

A&HP_AC_Interview_19_Jan_2017

Date: transcribed 6th February 2018
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KEY:

Cannot decipher = (unclear + time code)

Sounds like = [s.l + time code]

I: = Interviewer

R: = Respondent.

A&H1, A&H2 = Arts&Heritage Staff

NT = National Trust Staff Member

ACE1, ACE2, ACE3, ACE4, ACE5 = Arts Council England Staff

EH1 = English Heritage Staff

CRT = Canal & River Trust Staff Member

I: I've realised what I haven't done. Because you're on the steering group of the project –

R: Yes.

I: – I haven't brought a formal interview consent form –

R: Okay.

I: – for this interview. So, I'm just going to ask you now, whether you're happy for me to record your interview?

R: Yes.

I: And you're happy for us, as the research team, to use the material in this interview –

R: Yes.

I: – for research purposes?

R: Yes.

I: Yes?

R: Yes.

I: Okay. I mean if it's a considerable quote, you know, like a long quote –

R: Yes. You'll check it –

I: – we will get –

R: – with us? Yes.

I: Yes, but if it's just small bits we won't, okay?

R: Yes.

I: I mean it's mainly factual. So, what I'm doing –

R: Okay.

I: This is the last of... So, I've done... This is the third of three interviews that I'm doing before Christmas.

R: Okay.

I: So, I've interviewed [A&H1] about Arts&Heritage. Where the organisation... Where that's come from. I've interviewed [NT] from the National Trust, just about Trust New Art programme, but what I wanted to talk to you about was, kind of, obviously, you're involved... Arts Council is involved in both those things, but what I wanted to talk about really was the longer history of Arts Council –

R: Because I've been around for a long time.

I: Because you've been around for a long time.

[Laughter]

I: What's the longer history of Arts Council's interest in this area of Contemporary Art and Heritage?

R: Yes, I mean I can probably talk about that from a regional perspective and then laterally an area –

I: Fine.

R: – perspective. I can talk a little bit about the national MoUs, which are not just with heritage organisations but they include heritage organisations. I'm not leading on that work and haven't been for the last couple of years, so factually I might be, I might not have very many facts.

I: **No, but if you wanted... I mean we'll come back to so-and-so. If you want to pass me on to other people I should speak to, I don't mind. I can do that.**

R: Okay. Well I can tell you that the... So, up to date it's [ACE1], who's the RM for visual arts in the North West. [They're] one of them, there's two in the North West, and [ACE1] has been leading on that –

I: **On the National –?**

R: On the National Partnership working and there is a national group which is a cross-art form group and [ACE1] represents visual arts on that group as far as I understand it. [They] may not lead that group going forward, it's a bit up in the air at the moment, but in terms of, kind of, to date, she will be able to talk to you about that.

I: **Okay. So, [they're] the national –**

R: The detail of those relationships, those MoUs. So, that's National Trust, Forestry Commission –

I: **Yes. Canal & Rivers Trust.**

R: – Canal & Rivers Trust, yes.

I: **And is there one with the Churches Conservation Trust?**

R: No, there isn't one.

I: **Because I had... Because I dug out some of these things and I've got one. This was something that I saw that we had when we first... I don't know whether you were at those, I can't remember now, the early meetings that we had about putting the funding bid together for this project –**

R: Oh, okay.

I: **– with the CCT and there seemed to be at least the idea of them being an MoU –**

R: Yes, I mean it's –

I: **– but it didn't happen.**

R: Yes, it's not. They don't have one.

I: **That's right. Okay. That's fine. Okay. So, I'll come back to that.**

R: Okay. Yes.

I: **My first question –**

R: Okay.

I: **– this is very broad. I'll try and keep this on time. It's just... Well, we've got our... We're trying, we haven't really got a... We're trying to... What do we mean by Contemporary Art in Heritage? What does that mean for Arts Council? What's that field?**

R: Okay. So, the way we, I guess, currently define it in terms of strategic priorities, if you like, is that we use the phrase, "Art in Unexpected Places." So, it's not confined to visual arts and it's not confined to heritage. So, it's broader. It's basically about opportunities for audiences to engage with art outside the conventional arts infrastructure and the opportunities that that provides to reach different audiences who might not, for whatever reason, because of where they are located or because they don't think, they don't engage with art at all. That they don't consume art via those conventional galleries and so on, so it's an opportunity to reach wider, with engagement with art.

I: **And is that, sort of, enshrined in some strategy document type thing?**

R: I'm not sure what it says nationally, but certainly, it's been a priority within our area plan. We're just looking at the 18, 19 plan at the moment so I don't know whether it's going to be in there or not because I think... It's one of those things where it's been a priority and perhaps there's a thought now that, "Does it need to be a priority in the sense that it's kind of a given." It's something that we would support anyway, so it doesn't need to be a priority in that, you know, everyone knows that it's a kind of things that we would want to see happening and all the reasons are demonstrated.

I: **Okay.**

R: So, then in terms of nationally, I'm not sure how it's articulated, but [ACE1] might be able to tell you.

I: **Okay. And is there a document that would have that?**

R: Don't know. Don't know. Oh, in terms of the Art in Unexpected Places?

I: **Yes. Yes.**

R: Don't know. I would have to check.

I: **Okay.**

R: Yes. I mean it is in the area plan but in terms of what's –

I: **So, that's the North area plan.**

- R: – publicly accessible, I don't know. I would have to... Yes,
- I: **Okay. Because [NT] was able to... [They] sent me some document, a National Trust document; I don't know whether you'll be able to do that. Just for research purposes, I mean. I can maybe follow that up later.**
- R: Okay. Yes.
- I: **So, are 'Unexpected Places' and things like... If I said the word "Heritage" within that umbrella, what would you –**
- R: What would we understand by that?
- I: **– understand by that?**
- R: Yes. I think it's built heritage or former built heritage, but again... Yes, that's kind of a subset of this, I suppose, this Art in Unexpected Places. And I think it does call up the Heritage Agency's because they're custodians of a lot of the built heritage
- I: **So, that National Trust?**
- R: Yes. Yes.
- I: **Others?**
- R: Well, National Trust is the one we've got the MoU with and English Heritage, we don't have an MoU with, but obviously we have supported a lot of activity at English Heritage properties, a while ago now –
- I: **Yes, we'll come back to that.**
- R: Yes, and you know potentially other agencies that are in charge of the built heritage really.
- I: **Does that include things that might happen in churches, for example?**
- R: Yes. Yes. I mean... Yes. Buildings that local authorities still have. I suppose there's less of that now, but some of the buildings might be local authority.
- I: **Okay. What about, because there's this other parallel stuff going on, like Meeting Point, those sorts of things. So, museums, does that fit under this unexpected places heritage thing or is a museum separate? Do you think of that separately?**
- R: I would say it's overlapping, isn't it?
- I: **Yes.**
- R: Because it's, you know, behind it, it's got the same idea about reaching different audiences and at the same type, it's opportunities for artists to work in new

context and... So, it's part of the same thing, really. I think Art in Unexpected Places is just a handy definition when we're talking about it, you know, in context of area planning. So, the museums work has been funded through museum strategic funding, so that's Museum Resilience fund, which is no more, but there were two rounds in which Arts&Heritage got funding to do that and that was about trying to... I guess it's two things really. It's about helping the small museums reach new audiences, but also it obviously has a knock on with their resilience. And its small to medium sized museums are the ones where they don't have the capacity, they don't have the expertise. And often, they're the ones that maybe apply cold into Grants for the Arts for a project and they might get rejected because it's not been developed with the skills and knowledge and the learning from that project might not get passed on or shared any more widely.

So that funding, that investment is about trying to develop this museum development funding to address that gap in knowledge and skills and to help them identify ways in which engaging with contemporary art can actually help their overall resilience, which is one of the key priorities in terms of support for museums.

I: When did Arts Council take on that museums' responsibility?

R: Oh, gosh. Was that 2010, 11? Something like that.

I: Yes. Maybe.

R: I think it was, yes. Around that time.

I: These are mainly... We talked about the, sort of, strategic areas where our Arts Council wants us to work in partnership, is this –

R: Sorry, just to go back –

I: Yes, yes.

R: – to your previous point. Just to clarify. Arts Council took on responsibility for museums around that time 2010, 11, but the museums that we fund through that, through NPO and NPM, are accredited museums.

I: Okay.

R: And this programme, the Museums Resilience Programme, is really about helping those that aren't already... You know, so it's the –

I: (Over-speaking 00:11:41) accredited. Yes. Okay.

R: – smaller museums. Yes. Yes, you know that's what the museums strategic resilience fund, a lot of that and the funding that we give to museum development providers is about support for the rest of the museum economy.

I: Okay. [Pause 00:11:57 - 00:12:02].And this idea about Arts in Unexpected Places, does that come into, say, artists or arts organisations or people who

are applying to Grants for the Arts, rather than going through strategic funds, is that also equally priority there?

R: Yes. I mean, yes, I would say... Yes. Yes.

I: But might not be going forward? It's just because it's –

R: I think it would still be an area of interest, it just might not be articulated as a priority in our planning, but that doesn't mean to say it's no longer a priority. It's just that it doesn't need to be a priority in the planning because it's, kind of, happening, you know.

I: It doesn't need to be because it's developed –

R: Yes. Exactly. Because it's moving forward in other ways and we're supporting Arts&Heritage and encouraging [S.I Gfray 00:12:51] perhaps other things need to come to the fore, that's all.

I: Tell me about.... Arts&Heritage, obviously I've talked to them, but your perspective on it. They're now a strategic support organisation –

R: Yes.

I: – for this area of practice?

R: Yes. Yes.

I: How long has that got the MPO thing?

R: It's four years.

I: Four years.

R: Yes. And yes, sorry just going back to clarify –

I: Yes, yes, yes. No, keep going... Yes, I know, yes absolutely. Yes, yes.

R: – the thing about it not being a priority, I suppose, that's me speculating. I have no idea. It's in there at the minute, so it might still be a written priority. Yes. Okay, so yes Arts&Heritage, SSO –

I: Yes, sorry, yes. SSO, yes. Since –?

R: 1822 from April next year.

I: Okay. To 22.

R: Subject to them, you know... They've got this conditional offer all the NPOs and SSOs get conditional offers and then they have to produce a business plan. That's what they're all doing now.

I: Are there other NPOs or SSOs in that, kind of contemporary art and heritage sector? Is that Arts&Heritage the only one?

R: I think they're the only SSO. I mean there are museum development providers, which will become SSOs in the same way. So, at the moment the way in which museums are funded there are the regular funding for organisations, which was MPM, it's going to become NPO, it's nice and straightforward. And museum development providers, which were funded out of separate discretionary funds, museum discretionary funds, they are now going to become SSOs. So Arts&Heritage is an SSO alongside all the museum development providers, which are across the whole, you know, they're mutually based.

I: Can you give me an example?

R: For instance, [Name], is based at TWAM, [their role, [they're] the Museum Development Officer –

I: I see. Okay.

R: – and I think this is right, that TWAM received funding. Part of their funding was for their museum development provider role and then there's somebody in the North West, somebody in Yorkshire, so somebody in each region.

I: Based in the museum that you're funding?

R: Not necessarily based in a museum. Often they are based in museum services, yes, but not all of them, I don't think. So, they're going to transfer over onto this... You know, it's a technical thing really. We would expect, and Arts&Heritage are expecting that they will work very closely with museum development providers because they're the kind of eyes and ears on the ground about the sector at that level, what their needs are and who's the best fit for who they should be working with.

I: Okay, well let's go back in time and then work up to the present day. When I was thinking about this, I was thinking about you because obviously there's Trust New Art, which has been in existence, my understanding since about 2009.

R: Right.

I: Seems to be. And there seems to be a bit of work before that in National Trust, leading up to that. But I remember when I was here at Arts Council there was Inside Out at Cragside –

R: Yes –

I: – which was 2006.

R: – and that was Gfray.

- I: Yes. And [s.I writing 00:16:22 - 00:16:28] there was also obviously there was all the English Heritage work that [A&H1] had done –**
- R:** Yes. And that was via and RFO –
- I: Okay.**
- R:** – funding, so the predecessor to NPO. We gave money to English Heritage and they delivered the programme –
- I: Can you remember the date that...? Obviously, I've got it somewhere.**
- R:** [A&H1] will know.
- I: I've got a big spreadsheet of it all.**
- R:** Yes, it even goes to before I came... I started. It's actually [A&H2] really that I think... and so originally, wasn't it? [A&H2] worked for Northumberland County Council and developed the programme at Berwick on the Barracks and essentially the RFO programme, sort of, started in Berwick and then expanded to Belsay and became, you know, what we funded through the RFO.
- I: Was it the Berwick Ramparts Project?**
- R:** Berwick... Yes. Berwick...
- I: No, Gymnasium –**
- R:** Yes. Ramparts first and then the Gymnasium fellowships, I think.
- I: Because Berwick Ramparts was 1996, Year of Visual Arts, wasn't it?**
- R:** That makes sense, yes. Because I think, I think we started funding English Heritage around, like '97 or something like that, but [A&H1] will know.
- I: Okay. Yes. So, stuff at Berwick Ramparts was under [A&H2] Northern Arts?**
- R:** Yes. I'm not sure obviously because of whether [they] ... I think [they were] still the local authority arts officer when we funded it originally. Maybe it was like an individual project. I mean maybe the Ramparts thing that you're thinking of in 1996, perhaps that came after our project. I don't know, you'll need to... Yes
- I: Yes. Yes. Okay. Well, [A&H2]s on my list of... If I can persuade [them] to –**
- R:** Yes. Yes. So I don't know the exact sequence but it started in Berwick essentially and then it developed from there to –
- I: To... then to Belsay.**
- R:** That's when [A&H1] did the Living at Belsay thing, which was part of 1996.

I: That's right. And the other thing that was in that year that people talk about, which was the thing at the Bowes Museum.

R: Oh, that thing. Yes. A Private View, it was called.

I: Yes.

R: Yes. God, I remember that, yes.

I: Yes. It's interesting.

R: Yes. No, Yes. I don't know what the funding was for that.

I: I don't know what that was.

R: Yes, but it wouldn't have been Grants for the Arts, obviously.

I: Because there was that money, the visual arts, –

R: There was money for –

I: – whatever there was for that.

R: – the Year of Visual Arts. Yes. Yes. So, I presume Northern Arts funded it, yes.

I: I have to go back into the archives or something for that.

R: Yes. I mean they were very much Private View and then more recently the Craggside thing. They were one-off projects. But certainly, for a long time, you know, the programme at Belsay and Berwick was our, kind of, main investment in the North East. I'm not sure about... I know in the North West there was the Tatton Biennial.

I: Yes. Yes. But that's National Trust, isn't it?

R: Yes.

I: Yes.

R: So, they worked with those two curators, Danielle Arnaud and...

I: Jordan –

R: Yes. Jordan Kaplan, was it?

I: Yes. Yes.

R: Jordan Kaplan.

I: Yes. Yes. Yes, yes.

R: And they did that for a few years, didn't they?

I: **Yes. I think there was maybe two or three of them.**

R: Yes.

I: **Yes. They're on my list of people to follow-up.**

R: Yes. And then the English Heritage that we funded in the North East was through RFO and it would have been from about the end of the '90s through till about, I think it was about 2010, 2011. That ceased basically because English Heritage got massive cuts to their funding and it was the only programme of its kind, within the whole of English Heritage. It was a bit of an unusual way of working for them. So, yes, their funding got cut and they just couldn't carry on, so they didn't apply for the RFO funding at that point. They didn't apply to carry it on. So, yes, it all stopped.

I: **Yes. Was that...? So, Belsay was unique for English Heritage?**

R: Yes.

I: **And was that programme unique for Arts Council across the country?**

R: In terms of it being funded through RFO?

I: **No, just that relationship with English Heritage?**

R: I think it possibly was, yes. I'm not totally... I'm not sure. I'm not sure. Because I know there were things in the South West, you know, National Trust projects, but again whether they were individual projects or whether there was a regular other kind of funding relationship, I'm not sure.

I: **No. How would I find that out?**

R: Don't know.

I: **Don't know?**

R: Don't know.

I: **From (unclear 00:21:38).**

R: Yes, because everybody has gone, you know –

I: **I know.**

R: – that's the thing.

I: **It's all changed, hasn't it?**

R: In the Midlands, we have funded... in the Midlands, National Trust were working with a curator, who's that? This isn't as far back as when we funded English Heritage. Oh God, who was it?

I: **We can come back?**

R: Yes, I can't remember. There were instances round the country of there were relationships with National Trust. Whether there were any relationships with English Heritage, I don't know for sure, but I doubt it.

I: **Yes.**

R: I think if there were any kind of funding activity in heritage context it would have been National Trust and I suspect they were just project... they were supported through project funding rather than regular funding.

I: **Okay. Was there any, kind of, evaluation or any kind of reports and things that came out of those –**

R: No idea,

I: **– English Heritage? Was there no –?**

R: Berwick was evaluated, I think. You did it, didn't you?

I: **Yes. I think I did it.**

[Laughter]

I: **But that was the residences. I think I did. Yes. Yes.**

R: Yes, I don't think there was any evaluation of Belsay, no.

I: **No?**

R: No.

I: **Okay. But there's lots of... Maybe I did do that? I did do that. I definitely did Berwick.**

R: Yes, you did Berwick, yes.

I: **But no other, kind of, evaluation outside of what you would normally just do and reporting back?**

R: Yes. Yes. Yes, and whether English Heritage has any of their own evaluation, I don't know, I mean, I think evaluation standards, just generally, is more, you know, they're more robust and... Yes.

I: **It's modern and it's become more an internal process –**

R: People can see the value of it, perhaps more than they did in the past.

I: **Yes. It used to be a consultant coming in and, like me, doing that.**

R: I think... Well, English Heritage, I mean the sort of information that they would have collected probably would have been mostly around visitors because that's, kind of... their interest was obviously in getting membership up. I think most of their data would have been around that rather than, kind of, any evaluation of the projects –

I: **Impact on the artworks.**

R: Sorry, yes or any impact on the artists or anything like that. I doubt it. Well, [EH1] still works for English Heritage but [their] role has completely changed. [They're] based in the South West now. The [person] at English Heritage now is called [Name].

I: **Yes. [The'yre] on our –**

R: [They're] on your –

I: **Yes. Yes.**

R: – hit list, [are they]?

I: **Yes, yes. No, no. [They're] on our advisory group.**

R: Oh, [are they] e?

I: **Yes.**

R: [They] just wasn't –

I: **But I don't think he's been at the meetings you –**

R: Oh, okay.

I: **– the meeting you were at.**

R: Yes. Yes.

I: **I think [they] came to the first one.**

R: Right. Yes. Yes, so they may or may not have any of that data.

I: **Okay.**

R: I don't know.

I: **So, we've got this, sort of, emerging story, which seems to... It's hard thinking even back to '96, –**

R: It is.

I: – but before that. It's like it seems to have emerged from this... Visual Arts UK seems to have been fairly influential, in some ways. In terms of making these –

R: Visual Arts UK? What do you mean?

I: **Visual Arts UK, yes. The 1996 year –**

R: Oh, sorry, yes.

I: – has a sort of starting point for some of these things.

R: Yes. I mean I suppose it was a starting point for a lot of things in terms of the North East, you know. It kick started a lot of visual arts things, didn't it? So, yes, I guess that was one of the things, yes.

I: **Yes. But do you feel that this Contemporary Art and Heritage thing has, sort of, maybe grew from the North East examples into a National thing? Does anybody see it like that?**

R: No. I think, if anything it's, kind of a strength of the North, but not denying that there was activity happening in other parts of the country, like the South West and the Midlands.

I: **Yes.**

R: But I think in the North we do see it as a strength in terms of, kind of, track record, I suppose. And also, I think it's to do with the geography, isn't it? You know, there are a lot of museums and heritage properties in places where there's not much else.

I: **Yes. Yes. Not like London where it's just full of galleries.**

R: So, there's a lot of opportunity there for artists and for our audiences and things. And the people who run them, run those properties.

I: **Okay. And tell me about the Canals & Rivers Trust. Because obviously we've got our... It's a very difficult area to define what this Contemporary Art and Heritage thing is. And obviously in our project we're doing specific things, specific commissions at, you know, Gibside, Cherryburn and Holy Trinity Church at the core of it but... and there's an overlap with outdoor arts type stuff. Where does the Canal & Rivers Trust, because it's obvious you've got two things going on. You've got the historic built environment of the canals and its buildings and then you've got the, sort of, landscape around that. How does that –?**

R: Yes. Well, I mean I'm not involved in that one in detail but I think, yes both of those aspects are important.

I: Do you see a blend of that as well in heritage properties?

R: Yes, I guess we... I mean we don't tend to look at it as a one or the other thing. It just depends on the project and the property and what the opportunities are. Yes.

I: Yes. Yes Okay. So, that's a[n] [ACE1]–?

R: In terms of CRT?

I: Yes.

R: Yes, yes. [They] might be able to tell you a bit more.

I: And who...? Is it [CRT]?

R: As far as I know it still is [CRT], yes.

I: Yes.

R: Another Arts Council person.

I: I know. Because [their] name's been mentioned in terms of setting up the MoU.

R: Yes, could possibly be. Yes. Yes.

I: Okay. I keep getting CCT and CRT all muddled up.

R: CRT, which is –

I: Yes. Yes. Okay, so beyond the projects that we've talked about, are there any sort of standout projects in this field of Contemporary Art and Heritage in England? Things that Arts Council have been involved in or things that you know of that you think are kind of standout projects for just interest or quality, or ones which have been particularly influential? We've talked about some historically but, –

R: Yes. Well, I think the programme at Belsay's pretty... –

I: Yes.

R: – been a standout really in terms of, you know, the calibre of... We're not just artists that [A&H1] brought, but you know, it's was all sorts of –

I: Designers and –

R: – people from, kind of, the world of designing in its broader sense really and [they] managed to persuade them to come and do something. And I suppose that says something about how artists are attracted to working in a heritage context, because it's, kind of, different from a normal context.

I: Okay. Could you just say a bit more about that? How artists are attracted to that?

R: I don't know what else there is to say, but I mean I think... Certainly when [A&H1] and [CRT] have run these Meeting Point sessions, you know, where they bring museums together with artists and they pitch, they're really well attended. There is always a very strong interest from artists and art organisations in what they can do, and I think it's partly that there aren't, you know, there is that thing about museums or heritage organisations, not necessarily knowing how to go about appointing an artist and vice versa. How does an artist approach? So, it's intriguing, isn't it? There's a huge, kind of, rich source for artists to respond to. That's what they have in their minds, I suppose. A lot of it is they don't necessarily know how to go about approaching a museum or a heritage space and so, yes that's why the development work's really important.

I: Yes. Yes. And do you see it from, because obviously Arts Council has got this dual role of working with arts organisations at a strategic level but also you've got artists and smaller arts organisations coming in and curating for projects, so are there particular support things that artists need? Or have ever come through in conversations about projects?

R: Yes. Well, I mean I think that's the, sort of, dual role that an organisation like Arts&Heritage delivers because they are the intermediary between... You know, they understand where the artist's coming from and they understand where the museums are coming from and it's, kind of, their job to help navigate a relationship between the two and clarify expectations and help understanding rules of engagement, if you like. Sorry, I forgot what the question was.

I: That's all right. I probably have as well. Do you think the scope of the...? If we said that this work had a sort of history, say '96 is the beginning of that history, do you think the scope of the practice in Contemporary Art and Heritage has changed or developed or gone down different routes? Would you see it as evolving in some way or is it more or less the same now as it was then? What's changed? Has anything changed?

R: Well, I think it changes as the understanding, particularly on the commissioning side, changes. So, when the commissioning organisation gets more experience, I guess, you know, the level of ambition changes, doesn't it?

I: Yes.

R: But there is a, sort of, journey so I think we understand that for some organisations doing something really ambitious might not be a first step. In that sense, there's an evolution, isn't there, that each particular commissioning organisation might need to go on, depending on where they are when they start. In terms of whether practice has changed. Oh gosh. I mean I think it has probably changed in the same way that practice generally has changed, which is a kind of cop out answer, really.

I: What, in terms of media?

R: Well, media. Yes I guess that's part of it. Because I suppose you know you've got the constraints of a heritage site, so the possibilities of working in digital media open up all sorts of projects that might not have been considered or be possible before. That's good for heritage sites where you can't put anything into the walls or build anything. Or we've got access as a constraint. I suppose that maybe people can enjoy the work remotely, so I suppose that's a good thing. I can't pick out something that's specific in terms of the type of work that's specific to heritage commissioning, other than I suppose technically what's now possible.

I: **Yes, and in that unexpected places, sort of, idea, is that –?**

R: Yes. Yes. It's like, oh you know... You've got what Arts&Heritage do but then you've got what November Club do, which is completely different and it's all kind of, about participation, isn't it?

I: **Yes.**

R: So, I suppose it's, you know, the possibilities continue to open up, in terms of what you can do.

I: **But also a sense that it's become... It was a, kind of, sort of, exceptional projects and now it's become –**

R: More common.

I: **– more normalised?**

R: I suppose, yes. It depends where you are in the country, I think. Because individual property might have... you know, it has its core audience and they might have no experience at all. And for them, it's still near, isn't it? Even though down the road there might be something that's been going for years and has a very developed programme. So, I think it depends.

I: **Do you have a sense of where it might be going to next or in the future?**

R: [Laughter]. Who knows?

I: **Who knows? Who knows?**

R: Who knows? I mean I suppose it's, kind of, the openness of those people who are doing the commissioning and of the artists to work together and it's their confidence, isn't it? The more confident they become the more experienced then I guess they can do anything if they want to and the budgets there, of course. It has to be in the budget.

I: **Well, the budget's –**

R: I mean, I think, probably from a National Trust point of view what has changed is the, sort of... there's been a shift and it's been to do with how they run their business, is an acknowledgement that engaging with commissioning can actually

help you with your business resilience, I suppose and them acknowledging that that's how you talk... If you talk about it in those terms, then it's easier to have a conversation with a property that hasn't done it before. So, the way they structured all their business planning, you know, that's how... You know, where probably previous to that discussions would be about an individual project and then someone would have to convince the property owner that it was a good idea. But I think now that's been established to a greater extent, that kind of acknowledgement, that there is a value in it. Not to say that individual properties still need to fully understand and work out how it fits in with their individual business plan, but National Trust have these, sort of, over-arching strategies and priorities and there's now a place for cultural activity to fit into that, potentially, in the way they do their business plans.

I: Do you think the scope to bring English Heritage back into that, kind of, way of working –?

R: My understanding is that that's what English Heritage are now developing a new... Well they have, I think, developed a new cultural strategy.

I: So, there's talk about –?

R: Yes.

I: Yes.

R: And they're wanting to do projects now. They're planning projects now. They're planning a project at Belsay.

I: Yes. Okay.

R: So, they're coming back in, I think. Yes.

I: Yes. Okay. And are there any...? So, there's Churches Conservation Trust, are they...? What is their relationship with Arts Council?

R: I think it's very early days with that relationship because they haven't got a huge amount of experience in delivering commissioning and I think having that kind of experience demonstrates the level of commitment. So, we're still at that stage where they need to commit to some programme and then that –

I: Yes. Yes. Because I think when we first started putting this research project together, it was [Name].

R: That's right. They've had a change –

I: [They're] not there now.

R: – of Chief Exec and everything now. Yes. Yes. So, I'm not quite sure what their plans are and again [ACE1] might be able to tell you more.

- I: Okay. Are there...? Obviously National Trust and English Heritage are the major charities or organisations that we're looking at, are there any... and the Canals & River Trust is quite a new one, isn't it? Maybe that's another [ACE1] conversation really... other organisations in this field?**
- R:** Well, Forestry Commission is the other one.
- I: Forestry Commission.**
- R:** Yes.
- I: There's another things like the Historic Houses Association, Landmark Trust and all these other sorts of independent –**
- R:** Yes. I mean I suppose there are lots of independent trusts who are custodians of the heritage environment. Yes, potentially we could support them. Yes. We don't really have relationships. We might have individual relationships across and around the country but not any, kind of, strategic conversations that I'm aware of, but they could well be going on. I'm just not aware of them. I'm sure we would fund them. I'm sure there are projects like that, that get funded through Grants for the Arts.
- I: There probably are. Is there any kind of...? I can't remember now. There probably is, isn't there? There's a big spreadsheet sort of thing that you could have all the grants... It's on the Arts Council website somewhere, isn't it? Or is it just the...? I know I've come across a list of all the MPO type things.**
- R:** Yes.
- I: Is there an actual list of Grants for the Arts that one could search for heritage or something?**
- R:** I'm not sure. I'm not sure what's on there now. I think... I don't even know whether we would be able to search that data, you know, and pull out –
- I: Yes, exactly.**
- R:** – heritage because if they're not the applicant I don't... Do you see what I mean?
- I: Yes, so the applicant's either an artist or –**
- R:** Other than reading individual applications, which you couldn't possibly do because there would just be too many. I don't know how... I think you could probably... If you knew the names of the heritage organisations and again you've got a difficulty as well, because National Trust, individual properties can apply and National Trust can apply.
- I: Yes, yes. You would have to search –**
- R:** So, I think, unfortunately, it would be very difficult.

- I: **It's not like a tick box thing, where people might say, 'Where is this happening?' and you could say, it's a museum or a heritage property or something.**
- R: Yes, but I don't think, rather than physically going to read them all. It doesn't pull through.
- I: **No.**
- R: I mean I can ask the data team if there is any data about that. Actually, I mean [ACE1] might know.
- I: **Yes. Yes. It would be really interesting to know.**
- R: Yes. I just have a feeling that –
- I: **We're developing our database of projects of various different sources, but, yes it would be interesting to know whether there was more call or more applications coming in for that kind of stuff.**
- R: See, if the applicant is not a heritage organisation, if they're a partner it wouldn't pull through.
- I: **No.**
- R: If the activity... Yes. Yes. They would have to be the applicant and you would have to know who they are and, you know, you might not know that –
- I: **No, because it might be the name of a place.**
- R: Yes, exactly.
- I: **Yes. Okay.**
- R: So, I doubt it, but I'll check.
- I: **Okay. All right. The other thing we were thinking about doing, because as I said, we've been building... You know what we had at the beginning of the project was that audit that [A&H1], that Arts&Heritage did for Arts Council, which had about 300 projects on it. What we've done, is we've used that, we've incorporated that and then we've grown it. So, we've now got about 500 projects –**
- R: Right.
- I: **– on that list, but it's a mix. It's a real mix because we're not trying to define it too closely, just saying we're only looking at historic houses. So, we're looking at anything that might fall into that field. And it's not just England, there's a bit of Wales and Scotland, not much, the spread is mainly England. So, we're trying to grow that just from things we're reading or internet**

searches or things that people have said that come up in conversations, but what we might do... I think, did that come up at that meeting you were at? I think it did. We might do an open call –

R: Okay.

I: **– early next year, which would be really to say to curators, individual artists, arts organisations, have you initiated or have you been involved as a partner or whatever in a project that you would define as a Contemporary Art and Heritage project? We might say something, you know, that might be a museum or a country house or whatever. It could be like Hadrian's Wall –**

R: Could be, yes.

I: **– and there have been a few things. So, just to see if whether there's other stuff that we're not capturing, because ours is all commissions, commissioned work or residency's, things that have been organised from the top down. There's a few projects that may be arts organisations approaching property but there may be other things that other artists are doing that we haven't figured yet. I don't know whether Arts Council might have a role in us getting that open call out there.**

R: You mean, circulating it?

I: **Yes, circulating it. I don't know.**

R: Yes.

I: **As a call to the sector, kind of thing.**

R: Yes, I mean I could pass it on to my events...

I: **How does that work? Where could it go?**

R: Well, if you sent me an email I could forward it on to all the RM's around the country.

I: **Okay that would be brilliant.**

R: Just to forward on to their contacts. Notwithstanding latest data protection –

I: **I know.**

R: – about forwarding things on. But, yes if I can, I will.

I: **Okay. Well maybe we can talk later about logistics of that. That would be interesting. Yes, but we haven't got the capacity to go and talk to every... I mean, there's key people but I don't think we've got the capacity to... Because there's now five regions, is that right?**

R: Five areas.

I: Five areas, and you're suggesting that Midlands and the South West, apart from the North.

R: Yes. So in the Midlands you could talk to [ACE2]. I think [they] would be able to tell you about the National Trust.

I: [They're] the Relationship Manager?

R: Yes, and [they've] has been around for a fair while. In the South West, [ACE3's] been around for a long time. So, it's [first name spelled out]

U: [ACE3]. Yes, okay.

R: – and [ACE4].

I: Sounds familiar.

R: Yes. They've both been around for a while so they might be able to remember.

I: Yes. And then it's you here?

R: Yes. The other person in the Midlands is... Oh no, actually [ACE3], sorry, [ACE2] [they've] moved to the Brighton office but you can still... [They] still work[]s for Arts Council as an RM, [they] just work[] in Brighton now.

I: So, what's that South East?

R: Yes.

I: Okay.

R: So, [they] would –

I: But they've got that, kind of, history –?

R: – be able to tell you about the Midlands.

I: Okay.

R: The other person in the Midlands is [ACE5]. [They're, last name spelled out].

I: Okay.

R: It's interesting because you're talking about a period where Arts Council regions didn't really get together and share information, so it's only what you, kind of, pick up anecdotally about what was happening.

I: Yes. Yes. Because what we're trying to do is also put a bit of a timeline of the development of this sector and because we're based in the North East, we kind of get a bit of North East... I mean that's what we know, but obviously that could give us a distorted picture –

R: I know. Yes. Yes.

I: – if we don't pick up some other stuff.

R: I'm sure there'll be a lot of activity in other parts of the country.

I: **What are the other areas? London, no –**

R: London is one.

I: – **East?**

R: Yes. South West –

I: **Yes, I've got that. So, there's East –**

R: So there's the North, then there's London and South West, Midlands and it must be South East.

I: **South East which –**

R: London is separate.

I: **Yes. So, it must be South East.**

R: South East.

I: **What's Norfolk?**

R: Yes.

I: **East Midlands?**

R: I think... Yes, no.

I: **I can look up the map. It's fine.**

R: It must be...

I: **It's East. It's South East and East. Maybe it's South East and East.**

R: South and East together, yes. It must be.

I: **Yes, it must be. Rather than South East.**

R: I'm hesitating because I've just had a funny feeling that South East doesn't exist anymore, but yes.

I: **Don't worry. I can look it up. That's fine. That's fine.**

R: I'm going to look it up on the internet now.

I: **That's okay. So, we've got another five minutes.**

R: I'm embarrassed.

I: **Let me just revise my questions here.**

R: Okay, and I will –

I: **See if there's anything we've missed off. [Reads 00:49:03 - 00:49:07] I think we've probably covered... I mean in terms of... From what you know, beyond Arts&Heritage, beyond Danielle Arnaud who you mentioned are there any other arts organisations or curators who are, kind of, strong in this field?**

R: I think there are lots of organisations. So, York Museums Trust, Chrysalis. I'm not saying that any, you know, I'm not commenting on the quality –

I: **No, no, no.**

R: – I'm just saying that –

I: **Active, yes.**

R: Yes. I think Meadow Arts was another one.

I: **Yes, yes. Yes.**

R: [Thinks 00:49:58 - 00:50:03] I'm sure there's loads of others.

I: **Probably. I mean I've got... I'm just interested to see what you came up with.**

R: Yes. Yes.

I: **And what about curators?**

R: Individual curators?

I: **Yes.**

R: I don't know of individual curators other than Danielle Arnaud and [A&H1] really. Those are the two, and I know, I've just forgotten her name, but the curator who's working in the Midlands with National Trust there, but [A&H1] will know who it is.

I: **Okay. Okay.**

R: That's just old age. Can't remember any names anymore.

I: **No, I can't either. Terrible.**

R: It's South East, Midlands, North and South. That's only four. And London.

I: **Yes, okay. Yes.**

R: Yes. North, Midlands, South East, London and South.

I: **Okay. Is there anything else you wanted, apart from what I've asked so far, is there anything else you wanted to add or things I haven't touched on that you think are important to say?**

R: I suppose, it's not really related to this historical research, but I suppose what I'm wondering just at the back about the project is what is going to come out of the research that's actually going to be useful for the sector, in terms of learning about audiences and learning about artists. I'm not entirely clear at the moment about what will come out of it. I don't know.

I: **Okay. What do you think the sector needs to know?**

R: I suppose I'm not totally clear yet what the research questions are. I know that, sort of, from a broad sense it's going to be looking at the impact on the audience experience and broadly the impact on artists experience. But I suppose I don't know yet what are the specific questions that the research is looking at in relation to the development of artists practice and I suppose also about what's the specific learning going to be around audience engagement? Is it going to be focused around, for example, audiences who already attend and their experience once they are at the site? You know, I know the broad parameters of the project but I'm just wondering what the kind of specifics will be?

I: **Did we send you a copy of the [S.I AHSC 00:52:53] application? Because it has got some actual specific research questions in it.**

R: Has it? Right. Okay. No, I haven't seen that.

I: **You've not seen it?**

R: Well, I may have been sent it, but I haven't read it.

I: **I can send it again.**

R: I think that, from our perspective, that's what we're interested in. You know, what's the new research going to...? What new things are we going to learn from this, really, that's going to help the sector and help artists?

I: **I mean we had a conversation with National Trust just earlier this week, I think it was early this week or last week, about this focus group, the audience research part of it. The part that's part of our research project is this idea of researching audiences through focus groups of which we had four focus groups. And the idea is, we recruit four focus groups, which are each slightly different in their make-up, and we take each of those four focus groups to see the four artworks and we do a pre-meeting with those**

people to find out their general perspective on art and then they'll engage with the artwork.

The idea is that we have one group which are very engaged people, so they're heritage volunteers from at least... from the two... from the National Trust sites and if we can get them from the Church site, there's little engagement that's just difficult to trial. So, they'll be very engaged and knowledgeable people, really heritage people. And then arts attendants, so people who regularly go to BALTIC or Laing or whatever. Then we have other people who are engaged heritage attenders but who aren't as engaged as the volunteer sector. Then we have a fourth group which is the kind of non-attend... sort of, people who would go to a gallery or a kind of heritage visit, which might be a specific kind of group and that would probably be based on connections that the university already has. So, that's the focus group stuff and we've got a tiny bit of extra money to do a little bit of on-site, sort of, (over-speaking 00:55:23) –

R: (Over-speaking 00:55:23).

I: –type of stuff with just people who are visiting. It's based on something I did at Discovery Museum, so it's like door-stepping people who have obviously, you can see they've engaged somehow with the artwork and then asking them, just there on the spot a few questions about that. So, that's really not deep research it's a kind of an add on. That's our mechanisms for doing that, but you're right, what actually comes out of that... I think what we're trying to get at is that actual... What is it the engagement with an artwork in that setting and what does that do for the audience? Which we feel is the bit that's slightly missing from the National... I know they've been doing... They have a questionnaire thing about the Trust New Art sites and there's the National Visitors Survey type thing they do and the work that they're doing with the Audience Agency. We're not trying to replicate any of that.

I mean obviously we know about that, so there might be certain questions, which map across, but... Yes, so it's that. What is it about the artwork? Why do that? And why this artwork? And what does that do? Because there's... So, like a sound piece by Matt Stokes in church will be a very difference experience to seeing Andrew Burton's sculptural entities. So, that for us is interesting as well. How people, you know, it's not –

R: Expectations.

I: Yes. Expectations and actually how do you engage with a sound piece, which is durational as opposed to... And how do you engage with a sculptural thing and a landscape? So, I guess it's more that experiential level as well which is maybe the bit that's missing, but whether that's... How the sector can use that, because we want our research to be useful to the sector. But I think it's just the subtleties of understanding how these things work.

R: Yes. Yes. People's expectations and whether they're met or not.

I: Yes. And for the artist, what's it –?

R: In a good way or a bad way.

I: What's that about?

R: Yes. Yes.

I: And also about formats of practice as well. So, commissions as opposed to residences or other that might come up. And obviously the next thing, we've got another steering group meeting, which is in February. And I think the idea of that is that it begins to focus on ideas for the conference element. Because obviously they've got the commissions happening, spring, summer next year and there'll be a lot of research around that and the learning from that that we'll be absorbing and then in the third year, 2019, we've got a conference, probably a two-day conference and also an exhibition which we're negotiating with the Hatton Gallery. So, there's quite a lot more that can come out of that and I know that National Trust are organising a joint conference with (over-speaking 00:58:30) –

R: Oh, yes. They mentioned that. Is that next year?

I: Canal & Rivers Trust. Yes, next year. In the South West, which is quite good for us up here. So, the learning for the sector is not just the actual on the ground research stuff we're doing, I think there'll also be benefits from these other... Certainly from the conference, in terms of being able to present other stuff that's going on and learn from others, you know that sort of exchange is what we want to do. Also from this mapping element, what is the size of this sector and where has it come from and where is it going are there some changes within it that you can map when you've got a whole list of projects to look at? You can see things happening which maybe you can't see happening and it's balancing against what's this field doing and the learning from individual properties when people... It's a new person every five years and you've got to learn it again, kind of thing, but hence the practice change. I think there's quite a lot there. It's not just about the visitor. Whether that's important and the artist experience (unclear 00:59:36).

R: Yes. Yes. Okay.

I: That's our hour.

R: Is it?

I: Is there anything else you wanted to say? I think so. According to your clock. Yes.

R: I mean I suppose, you asked me about how things had changed, was the other thing that's probably changed is the proliferation of outdoor work. It's become much more common, isn't it? So, I suppose audiences... probably their understanding and their engagement has developed. Of those that have engaged

it's, you know, less unusual, I suppose, these certain types of outdoor work are very... like, light vessels and things like that, very common now so it's maybe not so unexpected.

I: Yes. Is that a good thing or is it a bad thing?

R: Oh, I think it's a good thing. Yes. I mean obviously yes.

I: It's a good thing.

R: Yes. In the sense that more audiences get the opportunity to enjoy great art.

I: Yes. Sure. Yes, yes. Yes.

R: Yes. Yes.

I: Because I think there is that thing about the unexpected, is that when it ceases to be... you know, when you go into a National Trust property and it's, you know, you understand when you go to Cragside, yes you might encounter a piece of contemporary art alongside it, that might be quite normal. Every time you go to Cragside there seems to be some new thing there, you know –

R: Yes, I suppose that's about how they manage the site, isn't it? Manage people's expectations because then you create an expectation for the next thing and the next thing, don't you?

I: Yes. Yes. Whether you start to get certain types of artworks, which are commissioned for –

R: Maybe. Yes.

I: – these things and so it's kind of... I think that's the difference between the field. Thinking, well, okay that's... you know we've had quite a lot of temporary pavilions, and they're all startling and different in themselves, but in terms of the idea of having something like contemporary architecture, maybe that's not such a new idea –

R: Yes. Yes.

I: – for the field.

R: Yes. Yes. So expectations, maybe, have changed –

I: Yes.

R: – where there's a kind of long history and I suppose there's still the organisations that have never done it before. And for that, their audience it's still new and novel but where there is a, sort of, programme that's established, then it's different, isn't it?

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I: Yes.

R: Yes. It's all good though.

I: Good. Happy with that –

R: I think so.

I: – for now? Okay. Good.

[End of Recording]