Doing Heritage Differently
Memoryscape: using new technology to integrate art, landscape and oral history

—Toby Butler

The Museum of London has a substantial oral history archive which, like many others, is relatively difficult for people to access. Recently the museum has been experimenting with different methods of producing what you might term oral history products or outputs other than exhibitions, to allow people to listen to or 'consume' some of the oral histories in the collection.

Currently the well-established methods of consuming oral history are reading quotes or transcripts in a book or leaflet, or listening on a CD or website. The museum set up a lottery funded programme of activities to try and extend that menu by experimenting with other media including printing quotes on postcards, carrier bags, dance performance and artwork. The 'London Voices' programme included the construction of a sound walk by the artist Graeme Miller (Miller 2003). This was a trail which ran alongside the M11 link road in Hackney, the site of the biggest anti-road protest in Britain. The trail was made up of oral history from people who had lost their homes in the process of the motorway construction, broadcast from lamp posts along the route (the trail is still up and running – see http://www.linkedm11.info/ for more information).

This was my first experience of a sound walk – a trail that you follow using some kind of audio equipment, usually a CD walkman, an MP3 player or a receiver of some sort. At certain points on the walk you listen to tracks at specific locations, a little like the museum audio guides that most people are familiar with, but used in the outside landscape. I later dubbed walks that involve oral history recordings 'memoryscapes' – landscape interpreted and imagined using the memories of others.

I arrived at the museum when this programme was in full swing and I was set to work advising on the interview-gathering process from residents and protestors and later evaluating Miller's work (Butler 2005). Since that time I decided to develop the idea of the audio walk conceptually, as an active and immersive way to understand and map the cultural landscape, and more practically as a potential medium for oral historians to use for presenting work to the public. So, following Christopher Hill, the Marxist historian who in *The World Turned Upside Down* (Hill 1975) famously challenged his students to become doers, not just thinkers, I set out to construct two oral history trails or memoryscapes of my own.

In this essay I will give you some background to this work by outlining some of the conceptual and practice-based roots of the oral history walk. After that I will tell you more about my experience of creating and evaluating two such walks and outline some of their benefits and pitfalls, as well as some of the challenges presented to established oral history methodology. Finally I want to explain how, like it or not, these kind of audio or multimedia trails will become more popular and could present some exciting opportunities for the oral history community.

Memoryscapes in context
The sound walk has its roots in many disciplines. Most obviously recorded tours were started in the field of museum interpretation, where audio tours of the collections at the Stedelijk Museum in Holland started in 1952 with the latest portable tape recorders. Acoustiguide was

set up in 1957 and has made tours for museums and galleries ever since. But my concern is with outdoor trails and these have a far longer and more diverse pedigree. I hardly need to mention that guided walks and local history trails written by local historians, antiquarians or any local expert have been with us for centuries. But the use of sound and exploration of the everyday street has its richest seam in 20th century artistic and musical practice that attempted to locate, or relocate work outside the traditional arena of the museum, art gallery or concert hall and back into the landscape. In musical practice the foundations of this movement go back to musicians that began to regard the sound of the outside world, or noise, as worthy of attention. The Italian futurist Luigi Russolo wrote the *Art of noises futurist manifesto* (1913) in which he declared: 'let us cross a large modern capital with our ears more attentive than eyes' (Russollo 1913, pp. 25-26).

Since that time there have been many experiments in the use of sound to draw attention to the urban landscape, most famously John Cage's 4'33 seconds, or 'the silent piece' (1952) in which the audience listen to the outside world while the pianist does not play a note. In the 1960s Max Neuhaus finally jettisoned the concert hall altogether. In Listen, a series of walks composed between 1966 and 1976, the audience would meet outside the concert hall where they would have their hands stamped with the word 'LISTEN' and they would then follow Neuhaus (who said nothing) around the nearby streets where they would be led to sonically interesting areas such as under flyovers (Foundation 2005).

Sound artists, as well as musicians, have continued to bring audiences outside conventional sites of cultural consumption to appreciate local and situated sound. Bill Fontana, for example, installed *Sound Island* (1994) in the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, in which he broadcast live sounds from 16 places in the city to a platform above the monument. By treating the urban landscape as a living source of musical information, he tries to challenge old ideas of noise, and encourages people to appreciate everyday sounds in a new way. Fontana has found that he has had to work outside the museum or art gallery – which he describes as institutions devoted to the visual experience.

Since then other sound artists, like Janet Cardiff who created a celebrated fictional trail of the Brick Lane area, *The Missing Voice (case study b)* (1999) and Graeme Miller, mentioned above, have added to a growing body of work that has the street or the field as the location of their work, rather than the art gallery or museum.

In summary, sound artists have attempted to overthrow an over-reliance on the visual and break free from the concert-hall conventions of the aural. Successful attempts have been made to move performance and display outside conventional cultural spaces which often deliberately insulate the visitor from their geographical environment.

Alongside these efforts, there has also been a movement to record and celebrate more contemporary, everyday sound, which has been hitherto overlooked or even resented as 'noise'. Now I want to suggest that this movement, known as acoustic ecology, of valuing the every day of sound in musical practice, has some direct parallels with recent debates about place and mobility, history and memory.

Place, mobility and memory
Place and mobility have become major concerns for geographers – older ideas that topography, geology and economic history 'made' a place have been questioned by people like Doreen Massey at the Open University, who has argued that places have to be seen as very complex and shifting combinations of local, national and international networks. The geographer Tim Cresswell has explored the rooted and bounded ideas of home and sense of

place that are pervasive in academia and beyond, in his book about the *Tramp in America* (Cresswell, 2001). He argues that the powerful sense of being 'rooted', having connection with home, is inextricably entwined with identity. This way of thinking, something that anthropologist Lisa Malkki has described as 'sedentary metaphysics', underpins much geographical and cultural thought, territorialising identity into commonplace assumptions about property, region and nation. This in turn seems to produce dualistic thoughts about people who are mobile or displaced such as tramps, travellers or refugees, as pathologically dangerous (Cresswell 2001, pp. 14-19).

In his new book *On the Move* Cresswell develops this argument to also look at the positive valuation of mobility. Just as the world has become noisier, it has also become more mobile, and nomadic thought has gained currency; a 'nomadic metaphysics' has evolved. In geography for example, there has been a move away from concentrating on what characterises a place to understanding how our experience of place and our local identity is constructed. Researchers have been implored to be more active, sensory, self reflective and embodied in their explorations; Said's work on the shifting nature of nationhood, de Certeau's thoughts on mobility and Nigel Thrift's work on affective and empathetic ways that humans encounter space explore different aspects of how our fundamentally mobile humanity is borderless, ever-changing, flowing and playful – the sedentary metaphysics, with its fixed ideas about what constitutes place and locality seems redundant and illusory (Cresswell, 2006).

This playful mobility was famously celebrated by the Situationists, who were interested in the material and psychological patterns of the city street and their effects on the individual, which they dubbed 'psychogeography'. Significance came from the *'dérive'*, literally a 'drift', an apparently aimless wandering that nonetheless revealed the psychic undercurrents of the city. Michel de Certeau extends this with the idea that walking in the city is a performance, an acting-out of place: he compares walking to language; walking and language are both creative acts in which you can improvise, make connections, take short cuts, take thousands of decisions in the present (Certeau 1984, p. 97). I would like to suggest that spoken memory can also be seen in these terms. The ability of spoken memory to make connections with other times, symbols and places make the act of memory a nomadic process – like our consciousness, it is always a work in progress. It can therefore present a multifaceted, nuanced way of seeing the world. It is also fiercely independent, sometimes affirming dominant collective memory, but as oral historians like Alessandro Portelli have shown us, often opposing it (Portelli 1981).

Connecting place in oral history

I now want to examine how conceptions of place have shaped existing oral history work and touch on some examples of oral history projects that have used either space or connective links between people to great effect. Conventionally oral history projects that have a geographical element (and many theme-based projects do not), tend to focus either on stable work-place environments, or on stable residential communities – an oral history of workers in a particular factory, for example, or a particular village such as Akenfield (Blythe, 1973). This work tends to take a fairly straightforward idea of place as a common-sense way to limit the work; for example one factory is picked, and only people who worked there, and still live in the area are chosen. A village or parish boundary is picked as an arbitrary means of deciding what should and should not be included. The problem is that places are not static; people move, leave, visit, pass through. Places and populations change with the seasons, the markets and the ages, yet the stories tend to come from those that have stayed a long time in one area and can give the impression that communities are far more stable than they actually are.

Recent work in oral history has put more emphasis on the experiences of migration and movement, particularly of distinctive ethnic communities. One such example is the lottery-funded, web-based *Moving Here* project, which is organised around the experience of Caribbean, Irish, South Asian and Jewish ethnic groups in England (*Moving Here* 2003). Perhaps the decline in local identity has made it easier to target the last, most easily identifiable cultural communities, connected by birthplace, accent or skin colour. But the problem remains that the participants may have more in common with their work colleagues, their computer newsgroup or their friends from other places than anyone in their local community. However, work like *Moving Here* concentrates on topics of movement, acculturation and shifting senses of place and in that respect gives a more sophisticated sense of place that we will be exploring further following some comments on mobility.

Sometimes an oral history project can be the connecting network between people who scarcely know each other but share common ground. Interviewers have considerable connective agency in their power to take questions and problems from one interview to another. This technique is most commonly used in journalism, where it is normal practice to record the opinion of one person and then immediately relate the opinion to another for a response, to balance the story. The technique can also offer great depth. In *Working*, Chicago journalist and oral historian Studs Terkel investigated American attitudes to work by interviewing people along a chain of relationships. For example, for a chapter concerned with telephony he might interview a receptionist who answers calls, a telephone engineer who installs telephone systems, someone who manufactures telegraph poles, the chief executive of a telephone company, a telephone helpline worker (Terkel 1974).

The technique can also be applied at community level with place-based interviewing. In some cases the community or group does not have to exist as an entity in the first place. In Islington, London, for example, an oral history trail is being constructed with people who live and work along a road, the A1, which runs through the borough. The stated aim of the trail is to tell 'the history and heritage of the A1 as told by the people who live and work along it', in part as a community building exercise (Timothy 2005, p. 19). Edward Platt also used a routeway in *Leadville: A Biography of the A40*, a history of a road (Platt 2001).He knocked on the doors of residents in Western Avenue, recording the words of anyone who was willing to discuss the road and their lives next to it.

Using something like a road as an organising principle to connect people is working with a more fractured perception of urban space which does not necessarily coincide with historical, planning, government or place-name perceptions of geography. The technique uses paths, routes, networks and trajectories through a city, talking to a series of people who might not ordinarily meet, or consider themselves a part of a group or a community.

This kind of approach can also be a starting point to building community feeling in a very active way; highlighting and sharing experiences and feelings that are highly related to place becomes a focus for building a feeling of belonging. In Southampton the City Council's Oral History Unit set up the Road Project to create a history of an inner-city residential street. The project was instigated by Leo Stable, a resident of the street who was concerned that the character of the area and people's lifestyles were changing so fast that the memories of the older residents of the area would be lost unless they were recorded. In this respect the project can be seen as a text book case of oral history being used as a result of rapid, modern change. But the sheer variety of activities that were eventually tried by the participants gives an idea of the potential community participation that can arise as a result of projects such as this. Apart from the recordings by volunteers, there was an exhibition, community events, a

conference, documentary photography, object collection and display and composition of poems. The interviewing and displaying/sharing process has encouraged neighbours to break down psychological or cultural barriers that have prevented them from communicating in the past. One participant said: 'Since the project has started there seems to be more possibility of meeting neighbours and thinking about what it is to live in this city.' (Broomfield 2004). Here we can begin to see the connective power of oral history at work.

Today much oral history practice deals with multiple narratives, complex connections with place and history and different understandings of place, mythic or otherwise. There are very healthy indications that oral history practice is already exploring ways of presenting and exploring memory that might better reflect the form of its primary source. Among those which spring to mind are the previously mentioned experiments at the Museum of London; the increasingly sophisticated on-line paths that can be followed through oral history websites; Jeff Friedman's work with memory and the physicality of dance, and Pam Schweitzer's innovative project with Age Exchange in Greenwich involving oral history-based memory boxes and theatrical performance. These are mobile, fluid, active and affective practices that allow the art of memory to develop into new forms (Friedman 2005).

All of the practices I have mentioned could be seen to be part of the 'nomadic metaphysical' school of thought that is excited by the possibilities of seeing the world in a fluid, transitory way, although I think it is important to remember that experience of place, however subjective and partial, inevitably plays an important role in that process.

From theory to practice

For the rest of this essay I want to look more closely at my own experiments in combining these elements (experience of place, memory, walking and sound) to try and create an experience that echoes some of these nomadic themes along the River Thames in London. I wanted to experiment with presenting memories coherently in a spatial context, using some techniques borrowed from sound art practice, and in the process encourage people to encounter parts of the river – and its culture – that they may not have considered exploring before.

One of the first hurdles to constructing a walk is to decide on a method of choosing a route – through the landscape as well as the subject matter. After working on Graeme Miller's Linked project I was heavily influenced by his approach of using a route way – in his case a motorway – as a way of linking a series of ostensibly unrelated places; an idea that has also been adopted in literature. Authors have made many creative attempts to treat transport routes as destinations in themselves, worthy of comment and study. Thus the kaleidoscopic, even chaotic accumulation of impressions in Platt's Leadville: A Biography of the A40 gives us many takes on reality; cumulatively we feel that we somehow 'know' the road by the time we reach the end of the book (Platt, 2001). Iain Sinclair's *London Orbital: A Walk Around the M25* (Sinclair 2003) and Patrick Wright's *The River; the Thames in our Time* (Wright 1999) both use a route to organise reflections. Using the conceit of a journey is a quickly understandable way of organising narrative; it has an aesthetic of its own that can embrace the unusual and the unexpected in a creative way. As it is easily understood, it also lends itself well to research that is constructed for a public audience – something that was very much a part of my brief.

Lefebvre has argued that 'abstract space' produced under capitalism is both homogeneous and fragmented, whole and broken (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]). The way that the river Thames was perceived in London certainly seemed to be. Having lived on the Thames in a houseboat for ten years, I was acutely aware that the river in London was an entity in itself with a

culture of its own, yet many Londoners seemed to see it as a border, an administrative and cultural dividing line between north and south. Conservation areas and borough boundaries often ended up in the middle of the river. The London Rivers' Association has been at the vanguard of the movement to give the river a more important and coherent role in urban planning. A recent LRA report summed up this fractured approach to London's river:

The opposites that structure the mindsets of the planning and built environment sectors, local/strategic, natural/urban, brownfield/greenfield – and even water/land – seriously handicap our ability to think about urban water spaces and their relationship with the city and beyond. The zones, hierarchies (of policy, plans and strategies), sectoral boxes and checklists that result from, and reinforce this approach effectively undermines the spatial configurations and naturalness of rivers which refuse to conform to the socially constructed lines on plans and in strategies (as many of the annually flooded towns and cities now contend).' (Munt & Jaijee 2002, p. 75)

With this in mind, I wanted to find a way of acknowledging the spatial and natural dimensions of the river by developing a more artistic and intuitive approach to structuring my field work. I developed a method of using the current of the river to find my 'sample' of river interviewees and physically link their lives up. A float was made out of driftwood and other river-carried material, using a design borrowed from hydrologists that use floats to track currents in rivers and oceans. I followed the float for many days, tracking its route through London, and noting where it collided with the bank (or any other interesting thing). In this way I wanted to experience London from the river, feeling its flow and using a natural phenomenon as a memory path through the modern city.

Many of these collision points became sound points on the walk, as more often than not a potential interviewee would become apparent – the float would hit a boat or a property that was owned by someone, or a place where an individual was working or resting, and people were generally willing to be recorded. Usually this meant an in-depth interview at their home or place of work at a convenient time. The method presented some severe challenges. Moving at the pace of the river, often in a rowing boat, took a great deal of patience (in some stretches it moved at less than 1/10th of mile an hour, or even flowed backwards with the tide). Some places the float hit seemed so barren that it became a real challenge to find a connection with human culture, but I found that if I waited long enough and looked hard enough a connection could often be made. An old outfall pipe of a disused waterworks led to an interview with a retired water engineer, for example. The flow of the river suggested quiet and noisy points. Turns in the river usually presented me with more collisions, different vistas and encounters with whole families of other floating objects, each with its own unknowable source, story and trajectory.

The landscape of the banks of the Thames in London also contains some of the most imposing architecture in Britain, as successive political and economic powerhouses were built along the prestigious waterfront (palaces, bridges, parliaments and corporate headquarters). Many of these buildings have such strong historical and visual centres of gravity on the riverscape that they are all but impossible to ignore. Yet the float managed to do so. On long, straight stretches the float would move fast, disregarding royal palaces, whole industries, entire localities. The flow gave me a strange, unfamiliar structure to my beachcombing of river-related memories. It forced me to consider talking to people that I would not have thought of ordinarily and it gave me a fresh set of memory places.

This was the latest in a long line of practices that in some way challenge dominant cultural practices associated with national places of memory by providing an alternative. You may

well be familiar with or involved in many such practices: neighbourhood tours, parish mappings, public art, gardening projects (Till 2003, pp. 294-296).

The collection of this semi-random collection of interviews for 'display' on an edited soundwalk might be seen as an aural equivalent of American artist Mark Dion's Thames Tate Dig (1999), which witnessed the collection of rubbish on the Thames foreshore with archaeological care, then its display in a curiosity cabinet in the Tate Modern (Dion & Coles, 1999). Another practitioner of this found art is John Bentley, who collected fragments of discarded notes, letters and shopping lists from the pavement in Harrow in London, publishing them in a book which he likened to a museum-case containing a selection of recently excavated literary shards which, seen together, provide a 'tantalisingly incomplete glimpse into the lives of the citizens of Harrow' (Bentley 2001, p. 1). In these works, both of which are highly place specific, the unexpected is sought out; the commonplace is dignified as worthy of contemplation; and the act of displaying it to a public becomes a symbolically important act. I attempted to do the same in terms of people's river memories.

The result was a carefully constructed walk three mile walk with 12 different sound points along the route, containing a total of an hour of memories from 14 different people. The sound tracks were also layered with binaural recordings of the river bank – recordings made with a stereo two-part microphone that is placed in each ear of the recorder, which picks up sound in the exactly the same way as the human head. When the binaural recording is listened to with headphones, the result is a startling 'surround sound' – if footsteps are recorded behind you, it will sound as if someone is behind you when you listen. This gives the walk an added temporal dimension, as the listener is hearing the past of the sound recording along the route (complete with rowers, ducks, swans and pushchairs) along with the past of the memories that they are hearing. The idea was to sensitise people to every day sounds and remind the listener that their drift along the river would necessarily be different for each person that does it. Walking speed and pace play a very important part in the walk too. The number and crucially the location of the drifting sound points corresponded to the flow pattern of the river, so it is a very unusual trajectory. The whole design of the walk was meant to slow people down, to take more notice of what surrounds us and therefore make place more meaningful. I decided against continuous audio to allow people to reflect, process and have their own adventure between sound points. Of course, the medium also allows the walker to skip or listen at their own pace, and some people enjoyed the walk in a very different way, for example by walking and listening non-stop. The overall effect has been described by one reviewer as being a little like a Zen koan; 'a fluid pattern of multiple agendas, effecting and being effected by the Thames and its social, political historical and economic sectors. Each location and narrator is accompanied by the river's own music, its aural ebbs and flows, the creaking of wooden boat joints, the wash, a tugboat toot, bodying the world of a major urban riverway' (Friedman 2006).

The drifting float used to find interviewees in West London
The drifting float method used to find interviewees became unworkable in the eastern part of London. At the Docklands Public Lecture hosted in July 2006 by the London East Research Institute, Patrick Wright roughly divided up river culture into two sections – upriver people who believe that the Thames starts in a field in the Cotswolds and makes its way between tea rooms and thatched pubs down to London, and downriver people who believe that the London Thames truly starts at the sea and works its way up the estuary. My downriver float fought bravely on from the first/last tidal lock at Teddington and got about as far as Kelmscott House, William Morris's home in Hammersmith. From there the float became impossible to follow; the river was too wide, tidal and strong flowing for there to be enough points of impact with the bank. The float either shot along the mid-flow of the river or was

propelled backwards for hours as the tide came in. To see this strange effect, walk along the Thames in East London in March and watch the Christmas trees floating up and down, trapped in a strange, slow tidal dance after being tossed in two months earlier in the vain hope that the river would take them away.

To have continued with my earlier method would have taken months. For the Dockers' trail I used the same style of a river-culture based walk, using binaural recordings of the route, but this time I drew on a rare collection of 200 interviews with dock workers, now archived at the Museum in Docklands but recorded over 20 years ago when the London Docks were shut down.

The route runs from picture-postcard Greenwich, starting at the Cutty Sark, and runs along the quaysides of the Greenwich peninsula to end up at the extraordinary Millennium Motel, part greasy spoon, part gypsy campsite, in the shadows of the Dome. The memories used encompass dramatic events, such as when the Greenwich foot tunnel was used a shelter against the Zeppelin raids, but is mostly concerned with life in the dockside communities from childhood to working on the barges, cranes and warehouses near the river. The experience of standing in front of the ruins of an old crane, and hearing the pride in the voice of a crane driver who tells us he could pick up anything 'from an elephant to a packet of pins' gives a strange sensation of bringing the past present in a very direct way that no memorial or information board can touch – you can click on this link to hear his words: http://www.memoryscape.org.uk/sound%20files/Dockers/Dockers05.mp3

Lovell's Wharf
Soon much of the area will be developed with the ubiquitous riverside apartment block. I hope that walkers are given the chance to make meaning of a confusing post industrial landscape; understand a little of the culture that was once there, and reflect on the fact that the last remains of this industrial landscape are likely to disappear forever. The experience is not necessarily nostalgic; the present industry on the river and the existing (and changing) life along the route, both natural and human, temper the pull of the past to some extent; and a recent interview with the owner of the Millennium Motel at the end of the walk gives a positive view of the residential development of some very derelict areas. I hope the variety of voices and stories give a nuanced and complex impression of the area rather than a wholly nostalgic or developer-happy impression of nothing but views and progress.

One of the trickiest elements of designing the walks was deciding how much narration to include. The first version of the walk did not have any narration, because I wanted to get as far away as possible from the authorial/tour guide style. People just had to use the maps and work out what to do. In the pilot study it was clear that some people liked it, but a lot of people were not sure what was going on. The whole drifting experiment got lost; people wanted to know who/why people were included and they wanted to feel that they were in the 'right' place. Artists like Graeme Miller celebrate the idea of getting a bit lost because that is when you start to have a bit of an adventure. It is the opposite of most people's instinct, particularly of curators in museums who take great effort to make things as accessible as possible. Basically some people will have a great time, but a lot of people just do not get it or feel very insecure without being guided. I wanted the walk to appeal as widely as possible, and the whole point was to locate the memories, so in the end we put in the narration. I think it works particularly well on the drifting work, which was a highly personal piece – it gave me the chance to get that across and lay bare some of the mechanics of the drifting experiment. In some ways the process of using archive recordings for this walk was more difficult; there were some wonderful stories that were impossible to locate, not least because many people worked in different docks; brief catalogue summaries made hunting for relevant

material very time consuming and the quality of the recording became more important than usual for use with a walkman in a noisy environment. This meant that some nice recordings had to be rejected purely on sound quality grounds. Nevertheless, many voices that would have remained silent in the archives can now be heard at or near the places where the memories were born.

What did people make of it?
I made a particular effort to get my sound walks into the public domain, making sure that they were available on a website, in local bookshops, museums, libraries and tourist information centres, and publicising the walks in the local press and on local radio. In five months at least 3000 people looked at the website in a meaningful way, 600 downloaded a walk or bought the CDs and at least 350 people actually walked the two hour walks (as opposed to listening at home or online). These may not be enormous figures, but with no marketing budget and a small amount of promotional effort the circulation has grown far beyond the expected readership of many journals or local history books; and a year on at least 7000 people have encountered the memoryscapes in one way or another.

I have conducted audience evaluation using questionnaires and interviews with nearly 150 adults. Almost everyone was very positive about the experience, which bodes well for future work that is aimed at a wide public audience. The questionnaire showed that 41 per cent rated the experience 9 or 10 out of 10; 83 per cent above 8 and 96 per cent above 7. In terms of satisfaction the experience seemed to have a wide adult appeal which did not alter significantly between male and female walkers, walk location, or whether the walk was undertaken alone or in an organised group. There was some slight indication that adults aged below 30 and above 70 did not enjoy the walks quite as much. Comments suggested that the distances involved, the style of presentation, the subject matter and difficulties in using equipment accounted for these relatively small differences.

The evaluation process revealed some interesting benefits to the memoryscape concept. Several people remarked that they felt empathy towards the people that they listened to despite the fact that they were from a different age, class or culture. This 'normalisation' effect seemed to come from a combination factors including the content of the recordings, the style of speaking, and the fact that the listener could not see the interviewee. Listeners seemed to respond particularly well to the variety of voices used: most people seemed to enjoy hearing from 'real' people as opposed to a mono-vocal guide, and to prefer shorter tracks that used more than one interviewee.

For me the most exciting finding was that the walks seemed to engender a feeling of identity with the landscape. Respondents reported that using a variety of senses, imagination, and references in the landscape, all helped to make the experience more meaningful and therefore memorable. Creating these connections, or links to place seem to have had led to a feeling of closeness, or rootedness for some people. One newcomer to London wrote 'now I know a sense of a beginning attachment'. Another walker described the process beautifully as 'deepening my attachment to the river. Like roots shooting off into the soil.' Several people talked about the experience adding a new reality, or a new dimension of reality to the existing landscape. Furthermore, anyone who visits the landscape again can use those links to remember something of the stories that they heard. Thus:

'Memoryscape has made me consider the part the river has played in so many people's lives. I think about this whenever I visit the river since listening to the recording 'drifting'.'

Perhaps this aspect of the experience could be of interest to those wishing to encourage feelings of belonging and identity in a particular community or location.

On the other hand, the intimacy of some of the recordings combined with hearing them outside someone's house or workplace made some people feel uncomfortable, particularly if the memories involved referred to recent circumstances. For example, one track featured a number of neighbours talking about a new house in the area – the footpath was located opposite the house that had enormous plate glass windows and you could see inside. Hearing details of the house and people's views of it seemed to become more powerful when stood outside the house itself, and there is a danger that using oral history in this way could verge on the voyeuristic. However, as the memoryscape process involved listening, understanding, consent and empathy I think it ran contrary to an act of voyeurism, which is based on the powerlessness of the subject – but I think it is worth pointing out as a potential concern with location based oral history.

Another interesting issue that came up was how conversational recording can become quite a different beast when listened to in specific locations. For example, one couple had described to me how their idyllic riverside bungalow suffered from sewerage flooding, due to the sewers being over-run by the sheer number of properties built in the area. The interviewees objected to the inclusion of the sewerage story, because they felt that it might affect the price of their property if a potential buyer tried the walk. In the end the clip was kept in with the agreement that their names and the exact location of their house would not be mentioned, but this was an interesting example of how the new context for the recording can introduce a whole new set of ethical dilemmas.

The future of the memoryscape
Location-based technology is becoming widespread. In-car satellite navigation, MP3 players, video playing i-pods, gps-enabled mobile phones and new generations of location aware palm computers are already with us, and we are already seeing local, national and even worldwide grids of information. At this moment Google are building the world's largest supercomputer to store the world's audio and video files, ready to pump out to gadgets that know exactly where they are in the world. A new free-to-use European GPS system will make navigation more accurate than ever before; new location based entertainments will be coming that make use of these systems; mobile internet services are becoming cheaper and in some cities they will be free; and the sound walk, memoryscape or its multi-media equivalent will be rapidly evolving as different disciplines and sectors explore its potential.

Memoryscapes are already being jumped on companies interested in promoting brand awareness through new technology. Adidas have sponsored sound walks in the Bronx and in Glasgow Tennent's Lager recently commissioned a freely downloadable MP3 walking tour of Glasgow's music venues, which has been dubbed an 'iTour', after the iPod player (Divine 2005; *iTour* website, 2005). Computer manufacturers and software developers such as Hewlett Packard are currently investing in research and development work for outdoor, mobile computing which includes roaming, i.e. location-based computer games that can geographically locate players in real time using gps. Content will be varied according to other real-world sensors, such as heart rate, direction and light using bio mapping techniques (Nold 2006). For the first time a BAFTA was awarded to a BBC producer for creating a series of audio walks (linked to the Coast documentary series), and there are plans for the BBC to create some kind of media portal for local groups or organisations to podcast their own walks – territory already being rapidly taken by Google Earth. You will soon be able to do a mobile phone based tour of the Olympics 2012 site and a museum in Sweden, the Molndals Museum has produced a PDA guide to the town using oral history, as well as another of Vilhelmina, a

tourist route in Lapland, using GPS (Hulten 2006). Many companies will be close behind, using location-based media to promote anything from trainers to tourism.

But the medium should not left solely for the market and large institutions to dominate. At best, this cultural geographical information system can be used to introduce multiple voices and conflicting readings of the landscape (and those that move and live in it). It can also be an empowering and expressive use of technology for the gazed at (or listened to). Just as simple websites can be constructed by individuals or small groups, sound walks can be made with minimal training and gain easy exposure on the internet. A walk has none of the practical problems associated with exhibiting landscape-related conventional art work or sculpture, because no exhibition space or planning permission is necessary. In the past this has proved to be a serious impediment to community-based initiatives that do not stem from local government or the arts establishment (Brown 2002). So the medium has the potential to be inclusive, and we should all be keeping a close eye on the podcasting phenomenon in which alternative tours of art galleries have already become well-known. In 2006 a King's Cross based oral history project produced an oral history CD walk, *The Argyll Square Sound Trail*, and the signs are that many more will follow.

For example, I am currently working with the London East Research Institute to get some funding for a network of multimedia trails around the Royal Docks and its surrounding communities, an area which not only lacks a museum but almost any heritage interpretation in public areas. A great deal of work will be involved in creating these trails, not just in engaging local historians and community groups to work on the content but also with landowners and local government to try and establish new paths that will allow people proper access to the dockside areas that, until relatively recently, were walled-off, inaccessible industrial quayside. The Royal Docks are also in severe danger of being the victim of the splintered urbanism that characterised much of the development of the Isle of Dogs and Canary Wharf. Premium sites such as the Excel Centre, the UEL campus and City Airport develop excellent connections and facilities but are in danger of becoming effectively gated communities, leaving a poor, fractured communities physically or psychologically excluded from supposedly publicly accessible spaces. The trails will encourage connections between the different parts of the docks and psychologically 'ungate' these premium sites by incorporating them as trail locations, and in turn encourage international visitors to venture beyond the taxi rank.

Hopefully the process of creating and walking the trails will also offer real opportunities to help create sustainable communities by providing opportunities for people to build identity and empathy with their surroundings – that feeling of 'rootedness' , particularly for substantial proportions of the local population that are very new to the area (new dockside development residents; school children; newly arrived ethnic groups; students living in or near the Docklands campus). In charting the area's cultural, industrial, maritime and natural history before it is gone forever, we are also setting out to invent the traditions of a sustainable future which builds on rather than disregards local resources, both environmental and human. Our aim is to do this in an active, participatory way which helps build local capacity to negotiate change, enabling disadvantaged communities to take up the new opportunities on their own terms, whilst at the same time giving some kind of context to the wider process of regeneration which for the first time is bringing large numbers of middle class professionals to live and work around the docks. The project really does have the potential to give past and present residents a voice in one of the most rapidly developing urban areas in the world.

In the future many such trails will develop, and whether you see this as a warning or wishful thinking, do not be surprised when location-based media producers (locedia) turn up on your doorstep. This emerging industry will give new challenges to cultural geographers, social historians and oral historians with an interest in communicating to the public. We must learn the vocabulary of these new technologies and understand their strengths and weaknesses. For example, the Tate Modern found that people found it difficult to watch video clips on a small screen on their multimedia handheld computers for more than 30 seconds, which suggests visual media might be less useful than audio for sustained broadcast. We have to experiment with creating journeys with this new media and learn from each other's lessons. We also have to understand the new demands of locative media and create interviews with them in mind. Interviewing techniques must evolve – at the very least, we need to locate memories as told to us, so that if someone relates a memory of their school days, we must make sure that we know which school they are talking about. I can see that there may also be pressure to make interviewing more broadcast friendly – for example by asking people to repeat the question in their answer, or repeating the answer succinctly, which may be more problematic for some styles of life story interviewing. Interview summaries for archives should include as many specific locations as possible (village, road and school names for example) so they can be used for locedia. And the pressure to digitise recordings into computer files that the dozens of different platforms can handle will be ever greater, making digital recorders the most efficient method of recording interviews.

Whatever technologies evolve, they will all need one thing – interesting, located (local) content. In the future I can foresee great demand for people with existing skills in local and oral history, particularly for people who have experience of recording and editing and can manage the technical and ethical challenges that creating public oral history entails. New producers will also come into the field, and they will need guiding and training in the practicalities and ethical aspects of recording local people. Archivists may also find that there is much more demand for oral history archive recordings, particularly those that are well-recorded and easily searchable. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this medium will give communities, groups and disciplines an alternative 'output' that can be complex, multi-vocal, accessible and with real public appeal.

The two memoryscape walks, 'drifting' and 'dockers' can be downloaded on to an ipod or mp3 player (or experienced online) at www.memoryscape.org.uk

Memoryscape, a professionally produced double CD featuring both walks and an eight page map booklet is available for £7 from Greenwich Tourist Information Centre, the Museum in Docklands or via email order direct from the author.

For more information about the Ports of Call project, or to order CDs, please email tobybutler@boltblue.com.

Toby Butler is in the Geography Department, Royal Holloway, University of London, and at the Museum of London. He is also a visiting fellow at the London East Research Institute.

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