Bridging the Divide: community history and higher education

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For many months I have considered this project to be a dismal failure, which is perhaps not the most engaging opening sentence for a Report! Both aspects of it – a questionnaire exploring the range of community history modules undertaken by history undergraduates, and my own case study in Sheffield - had proved to be extremely problematic. In fact, the two scarcely seemed to tie together. As the analysis of the questionnaire will reveal, the form that (university) 'history in the community' most commonly takes is that of 'work experience', whereby the student spends a number of hours associated with an external (public) agency, usually a museum or a record office, in order to experience the application of historical skills and/or to gain experience of the culture of work. Very few respondents were involved in the sort of collaborative work I was hoping to pursue in Sheffield. Secondly, this collaborative project itself proved to be fraught with difficulties. Indeed, it seemed that the divide between university and community history was unbridgeable, and maybe that went some way to explain why so few academics seemed (on the basis of the questionnaire results) to be engaged in such work. However, even if the interface between and community and academic history which I had initially set out to explore, seems rarely to exist, the project has nonetheless raised lots of important issues: about the relationships between academic historians, school students and other people with an interest in history; the pursuit of history in an extra-university context; and especially its use within what might be loosely termed 'regeneration' projects within urban communities. Most of all, it has made me aware of the extent of extra-university community history, and the scope for collaboration within that context.

The 'Bridging the Divide' project was inspired by my own contact with schools and neighbourhood groups in an area of Sheffield that is a designated 'New Deal for Communities' (NDC) funded area. The vision was quite grand: over the years of living in this very mixed community, I have met many people who have extraordinary stories to tell, but whose histories make it to neither the syllabus of undergraduate history teaching, nor the school history curriculum. This new project was to involve University history undergraduates in working alongside young school students studying History, acting as mentors, sharing skills in historical research, encouraging them to approach the community and the locality as a historical resource, engaging them in seeing their own family stories as 'real' history alongside the 'bigger' but more remote topics that they were studying in school. For the teachers involved, working in one of the most socially and economically deprived areas of Britain, where all schools fall into 'Band Three' in terms of pass results and numbers going on to higher education, this would support the (Department for Education and Skills) 'Gifted and Talented' scheme, which aims to encourage strong students, who would not normally consider going to University, to see higher education as a possibility in their own lives. The

relationships forged with local schools and other agencies might also be of some longer term benefit to the University itself, in terms of outreach and recruitment.

This Report is organised into two sections. The first section analyses the findings of the questionnaire on community history in higher education. In the second section I discuss the 'case study' in Burngreave and Pitsmoor.

I Questionnaire: History in the Community
In October 2002 I circulated a questionnaire to all History Departments and Departments of Lifelong Learning/Continuing Education throughout the UK. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information concerning the extent and nature of modules in higher education concerned with 'history in the community' (see Appendix A). Areas covered by the questions included: teaching on modules on public/community history; curriculum design; styles of teaching and learning; collaboration with external organisations/groups/agencies; methods of assessment; evaluation; successes of and concerns about the module. This analysis concerns both quantitative evidence and some of the more qualitative issues raised by follow-up interviews with some respondents.

The questionnaire elicited a low response rate. Of the 150 sent out, only 20 were returned. Two responses merely stated that the department did not run any modules associated with 'history in the community'. Others returned details of modules on 'public history'; in one case one such module ran alongside, and complemented, another concerned with community history. Of all those that did not respond, it is impossible, therefore, to know whether, for example, this was because the departments do not run such a module, or because the questionnaire was not passed on to the appropriate person; or indeed, whether the dominant understanding of 'community history' centres on archives and museums rather than community groups, voluntary organisations or schools. I had hoped to have anticipated this last possibility by placing these latter three options at the top of the list of agencies with whom departments may have contact.

The fifteen 'positive' responses came fairly evenly from the old (7) and new (8) University sectors. Most of the respondents (11) were located in a department of History; two were in departments of Lifelong Learning; and two in Humanities. One of these was concerned with Master's Level, although focusing on a non-traditional constituency; I have therefore included it as part of this study.

In an analysis of the fifteen responses, twelve concerned a module within the broader genre of 'work experience'. The titles of modules reflect the emphasis on work, some also containing a more or less explicit focus on the application of debates about history. The following are representative: Work Placement: applied history in the workplace; Sources and debates: Work

experience module; Work and Community Placement in History; Historical studies in the Community; Professional Attachment; Vision at Work; Work Study in History; History Placement; Workplace module; History@Work. Two departments ran a Practical Independent Study and a History Group Project, which focused on a student work placement. Introduction to History of Art was similarly concerned with the application of history. Exceptions to this included a module on a two-year Local Studies degree, which looked at applied history as part of a very broad programme; and a Masters in Irish Migration Studies, which visited museums to study migration rather than as a placement. Another module, History in the Community, focused on the project itself rather than on the experience of work, and had students undertaking a project of their choice which usually had some bearing on/was beneficial for an external agency and which was presented to a wider audience beyond the university.

Most of these modules (10) had been created in the 1990s, and four in the last three years. One developed in 1989 was quite explicitly a (very creative) response to government (and university) emphasis on 'enterprise'. Many others also fulfilled this requirement, more directly. Modules were taught mainly at undergraduate levels 2 (6) and 3 (7), with some offered at both levels two and three; one module was compulsory at Level 1 and another offered at this level, while another formed part of an MA course which focused on non-traditional entrants as part of a university outreach programme. Most (13) were taught from within the History group, though some were team taught (e.g. between History, Theology and English) or taught between the university and another agency (e.g. Northern Ireland Centre for Migration Studies). Many involved guest speakers or input from professionals in archives, museums and archaeology units. The modules were mainly run over a single semester; one formed part of a year-long programme of study while another extended over two years as part of a Local Studies degree. The numbers of students taking the modules varied dramatically, between 2 and 60 students (the 60 were first year students for whom the unit was mandatory). Usually, however, modules attracted in the region of 10-12 students. In terms of student composition, most tutors reported a higher percentage of mature students, and a slightly greater uptake amongst women.

The content of different modules varied in some cases from year to year, depending on the project work chosen by the students and the availability of placements within external agencies able to accommodate them. Usually, the university had developed the contact with the receiving agency; in one case the students themselves were required to find placements prior to the beginning of the module. All involved a period of attachment with an employer/community group, ranging from 4 hours to one day a week, or in terms of hours overall (for example, 30). The student on placement was supported by supervision by the tutor, in the form of visits, email discussion (also with other students), and/or tutorials, either group or individual. One module included an induction week on teambuilding. In many cases, there was no formal teaching. In others, a work plan was developed; and students might also

attend lectures. Seminar and lecture programmes focused overwhelmingly on heritage debates and practical skills, although one department was rather untouched by debates regarding the new museology and focused its taught (tutorial) programme on a satisfyingly in-depth exploration of specific archival problems concerning cataloguing, preservation, palaeography or the general uses and importance of particular deposits. In another, a module for part-time students, visits to public history agencies were part of a two-year programme which also included field work, guest speakers, oral testimony, lectures etc.

Assessment varied dramatically between modules. It usually involved a report (on the project), sometimes written for the agency and in some cases defined (and graded by) the 'employers'/supervisors at the placement. Many students wrote an essay for the department; these usually took the form of an individual essay, though some were group efforts. Other forms of assessed work included combinations of: an exam; a reflective learning log; a diary; a group presentation; student self-evaluation; and frequently, a final product that is accessible to a wider audience, either via the web, a booklet or a video, or, for the receiving service, a catalogue of documents, an education pack, greater factual depth to heritage presentations.

Such modules seemed to generate high levels of anxiety among staff! Tutors' main concerns tended to focus on making contacts, developing a working relationship with different agencies and maintaining them for subsequent years. The process of 'setting projects up, liaising with any outside bodies, advising students on approaches, skills and sources, helping them with project writing, and writing final reports' is not only time-consuming, but involves a number of risks. On the placement side, these risks involve: 'changing personnel', 'individuals failing to understand what can be achieved by undergraduates in the time available', 'over-worked staff', 'a general shortage of good placements within proximity of the university', 'running out of placements', 'finding more placements', and 'the closure and refurbishment of museums'. One respondent aimed to get round this by 'devis[ing] projects which could, if necessary, be achieved with minimum input from outside bodies but which still involved students in thinking about the issues involved in community history.' In terms of the university, there are issues of recruitment ('It has always been difficult to get large numbers of students to do something "different" although the students who have done the course have been very rewarding to teach for precisely that reason.'). There is also the possibility that students on placement feel unsupported; as well as issues about placing 'unsuitable' students, the balance between the practical and the academic ('students get very involved in the practical aspects of their group projects and have to be reminded about the need to maintain a good level of academic input'), the uncertainties regarding what students are asked to do and the variable quality of what they produce (one respondent reported a great fear of 'what would happen if the end product was not satisfactory!').

The reported 'gains' to students are skills and benefits associated with students across the board rather than with a group of more mature and majority-female students. Most tutors stated 'gains' in terms of research skills (including 'project report skills', 'information gathering skills', web-creation skills) and 'awareness of History's role in the community' (including 'ability to write for different audiences'; 'understanding of constructed nature of past'; 'ability to relate fieldwork to wider debates', 'understanding of organizing discipline-related public activities; contact with the public', 'self-awareness as historians in the community and relevance of history to work', etc.). Many also emphasised the importance of the experience of work, in terms of 'contacts', a 'sense of work in context – communal, social, ethical, not just financial', the 'experience of work situation', 'career insights, employability, understanding of the world of work', etc. Many stressed that the placement helped with getting onto an MA or PGCE course, or an eventual move into employment in the fields of heritage or tourism. Some respondents also emphasised the development of personal qualities: 'experience, self-confidence, personal skills, tact', 'the opportunity to reflect upon skills and strengths', 'knowledge and enthusiasm', 'responsibility, time management, confidence', 'self awareness, confidence, knowledge of strengths/weaknesses', and 'oral and written communication'. One tutor talked about the gaining of a broader understanding of society, and another made specific reference to the age of students, stating that for older students especially they had their 'eyes opened to new aspects of the city'. Many tutors reported a high level of student satisfaction. At one university, several student projects have been published, either in book form or on the web; a history of the university undertaken by students has found its way into official university publications and promotions.

These outcomes, information about which is gleaned both informally from students, and from the usual methods of course evaluation, largely matched the stated aims of the modules. These tended to emphasise the application of historical skills and the development of transferable skills relevant for work experience. Course booklets emphasised 'the nature and location of primary historical evidence available at the university and in the wider community... [and] appreciation of the uses and limitations of that evidence by undertaking original primary research', the 'experience of communicating historical information in such a way that it can be understood and appreciated by both an academic and local audience', the opportunity to develop critical skills regarding museum collections and archives; i.e. a broad concern to introduce students to the relationship between academic and public history in terms of debates around 'what is history'. Some students were encouraged to reflect on ethics of work; to engage in a learning experience with professionals, and to assist those agencies. Transferable skills for work were seen as: experience of team work, basic word-processing skills, awareness of how computerised databases and spreadsheets can be deployed to promote historical enquiry, the achievement of a specific objective within a specified time period.

Tutors reported that benefits to the receiving agencies are often hard to quantify, especially as, in many cases, they are 'effectively advisors rather than clients.' But there are, nonetheless, some very concrete results for community groups. They get the free labour of students, who often contribute new ideas and are able to produce quality work. Sometimes, students make contributions to areas where an agency is developing projects requiring government funding. Receiving agencies also get publicity and an opportunity to make contact with the public in a different way. Groups of school students especially are believed to see the benefits from gaining an insight into what university students do as part of their degrees.

The results of the questionnaire, then, demonstrated some engaging variations on the theme of work experience. All except one, however, were very much focused upon the experience of the student rather than a collaboration between the university and an external agency. In that sense, the survey results feel to be part of a different project from the case study, discussed below.

II Case study: community history in Burngreave, Sheffield
During the Autumn semester of 2002-03, sixteen undergraduate History students at Sheffield Hallam University took a new third-year option, entitled 'Life Stories and Community Histories'. As part of this module, students were to (a) receive training in oral history theory and practice; and (b) engage in 'doing history in the community', through collaboration with volunteers from the community based at either Burngreave Library in Sheffield, or Fir Vale Secondary School.

The connections with Fir Vale School and Burngreave Library had emerged out a series of meetings in late 2001- Spring 2002 which were connected with the New Deal for Communities programme in the Pitsmoor and Burngreave areas of Sheffield. New Deal for Communities is a key programme in the government's strategy to tackle multiple deprivation, including poor job prospects, high levels of crime, poor health, housing and the physical environment, and educational under-achievement. It aims to help some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country by giving grants to community-based partnerships for neighbourhood renewal. The first seventeen 'pathfinder' partnerships were established in 1998, followed by a second round of 22 partnerships formed in 1999. Approximately £2bn has been committed to the 39 partnerships; of this, £52million has been committed to Burngreave and Pitsmoor.

NDC in practice, however, is altogether more complicated, with many criticisms at the grassroots of a 'missionary model' of intervention: too little consultation, lots of imposition from above/outside rather than 'community ownership' (eg a prioritising of policing over and above a grassroots' demand for employment), too much bureaucracy, and considerable political in-fighting in which all number of people claim to speak for 'the community'.[1] But one

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[1] See for example back issues of the *Burngreave Messenger*, which operates as forum within which to critically evaluate NDC schemes.

positive upshot of NDC is that there are a lot of people involved in projects who perhaps would not normally be involved in local politics. There is a great deal of 'energy' around regeneration issues, and consideration of regeneration for many people necessarily involves thinking about the past, about what the causes of degeneration might have been, and about the character of the area prior to degeneration.

Burngreave and Pitsmoor are fairly typical inner-city areas. Briefly, they consist mainly of streets of terraced housing built around the turn of the twentieth century, to house workers employed in Sheffield's then-booming steel industry. Some high-Victorian semis, most of which were occupied by professionals until the 1950s, and a number of (some very grand) late-Georgian houses, which are now used mainly as offices, both point to the 'lost grandeur' of the area. The 1940s saw the growth of large council estates around the edge of the area, adding to some early (post-WWI) council housing stock which had been seen as very respectable, and certainly not cheap to rent. Combined with the increasing desirability of other parts of the city, especially the south-westerly suburbs of Sheffield, these developments saw the area becoming less fashionable in the inter-war years. By the 1960s, Pitsmoor and Burngreave was a destination for people migrating to Sheffield, initially from the Caribbean. Many of the large Victorian semis became tenement housing to poor families, many of whom came eventually to buy properties in the area. The 1950s-1970s also saw migration from Ireland, and immigration from Yemen (again, to work in the steel industry) and also from Kashmir/Paskistan and Somalia. Since then, Pitsmoor and Burngreave have become home to numbers of East European migrants, and more recently to asylum seekers from a range of places. There remains a large traditional Sheffield working class, and a sizeable white middle-class professional element in the area.

The history of the area is usually told in terms of 'degeneration'. This was the trajectory offered by local history society talks that I attended as I started my project. For example, looking at the range of impressive and very specialist shops and businesses that had existed on the Wicker and Spital Hill in the 1930s, (and now one of the most neglected parts of the area), the story rapidly became told in terms of race and immigration, and associated poverty, drugs and decline. This is a narrative that many inhabitants of the area feel uncomfortable with; it is nonetheless the dominant image of the area, promoted in the local press and held by many people living in other parts of the city.

At various 'Education Theme' meetings in Burngreave and Pitsmoor through the winter of 2001 and early 2002, I discovered that there was a fantastic enthusiasm for history. My own initial thoughts had been to begin by involving students in projects concerned with the environment, researching and writing, for example: the history of Abbeyfield house (a very grand Georgian house in a local park); the very multi-cultural Allotment Garden Society; the beautiful Burngreave Cemetery (the subject of a heritage bid); places of worship in the area,

such as St Catherine's Catholic Church, built to accommodate Sheffield's growing Irish population, Osgathorpe Road mosque and madrasa, and the Gurdwara on Ellesmere Rd North; or just to use the Census to explore the inhabitants of a row of houses or range of shops and businesses.

From the beginning, I had wanted to work with the local secondary school, a school which has received a lot of national publicity over the years as Earl Marshall, one of David Blunkett's 18 'named and shamed' schools. With Fir Vale (as it was renamed), this fantastically demoralising strategy seems to have had some success: the school is now in the top 5% in the country when assessed in terms of the 'value added' to children when taking into account their backgrounds. The intake of Fir Vale reflects the community, though more some communities than others, as white middle-class children tend to get creamed off by a much more successful comprehensive on the edge of the city centre, and many white working-class children tend to go to a variety of other struggling schools in the neighbourhood. At the meetings, there was considerable enthusiasm to 'train up' young historians from among the school students, especially those identified under the new 'Gifted and Talented Scheme', to have them doing local history alongside third year university students. But, rather than projects on the built environment, the sort of history that the community leaders that I met through NDC wanted, was an oral history.

An oral history is not something I would have initiated without such expressed keenness. This is for reasons of personal unease: I feel far too unhealthily entrenched in 1980s cultural politics to feel comfortable, as a white academic, recording the histories of people from different ethnic groups. But, I was rather persuaded to rise to the challenge through these meetings. The 'word on the ground' was also very positive. A library worker at Burngreave Library, a woman from a Jamaican background who is in contact with many local elderly people who came from the Caribbean in the 1950s and 1960s, reported some interest; (others, most decidedly were not, having participated in such projects in the past but having not had any feedback or outcome). The history teacher and community liaison person (the latter a member of the Kashmiri-Pakistani community) at Fir Vale School were both very keen: they knew of a number of children who would want to be involved in conducting interviews; other students were lined up to act as interpreters. Before long, up to sixty parents and grandparents, contacted by letter, phone, and word-of-mouth at a parents' evening, had committed themselves to participating in the project.

So, we (the University) and they (the school) did the preparation. I got my module validated, and went into school to undertake training sessions with Y10 and Y11 History students, most of whom were part of the Gifted and Talented Scheme. These were then followed up by the teacher. Some real stars emerged at these sessions. Two children, a girl from a Kashmiri-Pakistani background, and a boy recently arrived from Pakistan, went home and spent the

summer interviewing elderly family members. Another girl had at home a video made by the Yemeni Literacy Association featuring her granddad, which really stimulated her interest in her own family history.

At Sheffield Hallam, 16 students enlisted on the new module, entitled 'Life Stories and Community History'. There was a good number of mature students among them: after years of struggling with too many 'Lads', I had fulfilled my ambition of designing a course which creamed off a nice combination of mature students and others who were particularly 'engaged' with their studies! The group was white, with the exception of one mixed-race student, although there were a number of mature women with mixed-race children who were extremely engaged with the issues. The students did the preparation, in terms of attending lectures and practice sessions on oral history, and lectures and seminar discussions on immigration and issues of race and social investigation. Some of them were very challenged by the subject: I specifically targeted issues I knew would exercise them, such as the variety of meanings attached to the veil by Muslims and non-Muslims, different understandings and experiences of arranged marriages etc. There were one or two whose ideas were very much derived from the right-wing tabloid media and I was extremely anxious about 'letting them loose' in an interview setting. The dynamics within the group were also interesting. A lot of students looked to the single black male to 'educate' them about black experiences in Britain. This was most definitely done in a respectful way, deferring to his experience, but not only was it inappropriate, it was also impossible, as he was on his own very personal journey. In fact, the most immediately rewarding element of the project was that he felt doing the module changed his life (his words), which is possibly rather more than a history lecturer can hope for.

When the day for the big meetings came, however, there was very little interest from within the communities. There are a number of possible explanations for this. Firstly, the day for the interviews was a Friday, which many people had said they favoured, because (for the school-based group) they could come in on their way to the mosque. But it turned out to be the wettest Friday imaginable, with a whole morning of torrential downpours, and very discouraging, especially as many people don't have cars. But there was also a poor turn-out at the rearranged meeting, which was now too close to Ramadan. People who did turn up tended to be: taxi drivers, people associated through work with the community liaison worker at school, and some community leaders/representatives. The latter were very keen on telling their own stories, which were stories of high achievement, and some were rather dismissive of our wish to interview taxi drivers and housewives, thus raising some very interesting issues, which we were unable to pursue, about whose history should be told and who should represent the community. The people in the Library group did not appear either, though a few women were happy to be interviewed at home. Again, the weather was a factor, but I think a greater issue here was that we had decided to hold meetings in places away from the potential interviewees' homes. Possibly also people may have felt their stories were less interesting than

those of other people, and were willing to leave it to the next man and woman to participate. I also believe there was a tension between interest in the project and antagonism to telling your story to university people, but this is not based on evidence or than hearsay.

I was in a slightly anxious state at this point as, while the reasons why people hadn't shown were politically and intellectually exercising, I had sixteen students for whom an oral history interview was part of their assessment. Indeed, I was at the stage of accosting neighbours in the street, and did manage to enlist the mother-in-law of my hairdresser, who had come to Sheffield from Jamaica in the early 1960s. Nevertheless, students did their interviews: at school or in peoples' homes, in pairs, accompanied (in school) by child interpreters and with school students sitting in. It was not an oral history for 'purists'! The students nevertheless conducted some really successful interviews, and some interviewees seem to have really enjoyed the process of telling their stories. There was only one difficulty, and this was completely unanticipated. With all my worries about whether students would be sufficiently sensitive on various issues of cultural difference, it transpired that one of the interviewees knew the father of an interviewer and had a lot to say about him (the interviewer didn't know him), pursuing the subject fairly relentlessly and insensitively, and causing a weekend of turmoil for the student concerned.

But: we are left with some – a small number – of very successful interviews. These were mainly by women, who gave the fullest interviews. The men interviewed seemed to enjoy the process, but were so much less open to reflecting upon their experience. Indeed, it became a pattern that men lapsed into talking in lists –for example, about a loan they got in the early 1960s which had been very important in the process of settling here. The focus, however, was on the donors of different constituent parts of the loan, how it was paid back, what it was spent on (lino and carpet looming largely), but with absolutely no interested in extending this into discussion of the importance of community support when settling, male identity as provider, etc etc. This seemed to be because the interviewees anticipated that factual information was what we wanted, but this in itself the students found difficult to explore. Women's style of telling their stories was completely different from that of the men, and appeared to be focused much more upon feelings: how they felt as a mother leaving an elder child in the Caribbean, and bringing up a large family on little money over here; reflections on being British and their relationship with the 'mother country', and how both had changed over the years; and gave stark images of domestic life – landlords being skimpy with the electric, washing for a family in winter with a dolly tub in the back yard and cold, raw hands. Interviewees usually reported that they had enjoyed the meetings, which were often very intense, both for them and for the students involved.

Conclusions

The small number of interviewees' accounts has meant that we have been unable to pursue the original aim of holding exhibitions (in school and at Hallam) and of ultimately publishing the accounts. Here, working with the aims of the Gifted and Talented Scheme, we had hoped to help in the processs of familiarising students and their families with the university. My plan, however, helped by some encouraging responses and suggestions at the recent Teaching and Learning conference (April 2004), is to exhibit extracts from these accounts as part of a library display. This small display will hopefully stimulate further interest and enable the module and different collaborations to run in subsequent years. Moreover, a local initiative called 'Celebrating Burngreave', a three year project run between a Sheffield museum and Burngreave Library, has recently received funding, and it is quite possible that the project will find a home within it.

While the small number of people coming forward to be to interviewed did affect the momentum of the project, it was successful generating an interest in doing family and local history among some school students. Those who undertook interviewing at home quite evidently enjoyed the experience and told their stories with pride and interest. Whether this made them more likely to want to study History at university, or even to go to university, is impossible to quantify, however. Indeed, this may well feature on my list of things I would do differently were I to repeat the project: to find some way of measuring the impact of the project in terms of generating interest in history.

There is a number of other things I would do differently. While I am sure that an oral history could be more successful than this one has been, it needs to involve someone with a little less self-doubt than myself, or to take altogether a radically different format. Indeed, interviewees are perhaps best generated by the school students themselves. This may well happen in the context of a local primary school, where some teachers are concerned about not dealing as best they might with issues raised by the multicultural intake and have expressed interest in school students asking family members to come into school to talk and be interviewed. It may be that Hallam students are able also to work at the school to assist in this initiative. Any other interviews (i.e. those not associated with the school) should be held in their own homes rather than at a school or Library. A preliminary session to talk about what we mean by history, our interest in domestic stories, in whatever is of significance to the interviewer, rather than factual detail, might also be useful. University students' assessed work should not rely on the completion of an interview: the too many unknown factors make this too risky a strategy! Indeed, the next time this module runs (2005-06), students will have a range of projects to choose from, mainly concerned with the history of the area: Abbeyfield House, the cemetery, the allotments, places of worship etc.

The main thing that I have learned from this project is that there is so much history being done 'out there', often associated with regeneration projects, rather than with any university

History departments. This should be of interest to University departments: not only in supplying placements for work experience projects, but developing contacts, gaining the interest of potential future students and, as one academic running the one more collaborative history in the community module has discovered, generating new areas of research. 'Bridging the Divide' received a lot of interest from people working in this field and I am now aware of a community history network which includes initiatives such as local oral history projects, a bigger 'Friends of the General Cemetery' project, and a highly successful project to teach literacy through heritage studies at Clifton Park Museum in nearby Rotherham. It is in this context that I hope the Community History possibilities will develop.

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