Collaborative Geographies

The Politics, Practicalities, and Promise of Working Together

Edited by

RUTH CRAGGS, HILARY GEOGHEGAN, and INNES M. KEIGHREN

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP

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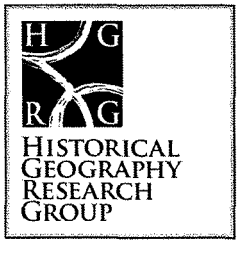

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Foreword

Catherine Souch

Collaborative research in all its forms provides many exciting opportunities. Over the last decade one strand of collaborative research and support, the Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA) scheme, also known as Co-operative Awards in Science and Engineering (CASE), has become increasingly important in the postgraduate funding landscape of the UK. Offered in different forms by each of the UK Research Councils, geographers have been particularly effective in accessing the opportunities provided by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and the National Environmental Research Council (NERC). Whilst each of these schemes has its own particularities, all are intended to encourage and develop partnerships between Higher Education Institution (HEI) departments and non-academic organisations and businesses.

As the chapters in this volume illustrate, these CDA opportunities have served geography and geographers well. Whilst healthy discussions continue across the community about the 'relevance' and 'impact' of geographical research, whether in policy, economic, societal, or environmental contexts, CDAs provide notable examples of success in terms of fostering new relationships and meaningful engagements with HEI and non-HEI organisations. Ranging from NERC-funded climatologists working with national energy providers, to AHRC-funded cultural and historical geographers working with national galleries and cultural institutions, examples of productive partnerships generating creative, innovative, and tangible outcomes abound.

The basic premise of collaborative doctoral schemes is that there are benefits for all those involved: the students, the supervisors, and the partner organisations. For the students there are opportunities to access training, facilities, and expertise not available in an academic setting alone, and to gain first-hand experience of work outside an academic environment. This affords real potential to develop career-enhancing skills in addition to an academic qualification, and alternative career opportunities are frequently opened up to students. CDA students also have the opportunity to put theory into practice and to contribute research and new thinking to the development of cultural policy, practice and services in their host non-HEI institution, and to disseminate their research through a range of media to diverse audiences. Supervisors can access different networks and realms of expert knowledge, and benefit from additional opportunities to shape the research direction of the partner body. From CDAs, other forms of collaboration, impact, and funding often follow. For the non-HEI, benefits are many: from feeding new research into strategies, policies, programmes, and services; to enhancing staff expertise and supervisory capacity; to deepening institutional understanding of collections and subjects; to added value brought to programmes including enhanced catalogues, digitisation projects, learning programmes, and exhibitions.

Such collaborations do not, however, come without challenges. Expectations, demands, and opportunities all have to be moderated and negotiated, with a steep learning curve for all involved. Right from the outset, students need to be embedded in their university *and* the partner institution. This takes time and can be even more challenging if the institutions are some distance apart. Deadlines for delivery, measures of accountability, and even hours of work can be quite different in HEIs and non-HEIs, and understandings of what constitutes a Ph.D., and the demands of original research, may be patchy in the non-HEI.

The fundamental purpose of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), is to recognise, promote, and support excellence in our discipline, geography, and to encourage the

development and use of this knowledge. Collaboration is at the core of the Society's research strategy and delivery. Over the last decade, we have actively pursued a number of CDAs and have also served as a collaborative delivery partner for 'impact' in larger Research Councils UK (RCUK) grants. Our greatest success has been with the AHRC CDA scheme, through which five funded Ph.D. studentships have focused on the Society's collections, with a particular eye to new perspectives, new audiences, and new forms of engagement. The programme is to grow in the next three years, with three CDAs annually, as part of an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) with the Royal Society. This is a great opportunity for the Society and for historical geographers together to develop genuine knowledge partnerships and to inform and engage new audiences.

1

Introducing collaborative geographies

Ruth Craggs, Hilary Geoghegan and Innes M. Keighren

Whilst interdisciplinarity has a long tradition in historical geography, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) scheme, and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Cooperative Awards in Science and Engineering (CASE) programme, have provided new impetus for collaborative working. In a funding climate in which impactful research is regarded as a priority, these schemes have been successful in promoting knowledge exchange between the academy and external partners and in providing students with an opportunity to develop new skills whilst producing outstanding scholarship. Historical geographers have been particularly successful in securing funding through these schemes and in developing innovative partnerships with a range of external organisations. For non-Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)—museums, public bodies, learned societies, and community groups, among others—the benefits of collaboration come from the new perspectives which students bring through extended research with institutions' staff and collections; the opportunity to work with academics in reaching new audiences; and the impetus which such relationships bring to re-envisioning organisations' current practice and future development.

In response to the exciting and innovative nature of current and recent collaborations in historical geography, contributors to this volume reflect on the nature of the collaborative process—its politics, practicalities, and promise. The chapters explore what it means, both practically and intellectually, to work together in the production of geographical knowledge. The volume brings together the perspectives of students, academic supervisors, and representatives from partner organisations in exploring the benefits and challenges of working collaboratively. Not all collaborations survive, and such failures can be personally and institutionally damaging. For obvious reasons it has not been able to include such stories here, although the contributors to this volume elucidate some of the academic and practical challenges of collaboration, highlighting their own experiences and suggesting ways in which they were able to negotiate such difficulties. The individual chapters examine the making and maintenance of collaborative partnerships across a range of organisations and—in addressing the personal, institutional, methodological, and ethical dimensions of collaboration—provide a useful guide for those HEIs and non-HEIs eager to initiate similar such connections. In addition to being a showcase of current collaborative undertakings in historical geography, and allied disciplines, the volume considers how productive relationships are developed and managed; how the competing demands of the academic and public sector are negotiated; and how geographical knowledge is communicated to, and informed by, partner organisations. These essays reveal, then, something of the otherwise-implicit and under-examined process of collaboration which underpins much work in historical geography.

The volume opens with Felix Driver's account (Chapter 2) of the patterns and prospects of collaborative research in historical geography. Reflecting on the temporal, geographical, and economic trends in collaborative research funding, Driver describes the ways in which departments of geography, in particular, have responded to the challenges and opportunities afforded by collaboration. In outlining the history of collaborative

research at one academic institution, Driver prompts consideration of the factors that have motivated historical geographers to pursue collaboration and the possible reasons for their success in so doing. Driver concludes by evaluating the possibilities presented to historical geographers by the AHRC's new Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) scheme, first introduced in 2012–2013 (see also Chapter 9).

James Fenner (Chapter 3) and Sarah Evans (Chapter 4), in their contributions, reflect on their personal experiences of working as CDA students between provincial university departments and metropolitan museums and learned societies. Fenner provides a useful insight into the genesis of his project and of the difficulties inherent in conducting research at a partner organisation then undergoing radical restructuring as a consequence of government funding cuts. Fenner's account highlights the contingencies which influence all research projects but which can be particularly acute in the context of a dependent and collaborative relationship. Sarah Evans focuses, in her account, on the problems and possibilities of the 'betweenness' associated with working across geographically-distant 'home' and 'host' institutions. Evans shows how mobility between these sites (both geographical and epistemic) not only generated practical challenges, but also contributed intellectually to her research.

Julie McDougall (Chapter 5) and Nuala Morse (Chapter 6) each describe, from their perspective as CDA students, the difficulties of negotiating and managing the occasionally-distinct expectations of HEI and non-HEI partners. Whilst both authors highlight the practical opportunities which their formal status within non-HEIs offered them in terms of access to resources, and the ability to communicate their research findings beyond the academy, Morse, in particular, points to the specific challenges associated with researching *on*, rather than simply *with*, the non-HEI. In considering the difficulties inherent in the co-production of knowledge, Morse argues that we need to be careful and flexible in our research methodologies, in negotiating ethical practice and

organisational structures, and in creating 'safe spaces' to promote genuine engagement with collaborating staff.

From consideration of the practical obstacles and opportunities of CDAs, the volume then turns to examine the future directions and potential outcomes of collaboration for individuals within and beyond the academy and for non-HEIs. George Watley and Patricia Sinclair's discussion (Chapter 7) of Watley's own CDA research suggests some of the important ways that academic work can be embedded within the practice and purpose of the non-HEI partner. Watley's research—and the opportunities it opened up for pedagogical innovation in his home HEI—had a range of reciprocal benefits for his partner institution and for his own personal and professional development. The experience of Alison Hess (Chapter 8), of moving from being a CDA student to an employee of her partner non-HEI, is also indicative of the career development opportunities generated by collaborative working. As well as reflecting on these opportunities, Hess provides a useful, personal account of the nature and purpose of collaboration as her role shifted between that of student, researcher, and employee across a five-year period. Hess's chapter also addresses the CDA scheme more broadly, and describes the differences between 'traditional' and 'collaborative' routes to doctoral study.

The volume concludes with two explorations of the longer-term impact and influence of collaboration for universities and their partners. Writing from the perspective of a non-HEI, Tim Boon (Chapter 9) narrates the changing engagements with academic research that have characterised the museum sector. Reflecting on the experience of CDA projects undertaken within his own institution, Boon describes the value of such awards to non-HEIs. Boon concludes by looking to the future and to the potential that new mechanisms for the distribution of AHRC CDA funding offer non-academic partner organisations. Alison Blunt, Eleanor John, Caron Lipman, and Alastair Owens meanwhile examine (Chapter 10) a broader research collaboration—the establishment of an interdisciplinary research

centre, which stemmed from an initial CDA studentship. Highlighting the processes through which the centre emerged, from individual conversations to feasibility studies, the authors discuss the processes of securing institutional backing for the centre and formalising the relationship through a partnership agreement. Reflecting on the importance of building strong institutional and personal relationships, based upon shared expectations and intellectual and practical investment, the authors describe the value of collaboration to both universities *and* non-HEI partners. Moreover, the authors' experience attests to the ways in which relatively small-scale collaborations, such as those embodied in individual doctoral awards, can develop into larger, deeper, and long-standing collaborative partnerships.

Taken together, the chapters in this volume suggest three ways in which the future promise of collaborative research in historical geography might take shape. First, collaboration will continue to raise the public profile of historical geography, encouraging innovative ways of disseminating research findings, such as those exemplified by George Watley and Patricia Sinclair's Oral History Roadshow (see Chapter 7) and Alison Hess's contribution to the forthcoming communications gallery at the Science Museum (see Chapter 8). Second, the successful example of doctoral collaboration provides a model for what might also be achieved at pre- and post-doctoral levels. There are clear opportunities for would-be historical geographers to collaborate with non-HEIs as part of undergraduate- and master's-level placement-linked dissertations. Moreover, there is an urgent need for successful collaborative doctoral research to be communicated through funded postdoctoral work (not least through the AHRC's Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement scheme). Third, there is considerable scope for the expansion of collaboration within historical geography, particularly in relation to international collaboration, opportunities to work in the Global South, and to develop larger-scale domestic collaborative relationships in innovative ways (see Chapter 10). We need to consider, then, how

to be more inventive, ambitious, and risk-taking in historical geography collaborations.

2

Historical geographers in collaboration: patterns and prospects

Felix Driver

INTRODUCTION

Collaborative research takes many forms in many different contexts: it was certainly not invented by the research councils. Yet the word 'collaboration', like 'partnership' or 'impact', is today something of a talisman in the world of higher education policy-making, and for this reason many academic researchers might prefer to keep a safe distance from excessive proselytising about its virtues. That would be understandable, and in some ways admirable, especially in view of the amount of funding now being made available in its name. Keeping this distance might also, possibly, lead to a more nuanced—and hopefully a more historical—sense of what collaboration in the production of knowledge actually means, or could mean, in a wide variety of different settings, from geographical exploration and laboratory science, to the increasingly-visible engagement (another buzz-word) between geographers and artists.

But keeping our distance will only take us so far. One of the most striking, and in some respects unexpected, features of the recent history of collaborative research funding in the UK has been the enthusiasm with which historical geographers have

embraced its promise. Over the last decade, collaborative research studentships have become one of the main ways in which our sub-discipline has developed new relationships with other disciplines and professions, notably within the heritage sector, and more visible connections with institutions and communities beyond the academy. These kinds of postgraduate award, originally known as CASE studentships (Cooperative Awards in Science and Engineering), have been available since 1994 in the physical sciences, where they were designed to encourage closer links between industry, commerce, and university research. The involvement of public bodies, government agencies, and charities in such schemes has since been extended to the health and social sciences. Since the late 1990s, Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) CASE studentships have become an increasingly significant source of support for postgraduate researchers in human geography. The ESRC scheme is notable for engaging a wider range of partners than CASE studentships supported by other research councils. These partners include a number of organisations within the heritage sector, not least major national museums, with which historical geographers and others have established new relationships through ESRC-funded collaborative studentships. As Demeritt and Lees concluded in their 2005 study of ESRC CASE studentships in geography, 'Contrary to those bemoaning the relevance and influence of academic geography, this success in these collaborative studentship programmes demonstrates the appeal of geographical research to a wide variety of public, private and voluntary sector organizations.'[1]

Demeritt and Lees published their study at a time when a new research council—the Arts and Humanities Research Council, previously the Arts and Humanities Research Board—was establishing its own version of the CASE programme, which it named the Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme. This development coincided with a more vigorous professional and public debate around the discourse of 'knowledge transfer' and the emergence of other models of collaboration, emphasising the two-way exchange of knowledge as much as its 'application' or

'dissemination' from the academy. Subsequently, political and financial imperatives associated with the financial crisis and the restructuring of higher education have shaped the funding landscape in such a way as to heighten the significance of 'impact'—which is another way of saying that, in the longer term, the price of research council status for the arts and humanities was an increased engagement with the language and instruments of public policy. The sometimes acrimonious debates over the discourse of 'impact' within research funding and assessment amongst UK academics and policy-makers over the last few years have perhaps obscured the extent to which academic collaboration with non-academic bodies has become routine—within the arts and humanities, as well as in the social and physical sciences—in ways simply not imaginable twenty or even ten years ago. In the process, or so I will argue here, historical geographers have been presented with significant new opportunities.

This essay outlines patterns of collaborative studentship funding for historical geography over the last decade, and its future prospects. As a preliminary, it should be emphasised that historical geographers find support for their research—including postgraduate research—in a wide variety of ways. In quantitative terms, research-council-funded postgraduate research remains a minority pursuit: but its influence in shaping university policy, departmental strategy, and student choice is undoubtedly highly significant, and arguably more influential than ever. The adoption of collaborative schemes by the research councils has had an important influence in shaping approaches to postgraduate training in our universities disproportionate to their numerical or financial scale. This is one of the reasons why it is important to be alive to the possibilities of such schemes, and to the pattern of success or otherwise that historical geographers have enjoyed.

Historical geographers have, in fact, received significant amounts of funding support from the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and its successor the ESRC (established in 1983), though in recent years our comparative success in collaborative schemes has not been matched in other ESRC grant competitions.

However, significant historical research continues to be funded by the ESRC, including large-scale and high-profile projects such as the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project (which incidentally has a significant geographical component).[2] Moreover, since its establishment in 1998, the AHRB (which became AHRC in 2005) has presented historical geographers with further funding opportunities. In 1999–2000, representations were made to the AHRB for the inclusion of aspects of historical geography, cultural geography, and the history of geography within its remit. The fact that all of these subject areas (and others, including environmental archaeology and the history of cartography) were soon given explicit recognition in AHRB documentation was by no means inevitable: it depended on the case being made.

NATIONAL PATTERNS: HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY AND COLLABORATIVE STUDENTSHIPS

In 2005, Demeritt and Lees concluded that 'human geographers have been far and away the most active participants in the [ESRC] CASE programme, with 28 per cent of all awards classified as human geography'.[3] The authors attributed this success to geographers' flexible and synthetic skills which were much in demand within public, voluntary, and business sectors. However, the evidence base for the study of ESRC CASE awards is now somewhat limited. The absence of reliable and accessible data on the pattern of these ESRC awards (especially since 2011 when the Doctoral Training Scheme devolved decision-making over awards to regional consortia) is as perplexing as it is frustrating. Piecing together the available evidence, we know that project partners on ESRC CASE studentships supervised by geographers have included a number of heritage sector organisations, notably the British Library, the Museum of London, the National Archives, the Science Museum, the Geffrye Museum, and the National Trust. Historical geographers have been involved in supervising some of these projects, but due to the lack of a comprehensive

data archive, it is impossible to measure in any precise way just how significant a role historical geography projects and heritage sector partners have played in the ESRC scheme.[4]

The disciplinary pattern of collaboration on AHRC-funded Collaborative Doctoral Awards is somewhat easier to map, as data has been published annually since its establishment. From 2005 to 2012 inclusive, the AHRC made nearly 500 Collaborative Doctoral Awards to support postgraduate students working in the UK across the arts and humanities, each involving a co-supervisor in a non-academic organisation (Table 2.1). This figure includes thirty-seven awards (7.5 per cent) supervised in departments of geography, most of them historical or cultural in nature, and an unknown number of further projects involving geographers but formally based in other departments. The CDA scheme data suggest that human geography, a relatively small sub-discipline in the AHRC context, has been punching well above its weight: for comparison, geographers represent less than 2 per cent of the current membership of the AHRC Peer Review College.

The AHRC scheme has proved an effective way of initiating and developing collaborations between historical geographers and external organisations, notably on public engagement and collections-related research. A significant proportion of funded projects have involved partners in the heritage sector, broadly defined. Table 2.2 shows the twenty-seven different partner organisations involved in supervising CDAs held within departments of geography between 2005 and 2012. Five of these organisations—the British Museum, the Museum of London, the National Maritime Museum, the Royal Geographical Society (with Institute of British Geographers), and the Science Museum—had multiple awards over the period as a whole, accounting for 46 per cent of the total number. Other partners—including the Geffrye Museum, the Museum of Childhood, the National Library of Scotland, and Porthcurno Telegraph Museum—supported multiple studentships. Other partners included major national museums (such as the Imperial War

Table 2.1: AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Awards to departments of geography, 2005–12

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Aberystwyth								1	1
Cambridge				1					1
Edinburgh					1				1
Exeter			1	1	2	1	2		7
Glasgow							1		1
King's College London	1	1							2
Newcastle								1	1
Nottingham				1	1	1		1	4
Oxford					1				1
Queen Mary, London					1	1		3	5
Royal Holloway, London	1	1	1	2		2	2	1	10
Sheffield				1					1
University College London					1				1
University of the West of England						1			1
Total geography	2	2	2	6	7	6	5	7	37
Total AHRC CDAs	41	49	58	60	67	74	77	67	493

Source: AHRC listings of CDA award outcomes (accessed 1 March 2013): http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Pages/Collaborative-Doctoral-Awards.aspx

Note: The published data refer to awards, not to individual studentships: they may include more than one studentship awarded simultaneously or in successive years (the latter data are not consistently available). The table also excludes collaborative studentships awarded within standard research grants or funded through strategic programmes (such as those in the AHRC Landscape and Environment programme directed by Stephen Daniels, which supported five CDAs, including two in departments of geography).

Museum), regional and civic museums (the Derby Museum and Art Gallery), environmental heritage bodies (Jurassic Coast), arts organisations (Arts Catalyst), and specialist conservation organisations (Botanic Gardens Conservation International).

There will always be room for debate over the institutional range and geographical spread of these partnerships: public sector bodies, especially museums, have accounted for a much larger proportion of awards than in the case of the ESRC scheme, and there has been some concern over the concentration of awards in larger metropolitan organisations capable of supporting a succession of awards. This debate was intensified by the creation of the Collaborative Doctoral Partnership scheme in 2012–13, in which the larger non-Higher Education Institution (HEI) partners—many of them London based—manage a substantial proportion of the awards. Overall, it is clear from Tables 1 and 2 that the CDA scheme has thus far funded a variety of different kinds of partnership, involving HEIs and partner institutions in many parts of the UK.

The pattern of awards under the AHRC CDA scheme suggests that some departments have been more successful than others in developing partnerships and winning funding. Given the impetus to selectivity often associated with the development of UK human geography in the era of research assessment, some degree of concentration might be expected. Yet it should be emphasised that the AHRC scheme has, until 2012, operated on an open competition basis, and there has been no attempt to restrict allocations by means of quotas based on periodic assessments of departments as there was, for example, under an earlier ESRC studentship scheme (which included a specific process for determining which departments were eligible to receive CASE studentships). Departments which have a significant presence of geographers working in the arts and humanities—which for these purposes includes historical geographers, cultural geographers, environmental archaeologists, historians of geography, and historians of cartography—would naturally be expected to have more opportunities within such a scheme. These

include, for example, significant numbers of historical geographers at Exeter, Nottingham, and Queen Mary and Royal Holloway, University of London. Equally, humanities-inclined historical or cultural geographers working in smaller groups have also been able to develop partnerships and win funding under this scheme, as the example of the University of the West of England indicates.

Table 2.2: Partners on AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Awards in departments of geography, 2005–12

Arts Catalyst	Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site
Audiences Yorkshire	London Transport Museum
Botanic Gardens Conservation International	Museum of London*
British Geological Survey	National Library of Scotland†
British Museum*	National Maritime Museum*
Cittaslow	Oslo Lufthavn AS
Comm. for Architecture and the Built Environment	Porthcurno Telegraph Museum†
Cornwall County Council	Ragged School Museum
Derby Museums and Art Gallery	RGS (with IBG)*
Dify Biosphere	Rufford Abbey Country Park
Environments Systems Ltd	Science Museum*
Geffrye Museum†	South West Coast Path
Glasgow Museums Service	V&A Museum of Childhood†
Imperial War Museum	

Note: * partners with multiple awards in different rounds; † partners with multiple studentships within a single award.

The concentration evident in Table 2.1 is not simply, or even primarily, a product of generic patterns of selectivity associated with the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and Research Excellence Framework (REF). Of the five departments which came out on top of the league tables of research performance in human geography in the wake of RAE 2008, two (Oxford and

Cambridge) figure only slightly, and two (Durham and Bristol) are completely absent. There may perhaps be an 'ESRC effect' here, insofar as it is possible that historical and cultural geographers at these departments may be concentrating their efforts on ESRC-funded collaborative studentships. Yet the pattern observed by Demeritt and Lees in the case of ESRC awards suggests that, at least in the case of Oxford and Cambridge, the relatively low profile of these departments in collaborative studentship projects is not confined to the AHRC.[5] There may also be a 'departmental research culture' factor, insofar as historical and cultural geographers in some departments have consciously aligned their work with other researchers in the arts and humanities (notably in english, theatre studies, art history, and music) and have fostered collaborative links with external partners in the heritage and creative arts sectors: this would be true, for example, of the departments of geography at Royal Holloway, University of London and Nottingham. Historical geographers in these departments, as also at Exeter and Queen Mary, University of London, have been responsible for developing explicit strategies to support collaborative projects capable of attracting AHRC funding. At the same time, and often on the basis of their experience in collaborating with such departments, external organisations (especially museums and galleries) have sought to develop closer relationships with individuals and groups of geographers. Throughout this process, and contrary to what is sometimes assumed about patterns of concentration visible in the map of academic research funding, small-scale initiatives and personal connections have played an important role. In this case, at least, I would argue that top-down initiatives at either Research Councils UK (RCUK) or university level account for relatively little of the pattern we can see. In order to examine this further, it will be useful to explore the experience of one of these departments and its partners.

COLLABORATIVE POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AT ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, 2002–12

Between 2002 and 2012, the Department of Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL) received a total of twenty-two collaborative doctoral studentships from three research councils—the AHRC CDA scheme accounting for half of the total, with further CDA studentships being awarded under AHRC strategic research programmes (Table 2.3). Two-thirds of the total, including all but one of the AHRC awards and several other studentships funded by the ESRC and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), were made to projects involving partnership with museums, libraries, and other organisations holding historical collections. The remaining studentships were awarded for collaborative projects with NGOs, charities, an arts organisation, a think tank, and a public authority. Institutions supporting more than one collaborative studentship during the period as a whole included the Science Museum (four), the National Maritime Museum (two), and the Museum of London (two), all of them involving collections-based projects. Other projects also involving archival research were established with the British Library, the Natural History Museum, the British Museum, and the RGS-IBG. It should be emphasised that Table 2.3 is limited to projects funded by the research councils under CDA or CASE schemes, and involving joint supervision by non-academic partners. Yet the model had a wider influence. During this period there were also other doctoral projects, funded in other ways, involving elements of collaboration with these and other bodies, including, for example, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

In order to make sense of the pattern of partnership in Table 2.3, it helps to know something of the history of research strategy within the Royal Holloway department. This was not one of the departments awarded recognition for ESRC CASE studentships in the first round of the scheme: in fact, it was widely perceived at that stage (in the late 1990s) that such studentships

Table 2.3: Department of Geography, Royal Holloway, University of London collaborative studentships, 2002–12

Project	Partner	Funder	Year
Urban renaissance	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors	ESRC	2002
Popular memory and the city	Museum of London	ESRC	2002
The culture of enthusiasm	Science Museum	ESRC	2003
Child headed households	Street Child Africa	ESRC	2004
Health in central America	Science Museum	ESRC	2005
Hidden histories of exploration	Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)	AHRC	2005
Colonial copyright and the photographic image	British Library	ESRC	2005
Sharing human origins	British Museum	AHRC	2006
London before London*	Museum of London	AHRC	2006
The woolly rhinoceros	Natural History Museum	NERC	2006
Fashioning diaspora space†	V&A Museum	AHRC	2006
Steam after slavery	National Maritime Museum	AHRC	2007
Curating the global city	Museum of London	AHRC	2008
Water aid in Mali	Wateraid	ESRC	2008
The 2LO transmitter	Science Museum	AHRC	2008
The art of the botanic garden	Botanic Gardens Conservation International	AHRC	2010
Imperial coaling stations	National Maritime Museum	AHRC	2010
UK-Arctic network assemblage	Royal United Services Institute	ESRC	2010
Polished axes: object biographies	British Museum	AHRC	2011
Aerial surveying in colonial Africa	Science Museum	AHRC	2011
Empowering girls to claim rights in Kenya	World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts	ESRC	2011
Public art at Oslo airport	Oslo Lufthavn AS	AHRC	2012
Art-science collaboration	Arts Catalyst	AHRC	2012

Note: All the studentships listed above were standard research council CDA or CASE awards, apart from two awarded under AHRC strategic programmes: *AHRC Landscape and Environment Programme (with the Museum of London); †AHRC Diasporas, Migration, and Identity Programme (with the V&A Museum).

would only be applicable to policy-relevant and applied projects, especially in the UK. The case had to be made, within the department as well as more widely, for a more expansive vision of the kinds of project that a collaborative scheme could support, including, for example, work building on growing links with third-sector organisations in the field of overseas development, as well as major metropolitan museums and libraries. Once CASE recognition was achieved, serious discussion could begin with potential partners concerning possible projects likely to be funded by the ESRC. Here, undoubtedly, personal connections and networks were important: to access the right people at the right level (and at the right time) in potential partner organisations is clearly one of the most important enabling factors in the development of any collaborative project. For historical geographers, connections with staff in museums, libraries, and archives are made routinely as part of our professional lives. Less immediately visible, though increasingly important in the last decade, are the people who head research departments in the larger national museums and libraries, who themselves may have a significant track record in research and who have been seeking viable partnerships with academic researchers. The latter connections became much more significant once the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme was established in 2005. The experience of the Royal Holloway department with heritage-sector partnerships under the ESRC scheme was of direct use in developing projects with museums and related institutions under the AHRC scheme.

Broadly speaking, of the projects listed in Table 2.3 which were proposed and supervised by Royal Holloway historical geographers, or contained a substantial historical element, there were two types which stand out. The first reflected an interest in, and commitment to, new models of *public history*: these were projects that might arise from the need to present new versions of, say, urban, social, and technological history in the gallery spaces of museums and libraries, or which sought to create new models for the way people might relate to these histories via new technology,

the web, and social media. Sometimes these projects included an input to the design of new galleries; alternatively they might include experimentation with new formats for the communication of oral history (as in the production of sound walks for the Memoryscapes project with the Museum of London). The second type of project was characterised by a specific focus on *collections-based historical research*, including projects working with manuscripts, printed works, machines, instruments, artefacts, photographs, artworks, and specimens. These collections-based projects typically brought new academic perspectives and analytical techniques to bear on under-researched collections, and often (but not always) had a public engagement component, making the research available via web resources, public exhibitions, and popular publications. In reality, the distinction between the two types of project was inevitably blurred: the same project (say the Hidden Histories of Exploration project undertaken with the RGS-IBG) might depend on both new academic approaches to historic collections and new ideas about how to promote public engagement with these collections.[6]

In view of the widespread public debate over 'impact' within the academy, driven especially by its role in research assessment, it should be emphasised that CDA projects involving museums have rarely if ever been seen simply as exercises in 'knowledge transfer'. Collaborative doctoral research, as in any doctoral research, is ultimately about the production of new knowledge, not simply its dissemination. In some cases, the process of creating new knowledge takes place through intensive scholarly or scientific research on collections managed by, or housed within, partner institutions. In other cases, it emerges through the process of engaging with specialists, enthusiasts, and public audiences associated with major heritage sites and museums. Whatever the particular form and focus of the research, the partnerships developed at Royal Holloway and elsewhere are best understood as *knowledge partnerships*, in which there is a two-way flow of expertise and information. Staff involved in these partnerships on the museums' side have much to gain from the

opportunities presented by the academy (including support for their own research and training), whilst CDA researchers gain valuable work experience which may shape their future careers (see Chapter 8).

As the experience of actually undertaking or supervising CDA projects is discussed elsewhere in this collection, this is not the place to go into detail about individual projects. But it would be useful to say a little more about how the experience of managing these projects helped to shape a broader research strategy at Royal Holloway—for in this case it was certainly that way round (experience shaping strategy, rather than strategy driving activity). The success with early collaborative partnerships—the sheer fact of an RCUK 'kite mark' on what might otherwise be seen as a relatively small-scale initiative—gave them a certain visibility within the department and the institution as a whole. For example, the fact that these projects have been treated as research grants, managed by the research finance office rather than postgraduate administrators, has given them a certain cachet as far as research managers (and heads of department) are concerned. Of course, the income to the institution is trifling compared with most research grants. But here, perhaps, lies the key to their success: a very small project, if successfully managed within both institutions, will naturally lead to questions about further collaboration. From small beginnings, a CDA project can lead to bigger things (see Chapter 10).

After the initial run of success with collaborative studentships supervised by urban and historical geographers at Royal Holloway, the model began to be adopted within other research groups within the department. New projects also began to be conceived more strategically, as part of fostering and nurturing partnerships with external bodies such as the Science Museum and the British Library, which had the potential to develop in various ways for the department, for the partner institution, and for the individual student. Increasingly, this potential was built into collaborative studentship proposals, so that individual projects were situated much more clearly within the

longer-term development of multi-project partnerships between universities and non-academic institutions. Whilst these longer-term impacts are difficult to capture within conventional approaches to the evaluation of one-off academic projects like CDAs, the research councils clearly have an interest in attempting to do so. The success or otherwise of collaborative research schemes cannot be judged through short-term measures alone: their real value, I would argue, is in initiating and sustaining much longer-term partnerships which may bear fruit in a wide variety of ways.

FUTURE PROSPECTS: HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY AT LARGE

Over the last decade, historical geographers have made significant contributions to practice, policy, and public engagement beyond the academy. The growth of various forms of public engagement in recent years is reflected in the establishment of a new feature in the *Journal of Historical Geography* entitled 'historical geography at large'.[7] Broadly speaking, such activity is reflected in research-oriented exhibitions, in projects of public history and heritage, in science communication, and in engagement with new communicative and social media. Examining such activity more closely, it is clear that one of the ways these engagements have been generated is through collaborative research of one kind or another, including research at the doctoral level. These projects have had, and are continuing to have, an influence far beyond their immediate confines. And it is notable, especially in the context of the arts and humanities, that collaborative research has given renewed stimulus to historical geographers—not just in research, but in training, teaching, and career development.

Looking to the future, it is clear that the research councils are developing and expanding their collaborative schemes in various ways. Whilst the ESRC has devolved the administration of its CASE scheme, and apparently withdrawn from a more strategic

approach to its management, there is some evidence that the regional consortia which now administer doctoral studentship funding continue to give additional weight to collaborative projects involving external partners. The AHRC, meanwhile, has split its own scheme into two routes: an 'open call' similar to the existing system which continues to be administered centrally (though with a 'cap' on the number of applications each university can make), and a second route, now managed by non-HEI organisations in consortia known as Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (CDP). In January 2013, the AHRC announced its intention to support approximately forty studentships through the 'open call' and fifty studentships through the CDP route in 2013–14. This is a significant, and indeed remarkable, increase on historic levels (as can be seen from Table 2.1), especially given the austere financial climate. In light of the record I have described, the expansion of the scheme bodes well for the future prospects of support for postgraduate research in historical geography. Given the devolution of a significant part of the management of the scheme to CDPs, it is to be hoped that the AHRC will continue to make publicly available information previously provided about collaborative studentships, irrespective of the route by which they are funded, so that the development and performance of the scheme as a whole can continue to be monitored.

CONCLUSIONS

The ethos of the collaborative studentship—its commitment to a partnership model, its openness to the possibilities of research engaging beyond the academy, its acknowledgement of the variety of career pathways open to postgraduate researchers—is now being extended into research studentship provision more generally. This is evident in current thinking around the next incarnation of the AHRC's Block Grant Partnership scheme (the mechanism by which most of its studentships are managed) due to be introduced

from 2014, in which partnerships with external institutions are strongly emphasised. Within universities, what used to be called the skills agenda has broadened considerably, as twenty-first-century researchers come to face a dramatically-transformed world of employment challenge and opportunity. In this context, it is not difficult to see why the Collaborative Doctoral Award should have attractions: it offers an experience of working with professions and specialists with very different skill-sets and supports career paths well beyond the academy. Students undertaking such projects are exposed to new ways of working, and different kinds of expertise, relevant within as well as beyond the academy. Who else but geographers, those aficionados of the 'real world', would embrace the possibilities that such cross-border collaboration can bring?

Notes

[1] D. Demeritt and L. Lees, Research relevance, 'knowledge transfer' and the geographies of CASE studentship collaboration, *Area* 37 (2005) 127–137.

[2] Legacies of British Slave-ownership, http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/ (accessed 1 March 2013).

[3] Demeritt and Lees, Research relevance, (note 1) 134.

[4] Other partners on heritage-related ESRC CASE awards to departments of geography since 2001 include Forest Research, the Environment Agency, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

[5] Demeritt and Lees, Research relevance, (note 1), 134.

[6] F. Driver, Hidden histories made visible? Reflections on a geographical exhibition, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 38 (2013) 420–435.

[7] F. Driver, Historical geography at large, *Journal of Historical Geography* 36 (2010) 243–244.

3

'Beneath a hive of glass'[1]: the British Small Craft Exhibit and the experiences of researching model boats at the Science Museum

James Fenner

> They collect in a single focus the scattered rays which illuminate the recesses of the body politic; they present in a visible and striking form those features of our industrial and social life which almost of necessity escape common observation, and so to speak, they place beneath a hive of glass the operations and domestic habits of our human bees.[2]

INTRODUCTION

This lyrical description comes from the official catalogue of the 1883 International Fisheries Exhibition—a major public exposition held in the gardens of the Royal Horticultural Society on a site now occupied by the Science Museum. In various ways, the Exhibition was the precursor to the 'British Small Craft' displays within the now-closed Shipping Gallery of the Science Museum. These displays form the empirical basis to my study of curatorial practice. The research project is being carried out as part of an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded

Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA), held by the Science Museum and the University of Nottingham's School of Geography, and is investigating the stories behind the Shipping Gallery collection. The project had its origins in the mutual interests in interwar documentary film of two of my supervisors, David Matless and Tim Boon, from whose initial discussions the topic emerged. The project also complemented David's own research on boats within British historical/cultural geographical landscapes, in particular on the Norfolk Broads. Although these personal interests were the catalyst for the project, I have never felt restricted by my supervisors as to how the research should proceed.

The British Small Craft display was installed in 1963 as part of the Museum's new Shipping Gallery, and until the gallery's closure in 2012, comprised a sequence of twenty showcases containing models of British boats arranged primarily by geographical region. Many of the displays included accessory models and landscape settings, including human figures and painted backdrops. The majority of the craft on display were acquired well before 1963—some were collected for a 1936 exhibition organised by the museum and the Society for Nautical Research; others can be traced back even further to the aforementioned International Fisheries Exhibition.

The research considers the former British Small Craft display in terms of its presentation of national and local identity, the transference of knowledge from local regional areas to a national/international stage, its evocation of coastal and river landscapes, and its techniques of landscape miniaturisation. Archival sources reveal the complex cultural stories behind the creation of the models and displays, with national curators commissioning enthusiasts to create and/or present replica models of regional craft to the museum. Now in my third year, and writing my thesis, I can reflect on the eleven-month period of empirical research, during my second year, when I was based permanently at the Science Museum.

THE MUSEUM, THE EXHIBIT, AND THE NATURE OF THE DISPLAYS

The Science Museum, in its current incarnation, was formed in 1909. In 1912, the Bell Committee published a report proposing the construction of new, purpose-built accommodation for the museum, consisting of three blocks: East, Centre, and West. This ambitious vision was—as a consequence of war and financial depression—never fully realised, the East block being completed in 1928 and the Centre block only in 1961.[3] Responsibility for filling the Centre block with new galleries was assumed by William T. O'Dea, Keeper of Sailing and Aeronautics.[4] O'Dea's vision for the Aeronautics Gallery on the third floor, and the Shipping Gallery on the second, were innovative and ambitious. Although the gathering of models was still apparent in this later period, O'Dea's curatorship was geared more towards the overall aesthetics of the galleries. The Shipping Gallery was originally opened to the public in March 1963. Its twenty British small craft showcases, spread over a main and mezzanine floor, were part of the outside of a central 'island' display area in the middle of the gallery. O'Dea's exhibition techniques marked a shift in curatorial and museum practice; he wanted to entertain and attract visitors rather than dryly educate them. One installation from the gallery exemplifies this point: the Mevagissey Cornwall display (Figure 3.1) made by the artist Jenny Clements for the museum in April 1962, which illustrates the use of three-dimensional dioramic modelling.

The harbour jetty in the background, and the minute figures of the gulls on the roof of a building, lend the scene a sense of authenticity and fidelity. Carefully-crafted figurines (Figure 3.2) bring the scene to life: one fisherman showing another a bucket of shell fish at the end of a day's fishing—a moment of sociability captured. The display was further enhanced by a model of a Quay Punt, which had been created by Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. Terry for the museum in 1936. The acquisition of this piece is detailed in

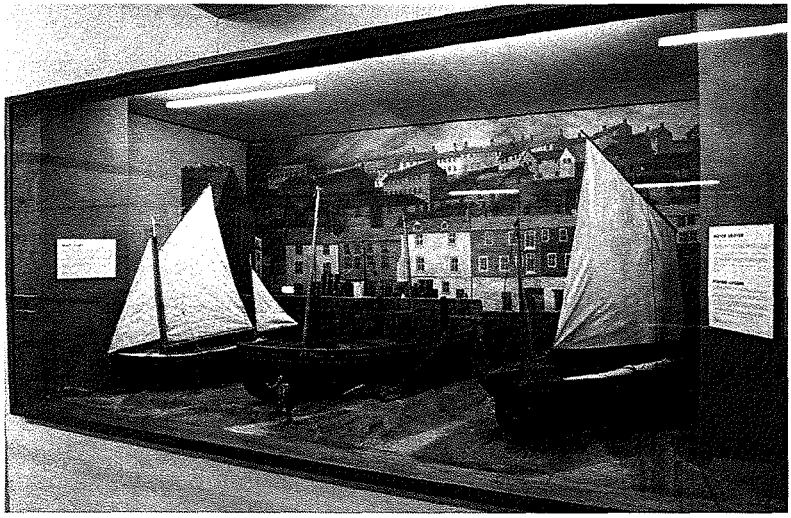

Figure 3.1: The Mevagissey Cornwall display

Figure 3.2: The two figurine Fishermen, Mevagissey Cornwall display

an internal memorandum from the then Assistant Keeper, Geoffrey Swinford Laird Clowes:

> Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. Terry O.B.E. of 'Soundings' ... Falmouth has brought us for examination a model of a Falmouth Quay Punt which he has recently made. This represents a very interesting type of vessel which used to be used in Falmouth Harbour for the supply of ships lying at anchor there but which has now gone out of use entirely, although a few still survive as yachts. Lieutenant-Colonel Terry, who lives on the spot, has done some careful researches into the matter of lines and detail and has obtained all possible information from local sailormen.[5]

As well as demonstrating the museum's desire to record an obsolete example of maritime transportation, the Quay Punt and its place within a now-removed three-dimensional dioramic setting is also emblematic of the other themes of the project. In this one example we can see not only the physical nature of the model itself but are also able to follow its acquisitional history. It is through the correspondence about this model, and the aesthetics of its display setting, that issues of national and local identity are brought into focus. This object, now placed in storage along with the rest of the Small Craft collections and contents of the gallery, in turn exemplifies the role of non-institutional knowledge and its accession into the collections. It also speaks to other themes of the project, namely the evocation of coastal landscapes (as well as seascapes) and illustrates clearly the techniques of landscape miniaturisation.

THE NATURE OF RESEARCHING AT THE SCIENCE MUSEUM

My reasons for spending the majority of my second-year at the museum, rather than in Nottingham, were twofold: first, to gain more museum experience with the aim of pursuing a career in

curatorship, and, second, (and perhaps more importantly) to benefit from uninterrupted access to the museum's archives and collections. Being on site, and being affiliated with the museum as a consequence of my CDA, meant that I was not confined to booking appointments or making do with fleeting visits. The archival documentation was also supported by the museum's own library and other collections in London (such as the National Archives, the British Library, and the Caird Library of the National Maritime Museum).

The project has four supervisors: two at Nottingham, and two at the Science Museum. Although four supervisors exceeds the usual number associated with a traditional Ph.D., the added support and variety in expertise has proved invaluable to me in terms of guidance. What is perhaps different from other AHRC studentships like this is that my Science Museum supervisors also have an academic background: one already holds a Ph.D. and conducts research in the history of science, whilst the other is pursuing doctoral research in geography. They offer new insights into the project, combining their own experiences of academia with in-depth curatorial knowledge of collections, exhibitions, displays, and broader museum cultures. Generally speaking, however, the organisation and logistics of regular meetings such as these can prove quite difficult with collaborative studentships. In my case, the solution was to have regular meetings at the university and at the museum. It is through these meetings, copious train journeys between London and Nottingham, and living and working in both cities that, as a researcher, I was able to experience two very different institutional environments and benefit from both.

During my eleven-month residency I was also able to take advantage of a variety of opportunities and training. I was invited to sit in on the monthly Curatorial and Collection Board meetings as well as the quarterly staff briefings. It was through these meetings that I encountered new people and gained a better understanding of the inner workings of the institution. This, in turn, meant that I was able to share in the future redevelopment

plans of the museum. I also visited the Science Museum's two main storage facilities: Blythe House in Kensington Olympia, London (a storage site for the museum's smaller objects) and Wroughton (the ex-RAF base used for the larger objects) near Swindon.

In terms of the training I received at the museum, I gained many useful skills that both helped my research and, I hope, strengthen my chances of employment in the museum sector. I was taught how to use MIMSY XG—the museum's computerised collections database—which helped me research the individual small craft models, including those that were no longer on display or in the museum's collections. This, in turn, meant that, with some guidance, it was possible for me to later update the information on MIMSY for all of the British Small Craft models. It is hoped that this will be beneficial to curators and other museum staff in the future—disseminating my research through another medium and, in turn, benefiting the museum. Other training that I took part in was directed more towards object handling and the avoidance of hazards, such as asbestos, again allowing me to acquire more museum-relevant experience in the process.

During my time at the museum there were many changes, and due to government cuts to the heritage sector some of these came in the form of staff redundancies. These dramatic changes speak to wider debates concerning museum culture and the public. There was, however, one particularly significant change to the museum which proved vital to the development of my research—the establishment of the museum's own Research and Public History Department, headed by Tim Boon (see Chapter 9). In recent years the museum has had a growing awareness of the value of academic research and collaboration and its role alongside the traditional museum function of engaging public visitors. This awareness was further heightened with the arrival of the current Director, Ian Blatchford, in November 2010, who has promoted the museum's engagement with academia. The department was officially opened in April 2012 and, for a short time, I was part of

that new office environment. The department is still in its infancy and is rich with ambition, and looks certain to be a supportive institutional mechanism for current collaborative doctoral students, like myself, as well those to come in the future. The department's public history remit has made it easier for my research to be shared more widely.

Another crucial element of the collaborative research process was the museum's wish to disseminate my findings to wider audiences. This culminated with me presenting my research through a Science Museum public talk and tour in April 2012. This was followed by a set of three blog postings on aspects of the British Small Craft exhibit.[6] I also took part in a recorded interview in the gallery for the programme 'Hearing Artefacts' on the radio station *Resonance*. It is through these media of public engagement that knowledge gained in any CDA research project can be disseminated to the public, cultural institutions, and academia. Furthermore, it is through the communication of my research (and other projects like it) that the museum has also been able to generate knowledge about its history and collections. Thus the intellectual benefits of collaboration are reciprocal and mutually constituted.

CONCLUSIONS

The closure to the public in May 2012, and the subsequent total removal of the Shipping Gallery by December 2012, is an early indication of longer-term plans to refurbish the museum—part of the institution's fifteen-year vision for redevelopment. The Shipping Gallery will be replaced with a new communications gallery due to open in 2014 (see Chapter 8). The obvious question with regards to this change is why had the gallery remained in place for fifty years and not removed sooner? The simplest answer is that the Shipping Gallery was one of the most object-rich and structurally-complicated galleries in the museum and its removal was, therefore, a financially-costly and time-consuming process; a

project only viable if other parts of the museum were gradually upgraded as well. Now, however, the museum has the opportunity to install and display some of its communications collections—part of the 95 per cent of museum objects held in storage and not on display.

Collaborative Doctoral Awards can prove to be extremely rewarding—to academic and partner institutions, as well as to the supervisors and student researchers involved. Having said this, however, it would be naive not to acknowledge that there are many challenges faced when carrying out such projects. In this chapter, I have detailed some of my own experiences of researching for an eleven-month period in an institution at once supportive and undergoing significant structural change. Although there may, thus, be unforeseen difficulties in collaboration, the benefits, especially within historical geography, outweigh these obstacles. Although the epigraph which began this chapter was referring to national and international exhibitions of the late-Victorian period, there is a similarity in resonance of its sentiment with that of CDAs. In a way, like exhibitions, studentships 'can present in a visible and striking form those features of our industrial and social life which almost of necessity escape common observation'.[7] It is the historical geography researcher, as the 'hive of glass', or lens, through whom the narratives of the past and present activities of 'human bees' can be told and visualised.

Notes

[1] Official catalogue and jury awards of the Great International Fisheries Exhibition, London, 1883, London, 1884, xxxiv.

[2] Official catalogue, (note 1), xxxiv.

[3] D. Rooney, 'A worthy and suitable house': the Science Museum buildings and the temporality of space, in: P. Morris (Ed.), Science for the nation, Basingstoke, 2010, 157–175.

[4] D. Rooney, The events which led to the building of the Science Museum centre block, 1912–1951, London, 1997.

[5] Science Museum, Nominal File 3636/4/1, Science Museum Memorandum on the Quay Punt model (inv. 1936-368), 25 July 1936.
[6] J. Fenner, Stories from the stores http://sciencemuseumdiscovery.com/blogs/collections/category/transport/water-transport/, (accessed 3 September 2012).
[7] Official catalogue, (note 1), xxxiv.

4

Between *terra incognita* and home: a collaborative expedition through the Royal Geographical Society archives

Sarah L. Evans

INTRODUCTION

As I write this chapter I am in my final year as a Ph.D. student, undertaking an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded CDA between the University of the West of England (UWE, Bristol) and the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) (RGS-IBG).[1] As I near the end of this project, it seems an opportune moment to reflect upon the process of collaboration and on my personal experience of undertaking this kind of intellectual work. In what follows I will outline briefly the nature of the research project before discussing some of the opportunities and challenges presented by collaborative doctoral research. I will conclude by showing how the process of working between two institutions—and two places—has been both practically challenging and intellectually fruitful.

TERRA INCOGNITA: WOMEN IN THE EXPEDITION ARCHIVES

The focus of my research is women's involvement with RGS-supported expeditions in the period between 1913 and 1970. From its foundation in 1830, the RGS (after 1995, RGS-IBG) has supported and promoted geographical expeditionary work. Through its patronage, the RGS-IBG has helped to define the nature of expeditionary work and thus what counts as a geographical expedition. Although the iconic expeditions of Scott, Hillary, and Livingstone, amongst others, are justifiably well-known, the Society's archives also contain traces of smaller, though no less important, stories of geographical expeditionary work which have important implications for the history of geographical thought and practice.[2] Women's expeditionary work, in keeping with women's geographical work more broadly, has been comparatively neglected within the wider history of geographical thought and practice.[3] Although women travellers continue to exert a strong hold on the popular imagination, it is only relatively recently that historical geographers have sought to incorporate them, and their strategies of knowledge production, into histories of geography, and to consider the impact of the gendering of travel, expeditions, and fieldwork as forms of geographical knowledge production.

As part of its archival collections, the RGS-IBG holds material relating to women's involvement with geographical expeditions over the course of the twentieth century. Prior to the commencement of my research this material had not been investigated for this purpose in any great depth. My project seeks to chart this *terra incognita*: to investigate these untapped archival resources and to reconstruct a historical geography of women's involvement with RGS-supported expeditions. The project's historical sweep runs from the point at which women gained permanent admission to the Fellowship of the RGS in 1913, through to the date that the Oxford University Exploration Club permitted mixed-sex undergraduate expeditions for the first time

in 1970. Both moments marked significant shifts in women's access to expeditionary space: the first, by opening up the possibility of women accessing the support of the RGS in their own right; the second by reflecting wider social changes about the possibility of unrelated women and men working together in the field.

The project has had two major phases. The first has been to identify—using a variety of archival and published sources from the RGS collections—all applications to the RGS for support for expeditionary projects (broadly defined). I have, in so doing, constructed a database of this information, including details of the gender composition of the expeditions, and employed this to track changing patterns in women's access to this form of expeditionary space. Types of RGS support included—among much else—approval of plans, financial support, the loan or gift of instruments and equipment, and letters of recommendation. This information also allowed me to generate a list of those RGS-supported expeditions with which women were involved; information necessary to the second phase of the project. This phase involved in-depth data collection on, and analysis of, this subset of expeditions, paying attention to the discursive, material, and emotional expeditionary experiences of these women, and to how these experiences shaped their geographical knowledge production.

In particular, three major themes have emerged: the role of expeditionary mobilities in shaping knowledge production; supporting ('domestic') expeditionary roles and how these facilitated knowledge production; and the receptions, both public and academic, of the knowledge produced. Whilst my study includes well-known and well-studied women, such as Gertrude Bell and Freya Stark, it has also sought to uncover the involvement of now lesser-known women, and thus to complicate understandings of 'significance' when it comes to geographical knowledge production. This process of complication is particularly important given the way that, epistemologically speaking, to claim the title of 'expedition' is as much to make a status claim about the

significance of the work being carried out, as it is to suggest a particular form and content to that work.

I first came to this project at rather a late stage, at least as it felt to me then, especially compared to my supervisory team who had been responsible for generating the application to the AHRC, and were already familiar with the subject matter and with the institutions involved. I saw the studentship advertisement in June 2010, a few weeks after I had completed my M.Phil. dissertation on an entirely different topic and in a different discipline. I had been based in a history department for my undergraduate and master's degrees, specialising in South Asian history and working on the impact of the border demarcations of the 1947 South Asian partition on the nascent states of India and Pakistan. In retrospect I can see that this was, clearly, historical geography, and recognise the continuities that it presents with my work now. However, despite being conscious of the geographical elements of my work, I did not classify it as such at the time. I was intrigued by the studentship, having been interested in women travellers, feminism, and gender history during my undergraduate degree. I was, however, unfamiliar with both UWE and the RGS-IBG, and concerned about how easily I might transition from history into geography. Keen to work on gender issues again, and deeply interested in dealing with unexplored material, with the encouragement of my now supervisor, Avril Maddrell, I took a leap of faith.

BEING BETWEEN: THE REWARDS AND CHALLENGES OF COLLABORATIVE WORK

Having been awarded the studentship, I moved to Bristol in September 2010, and spent the first two months immersing myself in the history of geographical thought and practice, including the feminist historiography of geography. As I discovered in these early months, there is a long tradition of collaboration and cross-over between history and geography, not least within the sub-

discipline of historical geography of which I had hardly been aware, so that even as I sometimes felt that I was venturing into a vast and unfamiliar land, I nonetheless encountered much that was familiar to me. Being and working between two academic disciplines in this fashion—an interdisciplinary approach that I have found enormously helpful, not least because of the interdisciplinary nature of much of the work done by my research subjects—helped me to conceptualise the sense of 'betweenness' that has characterised much of my experience of doctoral research and of working collaboratively.

That sense of 'betweenness' emerges clearly in the first decision that a CDA student split geographically between sites has to make: where to base themselves for the first year, in the knowledge that they will probably have to move for their second year. This is very much an individual decision, made in line with the demands of the project and the student's own situation. In my case, I needed to move to Bristol in order to take a number of research training modules as part of the registration requirements for doctoral study. These were enormously helpful, not least because they were based within a social sciences framework that was still very new to me, even though it meant grappling with the dreaded quantitative methods that I had successfully avoided up to that point. They also helped to ease the anxiety I felt at finding myself (a historian) in a very scientifically-minded Faculty of Environment and Technology, and helped me build relationships with my fellow Ph.D. students, who were tolerant and welcoming of the historian who had appeared among them, with her strange talk of archives and unusual definitions of primary and secondary material.

One module in particular, 'Claims and Debates in the Built Environment' (adapted to fit our particular subjects as necessary), provided a wonderful discussion space in which I could grapple with the epistemological elements of my project, something which, I quickly came to realise, was central to my work. The research training modules focused in particular on developing and elaborating upon the chosen research topic, and in this I was

already ahead. One of the pleasures of a CDA, which affords the student a distinct advantage, is that of having a project already sketched out for you, and reviewed for feasibility, by some of the experts in the field who then go on to become your supervisors. However, this is also, potentially, one of its pitfalls, in that it could leave the student feeling constrained by the existing project, or, if they are happy with its parameters, unsure as to how to put their own stamp upon it. Whilst my experience has been broadly positive, and the project has been a good fit for me, there were moments where I struggled to see how this was *my* project, and not something I was doing simply on behalf of other people; this sense of distance from the project can make motivation difficult.

Another benefit of having been based at UWE for my first year was the openness to collaboration that characterises much of the research undertaken there. At UWE, collaboration with public- and private-sector partners outside academia is the norm rather than the exception, and is an important part of the university's activities. In this environment, where collaboration is accepted and easily understood, it has been easy to discuss my work with colleagues who treat this situation as natural, and who also understand some of the pressures of working between two institutions, such as managing differing expectations, norms, and procedures. This has made UWE a particularly good environment within which to undertake a CDA. The RGS-IBG also has a strong history of collaboration with geography departments, and has played an important role, both historically and today, in facilitating relationships between different branches of geographical activity, and encouraging public engagement by researchers. Furthermore, the existing relationship between UWE and the RGS-IBG took some of the pressures of collaboration off my shoulders. For these reasons, I have been fortunate not to have encountered any significant institutional obstacles to collaboration.

There were downsides, however, to spending the first year in Bristol. As the collection with which I was to work was in London, where my partner and most of my existing social circle were based, I always intended to spend only a year in Bristol, and

to return to London at the start of my second year. This made it difficult to settle in Bristol, as my situation always felt temporary. I spent a lot of that first year on trains and coaches, moving between Bristol and London, both to visit the RGS-IBG and to spend time with my partner and friends, exacerbating my feelings of rootlessness, and of being somehow unmoored. Whilst this was difficult emotionally, this kind of mobile consciousness has had, given the nature of my project, productive intellectual consequences. Whilst my supervisor and I always characterised my planned archival research as my expedition through the RGS-IBG archives, it now feels more as if my time in Bristol *was* my fieldwork, at least in terms of experiencing in an emotional sense something of what it was like for my research subjects to be on the move and away from home, and to empathise with them in that regard.

Having moved to London at the beginning of my second year, in September 2011, I am now based at the RGS-IBG full time. Whilst this has made it a little difficult to maintain some of the fledgling relationships with my department in Bristol, it has also provided significant intellectual and practical advantages for the project. The first of these, and perhaps the one most important for the project itself, has been the easy and guaranteed access to archives that comes with the status of being an institutionally-affiliated CDA student. Being able to spend over a year at the RGS-IBG in close proximity to its collections has allowed me to immerse myself in the sources, to take my time, and to become engaged and familiar with the material—playing with the parameters of my data set, allowing the project to develop organically. It has also given me the time and space to build good relationships with the collections staff, draw on their expertise, and add to gaps in the existing institutional knowledge where appropriate. From my perspective, the CDA has made explicit, and far easier to develop, the kind of relationships that are essential to the progress of archival research, and which tend to develop naturally over the course of a doctoral project.

This process of relationship building has been particularly useful in terms of access to informal training opportunities, such as in the use of catalogues with the collections staff, and on database building and maintenance with Stephanie Wyse in the RGS-IBG's Research and Higher Education (RHED) department. I have also been able to informally observe the running of the RGS-IBG, particularly in RHED, with regard to the Annual International Conference and the various workshops with schools, universities, and the wider public that run throughout the year. This insight has encouraged me to focus on the history and nature of geography beyond and outside the academy, both in terms of the audiences that I might myself engage with, and the range of opportunities to do so. It has served, too, as an important reminder that geography is not, and has never been, just academic geography.

As a newcomer to the discipline, seeking to immerse myself in this unfamiliar and exciting subject, this challenging perspective has been particularly important, not least in terms of engaging with the experiences of my research subjects. Many of them did not claim the status of 'geographer' themselves, or were not academics (or, if they were, they specialised in other subjects), but nevertheless made contributions to geographical knowledge. Many of my subjects also stood astride the academic/popular divide, in producing both academic and popular publications—the work of Lucy Evelyn Cheesman, an entomologist who also wrote a travel account of her expedition to the South Pacific being a good example—whilst the RGS-IBG has long sought to cultivate and maintain these links. It is also interesting to reflect on the ways that collaboration was the norm for many of these expeditions; collaboration between a number of institutions as well as the RGS in terms of supporting expeditions, securing funding and other necessities, as well as between the individuals themselves on particular expeditions.

LOOKING OUTWARDS: COLLABORATION AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

My particular experience, being based at the RGS-IBG and contributing to its programmes of outreach and public engagement, has kept me aware of the possibilities for shaping my own work in that direction, whilst maintaining a critical edge—something which, perhaps, helps to keep my publically-funded research relevant to popular, public audiences. Being based at the RGS-IBG has also opened up possibilities for direct public engagement, both informally in discussions with members, Fellows, and staff when attending RGS-IBG events, and more formally in opportunities to speak to popular audiences as part of the programme of events itself. This is one example of the ways that such opportunities can benefit both the student and the institution. Another example, reflected in one of the major aims of my project, is that of enriching the existing collections of the RGS-IBG: this has been met, at least partly, in my creation of a database of all applications for expeditionary support, which I hope will be useful to RGS-IBG staff. In my liminal position, working both for myself, and for the RGS-IBG, I have been able to uncover information of particular interest to the Society and its staff today about its history, and to use their concerns and needs to shape the direction of my research, where this was compatible with my own research aims. I feel this has been very productive for my research and for the institution, largely because my independence has always been paramount, and the project has always been seen as mine first and foremost.

I have been guided by a fantastic supervisory team, comprising of my Director of Studies, Avril Maddrell (UWE); Catherine Souch (Head of RHED at the RGS-IBG); Alison Blunt (Queen Mary, University of London); and Alan Terry (UWE) in an advisory capacity. In my case, I have been very fortunate that the mysterious alchemy that determines student-supervisor relations has helped me forge strong and supportive relationships with all my supervisors. Whilst always crucial, I have found this to be

especially important amid the particular pressures of collaborative doctoral study. Perhaps because my supervisory team had strong pre-existing relationships, I have so far found that it has been relatively easy to manage any differing expectations that may arise between myself, my academic supervisors, and the RGS-IBG. The greatest difficulty that we have encountered, given our dispersal geographically, has been that of arranging face-to-face, joint supervision meetings. This has been a little frustrating, although technologies for video conferencing have helped. We have mostly managed to negotiate this by means of regular individual supervisions with each of my main supervisors, and circulating the minutes of these meetings via email as necessary. Where points of disagreement and perspective have arisen, it has been relatively straightforward to negotiate between them.

CONCLUSIONS

Although, at present, it is a little difficult to look beyond the immediate horizon of chapter writing and submission deadlines, I look forward to seeing what the long-term implications of collaboration will be for myself, the institutions concerned, and my supervisory team, and I hope to maintain the good relationships with UWE, the RGS-IBG, and my supervisors. Speaking more broadly, whilst collaborative partnerships of this nature offer a number of strengths and weaknesses, the major advantage that they present is that they enable, and make formal and explicit, the collaborative relationships—with archives, with the staff that care for them, and with the institutions that house them—that are necessary for successful doctoral research in historical geography, and for disseminating the results of such research beyond the academy.

Notes

[1] The RGS and the IBG were two separate institutions, founded in 1830 and 1933 respectively, prior to their merger in January 1995. It is with the archives of the RGS that my project is principally concerned.

[2] See F. Driver and L. Jones, *Hidden histories of exploration*, London, 2009; H. Lorimer, Telling small stories: spaces of knowledge and the practice of geography, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28 (2003) 197–217; H. Lorimer and N. Spedding, Excavating geography's hidden spaces, *Area* 34 (2002) 294–302; H. Lorimer and N. Spedding, Locating field science: a geographical family expedition to Glen Roy, Scotland, *British Journal for the History of Science* 38 (2005) 13–33.

[3] See M. Domosh, Towards a feminist historiography of geography, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16 (1991) 95–104; M. Domosh, Beyond the frontiers of geographical knowledge, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16 (1991) 488–490; A. Maddrell, Marion Newbigin and the scientific discourse, *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 113 (1997) 33–41; A. Maddrell, The 'Map Girls'. British women geographers' war work, shifting gender boundaries and reflections on the history of geography, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 33 (2008) 127–148; A. Maddrell, *Complex locations: women's geographical work in the UK 1850–1970*, Oxford, 2009; C. McEwan, Cutting power lines within the palace? Countering paternity and Eurocentrism in the 'geographical tradition', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 23 (1998) 371–384; G. Rose, Tradition or paternity: same difference?, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20 (1995) 414–416; and D. Stoddart, Do we need a feminist historiography of geography. And if we do, what should it be?, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16 (1991) 484–487.

5

Researching the Bartholomew Archive: a Ph.D. student's experience of collaboration in historical geography

Julie McDougall

INTRODUCTION

Collaboration was a buzz word in geography seminars, conferences, and staff meetings well before I began my Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh in September 2009. Having come straight from an undergraduate degree, however, where 'collaboration' was used in a pejorative sense—often an activity akin to plagiarism—its meaning and potential was, to me then, somewhat ambiguous. What collaboration really is, and what it does for geographical research, is still difficult to capture in a single sentence. Some see collaboration as the means to bring together two or more distinct fields, aspects, or approaches in the discipline. Others see its value in extending geography's scope beyond the confines of physical, historical, cultural, social, or economic geography to other subjects/disciplines. It seems to me that this preoccupation with collaboration (and interdisciplinary research) rests upon the longstanding question of what geography (as a discipline) actually does.

Concern as to geography's scope and remit has been a source of anxiety for more than a century; an apprehension evident in the journals of leading geographical societies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and still a concern among geographers today. Contemporary discussions as to geography's purpose are often framed in terms of the 'policy relevance' of its research or the ability of individual geographers to 'impact' the world through their work.[1] The relevance of these questions to historical geographers is well understood. In 1988, Dennis Hardy argued that there was 'a well-tried case for reviewing traditional approaches to the study of geography' and he entreated historical geographers, specifically, to 'respond to a growing demand for heritage studies' by working together with libraries, museums, and learned societies.[2] These questions and concerns over geography's purpose and historical geography's effectiveness beyond the academy make the opportunity to reflect upon the process of collaboration timely and important.

In what follows, I describe the process of collaborative research from the student's perspective, how they negotiate the relationship between the academic and partner institution, and what the process of collaboration brings to the experience of being a Ph.D. student. I draw on my own experience of working collaboratively in historical geography to show how the knowledge produced through my interpretation of specific historical collections was facilitated, enhanced, and challenged by collaboration between three institutions, each with particular responsibilities and motivations. These institutions were the University of Edinburgh, where my Ph.D. was based, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), which funded my collaborative research project, and the National Library of Scotland (NLS), the project's non-Higher Education Institution (HEI) partner. By recalling my recent experience of these relationships, and having successfully completed my Ph.D., I offer a personal perspective on the process of collaborative geographies. I begin by providing a brief outline of my research and how it came to be part of a collaborative endeavour. I will then highlight

different aspects of my experience—including questions of knowledge access, research impact and output, and challenges and institutional barriers—before, in conclusion, outlining my subsequent professional development.

AN AHRC COLLABORATIVE DOCTORAL AWARD IN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

My Ph.D. was—from its outset and even before I was selected for the project—a joint effort between my supervisor at Edinburgh, Charles W. J. Withers; my supervisor at the NLS, Christopher Fleet (Senior Map Curator); and my supervisor at Queen Margaret University, and later the University of Dundee, the book historian David Finkelstein. The nature of my Ph.D. research was shaped by a common desire among my supervisors to facilitate a project that would exploit the rich and previously under-examined Bartholomew Archive at the NLS.[3] Thus, my Ph.D. experience began with a broad research question, defined by a group of actors in certain HEIs and non-HEIs. My project was, therefore, also interdisciplinary, informed from the beginning by theoretical concepts in historical geography relating to the construction of geographical knowledge, in the history of cartography on the meaning of maps, and in book history on the dissemination and reception of knowledge. The aim of the project was to interpret the map publishing activities of John Bartholomew and Son, a firm of printer/cartographers active in Edinburgh between *c.*1880 and *c.*1980 (Figure 5.1). It was my own activities, in coordinating and negotiating these questions, which moulded the project.

In a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA), independent archival research co-exists with intellectual relationships between supervisors and between supervisors and the postgraduate student. The interplay of individual research findings and broader project agendas is fundamental in shaping the aims and focus of any collaborative study. This is evident through my close connection

Figure 5.1: The foyer of John Bartholomew and Son, Duncan Street, Edinburgh. The firm operated here from 1911 until 1995.
Reproduced by permission of the NLS.

to the Bartholomew Archive at the NLS, the workplace of one of my supervisors, which formed the basis of my empirical research. This collection holds a century of records detailing map and atlas production by John Bartholomew and Son. The Bartholomew Archive is, arguably, one of the most extensive mapmaking and publishing collections of its kind in Britain. After much initial searching and sifting among this collection, my thesis focused on a single aspect of Bartholomew's production, namely British school atlases published between 1870 and 1930. Here is where my influence on the project as it was originally conceived by my supervisors becomes apparent.

During my research in the Bartholomew Archive, the production records of the firm—including its proof maps, editorial notes, invoice books, and correspondence ledgers—were important sources in my attempt to understand school atlas publishing. Yet I soon realised that, like every historical collection, the Bartholomew Archive is incomplete. The nature and extent of its records reflect the motivations and decisions of a range of people between the period of its activity as a working family firm and today when it is at the hands of archivists and researchers (including myself). In my study of the archive, I found it helpful to think of it as a 'principle of credibility'. What this means, is that the Bartholomew Archive is a 'device' through which we are able to make and justify statements about the past, specifically in relation to map and atlas production.[4] If we follow this argument, there are two types of credibility guaranteed by the archive. First, knowledge produced through the archive is legitimised by the archive's guarantee of epistemological credibility. That is, the archive is a physical site embedded in particular kinds of knowledge and styles of reasoning associated with archival discourse, which give credence to any statement made through the archive. Second, the archive generates, and depends upon, ethical credibility, which reflects the status accredited to the archive and the subsequent right to speak among those with knowledge of it. Interacting with, handling, and making sense of the collections in the course of research makes the Bartholomew Archive a centre of interpretation too.

Through my examination of the Bartholomew Archive, I came to focus on the publishing history of school atlases in connection with wider developments in British geography. The firm's business records list the number and type of school atlases produced and point to the range and type of customers who were commissioning school atlases in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. My interpretation of school atlases quickly became linked with considering the people involved in atlas publishing, who were not only mapmakers and publishers, but professional geographers and academics from other disciplines,

often working in the universities, writing in journals, and producing other school texts at the time. My research in the Bartholomew Archive, therefore, led me to look in greater detail at the individuals and institutions, other than Bartholomew, involved in atlas production. I thus perused the collections of the Royal Geographical Society (with Institute of British Geographers) (RGS-IBG), the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS), the Geographical Association (GA), and the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS).

This focus on production was one element of my thesis. It was intertwined with questions about how geographical knowledge was made to move from one place to another, between sites of atlas production in the UK, and producers and audiences in different parts of the British Empire. These questions evolved both from the initial project aims and from my findings in the Bartholomew collection and research elsewhere. Moreover, by studying atlases in the NLS I was able to understand how the knowledge represented in certain texts was transformed according to audience demand and changes in political, social, and cultural circumstances over time and space. On a day-to-day basis, my physical access to the Bartholomew Archive, and the knowledge I accumulated there, relied on the motivations and agendas of the archivists and others involved in preserving and promoting this collection. It is to accessing historical collections that I now turn.

ARCHIVAL ACCESS: PHYSICAL, EPISTEMIC, AND PEDAGOGICAL

Conducting a Ph.D. in any subfield of geography is often characterised by problems of access, and empirical research is often dependent on assiduous attempts by students to gain permission to accumulate knowledge and evidence. This is where collaborative research is beneficial. Whilst the early stages of my research were no less daunting than that of my contemporaries, there was a sense of team-work between myself and my

supervisors in outlining exactly what my project would be in the Bartholomew Archive, and in making sure this was feasible in terms of the sources required to achieve research aims.

In the midst of my empirical research, during the second year of my studentship, the contacts I had made through the partner institution served me well when attempting to research in other archives across the UK. As a researcher at the NLS, I became part of the community of UK archivists and was thus able to gain access to collections which might otherwise have proved difficult, including the RSGS, the George Philip Archive at the RGS-IBG, and other collections in different institutions in England and Scotland. Although this would not have been impossible without the assistance of my supervisor at the NLS, his advice and his letters of reference were invaluable.

Physical access to collections was enriched by my NLS supervisor, and other institutional staff, who had important first-hand knowledge of the Bartholomew Archive. Having access to such a rich collection is a privilege, but it can also be daunting for a first-time researcher, especially when the initial project briefing was broad and required skills of selection and interpretation to focus and define. As already indicated, it is in the doing of archival research that the postgraduate finds their own direction in a collaborative project. In my case, my discoveries in the Bartholomew Archive and elsewhere were in harmony with my supervisors' broad ideas of the project's intellectual agenda. This phase of defining project aims was in turn facilitated by working closely with people in the NLS familiar with the scope of its collections.

At the same time, I gained experience of the institutional workings of the NLS. Most obviously, I was able to engage in the promotion of the Bartholomew Archive as a heritage collection. The insight and instruction I received during long periods of research in the Bartholomew Archive (conveniently, a stone's throw from my flat) was something I would not have received quite so readily had I been an independent researcher in this or any other cultural institution. When a doctoral student works within a

collaborative network, the benefit of easy access to archival material is supplemented by the value of being treated not simply as a researcher but as an individual actively involved in assisting with the use and dissemination of historical collections. That, at least, was my experience at the NLS. Moreover, I benefited from having a space—convenient, friendly, and accessible—where I could research, write, and mull over my findings; all of this without having to justify my presence at every turn which is often, necessarily, the case when you visit archives as a researcher rather than as an institutional affiliate. This personal contact was a reassuring and encouraging advantage and one which made the Ph.D. experience manageable and beneficial.

PUBLIC ACCESS IN THE 'OUTPUT' STAGES OF MY RESEARCH

Ease of access to empirical materials feeds into another popular phrase in academic research: 'impact'. The question of how to communicate the findings of research beyond the academy was examined at an AHRC workshop on Collaborative Doctoral Awards held at the University of Edinburgh in May 2009. The consensus among those in attendance was that the CDA scheme offers students high-quality dissemination opportunities less often available in non-collaborative work. From my experience of working with the NLS, this, in many ways, is true. In the light of the pressure on historical geographers to make their research appeal to the public, my connection with the NLS meant that I was able to gain access to a broad audience interested in my work.

The result of this was that as well as the traditional methods of research communication, including conference papers and journal articles, I engaged in other activities, one of which was the Scottish Map Forum, arranged by the NLS in May 2012. This was an opportunity to present my research on Bartholomew's school atlases to a largely non-academic audience with interest and experience in the history of cartography and/or the history of

geography as a discipline. It was also a challenge: the history of the Bartholomew firm and of school atlases is very accessible to people beyond the academy, as much of historical geography is, but there is a danger of failing to adapt this to appeal to the interests of listeners not concerned, necessarily, with the theoretical basis to my findings. Thus, an important aspect of collaborative research, in my experience, is in drawing out the parts of research that appeal to an informed public.

Perhaps the most obvious 'output' from my research is my contribution to the NLS's exhibition on the Bartholomew firm: 'Putting Scotland on the Map: The World of John Bartholomew and Son' (which ran from December 2012 to May 2013). My role in the organisation of the exhibition was limited but, since its opening, I have been engaged in several public events associated with it. In one instance, I wrote a review of the exhibition for the International Map Collectors' Society periodical, *The IMCoS Journal*, which raised awareness of the Bartholomew Archive and exhibition among a specialist audience. In January 2013, I coordinated and delivered a lecture on the Bartholomew family and gave a tour of the exhibition for Contact the Elderly, a charitable organisation which aims to reduce seclusion among the aged. I also delivered a talk on my research in the Bartholomew Archive at the close of the exhibition in May 2013. These activities are a direct consequence of my collaboration with the NLS and they provide not only the opportunity to disseminate knowledge generally but they also actively reduce the gap between the academy and external institutions and their publics.

The collaborative relationship with the NLS was not unilateral. During my Ph.D., I supported their institutional requirement to communicate with a broad audience and, concomitantly, they provided the resources that allowed me to fulfil my research aims and some of my own outreach activities. For instance, with the help of staff at the NLS I was able to organise a teaching course on historical maps as part of the Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS), a summer school held at the University of Edinburgh for Scottish

students hoping to progress from school to higher education. The one-day course I organised—'Maps as Social and Cultural Constructs'—consisted of a short lecture, a class activity with pupils, and a trip to the NLS's Map Library to view, and have contact with, historical maps and atlases. What I found most encouraging was the Map Library visit, which was often the first time the students had access to historical collections. My collaborative Ph.D. experience confirms that it is through contact with pupils and the public that historical geography becomes something more than simply the preserve of academics—it becomes an education and an interest for a broader audience keen to know what people were concerned with in the past, what societal and political challenges they faced, and what materials/artefacts exist to reconstruct their lives and views.

CHALLENGES AND INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS

Thus far I have offered a positive account of my experience in a collaborative research environment, yet there is something to be said about the challenges of working closely with an institution like the NLS, with its own agendas and motivations. The advantage previously identified of contributing to the Bartholomew Exhibition carried with it some limitations. Although I was able to contribute to the exhibition in the aftermath of its opening, I was excluded, in part, from its design and organisation. This was very much in the hands of the main curator of the Bartholomew Archive who, quite naturally, assumed the challenge of whittling down, for a relatively small exhibition space, a large number of items and stories from the Bartholomew collection. My research on Bartholomew's school atlases did not, to my disappointment, feature in the exhibition. This fact was possibly a consequence of my supervisor at the NLS not being directly involved in the creation of the exhibition and, consequently, having limited influence over its content.

Whilst I may lament this missed opportunity, I am far from dismayed by it. This experience stands as an example of the challenge one faces when working in institutions outside the academy. There are complex relationships and decision-making processes in any institution, but as a student researching in one it is difficult to know how these work in practice or to have influence over them. It is important to bear in mind the impact they might have on research objectives. My limited role in the exhibition was appeased by the willingness of the curator to recruit my assistance in promoting the exhibition post-construction.

CONCLUSIONS

As well as the issue of exclusion from certain activities in the collaborative partner organisation, there were, at times, varied expectations between different actors involved in my project over what a thesis on the Bartholomew Archive should be, what focus it should take, and what story it should tell. This variety of opinion generated some indecision over which aspect of my research I should take as my focus, but this is a challenge far from unique to collaborative research. At the same time, however, differences in research ideas among the partners involved served, in my experience, to direct my project in ways which, more often than not, proved fortuitous. In this case, having a variety of input from different professionals—academic and non-academic—was an important part of my research experience. The advantages I have outlined far outweigh the intricacies of institutional red tape or the skill needed to juggle a variety of agendas. In fact, dealing with these issues has supported my professional development, not only as an academic but as a potential employee in an institution concerned with preserving and promoting collections to the public.

From my perspective now—post-submission, post-viva, and employed as a post-doctoral researcher on an interdisciplinary research project between the University of St Andrews and the

Royal Society—the purpose and effect of collaborative research in historical geography seems advantageous. This view is supported by the fact that museums, libraries, archives, and professional societies and organisations in the UK, which hold extensive collections of historical materials, are taking steps to further illuminate the resources they hold, hitherto dormant and unexplored. It seems to me that when historical geographers, funding bodies like the AHRC, and national, regional, and local institutions with historical collections work together, they create the potential for the production and dissemination of knowledge about the past. Those benefiting from such a scheme are researchers (like me), who develop new skills and experiences in research and communication; the collaborative partner (like the NLS), which can rely on researchers to find the 'messy' and intimate stories within a historical collection; the funding body (like the AHRC), which achieves, through such a project, its aim of promoting innovative and important research in the humanities; and the public, who benefit from a greater understanding of history.

Notes

[1] D. Dorling and M. Shaw, Geographies of the agenda: public policy, the discipline and its (re)'turns', *Progress in Human Geography* 26 (2002) 629–641; R. Martin, A geography for policy, or a policy for geography? A response to Dorling and Shaw, *Progress in Human Geography* 26 (2002) 642–644.

[2] D. Hardy, Historical geography and heritage studies, *Area* 20 (1988) 333–338, 333.

[3] C. Fleet and C. Withers, Maps and map history: using the Bartholomew Archive, National Library of Scotland, *Imago Mundi* 62 (2009) 92–97.

[4] T. Osborne, The ordinariness of the archive, *History of the Human Sciences* 12 (1999) 51–64.

6

Researching with(in) organisations: creating safe spaces for collaborative research

Nuala Morse

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I provide personal insights as a human geography postgraduate student working with a large museum service on an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)-funded Cooperative Award in Science and Engineering (CASE) studentship. My focus is on three questions: 1) What are the different purposes of research 'with' and 'on' organisations? 2) What are the challenges of research in institutional settings? And 3) How are collaborative relationships negotiated in organisational research? The first part of the chapter offers some background to the research—its aims and contexts. The second part outlines different approaches to social science research: researching 'on' and researching 'with' organisations. In so doing, it considers some of the key principles and challenges of these forms. The third part of the chapter reflects on the CASE experience—where issues of confidentiality became critically important in negotiating the research arrangements—and reviews strategies for creating 'safe spaces' in a hierarchical institution. The experience shows that collaborative research is challenging, complex, messy, and cannot be reduced to a single, predictable approach that the researcher

can adopt in advance. This chapter suggests, therefore, that moves between different forms of working 'with' and 'on' organisations can help to negotiate power relations and facilitate more collaborative geographies.

BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH

The research upon which my thesis is based was funded through an ESRC CASE studentship in partnership with Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, a major museums, art gallery, and archives service in the north east of England.[1] The original aim of the studentship was to examine the museum as a space of encounter, looking in particular at intergenerational and interethnic museum projects. These parameters were set between the academic supervisors and the museum a year before my appointment. As I began my research, however, there had been many changes to the museum sector, and it felt to me that other research questions were more significant and timely. Through discussions with my CASE and academic supervisors, I was able to put forward an argument for revisiting the research project and was supported in altering my research questions to reflect my interests and the changed context of the project.

The refocused aim of the studentship was to examine staff and institutional practices in relation to community engagement work (hereafter CE), in order to consider the possibilities and limits of participatory practice within museum institutions. I was interested in the possibilities the CASE structure could offer in terms of studying museums as organisations. There is currently a paucity of direct studies of museum practice from an organisational perspective.[2] Museum processes tend, instead, to be examined through the study of a single gallery, isolated from the wider workings of the organisation. Such studies consequently 'flatten' the complexity of the museum by presenting it as a homogenous, rational, and functioning machine. Archival research

on collections does not, for example, always engage with questions of how different people curated archives.

There are two main issues with external or textual readings of museums: first, museums are not bounded entities formed around shared goals and ideas (although they may be present themselves as such), but rather are loosely-coupled systems or networks in which different perspectives contend for authority and influence, and which are further defined by position and hierarchy. A second issue, often noted by professionals in the sector, is the perceived divorcing of practice (especially the constraints of work-worlds) and theory in academic writing.

My research attempts to shift the understanding of museum organisations towards relevance and closer connections between the practices of individuals and organisations as they work to cope with, and influence, their institutional contexts. In order to 'map' CE practice across the museum, the research combined both ethnographic and participatory approaches—an approach I refer to as a *collaborative ethnography*.[3] In what follows I consider two typologies of social research in organisations. The distinction made here between working 'on' and 'with' organisations is not intended to define a hierarchy of research, nor to present these research programmes as mutually exclusive approaches, but rather to suggest that such categories are helpful in thinking through the different purposes of collaborative research.

RESEARCHING 'ON' ORGANISATIONS

In museums, research 'on' organisations usually focuses on issues of privilege, authority, and control, and aims to reveal the particular discourses that underpin power/knowledge relations. It might focus on a critique of the 'ableism' of displays; or on LGBT issues as they relate to the museum.[4] The methodologies used for research 'on' include critical discourse analysis and consideration of the politics of display.[5] Such studies often include interviews

with practitioners, but do not necessarily include staff and organisations in reflexive critique and dialogue. This work can be viewed pejoratively as serving narrow academic interests, but equally it provides vital insight that can hold museums to account for their practice. Working 'on' can also take the form of organisational ethnography, which holds the promise to elucidate the 'hidden' dimensions of organisations, including the often-overlooked, tacitly-known, or concealed dimensions of practice and meaning-making.[6]

'Practice' is a notion that is not easily translatable into words for participants: some practice is just performed or 'got on with', and accounts of practice are often subject to 'impression management' that favour rational decision making over messiness and contingency.[7] Looking at what staff do (not just what they say they do) is, therefore, useful for studies of practice. In the context of CE, what was apparent even from the early phases of my research was the perceived gap between staff intentions for CE and their sense of disappointment with the final outcomes. Staff were also aware of the academic critique of control in museum-community relations,[8] yet felt unable to act upon this. Interesting questions then emerge in terms of processes and structures, agency and 'unintentionality': What are the different barriers to CE in museums? What happens between rhetoric, intentions, and 'reality'?

RESEARCHING 'WITH' ORGANISATIONS

Working 'with' evokes collaboration where the organisation is more actively involved in the research process. A distinctive approach to more radical collaboration is Participatory Action Research (PAR).[9] The first principle of PAR is that actors are themselves the 'experts' in respect to their life-situations and should, therefore, be involved not only in generating information, but also in doing the analysis in research contexts. Secondly, PAR is 'a political statement as well as a theory of knowledge', whereby

participants are empowered through the process leading to action and change.[10] A third principle is that information is public, correctable, and verified by participants themselves, and results in research that is 'appropriate, meaningful and relevant' to the groups working with the academic.[11]

Bringing PAR with(in) institutions presents particular challenges for researchers. There are only a limited number of examples of PAR projects inside organisations, many of which have been prescribed and involved only the leaders of organisations.[12] When the research context is largely controlled by management, it may be hard to ensure participation, and approaches can end up being symbolic rather than substantive. In fact, participatory research views organisations as the centre of power and oppression,[13] and researchers usually work with participants to expose institutional structures and practices (such as racism or sexism) and devise ways to confront them.[14] PAR ultimately requires researchers and participants to challenge the structures of the very organisations in which they are located—not always a desirable outcome for management. On a practical level, too, staff often do not have the time to engage fully in all aspects of the process as co-researchers.

DOING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH IN A HIERARCHICAL ORGANISATION

In late 2011, I began my ethnography of the museum. I was first based in the Outreach Team office as their work most directly focuses on CE. The often-lamented problem of institutional access did not here occur thanks to the support of the CASE supervisors. I was able to move freely throughout the organisation and observe different levels of (inter)actions between different staff, and across different teams. Over the course of one year, I shadowed different members of museum staff, accompanied them to meetings (where I often joined in discussion and asked questions), and took part in informal chats in the office. I later

arranged semi-structured interviews, individually or in small groups, which I recorded. The initial phase of the fieldwork gave me an overview of debates and issues across the organisation. All the while, I encouraged staff to view my research as collaboration, and attempted to introduce ideas and opportunities for developing participatory approaches inspired by PAR. It soon became clear, however, that collaboration with(in) the organisation would be more complex than I had anticipated.

The main challenges that limited participation were the practical issues of staff time and capacity. It would have been impractical to ask museum staff to lead in the data collection (for example, through peer-to-peer interviews) due to their own work pressures and the stress they often felt regarding this. Instead, I asked staff to comment on research questions, as well as on the specific scripts for interviews with other teams. Although I would thus undertake much of the research myself, this was nevertheless a useful strategy for involving staff in co-designing research enquiries. I also identified a number of projects and exhibitions I became more actively involved in. Through assisting staff in their day-to-day practice with community participants I was also able to better appreciate their interests and concerns.

The timing of my project had important implications for collaboration. In the context of public-sector cuts, there were restructurings, redeployments, and even redundancies across the museum service.[15] Staff were often more preoccupied with these events (and rightly so). These uncertainties made it even more delicate to encourage staff to engage in 'critical' self-reflection. Amid this heightened mood of anxiety across the organisation, I had to renegotiate my own positionality and the purpose of my research. Some staff saw my research as driven by management and aimed at producing recommendations for organisational change. My attempts at involving staff in a more participatory manner were viewed either with scepticism—some saw this as a futile or simply symbolic effort as they felt their concerns would not be taken seriously by management—or caution. Others were concerned by how my 'critical' observations on their work would

be acted upon by management. Still others saw the research as my personal endeavour, entirely separate from their own or wider organisational concerns. In PAR projects these challenges can often be overcome through involving participants in the process of generating research. In my own experience, however, my efforts at participation were often messy and compromised, and my relations with staff evolved within this particularly emotional context. The complex challenge of creating 'safe spaces' for research in institutional settings became central to my inquiry.

CREATING 'SAFE SPACES' IN ORGANISATIONAL RESEARCH

Lines of management draw out power relations in organisations, and outreach officers, curators, and managers do not share power in their institution equally. My central concerns from the outset of the project were about the potential for the research to be hurtful to staff involved if they shared information that was critical of the organisation. Participatory researchers work hard to create 'safe spaces' for participants to engage with the research processes—spaces that build up relationships of trust and which are non-exploitative and non-judgmental. In the case of this study, the participants were a privileged group with high levels of cultural capital, able to speak for themselves, but working within an institutional hierarchy. The strict hierarchical distribution of authority in the museum meant that open conversations about some institutional practices could be risky, and this risk to staff would be heightened in a time of redeployment and redundancy.

The ethics of my research were developed collaboratively and approved by my CASE supervisors (effectively, on *behalf of* all staff), and approved by my departmental ethics committee. I felt, however, that it was equally important to gain informed verbal consent from every member of staff encountered during the research. It was imperative to communicate clearly the right of staff to opt out of the research, and withdraw any comments at

any stage. 'Safe spaces' focused on making clear the relation between my position as researcher, the research itself, and the institution; in particular by explaining the forms through which the research findings would be disseminated within the organisation. As a CASE award, there are expectations to produce certain outputs (e.g., reports, web pages, and executive summaries) for the partner organisation. These are often, although not exclusively, consumed by managers. As such, it was crucial to ensure that staff could not be identified and that their words could not be used against them in another work context.

Creating 'safe spaces' during group interviews—involving staff and their line managers, or staff from different parts of the organisation—presented its own challenges in terms of social dynamics and hierarchies. I felt that enabling staff to engage with each other in ways which were just different enough from standard meetings was important, so I elicited the help of staff in devising ways to encourage open reflection. One solution proposed by staff was the application of Chatham House rules: these were well-known as a standard invoked in minuted meetings for saying things 'off the record'. The rule states that 'participants are free to use the information received [in meetings], but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed'.[16] These proved a useful collaborative strategy through which to practically frame my research ethics.

I was able to organise a small series of participatory workshops with the Outreach Team, the aim of which was to articulate the skill of CE through PAR methods such as participatory diagramming and cycles of story-telling and reflection on practice. It was not often possible, however, to get different staff together, or for a sufficient period of time, due to their work pressures, which complicated the possibilities for participatory workshops. Instead, partway through the fieldwork I created a participatory blog, where staff could start their own discussion topics and engage with the research themes. I did not moderate the content posted, although staff must have accepted the terms of use of the blog before registering.[17] The blog was particularly

welcomed by staff as it provided an anonymous space 'outside' of the organisation to discuss organisational issues without fear of retribution. One member of staff commented that 'it is good to have a space where we can really say what we think'. Through the blog, the participatory element of the research extended beyond the fieldwork, as I posted parts of chapters and findings, and staff were invited to challenge my analysis. This openness was important within the participatory commitment to including those studied in the analysis of data. Collaboration also took the form of inviting participants into my own academic work-world: co-presenting at a conference and co-authoring a journal article with two members of museum staff[18].

PRODUCTIVE SHIFTS IN COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

The research I have produced does not reflect a proportionality of input; it is a mixture of co-produced knowledge and single-authored content. The way I undertook the research is only one example of how to conduct organisational research in museums, and one way to approach the CASE model. Collaborative Ph.D. researchers need to manage the push and pull of different interests and the complex, messy relationships that arise throughout collaboration. My research attended to the different interests of the museum, my own academic interests, as well as the particular requirements of form associated with an academic thesis. The point of this chapter is to show that moving between different forms of research 'on' and 'with' can help negotiate the purpose, politics, and practicalities of researching organisations.

For the museum, the main motivation to engage in this collaboration was having an 'outside' researcher examine the structural barriers to CE and provide recommendations. As one of my CASE supervisors put it, I would be able to see the 'bigger picture with fresh eyes'—something the museum did not have the time or capacity to do. The museum was willing to be researched 'on', in order to illuminate the 'hidden' dimensions of its decision

making, and their non-rational, often unintended consequences, in order for research to enable organisational learning. For me, my academic interests related to examining issues of power in CE practice in museums. At the same time, my starting point was a participatory commitment, aimed at inviting all staff, as much as possible, to co-produce research. However, the challenges of researching with(in) an organisation, particularly in a context of austerity, meant that I had to adapt and improvise my strategies for research. Most importantly, this required developing safe spaces for negotiating research with participants based on their own concerns and within their own time capacities.

Ultimately, this participatory commitment went further than an epistemological concern. I openly positioned myself within the relations of collaboration: whilst having to negotiate the requirements of my Ph.D., my research was equally grounded in a sense of solidarity towards staff doing community engagement and outreach work. Since I had 'time', I aligned my enquiries to include elements of researching 'on' the organisation to examine structural as well as imagined barriers to CE. There are interesting questions that emerge around how the CASE model might make more explicit the need for researchers to negotiate openly their position *vis-à-vis* their academic and non-Higher Education Institution partners (in my situation, my CASE supervisors were two museum managers).

In a variety of respects, CASE Ph.Ds show the potential benefits of more engaged forms of research. Moving between different forms of researching 'with' and 'on' organisation can create a community of interest between researcher and researched for work of applied relevance through which productive collaborative relationships can emerge. In however small a way, my involvement in discussion (and performance) of everyday practice has lead staff to reflect and to act differently, irrespective of the thesis as output, reports to management, or policy recommendations. For example, the workshops with the Outreach Team helped articulate the practice—emotional and administrative—of engagement and will be used with staff to co-

produce capacity building training for other employees across the museum.

CONCLUSIONS

There is no set text on collaboration. This personal account of collaborative research highlights a few points. Whilst research design is often presented as a neatly-defined and linear process of deductive research, collaboration is much messier. The context of austerity, and the emotional ways in which it plays out in research relationships, has serious implications which need to be acknowledged for any kind of collaborative or impact work. Collaborative research requires more iterative research methodologies that are improvisation-friendly, participation-centred, incorporating an ethics of care,[19] and attentive to multiple accounts. Museum work with communities already demands this mutuality as a matter of priority; perhaps a few more collaborative accounts of staff practices will also enhance our understanding of museum organisations.

Notes

[1] The museum service manages twelve museums and galleries with extensive and varied collections of art, archaeology, technology, social history, and natural sciences. It is supported by five local authorities and the Arts Council. The venues employ around 290 staff alongside 691 volunteers.

[2] See, however, S. Macdonald, *Behind the scenes at the Science Museum*, Oxford, 2002. This uncommon and fascinating study has provided much of the inspiration for this research.

[3] Cefkin describes ethnography as different ways of relating to respondents through different key terms: advocacy, complicity, intervention, collaboration, and participation. M. Cefkin, Introduction: business, anthropology, and the growth of corporate ethnography, in: M. Cefkin (Ed.), *Ethnography and the corporate encounter: reflections on research in and of corporations*, New York, 2010, 1–60.

[4] R. Sandell, J. Dodd, and R. Garland-Thomson, *Re-presenting disability,* London, 2010; A. Levin, *Gender, sexuality, and museums,* Hoboken, 2010.

[5] I. Karp and S. Lavine, *Exhibiting cultures: the poetics and politics of museum display*, Washington, D.C., 1991.
[6] D. Neyland, *Organizational ethnography*, London, 2007; S. Ybema, D. Yanow, H. Wels, and F. Kamsteeg, *Organizational ethnography: studying the complexity of everyday life*, London, 2009.
[7] K. Hastrup, *A passage to anthropology*, London, 1995; E. Goffman, *Relations in public: microstudies of the public order*, London, 1971.
[8] B. Lynch, *Whose cake is it anyway? A collaborative investigation into engagement and participation in 12 museums and galleries in the UK*, London, 2011.
[9] See S. Kindon, R. Pain, and M. Kesby, *Participatory action research approaches and methods: connecting people, participation and place*, London, 2007.
[10] P. Reason and H. Bradbury (Eds), *Handbook of action research*, London, 2006, 10.
[11] M. Kesby, S. Kindon, and R. Pain, Participatory research, in: R. Flowerdew (Ed.), *Methods in human geography: a guide for students doing a research project*, London, 2005, 144–166.
[12] For a review, see G. Dover and T. Lawrence, A gap year for institutional theory: integrating the study of institutional work and participatory action research, *Journal of Management Inquiry* 19 (2010) 305–316.
[13] J. Cameron, Linking participatory research to action: institutional challenges, in: S. Kindon, R. Pain, and M. Kesby (Eds), *Participatory action research approaches and methods: connecting people, participation and place*, London, 2007, 206–209.
[14] See for example M. Fine and M. Torre, Re-membering exclusions: participatory action research in public institutions, *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 1 (2004) 15–37.
[15] My research coincided with deep public sector cuts in the arts and cultural sector in the UK.
[16] On the Chatham House Rule, see http://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chathamhouserule (accessed 4 January 2013).
[17] Staff are encouraged to use non recognisable usernames, and also to agree not to post anything whereby the identity of another member of staff may be inferred.
[18] N. Morse, M. Macpherson, and S. Robinson, Developing dialogue in co-produced exhibitions: between rhetoric, intentions, and realities, *Museum Management and Curatorship* 28 (2013) 91–106.
[19] S. Cahill and R. Pain, Participatory ethics: politics, practices, institutions, *ACME* 6 (2007) 304–318.

7

Strengthening a sense of community through collaboration

George Watley and Patricia Sinclair

INTRODUCTION

A sense of community can be interpreted in diverse ways, dependent on various individual, group, and organisational forces. This chapter examines how a sense of community was developed through an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) between the University of Northampton (UoN) and Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA). In what follows, we offer some examples of how collaborative research between university staff and students and community-based non-academics can be fruitful for both parties; individuals unaffiliated to either group; and the larger regional community. Furthermore, we develop an understanding of how the triplicate of academia, community-based organisations, and individuals unaffiliated with either partnership group can simultaneously benefit from research collaboration both during and after collaborative research. We begin by introducing the project and research partners.

The AHRC CDA application emerged from a longstanding collaborative relationship between UoN and the NBHA. The Management Committee of the NBHA (the Committee) and Julia Bush, from UoN, previously worked in partnership in order to develop undergraduate modules in Black British history. The UoN

also provided financial and in-kind support to produce NBHA publications, specifically *Sharing the past* (2008), a documentation of 800 years of Black history in Northamptonshire, and *Black British history: selected studies* (2010).[1] The essays forming *Black British history* were written by undergraduate and associate students attending Black British history modules led by Julia Bush between 2006 and 2009. The reciprocal relationship between the university and the NBHA was integral to the decision to work in partnership and apply to the AHRC for a CDA.

The Committee was keen to have a researcher dedicated to recording oral histories of local Caribbean people, as well as having the prestige of linking more formally with UoN. In addition to the aforementioned collaboration, the CDA was regarded as an extension of the Northamptonshire Black History Project (NBHP) funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Northamptonshire County Council in 2002. This funding enabled the collection of a wealth of local history which led eventually to an application for a Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) Libraries Changes Lives award to produce *Sharing the past.* During the production of this book, it was recognised by those participating in the NBHP that there should be a consistent effort towards helping people learn more about local Black and Black British history. NBHA was launched in October 2005 to promote education in relation to Black history, and to 'empower Black communities and the wider community and challenge racist attitudes by demonstrating the contributions and achievements of Black individuals and communities throughout British history'.[2] At the same time the UoN formally agreed to work with the NBHA, beginning a fruitful connection between community and academia. Whilst proud of these accomplishments, the NBHA also wanted to develop another area of local Black British history, forming the basis to the AHRC CDA discussed in this chapter. The NBHA wanted to capture the imagination of local people regarding Black British history, as well as nationally and internationally whenever possible.

The appointed CDA student, George Watley, was a member of the Caribbean community by parental origin. Being American meant, however, that he was also not entirely part of the local community he was researching. Watley's heritage combined insiderness and outsiderness. Despite living in Northampton for five years before commencing research, Watley knew nothing about the NBHA before reading the advertisement about the AHRC-funded CDA in April 2008 in the window of his local barbershop. The remit of the CDA was originally to research the consumer behaviour of Caribbean migrants to Northamptonshire in the period *c.*1955 to 1975. As the research progressed, however, the shifting identities of the interviewees, and Watley's own identity, became apparent. This recognition made Watley alter the focus of the research towards including an analysis of how identity influenced the consumption practices of local Caribbeans, a question which became central to the thesis. Not only were multiple conceptualisations of identity as Black, Caribbean, and British important in analysing Caribbeans' consumption practices, concepts of identity and the simultaneous shifting of these cultural categories influenced Watley throughout the research.

In the remainder of this chapter, we will address and discuss three important categories from the perspective of the CDA partnership: first, the collaboration as it supported research, as well as broader objectives directly and indirectly related to it; second, the collaboration as it supported research dissemination, as well as how such dissemination influenced research findings; and third, the during and post-research benefits to a sense of community of the CDA collaboration.

COLLABORATION SUPPORTING RESEARCH

When the CDA research commenced, the NBHA possessed a range of beneficial resources, including approximately 100 recorded and fully-transcribed interviews conducted between 2002 and 2005 as part of the HLF-funded NBHP. Half of these

interviews were with local Caribbean people. The interviews were conducted through an academic-community partnership that was envisioned to lead towards the future development of local Black history. In terms of the CDA research, these interviews were extremely useful. Watley was able to read the transcripts, and use the plethora of information obtained about potential and actual interviewees, in preparation for his own interviews. Watley used these extant interviews to become more knowledgeable about his interviewees and the Northamptonshire Caribbean community more generally, as well as to analyse the broad range of narratives collected in order to develop meta-narratives about the history of local post-War Caribbean people.

The extant interviews related to the general history of Black people in Northamptonshire and their lives before arriving to the county, whilst Watley's own interviews were specifically related to the CDA research. Interviewees ranging from professional educators, influential community members, as well as those outside of these status categories were interviewed; recording the life stories of a wide range of Northamptonshire Caribbean people variously positioned in the local community. Collecting and disseminating these narratives to a wide variety of audiences assisted in turning the NBHP into the NBHA, in addition to acquiring and fostering support to conduct future research on a more specific aspect of Northamptonshire Black British history. In addition to the NBHA-based resources supporting this collaboration, the UoN added to this alliance through Julia Bush's role as Secretary of the NBHA and supervisor of Watley. Moreover, various UoN faculty members assisted in the production of *Sharing the past.*

The combination of UoN support of the NBHA, in addition to the CDA researcher being able to use university resources to place the full range of interview archives under the NBHA umbrella, has given (and will continue to give) local, national, and international audiences an understanding of how Northamptonshire Caribbean people have distinctively added to historical narratives of Black people in Britain. Currently, all

NBHP- and NBHA-recorded interviews and transcripts are in the Northamptonshire Records Office and future plans include placing transcripts and selected audio clips on the NBHA website.

COLLABORATION SUPPORTING RESEARCH DISSEMINATION: TEACHING

Before the CDA commenced, Julia Bush taught modules in Black British history at the UoN, one of only three universities offering such modules in Britain at the time. During these modules, there was a dedicated session on oral history in which a guest speaker from the NBHA delivered a lecture about the purpose and rationale of oral history, as well as sharing with students aspects of oral history obtained from the 2002 to 2005 interviews. The retirement of Julia Bush in 2009 presented Watley with the opportunity to deliver these modules. The continuation of Black British history teaching at the UoN was welcome news to NBHA members. In this respect, the CDA led to teaching opportunities relevant to, and appreciated by, the NBHA.

After 2009, Watley shared with students excerpts of interviews. Some students chose to use these and earlier NBHA interviews when writing their essays. As a result, most students better understood the connections between the books, articles, and other references they were reading and the effects historical events had on individuals. The combination of sharing current research alongside NBHA members delivering lectures designed to help students understand oral history as a functional methodology, developed links between undergraduates and the Northamptonshire community, as well as giving students an introductory understanding of Black British history. Undergraduate-NBHA connections were also developed in 2011 through a project that linked these two groups.

COLLABORATION SUPPORTING RESEARCH DISSEMINATION: ORAL HISTORY ROADSHOW

In addition to using current oral history research in teaching, Watley, in collaboration with the NBHA, was able to obtain funding from the UoN for a travelling Oral History Roadshow (Figure 7.1) that disseminated NBHA-collected oral histories to a variety of audiences between March and June 2011. Watley produced this Roadshow with the support of approximately twenty people, ranging from NBHA members and UoN students to some non-NBHA affiliated individuals. This Roadshow used a combination of portable banners and hand-held audioguides to share both sets of NBHA-conducted interviews with various audiences in Northamptonshire, including the UoN, schools, libraries, and other venues. All volunteers were inspired to share this history. The preparation and exhibition of the Oral History Roadshow presented challenges and opportunities in unexpected ways.

During the interview stage of the research, Watley recognised that the town of Wellingborough was underrepresented in the number of interviews he conducted. Wellingborough is the second largest town in Northamptonshire, as well as home to the second-highest number of Caribbean people in the county. Out of eighteen interviews conducted before the Roadshow, only two of these were with Wellingborough-based Caribbeans—a proportionally low number. Despite placing advertisements in Wellingborough, as well as asking various Caribbean and other Black people in the town to seek out potential interviewees, this relative failure to obtain more interviewees remained.

During the preview of the Roadshow, a week before it launched, many people stated that Wellingborough was underrepresented. However, two people came forward to tell their stories prior to the Roadshow. The first was the uncle of the NBHA's Association Manager, who was a Wellingborough Caribbean who told his story of living in the town since the

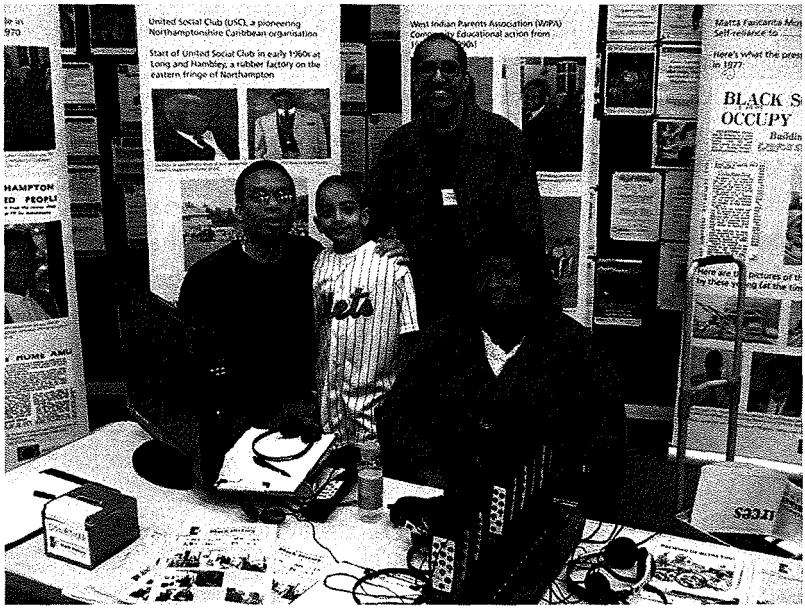

Figure 7.1: At the Oral History Roadshow
Author photograph.

mid-1950s. The second to come forward participated in the Roadshow's planning committee, making it even more perplexing that she had not been interviewed beforehand. The failure of these two people to be interviewed illustrates the challenges and opportunities involved in collaborative research. The challenge was not only to be inclusive in conducting collaborative research, but also to present opportunities to disseminate preliminary research findings to the general public as stakeholders. Presenting this type of opportunity can work towards eliminating any gaps in research that could be publicly, or otherwise, objectionable. However, despite being unable to revise the Roadshow to include the input of more Wellingborough voices, these two people were interviewed within a month of the Roadshow preview, adding to the research in ways that most likely would not have occurred without the Roadshow.

In terms of the Oral History Roadshow, NBHA members, students, as well as a local playwright and producer, all volunteered their time and contributed to its success. Also supporting this project was a local videographer who produced a thirty-minute documentary about the Roadshow. The Roadshow exemplified the collaborative nature of the NBHA and UoN partnership in working together alongside university students and non-group-affiliated individuals sharing a common aim of disseminating oral history to the general public. Although not strictly research and/or dissemination for the purposes of the CDA, the ability of the collaboration to parlay previous and current collaboration into future partnerships added to the value of the CDA, helping to foster connections across sub-sectors of the community that otherwise would probably not have been as well linked.

Another benefit of this collaborative dissemination was that interviews were conducted and recorded of the Roadshow audience. An overwhelming majority of these interviews were conducted by volunteers. Volunteers were trained in oral history/interviewing techniques, with over thirty interviews collected in total. Some of these interviews were useful for Watley's thesis, as well as potentially for future publications. In addition, one of the NBHA member-volunteers not only conducted a majority of the interviews, but also became a Trustee of the Association largely as a result of working more closely with the NBHA during the Roadshow. The dissemination of research through our collaboration led to skills transfer, greater connections between formerly unconnected groups, and community discoveries about Black British history. This latter point was illustrated through a Roadshow audience interviewee stating, 'It sounds preposterous, but through this Roadshow I learned that [Black British history] exists'.[3] Through this, and many other discoveries, our collaboration linked individuals and groups that would have been unconnected beforehand, whilst helping people discover information useful as individuals, groups, and, for Watley, material important for his thesis. This worked alongside ameliorating a significant mutually-perceived gap in the research,

integrating Northamptonshire's second town, Wellingborough, more closely within research findings *vis-à-vis* Northampton. This was appreciated by all parties and would not have occurred without the Roadshow.

COLLABORATION SUPPORTING RESEARCH DISSEMINATION: DIGITISATION BENEFITS

The interviews conducted and recorded by Watley would not have occurred without the resources offered by the CDA. In addition, Watley transferred all of the approximately 100 interviews conducted between 2002 and 2005 from MiniDisc to MP3 files for easy access and portability. This work benefited not only the NBHA, but local history more broadly, as copies of all interview recordings were given to Northamptonshire Records Office (NRO) alongside the transcripts of the 2002 to 2005 interviews that the NRO already held. Watley also gave the NRO recordings and transcripts of the interviews he conducted. All of these historical data would not be publicly accessible if it were not for the CDA. In addition, Watley's presentation of his thesis to the NBHA highlighted the successful culmination of this collaboration.

CONCLUSIONS

Collaborative doctoral research can work successfully to develop a sense of community across seemingly-unconnected groups and/or individuals, as well as cementing bonds already in existence. The NBHA-UoN partnership through the CDA worked because both organisations had several dovetailing aims. Some individuals were interconnected within both organisations, with the NBHA and the UoN both desiring to work with others outside their respective groups, particularly involving volunteers and promoting their respective organisations across Northamptonshire. A university/

non-academic partnership can work for the doctoral researcher in terms of connecting the researcher to the various relationships within a community and providing benefits to the individual and organisations in the partnership after the collaborative research has concluded. The larger community can benefit from having a skilled researcher with the time and resources to work with individuals and groups. The positive attributes and benefits of the UoN-NBHA CDA collaboration provides examples of how other academic-community collaborations could create and develop connections and opportunities benefiting academia, community groups, and individuals, as well as for the CDA researcher. Furthermore, such partnerships can support the creation and development of an inclusive sense of community, potentially including those formerly excluded in the process. Supporting the concept of inclusion of the formerly excluded was Watley's experience. Being relatively unconnected with people in Northamptonshire before commencing the CDA research, Watley is now well integrated into the Northamptonshire community, as well as the NBHA. He is a Trustee and Vice-Chair of the Association, supporting the organisation during a critical phase of its progression.

Notes

[1] Northamptonshire Black History Association, *Sharing the past*, Northampton, 2008; Northamptonshire Black History Association, *Black British history: selected studies*, Northampton, 2010.

[2] Our history so far..., http://www.northants-black-history. org.uk/aboutUs. aspx?itemTag=Our_history_so_far (accessed 1 March 2013).

[3] Unpublished interview with Roadshow attendee, 17 March 2011.

8

Experiences from both sides of the Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme

Alison Hess

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the collaborative doctoral programme at the Science Museum entered its tenth year. This model for doctoral study is now an established part of postgraduate research. Despite this, it is a scheme that is constantly reassessed by academics, museum practitioners, and students. In discussing Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs), which will be the primary focus of this paper, those involved find themselves reflecting on the value of the 'experience' as well as the research outputs. What is it about a student conducting research within both a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and a non-HEI that invites such self-analysis? Does the need to pointedly celebrate this unorthodox, collaborative form of doctoral study suggest a continuing anxiety about it? Is it perceived as a threat to the traditional model of the Ph.D.? Does this non-traditional model really change the way we practice historical geography?

This paper reflects on my experience as a CDA student at the Science Museum between 2008 and 2012 and now as a curator in the Science Museum's Research and Public History Department, where I am supporting a new generation of

collaborative students. Based on formal research, workshop discussions, and the inevitable gripes and moans from both sides of the viva, I seek to explore here some of the anxieties, as well as the many benefits, of being a collaborative research student. I also suggest that these anxieties should not be viewed negatively; rather, by questioning the process and the position of a project, we can produce richer and often unexpected results.

A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY? RESEARCHING AT THE SCIENCE MUSEUM

My own CDA student experience started in 2008, five years into the Science Museum's collaborative doctoral journey. The project was advertised as 'The 2LO transmitter: technology, material culture and metropolitan modernity in inter-war London', with the HEI partner being the Department of Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London. After three-and-a-half years, however, the thesis had changed substantially, finally being renamed, 'From hidden technology to exhibition showpiece: the journey of 2LO, the BBC's first radio transmitter, 1922–2012', and offering an extended object biography of one the Science Museum's key objects. The journey of 2LO (Figure 8.1) as the BBC's first transmitter wound its way from 1920s when it became intertwined with the public image of the new broadcasting company, through decommission, and various displays, to its eventual accession into the Science Museum's collection in 2002. It is now intended for a major new exhibition of communications technology. My thesis traced this remarkable journey and explored a distinctly material approach to the historical geography of science and technology. Forming part of the Science Museum's collections, the journey of 2LO inevitably led back to the Museum. Unexpectedly, however, this journey also led me to question my own position as a researcher. In the end, being a collaborative student researching 2LO became important to 2LO's journey, and

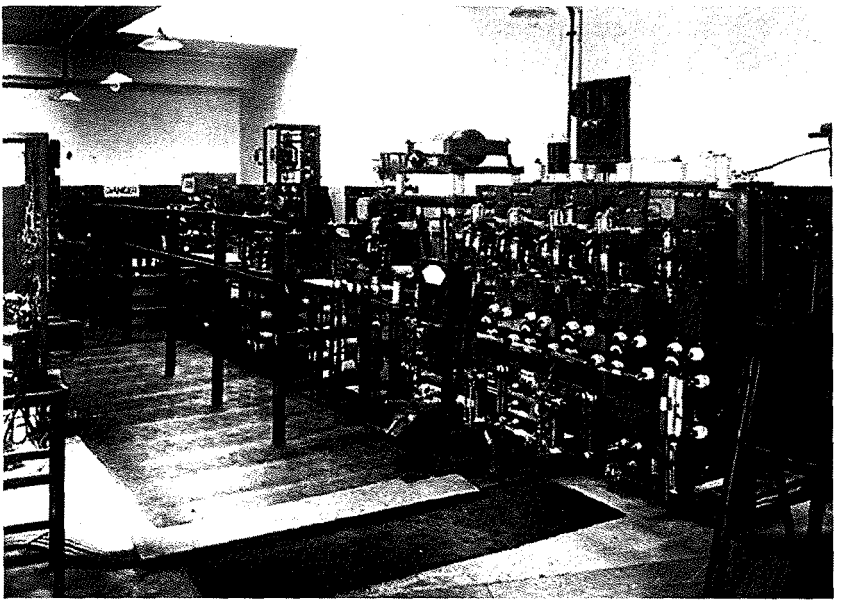

Figure 8.1: The 2LO transmitter in Marconi House, 1923
© Science Museum/SSPL.

its eventual fate. In reflecting on this, I ask whether or not we are sufficiently aware of the reciprocal relationship between researchers and the objects of their study. In this chapter, I ask the following questions: Can researchers ever escape from the responsibility of collaboration? Is this what is at the heart of CDA anxiety?

FINDING A PLACE: FIRST DAYS IN THE NON-HEI

The most daunting experience for a new CDA student is the first days spent in the partner organisation. Whether it is a museum, charity, gallery, archive, or local authority, the student has to decide (through discussion with supervisors and colleagues) what to do with the next three years. How easy it is to find one's place within the institution depends in large part on the organisation. In

some cases, this can mean having the same status as a member of staff with a clear list of tasks to be accomplished. Equally, the student can find they are viewed with some confusion and trepidation by those not directly involved in the project. Whilst not all CDA students need to be in the workplace, those who do sit in a grey area: not paid by the organisation but contracted to it. To whom do they report? How does their work fit into the wider aims of the organisation?

Whilst CDA students were not new to the Science Museum in 2008, it was still not clear what my role there would be. On my first day I received a desk and an email account, and within a few months I was allocated a staff security pass that provided easy access to the whole museum. Asking the right questions of my supervisor provided easy access to collections, archives, members of staff, and databases. In those first months my main supervisor, the Curator of Communications, was heavily involved in one large exhibition after another and, at first, he was uncertain as to what support to give me. It was only after maintaining a regular presence in the office that our roles became clear. His excellent, in-depth knowledge pointed me to a little-known archive hidden beneath Earl's Court and provided access to the appointment-only British Vintage Wireless and Television Museum. Supervision from someone enthused by the subject was also a huge support. The tireless enthusiasm from the curator, and my passion for working at the Science Museum, would sustain me during the writing-up stage. My CDA was not, however, entirely successful in creating a place for me in the organisation: five years later, now as an employee, I am still discovering new people and resources. The experience of curating a temporary display in 2012 for the BBC ninetieth anniversary was particularly revelatory: with curators, conservators, designers, new media specialists, workshops, events, and press involved in even quite a modest display.

This question of a student's place in the partner organisation was raised in a recent workshop at the University of Reading, organised in response to the new Collaborative Doctoral

Partnership (CDP) funding model (see Chapters 2 and 9) and focussing on the training needs of CDA students. Amongst the group of invited Independent Research Organisation (IRO) representatives, it was felt that integrating a student was not entirely the responsibility of the organisation. The student also needs to understand, and involve themselves in, the workplace culture. Some organisations do provide training sessions and inductions but face the problem that students do not always attend: the result of a culture clash between the necessity of infrequent training sessions and the Ph.D.'s unexpected rhythms. This might also mean a change in the type of people who apply for CDAs, as interviewers look for good interpersonal skills as well as academic achievement.

For all the research programmes and project plans it is difficult to predict what new discoveries will be made or what will end up demanding most of a student's time. Unlike members of staff, students are in the fortunate position of having three uninterrupted years to focus on a specialist subject. In organisations that work to Personal Development Plans and annual targets this is a challenge to manage. Being aware of this, and envisioning how their work can fit into the broader aims of the institution, can be helpful to students in bridging this cultural gap.

TOO MANY COOKS? MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGHOUT THE CDA

Traditional-route Ph.Ds often have more than one supervisor but in the case of a CDA is it normal to have multiple supervisors. I had four supervisors (two from Royal Holloway, University of London and two from the Science Museum) involved in the project. Fortunately it worked well as the distinct roles remained clear. My academic supervisors suggested literature and conferences, discussed theory, and provided invaluable advice on how to write a geographical thesis. For a long time my thesis

remained a series of interesting but individual vignettes and I struggled to bring it together into a cohesive whole. Ranging across nearly a hundred years, and reliant on a range of methodological approaches, the only common theme was the central object: 2LO. It was through conversation with my Royal Holloway supervisors that we struck on the idea of 'object biography' and 'object journeys'. Introducing work such as Ian Cook's 'Follow the Thing'[1] and Robey Callahan's study of the Liberty Bell[2] brought a necessary framework to the final thesis and, for me, played an even more significant part. Like the majority of CDA students, I applied to an advertised project. The subject was exciting, and sat well with my interests, but I was a historian and not a geographer. Introducing the idea of the journey finally alleviated an anxiety that had been with me throughout the project, and going into the viva I could see with confidence why this was a Ph.D. in geography.

My Museum supervisors played a different role. The Curator of Communications provided excellent specialist knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. He suggested archives to visit, as well as people and specialist organisations to contact. My other Museum supervisor, the then Head of Collections, brought an invested, outsider's view to the research. He introduced ideas from the history of science and technology and provided valuable intellectual insight into the wider politics of the Science Museum. Importantly our annual meetings provided an opportunity for all supervisors to share their ideas about the project. With so many supervisors, with different ideas and interests, it was equally important to listen to their advice but be confident that ultimately this was *my* research that I would have to shape and, ultimately, defend in the viva.

Not all projects run this smoothly. The writing-up process can be frustrating as supervisors from different academic backgrounds debate the absence/presence of literature reviews and methodology chapters. The final thesis can also be shaped in particular ways by a sense of which institution 'owns' the student. With pressures of time and (occasional) geographical distance

between organisations, it is easy for one institution to feel like 'home'. This can cause problems: I was once told by a supervisor from a partner organisation of their feelings of abandonment when 'their' student moved away.

Being a CDA student carries with it different expectations from that of a traditional Ph.D. student. A CDA student is required to produce a substantial, high-quality piece of research whilst simultaneously engaging with the cultures of the HEI and non-HEI. In this respect, there is perhaps a case to be made about increasing the length of funding for a collaborative Ph.D. or for introducing tailored funding for CDA post-doctoral outputs to make the most of the excellent, cross-institutional relationships being cultivated.

OWNING THE PH.D.

Starting a new project is the greatest and most exciting challenge for all researchers but for CDA students there is the additional complication of making the work their own. A collaborative award has already required hours of thought and work from academics and their non-HEI partners before it has even been funded. Supervisors draw on existing networks to outline key questions, significant archives, and literature, before the student is even involved. As such, there is the risk that the project can feel more like the supervisors' own than the student's.

Initially, this can be reassuring and the work can often get underway more quickly. As with all Ph.Ds, however, there comes a point when the work needs to be transformed into a coherent thesis. At this moment, I took a step back and questioned what had caught my imagination in the first place. What was it that really fascinated me about subject I was researching? What literature really kept me engaged? Without this genuine, personal enthusiasm, the months of writing would have been impossible, particularly as the deadline approached. Helpful to this process was giving conference papers in the second and third year of the

Ph.D. Having to provide immediate answers and reflections on the research made the work feel like it was genuinely my own.

Most importantly, my supervisors gave me enough space to get on with it. The proposal they wrote was a brilliant, sprawling collection of ideas, but ultimately some themes just did not fit with the sources uncovered. The original proposal had placed a strong emphasis on 2LO's significance within inter-war London, but in actual fact this really only featured in the first chapter: the result of the archives (particularly the BBC written archives) holding less than originally expected. Guided by the sources, and my interests, the thesis took on a different shape. Whilst this evolving process is recognisable in any research project, it was particularly important as a researcher at an early stage in my career to feel I had instigated this shift.

In amongst the largely-positive discussions about the scheme, there has also been criticism. Some claim that the scheme, as it advertises projects rather supporting student-initiated ideas (as in the traditional route), leads to less original and intellectually-rigorous research. These comments, whilst uncomfortable, nevertheless highlight the delicate balance maintained between student, partner institution, and university which is usually absent from the traditional-route Ph.D. All those involved need to take care that students are supported, but also given the space to develop their own ideas.

THE SPECIAL CASE OF CDAS

There has been much reflection on, and discussion of, the CDA. What arises from many of these conversations is that, unlike the traditional Ph.D., the quality and experience of the process of researching is as important to a CDA as the eventual outcome. Those on a traditional route can start their research and effectively disappear for a few years, occasionally surfacing for seminars and supervisions. In contrast, as the collaborative scheme has developed, there has been an increasing expectation (at least

amongst museums) that students feed back into the institution throughout the three years as well as producing the final written piece of work. This can mean helping to develop content for a major exhibition, as I did, or increasingly introducing new forms of engagement through blogs or other online tools. In 2009 I attended the London CDA Network conference, organised by a group of London CDA students. An event aimed at sharing experiences with students on the same scheme, it also contained a more formal element: evaluating the process with a report written and submitted to the AHRC. The report was timely since 2008–09 saw the first students complete their projects. The conference fed back concerns and made recommendations about ways the scheme could be improved.

The conference was a mixed experience and the focus on guidelines and training seemed out of character with the process of Ph.D. research, namely the excitement of investigating a subject, deciding on the focus, and discovering new things. It seemed, however, that many CDAs wanted more structure, more training, and more guidance from the partner organisation. These were concerns I shared, but too much structure was a danger in itself, making the process too rigid and formulaic. Again this highlighted the difference between the CDA and the traditional Ph.D., where training (though still provided) is not seen as integral to the research process. It is worth noting, however, that how traditional and non-traditional Ph.Ds are examined is exactly the same. Now in my role at Associate Curator of Research and Public History, overseeing nine new CDA students starting with the Science Museum Group in 2013, I find myself wanting to do all those things: induction, training, and networking.

CDAs really are a different kind of doctorate. Students are expected to take advantage of the freedoms of pure academic culture, specifically flexible time and day-to-day management. As well as this, however, they often have to fit into a much more traditional workplace environment of the partner. In this world, a student is also an employee and must use Outlook to arrange meetings in the working day, and understand the wider goals of

organisation. The two cultures can be difficult to navigate. There are, however, also benefits to this duality. The Science Museum granted me access to an extensive network, including museums, industry, and learned societies. This network delivered clear results when trying to arrange an interview at the BBC: an impenetrable organisation without a specific contact. Following a casual conversation with my Museum supervisor, I had a contact within an hour and a meeting the following week. I only wished I had brought it up sooner.

One of the most rewarding experiences of my CDA was the chance to develop content for a public gallery. Help was needed on a Heritage Lottery Funding bid for a new communications gallery. Already in the office, and conducting research which addressed the history of radio, it was easy for me to slot into the team. Over the summer of 2010, I researched the history of broadcasting from 1900 to the present, choosing key transformative events. The gallery will open in 2014 and one of the objects set to feature in it is the 2LO transmitter. Seeing 2LO feature in this large gallery shows just what a direct impact collaborative research can have.

This kind of experience and research impact would not so easily have formed part of a traditional Ph.D. Whilst the content of the work did not find its way into the final thesis the process formed an important part of the final chapter. Having followed 2LO through various stages of interpretation and reinterpretation as I traced its long and varied exhibition history, working on the communications gallery provided first-hand experience of this process. How were stories selected? What meaning was attached to the object? How did 2LO fit with the wider narrative of the gallery space? Ultimately this research, and the chapter, provided an insight into how history is crafted for public consumption.

Whilst every project is different, one of the reasons the CDA scheme attracts so much comment is because of the opportunities it offers. How we best facilitate this in a natural way without imposing too much formality on the process remains one of the greatest challenges for those who supervise within, and

administer, the scheme. From a museum point of view, this may mean thinking more imaginatively about the ways in which students can be involved in projects within the time limits of their thesis and beyond.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter explored some of the challenges and concerns raised in the course of a CDA. This scheme is now an established part of postgraduate research and, with increased emphasis on wider engagement from funders, as can be seen for example in the AHRC's 'Connected Communities' programme and its 'Follow-on Funding' scheme, seems likely to remain so. With the introduction of the CDP scheme in 2013, the Science Museum is also taking the opportunity to reflect. In a time of funding cuts and reduced staff, CDAs offer an invaluable opportunity to explore collections and introduce new ideas into the institution. Whilst there is still much to improve, facilitating the effective communication between student and museum is very much in our interest.

Finally, how will the increased presence of CDAs affect the shape of humanities research in the future? The collaborative nature of my Ph.D. dragged the thesis away from archives into ethnography, interview, and conversation, blurring the boundaries between historical and cultural geography. We are, by necessity, becoming more collaborative, more engaging, and more communicative. As was outlined in the introduction, for some this can be a cause for concern as the lone academic, enveloped in a personal quest for knowledge becomes rarer. In my experience, however, this can only be a positive thing and, in museums at least, it is an exciting time to be a researcher.

Notes

[1] I. Cook, Follow the thing: papaya, *Antipode* 36 (2004) 642–664.
[2] R. Callahan, The Liberty Bell: from commodity to sacred object, *Journal of Material Culture* 4 (1999) 57–78.

9

Collaborative Doctoral Awards and the development of research at the Science Museum

Tim Boon

INTRODUCTION

What kinds of research do museums need? And what is a suitable subject for a doctorate? Do these issues even belong together? There are no easy answers to such questions; even within the space of a generation, museums and universities have changed radically. The responses we give now—where there is a remarkable convergence between museums and universities—would differ markedly from those of our forebears, just as we might anticipate our successors will see things differently again. In what follows, I sketch briefly how collaborative doctorates have come to play a key role in the path of the Science Museum Group (SMG) to its present academic ambitions; I will explore the benefits of the current scale of activity and survey the projects, before suggesting some of the ways in which doctoral collaborations may contribute towards the Museum's future.[1]

PAST

If you take a broad definition of 'research', then the Science Museum has always needed, and its staff have always done, research. Every exhibition has required objects to be selected and accurate label text composed. The presence of hundreds of thousands of old machines and instruments in our collections might seem to imply that *historical* research should be the governing intellectual mode for science museums. Unlike paintings, which have been at the heart of the history of art, objects in technical museums have only rarely been the core of a discipline.[2] Engineering and science have had their antiquarians, and, for most of the Science Museum's history, the majority of the Museum's curators were, fittingly, scientists or engineers with historical interests rather than from the humanities. It as though, as in the broader culture, curators supposed the history of science and technology to be branches of science and technology themselves, rather than belonging to history more broadly. And this is entirely unsurprising for an era in which the majority of those writing on the past of science were scientists, and when history was mainly constitutional history.[3] Emblematic of the Science Museum's research style for this era (stretching from the interwar period to the 1970s), were two kinds of publications: technical-historical papers given to the Newcomen Society and printed in their *Transactions*, and the catalogues of individual collections. The Science Museum *Catalogues*, which each covered an individual collection—such as bicycles or industrial chemistry—most often reflected the structure of the gallery where it was displayed. These publications are members of a broader museological mode; most collections-holding museums and galleries publish them. In the Science Museum's case, these are descriptive label-based catalogues, which were later routinely complemented by *Handbooks* which provided narrative technical histories of the particular class of objects.[4] The last such publication was *Public and private science* (1993).[5]

The Science Museum began to entertain other modes of historical research closer to the academy particularly after its absorption of the Wellcome Trust's history of medicine collection in the 1970s. This was not just by virtue of the humanistic focus of medicine as a subject, but also because of the broad anthropological or social-historical character of the Wellcome Collection.[6] This was also the era when social history practitioners in museums more generally began to self-identify and organise into the Social History Curators' Group; some of the Science Museum's younger graduate curators were members.[7] Contemporary with the Museum's adjustment to this major acquisition, it also began to employ more curators with educational backgrounds in history, and in the history of science. One of the new recruits in 1978 was Robert Bud, who was awarded his doctorate in the history of science shortly afterwards. Neil Cossons, the transformative director in power between 1986 and 2000, pressed for the modernisation of curatorship.[8] Rising quickly through the ranks, Bud found himself a keeper (head of a curatorial department) under Cossons in the 1990s, with responsibility for research. Since the 1970s, studying for an M.Sc. in the history of science had been a rite of passage for some of the curators, but doctorates were rare amongst the staff.[9] Bud, challenged by Cossons to provide a mechanism for the professionalisation of the curators, proposed that they should become credentialed historians of science by studying for doctorates; five of us took this route during the decade. Parallel forms of professionalisation occurred with the appointment of trained conservators and the taking of inspiration for audience research techniques from North American practice. Alignment of the coverage of contemporary science with the new post-Bodmer Report university discipline of science communication was a further aspect.[10] In short, institutional change, including professionalisation, went hand-in-hand with the development of new ways of thinking about the Museum's role and with new intellectual possibilities.

PRESENT

One of the benefits of the 1990s doctoral programme for curators was that it brought its participants closer to the academy; as they had internalised the value of study at this level to their own practice, it was a short step to imagine the benefits for others of doctoral study of the Museum's subjects, collections, and concerns. And so it is that, since 2003, the Science Museum has welcomed fourteen collaborative doctoral students, three under the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Cooperative Awards in Science and Engineering (CASE) scheme, and the remainder funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), and with nine different university partners. Subjects have ranged widely (Table 9.1).[11] So far, there have been four broad kinds. Some, such as Alison Hess's thesis on the BBC's first transmitter, '2LO' (see Chapter 8), and Tom Richards' study of Daphne Oram's 'Oramics Machine' music synthesiser, are detailed 'biographies' of individual and unique objects; each a study that moves out from the individual item to its specific cultural meanings. Others, such as Gemma Angel's study of human tattoos in the Wellcome Collection, or James Fenner's on the model British coastal fishing boat collection (see Chapter 3), illuminate specific classes of objects or sub-collections within the Museum's broader holdings. The largest category so far has been of studies of the broader contexts that illuminate parts of our collections: Peter Gordon's study of the meanings of displays of human remains in different countries; Joydeep Sen's on Indian astronomy; Emily Hankin on the uptake of electrical appliances in the home; Cat Rushmore on household chemicals; Imogen Clarke on the reception of modern physics; Emily Candela on atomic iconography; Helen Evenden on car design techniques; and Elisabeth Haines on surveying in Africa. Studies of these kinds extend beyond the curators' stock of narratives about the collections and often show the things that different objects—often separated by the Museum's taxonomy—have in common. One final category explores policy questions: examples are Hilary

Geoghegan's study of the relations between enthusiasts and the Museum's collections, and Louise Devoy's on how to transfer the contemporary historiographies of science into displays that are palatable to visitors.

Our aim with these collaborations is to ensure that all projects benefit the Museum, the student, and the collaborating universities. As indicated, knowledge of the Museum's collections is enhanced in many ways. The vast majority of topics for doctorates have arisen from a wish to know more about key artefacts in the Museum's collections. Very often the motivation is to inform displays, as in the case of the 2LO transmitter, which will feature prominently in the major planned gallery on the history of telecommunications due to open in autumn 2014. Others arise from an acquisition and display, as in the case of the 'Oramics Machine', acquired in 2010 and shown in a temporary exhibition in 2011–13. But the benefit to the Museum goes beyond informing displays. Curators gain a great deal from working alongside students; they learn to supervise, but also gain from the students' breadth of reading, and different insights into subjects and collections familiar (and unfamiliar) to them. For the students, in addition to the benefits of a conventional doctorate, there is the opportunity to gain insights into the culture and processes of the Museum, which is particularly welcome to those considering a career in the sector, just as we hope it will help those whose destiny is in the academy to become more 'materially minded' than other scholars. Students also gain opportunities to present their developing work to public audiences in lectures, public engagement activities, and via electronic and social media.

Knowledge exchange and cultural impact are currently being made core aspects of the funding regime for research; our belief is that, for all the controversy that this has caused in the universities, the regime prompts serious and interesting questions about the relation between research organisations and the public. We in the museums hope, therefore, that university supervisors of CDAs will experience the benefits of working on the hybrid

Table 9.1: Collaborative doctoral studentships undertaken with the Science Museum

Student	Funder	PI and HEI	Title	Start
Hilary Geoghegan	ESRC	Felix Driver, Royal Holloway, University of London	The geography of enthusiasm: public history museums and spaces	2003
Louise Devoy (née Thorn)	AHRC	Andrew Warwick, Imperial College	Knowledge transfer in action: a study in the selection and interpretation of themes from history of science scholarship for museum exhibition	2005
Peter Gordon	ESRC	Katie Willis, Royal Holloway, University of London	Tongued with fire: encounters between museum visitors and displayed human remains	2005
Joydeep Sen	AHRC	David Arnold, University of Warwick	Astronomy in India, 1784–1876	2007
Emily Hankin	ESRC	Jeff Hughes, University of Manchester	Buying modernity? Consumer experience of domestic electricity	2008
Alison Hess	AHRC	Klaus Dodds, Royal Holloway, University of London	From hidden technology to exhibition showpiece: the journey of 2LO, the BBC's first radio transmitter, 1922–2012	2008
Gemma Angel	AHRC	Mechthild Fend, University College London	Preserving skin: the collection and preparation of tattoos in late nineteenth-century France	2009
Imogen Clarke	AHRC	Jeff Hughes, University of Manchester	Negotiating 'progress': promoting 'modern' physics in Britain, 1900–1940	2009
James Fenner	AHRC	David Matless, University of Nottingham	British small craft: the cultural geographies of mid twentieth century technology and display	2010
Emily Candela	AHRC	Sarah Teasley, Royal College of Art	Atomic, molecular and orbital iconography in post-war design	2011

Table 9.1: Collaborative doctoral studentships undertaken with the Science Museum (continued)

Student	Funder	PI and HEI	Title	Start
Elisabeth Haines	AHRC	Innes M. Keighren, Royal Holloway, University of London	Losing touch with the ground: surveying in twentieth-century colonial and post-colonial territories	2011
Tom Richards	AHRC	Mick Grierson, Goldsmiths, University of London	Oramics: precedents, technology and influence	2011
Helen Evenden	AHRC	Dale Harrow, Royal College of Art	History, craft and practice in the evolution of vehicle design	2012
Cat Rushmore	AHRC	Viviane Quirke, Oxford Brookes	Chemicals and their users in the British home, 1930s–1980s	2012

territory of the museums, which at their best combine the virtues of being both academic and public. Equally, the scarcely-begun opportunities of working on science's material culture make the argument for collaboration. We have seen both aspects in action with the CDA programme so far. Most often doctoral topics have arisen in conversation between Museum staff and university researchers as they have discovered common interests and subject areas, where perhaps a particular line of research can be especially illuminated by the Museum's holdings. One example is the study of the model British coastal fishing boat collection, where every port seems to have produced its own specific and local technological solution to the challenges of sea fishing; the possibility of a CDA arose in conversation between the university lead supervisor and me, when it emerged that the former was engaged in researching a cultural history of Britain's coast (see Chapter 3).

All the Science Museum's collaborative doctorates have sat broadly on the territory of the cultural practice and history of science and technology. Five have been collaborative with geography departments (four with Royal Holloway, University of London; one with Nottingham). It might seem curious to the innocent observer that such a large proportion of our projects has been supervised by geographers, rather than, perhaps, historians of science or professors of museum studies. The explanation, I suspect, lies not so much in geographers' emphasis on spatiality (though that certainly plays a part), as in the development within the discipline of a certain passionate tendency to open-minded interdisciplinarity. A parallel might be drawn with the dominance of English literature faculties in the pursuit of film studies. It is true that two generations of historians of science, technology, and medicine, in seeking to escape the historian's equivalent of *le cinéma de papa*, have been very receptive to the concerns of adjacent disciplines including anthropology and sociology. But they have not necessarily been so stimulated by the material and visual culture of the disciplines they chronicle; if sociology of science sits at the heart of the metropolis, these non-textual aspects inhabit the outer suburbs of science and technology studies. So it is that, with a sense of mild frustration on the part of science museum curators, and a sense of interesting new territories to explore, the curators have found common cause with historical and cultural geographers.

There may also have been a quasi-economic factor at play. Collaborative doctorates have become progressively more attractive to scholars within the universities, partially as a result of new research council regimes that have had the effect of reducing the availability of conventional doctoral places. This has placed a premium when proposing CDA projects on the development of adventurous new angles on museum topics so as to enhance the chances of success in the highly-competitive contest for refereed places. This has been good for the creation of exciting projects, but may also—slightly paradoxically—have had a negative impact on the attractiveness of the projects for potential applicants. This

is because, despite the openness of supervisory teams to students finding their own route through the material, many candidates prefer to set entirely their own agenda for doctoral study and, therefore, pursue 'conventional' doctorates instead.

FUTURE

It is possible now to discern a still-stronger convergence between the academic ambitions of museums, the interests of some university colleagues, and the policies of funding agencies. Together these point to an enhanced status for collaborative doctorates for all parties, including students. Starting with the induction years 2013–15, the AHRC has introduced the Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP), a new version of the CDA scheme that has, effectively, awarded small block grants of studentships to Independent Research Organisations (IROs) such as the SMG, thus enabling a more premeditated focus within awarded CDAs on the research priorities of these organisations.[12] The new scheme also places a premium on the experience of students and the provision of opportunities for personal development made possible through their presence in museums. Because the IROs will be working together to provide skills training, we can expect future students' experience to be broader still than it has been in the past. To the existing tendency for students studying in similar subject areas to organise informally will be added a view across the London (and the Scottish) museums, galleries and archives.

In the Science Museum Group, we also expect two new kinds of novel working to arise as a result of the CDP scheme. In the first case, we intend that doctoral study will develop into aspects of our professional lives that have so far not been treated in this way, including aspects of how visitors learn, and the conservation and preservation of our collections. Our research priorities formally include these areas as well as research into the public history of science, technology, engineering, and medicine

(PHoSTEM), defined as public engagement specifically with the *histories* of science, technology, engineering, medicine, and media, including studies of the lay historical imagination and the policy and historiographical implications of bridging lay and academic historical understanding.

For the cultural organisations now running these schemes, there are significant potential opportunities, as well as some pitfalls to avoid. Whilst we are happy to leave behind the lottery of the CDA scheme, it is important to ensure that we do not begin to fall into the trap of seeing students merely as contract researchers. It is crucial that the thesis remains the core of students' activity, even whilst they gain the satisfaction of working on topics that are close to the public programme. Equally, it would be more than a pity if the ability to focus our concerns led the projects to be less intellectually daring than the best of the CDA applications have been. We also need to make clear that, whilst the territories for these theses may be sketched by university tutors and museums' professional staff, the detailed route across them, and the approach taken to them, must be the product of each student's own creativity.

CONCLUSIONS

The 'P' in CDP stands for Partnership, and there truly is under the new scheme the potential for a relationship stronger than that simply between the funder and the funded, one where mutual interests in the potential for research, research careers, and public impact are evidently present. But it is also clear that the current planetary alignment of museum and research council priorities extends far beyond doctoral training. The AHRC's themes—including Science in Culture, Connected Communities, Care for the Future, and Digital Transformations—all resonate strongly with SMG's strategic concerns and public role. Indeed, the AHRC have already supported a research project and a network on PHoSTEM under their Science in Culture theme, and two projects

under Connected Communities; one exploring the local historical meanings of a piece of telephone exchange equipment, and the other supporting local heritage groups in their research.[13]

The implication is that we can be optimistic that the opportunities for the most interesting work extends beyond CDAs into postdoctoral research. This is the case both for individual students who may progress to postdoctoral opportunities, but also to the museums that stand to gain a much more strongly research-driven culture than ever before. It may even result in some of the research in museums being less instrumentalist—that is, tied to practical outcomes—than in the past. We can hope that the current emphasis on knowledge exchange and cultural impact will lead not only to new research questions, but also to some helpful convergence between postgraduate employment in museums and in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), leading to a greater porosity between the sectors to their mutual benefit. This benefit is reciprocal: on the one hand, the soundness and novelty of museums' public programmes will be enhanced by the stimulus of working at the highest intellectual level, fully up-to-date with the scholarship of the universities. On the other, university research can expect quicker and more effective routes to the public.

That is not to say that there are no clouds in the sky. It is very unclear what will be the medium-term impact on doctoral candidates of rising undergraduate- and Master's-degree tuition fees, or what the effect of the loss of most funding for Master's degrees will be. We cannot predict the final impact of Open Access publication, with its concomitant requirement either to find sources of funding for access charges or to defer open publication under the 'green' route. In other words, the golden opportunity of the present—symbolised by CDPs and the research themes—could, in theory, be dissipated in unpredictable spasms of the higher education 'market'. Equally, it should be noted that our age of austerity will have produced within two years around a 25 per cent cut in the core grants of the national public museums. Necessarily those cuts have a direct impact on the numbers of professional staff. Fewer professionals means fewer potential

supervisors for CDAs, and those that do supervise will necessarily also be very busy on other projects. Both museums and HEIs exist in a Hericlitean flux; there are no guarantees for the medium or the distant future. We should enjoy the potential of the current alignment between our worlds. That means that—for the next few years at least—there will be great opportunities for students, for museums, and for those non-human actors, the collections. The longer-term future is harder to discern.

Notes

[1] The Science Museum Group comprises the Science Museum (London), since 2012 the Museum of Science and Industry (Manchester), since 1982 the National Media Museum (Bradford), and since 1975 the National Railway Museum (York).

[2] Defined as those museums holding and displaying collections in the physical sciences and engineering, to which category I would argue the Science Museum used to belong.

[3] J. Christie, The development of the historiography of science, in R. Olby, G. Cantor, J. Christie, and M. Hodge (Eds), *Companion to the history of modern science*, London: 1991, Routledge, 5–22; M. Taylor, The beginnings of modern British social history?, *History Workshop Journal* 43 (1997) 155–176.

[4] See, for example, C. Caunter (Ed.), *The history and development of cycles as illustrated by the collection of cycles in the Science Museum*, London, 1955.

[5] A. Morton and J. Wess, *Public and private science: King George III collection*, Oxford, 1993.

[6] G. Skinner, Sir Henry Wellcome's museum for the science of history, *Medical History* 30 (1986) 383–418.

[7] S. Davies, Social History Curators' Group, *Museums Journal* 85 (1985) 153-155.

[8] T. Boon, Parallax error? A participant's account of the Science Museum, *c.*1980–*c.*2000, in: P. Morris (Ed.), *Science for the nation*, Basingstoke, 2010, 111–136.

[9] R. Bud, History of science and the Science Museum, *British Journal for the History of Science* 30 (1997) 47–50.

[10] Boon, 'Parallax error?', (note 6).

[11] Students have also been attached to other museums in the Science Museum Group.

[12] A list of Independent Research Organisations can be found at http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/What-We-Do/Fund-world-class-research/Pages/Independent-research-organisations.aspx (accessed 21 February 2013).
[13] The Enfield Exchange (accessed 21 February 2013): http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/about_us/research.aspx

10

Centre for Studies of Home: a partnership between Queen Mary, University of London and the Geffrye Museum of the Home

Alison Blunt, Eleanor John, Caron Lipman, and Alastair Owens

INTRODUCTION

The home has become an important focus of research, spanning work on the domestic sphere, including everyday life, architecture, interior design, and material cultures, to the significance of home beyond the domestic, including broader ideas about dwelling, belonging, privacy, and security. The Centre for Studies of Home was established in 2011 as a formal partnership between Queen Mary, University of London and the Geffrye Museum of the Home.[1] The centre aims to create an internationally-important hub of research, knowledge transfer, and dissemination activities on past and present homes and has brought both organisations together in a long-term partnership.

Through our focus on the Centre for Studies of Home, this chapter explores the processes and practices of collaboration at an institutional level. We begin by outlining the foundations for the partnership, before turning to the year-long feasibility process that established the centre. We then discuss collaboration in practice before reflecting on the importance of the collaboration

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for both partners. Whilst both Queen Mary and the Geffrye could have established their own research centres on home, what difference has it made to set up a collaborative centre? What have we learnt about collaboration through our experience of setting up and running the centre?

FOUNDATIONS

It might seem rather implausible to suggest that our partnership has its origins in a decision made by William Pitt's government in 1796 to introduce a new tax on inherited wealth. It may sound even more unlikely that a collaborative research project on home in the nineteenth century could be built upon the complex series of taxation records that this legislation gave rise to. However, as one of us sat leafing through Legacy Duty papers at the National Archives on a cold February afternoon in 2004, it became clear that the state's desire to extend its fiscal reach into the seemingly-private world of family wealth transmission could offer a unique glimpse into the material culture of nineteenth-century homes. The inventories listing deceased people's household possessions, often on a room-by-room basis, that were tucked away inside bundles of tax accounts, represented an important archival 'discovery' as most scholars had assumed that this kind of evidence of domestic life was not available for the nineteenth century. Whilst not unproblematic as a historical source,[2] inventories offer important insights into what people owned and consumed, how they organised domestic space, and the extent to which domestic practice followed popular prescription and representation. This seemed an obvious basis for an academic research project. However, as a museum organised around a series of room displays representing different historical periods (including the nineteenth century), it was also clear that the direct evidence of ownership and placement of domestic goods provided by the inventories would also be of very great interest to the Geffrye—a museum of the home based in East London, just two miles from Queen

Mary's main campus. One of the starting points for our partnership was, therefore, a set of discussions about a very specific archival source and its potential to enrich understandings of nineteenth-century domestic life.

Born in the rather conventional historical-geographical research setting of the archive,[3] these discussions eventually developed into an application for an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) CASE studentship. Initial contact with the Geffrye was made via a 'cold call', followed up with an invitation to a university networking event, and then a series of meetings over several months where we worked together to write the application and figure out what benefit the research might bring to both organisations. Investing time and money in undertaking some pilot work with the inventory source material was a critical part of this process, as was learning about the different research cultures of a museum curatorial department and a university. These early stages of building the partnership were important in establishing a good working relationship where both the museum and the academic supervisors were strongly and equally invested in the project. Indeed, after securing funding from the ESRC, perhaps the most difficult moment in the relationship was the need to formalise the partnership via a written agreement. Queen Mary's research support staff provided a template document that was an adapted version of a science and industry partnership agreement. Written in an almost impenetrable legal language and rather overemphasising potential commercial interests in intellectual property arising from the collaboration, the agreement failed to capture what had already become a rather more genuine and mutually-respectful academic partnership. A simpler, clearer, and more accommodating agreement was drafted instead.

Central to the success of the CASE studentship was the candidate who we appointed to undertake the Ph.D. research. Lesley Hoskins brought a unique set of skills and experience. Having worked previously with the Geffrye Museum and at the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, and already a

published expert on nineteenth- and twentieth-century domestic life, Lesley was able to traverse the professional cultures of a museum and a university with ease. Regular seminars with museum staff throughout the Ph.D. on both substantive and methodological issues meant that there was an institutional understanding of her work and the partnership with Queen Mary. Lesley's involvement in other projects for the Geffrye alongside her doctoral research, such as co-curating an exhibition, meant that her presence as a researcher and professional colleague had a wider impact. There were also other opportunities for those of us at Queen Mary to get involved with the museum. Alison Blunt and Alastair Owens brought final-year undergraduate students to the museum to meet with curators and cast a critical eye over room displays as part of their respective 'Geographies of Home' and 'Victorian London: Economy, Society and Culture' courses.

At a later stage, Alison and Alastair also joined the steering group for the 'Histories of Home' Subject Specialist Network, led by the Geffrye and bringing together museum and heritage professionals and academics interested in domestic life in the past and present. At the same time, Lesley's Geffrye supervisor, Eleanor John (Head of Collections and Exhibitions), got involved with events at Queen Mary, participating in the Colleges' Arts Week and discussing the value of collaborative Ph.D. research projects at events organised to encourage others to apply for partnership funding with different arts and culture organisations. Driven by Lesley Hoskins' insightful, careful, and thorough scholarship,[4] along with a pleasurable and mutually-rewarding partnership among the supervisory group, these examples of what research councils would call 'knowledge exchange' began to happen.

The initial idea that the relationship might be taken further and developed into a long-term partnership via the creation of a joint research centre arose during an informal conversation on a return Manchester-to-London train journey following a Histories of Home Subject Specialist Network conference co-organised by Lesley on the theme of home and work.[5] We discussed the

Geffrye's plans for a Heritage Lottery Fund-sponsored bid to undertake significant development work at the museum, reorienting the layout of some of the museum, building new study, library, gallery, learning, and conference spaces, and broadening the focus of the institution—a project that is now branded the 'Museum of the Home' development. This development project is due for completion in 2016 and will lead to better access to collections, the library, and the archive for study and learning, better facilities for conferences and events, more gallery space, and a new learning centre. Collaborative work with Queen Mary offered the potential to support and enrich the intellectual environment crucial for achieving the museum's vision of becoming a leading centre for the study of home. This seemed an obvious opportunity to build a more permanent relationship with the potential to strengthen funding applications. On the Queen Mary side, it also felt like a good moment to consider a mechanism for bringing together growing interests in the geographies of home, particularly in relation to the work of Alison Blunt and a number of Ph.D. students who had been researching domestic themes, including Caron Lipman, Joanna Long, Akile Ahmet, Imogen Wallace, Felicity Paynter, and Jayani Bonnerjee. The centre also promised to offer a way of bringing together the substantial and wide-ranging cross-disciplinary interest in home at Queen Mary, exemplified by the subsequent appointment in 2011 of the influential feminist historian of British domestic life, Amanda Vickery to a chair in History.

On the museum side, the Geffrye could bring to the partnership expertise in public engagement, and the collections and physical spaces in which to do this, which fitted well with Queen Mary's own already-established commitment to public engagement. The partnership promised to offer the museum the opportunity to increase staff awareness of current scholarship and fund in-depth research into specific areas of shared interest, all of which would help to enhance the museum's activities—exhibitions, collecting, and learning programmes—and ultimately enrich the experience of their visitors. Opportunities for on-the-

job research within the museum industry are limited, and sourcing funding for research is essential to unlocking the potential of museums, helping to keep them exciting, up-to-date, relevant, and vibrant spaces for exploration and discovery. Both organisations, therefore, had good reasons for coming together and building on the experience of a successful ESRC CASE studentship. Wider institutional shifts also bolstered the rationale for the creation of a jointly-run centre, especially the increased emphasis placed on knowledge exchange and research impact by the UK research councils. We felt that a centre would be well placed to facilitate these activities.

THE FEASIBILITY STUDY PROCESS

Once both organisations had agreed in principle to work more closely together with a view to establishing a research centre, the college agreed to fund a feasibility study into the partnership, and a researcher was commissioned to carry this out. There were multiple benefits of undertaking such a study. Firstly, the wide-ranging brief allowed for the collection of detailed information—including existing partnership structures, funding opportunities, policy issues, and scoping of both the subject and of researchers in the field (at Queen Mary, the Geffrye, and beyond). The research gained candid insights into the positive and challenging aspects of existing partnerships, as well as comments from museum staff members and stakeholders at the college. These comments and insights were fed back to a series of meetings of the steering group in the form of interim reports. The meetings, in turn, provided a crucial forum to develop relationships of familiarity and trust between representatives of organisations with different sets of language, working practices, criteria, and internal issues.

The feasibility study, and the way the process was structured via the steering group meetings, was particularly important because there was no clear initial focus for the partnership; clarity about how it might work in practice, to the

benefit of both organisations, emerged slowly. Key practical ideas were developed through the research process, including replicating the structure of existing research centres at Queen Mary. The final feasibility report included descriptions of the challenges and issues which emerged during the meetings, some of which needed to be deferred to the future. Many have either fallen away as issues or have been resolved in the act of practising the partnership, although other specific issues have arisen, as we discuss below. By acknowledging and incorporating these unresolved issues, points of tension or differences in expectation and approach, the feasibility process and the final report acted as containers able to hold these potential difficulties, thus playing a pivotal role in strengthening and clarifying relationships between the two organisations.

COLLABORATION IN PRACTICE

Following the completion of the feasibility report, a formal proposal was developed to establish the partnership between Queen Mary and the Geffrye via the Centre for Studies of Home. At Queen Mary this involved completing a two-page proposal, a collaborative partnerships form, a memorandum of understanding between both organisations, and a risk assessment. The application was reviewed at faculty level before its final approval by the Queen Mary Senior Executive. At the museum, the two-page proposal and memorandum of understanding was reviewed by the Senior Management Team and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Once the centre had gained formal approval, it was launched at a one-day workshop at the Geffrye in February 2011, which brought together over thirty colleagues from Queen Mary and the Geffrye working on home. Sixteen participants gave ten-minute presentations about their work on home, and break-out groups discussed areas for future research and other development. This group constituted the original membership of the centre. It was cross-disciplinary, including a wide range of academics,

postgraduates, and postdoctoral researchers at Queen Mary and staff from the curatorial and learning and education departments at the Geffrye.[6] In addition to external grant income, the centre can apply for up to £3,000 per year from Queen Mary, and is also supported by the Geffrye through the provision of rooms, the organisation of events, and administrative support.

Rather than establish a formal membership, the centre has a mailing list of 145 people at Queen Mary, the Geffrye, and far beyond, and has developed an on-line research register which now has more than 100 entries from academics and practitioners working on home around the world. The centre runs a range of regular activities and longer-term research projects. We hold a monthly seminar at the Institute of Historical Research (IHR) on 'Studies of Home' (with seminars available as podcasts on the website); an annual postgraduate study day on home; an annual lecture (also available on the website); and a range of conferences and workshops (including a one-day conference on 'Domestic methodologies', an AHRC-funded workshop on 'Home, migration and community' as part of the Connected Communities programme, and a one-day conference on 'Teaching and learning about home'). Such regular events have been vital in both establishing and fostering the momentum of the centre, with colleagues at Queen Mary, the Geffrye, and elsewhere meeting up regularly to share our ideas, knowledge, and experience.

The centre has also been successful in securing external grant income. Two major research projects are currently affiliated to the centre: the AHRC-funded project, 'Living with the past at home: domestic prehabitation and inheritance'[7]and a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Research Fellowship on 'Home and inhabitation: a biography of the Aylesbury Estate'.[8] The centre facilitated the development of impact strategies for both of these research projects by bringing together colleagues from Queen Mary and the Geffrye from the early stages of the application process to identify and discuss key areas for collaborative work. The former project has involved three workshops on 'Histories of home' held at the Geffrye for participants interested in researching

the history of their homes, and will also include a final exhibition and research archive that will be added to the museum's collections. Public engagement outputs from the latter project include a public talk, workshop, exhibition, and the addition of the research archive to the museum's collections. Colleagues at the Geffrye were closely involved in the development of both applications from initial discussions to final submission, and sit on advisory groups to discuss research, public engagement, and dissemination activities.

Building on, and significantly developing, its collaborative work, the centre has also secured research funding for seven Ph.D. students. The first two are Queen Mary studentships awarded to the centre in partnership with other cross-disciplinary research centres. This involved identifying a theme and broad proposal with another research centre ('Emotions and the home in modern Britain' with the Centre for the History of the Emotions; 'Space and time at home in the eighteenth century' with the Centre for Eighteenth-Century Studies). Drawing on the success of securing internal funding for Ph.D. studentships, together with the experience of Alison Blunt, Alastair Owens, and other colleagues in being awarded three AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award studentships with the V&A Museum of Childhood, the centre then focused its energy on applying for four AHRC CDA studentships. Returning to the areas for future research identified at the launch workshop, and through discussions between colleagues at Queen Mary and the Geffrye, we decided to develop an application on 'Home-work: connections and transitions in London from the seventeenth century to the present'. We invited all participants who came to the launch workshop to submit ideas for proposals under this broad theme, and then worked to develop four of these. The application to the AHRC was able to demonstrate an established partnership between both organisations, with much of the infrastructure and working relationships in place for successful joint supervision, specialist research training, and the development of a range of curatorial and educational outputs beyond the thesis. This application was

successful, and four Ph.D. students started in October 2012. Two are based in geography, one in history, and one jointly in geography and languages, and each has two supervisors from Queen Mary and two from the Geffrye (with one from the Curatorial and one from the Learning and Engagement Departments). A final Ph.D. studentship—this time on teenagers' bedrooms—has been awarded by the ESRC via the Queen Mary and Goldsmiths Doctoral Training Centre, and also involves joint supervision between colleagues at Queen Mary and the Geffrye. In addition to its other activities, the collaboration at the heart of the centre is put into practice through regular supervision meetings and bi-annual research-in-progress days.

REFLECTIONS ON COLLABORATION

The Centre for Studies of Home has brought together two organisations and a wide range of people, spanning different academic disciplines at Queen Mary and the curatorial and educational departments at the Geffrye. In this section we want to reflect on what we have learned from our experiences of collaboration, from the perspective of those working in the two partner organisations. Whilst both Queen Mary and the Geffrye could have established their own research centres on home, what difference has it made to set up a collaborative centre?

From an academic perspective, the collaboration between Queen Mary and the Geffrye has made a wide range of activities and research projects possible, and has enabled us to engage much more directly not only with colleagues working on home in a museum context, but also with a much wider public. Establishing a formal partnership between both organisations via the centre—and providing the resources to make this possible—demonstrates an institutional commitment to long-term collaborative work. Rather than work together on single projects (for example an AHRC CDA application), the partnership between both organisations has established deeper collaborative foundations on

which research ideas, knowledge exchange activities, and dissemination can be discussed and developed. In other words, the collaboration now goes beyond specific projects.

Whilst the centre was launched in 2011, its roots are much deeper. Our early experience of collaborative work (notably the joint supervision of Lesley Hoskins' ESRC CASE studentship, and undergraduate visits to the Geffrye) together with the feasibility study and early steering group meetings, established the infrastructure and relationships on which to build a collaborative partnership. This relationship has been sustained and further developed by regular activities, as well as through longer-term projects. Whilst some of the centre's activities are largely focused on the collaboration between Queen Mary and the Geffrye (notably the research grants and Ph.D. studentships), others involve participants from elsewhere too (including the IHR seminar series, postgraduate study days, and other conferences and workshops). As well as developing research projects based in the centre, we are also named as partners on other external applications (including the ESRC seminar series on 'Home spaces? Public and private in new welfare settings' based at the Open University). Members of the steering group are also involved in other collaborations, including three AHRC CDA studentships with the V&A Museum of Childhood and one with the Ragged School Museum. The Geffrye is named as a partner in the AHRC-funded and Queen Mary-led knowledge exchange hub, Creativeworks London.

In addition to developing collaborative research projects and public engagement initiatives, the centre has also had a direct impact on our teaching at undergraduate- and master's-degree level. Whilst undergraduate visits from Queen Mary took place before the centre was launched, they have developed in new and exciting ways since we have worked more closely together, largely because colleagues at both organisations now know each other much better and are much more familiar with each other's work. Following a talk on the history of the domestic interior and an introduction to the Geffrye and the scope of its work, the students

compare two period rooms, and then study some of the 'Documenting homes' material collected by the Geffrye to record the furnishings and domestic arrangements of households, both contemporary and within living memory. As a result of this, the coursework for students writing an extended essay as part of a course on home, involves completing their own 'Documenting homes' project. A new master's-level module, 'Cultural geography in practice', also involves a visit to the Geffrye as part of the wider study of collaborative geographies and curatorial practice.

From the museum's perspective the collaboration has brought almost unimaginable riches in terms of research and opportunities for continuing professional development. The fact that a museum of the Geffrye's size can be involved in seven Ph.Ds and two post-doctoral research projects, generating material for the permanent galleries, temporary exhibitions, collections, and diverse learning programmes, as well as co-delivering a rich programme of academic seminars, conferences, and workshops engaging with new research and professional practice, is testimony to the fruitfulness of the partnership. It also illustrates the potential it has for sustaining development within the museum sector and helping to ensure that academic research benefits a wider public. The challenge will be to ensure that the potential of all these opportunities is maximised, that the research does find its way into the museum's activities, and that research archives are catalogued and made accessible. Some of this work is funded from within the projects: the post-doctoral research projects have funding to produce small exhibitions, and cataloguing of research archives is also envisaged within these grants and within the Ph.Ds, although the degree to which archives can be catalogued adequately in this way has to be tested. Whilst material for permanent galleries, larger exhibitions, and learning programmes will undoubtedly be generated, the museum can only capitalise on this if it is successful in maintaining the capacity amongst its staff to engage with this material and in securing the funding to implement these programs.

An important feature of this collaborative work has been the pleasure of working with colleagues and getting to know an organisation in a different sector. The sheer enjoyment of going to meetings at the Geffrye, convening events there, and sharing ideas in postgraduate supervisions has underpinned the success of the centre. It has also been a learning process, particularly in terms of how different organisations work. As one example of this, a number of research projects and doctoral studentships affiliated to the centre, as already mentioned, aim to deposit primary research material in the Geffrye collections. In early discussions, different perspectives emerged in terms of the principles of how to do this, particularly in terms of maintaining anonymity and setting an embargo before the material is made publicly available. We are now working together to develop a protocol to establish shared principles, and see this as a constructive and collaborative way forward. Our partnership has involved internal as well as external collaborations, and we have learnt that the former are sometimes more challenging than the latter, particularly in terms of the administrative work required for Ph.D. studentships based in different Queen Mary departments.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has focused on the Centre for Studies of Home, a partnership between Queen Mary and the Geffrye Museum, as an example of institutional collaboration. Whilst it was founded in 2011, its foundations are much deeper, dating from Lesley Hoskins' ESRC CASE studentship. Specific collaborative projects—in this case, a Ph.D. studentship—can have the potential for much longer-term collaboration between two organisations. The foundations of the partnership were strengthened by the feasibility study, which provided an essential opportunity for staff at both Queen Mary and the Geffrye to discuss their interests, aims, and concerns and to plan how a research centre on home might be constituted and what it would

seek to achieve. Institutional support at this stage was vital in ensuring the depth and breadth of the feasibility report. Once the proposal to establish the centre had been formally approved by both organisations, we convened a launch workshop. Since then, we have found that a combination of regular activities and longer-term projects, some of which primarily involve colleagues at Queen Mary and the Geffrye, and some of which involve many other participants too, has established and maintained the centre's momentum. Whilst both Queen Mary and the Geffrye could have set up their own research centres of home, the joint centre has enabled us to do far more together, particularly in terms of reaching different audiences, developing public engagement strategies, and enhancing research capacity.

We have learnt a number of things about collaboration through our experience of working together on the Centre for Studies of Home. This collaboration exists on an institutional level, through a formal partnership between both organisations. Whilst institutional support from both Queen Mary and the Geffrye has been vital in establishing and running the centre, the collaboration has depended upon close working relationships between individual colleagues and across different departments in each organisation. The centre would be far less secure and effective without either the institutional support or good relationships between colleagues. Both Queen Mary and the Geffrye are committed to a long-term partnership, within which a range of collaborative projects has been developed. Finally, we feel that the centre has been able to achieve so much within two years of its founding because its roots run much deeper and because the feasibility process enabled us to clarify our aims and objectives, to learn from other collaborations between universities and museums, and to work closely together before the centre was established.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Ruth Craggs, David Dewing, and Alison Lightbown for their very helpful comments on this chapter.

Notes

[1] The centre's activities are described on its website: http://www.studiesofhome.qmul.ac.uk

[2] T. Arkell, N. Evans, and N. Goose (Eds), *When death do us part: understanding and interpreting the probate records of early modern England*, Oxford, 2000.

[3] For reflections on archival method and practice see E. Gagen, H. Lorimer, and A. Vasudevan (Eds), *Practising the archive: reflections on method and practice in historical geography*, London, 2007.

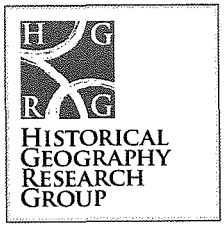
[4] J. Hamlett and L. Hoskins, Introduction, *Home Cultures* 8 (2011) 109–117; L. Hoskins, *Reading the inventory: household goods, domestic cultures and difference in England and Wales, 1841–81*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2011; L. Hoskins, Stories of work and home in the mid-nineteenth century, *Home Cultures* 8 (2011) 151–169.

[5] See the resulting special issue of *Home Cultures* 8 (2011) entitled 'Home and work in Britain'; Hamlett and Hoskins, Introduction, (note 4).

[6] The centre has two directors: Alison Blunt (geography, Queen Mary) and Eleanor John (Head of Collections and Exhibitions, Geffrye), appointed in the first instance for five years, and a wider steering group that meets quarterly and consists of Rhodri Hayward (history), Caron Lipman (geography), Alastair Owens (geography), and Amanda Vickery (history) at Queen Mary, and David Dewing (Director) and Alison Lightbown (Head of Learning and Engagement) at the Geffrye.

[7] Principal Investigator: Catherine Nash; Co-Investigators Alison Blunt and Alastair Owens Postdoctoral Research Assistant: Caron Lipman.

[8] Leverhulme Early-Career Fellow: Richard Baxter, School of Geography, Queen Mary, University of London.



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