

A&HP_BAP_Interview_8_Aug_2018

Date: transcribed 29 August 2018
Comments: anonymised March 2021
Duration: 54:14

KEY:

Cannot decipher = (unclear + time code)

Sounds like = [s.l + time code]

I: = Interviewer

R: = Respondent

NT = National Trust Staff Member

I: So, it's a practice based project lead by Andrew Burton, who's the leader of the research project and he's a practice based researcher in Fine Art. He's a Professor of Fine Art at Newcastle University. So, he's the lead for the project and it involves a number of different strands. So, it's a three year project and we're about halfway through.

One of the key strands of the project is that we've actually done some live commissioning, with National Trust, with English Heritage and also with The Churches Conservation Trust, to do a number of artist commissions which are just currently live, at the moment. They've all been in the North East properties/heritage sites. So, that's been at the core of it but we're also doing two other strands of research.

One of them is looking at how audiences engage with those artworks, in the heritage context. We're doing that mainly through focus groups. Then, the other strand, which I'm leading on, is this mapping strand, which is looking at the idea of contemporary art and heritage as being a kind of a "field of practice" that's developed more since the 1990s and how that's grown in the UK and what that current scope looks like?

So, as part of that, I'm doing a series of interviews, this one and number of other ones. How it's come about is that we've done some sort of online research and working from the literature and drawn up a massive database, basically, of projects in this area. Then we've got quite a loose definition of what these projects are. Although, in terms of our own practise, we're looking at commissioning with major heritage organisations but we know that the practise is broader than that.

So, from that database and that research, I've identified a number of curators and arts organisations who have been involved in practise. So,

that's where I come to you, through that, really. So, I just wanted to have a conversation with you about your experience of working in that area, as a curator.

Obviously, I've done a bit of research around your various websites and your CV and projects you've been involved with. So, I can see that there is a crossover, quite clearly, with some of the partners, with National Trust; I know you've worked with them but other independent sites, as well. I just wanted to have a conversation with you about that. Before I do, do you want to know anything more about the project. I just need to check, also, that you're happy for us to use this material? I'm audio recording our conversation, it's not video recorded.

R: That's absolutely fine, yes. I don't mind you using the material, no, it's good. It's good, from my point of view, that all histories are recorded because a lot of stuff can get lost over the years. Have you got a list of questions or is it just an informal chat? How do you want to do it?

I: **I have got a list of questions but they're like opening questions and prompts, really. So, we can go in various different directions according to the conversation. It's not like a questionnaire or anything, although I'm trying to keep roughly the same format with different people.**

So, the first question is just, really, an open one, for you to tell me about the history of your engagement in this area; what I'm calling, this, kind of, "contemporary art in heritage" field?

R: Okay, well, the story is that the first Beacon project was in 2004 and it was predicated on ... So, in 2000, [Name], my spouse and I, and [child], moved from London to rural Lincolnshire. We bought a derelict chapel and Sunday School.

I: **Ah, so that's the chapel and I've seen that mentioned.**

R: Yes, that's right. So, we've used that quite a few times. So, with no real intention of creating Beacon. In London, at that time, certainly in the '80s, late '80s and through the '90s, it was very much a DIY culture. You know, it was that time where artists were very entrepreneurial and, "Let's put on a show." And you find a space and you do it, wherever that might be.

So, that's sort of ingrained into me, as an artist. That's what I and many other artists I know do and certainly did, back then; it was common practise. A lot of those sites and certainly, at least one project I did in London, was in a heritage site in the Westminster Bridge Road. So, that's what I carry around with me, that's my sensibility because whenever I encounter a space, the first thing that always come into my mind is, "What can be done here? Can we do something here?"

Anyway, to cut a long story short, so we moved to Lincolnshire and because we didn't know Lincolnshire, we just fell in love with these buildings. Then, moving from London to rural Lincolnshire, it was a real culture shock. There was a sudden realisation that there's absolutely nothing here; absolutely nothing. So, really, the first exhibition, the first Beacon project, was ... I had the idea, or the seeds of an

idea, when we'd been there for about a year or so because in London, I used to enjoy walking through the streets of London and my practise, at that time, was predicated on that. So, I started to drive through the Lincolnshire countryside and I started to see all these towers and then these really interesting old buildings, derelict building sites. So, I thought, "You could put on a show, you could do something with that."

I remember having a meeting in, maybe about 2001 or so because I'd identified these sites, these two towers and another building and I'd contacted the local Arts Officer at Kesteven District Council, [Name] and [they] set up a meeting with Lincolnshire Heritage and somebody from the bloody Arts Council, East Midlands Office. So, the idea was ...because [Name] was very keen on making this happen in [their] district. So, I remember going to this meeting and I had all these plans and it was a [person] from the Arts Council who just picked on it. "Impossible, you can't do that. It can't be done."

Then, fast forward to late 2003 and all of a sudden, quite quickly, the landscape changed, certainly in terms of funding. You know, the rural was very rock 'n' roll; arts in rural was very rock 'n' roll. So, at that point, I'd been out of London for three years and still showing work but in London. I had this particular body of work that I wanted to show so I thought, if I was in London, I would just do something. So, that's what I did; I got three other artists or four artists. I found these sites, these heritage sites and heritage was always ...It was a very broad term so ... I think one of them was certainly very derelict, it was an old, very derelict mental asylum. Then, I got the funding. I'd written the project and I'd got the funding for it.

The first project was really, it was a means for me to show some work, my own work but it was predicated on an urban model. You know, right from the sixties in New York, where artists were putting on shows in their lofts or owning shops and stuff like that. So, it has a lineage but I was sort of using that urban sensibility, in a rural context. For us, one of the key things that we did, certainly at that time, which was always the USP. I was always very concerned or very cynical about a lot of rural arts initiatives, at that time, where they actually parachuted the arts into ... You know, took that art to the audience.

I: Like rural touring programmes, sort of thing?

R: Yes, that's right. So, what we did, for the first project, and subsequent projects, we actually took the audience to the arts. So, the audience, right from the get-go was at the core. So, in our first project, we had an audience of just over a thousand and that was from nothing.

I: What was it called, this first project?

R: It's called "Beacon".

I: Okay, yes.

R: But there's images on the website of that. So, this thing about just taking the audience from site to site because it's quite dispersed. Lincolnshire's very flat so you have these guided coach excursions and you had this audience that would

commit themselves to about three to four hours. We used to get this amazing stuff happening on the bus.

That first project, the evaluation that was done, over 50% had never been to an art exhibition before and we realised that it's a double whammy because some people go for the arts and some people go for the heritage. The other thing that we were doing was that, with those projects, we were opening up these heritage sites, which were normally closed.

I: What were the sites?

R: Well, there was the old asylum in Bracebridge Heath. There was St Mary's The Old Hall in Lincoln which is a Grade I 14th Century but it's in the poor part of Lincoln. You know, Lincoln's very pretty, at the top, round the Cathedral, where the money is but St Mary's The Old Hall is right down at the bottom, in the poor part so it has no sensibility, this building. Then Temple Bruer Tower which was, I think, English Heritage owned it but it was managed by Lincolnshire Heritage, Lincolnshire. An old farmhouse I think we got that time but I can't remember all our sites. Then our chapel, we used our chapel as well.

So, there were some interesting things and all of a sudden, we realised that we'd created this stuff and we'd made this stuff happen and all this other stuff. So, we just carried on doing projects, I suppose. Then we became a charity and we carried on with the same stuff.

Then, now, I do feel that artists working in heritage sites is a valid practise now, an aspect of artistic practise, but I do recall when artists used to come to visit the sites, they were really out of their comfort zone. The artists that had come up from London, really out of their comfort zone which was good because we all thought it was good that artists should be challenged. So, that's the sort of starting point and a brief history, if you like.

I: Okay, I've made some notes from what I've seen on your various websites and things. So, since then ... and those were early projects, in 2003/2004, that first Beacon?

R: Yes, 2004, that's the first project but we'd started planning the year before.

I: Then I saw ... So, jumping rather ahead; 2010, you did some work with the National Trust?

R: At Calke Abbey?

I: And Barrington Court, is that right?

R: Yes, Barrington Court. So, they're two different stories. Calke Abbey, I remember [Name], who was the Arts Council Officer in the East Midlands, [they were] saying, "Oh, the Arts Council has just signed this letter of ..." Whatever it's called?

I: Memorandum of Understanding.

R: Yes, that's it and then, in the East Midlands, a new vibe went out for people to go and talk ... Or, there was a talk about it, at Calke Abbey and after the talk, I immediately went to pitch something to them. So, we did that ourselves.

I: **So, the invited thing, at Calke Abbey, that wasn't [NT]?**

R: No, that's what I was saying, it was before so it was completely before Trust New Art and Barrington Court. I think we were one of the first but that's a completely different story but Calke Abbey was an amazing experience. The manager was so supportive and it was one of our best projects.

The other thing was, during those years, there was so much money around. I mean, it beggars belief. We used to go to the meetings and come away with thousands, just by talking to them, there was so much money. Anyway, that's being a bit nostalgic, as well. It's much more difficult now.

So, Calke Abbey, that was just when that was starting and I don't think ... It might have been [NT] that was talking and I can't quite remember but it was right at the beginning. There certainly hadn't been anything like it and because, by that time, we were very interested and aware that the audience were key and working with the National Trust, at that time, we were also very aware that the volunteers, the people who work there, we needed.

So, one of the commissions was ... We commissioned [Name] to ... [They're] like an "artist in residence" who worked with the volunteers, just to get them on board with the projects. We did a lot of work with them and giving them talks. We also had our own team of volunteers, when the project was open. You know, with t-shirts saying, "Can I help?". We used to encourage our volunteers to actively engage with the audience. Yes, that was good, that was a good project.

Then, Barrington Court was the complete opposite. Nightmare's not the right word but it wasn't a good experience because I think it was one of the first. There was no call for a curatorial proposal to do stuff there. You must have spoken to somebody from Barrington Court about this?

I: **Well, [NT], I've obviously spoken to [them] but I haven't interviewed [them], yet, in depth about it. There's other people in National Trust that I've interviewed about the Trust New Art and its development. So, tell me about it.**

R: So, I wrote a curatorial pitch, to the scheme, for people who'd worked there for two years. So, [Name] and I went up for the interview and we were shortlisted and then we got the gig, basically. So, we were really excited and it was a really nice house. I don't know whether you've been there but there's no furniture in it, at all so it's a really nice space.

The proposal I wrote was like a slow burn, it would be a cumulative project that we'd build over two years, where you'd get this big, hard hitting commission, right at the end. So, just to get the audience used to seeing contemporary art. That's what we pitched and they bought into that. It ended up that, after a year, the steering group that oversaw the project ... At the end of the year, the first year,

[Name] and I went to this meeting, to give a progress report and we had all this positive stuff and we quickly realised that they didn't want us to carry on with it anymore.

I: Really?

R: So, we withdrew from the project but that's the key point that I want to make. I think it's really important that ... So, when we started the project, we had real problems with one or two members of staff there that were completely anti it.

I: What kind of area of staff; were they conservation or audience people or what were they?

R: One of the managerial staff and there was a new person brought in who wasn't at this selection meeting but [they were] at our first meeting. This isn't about tittle tattle, this is how National Trust properties work; they rely a lot on volunteers. The sense we got was that this particular person was saying things like, [...] And the volunteers were picking this up and it doesn't help. We did have an artist in residence there and she spent a lot of time working with the volunteers. So, that was the first commission, really, was to actually work with the volunteers.

I mean, the other problem with that, with the National Trust, then, was that we helped them ... They had to write an Arts Council bid, basically, for the project. So, we helped them do that but it wasn't Beacon that submitted that, it was the National Trust. So, we'd agreed these, sort of, stage payments but for the first months, we had no money and I actually funded the commission myself.

It was so difficult to get money from them because there were no structures. We'd signed a contract for us to deliver these artist projects but I paid for it, myself. I kept saying that to [NT] but, in retrospect and hindsight, I think [they] thought that, perhaps, Beacon, as an organisation, was paying for it but it was actually me. So, for three months or so, I was actually paying artists' fees.

I: Because of trying to get the process going?

R: Yes, there was this huge hiccup and I think that project, I think they learnt a lot from that project, as did we. It's to not do anything like that again.

I: So, you haven't asked the residents but it didn't come to fruition as a commission?

R: Yes, it did.

I: Oh, it did?

R: Yes, we had a whole year as a project and I give you the rationale.

I: Yes, that would be really interesting.

R: Because it was like a slow burn. Then, the next thing we hear, they got [Name] involved and [they] just got Antony Gormley in there. That's the other thing I've realised, is that ... and this is something that I have a slight problem with, after

working in heritage sites because, in the end, it's about making money for the organisation.

I: In terms of attracting visitors?

R: Yes, because that's the other thing; our focus was art, whereas, what the National Trust wanted was an increase in people visiting but I don't think there was much increase in ticket sale? If we'd have known that, if that had been more clear, from the get-go, that that was really what the thing was about because my interest was, and still is really, about supporting artists and enabling artists to make things happen. So, that's still a bit raw with us but I can talk about it now without getting too angry about it. [...]. It wasn't a good experience and I do think that they learnt a lot from it.

I: Yes, obviously, it's been an evolving ...?

R: Yes, it's much better now and there's some really great stuff that goes on.

I: And sometimes it's a matter of scale and it's a huge, massive organisation and it's the culture of different organisations and the way that artists run things, it's all part of it. That's also part of what we're looking into, is looking at these partnerships between artists and heritage organisations and artists and heritage sites and this sort of thing.

So, you haven't done any further projects with the National Trust? There's been other independent sites, haven't there?

R: Yes, that was the last one and it was interesting that they happened around the same time. You know, Calke Abbey, which was such a fantastic one. That was artist-led and it wasn't a top-down thing. Whereas, the Barrington Court, it was too top-down. Even though, on the steering group, there was never any support for us, not even from the Arts Council person, who I know and I saw [them] at the week-end, actually, but we don't talk about it.

The other thing was, we're an artist-led organisation, we're not big, we don't have any capacity and certainly not any financial capacity. So, when you're going to the National Trust, we haven't got any money, we can't eat and they're not going to understand that. They don't really understand the urgency of that, of that situation.

I: I picked up, from your documentary information, I picked up some other projects, also in Lincolnshire, later things, in 2012 and '13. There's Woolsthorpe Manor, Grimsthorpe Castle and a few other things; were they National Trust, as well?

R: Yes, that's just a case of me going to see the manager and they were so nice and they said, "Sure, it's fine." So, absolutely no problem at all and that wasn't a Trust New Art. So, that's a good example and I'd forgotten about Woolsthorpe Manor and it's Isaac Newton's birthplace. Then, Grimsthorpe Castle is a private property; it's owned by this lady who was one of the Queen's bridesmaids. I just approached [Name], who is the Estate Manager. So, I just said, "Can we do a project there?" And [they were] was up for it so that was great. Then, Ayscoughfee

Hall, which was owned by the local authority. It was just a case of ... I would just approach people and just have a conversation with somebody.

Then we viewed two or three derelict manor farmhouses, on farmland. They're usually really interesting properties and the ones we've used have been completely derelict. They've been Grade I or Grade I but the farmer can't afford to do anything with them so they just fall to rack and ruin. There was a fantastic one near Boston that we used which was in the middle of a big transport park but it was completely derelict. So, Catherine Bertola did a fantastic project there. I think artists appreciate those sorts of opportunities.

I: So, how were they funded, those projects? Was that through grants for the arts?

R: Yes, most of it was through grants for the arts but there were two or three years ... I think Calke Abbey, a lot of cultural lottery money, as well. There was a period where there was the Lincolnshire Creative Solution Initiative which was ... [Name], who was the Arts Officer for Lincolnshire County Council, at the time, had got a huge amount of money from Europe. So, [they] set up this Creative Solutions Initiative which was about developing creative activity in Lincolnshire and we had quite a lot of money over those two or three years. Maybe about twenty or twenty-five thousand, in two or three different lots. But the Arts Council has always been the main funder and the Henry Wolf Foundation funded some aspects of some of the projects.

I: I don't know whether it might be interesting to say a little bit more about ... So, that was the Compass Project, 2012, which was Woolsthorpe, Grimsthorpe Castle and Asycoughfee Hall. So, you said the first one was a National Trust property, second one, Grimsthorpe, was privately owned and Asycoughfee was local authority owned. I'm just wondering whether there's anything there to say about the differences between ... as an artist and curator, working with those different sorts of organisations or ownerships or maybe it doesn't make any difference to the projects?

R: I don't think it does. Grimsthorpe Castle was a fantastic estate and it is open to the public, maybe about five or six months a year. Lady Willoughby, she's in her late eighties and I think she's still alive? I met her a couple of times and she's very nice and she's a patron of the arts and they actually kept the place open, a month beyond their normal season, to enable us to do that project so that was really generous of them.

So, I didn't really see any difference and everybody has their own ... I suppose it's health and safety, it's just things like that because by now, I have a lot of experience in how to manage, or install, artworks and all that sort of stuff, without causing damage. So, yes, no difference. It's good that the people I've worked with have had the autonomy and authority to make a decision. So, yes or no, and that's really good. Certainly for that Woolsthorpe Manor, that other National Trust property, I thought it worked on that one.

I: So, from what you've said, it seems to be very much about personal contact? Whether it's the National Trust site manager or the estate office or something from the privately owned?

R: I also feel it's because I'm an artist and I think that makes a huge difference. You know, that I'm used to dealing with people because if you're an artist, you want to make things happen and you find ways to make it happen. So, I've always felt that that is a key part of the success of the Beacon Project, over the years. Certainly, that ability to actually work with artists, I think that, in itself, is a skill.

I: So, Barrington Court is Somerset and Calke Abbey is in Derbyshire but you seemed to have developed a specialism in terms of where you live and being an artist in Lincolnshire and doing ...

R: Well, initially, yes, it was based in Lincolnshire but then we have worked in Somerset and Derbyshire and we've done stuff in London and I'm just working on a couple of projects in Stoke and Manchester, at the moment. So, yes, things evolve and also, the other thing is that, a really important thing is that ... The Beacon Art Project, the charity, we closed in 2016. One of the reasons was it had become so difficult to get funding but the other thing is that there's so much stuff going on now in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands. When we moved there, it was literally a cultural desert and it was almost like, the job's done.

The last Beacon project was the one in Venice which was always something I'd been developing since about 2009. So, it was good that we managed to do it, working with other partners, but we did a project in Venice which was fantastic. So, yes, our original needs, or rationale, for doing something in Lincolnshire from 2000 forwards but there's so much stuff going on there, now. So, yes, it's completely different.

I: I'm just thinking ... because you mentioned ... Going back to something else you mentioned there, that I didn't really pick up, particularly. You talked about these different sorts of sites. So, 18th century, 19th century country houses and those kind of things. You also mention these derelict manor farmhouses, on private land, and also there's been a recent project at Greyfriars, more recently, 2012/13. I'm just thinking about this definition of heritage site, what that is for you?

R: Well, for me personally, it's very closely related to the ruin, the idea of the ruin. The ruin is something that has always informed my art practice. There's no sort of legal definition of heritage that I adhere to. It's really something that appeals to me personally and I'm usually drawn to the derelict and decrepit or the empty and the abandoned rather than the, open to the public, all hours. So, to go back to your earlier question about Asycoughfee Hall which was a local authority. I suppose that was slightly different, in a sense, because it was open to the public, all hours, actually, as well and it had a different vibe to it. Does that answer your question?

I: Yes, it does because when we're looking at trajectory of practice. So, in terms of the kind of things that have been written about these kind of practices, already, there's often an association and the idea of artists intervening in museum collections and museums and the National Trust

being, kind of, house museums, sort of thing. So, it's interesting what you just said about the ruin and the derelict and the abandoned, a different direction.

R: It is very much about space.

I: **Yes, not about the objects?**

R: No, not objects in that sense. I mean, artists working with museum collections is becoming a bit of a trait now. Yes, so, I think that needs to be invigorated a bit and it's a little bit too English.

I: **Okay, good. Okay, so we've talked about key programmes and projects and then my other questions are really about what you think are the key opportunities or issues or challenges are for this sort of field of practice, today?**

R: I think it's difficult to make challenging work in those contexts and I worry that artists would need to compromise too much sometimes. I think that's the biggest challenge, is how to commission artists without, in their work, what they propose being compromised by the organisation, if you like, or the institution. Maybe that's always the case, I don't know?

You know, we've done some really challenging projects and what we always realised was that we underestimate our audience. It's amazing what people ... If they're given the right information and the right encouragement, people engage with anything. They might not like it but the fact that they can engage with it and make informed decisions, I think that's the key thing rather than making that decision before the audience has had a chance to encounter the work. I think that's the biggest challenge, there, for artists. Maybe not for organisations because they're in a position of power so it is an unequal relationship, in a way.

I: **I think you said something earlier, right at the beginning, and you were talking about the early project where you took an audience by coach to different sites.**

R: Yes.

I: **I think you said something about some of those people were interested in the heritage and some of those people were like the arts audience?**

R: That's right, yes.

I: **Is there anything else that can be teased out of that or you could say more about that?**

R: Well, one example that always springs to mind in, I think, is the second project. One of the artists we commissioned was Doug Fishbone who is an American artist and at the time, he was giving these informative slide lectures. You know, it was like a monologue and the images were all gleaned from the Internet and some were very, very dodgy images. We, at the time, for the first two or three projects,

we always used the village hall, in the village. So, the coach would pull up and we would take the audience to the village hall and ...

The thing about the coach is that the coach is a social space so people were very relaxed on the coach, they were talking to one another and you used to hear these fantastic conversations about what they'd just seen and what they might see. A similar thing with the village hall. So, if you know you're going to a village hall, you sort of have in your head, "Oh, hopefully there'll be a cup of tea and some biscuits?" And there was and, "I'll be able to sit down and there'll be toilets and that." So, people were relaxed about it. So, I realised that we were doing, and what we needed to do, is create this space for these things to happen. Not a physical space but to create a non-hierarchical space.

So, we went to the first performance, on the launch of it and most of the audience were knowing art people, the knowing art club and they laughed in the right places and they got it. A lot of it was ironical and stuff and it was all about irony and they got the jokes and the irony. However, other audiences we had were a real mix of people and some of the images Doug was showing were very racist. That's what his performance is about, it's very edgy and people were laughing in the same places but we were realised that they were actually laughing for the wrong reasons but they were able to do it and they were engaged with it because they were in this space where they felt comfortable. You know, it wasn't threatening at all.

Make of that what you will but I think that was a real eye opener, actually. How you can get an audience to engage with something can be quite challenging and we've done some other quite challenging work and we've never shied away from that. You know, if an artist has proposed something, I've never said no. What I've done is always found a way to try and make it happen. Like, at the moment, a project that I hope to work with, the project involves animals.

I: Live animals?

R: Yes, live animals and I'm thinking, "My God! How's that going to work?" So, I'm still trying to work that out. My first reaction to it is not to say no and I think it's important. So, to come back to that thing of the danger of artists being compromised. I think the institution, whether it's National Trust or English Heritage, needs to have the mind-set to see about actually enabling something to happen. You know, figure out ways to make it happen or how could we make this happen rather than say, "You can't do that. We can't do that." So, I think that is a real challenge.

I: And you mentioned some of the more difficult projects you had with the National Trust. You know, negative feedback, through staff or from volunteers but I'm just wondering whether there's been any feedback or evaluation from actual audience visitors, to those places? Not the audiences you've taken but visitors who've ... Was there any feedback from that?

R: What, from Barrington Court?

I: Yes, from the National Trust places?

R: That I don't know, we were never made party to that. So, it wasn't a good relationship. We have had a couple, over the years, a couple of letters. There was one, it was a Jordan Baseman thing where that caused a huge furore and we were in the national press and television and radio because ... Do you know the story?

I: **No, tell me the story.**

R: I'd actually forgotten it and I haven't given a Beacon talk for some time but I always tell this story. Jordan's commission was to make a film so he made a film in Boston, in South Lincolnshire which, at the time, had a really bad reputation for being racist. So, it wasn't a good place but it had a very large Portuguese community at the time because they used to work on the land. I think now it's Eastern Europeans?

So, he made the film and he's working with this woman because, at the time, his main modus operandi was interviews, it was filmed interviews. So, this woman was talking about her day to day life in Boston. So, taking her child to school and being the subject of racist taunts, basically and how her son, in school ... So, he made the film and then he named it "I hate Boston and Boston hates me" after the boy's words. So, somebody from the local press picked up on that and it made headlines in the local newspaper. Then that was picked up by the national press and for two or three days our lives were an absolute nightmare. The important thing is, is that they're complaining about this film that's been made but nobody, except Jordan and myself and the woman, had actually seen it.

I: **Yes, they'd just heard about it and the title was enough?**

R: Yes, so Jordan withdrew from the project and *he* made that decision but I admire him because he didn't want to jeopardise the whole thing. So, it was just the British press, it was absolutely crazy. Then, if people only knew what the woman was talking about. The council, at the time, made you feel, you know, in the local press, they don't want to see their place labelled as being racist but it has a history of that. So, that was interesting so there's that sort of feedback.

Then, Calke Abbey, someone did write a letter complaining about it but that just went nowhere and we dealt with that.

I: **Well, that's the problem, you always get the complaint, the complainer?**

R: Yes, there's always one person that will always ...

I: **They'll write the letter?**

R: Yes, yes.

I: **Nobody else will.**

R: That's right.

I: Okay, we've been talking for nearly an hour.

R: Have we? Bloody hell!

I: Yes, so, I don't know whether there's anything else that I haven't picked up, or we haven't mentioned so far, that you wanted to tell me about, in terms of your experience or your thoughts about this area of practice? I mean, we can follow up by e-mail.

R: I'm happy, if you've got anything? I can't think of anything off the top of my head but if you need any more info or want to ask any more questions or follow-up, by all means, do.

I: That would be brilliant. All I've got is things from your various different websites and I don't know whether there's any project publications or reports?

R: There's catalogues so if you send me somewhere where I can post them? Send me your address and I can post them.

I: That would be brilliant. That would be great because we are looking at that because there's not a lot written about this area of practice so we are looking to collect stuff.

R: Really?

I: Well, we're an academic research project, so, not in that sense. I mean, there's lots of catalogues.

R: Do you know that project called "On the Edge" by Anne Douglas at Gray's School of Art because we did a couple of things together in 2004/5 because she wrote something for Beacon. So, "On the Edge" that was looking at art projects in the Scottish Islands.

I: Okay, I'll look at that.

R: Anne Douglas her name is and she's very knowledgeable about that sort of thing and I mentioned François Matterasso; you know François?

I: Yes.

R: So, yes, send me your address and I can post some stuff off to you.

I: I just wanted to say thanks very much for taking the time to talk to me about this and I'll ask you again, just for the record, that you're happy for me to use this material?

R: Absolutely fine but don't quote me saying [...]

I: No, I won't say that. [Laughter]. And also, just to update you on our project. As I said, we're halfway through and we've launched our commissions and if you follow that link I sent you, you can find out more.

R: Yes, I'll have a good look.

I: We are updating the website as we go. So, next year, around this time next year, actually, at the end of July next year, we're actually doing a conference in Newcastle, a two day conference about this whole area of practise. So, obviously, that might be something that you're interested in maybe coming to or maybe presenting something and being part of? So, we'll be putting more information on our website shortly, in the Autumn, about that and I might just send you the link and remind you about that.

R: Yes, maybe it would be interesting to just present something there?

I: Okay, so, thanks very much, [R]

R: You're welcome.

I: Nice to speak to you and nice to meet you.

R: Okay.

I: Thanks a lot.

R: See you.

I: Bye.

R: Enjoy.

[End of Recording]