

OUTCOMES: WHAT IS THE VALUE OF CO-PRODUCTION?

Pip Willcox (The National Archives) [00:00:10] My name's Pip Willcox. I'm Head of Research here at The National Archives. I'm absolutely delighted to be asked to chair this session, which is on outcomes. What is the value of co-production?

We, as you may have gathered, are amongst the many, many people in this room, everyone in this room who are fascinated by the subject of co-production and one strand of that is in the digitally enabled co-production. We are delighted to be part of the Towards a National Collection research programme that's recently been announced by the AHRC. And one of the projects we have two projects here (we're lucky enough to have two projects that we're leading) but one of the projects is called Engaging Crowds: Citizen research and heritage data at scale, where we are working with colleagues at the University of Oxford from Zooniverse, and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and Royal Museums Greenwich on citizen research in the online setting.

But we will be having workshops that are deliberately aimed at broadening that conversation beyond the digitally enabled part. So I do hope you'll keep an eye out for them and come and share your brilliance and your expertise with us in those.

And having plugged that, let us move on to the much more important part of the afternoon, which is that we have three speakers. So as this morning, we'll hear from all three of them and then gather them together for a discussion afterwards. And these are more lightning talks. They're 10 minutes each.

And our first speaker this morning's Professor Sarah, this afternoon, crikey, is Professor Sarah Lloyd, who's a Professor of History at the University of Hertfordshire. She's worked with communities on a range of history and heritage topics, most recently as Director of the First World War Engagement Centre: Everyday Lives in War, which is an AHRC-funded programme five year research project.

I'm going to hand over to you Sarah.

Sarah Lloyd (University of Hertfordshire) [00:01:53] So thank you very much. It's lovely to be here. It's a really interesting day so far. And I'm finding that what I have written

actually speaking into conversations that have already started here. So hopefully you can set it in that context rather than we've heard that before.

I have followed the questions that the organisers set us to speak to. So I'm going to start with my definition of co-production. The one definition I haven't given here, because I've only got 10 minutes, and thankfully I wasn't asked to define this in my talk, is 'community'. But can I just say that every time I use the word 'community', I do actually know it is a very, very complex and slippery sort of term. So it's another term that we might want to think about in a discussion.

So for me, co-production means people working side-by-side on a shared objective, enthusiasm, interest or passion. It's a process that recognises participants' different experiences and acknowledges that each person has expertise to contribute.

My definition is itself co-produced, since it emerged from a conversation many years ago around the history of a disused railway branch line. I was in the company of train modellers and chroniclers, and they knew the minutia of railway infrastructure and I was all too aware of my own ignorance. 'I am no expert,' I confessed very nervously. 'But we all have expertise,' one of them kindly said, and that proved to be the case.

There was something I could offer as a social historian. It wasn't deciphering locomotive numbers, but it was investigating the people living next to the line and the goods travelling along it. That conversation, the insight that everyone has expertise to share, has had a long-lasting effect on me. It has radical potential, I think, as the basis for what I call expansive inclusion and recognises the effect of happenstance. If we prioritise a specific skill set or experience, we miss the unexpected and we exclude people who might like, in other circumstances, to be there. We lose opportunities.

Co-production simultaneously raises pressing practical questions around participation: do time and money create privileged access? Yes, this is often about funding, covering travel costs, for example, upfront and not at the glacial speed of university reimbursement procedures.

As far as possible, it's about scheduling activities to accommodate working hours or childcare responsibilities and creating welcoming environments, not necessarily a university campus. It often involves food.

Co-production requires attention to power relations and strategies to mitigate imbalance and exclusion. We need to think about who controls resources, who claims authority, where the fault lines of inequality run.

When the process works well, co-production can be transformative in creating new knowledge and creating a culture of enquiry. It can produce something that no single person involved could create on their own, a whole greater than its constituent parts.

Co-production often goes with a commitment to co-design or shared starting point, which establishes the terms of engagement. What are we doing? What do we want to achieve? How will we do it? And how will we treat one another?

It's often about making space for different voices and hearing what they say and this can be very challenging for academics, and it runs counter to powerful images and assumptions about what academics do. It even runs counter to an academic sense of identity, because if you think about it, public engagement, research impact, is based on a model of talking, of being listened to.

So what happens if we turn the process around? What really opened my eyes to this was the testimony of the Grenfell Tower residents following the devastating fire in 2017. Again and again, they said that they had not been listened to.

Theirs was a statement about 21st century Britain, and it has deep historical roots.

Crucially for the present distinction, they made a distinction between the process or the performance of listening and attention to what was being said. So listening is more than just a technique of saying, 'I hear you'. It requires us to respond actively to the content of what is heard.

And I think we sometimes need to reassess our own metaphors. Just to take one example and thinking again about Grenfell. Grenfell's were not untold stories. So we often use the

notion about hidden/untold but often need to unpack those and think about from whose perspective are we speaking there? When I'm talking about 'we', I'm often here now talking about academics.

So let's think more about the power dynamics of listening and speaking, which may require academics to shift their expectations of a project or their assumptions about what each participant will gain from archives and bring to collections. We have to recognise such moments and be open to different, sometimes contested, meanings and values.

So what is the intellectual and cultural value of co-production?

So I'm going to give you a couple of examples from my own recent experience with community-led and initiated history and heritage projects largely around the First World War centenary.

So a very obvious example is local historians who were practising co-production before we had the term. It's a tradition connecting back into the early 20th century with commitments to adult education and people's history and it had, it has links with citizen science.

Historical societies bring together people from all walks of life, including universities, and they create often in-depth knowledge, in some cases using their own materials. They often enjoy long standing relationships with archivists, curators and genealogists.

If you ask what the expertise of a university employee historian might be in these settings, often I think it's as a sounding board. It can be confidence building. It can be about project framing. So in the context of the First World War, it might be, 'let's go beyond the names on the war memorial'. How about using local newspaper reports from military tribunals to reconstruct economic and labour relations in the early 20th century? Let's explore what diarists and letter writers don't say, and so on.

Local history also sits neatly with 21st century social and political agendas around place-making and wellbeing. But take a less familiar instance, and that's co-produced history to secure social benefits and not primarily to increase knowledge of the past. The example I'm thinking of here is a children's human rights organisation in the north east. Young people with experience of social services and the care system who develop a range of skills as 'heritage detectives'.

They asked a profound question, which was this: what happened to kids like us during the First World War? It wasn't something academics had asked, and heritage bodies seemed much more concerned with history *for* young people and less attuned to the history *of* young people.

And I think this is a good example of the unexpected and transformative. It was an experience I will be better prepared for in future, which is another way of saying that my response to this project was a bit slow off the mark. I was unsuccessful in negotiating access to appropriate archives. I was more successful in finding invitations to the group to participate in other projects.

Here, it was their question that created the new knowledge, and in this case, the academic's role was to respond to the research and help make connections.

So in short, the value can lie in new knowledge in the meaning and use of what is discovered and in changes embodied in participants.

I don't think any single authority or definition determines the value of co-production just as the process has no single purpose or objective. The experience of collaborative working can be evaluated. Participants define and determine value for themselves. It might be about leaving a trace. It might be making a place. Recovering the dead. Having fun.

Value also lies in responses to a project and its outcomes from those who don't participate. To what extent does a longer term survival or sustainability of a group or the knowledge it creates suggest another criterion of value? I think it's one that we need to think about and I think we also need to think and be much more alert when recognising value. Value may lie in a single question, not a new book. It may emerge from a fleeting encounter as well as from long term commitment.

The challenge, therefore, is to put insights into circulation, to share them, not to lose them. And for academics, I think it's crucial when gauging value to understand the uses to which the past is put and to pay attention to these uses as well as to the historical information generated.

And finally, what do various participants gain?

Relationships, experiences and objectives are incredibly varied. In some instances, participants gain life skills. And that includes academics gaining life skills. For others, it's pre-eminently about access to material and stories otherwise closed to them, whether in institutions or in collective memories.

Co-production may establish participants' presence in histories that previously excluded them. It may reveal enduring historical wounds.

Early career researchers may gain experience in working with communities. Curiosity, passion and companionship matter too. Activism and the democratisation of knowledge, which drive many aspects of co-production, mean that value does not originate with, or radiate out from, academics.

For me, the excitement of co-production is it encourages us all, individuals and groups, to think historically, and through these encounters we are impelled to rethink the nature of historical awareness itself. Thank you.

Pip Willcox (The National Archives) [00:12:48] Thank you very much. And admirably to time, crikey, what's happening? Our next speaker is Stefan Dickers who comes to us from the Bishopsgate Institute, where he is Special Collections and Archives Manager. He's been responsible for the development of many collections on London, radical feminist LGBTQ+ history, and started at the Institute in 2005. He previously worked in the archives of the London School of Economics and Senate House Library, so you are very much amongst friends. Thank you very much for coming and joining us.

Stefan Dickers (Bishopsgate Institute) [00:13:22] I am totally rubbish. I've not tried to answer any of the questions. I'm just gonna blab on and hopefully accidentally answer some of them.

But who knows Bishopsgate? But for those who don't, we've been there a 125 years. I won't go into it too much. But we look like that, the only building not made of glass and chrome on Bishopsgate now. Wonderful, wonderful. Set up in 1895. And we have a wonderful special collections and archives there that cover this, these collecting areas.

Now I was thinking about what to say when I was asked to come and talk, and thank you very much for inviting me. And sort of, really came to the conclusion very quickly that collaboration and co-production isn't something we sort of dip our feet in. It's something that is core to the collecting policies of Bishopsgate Institute and something that we do and we consider essential in the collection for a couple of reasons.

One: there's quite a lot of collecting areas there. I haven't got time or the knowledge to fill all of them up. You know, I'm not an expert on London history. I would never consider, I know a bit, you know, not, not good. So, you know, this helps co-production, working with other groups, helps fill in a lot of these areas I'm not an expert in.

Secondly, we hold the archives at Bishopsgate of a gentleman called Raphael Samuel, a very famous historian. He's a bit of an inspiration to me. He very famously said, 'History is too important to be left to historians.' And I sort of think the same is true with archives, really, I think archives are too important to be left to archivists, personally.

So any opportunity we get to collaborate, co-produce with people, we take it with open arms. But I thought I'd describe a few ways that we've done this very quickly and hopefully this allows some of the questions about how much we value, how much value it brings to collections at Bishopsgate.

So firstly since On the Record plugged me, I'm going to plug On the Record back because we do engage with a lot of historical community heritage projects. I think that one point we had about twelve on the go at once.

But these are wonderful ways. And really when we get approached by a group to work on a project to be the repository for the archive, to be involved in a project in some way, we jump at it. For several reasons. One, we do very little work, but get wonderful archives at the end. Secondly, the way they work, particularly On the Record, is a wonderful example of actually going out and covering subjects and talking to the people who actually live this experience and they become involved in the whole archiving process.

So not only do they contribute to the record keeping, the cataloguing descriptions, they come and engage with the archives and I particularly love how as part, not only oral history

is done by On the Record, but they also encourage people to donate documents that are important to them as well. So we're getting people's takes on their own history being put into the archive, which is wonderful.

So we've done the wonderful Speakers' Corner project. The Centerprise stuff is all at Bishopsgate and is well used all the time.

A particularly wonderful one we've done and I'm very keen on a lot of projects to just completely step back. I know my limitations as an archivist and I'm quite happy not to be at the forefront. One project we did recently with Birkbeck College and a group called Kensington Narrators was a project around the community response to the Grenfell Tower.

And this was a project I was very unsure about. It was obviously about the victims. It was the community response. And it was a project where we completely stepped back and let the whole production being taken place by the community itself.

So basically, we said, one, considering it's a group of people who had been involved in activism, we said we're not going to tell you what we want. You decide what should be in the archive and we're not going to describe it. You describe what goes in the archive. So you say why this is important, why you've decided to put this in the archive. How dare I tell someone what's important about this or their response to Grenfell?

So we had donations of poetry, artwork, all described by the people who donated it. We would obviously do our archive bit. The description of the items was completely up to the person. And that led to all the memorial boards from the tower coming in, etc. So it was a really wonderful and quite empowering project.

We also like to put out calls for archives as well, let people collaborate and co-produce their own archives. One quite famous one some of you might have seen was around the Women's Marches in 2017 and 2018. Me and a colleague thought, 'There's some really good placards, we should get some of these.' So we both tweeted simultaneously not knowing that the other one was doing it.

And for the next five weeks, people were walking along Liverpool Street with things like this. And we gathered a huge array of these placards which were incredible. And the stories behind them, why people were marching, the Women's March, etc.

This is my favourite Berwickshire Granarchists against Trump. The Berwickshire Granarchists couldn't attend the march. They just walked around their local Tesco with that.

And we carried on and we did this with the digital photographs. We asked people to send digital photographs of you and your pals there. Tell us why you were there. Produce your own archive. Bring it in. And we did it with the Trump March as well. So we actually went out on the Trump March and handed out leaflets going, 'give us stuff'.

But about people coming in depositing their own protest history, why they were there, what they created, and quite wonderful to do that sort stuff.

Also, I'm very keen at any opportunity to take a step back. Having worked in places that have recorded the big narratives and the big people in the big organisations. We do do that at Bishopsgate, we approach organisations and individuals for their archives, but we are also very much interested in recording everyone's narratives and also them being the decision makers about what is brought in. And that's particularly strong in our LGBTQ+ collections.

So there's two ways of describing it. One is Stef is inspired by history from below and recording all of our histories, or as my colleagues describe it, Stef will take in anyone's old sh*t.

This jumper, which I think we all will agree is the most heinous jumper known to man. Someone walked in with this. 'I'd like to deposit this jumper into archive', please. I was like, 'I bet you would.' But then went on to tell me for about 25 minutes how he wore this to Heaven when he first went out clubbing as a gay man. But this whole story emerged around this jumper, which suddenly brought it to life and made me, me like that jumper. You can see I like to colourfully dress quite a lot.

So that's now gone on with the story. But it gets slightly more surreal. So we collect things. People are walking with flyers, all sorts of things and say 'this is my first club I went to, I want the flyer in the archive'.

But my favourite was this. We took in a wonderful set of papers from a 'rebel dyke' who was sort of a lesbian feminist, a quite radical, slightly kinky group from the 80s and 90s, who used to run clubs, go out, go to Pride and stuff. And they basically started to record their own history.

Unfortunately, one of them passed away. And she was a wonderful community activist, did all sorts of great things. They said we want to put her in the archive. You know, she wasn't famous. They said, 'Bishopsgate will take it'. So with got all the love letters, diaries, photos of her and her mates at Pride. And as I'm walking out with this wonderful collection about this woman's life, they said, 'You've not taken the bed.' 'What bed?' 'That bed.' I said, 'I'm not a bloody removal man.' They said, 'Well, if you don't take the bed you ain't taking the rest of the stuff. So you make your mind up very quick.' I was like, 'Why have I got to take the bed?' They said, 'This bed is a London lesbian icon. More women have had more pleasure on this bed than any bed in London.' I was like 'Ok, yep, take the bed, bring it in.' It's about to be displayed, I think, in an exhibition so you can come and lay on the London lesbian icon.

So we will accept stuff here and let people decide their own production and what goes into the archive and how it's recorded.

Last but not least, we do something quite controversial with archivists, which has sort of become coined as 'live archiving' because a lot of protest groups that are active in now we engage with and say, well, let's not wait till, you know, you finish and hopefully the one of you that keeps the stuff in attic will donate it to an archive, let's engage with you now. You decide what comes into the archive. Produce your own archive. Put it in Bishopsgate. And as you're still protesting, you can take it out.

So this is a group called Act Up London, a LGBT campaign group for HIV/AIDS campaign group as well. And they bring in this stuff. It sits in the archive in acid free boxes, in acid free, perfectly stuff. And then they go, "Right. We wanna borrow the police truncheon, police hats and the banner please.' And we have to go out and get it out. And they take out

and protest with it again and bring back twice as much stuff the next time. And it's quite a wonderful way of ensuring that these protest groups are captured.

So a very flippant talk, but about the very ways that sort of collaboration and co-production with either depositors, with the various communities we engage in is core to how we collect at Bishopsgate, not only on a political sense, as in, you know, who am I to make decisions of what's important about someone's history, but also in the fact that we can never do it all ourselves.

Someone once called us Bishopsgate: the archive that collects things no one else wants. So if this is all the stuff I'm quite happy to have that as the moniker. There we go. Thank you very much.

Pip Willcox (The National Archives) [00:23:09] Our final speaker in this panel, before we open up to discussion from all of us is Martin Spafford, who was a secondary school teacher between 1991 and 2014 (for which he deserves a medal) and taught at a secondary school in Waltham Forest and before that, other schools in London and elsewhere. His students were involved in extracurricular projects, collaborating with a range of partners. And that work, often with archives and oral histories, were springboards for other activities. And since his retirement, that doesn't sound like a retirement at all, he's written GCSE textbooks and teacher guides on the history of migration to the UK, help with the Migration Museum and the Runnymede Trust's migration story.

Martin Spafford (school teacher and writer) [00:23:53] Well, good afternoon, everybody. Thanks so much for inviting me. I'm going to share with you one or two projects that have been collaborative from the time that I was working at this school. And when doing so, I'm thinking about these questions which have been central to today. I've sort of replaced co-production with collaboration because that's more relevant to exactly what was involved for us and what I want to look at.

I'm going to share with you really stories of six projects that have worked with archives in the widest sense that will include archives, archives in archives, will include people's personal mementos and oral histories.

And to look at what I think has been the impact of those on the young people who've been involved and what it's been like for them as, if you like, the community that the archivists and the archives have been working with and also in a couple of cases, the impact on older people too.

So first of all, I'm going to start with four projects, all of which started with students coming and looking at archives, and in each of those cases who we collaborated with are explained at the beginning.

It's very good follow up on Stefan in this case. And in all those cases, we were approached by those organisations. So there was no cost to us as a school.

And here, it's a day project and with a group of year 10 students. What they're looking at is a whole range of documents and photographs around the stories of the gang-related events, violent events in London in 1911: the Tottenham outrage, the Houndsditch Massacre and leading up to the Battle of Sidney Street.

And what they do, first of all, is they piece together looking through a whole range of documents, what they think was going on in that year. And having done so around a range of themes, they make presentations about those actually at the Bishopsgate, and then we go out for a very rainy walk around the particular places where this happened.

Now, all of this is going to be about making history meaningful to young people. And I think this small project, which was only a day long helped the students see how archives help us unlock a story. They can find connections between documents that helped to begin to really reveal solutions to a puzzle.

A brief insight in that way into how historians work. They see links between past and present by experiencing the physical environment where the dramatic events happened, as well as seeing echoes in the past of issues such as gang membership and terrorism, issues that we grapple with today.

And in this next example, in this case, also connected the Bishopsgate working with On the Record, the Sounds from the Park that you've heard about before, this is the beginning. And we're going to come back to this and.

They're sitting around tables and every box has material from a different period. And when they open the box, round their table in their part of the period of the 20th century, decade of the 20th century, they will see something about the story of Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park at that time and how it was perceived and who was speaking there, but also something about how the skill of public speaking was taught and trained and what was seen as the skills in that particular period.

Having done that, they then have and he's in the middle standing at the top, then they have a sort of the seasoned speaker from Speakers' Corner, giving them training in public speaking skills. And I think Majid and Franco in the corner, on the far side, realise that something is going to happen and they're going to have to actually do something soon. We'll come back to that.

And then this third one, students go down to Age Exchange and they meet people whose parents or grandparents were involved in World War One. It's part of a project looking at the impact of World War One on, on future generations and the emotional response that these young people had. Year 9 students coming absolutely cold and meeting these men and seeing the artefacts from their families was really powerful. I think it said something about family and conflict, but also said something to them about how these items actually are part of real people's lives.

And the fourth one. The Manor Project with Villiers Park, Bishopsgate and Eton Manor Old Boys. This is a group of year 10 students of all abilities who have just said they'd like to study history at GCSE. Year nine. Sorry. What they've got in common is that they love sport, they're all boys, and they've come down for the beginning of the project. And I think they don't quite realise what they've let themselves in for. And one of the first things that they let themselves in for is sitting in the Bishopsgate and looking back through documents about the history of sport in London and in Britain.

Now, that's a first stage. But in all of these projects or most of them, there's then a next stage because it's about then taking this out further. And in the case of that project, the next stage for these young people was a residential in which they mixed, going deeper online, into the, the archives of the Eton Manor, Old, the Eton Manor Boys Club, but also filming their own experiences and having a lot of fun as well.

And here's another project which again goes into the stories of older people. In this case, it was a project with Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, where year 8 students looked at the, the personal histories from oral testimonies of Irish people who had migrated to central London in the 1950s and then had gone out to Essex from Central London.

And so all of the students here are actually from migrant backgrounds themselves: Albanian, Bangladeshi, Ugandan and Caribbean. And what they're looking at is a story of people who came to where they're living now, but then moved on away from there, too. And they took those stories and they made them into a dramatic presentation at the theatre.

And in this case, a project which is based on the bringing down of the towers in a tower block estate right next to our school in Leighton. This group of students are being trained through a series of activities in oral history interview techniques. And they then interview people who lived on the Beaumont Estate at different periods through its history at the point that it's about to be taken down. And here they are talking to those people, interviewing them. And then from that, they will create a dramatic presentation which interprets those stories from the 1940s of playing in the bomb craters, from the 1950s, of courting on the fire escape outside Sainsbury's, from the 1970s, of having the Queen's Jubilee Party and dancing to The Rolling Stones, from the 1990s arriving as a Somali refugee.

And Hannah there in the top right hand corner is actually playing the part of Marian Moody arriving from Somalia with her baby, wondering where she was going to be in these tower blocks. And the first person she speaks to is so drunk that he can't explain it to her. They did a great comedy turn on that.

And here the actual Marian Moody, who's sitting in the audience in the front row, is now talking to Hannah, who played her part. And with Marian was her teenage daughter who had been the baby in the story.

Now, the point about all of these is the connections across the generations become powerful. And here is, we're going back to those men that the students met with the memories of the First World War.

And now they're with actually not our students, they're with a group of students from two south London schools performing at the Bridewell Theatre and performing their stories in a cross-generational theatre production in which Ruth there is talking about the illness that her father came back from the Western Front with to a third year, to a, a year 9 student. Bill on the right, top right, is talking about how he was named after his father's commanding officer who was killed, and Ralph on the left, sadly now passed away, is actually sharing on stage with huge screen presentations behind him, the very mementos, the very items that he shared with our students previously.

And when those men and the women were interviewed on film alongside the year 9 students talking about the power of working together, they talked about what it meant to feel that this younger generation understood their relationship with their own parents. And the children said what it meant to realise that the First World War was not just about dead people in books, but was about real people and remained in the stories and remained emotionally in those families.

So let's go back now to two of those projects that I'm going to now look at in a bit more detail before I conclude. And the first was the Up the Manor Project because the next stage after the residential is the students. Here, Omar is interviewing David. David was an ex-pupil at Omar's school.

The connection is now built up thanks to the wonderful work of Michelle Johansson from the from the Villiers Park Project and later the Bishopsgate. And she helped those older and younger people to bring links together. So not only, do they, are they interviewed, but the old boys come and visit our school. They are amazed of the warmth and the friendliness of the young people. I think they have very kind of media myth created ideas about black and brown young people. Our students were amazed that they had so much in common with these older white men, including football, they went to Arsenal, but also including a realisation that they grew up in the same streets and they teach each other things. Bob, who now runs a golf club outside Cambridge taught all our boys how to speak, teach, how to play golf, and the boys taught Peter how to play Penny up the wall.

Those connections were really important in the case of the Sounds of the Park project, having had some training in public speaking, the kids were taken outside the Bishopsgate and told 'Right now you're going to do it. Get up on the wall and talk.'

So Judith actually did so, started talking about inequalities in Britain. They started reacting and heckling her, then others got up. Big discussions got involved about all sorts of things, science, religion, politics, everything. It got really, really heated. They had great fun. So the project then took them the next Sunday, took them to Hyde Park Corner where they got very involved, so much so that they borrowed somebody's stepladder and created their own pitch.

So we've moved from looking at those archives through to them having a direct agency. And not only that, but when the final project came together at the end of the Bishopsgate with all the people who'd been involved, adults, people connected with Hyde Park Corner, a whole range of people, our students were a central part of that. They were treated with the equal respect and value as everybody else. They met and worked in workshops the adults who were involved in the project, and they stood on the stage and they told everybody about their part in the project.

So I will conclude, if I may, by just reading out what I think my conclusions are to this. So to return to these opening questions that we had, in these projects, our students gained intellectually, culturally and emotionally thanks to how our partners treated them with respect and care. They were believed in to achieve highly and they understood that archives are not an end in themselves, but a means towards a deeper understanding of how history engages with reality. A context from which past and present can be in dialogue and a resource for creative interpretation of how lives and events in the past spoke to these young people.

There were also great gains for older people, which I'll move on from because I realise I must conclude. So to say that collaboration of this kind is undoubtedly useful.

I think the value is defined, in my case, I'm interested in how the users feel. And in a similar project in an earlier time in the 1990s, Kenny, who was then a year 7 student in 1995, 9 years ago when she was 28 years old, she reflected on that project and said to me, 'Because we were trusted and listened to, we had to be accountable for our views and

provide the evidence to back up anything we said. That was scary for me as an 11 year old, but liberating.'

So finally, collaboration with schools and communities, beyond where the archive is stored, can unlock for them how we construct an evidence-based understanding of the past that creeps into our present. It can enable them to realise how historians reach the assertions that they read in their textbooks. It can widen a collective sense of the importance of heritage to who we feel to be, and it builds human bridges across time.

Archives are history laboratories. If we're to be guided by the past as we face our future, if history is to be meaningful, the guardians of our archives need to ensure that upcoming generations recognise value and use them. To this end, archivists and teachers have a responsibility, I believe, to ensure that such collaborations happen. Thank you very much. And many thanks to all those people.