

<b>Institution: University of Chester</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 34: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory</b>
<b>Title of case study: Memories Materialised: a public online oral history environment</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>'Memories Materialised' examines the 50-year-old memories of the people who lived on a half-mile stretch of Stockport Road in Manchester from 1963.</p> <p>The project has created new models of history data collection, encouraging discursive examination of individuals' recollections, in direct contrast to traditional methods which can direct the flow of those thoughts and memories.</p> <p>An online archive and publication have been generated and distributed to thousands of people, which are proving invaluable for researchers and the public alike, and give a valuable insight into a changing world in this snapshot of city life.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>During late 2011 to 2013, Grennan (Research Fellow in Fine Art at the University of Chester since February 2012) and a team from Great Places Housing Group undertook two major projects in the Levenshulme, Longsight and Hulme areas of Manchester. The first involved three studies of the attitudes of 50 people, aged between 14 and 20, to a range of accepted oral history research practices. The second involved three more studies of 30 older people, aged 60+, and their recollections of particular locations, people and events.</p> <p>Indications from these studies were used to hypothesise new models of both oral history data collection and data presentation, relative to the conventional model of oral history practice. Traditionally, a trained interviewer first directs the subject to specific topics and, second, constructs the interviewer's putative neutrality relative to the topics in view. This method also places a great deal of emphasis on the veracity of the interviewee's testimony, which is approached as a primary source of information. In this model, it is rare to bring interviewees together to discuss memories or to consider the ways in which memories themselves develop. However, with 'Memories Materialised', the emerging model of data collection encouraged discursive interrogation of memory itself, rather than default to documented facts, allowing contradiction, dissent and opinion about personal experiences of the past to come to the fore. This approach provided the basis for the new model of data presentation in an online environment in which a schematic map, a searchable location archive and a virtual walk-through present representations of the subjects' recollections.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grennan, S. (2012). Creative Mind Navigator: towards an online adaptation archive. Keynote address at DigHum12, KU Leuven, Belgium, 19/09/2012.  Programme: <a href="http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/digitalhumanities//DigHum12">www.arts.kuleuven.be/digitalhumanities//DigHum12</a>  Video: <a href="http://videolab.avnet.kuleuven.be/jukebox/?album=5fb773f8839decc38febfd7e8d6070c8">http://videolab.avnet.kuleuven.be/jukebox/?album=5fb773f8839decc38febfd7e8d6070c8</a></li> <li>Grennan, S. and Great Places Housing Group (2013). 'Memories Materialised', publication and website: <a href="http://www.memoriesmaterialised.com/">http://www.memoriesmaterialised.com/</a>. This output has been submitted in REF2.</li> </ol> <p>Key grant:  2012 - 'Levenshulme Intergenerational Memory Project', Heritage Lottery Fund, £38,900 (Great Places Housing Group).</p>

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Led by Dr Simon Grennan, the project team included an academic researcher (Grennan) and five public engagement and youth engagement staff from Great Places Housing Group, Manchester. The impacts described below have occurred during the period autumn 2011 to spring 2013.

Aiming to pilot new oral history methods and present the results publicly to a stakeholder community, 'Memories Materialised' bridged the gap between practice and cutting-edge theory in the field. The project recruited a team of 30 volunteers in two groups: people over 60 years of age with personal memories of Stockport Road in 1963 and people under 20 currently living in the area. The young people came from a wide range of European, Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds, reflecting the changes brought by migration into Levenshulme and the surrounding areas. The age difference between the groups provided insight into these changes, showing that Stockport Road in 1963 was a very different world to the one we know now. Over nine months, the groups worked together to share stories and document recollections of the street, producing more than 300 documents for use online and in print.

There has been a lasting impact from the study, particularly in terms of intergenerational awareness, local cross-sector partnerships and in oral history process and archive modelling. Over a year, the project provided an environment in which 30 people with very different life experiences and of very different ages worked closely together, identifying aims, creating and fulfilling strategies and producing the archive, gaining enhanced understanding of each others' experiences, values and points of view.

As well as the new partnership between research academia and Great Places Housing Group, the project has engendered new partnerships between local voluntary and community groups, their facilitators and members, particularly Levenshulme History Group, Inspire Centre, Northmoor Youth Group, Inspire Youth Group, totalling another 20 key, secondary participants.

The new model of an archive presented in 'Memories Materialised' is under scrutiny by research and professional archivists in the UK, at the Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London, and in Belgium at the KU Leuven. The impact of the model upon further developments in the fields of, firstly, digital archiving, and, secondly, public engagement with archives, is already being felt through uptake of both the conceptual framework and the model's specific technology by these two institutions: KU Leuven in terms of the ways in which visualisation techniques can provide a taxonomic framework for an archive, and Guildhall Art Gallery in terms of developing a proactive role for remote visitors to its collections.

The public legacies of 'Memories Materialised' also include an online archive and a free publication presenting a virtual walk-through, map and searchable archive which comprise the personal memories of this research project's subjects. The subject groups also directed the construction of the website and helped to design the publication. The site and publication were launched at a public event attended by 150 people and 3,000 copies of the publication were subsequently distributed door-to-door to domestic addresses within a mile radius of the stretch of Stockport Road. Since mid-March 2013, the site has averaged 54 views a day. For at least two more years, the site will be managed by the voluntary organisation Levenshulme History Group.

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. The impact of the 'Memories Materialised' project can be corroborated by the Community Development Officer, Great Places Housing Group, Manchester.

See also:

- Great Places Housing Group (2013). 'Memories Materialised Evaluation Report', Manchester: Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Media coverage:
  - (a) Great Places Housing Group (7 March 2013):  
<http://www.greatplaces.org.uk/Communities/What's%20Happening/Pages/Residents-launch->

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[1960s-memories-website.aspx](#);

(b) Manchester Evening News (8 March 2013):

<http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/levenshulme-high-street-history-mapped-1730492>

- The partnerships between the project and local voluntary and community groups are detailed on the 'Memories Materialised' website:

[http://www.memoriesmaterialised.com/wp/?page\\_id=41](http://www.memoriesmaterialised.com/wp/?page_id=41).

2. The impact of the research on public engagement with archives through visualisation techniques can be corroborated by a representative of the Faculty of Arts, KU Leuven, Belgium.