

PROJECT FEATURES IN ORAL HISTORY PUBLICATION

The Calderdale & Kirklees Cricket Heritage Project featured in the Autumn 2008 edition of *Oral History* - the journal of the Oral History Society.

WOMEN FROM THE VALE

Julia Letts reports on this intergenerational project, which was conceived and funded by Jan Roberts, Manager of Worcestershire Neighbourhood Network (WiNN), Evesham: 'WiNN was set up two years ago to support older people in the local community. One aspect of its work was to encourage more interaction between older and younger people, and enable the older generation to feel valued. We decided to record the stories and memories of about 25 women aged 55 and over who had grown up or lived most of their lives in Evesham and the Vale. The plan was to share these stories with the rest of the community, by creating a series of radio plays which would be broadcast on the local BBC station.

'Recording started in September 2007, with oral history producer Julia Letts interviewing 24 women in Evesham town and the surrounding villages, accumulating more than 40 hours of recorded material. Julia also collaborated with Evesham High, training a group of year 10 students to undertake their own interviews. All the interviews were then transcribed, and used to create a series of plays by professional script writer Rib Davis. Each short play covered a different aspect of life, for example working on the land, courting and coping with death. We advertised locally for an amateur cast and auditioned over 90 keen and talented people aged between seven and 70. We also worked with Evesham High and Fladbury First School who provided us with several members of our cast.

'We recorded the ten plays over one weekend in May, at the BBC's Wood Norton studios near Evesham. With an experienced drama director (Marilyn Imrie) at the helm, we got superb performances from our amateur cast, and more importantly, we all had great fun. The final versions of the plays, which also contain audio from the original interviews and especially composed music, will be broadcast locally on BBC Hereford and Worcester, and BBC online later this year. It is hoped that they will also be broadcast nationally and showcased locally this summer at an Evesham venue.



Some members of the amateur cast at the BBC Wood Norton studios.

'The original recordings will be handed over to Evesham Library as a digital archive, along with a sound post containing extracts from the students interviews and a display of their work. This has been a rewarding and highly successful community project and we thank Worcestershire County Council for their vision and financial support'.

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YORKSHIRE CRICKET HISTORY OF CALDERDALE AND KIRKLEES

Extracts from oral history recordings along with a range of documentary sources from the 'Cricket History of Calderdale and Kirklees' can now be accessed online at the project website. Many of the interviews relate to individual clubs, while other topics include Asian cricket in Kirklees and interviews with the Project Artist, Tony Haigh. As the project website notes: 'Cricket is a fundamental part of the local cultural tradition. Yet often, the heritage of grounds, and the societies that shape them, is neglected. Clubs in Calderdale/Kirklees act as a focal-point for community life. It is not just that local men play for senior

sides, but children turn out for junior sides, women often help on the social side, and many elderly people take on administrative roles. There is also high ethnic minority involvement'.

The project will establish cricket archives alongside an oral history 'bank' in Halifax and Huddersfield town libraries. It is employing community photographers and artists to depict local cricketing landscapes, and local libraries will host exhibitions on a cricket/community theme. It is also intended to introduce 'Sport and Heritage' into a variety of degree-level modules at the University of Huddersfield.

The project is funded through a £43,400 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and an in-kind contribution of £7,000 from the University of Huddersfield. It is managed by the Division of History, University of Huddersfield in association with the Trinity Insurance Halifax Cricket League, the Drakes Huddersfield Cricket League and Halifax Public Library, Huddersfield Public Library and West Yorkshire Archives.

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An unknown Emley player.

