When many people think about history, they think about books and documents, castles or stately homes. In fact history is all around us, in our own families and communities, in the living memories and experiences of older people. Everyone has a story to tell about their life which is unique to them. Whilst some people have been involved in momentous historical events, regardless of age or importance we all have interesting life stories to share. Unfortunately, because memories die when people do, if we don’t record what people tell us, that history can be lost forever.

National Life Stories was established in 1987 to ‘record first-hand experiences of as wide a cross section of present day society as possible’. As an independent charitable trust within the Oral History Section of the British Library, NLS’s key focus and expertise has been oral history fieldwork. For more than two decades it has initiated a series of innovative interviewing programmes funded almost entirely from sponsorship, charitable and individual donations and voluntary effort.

Each collection comprises recorded in-depth interviews of a high standard, plus content summaries and transcripts to assist users. Access is provided via the Sound Archive Catalogue at www.cadensa.bl.uk and a growing number of interviews are available for remote web use. Each individual life story interview is several hours long, covering family background, childhood, education, work, leisure and later life.

Alongside the British Library’s other oral history holdings, which stretch back to the beginning of the twentieth century, NLS’s recordings form a unique and invaluable record of people’s lives in Britain today.
Our Oral History of British Science programme self-evidently analyses technological change, but we have been using life stories to document technological transformations in other areas too. Our interviews for An Oral History of Barings, for example, have shown the impact of the arrival of computers on business and finance, long before the ‘Big Bang’ that transformed the City of London. Recordings in the water industry are charting the impact which post-war technological developments such as auto-analysers brought to the testing of water quality. Artists’ Lives interviewee Harold Cohen spoke about using computers as early as the 1960s to generate his work. In the Authors’ Lives recordings some writers have talked about the effect of moving from the typewriter to the word-processor, others preferring to hang onto their pens and pencils.

It is the speed of these transformations that life stories can track: their excitement and their human dimension. In the 1960s seismic refraction scientists using sonobuoys in the Red Sea to study the composition of ocean floors as part of developing theories about ‘sea-floor spreading’, used eighteenth century technology – the sextant – to plot their location. In a few short decades Global Positioning System (GPS) became available on mobile phones locating us to within an accuracy of a few metres anywhere on the earth’s surface. When National Life Stories began its work people travelled to London to listen to our analogue cassette recordings. Now anyone anywhere in the world can listen to and read, and increasingly comment on, many of our life story interviews via the internet.

Our active projects have continued to make good progress. We completed seventy-nine new interviews in 2010, bringing our total recordings to 2241. Over the coming year we will be scoping another new area of technological change – the electricity supply industry – the latest of our projects on the utilities, which we expect to launch in 2012. And we continue to work hard to secure the funding which we need to start our final two science strands relating to biomedicine and cosmology, together with a newly-scoped programme about the development of ‘talking therapies’ in post-war Britain.

I would like to thank all our trustees, staff and volunteers who have worked so hard to make the past year such a success; and our donors and funders for making it all possible.

Sir Nicholas Goodison
Chairman of Trustees
Review of 2010

Rob Perks
Director of National Life Stories

Collections and projects

Our major new programme An Oral History of British Science was successfully launched with a well-attended event in the British Library’s conference centre and excellent media coverage. At the end of 2010 thirty-seven interviews had been completed, of which sixteen are now online (http://sounds.bl.uk/) in their entirety including: zoologist Robert Hinde; soil scientist David Jenkinson; Desmond King-Hele, pioneer of satellite orbit analysis at the Royal Aircraft Establishment; glaciologist Charles Swwithinbank; computer pioneers Geoff Tootill and Tony Brooker; and Janet Thomson, the first woman to be permitted to join a British Antarctic Survey research party.

Made in Britain interviewer Tom Lean initially focussed on computer pioneers and managed a short interview with Sir Maurice Wilkes shortly before his death at the age of ninety-seven. He has also recorded software entrepreneur Dame Stephanie ‘Steve’ Shirley, Andy Hopper, Dai Edwards and early programmers Coombs and Frank Land who worked on the Lyons tea shops’ LEO computers. More recently he has moved on to rocketry and aeronautical engineering: Bob Parkinson, John Scott-Scott and Roy Dommett have talked about Britain’s little-known space and rocket programmes, Roy Gibson about his time as the first Director of the European Space Agency. Closer to earth, Ralph Hooper’s work led to the Harrier jump jet, Sir John Charnley’s interview covers his work flight testing Britain’s first jet aircraft, and Ray Wheeler discussed the development of the hovercraft.

Paul Merchant, the interviewer for A Changing Planet, is capturing stories of key developments in the ‘Earth Sciences’ including the influence of physics on glaciology (Charles Swwithinbank, John Nye, John Glen), the formulation of the theory of plate tectonics (Fred Vine, Dan McKenzie, Mary Almond), the use of isotopes to date events in the life of rocks (Stephen Moorbath), the role of satellites in observing the Earth and its atmosphere (Desmond King-Hele, Sir John Houghton), the discovery of the ozone ‘hole’ (Joseph Farman), the use of instrumentation in oceanography (Sir Anthony Laughton, Philip Woodworth, Melvyn Mason, Norman Smith) and the rise of interest in climate history and change (Dick Grove, Richard West, John Kington, James Lovelock, Chris Rapley). The programme’s distinguished advisory committee has been vigilant in ensuring the interviews cover both key figures and lesser-known scientists and technicians.

Using video has posed a steep learning curve for the team, both in terms of the practicalities around location shoots but also the longer-term archival storage issues (digital video files require large amounts of computer space). Our chosen camera is the Sony EX3 which delivers high-definition digital video with uncompressed audio. It has produced impressive results: on location in Birmingham with Ray Bird and the ‘HEC’ computer which he developed in the 1950s (on which Tom reflects later in this Review); and at the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge, where Joe Farman explained the workings of the Dobson spectrometer used to measure ozone in the Antarctic which led to his discovery of the ‘hole’ in the ozone layer. We also filmed electrical engineer Melvyn Mason talking about seismic refraction using sonobuoys in the 1960s to chart the composition of ocean floors as part of developing theories about ‘sea-floor spreading’ (which audio interviews with Fred Vine, Dan McKenzie and Sir Anthony Laughton explored in depth). Our careful selection of relevant artefacts and locations for filming has added significantly to the longer audio life story recordings which remain at the core of the project. We aim to add video clips to the programme website alongside full access to the audio interviews and transcripts, together with links to related materials and collections held elsewhere, so far funding remains elusive for the remaining two science strands, Cosmologies and Biomedicine.

Cathy Courtney compiled a double CD publication, Connecting Lines: Artists Talk About Drawing, funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation and using extracts from the over three hundred recordings from Artists’ Lives. We have distributed 6,500 copies to art schools and colleges, and to the libraries of higher education institutions running related courses across the UK. Copies also went to delegates at the Oral History Society’s annual conference at the Victoria & Albert Museum in July, ‘Record Create: Oral History in Arts, Crafts and Design’. An event at the Sir John Soane’s Museum in November further raised awareness of the CD amongst secondary school teachers. There have been new Artists’ Lives recordings over the past year with sculptor Rob Ward; Jon Thompson, artist and former Head of Goldsmiths College Department of Art, and Emeritus Professor of Fine Art at Middlesex University; Jeffrey Steele, founder member of the Systems Group, and Eve Williams, widow of the Guyanese painter, Aubrey Williams. On a trip to the US Cathy interviewed the abstract artist Richard Smith and figurative artist Sylvia Sleigh, widow of critic and curator Lawrence Alloway. Sadly, Sylvia has since died and excerpts from her recording feature later in this Review.

It has been a busy year for Authors’ Lives, as the project marked its first forty interviews with a double CD, The Writing Life: Authors Speak, produced in conjunction with British Library Publishing and with funding from Arts Council England. 2,000 free copies will be distributed to secondary schools.
Physicist John Nye during a summer school on the Juneau Icefield, Alaska, 1967. The image shows the Vaughan Lewis Icefall with its prominent waves of light and dark bands.
through the charity First Story, and to aspiring writers through the Arvon Foundation, the co-founder of which, John Moat, was recorded at his home in North Devon. Other recent additions to the collection include crime novelists Ian Rankin and Simon Brett, biographer Hilary Spurling, poet Wendy Cope, historian Philip Ziegler and novelist A S Byatt. Sarah O’Reilly also visited Wales to interview Matthew Prichard, grandson of Agatha Christie and Chairman of Agatha Christie Limited. The continuation of the project has relied on the enthusiastic support and fundraising efforts of the advisory committee led by Penelope Lively, which achieved grants this year from the Charlotte Bonham Carter Charitable Trust, the Matthew Hodder Charitable Trust, the Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS), the Foundation for Sport and the Arts and other individual donors. Our collaboration with the Booker Prize Foundation also looks set to continue and the urgency of our work was underlined by the death of Beryl Bainbridge, frequently shortlisted for the prize but never a winner. An interview with 2010’s winner, Howard Jacobson, was added to the collection alongside previous winner Hilary Mantel.

With funding in hand we were able to recruit a second interviewer for Crafts Lives. Frances Cornford joined existing part-time interviewer Liz Wright, and has been interviewing ceramicists Takeshi Yasuda and Eric James Mellon, who described the development of his richly decorated ceramics and his many years of experimentation with plant ash glazes to find a glaze which would enable him to decorate stoneware and fire at high temperatures. Frances has also been recording glass engraver Alison Kinnaird and glassmakers Colin Reid, Tessa Clegg and Steven Newell, all leading figures in the British studio glass movement. Liz has been interviewing enameller Jane Short and Jacqueline Stieger, who is both a sculptor and jeweller, as well as the artist Andrew Logan, who has been organising the Alternative Miss World since 1972. She has completed recordings with Janis Jefferies, a weaver and academic researcher, and quiltmaker Michele Walker who talked about her piece, ‘Memoriam’, shown as part of the V&A exhibition ‘Quilts 1700–2010’. Cathy Courtney completed long-running recordings with Rod and Alison Wales, providing an excellent documentation of the highs and lows of running a small independent workshop designing both contract furniture (chiefly outdoor benches and hotel and office furniture) and bespoke unique pieces for private clients. These recordings bring the project total to over one hundred interviews since the project began ten years ago.

An Oral History of the Water Industry reached its midpoint last summer and Mary Stewart and project interviewer Alison Gilmour circulated a detailed progress report to the six participating water companies (Cambridge, Northumbrian, Scottish, Southern, Yorkshire and Wessex Water). Alison has been travelling to all corners of the UK and the detailed life stories recorded cover numerous aspects of the industry over the last fifty years including engineering, plumbing and repairs, water and waste water treatment processes, dam management and land drainage, as well as structural changes, including the formation of the regional water authorities following the 1973 Water Act and privatisation in 1989. New interviewees have included Colin Skellett, Executive Chairman of Wessex Water, and John Mowbray, Director of Corporate Affairs at Northumbrian Water. The first of the Scottish Water recordings got underway with Peter Farrer, Customer Service Delivery Director, and Geoff Aitkenhead, currently the
company’s Asset Management Director amongst other high profile roles in the industry such as his Chairmanship of Water Aid (Scotland). Alison has made good progress with the recordings sponsored by Southern Water: Ken Gest spoke of his fifty years engineering in pumping stations and sewerage systems; Shelagh Wilson told of her experiences as a biologist with Kent River Authority, Southern River Authority which became Southern Water, and then with the Environment Agency. Julie Harriott’s ongoing interview explores her long-service in Human Resource Management and Nigel Sneathth, Governance Manager of Southern Water, gives fascinating detail about his background as a water supply scientist and work in water regulation. Later in this Review project interviewer Alison Gilmour explores the interview process with Professor Sir Fred Holliday, whose interview was completed in 2009.

Thanks to the generosity of Sir John Craven we have recorded some further Chefs interviews including Italian chef, restaurateur and businessman Antonio Carluccio and David Eyre, who founded The Eagle gastropub. Interviewer Niamh Dillon has also been completing interviews with Jeremy Dixon and Ted Cullinan for Architects’ Lives, and started a recording with Donald Insall, famous for his renovation of historic buildings such as Windsor Castle and the House of Lords. For An Oral History of British Fashion Niamh is talking to influential textile designer Celia Birtwell.

Good progress has been made with two new projects in development. Following an open tender we commissioned Rebecca Hutten from the Centre for Psychological Services Research at the University of Sheffield to carry out a scoping study for An Oral History of Talking Therapies in the UK preliminary to identifying funding. We have defined ‘talking therapies’ as those that do not use pharmaceutical or other medical form of interventions to alleviate mental distress, but depend entirely on verbal exchanges between client and therapist. A future project would seek to interview a wide range of professionals in this complex and diverse sector and the study has revealed that its history is a gap in the national collections. We have also obtained funding for a scoping study about the history of the electricity supply industry in the UK, which we expect will be the latest in our series of projects documenting the utilities.

Partnerships

Our collaborative project with The Baring Archive, An Oral History of Barings, is on target for completion in the autumn of 2011 and interviewer Katharine Haydon has twenty-five of the planned thirty recordings complete or underway. The interviews have ranged widely both chronologically – from memories of being evacuated to Stratton Park during the Second World War up to the collapse in 1995 (and the aftermath), and across the different levels of seniority within the bank from boardroom to butler. The project captures not only the experiences of those who worked in the traditional areas of corporate finance and banking but also those involved in the investment management and the securities businesses of Barings. A picture is emerging of the progression of Barings from the stagnant post-war era to a business operating in a dynamic and competitive global market, from a partnership ethos to a more layered and intricate management structure as the organisation grew. The 1980s (and ‘Big Bang’) does seem to have heralded a new era of technology, of increased professionalism in personnel and training, and of greater complexity in financial markets and financial instruments. If the heart of Barings was located in Bishopsgate, employees’ lives were by no means confined to the Square Mile of the City of London. The interviews capture experiences from every part of the world giving glimpses of the remnants of the British Empire as well as Barings’ overseas operations. Later in this Review Johnnie Russell, a trustee of The Baring Archive, reflects on the origins of the partnership with NLS.

The long-standing partnership with English Heritage, An Oral History of the Courtaulds at Eltham Palace, was concluded with some final interviews with those staff who had worked on the restoration of the 1930s Art Deco property leading up to its reopening in 1999, and with two members of the Royal Army Educational Corps who were based at Eltham Palace between 1945 and 1992. Michael Turner drew on the collection for his revised guidebook and interviewer Catherine Croft edited clips for future use in the house and online.

We have initiated partnership discussions with the London School of Economics’ Legal Biography Project to explore how we might jointly scope a programme as part of Legal Lives about the workings of the English court system.
**Dissemination**

In addition to the new artists and authors CDs, the NLS team have been busy with conference presentations and training. Cathy Courtney led a day on interview techniques when working with artists for the Tate conservators, and made a presentation about *Artists’ Lives* to Courtauld MA students. She and I introduced arts and design postgraduates to the British Library’s oral history collections, and spoke to the Friends of the Flemings Archive. Niamh Dillon was ‘in conversation’ with architect Michael Wilford at the Oral History Society’s annual conference at the V&A; and Sarah O’Reilly interviewed biographer Michael Holroyd for a platform event at the 7th Biennial International Auto/Biography Association conference at Sussex University in July. Mary Stewart and I gave papers at the European Social Science History conference in Ghent in April and at the International Oral History Association conference in Prague in July. Paul Merchant and Tom Lean gave papers to the history of science departments at Manchester University and University College London; and Alison Gilmour to the Scottish Oral History Centre at Strathclyde University. Our longstanding relationship with the Wellcome Trust continued with another residential course in oral history for historians of medicine, this time in conjunction with Graham Smith from Royal Holloway College.

Andrew Lambirth used our recording with modernist painter and sculptor Margaret Mellis (1914–2009) for his book *Margaret Mellis* (Lund Humphries, 2010). With her husband Adrian Stokes, Mellis was pivotal in establishing the artists’ colony in St Ives. Cathy Courtney drew on her interview with Simon Lewty to contribute to a new volume about his text-based art, *The Self as a Stranger* (Black Dog, 2010). Euan McArthur used extracts from NLS’s interview with Paul Neagu in an exhibition marking Richard Demarco’s 80th birthday at the Royal Scottish Academy, ‘10 Dialogues: Richard Demarco, Scotland and the European Avant Garde’. Recordings from our various food sector projects were used in an exhibition – ‘Food Glorious Food’ – at Weston Park Museum in Sheffield. It attracted 153,455 visitors before transferring to the Museum of Childhood in London in January 2011. My article reflecting on NLS’s corporate oral history projects appeared in the *Oral History Journal*, and the paperback edition of Sue Bradley’s book *The British Book Trade: An Oral History* (British Library, 2010) was well-received, described by one reviewer as a ‘truly exceptional piece of social history’.

**People**

We welcomed Lord Rees, Astronomer Royal, Master of Trinity College Cambridge, and former President of the Royal Society as a new NLS Advisor. Austin Mitchell, Lord Young of Graffham and Sir Terence Beckett all stepped down as Advisors and we thank them for their support. We were sorry to say goodbye to Katrina Dean, the British Library’s Curator of the History of Science and co-leader of our science project, who took up the post as University Archivist at Melbourne University; and also to Tilly Blyth, Senior Academic Consultant, who was recalled to the Science Museum. Tilly continues as a member of the *Oral History of British Science* advisory committee and her role in the project team has been taken by Sally Horrocks from the School of Historical Studies at Leicester University. Volunteer Sophie Ladkin left to travel after completing her degree and in her place Bethany Lamont has joined us from Central St Martins University of the Arts London.
Oral history at the British Library: what else has been happening?

A thorough review of the British Library’s Scholarship and Collections directorate was concluded last summer and two permanent oral history posts were confirmed. The resulting restructure moved the oral history section (and National Life Stories) from the Sound Archive into a new History and Classics department led by Scot McKendrick. We are now working alongside curators of medieval manuscripts, historical papers, printed historical sources, and India Office records, and beginning to explore potential joint projects, the first of which has been a schools session on Indian Independence. An office move is planned for the summer of 2011. We will retain crucial links with Sound and Vision technical and cataloguing staff through a new British Library-wide Audio-Visual Forum.

There were several new acquisitions in 2010 including two health-related collections: one comprising the recorded reminiscences of Geoff Webb, polio sufferer and activist for independent living for disabled people, who died in 1975; and another interviews carried out by Imperial College London with former tuberculosis patients who had recovered without the aid of drug therapies. Two cassettes recorded in 1967 document artist Dorothy Brett’s friendship with D H Lawrence in New Mexico. A set of interviews from the ‘Cultures of Brass’ research project conducted by Professor Trevor Herbert of The Open University Wales, and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), investigate the way that brass playing in Britain has changed over the last three centuries, with the oral history interviews themselves focusing on the period 1900 – 1980. In particular the project aimed to explore the relationship between amateur and military bands and professional music; the distinctive nature of each; and British orchestral, jazz and light music performance on brass instruments. We also accepted the first tranche of interviews from the Millthorpe Project, a TUC initiative documenting lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans trade unionists. Two contrasting collections document women’s experiences in Britain: a small collection of recordings about the Mothers’ Union were donated by Lambeth Palace Library and cover key conferences, talks and prayer materials from the 1970s, ’80s and ’90s; whilst the first interviews with feminist activists were gathered for Sisterhood and After: the Women’s Liberation Oral History Project, a partnership project between the British Library (led by former NLS interviewer Polly Russell), the Women’s Library and Sussex University, funded by the Leverhulme Foundation.

For the Oral History of British Photography Shirley Read talked to press photographer Tom Smith about being an assistant to portraitist Yousuf Karsh and photographing the Falklands war attached to the Parachute Regiment. And to portraitist Terry O’Neill, who achieved success photographing the fashion and celebrity elite of the 1960s. She updated an earlier interview with Guardian press photographer Martin Argles, who was embedded with the Labour Party during the 2010 General Election campaign (for which he won the Picture Editors’ Guild Photographer of the Year Award). We also documented the recent history of the Photographers’ Gallery through the reflections of Directors Paul Wombell and Brett Rogers. These complemented the Gallery’s deposit of a further tranche of recorded talks and events, which have been digitised and made available through a grant from the Pilgrim Trust. Louise Brodie made several more recordings for our series with social pioneers and activists, notably former Executive Director of Greenpeace now Policy Director of the Soil Association, Peter Melchett; Ambalavaner Sivanandan, Director of the Institute of Race Relations; prisons campaigner Frances Crook, Director of the Howard League for Penal Reform; and Dame Anne Owens, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Prisons, former Director of Justice, and Chair of Clinks, the charity which supports the voluntary and community sector working with offenders.

Elspeth Millar, Mary Stewart and I led two successful seminars for students on the Masters in Archives and Records Management at University College London as part of our campaign to strengthen links within the wider archive sector. Each three-hour seminar addressed oral history as a resource, its role as a tool for community engagement, and demonstrated our work in the complex fields of cataloguing and storing oral history audio files. The feedback from the seminars was excellent and the session will now feature as a part of the syllabus in future years.
Since 2006 NLS’s day-to-day work has mainly revolved around digital files and digital access; all interviews are recorded digitally and we are increasingly digitising individual interviews and collections in order to provide easier access to interviews onsite at the British Library and remotely via the internet, and for preservation reasons, to ensure that the interviews continue to be accessible as analogue technology becomes increasingly obsolete.

Although the Oral History department still collects material recorded on analogue mediums, NLS and Oral History, in line with the rest of the Library, collect digital content as the format of choice. This not only means practical changes to the way we work but also different ways of thinking; whilst previously we acted as stewards of physical assets (cassette tapes or open reels for example) we are now increasingly involved in ‘digital curation’ which involves ‘maintaining, preserving and adding value’ to digital data in order to ‘mitigate the risk of digital obsolescence’; in other words, we have to actively manage our interviews (both digitised and born-digital), which no longer have any physical representation. As digital files are, by their nature, ephemeral we have standardised our workflow for accessioning and archiving interviews in order to ensure the integrity of the files and to capture the correct information about them. All NLS and freelance interviewers now follow a step-by-step procedure when they upload digital interview files in the Oral History offices at the Library.

All oral history interviews are catalogued on the Sound Archive online catalogue as soon as they accessioned into the collection. As the Sound Archive catalogue is not, at present, picked up by Google or other search engines, researchers still need to search through the catalogue in order to discover individual interviews. However, oral history material at the Library is becoming increasingly visible through other avenues.

Edward Bottoms, Archivist, Architectural Association, London

“In early 2011, the Architectural Association organised an exhibition entitled AA Archives: Projects, Personalities and Publics charting some of the projects, programmes and personalities which constitute a history of the UK’s oldest and most influential school of architecture. In planning the show we attempted to bring together textual records, drawings, models, photographs and archival artefacts. However, it was felt that whilst the official records of the Association were adequately represented the ‘student voice’ could not be clearly heard. This was especially significant as the AA has been run as a participatory democracy since its foundation, ‘by students for students’, in 1847. Research on the Archival Sound Recordings website revealed the remarkable series of Architects’ Lives interviews, including a large number of recordings of AA alumni discussing their formative years. It was felt that these interviews provided not only a significant insight into the social and political concerns that have historically motivated students but also that they provided the exhibition with an injection of colour, humour and human interest. Over fifty interview were then analysed and whittled down to a total of eighteen clips, which were then presented on two Apple Macs positioned upon a table containing reading material – creating a ‘study area’ within the exhibition. Feedback has been incredibly positive with many visitors asking how they can access the complete archive and whether they can listen online.

“Key to including these oral history interviews in our exhibition has been the availability of a large number of recordings online – this has enabled research to be carried out efficiently and allowed our geographically dispersed staff to access, download, listen and then make decisions collaboratively. Without such access, the time and logistics of arranging visits to the British Library would have been simply prohibitive. We are incredibly grateful for the availability and easy accessibility of such a rich resource.”

CASE STUDY

The listening terminals at the Architectural Association exhibition ‘AA Archives: Projects, Personalities & Publics’.

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Discovery

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The Library has released the latest version of Search Our Catalogue, a new search tool which brings together a number of the Library’s distinct catalogues in order to provide a more comprehensive way for users to search within the Library’s collections. Search Our Catalogue allows researchers to search around fifteen million records of books, journals, and newspapers, five million items from the Sound Archive, 200 dataset records, and around 200,000 electronic journals all from one search box. Because of this, NLS interviews and the wider oral history collections have a higher profile and attract researchers perhaps not previously aware of oral history.

As well as being visible via online catalogues we have been improving our presence on the internet in a number of ways. In 2008/09, we created twenty-three subject pages on the Library website, in which we clustered our collections into themes such as ‘Arts and crafts’ and ‘Business and finance’. In addition, each NLS project has its own webpage, which has information about the aims of the project, but also lists our funders and sponsors and each project’s advisory committee.

We have also actively disseminated information about the collections and NLS projects through two of the Library’s blogs (of which there are around twenty), to which British Library curators and other members of research teams contribute in order to highlight aspects about their work and to disseminate information about new collections. The first is the ‘Sound Recordings’ blog, which is used by those who curate and archive the Library’s sound collections. The Oral History team have used the blog to provide information on new collections deposited and catalogued, collections that have been made accessible online via the Archival Sound Recordings website, and reflections from our interviewers on current projects. The second blog is the ‘History of Science’ blog, which is specific to the Oral History of British Science project. We have been providing updates on interviews completed for the project, discussing historical themes that emerge from the research programme, and promoting events the team are taking part in and which relate to the history of science.

This enhanced web presence has greatly helped to increase the visibility of the oral history collections and NLS projects. Most users now use Google and other search engines as the primary tool to discover research resources and both the webpages and blogging about our activities gives NLS projects a higher presence on the web, as the contents of the web pages and the blog posts are picked up by these search engines.

Access

Until 2005/2006 all of NLS’s interviews were recorded on analogue audio cassette tapes. In order to listen to the wealth of the oral history collections at the Library researchers needed to establish which interviews they wanted to listen to in advance by searching the online catalogue, and then make an appointment with the onsite Listening & Viewing Service. Whilst access to recordings is often still through the Listening & Viewing Service onsite at the British Library in St Pancras and Boston Spa, over the last five years we have sought to provide new ways to access the collections.

Dr Karen E McAulay, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Glasgow

“I’m Music and Academic Services Librarian at RSAMD, but I’m also a musicologist – I graduated with my PhD on ‘Our ancient national airs: Scottish song collecting c.1760–1888’, in 2009. As a librarian, I more often do lectures and seminars on information-finding and digital resources.

“But whilst I’m keen to promote digital resources to all our staff and students, I can’t deny that my antennae twitch even more keenly when they detect anything to do with archives or song-collating! So the British Library’s Archival Sound Recordings website is a happy hunting ground for me, and I’ve always enjoyed reading their Playback newsletter.

“That’s how I discovered the George Ewart Evans collection. The common link for me was in fact the work of Marjory Kennedy Fraser – a Gaelic song collector in the early days of recorded sound, about whom I had given a lecture. I reckoned our Scottish Music students would be interested in the work of another oral history collector, so I blogged about it on Whittaker Live, our performing arts weblog (http://whittakerlive.blogspot.com/2010/11/george-ewart-evans-oral-history-at.html). I hoped this would motivate our students to engage with the huge range of recordings available to them through the British Library Sound Archive. One student emailed me back straight away – and I call that a result!”

CASE STUDY

A vital component of creating an archive is ensuring that users can easily access the records on a day-to-day basis. Researchers, but also the general public, now create, store, access and disseminate knowledge through digital mediums, primarily via the Internet. It is not only expected that resources for research are findable via the web, but also that these resources (which include journal articles and newspapers, data sets and sound recordings) can be delivered via an internet connection. The advantage of digital working is that we can work towards democratising access to our collections by removing physical barriers, as digital access files can now be listened to by researchers around the world.

The Oral History and NLS team are working to meet changing user expectations by increasing remote access to the oral history archives. We have been using curated platforms, such as the Library’s Learning websites Food Stories, Voices of the Holocaust and, most recently, Children’s Playground Games and Songs in the New Media Age. But we are also increasingly providing remote access to entire life story recordings through the Archival Sound Recordings (ASR) website. Established in
interviews accessible online also creates a longer ‘workflow’:

...put in institutions. Significantly, although the initial project aimed to provide remote, open access to new born-digital NLS recordings, including: eighty-two interviewers from *An Oral History of British Photography*, 107 from *An Oral History of British Jazz*, sixty-five from *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community*, twenty from *Architects’ Lives*, 110 from *An Oral History of British Science*, 110 from *An Oral History of Recorded Sound* and 250 recordings from the *George Ewart Evans* collection, one of the founding oral history collections at the British Library. This represents only a fraction of the material contained with the Library’s oral history collections, but access via ASR is an important step in increasing access to the archives and providing access to all researchers, not only those affiliated to UK HE institutions. Significantly, although the initial project aimed to put *digitised* material online we are now using the website to provide remote, open access to new born-digital NLS recordings, primarily the interviews from *An Oral History of British Science*.

Online access does not come without its concerns, for both curators at the Library and also for interviewees. Some interviewees are initially uneasy about unmediated access to their life-story recordings although we have had few requests for interviews which were available online via ASR to be removed from the website. As a matter of course we now raise the possibility of online access with our interviewees at the ‘sign off’ procedure once an interview is complete, and we allow interviewees to ‘opt out’ of online access for a number of years if they wish.

For the Oral History and NLS team at the Library, making interviews accessible online also creates a longer ‘workflow’:

For the Oral History and NLS team at the Library, making interviews accessible online also creates a longer ‘workflow’:

David Adams, Lecturer in Planning, Birmingham City University

“I am currently in the tentative stages of embarking on my PhD thesis which seeks to explore some of the experiences that local people had in Birmingham and Coventry from the air raids of 1940: of seeing their cities extensively, though diffusely, bombed; of seeing the proposals for reconstruction being put forward; and, perhaps most importantly, of living and working in a city during the process of rebuilding. Some of this material was already in hand, stemming from interviews undertaken for my MA in Spatial Planning. However, after further analysis of this information, it is felt that it would be a necessary corrective to this story of urban change to consider the recollections of the planners and architects who designed the physical environment during this crucial period of rebuilding.

“In an effort to chart a path through this potentially ‘difficult’ area, I have been incredibly fortunate to be able to draw on sound archive collections held by the British Library. More specifically, the Archival Sound Recordings (ASR) website was able to provide me with valuable material on the lives and work of significant twentieth century architects who were associated with the process of post-war reconstruction. This material has been compiled by highly skilled and trained interviewers. Despite the growing interest in architectural modernism and the increasing amount of local authority and government papers now circulating in libraries regarding post-war planning, the sound recordings made available via ASR provide an invaluable ‘personal’ and corporeal insight into this period of British history. Furthermore, discovering the ASR has opened new avenues for investigation and has guided and prioritised my research planning at other British archives.”

CASE STUDY from the interview itself, to documenting the interview, and when determining access issues, we need to consider remote, open access accessibility to the interviews at each stage. It is a process that we are fine-tuning with *An Oral History of British Science* as the interviews are being made accessible online as soon as they are complete (with interviewee permission). The interviews will only be made available via open online access once all clearance and access issues have been ironed out and once the interview has a complete summary (so that researchers can determine the content of each interview) and, if possible, a complete transcript. Although there are both ethical and technical issues posed by online access to the archives, open access does have clear advantages, as the case studies featured here demonstrate.
Next steps

We know that we have a great many users, those that listen in the Library via the Listening & Viewing Service, and those that discover the archives via the ASR website. However, we need much more information about who these users are, and what they are using the archives for – something which will be remedied by the ‘user survey’ that we are planning for the summer of 2011. We hope to continue to use the Archival Sound Recordings webpage (and its successor) as a means through which to provide remote and open access to our collections.

Abigail Cox, University of Manchester

“I am a final year music student at the University of Manchester, taking a module in Electroacoustic Composition. I was looking to use recorded speech in my final piece, and was directed towards the British Library, where I found an enormous selection of different recordings. I stumbled across a recording of a live debate with Joyce Grenfell, during which she discusses the question: what is beauty? This then inspired me to create a concept for my piece, which looks at the idea of beauty, hidden beauty, and whether aesthetically unattractive objects can create beauty through sound. I have included clips of Joyce Grenfell’s speech throughout the piece as anchors to cue different sections. It has brought an entirely new quality to the piece that is rarely utilised by student composers. The ability to quickly and easily browse the sound archives and download clips directly from the website was incredibly useful for me given that the process of recording sound files is usually a long and tiresome one. I will be diffusing the piece live among my fellow students and lecturers, then will submit it as my final composition.”

Oral History Online

Oral History web pages
Oral history collections: www.bl.uk/oralhistory/collections
NLS projects: www.bl.uk/nls
Catalogues
Sound Archive Catalogue: www.cadensa.bl.uk
Search Our Catalogue: http://searchbeta.bl.uk
Online Access
Archival Sound Recordings (ASR): http://sounds.bl.uk
Blogs
Sound Recordings blog:
http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/archival_sounds
History of Science blog:
http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/oralhistoryofscience
Learning Resources
Food Stories:
www.bl.uk/learning/citizenship/foodstories/index.html
Voices of the Holocaust:
www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/voices/holocaust.html
Children’s Playground Games and Songs in the New Media Age: www.bl.uk/playtimes
An Oral History of British Science aims to record the stories of scientists, engineers and others involved with British science and technology. As well as a planned 200 life story audio recordings, the project is also gathering a number of shorter, supplementary video interviews. At first glance, simply adding moving pictures to sound does not seem much of an innovation: the movie industry have been doing it routinely since the 1920s after all. But in fact, video presents a range of challenges and opportunities for oral history, and some fundamental differences from the practice of recording someone’s life story in their own words alone. For An Oral History of British Science, video is only supplementing rather than replacing audio, and so our key question has been, just what can we add to an audio life story with a video?

An Extra Dimension

People do not just communicate with words, but with their body language too. Facial expressions can add weight to emotional statements, hand gestures convey energy, eyes move as interviewees think back to the past, or fix on me to answer my questions in the present. As interviewer I am in the privileged position of seeing all this non-verbal communication first-hand. I get a personal insight into my interviewee that doesn’t quite cover it. In any case, visual memories can be amongst the most striking parts of any interview. Descriptions of people, instrument readouts, items of equipment, layouts of laboratories and research establishments, remind us that there is a rich visual culture to science that it might just be possible to capture on video. One of our concerns for the science project has been how to record the scientist in this context, and video presents us with a powerful tool to help us do this in ways far beyond filming a studio-based ‘talking head’.

When dealing with a complex subject like science or engineering, the video interview has particular attractions. Often interviewees need to describe how things fit together or move, such as the trajectory of a rocket or how data flows inside a computer. As they do so, hand movements and gestures reinforce words, conveying speed, scale, movement, interaction and ‘would you mind explaining what you did with your hands there’ doesn’t quite cover it. In any case, visual memories can be amongst the most striking parts of any interview. Descriptions of people, instrument readouts, items of equipment, layouts of laboratories and research establishments, remind us that there is a rich visual culture to science that it might just be possible to capture on video. One of our concerns for the science project has been how to record the scientist in this context, and video presents us with a powerful tool to help us do this in ways far beyond filming a studio-based ‘talking head’.

So we have begun to take interviewees back to places where they worked, creating a powerful contrast between their own memories of the site and how it stands now. Consider how different today’s engineer’s office is from its 1950s equivalent, with its large skylight windows, drawing boards and mechanical desk calculators. Recording interviewees in their physical context not only supplements the audio interview with a visual element, but also graphically illustrates change. We have also asked interviewees to demonstrate the use of instruments they used in their work, recreating the practice of science and capturing some of the tacit knowledge engrained in their use of instruments. As my own part of the project is mainly concerned with applied scientists and engineers, one of the most successful aspects has been recording interviewees with technologies that they helped to create. Recording inventor and invention in this way allows forbiddingly complicated items to be explained in simple terms with the added help of visuals, and for the technology to act as a prop in the telling of an interviewee’s story.

HEC1

Our first video interview was with Dr Raymond Bird and HEC1, the computer he built in the early 1950s after accepting an intriguing offer from the British Tabulating Machine Company to work on ‘counting with valves’. At the time computers were mainly experimental machines, ‘electronic brains’, restricted to university laboratories and complex mathematics. Ray’s task was to create one suitable for commercial customers’ business operations. With guidance from Andrew Donald Booth at Birkbeck College, Ray developed the Hollerith Electronic Computer (HEC), which entered production and soon became the most popular machine in 1950s Britain, introducing many companies to electronic computing for the first time. As luck would have it, Ray’s prototype HEC1 computer still exists in a Birmingham Museum store, and Ray was delighted to take part in a video interview.

As my first taste of video interviewing, I was struck by how much of a different exercise video was compared to sound recordings. The audio interview is a conversation between interviewer and interviewee about their life. It is essentially an unplanned extended chat in which the recording equipment
eventually drifts into the background and both parties get to know each other and build up a rapport. The essential cosiness of this arrangement is a little disrupted by the appearance of the other people needed to record a video, the need to direct the action more toward the headline issues and the rather more intrusive nature of the video camera. It was no longer a personal chat between Ray and myself, but something rather more public for both of us.

There are certainly more things to worry about than in a regular audio interview. Finding a bit of peace and quiet outside the safe confines of an interviewee’s home can be tricky, and there are lighting, space for equipment, and camera angles to consider. Even with careful planning there is always the unexpected – I don’t think any of us anticipated that our video shoot would be disturbed by the arrival of a grizzly bear and a hammerhead shark, which were being deposited in the stores nearby.

The benefits more than outweighed the changing circumstances. Although we discussed HEC1 at length in Ray’s original interview, having the machine actually there suggested new questions and allowed Ray to explain this complex mass of electronic valves and wires in new ways. With Ray’s explanations, HEC1 turned from an arcane collection of vintage electronic components, whose form gave away nothing of its function, into a machine whose purpose and inner working were clear. With a sweep of the hand and a bit of pointing Ray explained how data flowed around HEC1, what the different parts of the machine did, the intricacies of how it all fitted together, and how one would use it. But it was Ray, rather than HEC1, who was really the centre of our attention. The computer was a useful prop for Ray to tell a chapter of his own life story and as he explained it, we got a fuller, more expressive sense of Ray himself than sound alone could convey.

**What are we trying to achieve here?**

Despite appearances to the contrary, we are not trying to create a television documentary. For *An Oral History of British Science* video is intended as a visual supplement to the longer audio recording. It is there to record a person, not only in their own words, but with their expressions, gestures and mannerisms too, a fuller expression of the individual. That video interviews can add visual explanation of complex subjects and add perspective on historical scientific places, is a great added bonus. With these benefits it seems natural to ask why we do not video life story interviews in their entirety? Quite apart from the extra resources and complexities this would consume, the life story interview is based on talking to the interviewer, not talking to the camera. The vital relationship between interviewer and interviewee seems altered by the presence of the camera’s eye and the wider audience it implies. This is not to say that life story video interviews are impossible, just that they would be different. For the science project the supplementary video approach adds an extra dimension without taking anything away from the life story recording – it is the best of both worlds.

While we’ve done a little editing of the end results, to insert close ups of details for instance, the end result is neither as polished or as contrived as a documentary. As Ray commented on seeing the end result of his day in front of the camera, ‘When I watched the film it was a bit rougher than I was expecting, but for all that, I thought you captured the real me.’ Personally, I’m rather happy with that.
After the interview: reflections on a life story recording

Alison Gilmour and Fred Holliday

NLS interviewer, Dr Alison Gilmour, interviewed Professor Sir Frederick Holliday in 2009 and 2010 as part of the Oral History of the Water Industry project. A year after his life story interview was completed Sir Fred asked if a final session could be recorded, allowing him to reflect on his diagnosis and treatment of lymphoma, which occurred after the initial sessions were recorded. For the NLS Review, Alison and Sir Fred together devised a set of questions which both of them then answered in written form, in order for them to reflect – separately – on the interview process.

Sir Fred Holliday

Sir Fred started his career undertaking research as a science officer at the Marine Laboratories in Aberdeen and then in a variety of roles as a lecturer and later Professor at the University of Aberdeen and the University of Stirling. He then moved into higher level university administration, ending this part of his career as Vice Chancellor at the University of Durham from 1980 to 1990. Following his ‘retirement’ from academic life Sir Fred worked at senior board level for a number of companies, including Northumbrian Water, and it was his role as Chairman of this utility company that led to his interview for the Oral History of the Water Industry project.

When invited for interview, what was your initial reaction and what were your first impressions of Alison?

I have been interviewed many times in my career: generally by strangers. I have always been cautious in my replies, not wishing either to regret my words or give hostages to fortune. I have always avoided giving more than the smallest amount of personal information. Insofar as the NLS interview was concerned – I expected an older and less charming person to be interviewing me! I soon found that Alison was a like-minded academic, and that made me feel comfortable: I have spent many years with doctoral and post-doctoral researchers and hence I did not find any barrier to communication. I found that I was talking objectively about someone I knew well – but not me – an odd feeling.

During your life story interview, how aware were you of your public profile?

My profile remains high in Scotland and the North-east of England. I have deliberately lowered it on the national scene by avoiding comments on either education or conservation – areas where my profile was high. I think I am now regarded as much as a businessman as an academic, but I have tried to retain my reputation as a scholar by lecturing and writing. Above all, I am a teacher who enjoys communicating complex issues in an understandable way. As to Alison – she is a gentle persuader with a light (but firm) grip on the reins. She remains objective and neither criticises nor commends my adventures!

What have you gained in material or non-material terms from your involvement in the water industry?

I did not inherit any wealth and as an academic I did not make any surplus wealth. However, thanks to shares and share options I have now enough for our lifestyle (a quiet life and bird-watching is not expensive – requiring only a camper van and a telescope) and I can support my favourite charities.

What was your favourite part of the interview?

My favourite parts of the interview were those when I remembered things from my early years that had been deeply buried. It was surprising to me how childhood memories come back – mostly pleasant – perhaps rose-tinted retrospection but even the war years did not seem too bad and produced some good (if not always happy) memories. Since those interview sessions even more recollections have appeared – it seems that once the pot is stirred then bits float up!

Were any parts of the interview difficult? How did you feel about them?

There were some difficult parts – some so distressing that I had to pause to regain composure. Most acutely, were the memories of the Stirling University troubles, and the death of its young Principal with whom I had worked closely. Also – the failures in my life, my regrets at my bad decisions and failure to achieve things I had wanted. I still feel those setbacks with a mixture of shame and anger.
What kind of rapport did you have with Alison?
I had an excellent rapport with Alison – she reminds me (if this does not sound patronising – it is not meant to be) of my bright, young postdoctoral students with whom I always had a sense of academic equality. Thus these interviews were much less guarded than any others – although there are still some areas I do not care to visit. I would like to write my memoirs but that wish did not colour these interviews – they provided a substitute!

Why did you want to record an additional session after the completion of your life story interview in February 2010?
I wanted to record the last year because it contained a life-threatening experience and forced me to evaluate my life to date, to put ‘myself in context’ and to realistically face and prepare for imminent death. That has not happened and I count myself fortunate to have had such excellent treatment for an aggressive lymphoma.

What does your family think about you being interviewed for National Life Stories?
The family has been more interested than I expected: I thought they would be bored, or at best indifferent, but no – since I’ve been interviewed they have been asking me more about my life!!

Was it worthwhile being involved in the project?
It was very worthwhile. I realised how much I owed to others and how much luck and chance had played in my life. “Chance and choice” sums it up.

What’s next?
What will I do now? At the age of 76 I shall soon retire from my last Directorship (of a Venture Capital Trust). I am still giving invited lectures – the next one, ‘What will guide the Guiding Minds’, a tough challenge as to how decision makers will in future find the best philosophies for action. I shall keep up-to-date with science generally and do some private research (microscopy). I hope to make the transition from life to death as rewarding as possible!
Alison Gilmour

Alison joined the NLS team in 2009, which coincided with the completion of her PhD at the University of Glasgow entitled: An examination of work culture and industrial relations at the Linwood car plant, c. 1963–1981. In addition to her role as an interviewer for An Oral History of the Water Industry, Alison also holds the Economic History Society Post-Doctoral Anniversary Fellowship (2010–11) at the Institute of Historical Research, for which she is writing up her PhD for publication.

When you identified Sir Fred as a potential interview, what were your initial thoughts and what were your first impressions upon meeting him?
Before every new life story interview, despite usually having some contact over the telephone, I feel slightly nervous in anticipation of meeting a stranger with whom I have to fairly quickly establish a relationship that will enable them to feel comfortable discussing personal aspects of their life. Whilst I had interviewed people from different levels within organisations, a former Chairman with a Knighthood, and an entry in ‘Who’s Who’ was a new experience! Therefore, there was some trepidation prior to interviewing Professor Sir Frederick Holliday to say the least. However, my apprehension was quickly dispelled. I met someone who was very approachable, who understood and valued the process of providing a life story interview, not only for the purposes of the Oral History of the Water Industry project, but also the wider contribution made to social history through life story recordings.

During Sir Fred’s life story interview, how aware were you of his public profile?
Prior to meeting Sir Fred, his public profile contributed to the aforementioned nerves about interviewing him. Yet, from early in the first recording session he was relaxed and comfortable answering questions and offered personal reflections in a forthright, down-to-earth manner on a variety of topics. That said, at points the very public nature of Sir Fred’s wealth of experience thereby providing a significant contribution to the water project. A key strength in the interview was his willingness to discuss the finer details of his experiences in academia and business, as well as exploring what they meant to him on a personal level. This included reflection on his experiences of events at the time they occurred, as well as offering retrospective reflection on what they mean to him now as he looks back over his life. Although lengthy, for me as the interviewer, Sir Fred’s engagement with the process made it stimulating, enjoyable and memorable.

What was your favourite part of the interview?
It is difficult to isolate a single favourite part of the interview but Sir Fred’s reflections on growing up and his inquisitive childhood interest in nature and science were particularly enjoyable. These reflections resulted in interesting discussions on the relationship between science and Sir Fred’s religious faith, which emerged as a recurrent theme throughout his life story interview. Another highlight was Sir Fred’s recollections on meeting Baroness Margaret Thatcher and his admission of being frightened of her.

Were any parts of the interview difficult? How do you feel about them?
As Sir Fred provided such personal reflections on events in his life, parts of the interview were difficult. Events at the University of Stirling and the Ladbroke Grove rail crash had to be explored in order to contribute to historical record, but as an interviewer it was difficult to question Sir Fred on these traumatic experiences, as it is to question people on areas of their past that are clearly a source of distress. I found myself emotionally affected when exploring Sir Fred’s experiences of such events.

What kind of rapport did you have with Sir Fred?
I believe that Sir Fred and I had a good rapport from our initial meeting that, for my part, has been enhanced by respect. He not only has a way with language that captivates one’s attention, but his critical mind and strong sense of his opinions offered deeply reflective answers to my questions.

What were your thoughts on being asked back to interview Sir Fred in February 2011 following the completion of his life story recording a year earlier?
Following completion of Sir Fred’s life story recording I was saddened to hear from him of his diagnosis of lymphoma. He kept in touch and I was relieved to hear of improvements in his health. I was delighted by his suggestion of a final recording session to reflect on his treatment and experiences in the year following the last life story session. It means Sir Fred’s life story interview includes information and reflection on this significant event in his life.

What do your family think about you working as a National Life Stories interviewer?
My family find this occupation a little unusual but understandable given my inquisitive nature!

What is the contribution of Sir Fred’s life story recording to the water project?
It was much longer than other project interviews: reflecting Sir Fred’s wealth of experience thereby providing a significant contribution to the water project. A key strength in the interview was his willingness to discuss the finer details of his experiences in academia and business, as well as exploring what they meant to him on a personal level. This included reflection on his experiences of events at the time they occurred, as well as offering retrospective reflection on what they mean to him now as he looks back over his life. Although lengthy, for me as the interviewer, Sir Fred’s engagement with the process made it stimulating, enjoyable and memorable.

What’s next?
At the moment I continue as an interviewer for an Oral History of the Water Industry, alongside my other research work. The interviews for the project are due to be completed by spring 2012. After that, who knows?
Gendered cultures of science
Paul Merchant, Project Interviewer, National Life Stories

Until very recently, most British meteorologists, oceanographers, geologists, geophysicists, geographers, glaciologists and atmospheric physicists were male. Glaciers were walked and measured by men. Rocks were sampled, drilled and dated by men. Instruments used to inspect the atmosphere, whether looking up from the ground or down from satellites, were designed and used by men. Oceanographic research ships tended to leave port with all male crews. The hole in the ozone layer was spotted by men. Plate tectonics is a theory developed in part by British scientists – all male. If the globe has warmed, it has done so under a largely male scientific gaze.

How should the ‘A Changing Planet’ strand of An Oral History of British Science (OHBS) proceed through this highly gendered material? We have three strategies. The first is to record the experiences of ‘pioneering’ female scientists, such as geologist Janet Thomson, the first female scientist allowed ‘south’ with the British Antarctic Survey (in 1983). Second, to investigate the role of female technicians, such as Barbara Bowen, who scanned atmospheric data for the team of scientists who found the ozone hole. And third, to examine the particular kinds of masculinity and femininity bound up with the pursuit of knowledge in what are now known as the ‘Earth sciences’.

The life story approach in oral history has the great advantage of taking us very close to cultures of scientific practice and to the subjectivities of the scientists involved. It is possible to examine, for example, particular kinds of masculine scientific culture. The British Antarctic Survey (BAS) was certainly one such culture. Geologist Janet Thomson remembers a visit to the Geology Section from BAS Director Vivian Fuchs in the 1960s:

“There was one occasion when [Fuchs] had come up and he invited the geologists to have a beer with him in the local pub... and Sue West and I went and we sauntered in and sat down and he was already in there and he said, ‘Oh, I didn’t know BAS employed women’ [laughs]. And strictly speaking BAS didn’t ... I think we rather...cramped his style by being there. … He was very sunburnt, had a pipe which he used for pointing [laughs] and really was quite a charming man... it was obvious that the – the men enjoyed his company, they responded to him very well and there was quite a lot of laughter, so I think he was one of those men who could talk to the troops very easily...so there was a good bonhomie and he was a leader of men I think.” C1379/20 back 4
What ‘the men’ might get up to on over wintering bases in Antarctica is suggested by technician Barbara Bowen’s memories of stories told back in England, in BAS’s tea room:

“They would sort of tell you tales, you know, sort of about raucous parties and they’d had strange names for undergarments and things like this... some people never washed [laughs]... I think the shreds were their underpants after [laughs] – after ’n’ months of being down there and one wondered whether they ever changed them all... it just seemed typically boyish lavatorial jokes [laughs], you know, just stupid really.” C1379/18 Track 6

It is this institutionalised, jokey, ‘boyish’ culture of scientific masculinity that Janet Thomson found herself up against. Denied access to Antarctica by BAS rules, maintained by successive Directors including Vivian Fuchs and Dick Laws (pictured), Janet was limited to working on geological samples brought back by male geologists:

“I thought it was daft that somebody...should be expected to work on samples that hadn’t been collected by that person. ...And I was also cross because there was the gender issue that was sort of dawning on me really [laughs] and I thought that was stupid too, so I wanted to go for the reason of seeing it for myself, that particular location, but also going because they shouldn’t stop me [laughs] because I’m a woman, you know, I think that was the start of feeling that it was a rather improper segregation of scientists, because [being] male or female depended, you know, whether they could go to the Antarctic or not.” C1379/20 Track 5

In 1983, after many years of asking, Janet was allowed to join a BAS geological cruise along the Antarctic Peninsula to collect her own samples. It would be easy to imagine that she was a strident pioneer – the first to overturn a sexist scientific culture. In fact, BAS was changing. Janet was greatly assisted by her immediate boss, OHBS interviewee Charles Swithinbank (see C1379/03 track 13), and we ought to acknowledge that Dick Laws was still Director when Janet set sail. If Janet was involved in a struggle or battle to get to the Antarctic, it was quietly fought:

“Paul: To what extent were you aware of and – or even involved with sort of popular feminist movements of – of the time? Janet: I was aware of them and I ... I wasn’t particularly happy because they tended to be rather strident ... it wasn’t a way that I wanted to behave and ... there was an awful lot of shouting on the radio that I remember hearing by very articulate ladies ... I can’t quite put my finger on it, I just didn’t want to be branded as one of them, you know, a sort of stroppy female who sort of shouted the whole time [laughs] and didn’t do anything.” C1379/20 Track 5

Quiet persistence. Not making a fuss. Getting on with the job. Avoiding the dramatic. These are features of a particular way of being female in a male scientific culture. They are qualities that recur throughout Janet’s life story. For example, of childhood dancing classes she remembers:

“I could tolerate these things [the classes] but what I did not like was the Christmas performances or the – the summer carnivals when...you went on a float, you know, and you were parading around in the streets and I don’t like being the focus of attention, and there was one Christmas concert that I remember where my sister was part of a trio of girls doing the can-can and for some reason I was a small white rabbit ...and I think I probably was only about five...and I was asked to sit on the stage...but I turned my back on the audience... throughout the performance.” C1379/20 Track 2

Quiet and undemonstrative as a child. Similar as an adult. It is tempting to claim that Janet’s subjectivity (or ‘self’ or ‘personality’) was formed early in life, that it is an internal quality, and that it is fairly stable. However, life stories, including Janet’s, are full of evidence that subjectivity is not an internal quality found inside us, but instead is constantly formed and reformed in relation to objects, places, things. For example, physicist John Nye tells us that female students in the Cavendish Laboratory in the 1940s experienced their femaleness in relation to clothes and pieces of magnetic equipment:

“Well of course, experimentally it was a hands-on thing, and, it was just not considered so ladylike to be doing science. I mean there’s a story about Searle. I witnessed some pretty bad bullying by Searle of women. But there was one woman who couldn’t get the magnetism experiment to work at all, and she was sent out to take off her [corset] stays, which were upsetting the experiment. ...That sort of thing would happen.” C1379/22 track 3

Similarly, Barbara Bowen remembers deciding not to pursue laboratory science in a story that focuses on clothes and chemicals, not abstract concepts of an inner self:

“We were then wearing tights and I ruined so many pairs and plus the odd skirt, because you had lab coats but [laughs] they were the old-fashioned variety...and they got holes in them and then they penetrated – if you got...another chemical on it, it went through that hole and onto your clothes [laughs] so I thought, oh, I don’t think I want a job where I have to work in a lab all the time and so that was it in a nutshell really...I’d just decided that I didn’t want to do lab work.” C1379/18 Track 4

Like the lab, the field offered particular ways of being female. Janet remembers becoming a geologist through relations with snow, corduroy trousers and the complaints of others on an undergraduate field excursion to the Pentland Hills, near Edinburgh:

“We got out of the coach and we were walking over the moor to where there was an outcrop and it began to snow, and it was very wet snow and it...got so much that we had to stomp to the coach...it was actually quite a long walk and the snow was pretty thick and a lot of people were getting quite distressed about it because they were getting cold, but I – I didn’t mind, I had got corduroy trousers on and they
were just absorbing the moisture and whilst I kept walking, you know, it was pretty good insulation, I wasn’t getting cold and I remember Grace saying when we got back to the coach, ‘Well I can see you’re going to be a geologist Janet,’ [laughs] ‘cause I wasn’t moaning, I was just sort of enjoying the challenge of – of getting out in the elements.’” C1379/20 track 3

Stories of science in An Oral History of British Science are accumulating like layers of snow on the Pentland Hills. Inspection of these layers of memories, whether during a quick listen on Archival Sound Recordings or through more detailed study, promises further insight into relations between science, subjectivity and gender.
Enriching a paper archive with oral history

Johnnie Russell, Trustee of The Baring Archive, in conversation with Katharine Haydon, Project Interviewer, National Life Stories

From its establishment in 1762 until its acquisition in 1995 by ING, the London merchant house of John & Francis Baring & Co, later known as Baring Brothers and Barings PLC, was one of the most prominent and longstanding merchant banks in the City of London. Barings’ extensive archive and art collection are a treasure trove of resources for researchers studying the history and networks of commerce and banking in Britain and the wider world. NLS’s An Oral History of Barings is a project undertaken in partnership with The Baring Archive. Project interviewer Katharine Haydon talked to Johnnie Russell, a trustee of the Archive who also recently retired after a thirty-five year career in UK and international corporate banking with Barings and ING. They discussed how the project originated, how it was funded and whether there were any particular issues arising from using oral history to trace the history of the bank within living memory.

Katherine: I wonder if you could start by stating what The Baring Archive is and what your role is with it? Johnnie: A decision was taken two or three years ago to put the historical collection of Barings and its Archive into a charitable trust. This is on a long-term loan from ING who own the collection but in such a form that it will remain an independent entity in perpetuity. The collection has a number of trustees; I happen to be one of those trustees. I started that role when I was still working for the bank and have continued now that I’ve retired from full-time employment at ING.

And can you give a flavour of what kind of material the Archive holds? It is a collection of business records that go right back to the founding of the bank. I understand it to be one of the most complete records of a merchant bank through the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and so to that extent it’s a rather unique collection. It also contains various historical artefacts which were connected with the bank and historical portraits. They could be gifts that had been given to members of the bank as a result of particular transactions, it could be items that were collected by partners of the bank, items of silver, pottery, some jewellery which were given as gifts or medals. A whole range of different things.

Do ING use the Archive for any reasons? Material in the Archive is used actively in preparing presentations and material for clients and Barings, having been a bank that engaged in activities all over the world, has an extraordinarily rich collection of material that is of interest to people in those countries today.

How did the Archive alight on the idea of doing an oral history? I happen to also be a trustee of something called the Villiers Park Educational Trust. This is a charitable body that has a long association with the bank in that a former partner of Barings, Arthur Villiers, established this at the turn of the twentieth century as a boys’ club in the East End of London; the Eton Manor Charitable Trust as it was then called. And that charity has evolved over time into an organisation that works with children who are bright but from disadvantaged backgrounds to encourage them to go on into further education. That charity, with funding from the National Lottery, commissioned an oral history project entitled ‘Up the Manor’ where a cross-section of the boys who had passed through Eton Manor Charitable Trust recorded their experiences. I went to a presentation of this and it occurred to me that this whole idea of oral history would be extremely interesting to future generations of users of The Baring Archive. If we could record the voices of people at all levels in the bank who had worked in Barings in the latter part of the twentieth century, at a time of great change in the City, it might be very interesting to future generations of historians. So it really came out of my seeing an oral history project in action.

And how did you get to hear about the work of National Life Stories here at the British Library? I began to discuss this idea with my fellow trustees of the Archive, and I think the idea of involving the British Library evolved out of those discussions.

I was wondering what the thinking was behind a partnership approach rather than just commissioning your own private study? One should aim to work with people who are professionals in an area. We have no expertise in this; we wouldn’t have known where to begin. I think National Life Stories at the British Library had very broad experience in this area. They had run a City Lives project of which I became aware and so clearly had some experience of talking to people in the financial world and it seemed very logical to explore with them the possibility of running this as a joint project. And by running this project with the British Library the material will be made available to a wider audience than it might be if it was just sitting in the [Baring] Archive in London Wall.
But doing the project through National Life Stories does mean that the approach is one of a life story. How did you feel about that kind of approach?

Well I think it's very much a piece of social history, so it's not just about what happened in the bank. It is extremely interesting to be able to understand a bit about the background of the people who work there: after all, soon many of them will no longer be here. It is going to be very interesting to historians to understand how those people came to work in the bank and what happened in their lives while they worked in the bank.

How was this idea received amongst your fellow trustees?

There was great enthusiasm actually because they quickly saw that we had this unique paper record and if we could add an oral history project to our material it would enrich the material and give it something that perhaps many other archives don't have. We then had to consider how on earth we were going to finance it.

And how did you finance it?

We’ve been fortunate throughout to have a very helpful and cooperative successor bank to Barings, which was ING, and they were from the beginning supportive of this project. Within the archive was a large collection of duplicate Russian bonds and a decision was taken that we should auction this material and raise some money. We did manage to find some buyers for these bonds and the money raised from that has added to the funds of the Archive and enabled us to start this project with confidence.

Was it ever a consideration that a lot of the nature of banking business is confidential? Were you concerned at all about what people might be talking about?

I took the view that the people being interviewed would use their own discretion as to what material they were happy to be made immediately available and what material they might wish to have closed for longer or shorter periods. I felt it was extremely important that we offered people that ability to close parts of their recording so that they could speak very freely, either about matters which might involve client confidentiality or indeed about other people within the bank who might be upset to hear what was going to be said about them. And I think for the material to be interesting to future generations of historians we had to encourage people to be as frank as they possibly could be.

And did you have any concerns over the sensitive nature of the issue of the collapse of Barings in 1995?

That is a sensitive matter and I’m sure it’s something that’s very concerning still to a lot of people. I was very clear in my own mind that this project was about the bank in the latter part of the twentieth century. You can’t ignore the collapse of the bank but it’s much more about the evolution of a merchant bank and the implications for that organisation of Big Bang and then moving towards the latter part of the twentieth century. It most definitely was not a project about the collapse of Barings.

Do you envisage a particular type of person coming to listen to this material?

I think it’ll be predominantly people who are interested, and by people I mean probably historians or research students, in how the City of London evolved in the latter part of the twentieth century and here was an organisation that was at the heart of that, going through a period of great change; how did the bank deal with that, how did the people involved think about what was going on and all the implications for an organisation that had been used to a very regulated and relatively predictable environment [moving] to one which was having to cope with a great deal of change.

Did you have any strong feelings about whether it should be a specialist from within the banking world who should be doing the interviewing?

No, I don’t think we did actually. It was more about who could empathise with people being interviewed and get them to talk freely. We expected whoever did it to have done their homework and to have learnt about banking but we didn’t want a banker particularly, we wanted somebody who could get the best out of the project. I’m pleased to see the enthusiasm with which people have agreed to be interviewed.

Has that surprised you, knowing what you might about your colleagues, that they have been so enthusiastic?

No, I mean we have had one or two people decline and perhaps that was a bit disappointing because I think they were people who might have had interesting things to say. But generally I would have expected people to be prepared to talk about what was, after all, an important part of their lives. Having spoken to one or two of the people who’ve been interviewed I think they’ve been surprised themselves by how much they’ve had to say. Some of the interviews are quite lengthy and I think people have been quite amazed by how much material comes flooding out once they get talking.
Sometimes I am asked by an interviewee anticipating talking about their working life, ‘Why do you want to ask me about my childhood?’ A person’s life, of course, doesn’t begin when they reach adulthood: the influences, perceptions, and experiences gained during childhood often leave a profound and lasting imprint on later life. Events in an individual’s childhood might direct them towards training for a profession, at other times the rejection of childhood influences can just as easily lead to an unexpected career path.

The first extract is from my recording with Cyrus Todiwala OBE, one of the most prominent Indian chefs in the UK, who grew up in a Parsee family in Bombay. His father was a senior executive for the Automobile Association, and cooking professionally was not something encouraged for middle class Indian boys. However, inspired by his mother’s cooking and visits to Bombay’s famous vegetable market, Bhaji Galli, Cyrus discovered an early interest in food.

“Most of the shopping was done on a daily basis, and as a child I used to do the shopping for my aunts and my neighbours to make pocket money. So I used to love to do the shopping. I used to go to each neighbour with my little chit and then I would go to the market. Because I did the shopping for everyone I could get better prices: so lime, coriander, fresh mint, lemongrass were standard in the house, because we have our tea with lemongrass and mint. And vegetables, most vegetables were okra, beans, pumpkin, squash, stuff like that. I used to bargain with these guys and come home with three or four bags for everyone and they would tip me and that was my money. Good times! Eggs were the most difficult things to bring home because we didn’t have trays and you would be given a paper bag and invariably I would knock the bag and break the eggs, so you had to be very careful, and everybody wanted eggs. I could never pick a good chicken as a child.

I always thought the plumpest ones were the best but then they had no flesh on them. Chicken was a treat. Dad was a great one for bargaining with fisherwomen on the market. We had a lane called Bhaji Galli and all the hawkers sat on the road and had their big woven baskets and you go from person to person and see what you like, the guy who sold the fresh herbs like coriander, spinach, mint, curry leaves, they only sold that stuff …and on the odd occasion if you found a few odd few lemons rolling down the road you picked them up quietly and put them in your basket! There was a lot of hustle and bustle: all of the women screaming and calling out to you, ‘Come to me, I have the best, look at my stuff, I have the best okra’, they would crack open an okra and show you how crisp and young it was, they would crack open a French bean and show you it had no seeds. You had to be very careful how they held the scales, I was taught to watch as they would chuck in six beans and tip out ten before you could notice. I can still visualise it all, the whole market. … We rarely ate out – there wasn’t enough money in the house. If you did go out, it was big event. We did go to functions, and those were the days you really enjoyed. Parsee functions are big feasts; we are a community that thinks that life has to be enjoyed. The Parsee loves his food, it is quintessential to his very existence, so they seek good food and variety was always key. I don’t know where it came from but it is part and parcel of our existence.”

Dixon Jones was the architectural practice responsible for the redesign and reconstruction of The Royal Opera House and for public buildings such as Kings Place among many others. Here Sir Jeremy Dixon reflects on his early difficulties with school and how a chance conversation in the 1950s between his parents and family friends, the Reads (Herbert Read was a prominent art critic and writer), led him to apply to study architecture at London’s Architectural Association.

“I had a very bad time at school; I really didn’t get on. I didn’t learn to read very quickly. I was good at drawing things and making things early on but when it came to reading and writing, I couldn’t. The point is I am dyslexic but that was never recognised through the whole of my education, and as a result I was hopeless at getting exams. I got O levels, I didn’t get A levels apart from art A level which didn’t count, but all the time I was making things. My father set up this workshop in our house and I was in there from a very early age making things on extremely dangerous machines like lathes and machine saws. From the age of seven or eight I used to turn things in brass on this lathe and sell them at the village show. The other influential thing is I was always making model airplanes which are made of thin bits of balsa wood which are stuck together and they become very

Why do you want to ask me about my childhood?

Niamh Dillon, Project Interviewer, National Life Stories
elegant structures, very like high tech structures, and you put paper over them and you put something called ‘dope’ over them which stretches the paper and makes it strong so they are like stretched skin high tech contemporary structures. It was a way of giving myself something to work for in a way because school was telling me I was no good and yet I was making these beautiful things.

“So I came out of school, boarding school, really feeling like I was no good and really feeling like there was no prospect, because school was telling me I was no good and yet I was making these beautiful things.

“Sir Jeremy Dixon.”

I might as well give up. I remember sitting on a train and thinking, ‘My God, what is going to happen?’ Now in parallel with this I had been doing quite a lot of things to do with seeing buildings, and places, the sense of place, it is not just to do with seeing architecture, it is a feel for a place, which my mother was very good at expressing: the beauty of the River Thames, of buildings, of animals, of farm implements and traditional things, she was very good at giving one a sense of how to use the eye to pick up important images. She drew things in a very nice way, with a very free watercolour gouache technique, but the most important thing for me was that she was incredibly supportive and encouraging. So I think in the background, I have no evidence for this, that my parents were saying to their friends the Reads, ‘what should Jeremy do, should he be an architect?’ It was not me saying I wanted to be an architect, if you know what I mean. And most importantly I think they were advised to encourage me to go to the Architectural Association which from my point of view was a wonderful thing because all the things I was not good at didn’t matter any more, and all the things I was good at did matter. So from being at the back of the class, and being given the feeling that I didn’t have any useful qualities, I was actually quite good; what I did was responded to by the staff at the Architectural Association and I got a year prize in the first year. So there is lot to be grateful for. But almost the most important thing to me is the element of chance, these strange shifts of accident that ends up with you being in a certain position at a certain time. Sometimes you are disadvantaged, sometimes something comes out of it, and I am very keen on the idea that if life is full of chances, if the door is a little bit open it is worth pushing on it a little bit and just walking through.”
Beryl Bainbridge (1932–2010)
Interviewed by Sarah O’Reilly, 2008–9

Beryl Bainbridge was born in Liverpool in 1932. Expelled from school at the age of fourteen, she later became an actress and drew on that experience in the novel An Awfully Big Adventure. Though her first book, Harriet Said, was rejected by several publishers, she went on to write a further seventeen, and to win acclaim for her darkly comic, tightly wrought prose. In 2000 she was made a Dame of the British Empire. When asked at the end of her NLS recording what the future held, she answered ‘Death and a full stop, that’s it’.

“My father was a clever man, but he had the most terrifying temper. A lot of my time was spent going upstairs with my father’s food on a plate and shoving it outside his bedroom door. I slept with my mother and my brother slept with my father to keep them apart – until the time came when I’d come home from school and you could hear noises in the bathroom above and my mother was having a bath and my father was scrubbing her back. So one knew that the rows for the moment were over, and the next day he’d take her down town and buy her something … But I hated my father for a long time because he scared me so with his shouting. I used to run at him, if he was in a rage, and put my knee in the small of his back and an arm round his throat and wrestle him to the ground and tell him ‘Be quiet, be quiet, shut up, shut up’. It was a bit of a violent household. My brother used to go out, and a lot of the time I went down to the shore. In those days it was double summertime so I could be down on the shore till eleven o’clock at night and nobody ever really bothered. In bad times my mother would go to the station and read her library book in the waiting room because there was always a fire, rather than stay at home with him. And he’d sit in the dark listening to the wireless, in his ARP uniform.

“There was a song in the war called ‘When that man is dead and gone, I’ll go dancing down the street kissing everyone we meet, when that man is dead and gone’. It was about Hitler, but I thought it was about my father, so I used to sing it rather loudly. But when I was in my teens, you know, I saw him differently. I realised that he was an unhappy man and thankfully I got much closer to him before he died. And he was very generous. Well they both were, I mean they did everything for their children, my parents. Education and holidays and things. So they were good parents, but they were also, I think, the sort of parents that are essential if you want to be a novelist. I mean I only began to write because of childhood, I wouldn’t have done it for any other reason. I don’t see the point in making anything up. So much happens to one, so much reality, that why bother, you know? I don’t believe anyway there’s such a thing as fiction, I think that’s a funny idea. And so I think the more difficult times are, the better it is.

“I think the original idea [of beginning to write] was I wanted to prove something, I wanted to prove that I’d had a pretty peculiar childhood. And the odd thing is that when you do that you cure yourself instantly if you’ve got some sort of terrible hangover or worry about something in the past. If you write about it, it disappears, you no longer … it no longer bothers you. And I remembered all these things about the terrible quarrels that went on, and getting thrown out of school and all sorts of things, everything muddled in one’s mind. And then as soon as you write things down it just soothes out. You become less neurotic.”
Professor Sir Maurice Wilkes was a pioneer of electronic computing, with an active career that stretched from the 1930s into the twenty-first century. After research in experimental physics at Cambridge’s famous Cavendish Laboratory he was awarded his PhD in 1937, and began working on mechanical and analogue computing in the Mathematical Laboratory. As the Second World War loomed, Maurice was recruited into radar research, spending the war years working on a variety of electronic systems. In his interview, he discussed attending the famous ‘Sunday Soviets’ at the Telecommunication Research Establishment. These informal meetings between scientists and the armed services were lively occasions intended to make the best use of Britain’s scientific knowledge to help with the war effort:

“The RAF had their problems but on the other hand the scientists could see problems that hadn’t yet loomed large in the RAF’s eyes and so we steered the future activity in those directions.

So the scientists were pointing out problems that hadn’t even arisen yet then?

Oh, yes. And, yes, I mean in fact providing a lot of the leadership … I’m sorry, I don’t like to say a problem was there, they’re not problems … they were discussions about the tactical and to some extent the strategic position and how radar might be used to make things go more smoothly, a bit more – and faster.

After the war ended Maurice returned to Cambridge to build EDSAC, the Electronic Delay Storage Automatic Calculator, the world’s first practical electronic stored program computer. While a handful of experimental computers had already been built, EDSAC was not just designed as a proof of concept, but as a practical tool that scientists, engineers and mathematicians could put to use solving complex problems. Maurice discussed his intentions behind building EDSAC:

“When I started building the EDSAC I had no doubt about who were going to be our users, they were people like myself. I mean I used to be doing things that would take perhaps a week solving. Solving a set of ten by ten linear equations took about a week with a desk machine, well that could be done rapidly with a digital computer. And those were the people who we made the EDSAC available to – research students in the lab and others, anybody who could make a good case could use it.…

“I made a firm rule I would never try to sell computers because I knew they would sell themselves, and they did at the bottom. Started with the students, the students would come in because they knew other students… we had a thing called a priorities committee, which was a frightening name, it tended to be, but it was a fascinating committee for me. And of course people, quite important people in the university were prepared to sort of tell… tell us about their plans and what they wanted, and all in the hope of getting their fingers on some machine time.”

Maurice remained as head of the Cambridge Mathematical Laboratory, later renamed the Computing Laboratory, from 1945 to 1980. Always modest about his achievements, he was awarded a Turing Award, ‘the Nobel Prize of computing’ in 1967, and knighted in 2000.

C1379/21
Theatre designer Stefanos Lazaridis was born in Dire-Dawra, Ethiopia in 1942 and educated in Addis Ababa and Geneva. He came to London in 1962 to study business administration but instead enrolled on a stage management course at the Central School of Speech and Drama, intending to become a director. His introduction to design came from working as an assistant to celebrated practitioners such as Michael Annals, Disley Jones and Nicholas Georgiadis. Specialising in opera, Lazaridis’s approach to design emphasised the dramaturgy or staging of a piece, from which he argued the visual solution should logically follow.

Lazaridis refers to the skills he developed – as well as those he failed to master – whilst working as an assistant:

“I was working with Michael Annals after school, I would go and work with him after five o’clock till the next morning if necessary and then go straight to Central. And I worked on making these models and trying to learn how to draw ground plans, elevations and all that. I never managed to learn that craft, I still cannot do a proper ground plan. I can do a rough ground plan with very accurate measurements and everything, but I cannot do a presentable ground plan to be proud of, or any other drawing in fact, technical drawing. And so I concentrated on model making; I was very, very good at that. I mean I had the knack, shall we say, and he was very pleased.”

Lazaridis’ first opera design was for ‘Carmen’, directed by John Copley at Sadler’s Wells in 1967. He describes how he managed to win this commission:

“John Copley said to me ‘I want you to do a project, you’ve got a week, do a model, a white card model and we’ll see.’ And I said, ‘I can’t just do that, I need you to tell me what you think about it, I’ve got to listen to it, I’ve got to learn it.’ Anyway, he met me again the next day and he talked about it – unbelievable information – and I listened to the music and then I completely flew and I just did a brilliant model; white card model, full of madness. And strange. And he came to see it and he just couldn’t believe it. But whether it was possible, whether it was realisable or not, I don’t know. It was a whole world that was like a collage of architectural bits – very abstract – that somehow managed to create a feeling of whiteness and death, I wanted to create this cemetery idea. And he liked that and then he got the London Coliseum to come and see it and I got the job and I was given three hundred pounds for that I think.”

The following extracts reflect Lazaridis’ focus on aspects other than the visual within design, and how these are explored in collaboration with directors:

“As a designer I’m not visually motivated. I don’t have an ABC of ‘This is going to be the red one’ and I hope not to have my own signature, my own style although it is recognisable every now and then. I mean you look back, you can see, yes… But the style is the fact that you start from the meaning of the piece, from the story, and you choose how you want to tell that story and you choose what it means to you today – that story – because yesterday it could mean something different. That’s how it is, how it should be, I think. And the same story can tell you many different stories. It’s interesting. So is it the piece that changes or is it me?”

“The great process for me of designing is the discussions that you have with a director and this is where ninety per cent of the creativity happens for me. The rest is the technicality of externalising thoughts and it’s very painful… sometimes it doesn’t want to come out properly because it is not possible practically or technically. But the actual meaning of it always happened in the discussions […] I mean mainly I suppose I approach things in a much more dramaturgical way and it is to me very important if you do ‘La Traviata’ to explore the whole idea of what prostitution was like in the nineteenth century and what was the disease… and then somehow you end up doing a design which is somewhere, somehow a culmination of these things. And the design takes very little time really and it just comes out reasonably fast, I think. But the other part, the discussions, these take much longer.”

Stefanos Lazaridis (1942 –2010)
Interviewed by Elizabeth Wright, 2007
A chance conversation after seeing Sylvia Sleigh’s painting, ‘The Situation Group’, in the National Portrait Gallery alerted NLS that Sylvia was alive and living in Manhattan, where she was recorded for Artists’ Lives a few weeks before she died at the age of ninety-four in October 2010. She was recorded in the same room in which her late husband, the influential art critic and curator, Lawrence Alloway, appears in the 1979 British film ‘Fathers of Pop’. In the film the viewer can see, behind Alloway’s shoulder, a section of one of Sylvia’s works, ‘The Turkish Bath’, which, like all her paintings, bears little overt relationship either to the abstract or Pop Art movements her husband became so famous for championing it.

The very fact that Sylvia’s painting hung in their home at all was probably due to the American abstract expressionist painter, Barnett Newman, as she remembered in her recording:

“I loved Barnett Newman, he was my favourite friend… Oh listen, Lawrence didn’t have my work hanging up and he said, ‘Why haven’t you got any of Sylvia’s work hanging up?’ So then Lawrence hung some up.

What was hanging up before?
Oh, everyone else’s paintings.

What did you feel about that?
Nothing. I suppose I was kind of proud. I thought, if he doesn’t want to hang them up, I don’t want him to.”

A figurative painter, Sylvia spent the bulk of her career feeling ‘I was doing the wrong thing at the wrong time. I was a Realist, and that was very much against me.’ Born in Llandudno, she studied at Brighton School of Art between 1934 – 37 but ‘I thought I’d be able to earn a living doing graphic work. I was utterly and totally wrong. I think the art school cheated me because I did what they called a commercial course. No-one would look at me. They said, “We don’t want women in our studio.” In fact ever since I’ve given lectures saying it was absolutely unfair what they teach you at school, they just tell you they’re not going to bother with you because you’ll only get married’.

Sleigh was married to her first husband, Michael Greenwood, when she met Lawrence, who was ten years her junior: “He was very young, he was seventeen and he was handsome and had great big blue eyes, but I didn’t really like fair men, so I didn’t take much notice of him. [laughs]. He pursued me…He liked my work, he was the first person who ever liked it.” It was Lawrence who wrote the catalogue for Sylvia’s first one-person exhibition at the Kensington Art Gallery in 1953.

Alloway and Sleigh married at Paddington Green in 1954 and remained together until his death in 1990. In 1955 Lawrence was appointed assistant director at the ICA, and by 1960 was championing the first exhibition of the Situation Group, so-called because of the difficult situation in which British abstract artists found themselves in terms of seeking exhibitions and support in Britain. Sylvia hoped that her portrait of the Group would appear on the front cover of the catalogue for their second exhibition in 1961; quite reasonably, given that her painting contradicted all the values they cared passionately about, the Group rejected the image. Soon after, the couple emigrated to America where Lawrence became a curator at the Guggenheim Museum.

Whilst Lawrence became more and more successful, Sylvia felt, ”I was ignored totally for years. Nobody looked at me. I never did [try abstraction]. I didn’t approve of it…I thought so often abstract painting was quite empty… Most people are not open minded if you’re not doing what they’re doing, they don’t like it.” In the 1970s Sleigh gained recognition for her series in which naked men took the place of the traditional female nude. ‘The Turkish Bath’, seen behind Lawrence in the film ‘Fathers of Pop’, features Alloway himself as the reclining nude in his wife’s version of Ingres’ painting of the same title; she painted Alloway over fifty times, sometimes in group works, sometimes alone. ‘The Turkish Bath’ (1973) is now in the Collection of the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago.

C466/307
# Statement of Financial Activities

## Year Ended 31 December 2010

### Incoming Resources

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<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
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<th>Total 2009</th>
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### Resources Expended

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<td>247,121</td>
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<td>Governance and administration</td>
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### Net Incoming Resources for the Year

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<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Total 2010</th>
<th>Total 2009</th>
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<td></td>
<td>10,648</td>
<td>19,682</td>
<td>30,330</td>
<td>40,797</td>
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### Statement of Other Recognised Gains and Losses

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<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Total 2010</th>
<th>Total 2009</th>
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<tr>
<td>Net incoming resources for the year</td>
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<td>19,682</td>
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<td><strong>432,183</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,116,050</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Statement of Financial Activities

Year Ended 31 December 2010

### Incoming Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Total 2010</th>
<th>Total 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>245,388</td>
<td>19,863</td>
<td>265,251</td>
<td>157,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank interest receivable</td>
<td>3,987</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3,987</td>
<td>4,936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment income</td>
<td>8,394</td>
<td>16,933</td>
<td>25,327</td>
<td>16,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous income</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>8,987</td>
<td>8,987</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Incoming Resources</strong></td>
<td><strong>257,769</strong></td>
<td><strong>45,783</strong></td>
<td><strong>303,552</strong></td>
<td><strong>178,482</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Resources Expended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Total 2010</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charitable Activities</td>
<td>247,121</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>247,121</td>
<td>102,672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance and administration</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>26,101</td>
<td>26,101</td>
<td>35,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>247,121</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,101</strong></td>
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### Net Incoming Resources for the Year

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<tr>
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### Statement of Other Recognised Gains and Losses

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<td>21,401</td>
<td>26,922</td>
<td>48,323</td>
<td>27,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net movement in funds for the year</td>
<td>32,049</td>
<td>46,604</td>
<td>78,653</td>
<td>67,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total funds:</strong></td>
<td><strong>651,818</strong></td>
<td><strong>385,579</strong></td>
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<td><strong>969,496</strong></td>
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<tr>
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## Statement of Financial Activities

Year Ended 31 December 2010

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<td><strong>Carried forward</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Balance Sheet at 31 December 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIXED ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible assets</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>8,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>705,907</td>
<td>358,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>705,907</td>
<td>366,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debtors</td>
<td>5,890</td>
<td>4,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash at bank and in hand</td>
<td>440,730</td>
<td>694,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>446,620</td>
<td>699,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CREDITORS (Amounts falling due within one year)</strong></td>
<td>(36,477)</td>
<td>(28,844)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>410,143</td>
<td>670,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td>1,116,050</td>
<td>1,037,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAPITAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Founder’s donation</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted fund</td>
<td>232,183</td>
<td>185,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted fund</td>
<td>683,867</td>
<td>651,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1,037,397</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Restricted funds are limited to expenditure on specific projects; unrestricted funds are intended to provide sufficient resources to maintain the general activities of the Charity. The Founder’s donation is the establishing donation given to NLS to contribute to the support of general activities. The balance on restricted funds represents donations received, the expenditure of which has not yet been incurred.

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at market value. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008), the Companies Act 2006 and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet have been extracted from the full financial statements of the company. The opinion of the auditors on the full financial statements is reproduced below.

**OPINION**

In our opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company’s affairs as at 31 December 2010 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice applicable to Smaller Entities;
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006; and
- the information given in the Report of the Trustees is consistent with the financial statements.

Approved by the Board of Directors and Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

R Rubenstein (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Parker Cavendish
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors
28 Church Road
Stanmore
Middlesex HA7 4XR

Sir Nicholas Goodison
Chairman of Trustees
Leaders of National Life
(C408) [30 interviews]
Leaders of National Life is one of NLS’s founding collections. Its scope is wide, and includes politics, industry, the arts, sports, religion, the professions, administration and communications. Priority is given to those whose life stories have not been previously recorded or published.

City Lives
(C409) [148 interviews]
City Lives explores the inner world of Britain’s financial capital. Support from the City enabled NLS to make detailed recordings with representatives from the Stock Exchange, the merchant and clearing banks, the commodities and futures markets, law and accounting firms, financial regulators, insurance companies and Lloyd’s of London. The project is a unique record of the complex interrelationships and dramatic changes which defined the Square Mile in the twentieth century. City Lives: The Changing Voices of British Finance by Cathy Courtney and Paul Thompson (Methuen, 1996) was edited from the interviews.

Living Memory of the Jewish Community
(C410) [187 interviews]
Holocaust Survivors’ Centre Interviews
(C830) [153 interviews]
These major collections were developed with the specialist advice of leading Jewish historians and complement a number of audio collections held by the British Library on Jewish life. The primary focus has been on pre-Second World War Jewish refugees to Britain, those fleeing from Nazi persecution during the Second World War, Holocaust survivors and their children. An online educational resource based on the collection is accessible at www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/voices/holocaust.html and over sixty full interviews are available on the web at http://sounds.bl.uk.

General Interviews
(C464) [78 interviews]
This collection comprises diverse interviews additional to the main NLS projects. Interviewees are drawn from the fields of education, medicine, retail, dance and engineering, and include scientists, notably Joseph Rotblat, Max Perutz and Aaron Klug; and leading designers such as Terence Conran and members of Pentagram.

Artists’ Lives
(C466) [309 interviews]
Artists’ Lives was initiated in 1990 and is run in association with Tate Archive. Collectively the interviews form an extraordinary account of the rich context in which the visual arts have developed in Britain during the twentieth and now twenty first centuries. Artists’ Lives provides visual artists with a forum in which their lives and work can be documented in their own words for posterity. We are grateful to all our sponsors but in particular to the steady support of The Henry Moore Foundation, The Fleming Collection, The Rootstein Hopkins Foundation and The Yale Center for British Art. A double CD, Connecting Lines: Artists Talk about Drawing, was published in 2010 funded by the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation. The audio from the CD is also available online www.bl.uk/artists/drawing.

Artists’ Lives Advisory Committee
Sir Alan Bowness, Sonya Boyce, Penelope Curtis, Caroline Cuthbert, Adrian Glew, Mel Gooding (chair), Beth Houghton, Richard Morphet, Margaret B Thornton and Andrew Wilson.

Architects’ Lives
(C467) [94 interviews]
Architects’ Lives documents architects working in Britain and those in associated professions. In addition to the main collection, and in association with the National Trust at Willow Road, NLS made a series of recordings documenting memories of Ernö Goldfinger which resulted in a co-published CD Passionate Rationalism (BL, 2004). NLS has also partnered English Heritage to document Eltham Palace and the Courtauld family (C1056).

Architects’ Lives Advisory Committee
Colin Amery, Catherine Croft, Ian Gow, Alan Powers and Andrew Saint.

Fawcett Collection
(C468) [14 interviews]
Supported by the Women’s Library (formerly known as the Fawcett Society) this collection records the lives of pioneering career women, each of whom made their mark in traditionally male dominated areas such as politics, the law and medicine. Woman in a Man’s World by Rebecca Abrams (Methuen, 1993) was based on this collection.

Lives in Steel
(C532) [102 interviews]
Lives in Steel comprises personal histories recorded in 1991–2 with employees from one of Britain’s largest yet least understood industries. Interviewees range from top managers and trade unionists to technicians, furnacemen, shearsers and many more. British Steel General Steels Division sponsored both the project and the Lives in Steel CD (BL, 1993).
Oral History of the British Press
(C638) [19 interviews]

This growing collection of interviews with key press and newspaper figures was extended with support from the British Library as part of the popular Front Page exhibition in 2006.

National Life Story Awards
(C642) [145 interviews]

This nationwide competition ran in 1993 to promote the value of life story recording and autobiographical writing. The judges, among them Lord Briggs and Penelope Lively, chose winners from 1000 entries in three categories: young interviewer, taped entries and written entries. Melvyn Bragg presented the prizes. The Awards were supported by the Arts Council, the ITV Telethon Trust, and European Year of Older People.

Legal Lives
(C736) [9 interviews]

This growing collection documents changes in the legal profession in Britain, including interviews with both solicitors and barristers. We expect to continue to augment this collection with a view to fundraising, in conjunction with the Legal Biography Project at LSE, for a larger scale project to start in 2012.

Food: From Source to Salespoint
(C821) [213 interviews]

Food: From Source to Salespoint charted the revolutionary technical and social changes which have occurred within Britain’s food industry in the twentieth century and beyond. Production, distribution and retailing of food are explored through recordings with those working at every level of the sector, including life stories with those in the readymeal, poultry, sugar, meat and fish sectors; a series with employees of Northern Foods, Nestlé, Sainsbury’s and Safeway; and a series with key cookery writers and restaurateurs. Within Food: From Source to Salespoint a set of interviews with Chefs [11 interviews] is now underway, exploring their working lives and the changing profile of the profession. The food programme of interviews also encompasses Tesco: An Oral History (C1087) [39 interviews] and An Oral History of the Wine Trade (C1088) [40 interviews].

Book Trade Lives
(C872) [118 interviews]

Book Trade Lives records the experiences of those who worked in publishing and bookselling between the early 1920s and the present day. Interviews covered all levels of the trade, from invoice clerks and warehouse staff to wholesalers, editors, sales staff and executives. The Unwin Charitable Trust was lead funder for this project. The British Book Trade: An Oral History (British Library, 2008, 2010) was edited by Sue Bradley from the collection.

Crafts Lives
(C960) [97 interviews]

Documenting the lives of Britain's leading craftsmen and craftswomen, Crafts Lives complements Artists’ Lives and Architects’ Lives. Areas of activity include furniture making, embroidery, ceramics, jewellery, silversmithing, calligraphy, weaving and textiles, metalwork, glasswork and bookbinding.

Crafts Lives Advisory Committee
Emmanuel Cooper, Amanda Fielding, Rosy Greenlees, Tanya Harrod, Helen Joseph, John Keatley, Martina Margetts and Ralph Turner.

Lives in the Oil Industry
(C963) [178 interviews]

A joint National Life Stories/Aberdeen University project, which, between 2000 and 2005, recorded the major changes that occurred in the UK oil and gas industry in the twentieth century, focussing particularly on North Sea exploration and the impact of the industry on this country. The project received support from within the industry.

An Oral History of the Post Office
(C1007) [117 interviews]

An Oral History of the Post Office, a partnership with Royal Mail, captured the memories and experiences of individuals from the postal services sector – from postmen and postwomen, to union officials, sorters, engineers and senior management. A CD, Speeding the mail: an oral history of the post from the 1930s to the 1990s, was co-published by the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) and the British Library (2005).

An Oral History of Wolff Olins
(C1015) [40 interviews]

This project documented the development of design and corporate branding through a biographical project based around the growth and development of a single commercial company, Wolff Olins.

An Oral History of British Fashion
(C1046) [16 interviews]

This collaborative initiative between London College of Fashion (University of the Arts London) and National Life Stories documents fashion and its related industries within living memory.

Pioneers in Charity and Social Welfare
(C1155) [15 interviews]

Records the memories and experiences of key figures in social welfare, social policy and charitable endeavour. Funded by the J Paul Getty Jr Charitable Trust.
An Oral History of Theatre Design  
(C1173) [33 interviews]  
This collaborative project with Wimbledon College of Art (University of the Arts London) charted developments in post-war British theatre design.

Authors’ Lives  
(C1276) [43 interviews]  
Authors’ Lives was launched in 2007 with the aim of recording approximately one hundred novelists, poets, writers and editors in its initial three years. Project funders have so far included the Arts Council of England, ALCS, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and other trusts and private individuals. Support from The Booker Prize Foundation is enabling shortlisted authors to be interviewed for the archive.

Authors’ Lives Advisory Committee  
Jamie Andrews, Stephen Cleary, Martyn Goff, Mark Le Fanu, Penelope Lively (chair), Deborah Moggach, Richard Price, Lawrence Sail and Jonathan Taylor.

The Legacy of the English Stage Company  
(C1316) [13 interviews]  
Sponsored by the John Hodgson Theatre Research Trust, this series of interviews charts the story of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre. This complements other theatre collections and adds the important perspective of the theatre director.

An Oral History of the Water Industry  
(C1364) [14 interviews]  
This project records life story interviews with staff at all levels within the water industry. Funded by six water companies, these recordings will provide valuable information about one of Britain’s most important and least documented utilities.

An Oral History of Barings  
(C1367) [19 interviews]  
In partnership with The Baring Archive, this project focuses on the history of Barings throughout the twentieth century, providing important insights into life and work within the bank – including stories from the family and those working at all levels within the company. This will complement City Lives and document the bank up to and including its collapse and subsequent acquisition by ING in 1995.

An Oral History of British Science  
(C1379) [37 interviews]  
This project was initiated in November 2009 in collaboration with the British Library’s History of Science specialist, and is run in association with the Science Museum and generously funded by the Arcadia Fund and Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851. It will create a major archive for the study and public understanding of contemporary science in Britain through 200 in-depth interviews with British scientists. As well as filling obvious gaps in our knowledge of major developments and innovations by interviewing the key players in British science, this project aims to account for the character of scientific research since the Second World War. To complement the 200 life story interviews, averaging 10–15 hours in length, the project will also undertake some shorter video recordings reflecting key events or locations, plus at least one group ‘witness seminar’ for each of the project’s four themed strands: Made in Britain, A Changing Planet, Biomedicine (currently unfunded) and Cosmologies (currently unfunded).

An Oral History of British Science Advisory Committee  
Dr Jon Agar, Dr Tilly Blyth, Dr Fay Bound Alberti, Georgina Ferry (chair), Professor Dame Julia Higgins, Professor Sir Harry Kroto, John Lynch, Professor Chris Rapley CBE, Dr Simone Turchetti.

Projects in Development  
We are currently scoping two new projects. An Oral History of Talking Therapies in the UK will explore the development in post-war Britain of those therapies that do not use pharmaceutical or other medical forms of interventions to alleviate mental distress, but depend entirely on verbal exchanges between client and therapist. A future project will interview a wide range of professionals in this complex and diverse sector. We have also obtained funding for a scoping study about the history of electricity supply industry in the UK, which we expect will be the latest in our series of projects documenting the utilities.

Access  
Further information about projects can be found at www.bl.uk/nls. The British Library Sound Archive catalogue at www.cadensa.bl.uk provides detailed content data about individual recordings. Some entire interviews are made available online at http://sounds.bl.uk and these include scientists and Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, and visual artists and architects (available only to further and higher education users). Contact nls@bl.uk for assistance with any of these services.
How to support National Life Stories

NLS’s charitable status means that donations or sponsorship are subject to the relevant tax relief for either individuals or companies. There are four tax-efficient and convenient ways to support National Life Stories.

Gift Aid

The Gift Aid scheme allows us to claim back basic rate tax on any donation received from individual taxpayers. This means that for every £100 donated we can claim an additional £25 from the Inland Revenue if a signed Gift Aid form is received. A Gift Aid form can be obtained from the NLS Office. It needs to be completed and returned to NLS together with your cheque.

Companies

Companies now pay the charity the full donation without deducting any tax and in turn obtain full tax relief when calculating their profits for corporation tax.

Donation of shares

Donors of shares are not deemed to have made a disposal that makes them liable to capital gains tax. The charity has the option of retaining the shares or selling them. Unlisted shares traded on a recognised exchange are included in this initiative. The individual making such a donation will also be able to reduce their taxable income by the value of the gift. A company donor will obtain full relief against corporation tax.

Bequests

Sums left to National Life Stories are deducted from an estate in the calculation of Inheritance Tax and are therefore free of tax. We can advise on an appropriate form of words within a will.

For further information please contact:
Mary Stewart
Deputy Director
National Life Stories
The British Library
96 Euston Road
London NW1 2DB
United Kingdom
nls@bl.uk
T +44 (0)20 7412 7406
F +44 (0)20 7412 7441

National Life Stories is the trading name of the National Life Story Collection, which is registered as a company limited by guarantee no.2172518, and as a charity no.327571.

Bankers:
Lloyds TSB (30-00-09),
39 Threadneedle Street,
London
EC2R 8AU

Donors and supporters in 2010

The Arcadia Fund
Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society
The Baring Archive
Charlotte Bonham Carter Charitable Trust
Sir John Craven
English Heritage
Heathside Charitable Trust
Matthew Hodder Charitable Trust
Michael Morpurgo
PF Charitable Trust
Mathew Prichard
Rootstein Hopkins Foundation
Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851
Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover
Tate
Jennifer Wingate
Yale Center for British Art
And a number of other generous individual donors