memories of politics at the constituency level, through interviews with activists and others, and the presentation will briefly describe these broader plans.

VOICES FROM A DISUSED QUARRY: AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE CENTRE FOR ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY

Allan Shepherd, Publisher/Author, Centre for Alternative Technology, Powys, Wales

CAT is an environmental charity with a unique organisational history. It was founded on a disused slate quarry in mid-Wales in 1974 as an experimental community and has evolved over time into an academic institution. It has maintained a blend of establishment thinking and revolutionary dissent throughout its history, treading a fine line between philosophical purism and pragmatic realism.

Up until April 2012, the Centre was run with a co-operative flat management structure, developing a whole series of interesting experiments in co-operative working practices, and along with it, a collective memory and myth about the origins of the organisation, its purpose and its heritage. In 2012 (due to financial pressures caused in part by the recession) the old management system was disbanded, a CEO appointed and many people made redundant.

The CAT Oral History Project

The CAT Oral History Project began in August 2012 and the oral histories were collected in the wake of this incredible moment of change. Over 80 interviews have been collected with the help of 18 volunteers. The resultant archive will be kept in the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth and will provide the raw material for a whole series of celebratory and investigative activities that will emerge during CAT's 40th anniversary in 2014.

The paper

This paper will give a snapshot of CAT's history, describe the project and then go on to suggest how oral history has been used to explore themes of 'myth, corporate memories and inheritance stories' leading up to the Centre's 'big birthday' in 2014.

ONE VERSION OF EVENTS: ORAL HISTORY AT BARCLAYS GROUP ARCHIVES

Maria Sienkiewicz, Group Archivist, Barclays PLC, Manchester, UK

The paper will begin with a brief introduction to oral history at Barclays Group Archives: how long the programme has been running, how many interviews have been conducted, and the selection process for interviewees.

Using examples from Barclays oral history interviews, the challenges of interviewing high-powered and intelligent people who know their subject inside out will be considered, as will the differences between interviewing senior and less senior staff. The question of motive will form a central theme: what does the archive hope to gain from an oral history programme, and why do the subjects agree to be interviewed? If a subject approaches an interview with an agenda, is there anything the interviewer can do to deflect them, and does that interview become less valid, relevant or reliable as a result? And when is the best time to capture an interviewee's memories? Do events need to be fresh in the memory, or does a little time for reflection allow for a more balanced review?

The paper will also reflect on whether company archivists, as employees of the company in question are the best people to conduct the interviews. Can they bring the necessary objectivity to the process? Does their access to written records provide them with the insight to conduct a thorough interview? Is the interviewee more or less likely to be candid with an employee?

The paper will conclude by looking at the use that has been made of the interviews, and at their value alongside the more formal written records.

PRODUCING AN HOLISTIC AND POLICY-RELEVANT HISTORY OF GUY'S AND ST THOMAS' HOSPITALS (1970s-2000s)

Julian M. Simpson, Research Associate, and Stephanie Snow, University of Manchester, UK

This paper reflects on the design of a project exploring the recent history of the London teaching hospitals of Guy's and St Thomas'. It set out to produce an historical account which reflected the perspectives of a range of actors. It also sought to be a policy-relevant history which would engage with the different administrative changes which reshaped the institutions it was examining. The aim was to incorporate into a coherent overview perspectives traditionally seen as from 'above' or 'below' by writing a history which was both social and political. Resolving the tensions inherent in this approach was one of the

challenges presented by the study. Managing recruitment was another. Institutional support was, on one hand, hugely advantageous, offering access to a range of willing participants. There were, however, various complicating factors when it came to constituting a sample of interviewees. The two institutions were initially separate before merging in the 1990s and retain strong individual identities. Moreover, they have employed a vast array of professionals and provided services to thousands of patients and well as having relationships with funders and politicians. A continuous process of change in healthcare since the 1970s added to this complexity. An eighteen month timescale to deliver the project and a limited budget provided supplementary constraints. The issues encountered were addressed through different approaches to recruitment and a constant process of reflection on the research agenda. Interviews were conducted with a range of participants with varying backgrounds. The evidence base was further broadened by recourse to joint interviews and by soliciting written contributions. Archival research complemented the views expressed by participants. This process resulted in the production and location of material that supports the writing of an holistic and policy-relevant history which shows Guy's and St Thomas' as constantly evolving organisms shaped by multidirectional influences.

WHOSE ARNOS VALE? – THE CHALLENGES OF REPRESENTING A CONTENTIOUS INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY IN A COMMUNITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Felicia Smith, Public Engagement Manager, Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust, Bristol, UK

Arnos Vale Cemetery is a working cemetery and heritage site in Bristol, operated by a charitable trust and owned by Bristol City Council. *Your Arnos Vale – a people's history of Arnos Vale Cemetery* is a community oral history project commissioned by Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust to record personal testimonies relating to the past 25 years of Arnos Vale. This emotive period in the cemetery's history covers its transition from a struggling private business, a contentious period of decline and closure, proposals for exhumation and housing development, a public campaign to "save the cemetery", compulsory purchase of the site, formation of the present charitable trust and the cemetery's eventual restoration and "relaunch" as a heritage site.

The project aims to gather a range of testimonies from associated trade professionals, former staff, bereaved relatives, concerned neighbours, members of the Friends of Arnos Vale Cemetery (FAVC) and individuals in the 20,000-strong "Arnos Army" who signed the campaign petition.

By July 2013 the interview-gathering phase of the project will be complete, and the focus will be on selecting material for visitor interpretation. The range of testimonies gathered will inevitably present opposing recollections of historical events – which were very contentious at the time and about which strong feelings are still held today. This is a case study of how one organization has approached the interpretive challenges of collecting its oral history.

Areas to be explored:

Whose memory? *Individual versus Institutional memory.* Organisational mythmaking and how to distinguish personal perception from historic reality.

Whose voice? *"History is written by the winners".* Dominant versus alternative narratives and communities of identity. Is there room to represent tension and challenging histories?

Whose story? *Editorial bias.* Looking for a “good story” for visitor interpretation.

Conclusion: Whose Project? *Funders, partners and performance indicators.* Some reflections on the restrictions of project-based oral history.

THE INSTITUTION CHANGES BUT THE MEMORIES LIVE ON: ALUMNI VOICES ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Stephanie Spencer, Reader, History of Women’s Education, Camilla Leach, Visiting Fellow, and Andrea Jacobs, University of Winchester, UK

King Alfred’s College Winchester, a well regarded, long established, predominantly teacher training institution, became a University with full taught and research degree awarding powers in 2008. The student body has grown from 250 men in the 1950s to over 7000 students of both sexes. A team from the Centre for the History of Women’s Education was funded by the institution to undertake an oral history to mark the transition from the status of College to that of University. Those interviewed included alumni from the 1950s to early 2000s and members of staff both retired and long-serving. In planning the project we were aware that histories of higher education are often written to be celebratory and tend to be parochial (and are criticised as such). In complementing the existing histories of King Alfred’s we aimed through the use of oral history to present an alternative version of institutional history that focused on individual voices, and therefore a history of people’s experiences against a background of change in Higher Education provision. Our study draws on recent interest in the history of emotions by including reflection by both staff and students on the role played by the College / University in the extraordinary two or three years of study that mark the transition from youth to adult. In this paper we discuss our use of Ferdinand Tönnies’ work to inform the framing of the project and our use of voice relational analysis which enabled us to situate ourselves as alumnae and researchers within our analysis.

FROM FAITH TO FOOD: USING ORAL HISTORY TO STUDY CANADIAN MANUFACTURING FIRMS

Janis Thiessen, Assistant Professor, History, University of Winnipeg, Canada

This paper draws on my fifteen years’ experience conducting oral histories at several privately held manufacturing firms in Canada. My first book, *Manufacturing Mennonites: Work and Religion in Postwar Manitoba*, to be published in spring 2013, examines the ways in which such oral histories reveal the function of what I term ‘corporate mythology’: owners, managers, workers, and community members used businesses to redefine religious identity along class lines in the post-1945 period. The companies at which I conducted interviews for this study are Friesen Printers (Canada’s largest full-colour printing firm), Palliser Furniture (one of Canada’s largest furniture manufacturers), and Loewen Windows (Canada’s largest wood window manufacturer). My current research uses oral histories to examine the production, marketing, and branding of Canadian snack foods, the ways in which owners, managers, workers, and consumers have addressed the changing attitudes of society and of regulatory authorities toward snack food production in Canada, and the ‘Canadian-ness’ of these products. Companies I am studying include Old Dutch Foods (makers of potato chips) and W.T. Hawkins (manufacturers of Cheezies, a cheese-flavoured snack made from extruded corn).

At the conference, I will present on the methodology and results of my oral history research at these half dozen companies. I will discuss the challenges of securing (and maintaining) the co-operation of privately held firms, the difficulties (both practical and ethical) of interviewing business owners and management, and my varied experiences with Research Ethics Boards at three different universities. As a labour historian who teaches business history at the University of Winnipeg, and as the secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Oral History Association, I am pleased that a conference has been organized that addresses the important and necessary convergence of oral history and business history.

'RUMBLING AND GRUMBLING': CULTURE, PRACTICE AND THE BBC IN YORKSHIRE 1945-1990

Christine Verguson, Research Student, University of Huddersfield, UK

The collecting of memories from past and present colleagues to mark the move of the BBC in Leeds to new premises in 2004 led me to ask what might be lost along with the bricks and mortar - just like the disappearing industries which they themselves may have reported on, BBC workers had also experienced changes in their crafts and working relationships. But this was the BBC, and as producer and documentary filmmaker Philip Donnellan pointed out: 'They [the licence fee payers] have a right to know who we were, how our work was done, with what motives and with what result',¹ while historian and journalist Robert Darnton claims that, whatever the medium, 'news is not what happened but a story about what happened, shaped by various conventions, not least those followed by those who produce it'.²

Using oral testimony as well as drawing on other forms of autobiography and reminiscence, this paper will reflect on the experiences of those who worked at the BBC in Leeds in a range of occupations from the relaunching of regional broadcasting in 1945 through the coming of television in 1951 and the redefinition of BBC non-metropolitan broadcasting at the end of the 1960s to the centralisation of the organisation instigated by John Birt. The extent to which a distinctive regional culture within the BBC in Yorkshire can be identified and how this, together with the work experience, may have changed over time will be considered and, in so doing, it is hoped this paper will go some way towards answering Donnellan's question.

¹ Philip Donnellan, *We were the BBC: An alternative view of a producer's responsibility 1948-1984*. Unpublished typescript. Birmingham Archives.

² Robert Darnton, 'The Library in the New Age', in *The New York Review of Books*, Vol 55, No 10, 2008 <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/21514>

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY – HOW ORAL HISTORY CAN PROVIDE UNIQUE INSIGHTS INTO THE RUNNING OF FAMILY BUSINESSES

Mark Wong, Oral History Specialist, National Archives of Singapore, Singapore

In Singapore, the top business fortunes are more likely to be family-managed than non-family managed. Based on a March 2012 study titled "Global Wealth and Family Ties" by Forbes Insights and Societe Generale Private Banking, it was found that 58% of Singapore's top business wealths was managed by families, while 42% was not. This was the inverse of the study's global average of 42% run with family involvement and 58% run without. Using case studies and examples of family business entrepreneurs from Singapore's Oral History Centre as a source, I hope to highlight some of the factors for the prevalence and successes of family businesses in Singapore. Furthermore, I argue that more attention should be paid

to the particular strengths of oral history in garnering unique insights into the nuts and bolts of how family businesses are run, their internal dynamics, corporate strategies and management styles. Oral history methodology is particularly suited to fulfil this task; the deeply personal and involving life story approach of oral history is effective in helping us understand the underlying values, motivations, and dreams of entrepreneurs. We learn the context of a life lived—origins, upbringing, and life circumstances—and how these may or may not influence their business (and life) decisions. In family businesses, the line between “family” and “business” is rarely clear, and it is often in the memory store of individuals that we can elicit the important aspects of human decisions and people-to-people relations that are the driving force of family businesses.

PANEL SESSIONS

BUILDING A NEW REGIONAL CITY: CORPORATE ORAL HISTORY, ARCHIVES AND THEATRE IN A FAST-CHANGING PETERBOROUGH

Tina Bramhill, Project Officer, Forty Years On Project

Ivan Cutting, Artistic Director, Eastern Angles Theatre Company

Richard Hunt, Archivist, Vivacity, Central Library, Peterborough

Ben Rogaly and Kaveri Qureshi, Department of Geography, University of Sussex

This panel will offer unique insights into a collaboration between oral historians, an archivist and a theatre-maker, each working with corporate oral history in the English provincial city of Peterborough. The more than two-fold expansion in the city's population between 1968 and 2008 was driven by the work of the Peterborough Development Corporation. Private companies involved in engineering, light manufacturing, logistics, distribution and food production continued to provide jobs for Peterborough's long-established and incoming workforces. For the first time in one session, the panel will bring together oral histories recorded with Peterborough Development Corporation staff, from chief officers to secretaries, with the oral histories of employees of the private companies based in the city and its regional hinterland. The panel will

- i) show how corporate (institutional) oral history can become public history through community theatre productions
- ii) explore the challenges and opportunities involved in archiving the papers of the Peterborough Development Corporation alongside newly gathered oral histories;
- iii) use oral histories with former Peterborough Development Corporation staff to provide a more rounded and human picture of town planning and expansion; and
- iv) use oral histories of work with private sector employees to trace continuity and change in key institutions in the Peterborough city region's food supply chain.

Humanising corporations through oral history, Tina Bramhill

This paper will explore how oral history can be used to increase public understanding of a corporation by looking at the memories of individual employees from low-level staff to chief officers and board members. This will draw upon interviews conducted with former employees of the Peterborough Development Corporation that transformed Peterborough into a New Town in the 1970s and 1980s, affecting the lives of thousands of new and existing residents.

Although the impact of the Development Corporation's work can still be felt in the city today, there is a lack of understanding about the organisation and its role in Peterborough's expansion, particularly amongst newer residents. The Forty Years On oral history archive humanises the Corporation for the first time, enabling residents to see individuals behind the key policies and decisions made about their city. Interviews reveal how the expertise, experiences and personalities of individuals contributed to the city's development including the location and design of key shopping areas, the formation of park trusts and the naming of streets and roads. Former Development Corporation employees are able to answer questions posed by residents and local researchers about the planning, design and building

process itself, bringing the subject of town planning to life whilst deepening knowledge about this modern period of the city's history and making it more accessible and engaging.

Creating theatre from corporate archives, Ivan Cutting

This paper will explore the means by which corporate and other local records can be used to create theatre for local and national audiences, jolt memories towards re-examining historical processes and help us understand how such artistic enterprises can help tackle contemporary social problems.

The paper will focus in particular on the techniques used to bring oral histories and archival records to life on the stage and the reactions of audiences, participants and contributors.

In setting up the main discussion of the use of oral and archival sources in the creation of theatrical work, the paper will also explain the genesis of the larger project on which it draws, particularly how and why the records of the Peterborough Development Corporation were chosen to explore the making of the Peterborough we have today; how an old city became a new town; and how it now struggles to become a new city. The paper will further show how this celebration of the whole PDC period is designed to help provide the sense of identity and high ambition that any city needs to flourish in the global 21st century.

Archiving corporate histories, Richard Hunt

Corporate and business archives pose interesting challenges for archivists as they are often entirely unique in their content and structure, compared to other institutions. Whereas functions and processes in the public sector are generally duplicated across the country, for corporate archives this is rarely the case. The Forty Years On project has directly involved local people in the archiving process, as well as used the oral histories of employees of the Peterborough Development Corporation alongside the 'Revisiting Collections' cataloguing methodology to ensure that descriptions in the Peterborough Development Corporation archive are more accurate, and that those individuals who played a part in creating the archive and are part of the corporate past of the institution can ensure their voice is heard in our catalogue descriptions.

This paper will explore how Peterborough's Archives service is aiming to ensure that the records of changing twentieth-century Peterborough are as informative, inclusive, and relevant as possible. Peterborough has struggled to find an identity for itself in the twentieth century and the experience of the archives has been that many questions surrounding the changes in this period and the experience of the city being turned into a New Town still have to be answered. The Forty Years On project is centred on the Peterborough Development Corporation archive and draws heavily upon the experiences of local residents of the expanding city, as well as the oral histories gathered as part of the project, to inform and improve traditional archive descriptions.

Oral histories of food supply chain institutions: continuity and change in a dynamic city region, Ben Rogaly and Kaveri Qureshi

With high soil fertility and a long history of hand-harvested field crops, the Fens to the east of Peterborough have become a dynamic hub of industrial food production encompassing fields, packhouses, processing and distribution from giant depots. Lying on some of Britain's main road and rail arteries, including the A1 and the East Coast mainline, the region now plays a pivotal role in the national food supply chain. Yet for all the dramatic changes in the

technology and organization of food production, and the major demographic changes in the city since the 1960s, analysis of oral history interviews with Peterborough-based workers in the region's food sector reveals continuity in workers' precarious employment and living arrangements. This paper draws on interviews with workers of diverse ethnic and national backgrounds to build up a picture of the city region's private sector food supply chain institutions. For example, houses of multiple occupancy and specialist employment agencies have long played important roles, contrary to the current discourse of national political leaders, which connects them to the large-scale arrival of eastern European workers in the 2000s. Workers' stories speak not only of insecure and temporary work, antisocial and uncertain hours, and sometimes abusive supervisors, but also of small acts of resistance, meaningful in themselves as assertions of dignity, even in a wider institutional context of limited, and grossly unequal, power.

EXPLORING THE BRITISH DEAF ASSOCIATION FILM ARCHIVE: THE REPRESENTATION OF INDIVIDUAL DEAF LIVES WITHIN INSTITUTIONAL HISTORIES.

John Walker, Senior Research Fellow, University of Sussex/Brighton

Jemma Buckley, Deaf Heritage Project Manager, British Deaf Association

Roger Kitchen, BL/OHS Accredited Trainer, Kitchen's Ink

The British Deaf Association first formed in 1890 and continues to serve the Deaf community today. It is a membership organisation with the current mission statement 'to ensure a world in which the language, culture, community, diversity and heritage of Deaf people in the UK is respected and fully protected'. The original formation was as a response to the growing hostility towards signed languages in Europe, which still has relevance today.

During the association's life the developments in photography and film enabled the recording of British Sign Language allowing Deaf people to express their assertions in their first language. The association has accumulated 70 years of film footage dating back to the 1930s, which has, until now, remained unseen to the wider public. The BDA's Deaf Picture House project is in the second stage of the Heritage Lottery bid. If successful, the BDA will be restoring the footage, making it available on line, and inviting contributions from members of the current Deaf community. The aim of the project is to provide a shared narrative context to the recordings via an oral history methodology.

As a membership led institution, the boundaries between what is *institutional* history and what is *community* history are blurred. The BDA's annual events, communication from the board or its officers, project outputs, TV programmes, interviews and the recorded case studies are examples of archives held by the institution. However the same archive also includes names of relatives, faces, use of signs from a bygone age, different appearance, social status and expressions of identity. These issues of individual experience, community identity and representation within institutional archives are to be explored by the BDA project team. The proposed panel discussion will explore issues around the relationship between the institution, the community and the individuals:

1. How does oral history explore the relationship between institutional and community identities?
2. What is the role of video in oral history as a recorded narrative and archive?

3. How does oral history methodologies provide a means for reminiscence and shared narratives, which enables the Deaf community to have a stronger identity with the institution?
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NEW CORPORATE MEMORY PRACTICES IN FRANCE: FOUR ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS AND THE SHIFT TOWARDS INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

Myriam Fellous-Sigrist, Oral History Project Manager, French Railway Historical Society

Arthur Mettetal, Heritage Project Coordinator, Heritage and Nature Network of Haute-Savoie (Réseau Empreintes)

Marie-Noëlle Polino, Managing Director of The French Railway Historical Society

In France, including employees' voices in the history of private companies or public institutions only became acceptable in the 1990s. It is now increasingly common for French companies or institutions to set up oral history projects, the outcomes of which contribute to shape corporate heritage. In order to help explain this oral history shift, we will take four case studies of such projects as a starting point and use the relationships between collective and individual memory as our research frame.

Ms Polino, who has been active in the field of industrial heritage since the late 1980s, will chair a discussion of the status and the role of intangible (as opposed to material or written) heritage in institution and company's memory.

Mr Mettetal will describe a university project dealing with the Penarroya-Metaleurop foundry (closed and dismantled in 2003) which he has led since 2011. The foundry employees' association commissioned this oral history project that combines photography, history and sociology.

Ms Fellous-Sigrist will speak about the oral history project that she leads for the French railway historical society (AHICF). This was commissioned by the French national railway company (SNCF) to give voice for the first time to those of its former employees who had lived and worked during World War Two.

Finally, we will present the work of two of our colleagues. Ms Angoustures is responsible for a collaborative project about the history of the French Agency for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless People (OFPRA). Thirty four interviews with staff-members were filmed to help recover the memory of the institution.

As for Ms Bouscasse, an archivist for an association aiming to preserving the heritage of French maritime companies, she asked us to explain how oral archives are becoming crucial in reconfiguring the image of French ports and promoting their economic regeneration.

WORKSHOPS

COPYRIGHT AND ETHICS: THE OHS'S NEW GUIDELINES

Joanna Bornat, Emeritus Professor, Open University/Oral History Society and Rob Perks, Lead Curator of Oral History, British Library

At this workshop we will introduce the Oral History Society's newly revised ethical and legal guidance, available to members of the public at: <http://www.ohs.org.uk/ethics.php>

While oral history work must comply with the law, legal requirements alone do not provide an adequate framework for good practice. For this reason, the Oral History Society take the view that oral historians should ensure that their actions are guided ethically so that interviewees are protected and informed by clearly understood and expressed responsibilities and requirements.

The session will provide opportunities to explore the guidance and discuss ethical issues arising from oral history work. Participants are invited to bring their observations about the new guidance as well as questions arising from their experiences in interviewing and archiving.

TEACHING AND RESEARCHING ORAL HISTORY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Jenny Harding, Oral History Society, UK

A discussion about oral history Higher Education and funding led by Jenny Harding coordinator of the Oral History Society's Higher Education Group. Jenny will also provide an update of the Group's initiatives and future plans.

AUDIO EQUIPMENT FOR ORAL HISTORIANS

Nick Hayes, Inquit Audio

Making good recordings is vital for all oral historians and it's almost as easy to make a good one as a bad one.

We will explore the equipment and technique you need to make your recordings sparkle and fizz, and try to see where equipment is heading.

VIDEO FOR ORAL HISTORIANS – TO DO OR NOT TO DO?

Roger Kitchen, OHS accredited trainer

Because the cost of video equipment is dropping and the quality of product is rising, more and more oral historians are wondering whether to record their interviews on video rather than audio.

This workshop will briefly discuss the pros and cons of doing this and will suggest a reasonably priced equipment kit that will enable the novice to record very high quality results.
