

MANCHESTER'S DNA – ORAL HISTORY TEACHER WORKSHOP

The video can be found [here](#)

Video timings:

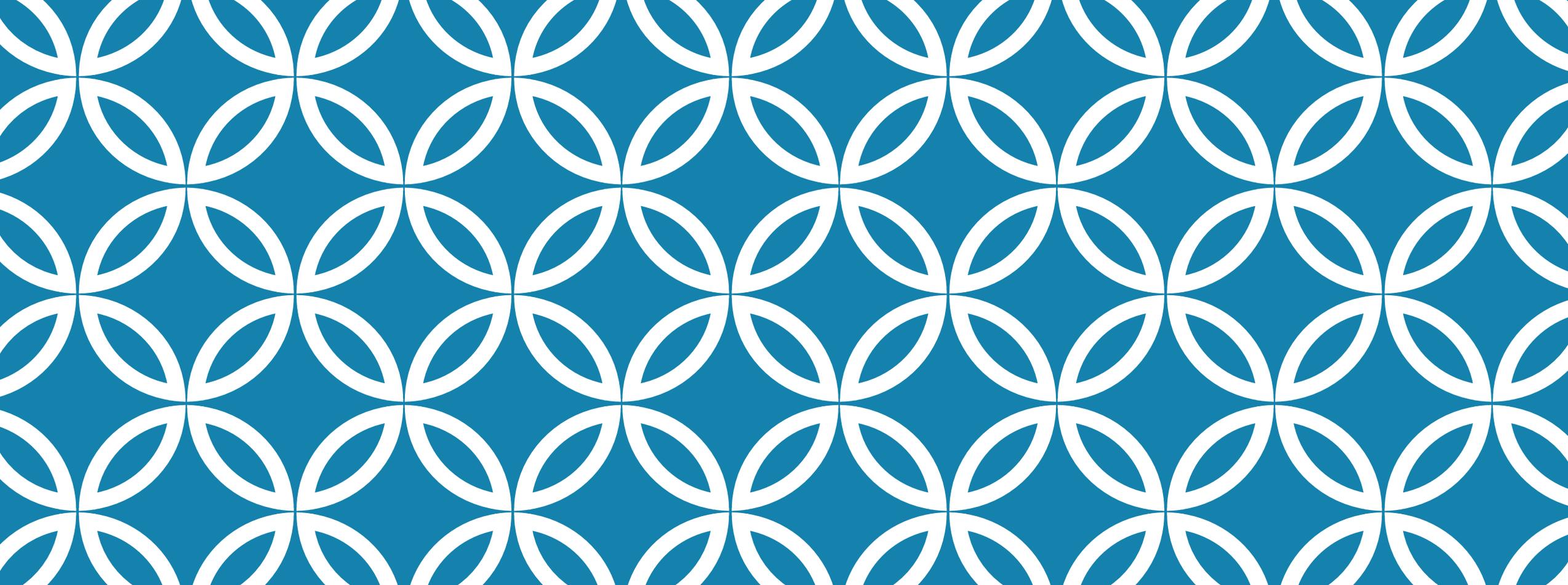
00:00:00 – 00:20:45 What is oral history?

00:20:46 – 00:26:47 Benefits of doing OH

00:26:48 – 00:50:12 Points to consider for the interview format – and alternative formats

00:50:13 – 1:11:57 Practical considerations – preparation, technology and permissions

1:11:58 – end Some projects for inspiration



ORAL HISTORY WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

guidance notes

What is oral history?

- A person's story in their own words.
- Verbal rather than written testimony (audio or audio visual).
- Anecdotal, incidental, hidden or overlooked.
- Reflective.
- Spontaneous.
- (usually) for the public record.
- Usually captured through a 1:1 interview.
- Questions framed within the form of a life story.

The importance of the life story interview



Photo: Lee Brown

Name Ian

“I like to be out, trying to earn a bit of

Pitch Morrisons, Wetherby

money. People see that and respect it.”

How long have you sold the mag for?

I've sold it for about 12 years. I was living in Stoke. Then, when I was homeless, I came to Leeds. I've always been a Leeds United supporter so I used to travel up a lot to see the football. So I ended up in a hostel here and started selling *Big Issue North*.

How did you become homeless?

I went through a divorce and ended up on the streets. I've struggled with drink my whole life. I can leave it for two or three days and then all of a sudden things get on top of me and then I can go on a bender. I've always been like that. I don't drink at home on my own – I go out and meet my friends in the pub. I meet all my friends in the pub and then there we go.

What's it like selling the magazine?

I love selling it. I've got some great regulars. There's a food bank in Wetherby. A customer goes and get two bags for me every week. He's about 70, the bloke who does that.

Why do you sell the mag?

You are not sitting on the dole and just taking what money the government gives you. That's not for me. I like to be out, trying to earn a bit of money. People know that you are doing something and not sat on your backside, especially when it's cold weather and you are outside freezing. They see that and respect it. Also, I'd find it difficult to get a different job. There's the drink now and again, plus I've

got a problem with one of my hands. I hurt it badly about two years ago and I can't really do anything manual.

Tell us about your tattoos.

I've got 12 altogether. Most of them are about my interests. I've got Mike Tyson's name on my forehead. I'm a big fan – always followed him. I got it done at a tattoo place and they did check with me before they did it. I've got other tattoos about Leeds football club, Vinnie Jones and horse racing. Henry Cecil was a horse trainer and I've got his name and the name of one of his best horses, Indian Skimmer, tattooed on me. I won £1,000 on that horse and that's when I got the tattoo done.

Do people treat you differently because of your tattoos?

I don't think so. People accept me for the way I am. I'd never have them removed. Once they are on, they're on.

What are your hopes for the future?

I'm quite content as I am. I'm trying to get working tax credits at the moment because I'm self-employed and it's something I am entitled to. The staff in the office have been a great help. They have filled all the forms in for me and, because my application was declined, they are now helping me with an appeal. If I get that, I will be really happy.

INTERVIEW: CHRISTIAN LISSEMAN

What oral history is not

- An unbiased or infallible account of the past.
- The story of third parties.
- Post memory (memories passed from one generation to another).
- Therapy (sharing memories can feel cathartic, though interviewers usually lack therapeutic skills)
- Journalism (Power should remain with the interviewee, who decides what information is shared and how it is framed. Interviewers should not pursue an agenda or hypothesis against the will of the interviewee.)

The benefits of doing OH work with young people

- Helps engagement with history on a personal level and develops empathy/ understanding.
- Enhances a sense of the past/ understanding of chronology.
- Helps to foster pride in people and communities.
- Interpersonal skills– approaching potential interviewees and explaining the project, listening as well as speaking, using non-verbal communication, reacting to the unexpected.
- Analytical skills - researching and preparing for an interview, making sense of information received
- Presentation skills - representing information to a wider audience in the form of a blog, poster, leaflet or exhibition
- Digital skills - using recording equipment, sound editing software, publishing software, online platforms and social media
- <https://www.ohs.org.uk/for-schools-main-page/>

Points to consider

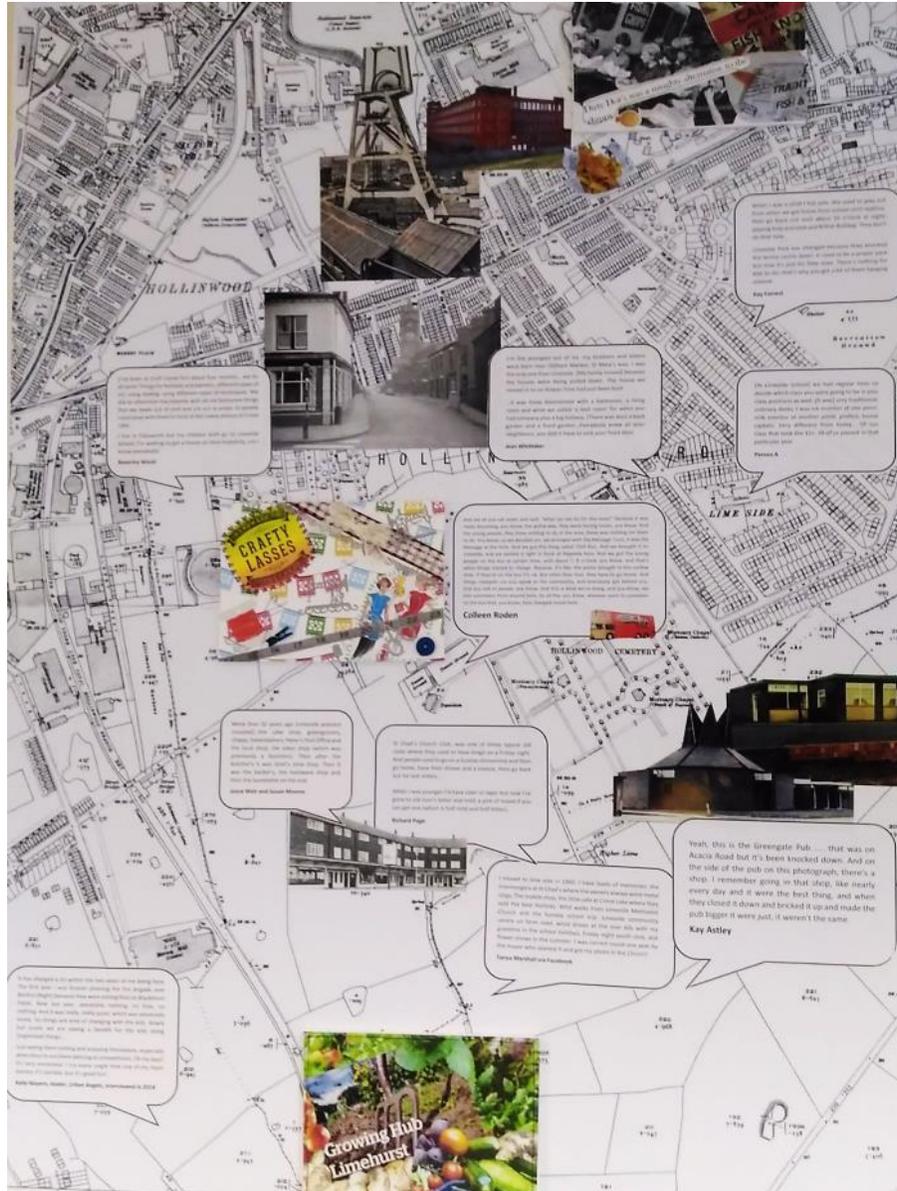
- The structure of a traditional interview (agreeing topics rather than set questions, being flexible whilst keeping to time, speaking as little as possible).
- The ability of young people to go off script/pick up on verbal clues.
- The dynamics of a conversation between different generations (issues of censorship).
- The type of subjects you wish to explore – some may be easier or more ethical than others.
- The amount of time you have to process the data collected.
- What outcomes you intend to produce as a result of the project and how this might effect planning/ permissions.

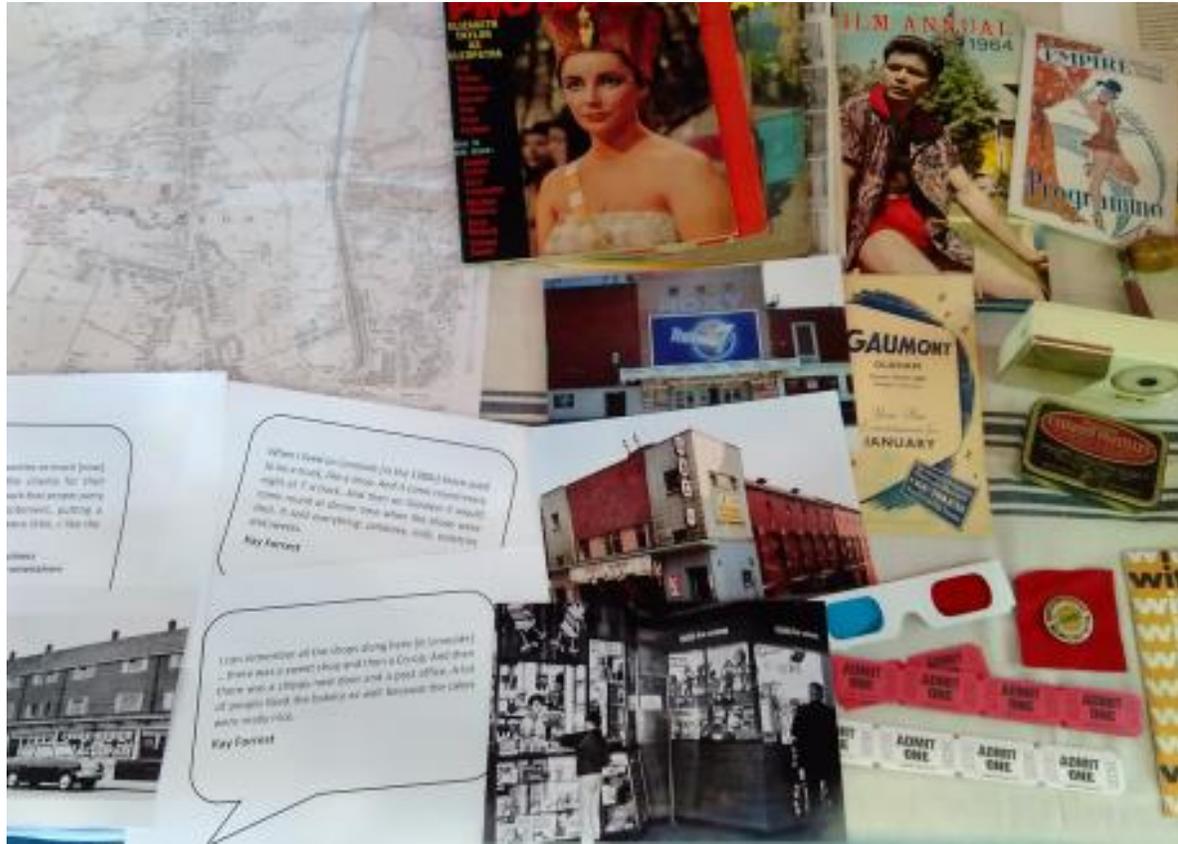
Alternatives to the standard 1:1 interview

- Groups of interviewers.
- Two way conversations (highlighting intergenerational differences, like R4's The Listening Project).
- Written statements or questionnaires.
- Creative reminiscence sessions (involving a group of people – emphasis more on process than outcomes).
- [Digital storytelling](#).
- Living libraries/ [human libraries](#).
- Role play.



Memory maps

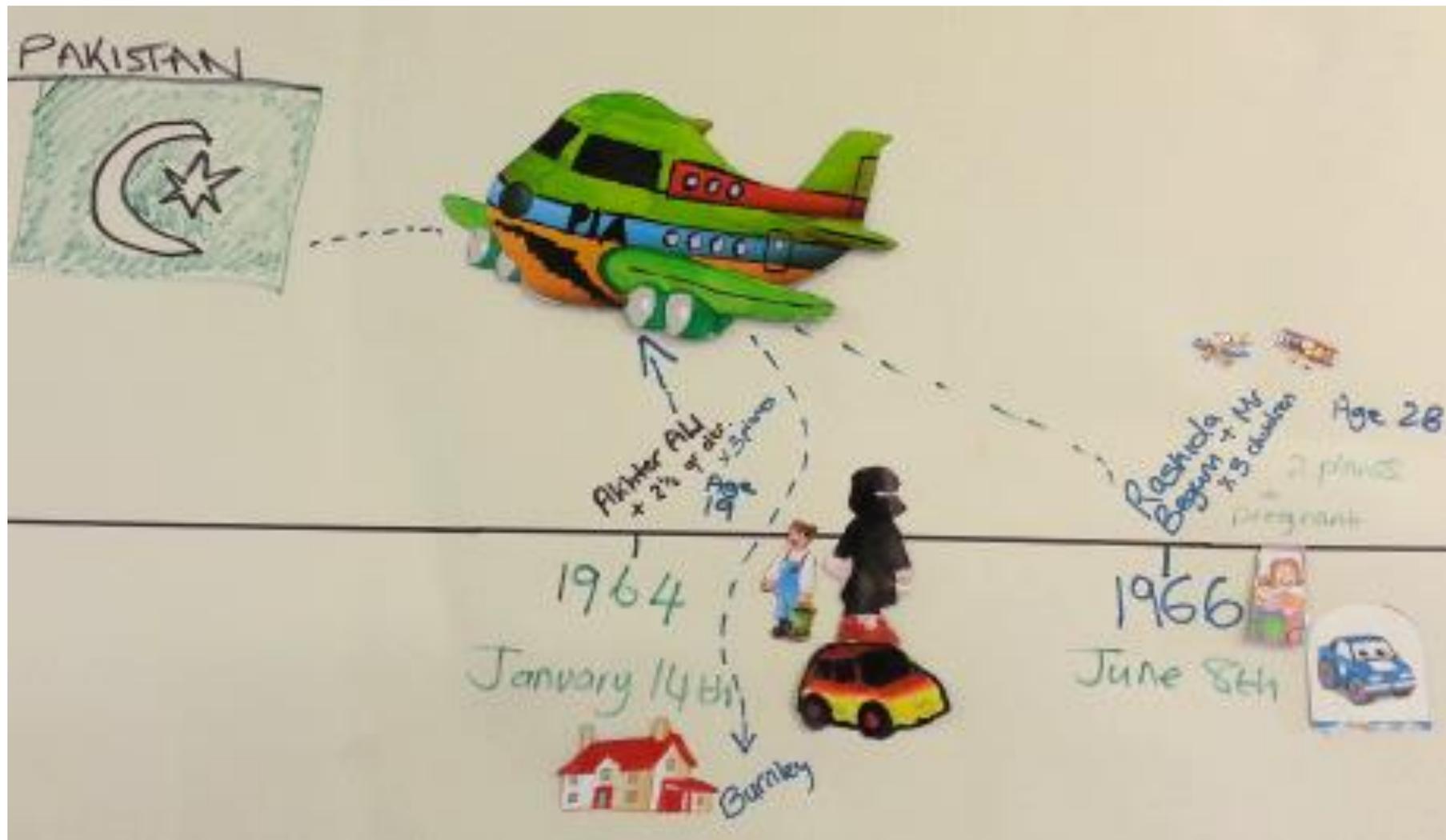




Memory boxes



Timelines



In preparation for interviews

- Do reminiscence work (to introduce group work, to identify potential topics of interest and to give young people the chance to reflect on their own experiences prior to an interview).
- Agree topics as a group.
- Do background research to increase awareness/ understanding.
- Discuss open questions/ starting points for conversations.
- Interview each other.

Recording an interview

- Personal safety – meet in a public space or consider adult supervision, avoid lone working
- Suitable environment – quiet, comfortable, private
- Recording equipment – digital Zoom or Tascam recorders. For advice on video see: [Using video | History at Leicester | University of Leicester](#)
- Remote interviews – see: [Covid-19 Remote recording - Oral History Society \(ohs.org.uk\)](#)
- See also cleanfeed: [Your Digital Story: Intro to Podcasting tutorial - YouTube](#)
- [Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust Oral History Toolkit](#)
- [Oral History Society advice for schools](#)



Sharing information

- Produce an information sheet to give out prior to each interview.
- Acquire informed consent – explain how the information will be stored and shared.
- Get written permission to cover what you would like to do with the information you have received – legal requirement.
- Create an index (list of subjects included in an interview with time stamps).
- Write a summary (short biography) or transcript.
- Create publications, animations, podcasts, films, comic books, posters, exhibitions, performances, artwork, learning resources, soundscapes, audio trails and apps.

Interviewee Consent Agreement

**Ahmed Iqbal Ullah
Race Relations
Resource Centre &
Education Trust**

.....[insert name of your project/ organisation]..... are grateful for your kind help and co-operation in our recording programme. The purpose of this Agreement is to ensure that your contribution is handled in accordance with your wishes (as stated below) and within the rules of the 1988 Copyright Act.

All material will be deposited at the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre (AIURRRC), University of Manchester and preserved for the future. This form, once signed, ensures that the copyright of the recording belongs to the University of Manchester. This form will be kept by AIURRRC. Your details will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR and treated as confidential.

Under the terms of this agreement your contribution will include any or all recordings (sound / video or both) and any photographic portraits taken as part of the interview(s). If you wish to contribute any further photographs, family documents or other material to the project and the AIURRRC you will be asked to sign a separate consent form to cover these items.

Please circle your answer to each question.

| | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Can the AIURRRC make your contribution available to the public for research purposes? | YES / NO |
| 2. Can the AIURRRC use your contribution: | |
| in exhibitions, displays and performances | YES / NO |
| On social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Wordpress | YES / NO |
| On our websites and our partners' websites | YES / NO |
| For broadcasting purposes (radio and television) | YES / NO |
| For educational use (school, college, university) | YES / NO |
| in publications such as books, leaflets and posters | YES / NO |
| 3. Can we include your name for the uses stated above? | YES / NO |
| 4. Can AIURRRC use your contribution immediately without any time restriction? If No, please state the time restriction you would like | YES / NO |

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| 5. Please state any other restrictions you would like to put in place: | |
| | |
| Your name: | |
| Your address: | |
| Your date of birth: | |
| Nature of contribution: | |
| Interviewee signature: | Date: |
| | |
| Interviewer name: | |
| Interviewer position: | |
| Interviewer signature: | Date: |
| | |
| Interviewer Parent/Carer signature: | Date: |
| | |

Looking for inspiration?

[Making Manchester | Olympias Music Foundation](#): a performance at RNCM based on oral histories collected by students at Dean Trust Academy.

[With Women](#): a collection of stories about Black and Asian midwives produced by students at Loreto High School.

[Roads to Wythenshawe](#): an app based on oral histories produced by young people from the WOW Zone in partnership with MMU.

[Top of the Bill](#): a research project by Cedar Mount students resulting in promenade performances at the Manchester Police Museum.

[Ladderedge Country Park Audio Trail](#): produced by students from Churnet View School in Staffordshire