

Imagine

***Imagine2* – connecting communities through research**

NOTES OF LAUNCH EVENT

Thursday 3rd April 2014, 12.00 – 15.30

Discovery Museum, Blandford Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4JA



NOTES OF LAUNCH EVENT

The *Imagine2 – connecting communities through research* launch event brought together thirty six people, the majority of whom have an active role on the project. Participants included twenty six representatives from community organisations and ten academics from Durham, Warwick and Huddersfield Universities. The aim of the event was to bring everyone involved in Imagine2 together in order to learn more about the project as a whole, the three areas of Benwell, North Shields and Hillfields and the various projects, as well as to share and explore ideas.

The event started with lunch and displays (posters, banners, leaflets and booklets) from community organisations involved in the research were available in the main room. After lunch the event started with an introduction to the project.

Introduction to *Imagine2*

Sarah Banks from Durham University began with an overview of the Imagine2 research project. She explained that Imagine2 has an historical focus and is located in three places – Benwell in Newcastle upon Tyne, part of North Shields and Hillfields in Coventry. These places were chosen because they were former Community Development Project (CDP) areas in the 1970s. The CDP was Britain's first national area-based anti-poverty programme. Although the CDP initiative is the starting point, the project intends to look at subsequent regeneration attempts in these areas. By charting the history of regeneration it is hoped that we can use this to look forward to the future. In particular, the level of community engagement during this history is important as are the different visions for the areas. Sarah briefly described the aims and research questions of Imagine2 and explained that the project is part of a bigger Imagine research project focusing on civic participation.

Benwell, North Shields and Hillfields:

Early history, the CDP and current position

Three brief presentations followed Sarah's introduction. These focused on the three places (Benwell, North Shields and Hillfields) and were presented by people involved in community projects and/or research in the areas. Judith Green (community coordinator for Imagine2 in the North East) provided an overview of the history of Benwell, locating this history in the history of the West End of Newcastle and the city. Andrea Armstrong (Durham University) presented the early history and CDP background for North Shields. Mike Burgess (Phoenix Detached Youth Project) provided insights into the current situation in North Shields and Philippa Southall and Rebecca O'Keefe (Meadow Well Connected) gave additional support to the presentation. Alice Mah and Ben Kyneswood (Warwick University) gave a presentation on Hillfield's in Coventry.

Statistical and policy trends over time

In the absence of Dave Byrne (Durham University), who is working on the statistics for the three areas, Fred Robinson (St Chad's College, Durham) gave an overview of statistical trends from Dave's report on changes in Greater North Tyneside and Greater Coventry between 1981 and 2011. The most striking changes over this thirty year period include: a) the extent of deindustrialization, particularly in relation to male employment but also, albeit from a lower starting point, for women; b) the decline in the significance of council housing in particular and social housing in general; c) decline in the role of housewife (contained within the category in the tables 'other inactive' for women of working age and d) the increase in the proportion of students in adult population.

The statistics were followed by an overview of policy and Fred drew everyone's attention to the policy timeline he has created for Benwell. This includes key policy initiatives over time as well as key events/activities and political changes. This is a work in progress and a timeline will be created for each area. In addition, Fred is conducting interviews with key policy makers who were involved in the regeneration initiatives.

Table Discussions

Following the introduction, participants were asked to form three groups in order to think about two questions:

- a. What are the commonalities and differences between the areas?
- b. What key questions would you like the project to examine?

After working in groups for 30 minutes the facilitator from each group then provided feedback to the whole group. A range of issues was raised from two groups who focused on discussions rather than the questions:

- The timeline – it will be interesting to include key moments in the history of the voluntary sector.
- The timeline and statistics might provoke us to think about immigration as a consequence of the decline of Benwell, rather than decline as a consequence of immigration
- Myths was a common theme for all three areas: for example, myths surrounding the riots – whereby the riots are seen as a marker by some which raises the question about who perpetuates the myths. There are myths within areas amongst residents, as well as those generated by outsiders.
- The importance of positive stories and how to measure success?
- The value of local history and remembering – but how safe are reminiscences? Some people commented that doing history was ‘cosy’ whereas others challenged this and said it was difficult.
- The importance of residents passing on information so the story is comprehensive.
- Does housing policy create decline?

The third group focused on the two questions:

Commonalities between the three places:

- Shared hard times and all experienced stigma associated with the riots
- De-industrialisation and being at the sharp end of welfare cuts
- Strong history of community action and a strong sense of community

Differences between the three places:

- Different industrial histories and trajectories
- Different histories of regeneration and rebuilding
- Different demographic and migration histories (especially ethnic histories and migration in Benwell and Hillfields and 'white' history in Meadow Well)
- Tenure and age of housing differs

Key questions that the group would like the project to examine:

- How do the areas go from flourishing to going downhill?
- How do you get to a sense of community purpose?
- What is the sense of purpose for the communities now? Rather than using the language of decline
- Questions related to employment rather than unemployment. What is the current employment situation? What approaches are being used and can be used to create employment? What are the differences in men's and women's employment and how can this be addressed?
- What has been and is the role of community development? If the regeneration worked then the areas would not need community development.
- Questions about decline. There was decline in the 1970s and decline now so are we reinventing the same problems?

It was agreed that MYTHS was a cross-cutting theme to explore further.

After the tea break there was a choice of three workshops.

Workshops

1: Still Moving

This workshop was presented by Ian Farrier, Michael Young and Fred Millican of West Newcastle Picture History Collection (WNPNC) and Judith Green of St James' Heritage and Environment Group, two volunteer-run organisations based in Benwell. WNPNC holds a collection of around 17,000 images and maps of the West End, including a large collection from Jimmy Forsyth. The session provided a taster of their work: collecting and making available to the local community and wider public old photographs and film material relevant to the west end of Newcastle, and using photography and film to document and explore the history of the area. They hoped to show examples of three types of usage of moving image material by St James' Heritage and Environment Group and partner organisations in Benwell – but ran out of time and couldn't show the third one. The three films were:

- a) Archive film material showing e.g. inside Vickers Armstrong's factory when it was working and local housing before the slum clearance programmes (see Archive for Change website for examples).
- b) Using film/drama to explore local history e.g. with school children
- c) Making films about the history of the area (including recent history of regeneration) with local people.

Further information and resources:

St James' Heritage and Environment Group – a wordpress site 'promoting, celebrating and sharing Scotswood and Benwell heritage' <http://stjameschurchnewcastle.wordpress.com/>

West Newcastle Picture History Collection Marks 30th Anniversary – newspaper article in The Journal, 13 February 2014 <http://www.thejournal.co.uk/news/local-news/heritage-west-newcastle-picture-history-6706648>

West Newcastle Picture History Collection (WNPNC) is located in the West End Library, Condercum Road, Benwell, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9JH. Information about opening times can be found at <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/leisure-libraries-and-tourism/libraries/branch-libraries-and-opening-hours/west-end-library>

Archive for Change – a film archiving project gathering materials on urban change in the West End of Newcastle. The collection is held at the same location in the West End Library as the WNPNC. <http://archiveforchange.org/about/>

Old Pictures of Newcastle's WEST END - a facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Old-Pictures-Of-Newcastles-WEST-END-categorized/150729531607278>

2: Still Listening

This workshop involved two presentations. The first was presented by Kath Smith of Remembering the Past, Resourcing the Future, a volunteer-run charity based in North Tyneside which specialises in researching and archiving local history using reminiscence and oral history recording techniques. Kath provided a taster of their work: good practice in interview techniques, getting the consent of the contributors, choosing and using recording equipment and editing software, archiving interview material and making it accessible to a wider audience. She then introduced a case study of a previous project – *Gannin shopping in Shields* – to demonstrate how oral history works in practice. The aim of the project was to remind them of the history of North Shields using shops and shopping to aid memories. The participants were from a Live at Home scheme and they found that using shops gave a new perspective on what North Shields was like. The second presentation was given by Janette Hilton, the project coordinator for Living History North East which is based in Sunderland. They are supporting Remembering the past, resourcing the future by providing oral history training to projects involved in Imagine2. Janette said they have learnt to use creative tools that are inclusive and when starting a project they always ask – what represents a community and how does that shift over time? How much control is there over that shift and to the change in identity too? And finally what is the motivation behind an oral history project? Some projects are organic whereas others are seeking funding. Funders are interested finding the voices of hidden histories for example, communities that don't have a locality. The project must not be about archiving (no funding for that) it also has to have a legacy. Janette then presented a case study *Blind Voice UK* to illustrate a hidden history (of blind people) and how this presented practical challenges (use of equipment when training blind people to interview blind people) but also revealed some compelling stories which had never been heard before.

Further information and resources

Remembering the past, resourcing the future:
Website <http://www.memoriesnorthtyne.org.uk/>

Living History North East
Website <http://lhne.org.uk/>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/LivingHistoryNorthEast>

3: Imagine and community radio

The community radio workshop was presented by Ben Kyneswood (Warwick University). The Warwick team are working with a local radio station (Hillz FM) located in the Hillfields area of Coventry. The aim of the workshop was to introduce community radio in the UK to help Imagine residents and partners understand how they might be able to work with the two community radio stations broadcasting in Newcastle, NE1 FM and Spice FM. Following an introduction to community radio and an explanation of how the Warwick team are working with Hillz FM, Ben asked participants to split into two groups to consider the following questions based on 'key commitment' documents from the two community radio stations in Newcastle:

- What jumps out within the key commitments that might make a partnership worth investigating?
- What is in place (such as ways of working with particular groups) that may enable us to join in current practise, rather than set something up within the station ourselves?
- How might Imagine contribute to the social gain objectives of the station?

Both groups saw that involving themselves as broadcasters would promote their project and provide the community radio station with content. Further development might involve joint funding bids on shared interests and the Discovery Museum was particularly interested in this. On reflection, Ben said,

“From my point of view the workshop facilitated thinking about capacity building. The two groups grasped the potential of community radio very quickly and sought to locate their thinking within the future of their projects. If new community radio broadcasters were in that room I will be very pleased!”

Further information and resources

Community Radio workshop blog http://www.kyneswood.com/Imagine_Coventry/
Hillz FM <http://www.thehillz.net/>
NE1 FM <http://www.ne1fm.net/>
Spice FM Newcastle upon Tyne <http://www.spicefm.co.uk/>

Further Links

These are links for **online** information related to the whole Imagine project and Imagine2 – the historical component located in Benwell, North Shields and Hillfield's in Coventry. There are links to websites, facebook and twitter pages if available.

IMAGINE – BIGGER PROJECT

Imagine Research Project Website – the website for the whole Imagine project <http://www.imaginecommunity.org.uk/> The page for the historical part of the project (also known as Work Package 2) can be found at <http://www.imaginecommunity.org.uk/project2>

Imagine on Twitter @imagine_connect

IMAGINE2 – HISTORICAL

The online resources for Imagine2 are still being developed – so watch this space!

Centre for Social Justice and Community Action – Imagine2 Project page – to be developed <https://www.dur.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice/imagine/>

Durham University, School of Applied Social Sciences <https://www.dur.ac.uk/sass/research/research/projects/?mode=project&id=678>

Hillfields, Coventry www.kyneswood.com/Imagine_Coventry/

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN IMAGINE2

Benwell

Patchwork Project:

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pachwk>

Pendower Good Neighbour Project:

Website <http://www.pendowerqnp.org.uk/>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pendower-Good-Neighbour-Project/82076472477>

Riverside Community Health Project:

Website <http://riversidechp.org/>

Twitter @RiversideCHP

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Riverside-Community-Health-Project/365997260199906?ref=hl>

Search Project:

Website <http://www.searchproject.co.uk/>

St James' Heritage and Environment Group:

Website <http://stjameschurchnewcastle.wordpress.com/>

St James' Centre for Heritage and Culture

Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM)

Website <http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/home.html>

Flickr https://www.flickr.com/photos/twm_news/
Twitter @TWArchives

Discovery Museum:
Website: <http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/discovery.html>

West Newcastle Picture History Collection

North Shields

Cedarwood Trust:
Website <http://www.cedarwoodtrust.co.uk/>
Twitter @CedarwoodTrust
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cedarwood-Trust/278696332239067>

Meadow Well Connected:
Website <http://www.meadowwellconnected.org.uk/>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/meadowwellconnected>

Phoenix Detached Youth Project:
Website <http://www.pdyp.org/>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/PhoenixDetachedYouthProject>

Remembering the past, resourcing the future:
Website <http://www.memoriesnorthtyne.org.uk/>

Living History North East (working with Remembering the past, resourcing the future for the Imagine2 project)
Website <http://lhne.org.uk/>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/LivingHistoryNorthEast>

Hillfields Coventry

HillzFM
Website <http://www.thehillz.net>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HillzFM98.6>
Twitter @HillzFM_Coventry

Working Actively to Change Hillfields (WATCH)

African Caribbean Community Organisation Ltd (ACCOL)
Website <http://www.accol.btck.co.uk/>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/African-Caribbean-Community-Organisation-ACCOL/180685731984705>

Herbert Art Gallery and Museum
Website <http://www.theherbert.org/>
Twitter @The_Herbert
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/theherbert>