



Community Archaeology Study Days 2006/7

STUDY DAY 4 – How to do an oral history project

Yorkshire Air Museum, Elvington, York. Saturday 8th July 2006

Feedback from the study day:

"I found that there was a great deal more to this topic than I had previously suspected – an interesting learning experience." Participant

"There were plenty of helpful tips and advice. Everyone got on well together and asked interesting questions" Participant

"A good, straightforward introduction to oral history...it was another good session, well done!" Participant

**GREATER YORK
COMMUNITY
ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT**

CONTACT

Oral history is a discipline in its own right. Recently, a number of local history group members had asked for a study day on how to do an oral history project. Luckily, there is a very good Oral History Society in York and I was able to employ Van Wilson and Mike Race to lead the day.

The venue was the Yorkshire Air Museum, chosen as a place that evokes memories from the past. Last year, Van Wilson did a project on World War Two, which involved talking to York residents who had fought in the war and recording their memories.

Van and Mike began the day by addressing the question of 'what is oral history?' They then went on to explain how to choose your project topic (would it be thematic or a life history?), how to do background research, what equipment is needed, how to find and approach informants, how to conduct an interview, overcoming problems and transcribing the interview. They produced an excellent series of notes for the participants and brought along examples of their work.



After a tea break in the museum café, Van and Mike did some role play work. They performed two role plays, one showing how not to do an interview and one showing the correct way to conduct an interview. This proved extremely useful and highlighted some of the dangers and potential problems of interviewing elderly people. We also listened to some sound bites that demonstrated other problems of recording oral history interviews, such as church bells and canaries interfering with the dialogue!

After lunch, the participants were split into pairs and dispersed around the room. They were each given a Marantz tape recorder and had to conduct a 10 minute interview of each other, using a sample questionnaire. This proved a lot more difficult than most people expected! We rounded off the day by listening to some of the interviews we had just conducted, which proved to be very useful feedback.

Thanks ever so much to Van Wilson and Mike Race for such an excellent study day. For further information on the work of the York Oral history Society, see their details at <http://www.yortime.org.uk/>

Contact

For further information on Community Archaeology in Greater York please contact Jon Kenny on 01904 663020 or email jkenny@yorkarchaeology.co.uk

DISCOVER

SERVICES

GET INVOLVED

RESOURCES

PUBLICATIONS

HOME

Copyright © 2003–2006 York Archaeological Trust

