Issue Highlights:

- The *Then & Now* project retrospective, reflections & impact
- Arts, cultural management and student-led research
- Co-creation, pedagogic practice and student experience
- Inclusivity within the academy
- Lessons from history on university's societal role
- Oral history and remote working practices

Exchanges is a scholar-led, peer-reviewed, diamond open access, interdisciplinary, online-only journal dedicated to the publication of high-quality work by researchers in all disciplines for a broad scholarly audience. No author fees or subscription charges are levied, and contributors retain their author rights. Since 2013, the title has attracted innovative research articles, critical essays and interviews from emerging domain experts and early career researchers globally. The title also publishes scholarly work by practitioner authors and independent scholars.

A Managing Editor-in-Chief based at the University of Warwick oversees development, policy and production, while an international Editorial Board comprised of early career researchers provide advice and practically contribute to editorial work. Associate editors are recruited to participate in producing specific special themed issues. Exchanges usually publishes two issues annually, although additional special themed issues are periodically commissioned in collaboration with other scholars.

Exchanges' twin missions are to encourage intellectual exchange and debate across disparate research communities, along with developing academic authorial and editorial expertise. These are achieved through providing a quality assured platform for disseminating research publications for and by explicitly cross-disciplinary audience, alongside ensuring a supportive editorial environment helping authors and editors develop superior academic writing and publishing skills. Achieving enhanced contributor esteem, visibility and recognition within these broader scholarly communities is a further goal.

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Through the Looking Backwards Glass: Editorial, Volume 8, Part 4

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In some ways, writing gets easier the more you do it, because the more you do it, the more you learn that it's really not as risky as you fear. You have a history on which to draw for self confidence, you have a believable reputation among a wider number of people whom you can call on the phone, and best of all, you have demonstrated to yourself that taking the risk can be worth it. (**Richards, 2020: 108**)

Introduction

Welcome to the nineteenth edition of *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, and our second special issue of 2021. If this is your first issue of *Exchanges*, then welcome, it is always lovely to have new readers. Conversely, if you are one of our growing number of regular readers, then you are equally welcome back with us once more.

Back From the Future

Unusually enough this is the third issue of *Exchanges* published this year, which considering we are only halfway through 2021 at the time of writing, is somewhat of a delight. That at least one further issue is anticipated to appear this calendar year forms an equally appetising prospect for myself and the editorial team. This edition you are currently reading represents the latest in our continuing series of special issues. Each special issue of *Exchanges* was initiated by an approach from an academic or academics external to the journal, as a route to celebrate, champion or otherwise highlight a particular domain of scholarship to our readers (**Exchanges, 2021a**).

For this issue we are for once firmly in the hands of scholars associated with our publishing institution of the University of Warwick, somewhat of a happy eventuality. As with all our special issues, this publication has followed a moderate incubation period during which answering questions concerning author recruitment, necessary editorial labour and post-publication promotion have formed as much a part of its gestational matrix as discussions concerning its scope and contents. Those eager to learn more about this process are encouraged to listen to an episode of

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The Exchanges Discourse wherein I tackle the genesis of special issues in some greater depth (**Exchanges, 2020**).

Now, those who have heard me speak about our associate editors will already know how proud I am of this development in recent years. This is both in respect to the journal helping to develop early career scholars along with the particular insights and practical contributions associate editors bring to the journal's operations (**Johnson 2021a & b**). This time I am especially pleased to note we have been dipping our editorial toes into the waters of supporting a mixed community of scholars and students firmly based at Warwick. While the remit for *Exchanges* continues to be to invite and embrace the scholastic world as contributors, it feels deeply gratifying on those occasions when we are able to support initiatives at our primary host institution. Even if, under normal circumstances, it denies any opportunity for any exotic trips abroad for your Editor-in-Chief!

Looking back today it feels, appropriately enough, that this issue was first initiated in the *Then* of a different historical epoch: the pre-COVID-19 pandemic period. Way back in January 2020, not long after *Exchanges* had relocated to its new campus offices, I participated in a preliminary meeting with the original lead for the *Then & Now* project, Dr Kathryn Woods. Reflecting back to that very positive encounter, hosted within a crowded university refectory, it is curious to consider how the vast bulk of this issue was conducted in the *Now* where further physical encounters were effectively *verboten*. Certainly, it has been some time since I have personally been at any gatherings of more than a mere handful of close associates. This is a shame, as characteristically I prefer to celebrate special issue launches with social gatherings. Perhaps this is something to aspire too on that happy future date when *Exchanges* is working once more in the heart of Warwick's beautiful campus!

That there has been a roughly eighteen-month period from this meeting to publication is perhaps worthy of minor note. My rule of thumb for the production of special issues from past experience suggests a period of between twelve to eighteen months from instigation to publication within *Exchanges* current resource. Certainly, this issue's production seems to have strongly adhered to this normative standard, although there were moments when I thought we might have it produced sooner. Such a lead time to production standard is worthy of note for any readers who might be contemplating any such future collaborative endeavour.

In terms of this issue's theme, you can read more about the *Then & Now* project in our articles, as detailed below, alongside the myriad of supplementary materials available online (**Warwick, 2020**). I would be remiss in my interlocutionary role were I not to heartily commend all of our readers to do just that. Hence, I will not belabour these elements here.

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Instead, what I would like to briefly stress was the excitement of opening up our journal to a wider scholastic range of potential contributors than is typical for our title.

Exchanges idealised target contributor audience remains, as always, early career researchers, however they might self-identify or perceive themselves (**Exchanges, 2021b**). Indeed, I enjoyed a spirited debate during my recruitment interview with the panel on the importance of appealing to as broader a contributing audience as possible for the long-term prognosis of the journal. I stand by my comments today as I did then, that *Exchanges* should embody an *inclusivity* rather than *exclusivity* in terms of the pools of authorial talent in which it fishes. Consequently, we have, before and during my own tenure, certainly published work from far more established researchers. This is most commendable, and perhaps even thrilling for the less-seasoned authors we publish to see their work appearing alongside these more luminary figures.

What was different about the call though for this *Then & Now* associated special issue, was how for the first time we explicitly extended an invite to taught students. Naturally, during my engagements with the potential contributors I stressed their work would need to undergo the same degree of scrutiny and review as any contributor. I note this in case anyone reading this was concerned we might have considered lowering our quality bar. We most certainly did not! Disappointingly though, fewer students took us up on the offer to contribute and I hope the 'fear of review scrutiny' was not chief among the barriers. Perhaps, as Stone's piece suggests, the project continues in some form, a future issue of *Exchanges* may be graced by future participants' contributions. Certainly though, lessons will be drawn from these editorial experiences and applied within any future special issue collaborations reaching out to the more junior ranks of the academy.

Nevertheless, I am exhilarated that some students did respond positively to our invitation. Accordingly, you can enjoy what will for some comprises their first professional, scholarly publications in this issue. I am also hopeful that some of the students who did not feel able to contribute to this particular issue might feel inspired to perhaps submit a piece to our 'sister' journal *Reinvention*. I am almost certain they would be very warmly welcomed contributions there.

Now, since I am sure few of our readers are breathless with anticipation for a more prolonged editorialising, let us move along to the articles contained in this special *Then & Now* issue.

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Papers

The journal's main contents begin, appropriately enough, with an introduction to the project behind this special issue, by two of the key figures involved. Kathryn Woods and Pierre Botcherby offer us an overview of the project and its activities, alongside considering how it relates to research into the student experience. In this latter respect the piece also provides a brief historiography in this field. Notably, this piece resonates with some of the analyses which follow ([1]).

Articles

We move on to our first peer-reviewed article, in which Josh Patel considers the *Breadth, 'National Needs', and Reimagining the Role of the University in Society*. Within this Patel explores the external influences which shaped and informed the University of Warwick's design of studies and original physical presence. Focussing on the leadership of its founding Vice-Chancellor, Lord Butterworth, Patel examines the reorientation of a higher education establishment to align more closely with pragmatic, business needs, than contemporary organisations. Patel argues how this underlying ideological alignment with the corporate was emblematic in Warwick's operations and external relationships and continues to resonate with the institution today ([9]).

Our second paper is from Lauren Sleight, and is entitled *Towards Inclusivity at the University of Warwick*. In this article, Sleight takes a deeper look at oral history interviews conducted with past staff and students from Warwick from earlier decades. Their experiences are then contrasted with the evolution of Warwick and the emergent institutional culture extant today. Sleight exposes how these experiences can contribute to current crucial discussions concerning inclusivity and accessibility, especially resonating within themes of gender, race, ethnicity and class. The paper contends that it appears while strides have been made with respect to gender equality, conversely aspects of class and race have seen fewer sustained changes. Hence, the paper postulates how further oral history endeavours could help to positively inform, enlighten and enable ongoing efforts towards greater institutional inclusivity and participation in the future ([34]).

Our final peer-reviewed piece is once more from Woods and Botcherby and considers the Then & Now Student Project as an act of *Co-creation in the COVID-19 crisis*. Alongside providing a project overview, the paper explores the underlying pedagogic practice and method deployed within its operation. It goes on to consider both the value and challenges emerging from an activity enmeshed within a student co-creation

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framework, alongside offering some evaluative insight into the student experiences and project outcomes (**55**).

Critical Reflections

Moving to our selection of critical reflective pieces we begin with Madeleine Snowdown's *Reflections on an artistic response to site and community*. The article takes as its centrepiece the *Afterimage* series of artworks, illustrated throughout, created by the author as part of their history of art degree programme. Snowdown's piece provides an insight into the creation and conceptualisation of these pieces, within their personal perceptual framework. The author continues by considering, in the light of the COVID restrictions and other external developments, how these eventualities have impacted on perceptions of the artworks themselves, and the statements they present concerning the built, institutional environment (**76**).

The next piece provides an insider's critical view on *Arts and cultural management and the shortcomings of student-led research projects*. Adopting an arts student's perspective, Elena Ruikytė explores the *Then & Now* project from a personal standpoint. Focussing especially on the project management processes, the author provides a contextual exploration concerning the role and deployment of art and cultural managers. In this way, they argue the *Then & Now* project demonstrably provides a framing for a deeper reflection and examination on the significance of this profession. Moreover, the value of the project in providing a crucible within which to consider issues such of these is spotlighted by the author (**87**).

Our third piece comes from Rebecca Stone, and is entitled *Scaling Up: The pedagogical legacy of Then & Now*. The article considers the impacts from the project, especially in terms of offering greater student opportunity. In this way it proposes routes to expand on the project into a recurrent programme of activities championing student-led arts and humanities research. Alongside this horizon-scanning view of the future, the paper also touches on the challenges delivering on the original project's envisaged range of activities, in the light of the COVID-19 operational restrictions (**99**).

Our special issue concludes with a final critical reflection. In this critical methods appraisal, Pierre Botcherby considers *Best Practice versus Reality* concerning remote interviewing in oral history, with respect to the Arts and the coronavirus restrictions. Botcherby considers how the unanticipated shifts to fully remote working have impacted on the acquisition of oral history subject interviews. The author explores their reconsiderations emerging from personal experiences have helped

demarcate an emergent remote-interviewing best practice during the pandemic era. They argue how such a method contrasts favourably with previously dominant physical 'face-to-face' practices. Hence, the piece proposes a greater flexibility should continue be embraced by practitioners even as physical interviewing becomes more accessible once again (**113**).

Open Calls for Paper:

If all these papers have whetted your appetite to consider contributing to *Exchanges then you will be pleased to know that the journal* welcomes submissions throughout the year on any subject, with no deadline. Articles which are accepted for publication will be subsequently published in the next available issue of the journal. Readers may also be interested in our currently open call for early career researchers to participate in *The Anthropocene and More-Than-Human World Writing Workshop Series*. One of the major outcomes of this project for participants will be the opportunity to contribute to a future special issue of *Exchanges to be published in* 2022/23. The call for participation in the workshops is open through to mid August, so there's still time to get involved (**Exchanges, 2021c**).

Initiating Special Issues

As this is a special issue, I should add, if you are an established or early career academic, seeking a suitable home for a dedicated volume of the journal we do welcome outline discussions for the ways in which *Exchanges* could become your publication partner. While our facilities are modest, we have been excited to work with the various scholars on this and prior special issues, and looking already to 2022 and 2023, there is certainly capacity for us to embrace new special issue developments. How to contact myself as Editor-in-Chief is given at the end of this editorial. You may also wish to listen to a past episode of *The Exchanges Discourse* (**Exchanges, 2020**) wherein I discuss the thinking and pragmatic concerns around initiating a special issue collaboration with our journal.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Nevertheless, for our regular published issues, we continue to be especially happy to consider research focussed or review articles which will undergo peer-review addressing any topic, ideally incorporating some element of interdisciplinary methods, methodology or thinking. Alternatively, we are delighted to receive pieces which are written to address their topic to a wide and general academic audience, written from within a disciplinary domain.

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Critical Reflections & Conversations

We especially welcome submissions of interviews with key scholars or critical reflections on important scholarly events, conferences or crucial new texts, which undergo internal (editorial review) scrutiny only. Along with their briefer wordcounts this permits the submission of timely pieces which usually see a more rapid progression to publication. As can be seen in this issue, they are a very popular type of article for authors old and new, and often have particularly high readership, due to their innate wider accessibility.

Deadlines

There are no deadlines for these submissions, which may be on any topic, theme or discipline of prospective interest to our readership (see below for more guidance). Note that the periodic thematic calls for special issues or themed sections of the journal produced normally will include a deadline within their outline information. A new themed call for contributions will appear in the Autumn 2021 issue of the journal.

Advice for Prospective Authors

As an interdisciplinary journal with a wide scholarly readership, authors should seek to write their manuscripts to be suitable for a general academic audience. Wherever possible, consideration should be given to unpack, delineate and expand on any potentially 'disciplinary niche' language, terms or acronyms used. Ideally, authors should seek to incorporate some element of interdisciplinary thinking or perspectives, or outline the broader scholarly relevance of their work, within the manuscript.

Exchanges has an expressly multidisciplinary, global and largely academic readership, and as such, have strong interests in work which encompasses or straddles disciplinary boundaries. Manuscripts providing an introduction, overview or useful entry point to key disciplinary trends, discovery and discourse are often among the most frequently accessed publications in the journal. Therefore, prospective authors are strongly encouraged to consider tailoring their manuscripts, narrative, thought and analysis in a mode which addresses this broad audience. For interviews and critical reflections, authors are especially advised to highlight the importance of disciplinary discourse or interviewees' scholarly contributions to the global academy, society and the public at large.

The Editor-in-Chief welcomes approaches from authors via email, or video-call, to discuss prospective submissions. However, abstract submission or editorial discussions ahead of a submission are not a requirement, and authors are welcome to formally submit their full manuscript without prior

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communication. Wherever possible, authors should include a note to editor indicating the kind of article they are submitting.

As *Exchanges* has a mission to support the development and dissemination of research by early career and post-graduate researchers, we are especially pleased to receive manuscripts from emerging scholars or first-time authors. All submitted manuscripts will undergo editorial review, with those seeking publication as research articles additionally undergoing formal peer-review by external assessors. Editorial decisions on manuscript acceptance are final, although unsuccessful authors are normally encouraged to consider revising their work for reconsideration at a later date.

More information on article formats, wordcounts and other submission requirements are detailed in our author guidelines (**Exchanges, 2021d**). All manuscript submissions must be made by their lead author via our online submission portal. *Exchanges* is a diamond open access, scholar-led journal, meaning there are no author fees or reader subscription charges (**Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013; Bosman, et al, 2021**). Authors retain copyright over their work but grant the journal first publication rights as a submission requirement.

Forthcoming Issues

The next issue of *Exchanges*, currently expected to see publication during late summer, will be our regular autumn issue (*vol 9.1*), which we hope to bring to you in late October/early November. Work on manuscripts for this issue will be continuing behind the scenes over the summer.

After that, in early 2022, we will finally be presenting our long awaited 'cultural representations of nerds' special issue (*vol 9.2*). Following the highly successful two-day workshop in mid-March (**Exchanges, 2021e**), we are as of writing awaiting the formal submission of the redeveloped manuscripts in the coming weeks.

Work is also advancing on our subsequent special issue based around 'The Anthropocene and More-Than-Human World' project and its associated writing workshops: the participation call for which is open through to mid-August (**Exchanges, 2021c**). As one of the workshops will be led by *Exchanges* you will be able to read more about this project and its development on our blog, and in a forthcoming episode of the podcast.

Consequently, as you can see 2021 and beyond continues to be a busy time for *Exchanges*, with hopefully plenty of interesting and varied discourse continuing to come your way.

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Acknowledgements

As always, my thanks to our authors and reviewers for their vital intellectual labour contributions towards creating this issue. Without you, producing a quality-assured, peer-reviewed, scholar-led publication would quite simply not be possible. Thanks also to our reader community, who play a key role in developing the debates and insights raised in each issue. I hope you find this issue as informative as usual.

I would especially like to thank **Dr Kathryn Woods** for her efforts on the *Then & Now* project, and for initiating this special issue's development. My thanks too to Kathryn, along with **Pierre Botcherby** and **Josh Patel**, who joined us as our associate editors for this special issue. I would like to tip the editorial hat especially to Pierre for being the driving force behind the project in the wake of Kathryn's departure for pastures new.

My continued thanks to the members of our Editorial Board community, especially in recent months for their insights on matters of publishing policy and ethics. Naturally, also a big thanks to them for their operational editorial labour on behalf of the journal and ongoing interaction with authors and reviewers alike.

My gratitude as well to **Rob Talbot** and **Dr Julie Robinson** at the Warwick University Library, and the members of the Warwick Journals Editorial Community for their continued insights, technical support and conversations. My thanks as well to the IAS' **Dr John Burden** for his role as an invaluable source of positivity and moral support, along with effective line management and pragmatic insights too.

Finally, my grateful thanks to our publisher, the [Institute of Advanced Study](#) at the University of Warwick for their ongoing financial and strategic backing for *Exchanges* and our related activities.

Continuing the Conversation

Exchanges has a range of routes for keeping abreast of our latest news, developments and calls for papers. In-between issues you may wish to listen to our growing range of podcasts or read our regular blog posts, to continue the interdisciplinary exchange of experience underlying our operations. Please do contribute to the conversation whenever and wherever you can, as we always value hearing the thoughts of our author and readership communities.

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Editorial Blog: blogs.warwick.ac.uk/exchangesias/

Linked.In: www.linkedin.com/groups/12162247/

Twitter: @ExchangesIAS

As Editor-in-Chief I am also pleased to discuss potential publications, collaborative opportunities or invites to talk further about *Exchanges* and our activities. Contact me via the email or via the social media platforms if you would like to arrange a video-consultation.

The Exchanges Discourse

Since our last issue, four more episodes of the companion podcast series to the journal, *The Exchanges Discourse*, have been published. Two of these episodes have featured conversations with authors who have published with the journal, discussing their own research and publication experiences. In particular, these episodes also focus on advice for first time authors in overcoming the hurdles to publication and are certainly worth a listen.

Various future episodes are currently in various stages of pre-production, and we hope to bring you conversations with some of the authors in this issue too. We heartily encourage all readers of the journal, and especially first-time authors, to seek out past and future episodes: available on all major podcast platforms, and specifically hosted on the *Anchor.fm* site. All episodes are free to stream or download and listen to at your leisure. Naturally, we also welcome approaches from potential guests who might wish to contribute to future episodes too.

Podcast: anchor.fm/exchangesias

Gareth has been the Editor-in-Chief of *Exchanges* since 2018. Along with a doctorate in cultural academic publishing practices (Nottingham Trent), he also possesses various other degrees in biomedical technology (Sheffield Hallam), information management (Sheffield) and research practice (NTU). His varied career includes extensive experience in academic libraries, project management and applied research roles. Currently, he is also the Chief Operating Officer of the Mercian Collaboration academic library consortium, and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. His professional and research interests focus on power-relationships within and evolution of scholarly academic publication practice, viewed from within

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social theory and political economic frameworks. He is an outspoken proponent for greater academic agency through scholar-led publishing, and an expert in distributed team management and effective communication practices. He is also the creator and host of a number of podcasts, including *The Exchanges Discourse*.

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Then & Now: Arts at Warwick Introduction

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Abstract

This introduction provides an overview of the Then & Now: Arts at Warwick special issue. It outlines the origins of the Then & Now project and how the issue was developed in collaboration between staff and students. To highlight the distinctive contributions of this issue to existing research on the history of Higher Education and the student experience, it also provides a brief summary of the historiography in this field.

Keywords: Arts; humanities; student experience; student-led research; student co-creation; University of Warwick

In his book *The Plateglass Universities*, Michael Beloff wrote that in the new universities like Warwick that were established in the 1960s, students 'had a vital role in creating the pattern of life within the university, and in establishing their own campus in the community of universities'. He went on:

> *It was a peculiar experience for the first generation, demanding, in a university context, a quality equivalent to Patriotism. Their courses were untested and experimental. Rules and conventions were designed in the barest of brushwork. Buildings were half-finished. There were few regular meeting places. None of the apparatus of ordinary student life was at hand. There was no union, no newspaper, no societies, no sports clubs. If University education is really what one remembers when one has forgotten what has been taught, then the first Plateglass students were largely self-educated* (**Belloff, 1968: 56**).

The origin of this special issue was the student co-produced *Then & Now: Arts at Warwick* project, which ran at the University of Warwick from January to August 2020 (**Warwick, 2020a**). This project took place in collaboration between academic staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students from the Faculty of Arts, archivists from the Modern Records Centre, and alumni. The project was situated within the tradition described by Beloff: students played a vital role, it took place against the backdrop of the construction (in this case the new Faculty of Arts Building), and it was experimental in theoretical approach, method, and implementation. Most traditionally of all, the project required belief and commitment from the students involved, especially in the face of the significant and unparalleled challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

What the project aimed to achieve was clearly articulated by one of the undergraduate project team members, Malina Mihalache, in an article on the project that she published in *Art Space Magazine* in spring 2020. On behalf of all the students involved, Malina wrote:

> *Through this project we seek to create a retrospective on the evolution of the arts at Warwick, whilst highlighting specific moments that are of interest. This is all the more fascinating as the research is conducted by current students from the university, which gives it a contemporary and interesting perspective* (**Mihalache, 2002: 16-17**).

As Malina described, it was undergraduate and postgraduate students from across the arts disciplines at the University of Warwick who made the *Then & Now* project. These same students have been responsible for contributing the content which comprises this issue. Both have been made in their own image. This issue is an embodied expression of their talents, skills, and achievements. The topics it considers reflect issues pertinent to

current students. In a piece published in Warwick's student newspaper *The Boar* in July 2020, the project's student social media lead Eilidh McKell wrote: 'one of the great pros of the project has been the freedom to creatively explore our own interests' (**McKell, 2020**). A great example of this is the *Afterimage* visual art series created by artist and project member Madeleine Snowdon. Her series of images overlay photographic images of the Humanities Building – the original and current home of Warwick's Arts Faculty – with images of the new Faculty of Arts Building, which was under construction during the period of this project. Employing a totally different approach, another member of the project team, Emma Lovell, conducted a statistical analysis of numbers of degree courses offered in the Arts Faculty from 1965 to 2017 (**fig.1**).

For almost all of the student contributors whose work is showcased here, this is their first experience of academic publishing. These articles were developed in addition to their main course of study. The research they have produced is of remarkable quality. In this issue the undergraduate student's articles are positioned alongside the work of established academics and postgraduate students, mirroring the spirit of co-creation that underpinned the *Then & Now* project. Collectively the pieces of writing contained in this issue push approaches to student research and understandings of the history of the student experience in a range of new and innovative directions.

*Figure 1: Scatter graph of the number of undergraduate degree courses
per year offered to prospective students 1965-2018 (**Warwick, 2020b**)*

This issue represents the academic culmination of the *Then & Now* project. It also contributes to the history of the student experience of Higher Education. Despite some notable exceptions, such as Harold and Pamela Silver's *Students: Changing Roles, Changing Lives* (**1997**), this remains a neglected area of historical research. In the main, research into the history of Higher Education continues to focus on its political dimensions

(**Stevens, 2004**) and architectural spaces (**Pellew & Taylor, 2020**). This issue seeks to address this historical lacuna by exploring how students have shaped student life and learning at the University of Warwick from the 1960s to present. It aims to unlock the student experience from analysis of archival records and oral history interviews with current and former students and staff. It also examines how Warwick's art and architectural heritage has shaped the student experience, and the extra-curricular sides of student life - socialising, sports and societies, student politics - which contribute so much to the vibrancy of Warwick's campus. As almost all of the research has been conducted by students and staff from arts and humanities disciplines, there is a particular focus on the historical experiences and contributions of arts and humanities students.

The history of the student experience is explored in two main ways in this issue. Firstly, traditional academic articles and interview transcripts explore themes such as the history of higher education, the arts, and student experience. Secondly, case studies and reflections by the student participants on their experiences of the project illuminate different aspects and themes of the *Then & Now* project. The research presented offers an important student-led view of the history of the student experience and illustrates the connections, similarities, and differences between students' experiences 'then' and 'now'.

In terms of source material, the *Then & Now* project investigated material artefacts and documentary evidence from the Modern Records Centre Archives and Warwick's Student Union Archives. Included among these evidence bases were student newspapers, such as *Campus* and *The Boar*, magazines like Warwick's early 1990s feminist magazine *Cobwebs*, the Student Unions' alternative prospectus series, and official university prospectuses and handbooks. Further evidence included photographs, architectural drawings, and films of student life on campus since the 1960s. The project's student research team also conducted interviews with staff and past and present students about their experiences at Warwick. Of particular note, amidst the COVID-19 lockdown in April and May 2020, the team undertook interviews where they asked participants to reflect on their experiences of remote learning and lockdown life during the pandemic. This material will serve as an archive of this unique historical moment for the future. The source material examined by the project was thus highly diverse, as were the students' diverse responses to it. It is fair to say that this project was exploratory rather than extensive in its approach to its sources.

This issue clearly demonstrates the value of student co-creation (**Bovill, 2013**), to teaching and learning, but also to research and public engagement. Students bring to research and public engagement fresh approaches and ideas. For example, this project has shown students to be particularly skilled in public engagement activities online, as well as in engaging the student and non-academic 'public'. The *Then & Now* project's Instagram page – entirely managed by the students - has been particularly successful in engaging past and present students, boasting 444 followers at the time of writing (**Warwick, 2021**). Elizabeth Wood, an archivist from the Modern Records Centre who supported this project, wrote in her reflective account for the exhibition website that 'the *Then & Now* project is a strong testament to its student-led methodology, and we have been so impressed by the professionalism of the students involved'. By working on the project and contributing to this issue, the students involved have transcended the traditional teaching and learning arena. They have taken part in research activities from which undergraduates, and even postgraduates, are often excluded. Academics and academic professionals have much to learn and gain from including students in research and public engagement activities more routinely and creatively.

This project has illustrated that being able to actively participate in and shape research and public engagement activities can greatly enhance the student experience. During the project's development, the student Digital Team manager, Elena Ruikyte, reflected: 'I'm very excited to be part of this project, as it [has] enabled me to implement my knowledge and skills, to exchange ideas, to experience flowing creativity and to build hopefully long-lasting relations with other students and staff members'. As is clear from so many of the *Then & Now* project's outputs, engaging and including students in diverse areas of academia can also help with the creation of learning community, enabling student voice, and developing feelings of connectedness and belonging.

The articles contained in this issue explore a diverse range of themes from the history of educational philosophy, to campus art and architecture, to pedagogic methods and approaches to oral history. Taken together, the content is a powerful embodiment of student voice. Readers can potentially learn a lot about current students from what historical aspects of the student experience the student contributors have chosen to study and how they have approached their research. At the same time, along with the project's online exhibition, the pieces of writing presented here underline the significant contribution students can make to academia not just as learners but as producers of knowledge, too. Indeed, one of the most striking findings made by the student researchers on this project was the recurring desire - across successive generations of arts students - to shape the campus and the university; to make Warwick *their* university

through activism and politics, sports and societies, and the day-to-day routines of student life. The project has, in turn, given its student participants a chance to shape their university through research. We hope that you enjoy reading the articles included in this special issue and that they deepen your understanding of the student experience 'then' and 'now'. We also hope that they inspire you to develop and participate in academic activities that blur the borders between teaching, research and public engagement, and that involve elements of student co-creation.

Acknowledgements

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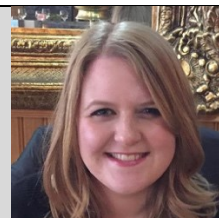
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Figure 1: Scatter Graph of the Number of Undergraduate Degree Courses per Year Offered to Prospective Students 1965-2018. (**Warwick, 2020b**)

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Breadth, 'National Needs', and Reimagining the Role of the University in Society: The early University of Warwick

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Abstract

A persistent critique of university histories is their lack of consideration for the influence of external forces. How did the political and societal pressures of the 1960s inform understandings of the contributions that students and universities should make to society? This article investigates how pressures that the universities contribute to the 'national need' informed the design of studies and the built environment at the University of Warwick.

Vice-Chancellor of Warwick 'Jack' Butterworth in 1970 found himself and his university criticised for permitting an 'oligarchy of industrialists,' to subjugate the university and force it to mass-produce 'capitalistic,' managers. For Butterworth this was no coup but a reorientation of the purpose of a university towards public needs. At Warwick, a new university was imagined. Its environment and teaching programme stressed 'breadth' and spontaneity so that it might produce students armed with 'pure' knowledge to be 'applied' to practical issues of the day, particularly those found in industry. The nation needed such broad-minded, productive graduates in order to engender the prosperous liberal society. This educational philosophy is identifiable in Butterworth's proposals for his business school, Warwick's foiled attempt to merge with the local college of technology, and its unsuccessful early designs for halls of residence.

Keywords: Higher Education; breadth; industry; Warwick; Butterworth; New Universities

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Introduction: Butterworth verses Thompson

In November 1970, Colin Eaborn, Professor of Chemistry at the new University of Sussex (1961), authored an article commenting on the relationship between industry and the universities. Eaborn noted a recent survey conducted by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) had indicated that all British university Vice-Chancellors were in favour of increased collaboration with industry. However, he was not certain they would still publicly profess this opinion owing to events earlier in 1970 at another of the new universities, the University of Warwick (1965). In February 1970, the Vice-Chancellor at Warwick, John 'Jack' Butterworth, had been the target of harsh criticisms for what Eaborn reported as Butterworth's 'outstanding success in bringing industrial interests into his university.' For his similar efforts Eaborn had himself, he reported:

> *…been denounced as a "lackey of US imperialism and British finance, industry and state monopoly of capitalism, and as an enemy of the broad masses of the British people and the people of the whole world,"* (**Eaborn, 1970**).

Butterworth's primary critic was professor of social history at Warwick, E. P. Thompson. Thompson decried what he saw as a 'virtually self-perpetuating', 'oligarchy of industrialists,' who had 'subordinated the university to the demands of industry.' These industrialists had redirected the university away from its rightful mission in pursuit of truth and towards the production of 'capitalistic' managers (**Thompson, 1970; Thompson, 2014**). Local Midlands industrialists, including representatives from the aeronautics firm the Hawker Siddeley Group, Rootes Motors Limited and the man-made textiles company Courtaulds, did play commanding roles in the Universities' executive body, the university Council (**Thompson, 2014: 31-41**). Thompson's evidence of any of them exercising improper authority over academic matters was, however, thin. It was quite easy to caricature his anxieties as one of Thompson's fellow professor later did as 'vociferous opposition […] to the non-existent domination of the University by sinister businessmen,' (**Griffiths, 1991: 337**). Michael Shattock (who joined Warwick in 1968, and was registrar from 1983 to 1999), reflected that it was perfectly understandable that the business community would be involved in the university as part of the programme of 'the regeneration of Coventry,' after the Blitz (**Shattock, 2012**).

This article will not retell the now legendary story of the 'Warwick Files Affair' which triggered Thompson's objections (where student protesters uncovered a number of files which implied that students and staff were being spied on by the Warwick administration), even if the passing of its recent fiftieth anniversary was criminally unremarked.[i] Instead it

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investigates the broader context of Warwick's early years. Why was Butterworth (like other university leaders) so keen to bring industry interests into his university? And how did this influence the pedagogies and built environment of the fledgling university? Robert Anderson (**2017: 38**) has identified that the general relationship between 'universities, technology and industry,' is understudied (**Sanderson, 1972**). There has been a persistent criticism that institutional university histories do not satisfactorily acknowledge the wider political or social contexts shaping university development (**Hayes, 2015**). Architectural histories have understood the designs of the new universities as attempting to create 'utopianist' 'communities', but avoid considering the wider educational and social purposes of building these communities (**Muthesius, 2000**). Due to the interest generated by the Warwick Files affair and the efforts Shattock, the published history of the University of Warwick is comparatively rich (**Rees 1989; Shattock 1991b; 1994: 73-97; 2015; Steedman 2020**). It is still helpful, however, to take an initially broad perspective of the context of the university during the 1960s, firstly to help contextualise some of the other contributions to this special issue, and secondly, an 'outsiders' view of Warwick's early years may be constructive.[ii] In doing so this article will show that the conflict at Warwick between Thompson and the industrialists was just one battle of a broader struggle to redetermine the role of higher education in post-war Britain.

During the 1950s and 1960s in Britain increasing public interest and investment in higher education meant universities found themselves having to demonstrate their contribution to society. From 1937 to 1961 actual public expenditure on higher education rose from £7 million to £146 million (**CHE, 1963a: 199**). For Butterworth and his industrialist allies, a university education in 'breadth' rather than narrow academic specialisation or vocationalism was necessary to ensure that the specialised knowledge students acquired at university was understood in the wider context of how it might be deployed to do productive work in society, particularly in industry. The nation needed such broad-minded, productive graduates in order to engender the prosperous liberal society and reverse perceived British decline (**Edgerton, 2006; 2018**). This article proceeds to explore how the teaching and built environment at Warwick were designed and promoted as providing this breadth. This educational philosophy is identifiable in Butterworth's proposals for his business school, Warwick's foiled attempt to merge with the local college of technology, and its unsuccessful early designs for halls of residence.

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The Expansion of Higher Education (1954-1973)

Warwick was one of many new universities that appeared during this time of dramatic growth in British higher education: in 1938 there were twenty-four universities, by 1966 there were just shy of fifty university institutions. (**Davies, Walker, and Tupman, 1989: 272**). In 1939 the total university student population was 50,000. Its sustained rise began after 1954 from 81,700 to 239,400 in 1973. Even so in 1962 of the then twenty-eight universities only thirteen had more than 3,000 students (the largest, Oxford and Cambridge had 9000 students each and the federal University of London had around 23,000 students) (**CHE, 1963a: 22-23**). Just 4% of British young people attended university and an even lower proportion (just 2.5%) of the total population of young women (**12-17**). The proportion of university income received from the state via the University Grants Committee (UGC) had been increasing since the 1920s: in 1938 it was 36% but by the mid-1960s it was as high as 80% (**Anderson, 2006: 135**).

Universities were both research and teaching institutions. Students studied courses in the arts including classics (arts subjects were taken by 28% of university students in 1962), 'pure' sciences (25%), 'applied' sciences and technology (15%), and social sciences (11%); as well as professional subjects: medicine (15%), education (4%) agriculture (2%) and law (**25**). In the early 1960s universities continued to hold a reputation as the premier sites of what was called a 'liberal education': an education in abstract or 'pure' principles of the basic disciplines of the sciences, mathematics, and particularly the arts, but most of all the classics. Such an education was fit for a small, leisured, elite governing class who had no need for 'applied knowledge' or to perform technical or manual labour (**Joyce, 2013: 230**). Before the 1950s employers rarely saw the university degree as preparation for working life; universities were the domain of certain privileged classes, medicine, and some teachers (**Schwarz, 2004**). Employers mainly recruited at ages 14-17 and trained their workers themselves (**Tribe, 2013**).

Universities were not the only institutions of higher education. The further education institutions, taking 2% of young people, included some three hundred institutions: local and regional Colleges of Technology, the Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs), and after the late 1960s the polytechnics (**Perkin, 1969: 41**). This included, for example, the Lanchester College of Technology (1961) at Coventry, which following a series of mergers became the Lanchester Polytechnic (1970) (and eventually Coventry University in 1992) (**Stephens, 1969**). These institutions were characterised as having a more concrete role to provide technologically inclined and vocational training and were generally teaching-led rather

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than research institutions. They additionally provided a large number of students outside of the higher education sector with education of below degree standard or part-time study (**Perkin, 1969: 42**).[iii] Students working at degree level at these institutions were examined for diplomas of technology or the University of London external degree; after 1964 further education institutions increasingly awarded nationally accredited degrees. Other institutions, taking 2.5% of young people, taught future schoolteachers, such as Coventry College of Education (which was integrated into the University of Warwick in 1978 and is now Warwick's Westwood campus). Carol Dyhouse (**2006, 87**) identifies that 70% of the training college population were female in 1960 (representing only 3.8% of the total age group).[iv] These 'public' institutions were often smaller than universities (in 1962 only twenty of 146 teacher training colleges had more than 500 students), and had lower entrance requirements (two A-level passes compared to a minimum three at universities) (**CHE, 1963a: 28-30**), and national and local authorities provided almost all their funding. These two sectors saw even greater expansion in student numbers than the universities. In 1938 there were only 6000 students in full-time advanced further education in the UK, by 1969 full-time numbers had exploded to 91,000. Teacher training also grew rapidly, increasing from 13,000 students in 1938, to a peak of 131,000 students by 1972 (**Cantor, 1989: 297-303**).

This huge expansion of student places and funding was the result of two main concerns. First, the wars of the first half of the twentieth century and the ongoing cold war had emphatically demonstrated the importance of technological and scientific knowledge and highly trained 'manpower' (and increasingly 'womanpower') to national security and prosperity. The Percy (1945) and Barlow (1946) reports made prominent calls for increased outputs of scientific manpower. However, many in Britain, concerned with perceived decline, remained anxious through the 1950s and 1960s that reserves of British scientific ability were lesser than that of the USA, the USSR, and of other European nations (**Tomlinson, 2001**). Second, the number of live births in the UK increased from a steady average of around 725,000 per year for the decade 1930-1940 to a peak in 1947 of over a million, producing the 'baby boom' and a 'bulge' of children coming of age towards the early 1960s. Compounding this was the 'trend' towards more of these children staying in education for longer as access to secondary education had been expanded to all up to the age of fifteen in 1944 (**Mandler, 2020; O'Hara, 2012: 153-75**). Between 1950 and 1962 the proportion of seventeen-year-olds remaining in school rose from 6.6% to 12% and showed no signs of stopping (**CHE, 1963b: 102-3**). Throughout the 1950s the availability of financial assistance to students in higher education grew, culminating in the introduction of the 'mandatory grant'

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following the recommendations of the Anderson Report (1960) (**Malcom, 2014**). By 1963-64, 90% of students received grants 'almost wholly,' from public funds (**Davies, Walker, and Tupman, 1989: 272**). As the demand for the products of higher education rose with the proportion of public finance spent on it, so did its prominence in public affairs.

The Purpose of Higher Education

These pressures on higher education numbers and institutions did not just revolutionise the scale of higher education provision but also the purpose of higher education. There were two expansion programmes in higher education: the CATs, providing technological education, and the New Universities, providing a 'broad' education.

Expanding Vocational and Liberal Education

An expansion of technological education was initiated by Ministry of Education attempting to address the concern that Britain was not adequately producing the necessary number and quality of highly qualified scientific manpower. In the late 1940s and early 1950s the UGC and Conservative government did not believe the existing pattern of university provision was inadequate (**Shattock, 1994: 74; 1991a: 286**). Calls for a technological university (a 'MIT of the Midlands') in 1951 to be founded in Coventry were rejected in favour of expanding provision in existing universities such as Imperial College London. In 1956, the Ministry of Education published a white paper, *Technical Education*. It proposed eight further education colleges should be re-designated as CATs, and two further colleges followed in 1962. These new institutions distinguished themselves from the theoretical, 'pure' academic programmes of existing universities (**Ross 2002; Scott 1993**). The CATs were to focus on technological studies at an honours degree level, and with a close association with industry, including industrialist representation on their governing bodies. They became characterised by their 'sandwich courses' where students alternated between periods of study and periods of practical work: by 1962 there were 14,000 students in further education taking sandwich courses (**CHE, 1963a, 33: Matthews, 1981: 133-4**).

The only new university foundation in the immediate post-war period was the experimental University College of North Staffordshire (1949), which became the University of Keele (1963). The promoters of the new university college were concerned that increasing specialisation of university graduates, scientists and other specialists had undermined any sense of a unified common culture and values that the 'liberal education' once provided. Without these values students were unaware of their wider responsibilities to society, particularly to the local community (**Cragoe, 2015; 2020; Taylor, 2020**). Students would study for four years

instead of the usual three, including a broad foundation year dedicated to the absorption of the heritage of Western civilisation and the methods of the sciences, ranging 'From Plato to NATO,' (**Whyte, 2015: 223-4**). Keele was however limited by the austerity of the post-war period and did not reach 600 students until 1956-57, and had only 1681 students in 1967-68 (**Perkin, 1969: 57-60, 80**).

By the mid-1950s the consequences of the 'bulge' and 'trend' in for universities was increasingly evident (**Perkin, 1969: 62-3**). In 1956 the Director of Education for Brighton, W. G. Stone, in a memorandum re-appealing for a university in Brighton, convinced the UGC of the need for a new university institution based on national demographic concerns (**Shattock, 1994: 74-5; Perkin, 1969: 65**). In 1958 the Chancellor of the Exchequer made the announcement of a £60 million programme of new university construction until 1963. This triggered a wave of seven *de novo* universities: Sussex, opening in 1961 (at Brighton), East Anglia (at Norwich) and York in 1963, Lancaster and Essex in 1964, and Kent (at Canterbury) and Warwick (at Coventry) in 1965. Two subsequent institutions followed: Stirling in 1967 and the New University of Ulster in 1968. The planning for these new institutions, while originating from the initiative of local deputations, was closely vetted by the UGC and its full-time Chairman Keith Murray through the use of Academic Planning Boards populated with UGC-nominated persons of high academic standing. With a large proportion of Treasury funding directed towards technological institutions such as the new CATs, Murray intended the new universities to specialise in non-technological subjects and provide a distinctive national contribution to justify their funding (**Shattock, 1991a: 292**). The existing literature, including Shattock, has assumed a strict division of national responsibility for education of what Shattock (**1994: 78**) refers to as 'rounded and balanced men,' at these new institutions, in contrast to the highly technically qualified graduates from the CATs. Government targets for the number of university places continued to grow: the Robbins Report (**1963a**) recommended a threefold increase to 346,000 students by 1980.

The *appearance* of a strong distinction between vocational education in the further education sector and non-vocational broad, liberal education at the universities was reinforced by the implementation of the 'binary divide' between the two sectors by the Department of Education and Science (DES). Announcing this policy in his infamous speech at Woolwich Polytechnic in April 1965, Secretary of State for Education and Science Anthony Crosland criticised the universities as elitist, classist, expensive, and ill-suited to meet the scientific and technological manpower needs of the nation (**Kogan, 2006: 78-80**). This duty would fall to the further education sector, whose output of qualified manpower could be more closely aligned with government anticipated 'need' (**Crosland, 1965**). In

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1966 Crosland announced that colleges of further education were to be rationalised into new institutions of university standard, the polytechnics. The first of these institutions appeared in 1969 (Hatfield, Sheffield, and Sunderland) and by 1973 there were thirty institutions of polytechnic status (**Robinson, 1968: 30**).

Rounded and Balanced Men for Industry

Such a sharp distinction between vocational and non-vocational 'liberal' educations was, however, not a distinction shared by university leaders and employers in the 1960s. For university leaders, the solution to national technological manpower needs was not to introduce a rival sector to the universities (which would struggle to achieve parity of social esteem) but to reconsider the role of the university (**Robbins, 1966: 138-57; Robinson, 1968: 46-54**). University Vice-Chancellors were particularly affronted when Crosland at his Woolwich speech clearly implied that the universities were incapable of responding to the national need (**CVCP, 1965**). Many Vice-Chancellors, particularly of the new universities including Butterworth, believed that a universities' 'liberal education' could, ironically, provide a better preparation for life in the world of practical affairs than specialised vocational training, especially for industry.

These vice-chancellors reclaimed the 'liberal education'. A university education and the 'character' it bestowed might be obtained through the study of any subject not just traditional 'basic disciplines'. Technological studies at universities, including engineering, had gained significant currency by the 1950s, advocated by vice-chancellor Eric Ashby (**Ashby, 1958; Silver, 2002**). Ashby redefined the idea of a liberal education by arguing that a liberal education was not equitable with any specific content but the habits of character and mind it promoted (**Rothblatt, 2006; 1993: 28-30; Kimball, 1986).** This 'character' was necessary for students and graduates to be able to deploy the specialised and technical knowledge they obtained in their degrees in the multidisciplinary context of the real world. The universities, the Vice-Chancellors argued, despite de-emphasising specific vocational techniques and with little direct equitability of student output with manpower planning categories, were no less responsive to national needs.

After 1950, a liberal education was increasingly considered by industrialists to provide students with the right character to succeed in industry. For instance, in 1961 in evidence to the Robbins Committee representatives of one of the largest employers' associations in Britain, the Federation of British Industries (FBI), identified two primary weaknesses in the sort of education that higher education institutions provided. Firstly, they argued that existing trained scientists were 'rather uncommunicative and […] handicapped by his inability to deal with relative judgements,' or

make decisions in the practical context of industry environments. Secondly, the FBI believed that higher education should do more to equip young people to 'adapt themselves to a continuously changing society and also to use the recurring opportunities for further training.' What was not needed in their opinion was more 'high calibre specialists,' trained in specific skills or vocational practices (which would quickly become obsolete due to the pace of technological change in industry). Instead, the FBI advocated 'breadth' in education. (**CHE, 1964: 572, 579**). The Robbins Report concurred this sentiment and indeed cautioned that it would not have advocated 'so large an expansion of universities […] unless we were confident that it would be accompanied by a big increase in the number of students taking broader first-degree courses,' (**CHE, 1963a: 296**).

This preference by industrialists for broadly educated university graduates was promoted by the CVCP as evidence of the capacity of universities to respond to the national need. Tellingly the label of a 'liberal education' appears to diminish in university parlance as the 1960s progressed. It was eclipsed by an emphasis in education in breadth or avoiding 'overspecialisation.' My thesis addresses this argument further and examines how some Vice-Chancellors and industrialists imagined a broad education prepared young people for life in industrial capitalist society. One interesting question that arises from this line of inquiry is: how far did an understanding of breadth as a practical virtue inform the built environment and course content at Warwick?
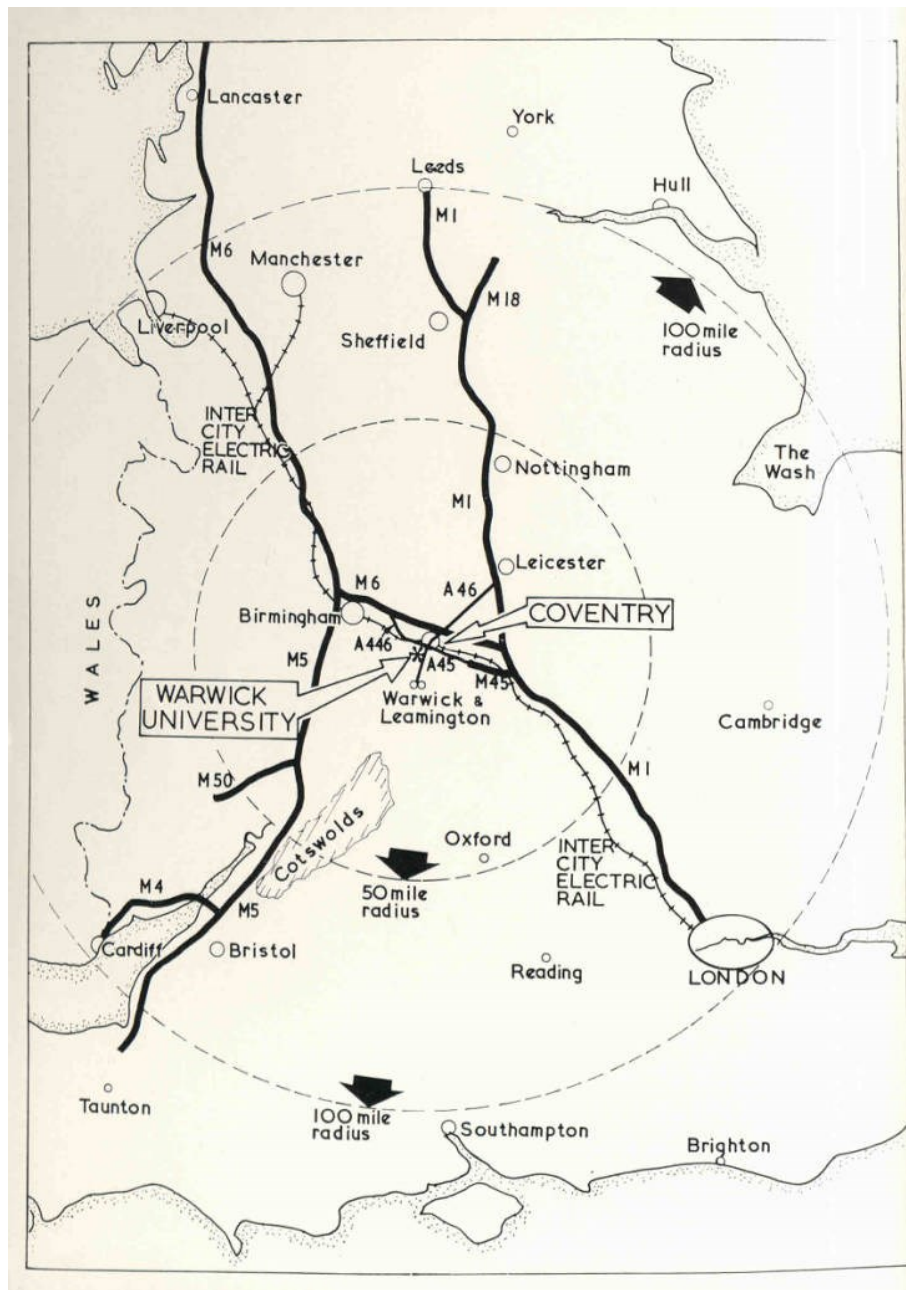
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*Figure 1: 'Meriden, the traditional centre of England, is only five miles away, after all. More to the point, Coventry lies on the inter-city electric rail network and at the hub of the national motorway system […] London is a non-stop one-and-a-quarter hours away by train and most major cities are within two hours' motoring,' (**UoW, 1972: 2, 4**). Reproduced with permission.*

Utility and Breadth at Warwick

There are plenty of signs that importance of breadth as a practical virtue was a key determinant of the educational philosophy at Warwick. Firstly, Warwick considered its geographic location as perfect for responding to the 'national need' for broadly educated graduates. The 'national need' was equated with the 'need' of industry. Warwick was unique among the new universities in its close proximity to urgent problems of industry: Coventry's aeronautical and motorcar industries. Its location in the centre of England also allowed it to present itself (**figure 1**) as a national node

with excellent connections to the South-East and London via the developing motorway system and 'British Rail's new Inter-City electric service,' (**UoW, 1964: 11-2**). The high number of industrialists in Warwick's University Council bought expertise to the university and aligned industry and university plans. Private donations further cemented this link. Jill Pellew (**2020: 232**) has calculated that by 1967 Warwick had raised £2.75 million from private donations in its appeal, over half a million more than any other new university. Much of this money was earmarked for particular items such a chair of Industrial Relations. The university claimed that the interests of business were reflected in its 'special emphasis placed on Science, Engineering and Social Studies (e.g. Economics and Business Studies)' (**UoW, 1968: 13**).

Secondly, breadth was understood as part of a preparation for working life necessary for more and more young people, no longer just for an elite. Warwick anticipated high national demand for its broadly educated students. Warwick's 400 acre site straddling the boundary of Warwickshire and Coventry (claimed by the university in 1968 to be the 'largest site in Britain designated entirely for university development'), enabled expansionist plans (**UoW, 1968: 12**). It was envisaged the university might grow to 20,000 students (**UoW, 1964: 26**). Beginning in 1965, with 436 students, the university reached 1689 students by 1972; and at that stage expected to reach 5000 students by 1976.[v] In 1966 men outnumbered women nearly 2:1, but as Dyhouse has identified the New Universities, Warwick included, were attractive to women: broad degree courses were thought to be more suitable to their aspirations, particularly for careers in teaching. (**Dyhouse, 2006: 101-3; Steedman, 2017**).

Studies in Breadth

Breadth also informed Warwick's teaching programme. Following Keele and Sussex's lead, Warwick's academic structure avoided faculties or departments and organised itself into large Boards of Study, initially, science (including natural sciences, computer science, engineering science, and pure and applied maths) and arts (English, European languages, and history) with social studies following later (economics, education, industrial and business studies, law, philosophy, politics, and sociology). Beneath the boards would be the Schools of Study which provided tuition. This was intended to provide 'maximum flexibility in arrangement of courses, and to enable students to delay a decision on the subjects which they are to study in depth as late as possible'. Students could pursue broad combined courses and take general courses shared by multiple degree courses within the same Boards of Study (**UoW, 1964: 13**; **1965**). Arts students for example were not finally committed to a particular subject in their first year, and research methods were incorporated at the

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early stages for science students, in order to show the relationships between 'contemporary problems and issues,' (**UoW, 1968: 35**).

There was however little prescriptive academic planning at Warwick, with no set teaching or assessment methods. The first professors were selected based on 'fresh and constructive ideas on how studies in their areas should be organised and developed.' It appears this autonomy was intended to ensure that by working together without constraints these professors would produce organic interdisciplinary cooperation (**UoW, 1969-70: 3**) – somehow more genuine than that achieved artificially through deliberate social engineering at other New Universities. For example, Thompson's graduate Centre for Social History (**Steedman, 2020**), was initially imagined to provide a complementary historical perspective for the research at the proposed Centre for Industrial Studies (**Hale, 1964**) (which after its realisation would eventually become part of what since 1988 is Warwick Business School).

Warwick's Academic Planning Board proposed a first-year compulsory course taken by all undergraduates in 'language, logic, and ethics,' to 'ensure all students could 'think and write clearly and to examine one's relation to society,' (**APB, 1963: 3**). A course, 'Enquiry and Criticism', eventually appeared, with one lecture and one seminar a week. Through the critical examination of the methods of 'various branches of knowledge such as mathematics, the natural and social sciences, literary criticism, ethics and politics,' outside a students' chosen subject, the course was intended to 'give the student a critical sense of the basis and limits of his own discipline,' (**UoW, 1966a: 15**). The hope was such study might provide a 'common language,' throughout the student body in an attempt to facilitate cross-school discussion and breadth (**Griffiths, 1991: 338**).[vi] It was hoped this would better arm students to tackle professional and personal problems in later life as a member of society. However, the course was poorly attended by students and faced opposition from professors: it was difficult to teach, and its objectives were unclear (**Griffiths, 1966**). 'Enquiry and Criticism' was terminated by 1967/68, replaced by a series of open lectures in the autumn term to 'liberalise students' intellectual approach and interests.' Additionally, lectures in all courses considered of general interest were open to all students again 'to promote inter-disciplinary understanding,' (notices of these lectures also vanished from later prospectuses) (**UoW, 1968: 28**).

The emphasis on the utility of breadth is most apparent in the plans for the study of business. Butterworth was particularly keen to develop a postgraduate business school and took inspiration from his visits in April 1963 to the American business schools at Harvard, MIT, Chicago, and Carnegie. Butterworth proposed a graduate school of business which

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spent half of its time on research to 'solve business problems and to provide a better basis for business education in the future,' and immediately produce valuable 'changes in operating practice in industry.' Alongside the teaching of analytical concepts and fundamental theory the programme would make use of pioneering teaching techniques such as business case studies. These programmes found support in industry and the school was initially privately funded. Two masters courses were launched from 1967. Both courses were intended to develop skills necessary for careers in industry: analytical skills, capacity to make judgments, understandings of considerations of cost, the limits of practical possibilities, and 'allowance for the fact that human beings are involved,' requiring the study of 'economics, sociology, psychology and engineering.' The course would conclude with a research project in industry or commerce to encourage students to apply abstract methods in practical contexts and 'not only evaluate evidence but act with responsibility,' (**Butterworth, 1963: 1-4; UoW, 1966a**).

The binary divide frustrated Warwick's attempt to incorporate the full range of applied studies into the university when the DES blocked a proposed merger with Lanchester College of Technology in 1965 (**Shattock, 2015: 33-34**). Warwick initially planned to teach 'pure' 'Engineering Science', and in the future absorb the applied facilities and teaching at Lanchester as a faculty of engineering (to avoid unnecessary duplication of facilities). The proposal had been articulated as early as March 1960 (**Shattock, 2015: 27-28**). Its failure was a bitter frustration of the university. The resulting rump engineering department at Warwick was headed by Arthur Shercliff. Shercliff was, according to Shattock, 'almost as much an Applied Mathematician as he was an Engineer, and of course he had very little to say to the [local] motorcar industry which barely had any graduates working for it,' (**Shattock, 2013a**). Despite this perceived disconnect, Shercliff maintained the aim of his engineering department was the application and contextualisation of the unifying influence of mathematics to real world problems. The university promoted the undergraduate course as developing the ability to use 'fundamental scientific ideas creatively, rather than the mere acquisition of specialized knowledge,' (**UoW, 1965**), and enabling study across mathematics, physics, engineering, computer science, and eventually business. Shercliff was active in promoting industrial links, including the appointment of visiting 'associate professors' from industry, to lecture and direct industry-oriented research projects (**Moffatt, 1985: 531-2**). While the full range of applied studies was curtailed by the binary divide, Warwick maintained the principle that a broad education was the foundation of practical skills.

Social and Academic Mixing on Campus

Warwick's campus was designed as a living academic community where students and staff spent time beyond their studies socialising and mixing as a way of further integrating breadth into their education. Unlike the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century civic universities whose sites were normally within cities, this was not the case for the New Universities. Warwick opted for a residential site three miles from the centre of Coventry (and seven miles from Warwick town).[vii] This choice was partly due to pragmatic concerns such as the availability of land, the possibility of expansion, and development costs. It was also, as Warwick's promotion committee argued as early as 1961, a repudiation of the limited nine-to-five ethos of the civic universities and the desire to foster this sense of community by encouraging students and staff to remain on campus throughout the day by providing leisure and social facilities. Like other New Universities, Warwick aimed to have two-thirds of students in residence (**Anderson, 2006: 137; Darley, 1991: 356**). It was not often explicitly stated in plans that socialisation would contribute to creating a student of the right character to have a productive career in the cross-disciplinary world of industry, but these values were implicit, and such efforts were often supported by industry finance.
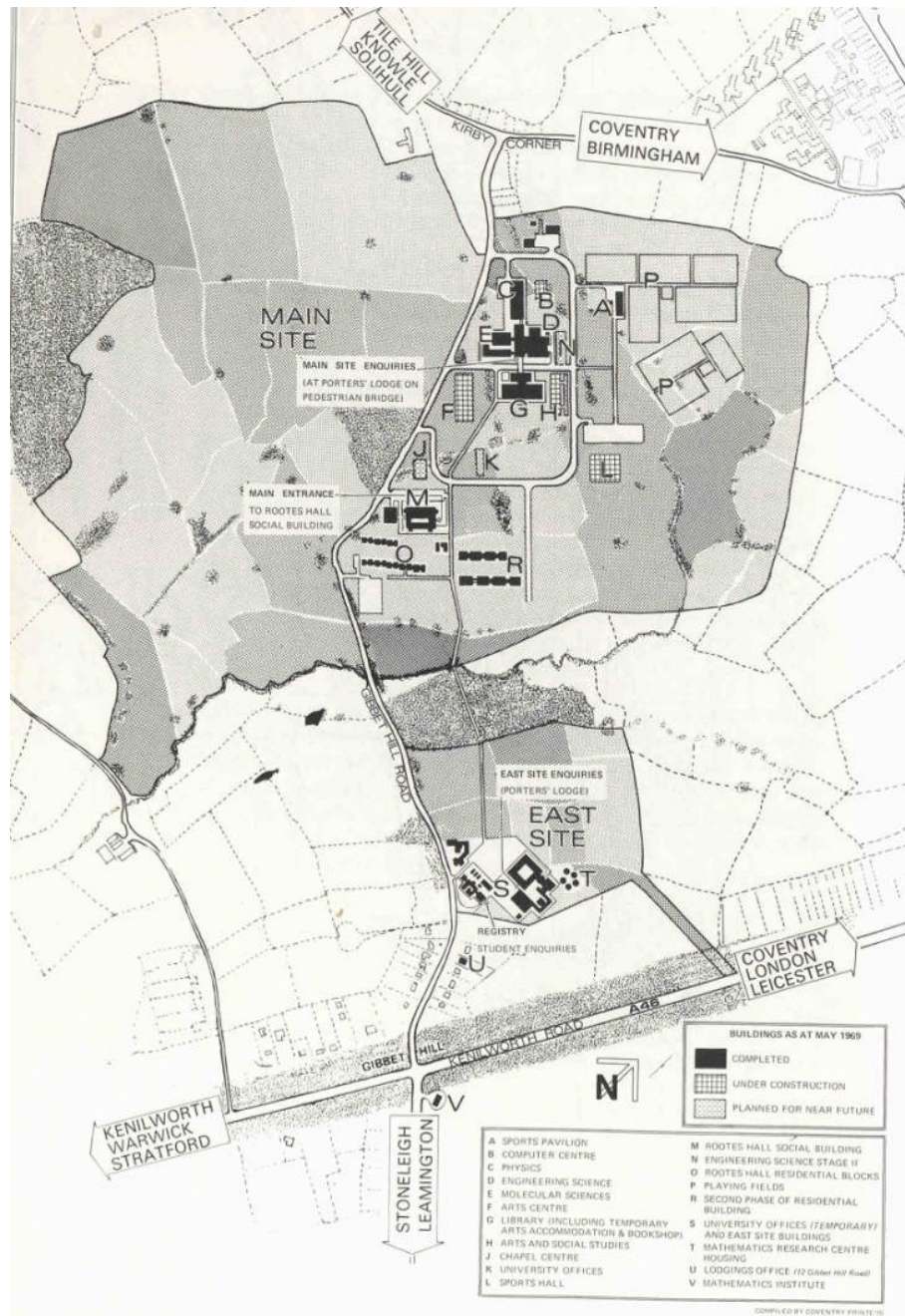
*Figure 2: Warwick Campus Map in 1970, showing the construction of the arts building and the space between the concentric circle rings (**UoW 1970, 120**). See also the access gallery in the centre of the map, running vertically up from the library (G) all the way through physics (C). Reproduced with permission.*

The first university buildings on the 'East Site' on Gibbet Hill acted as an initial 'nursery campus' for subjects before they moved into permanent accommodation on the main central campus, fifteen minutes' walk through Tocil Woods. The main campus was initially designed as a series of concentric rings blossoming out from the library at the centre (**figure 2**).[viii] The first buildings on the main site opened in 1966 (**UoW, 1968: 13**). In the closest rings were to be built the communal buildings: initially the board of science building, placed adjacent and directly opposite to the library. The library was intended to serve a student population of 5000 (the

arts were initially housed in the top two floors of the library, and the arts building, eventually the humanities building, followed in October 1970). This placement (rather than the distribution of communal buildings amongst residential 'colleges' such as at York, Kent and Lancaster) was intended to 'reflect the inter- dependence of scientific subjects.' Architecturally this 'interdependence' was realised by 'internal access galleries providing continuous links between all parts of the complex.' A main central access gallery extended out and bridged over the main access road to the library (which today forms the science concourse) providing a central artery through which ideas and people might flow and mix (**UoW, 1966b: 4**). There remain a remarkable number of these elevated pedestrian ways on campus, bridging the spatial and academic spaces between disciplines and facilitating the sort of organic academic mixing and innovation Warwick desired (**Perkin, 1969: 29**).[ix]

*Figure 3: The then brand-new swimming pool, apparently in 1974. See, outside the window on the left, the site of the new Arts building which is currently under construction. (**Sargent, 1974**: 13:04).*

Broadening influences were also intended to be inculcated through the provision of auxiliary cultural facilities. The sports centre featuring squash courts and a 25 metre six lane swimming pool (**figure 3**) opened in 1972, and the arts centre followed in 1974. The arts centre was one of a series of projects funded anonymously by the charitable trust of Helen Martin (whose family-owned Smirnoff Vodka), including an American exchange programme and the halls of residence Benefactors (1966) to house American exchange students (**UoW, 1972: 72-74; Shattock and Warman,**

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2010). The culturalization these spaces provided was part of the duty of a university to transmit a 'common culture', broadening the education of students so they might better understand the place of their specialism in society.

One failure in this regard was Warwick's attempt to socialise students in its proposed halls of residence. The 1964 development plan imagined fourteen halls of residence: communities providing living, workspace and social buildings, and catering for around 1000-1500 students of different genders and disciplines, intended to encourage 'real and contrived mixing,' (**UoW, 1964: 17, 33; 1966b: 6**; **Darley, 1991: 359**). The first of what was intended to be many of such residences, a four-story residential building and separate social building known collectively as Rootes Hall (named for the late local industrialist Lord Rootes), opened in 1966. This social engineering conflicted with the expectations of many students and staff, who desired a centralised independent student union with its own separate building (**Griffiths, 1991: 337; Thompson, 1970**). The university administration, and particularly Butterworth, forcefully opposed the possibility of a centralised students' union building; the university had already received UGC funding for a mixed social building (**Shattock, 2012**). Anecdotally, Butterworth is supposed to have proclaimed that 'there will never be a Union building in my lifetime,' (**Woodman, 2016**); and many students attributed the opposition to a centralised student union as evidence of industrialist opposition to united organised student labour movements. Following the student unrest of 1970, the administration relented: a centralised students' union building was opened in 1975. No further buildings like Rootes social building were built. Like most of the new universities Warwick found catering in halls of residence failed to achieve satisfactory economies and student preferences gravitated towards independent study bedrooms and flats over halls (**Muthesius, 2000: 77**).

Conclusion: Breadth, Space, and Pedagogies

This article has begun an initial exploration of how far the new liberal education of the universities and association of breath with practicality informed the pedagogy and built environment of universities in the 1960s. It refocuses historical attention on the historical context and role of ideas in university education during a time of increasing public demands. The case of Warwick shows there was potential to carry forwards the traditional values of a liberal education but reorient them towards the demands of modern society. The 'common culture' transmitted through universities was no longer the exclusive property of a societal elite but necessary for a much wider portion of the population to participate in modern society. Only through the broader understanding of the world that

a university could provide in its interdisciplinary teaching and through residence might students be best placed to use their specialised knowledge in their careers.

This recharacterization of the liberal education as a dynamic pedagogy in the post-war period points towards a number of further directions of inquiry. Firstly, it raises the question of whether or not these values were internalised by teaching staff or students. The universities' oral history project, *Voices of the University*, begun for Warwick's 50th anniversary celebrations, and the *Then & Now* project, tell a story which is a necessary augmentation to this history of ideas. For example, the campus architects initially designed a road system and infrastructure capable of supporting sustained expansion in the future, but this had the unfortunate effect of spreading facilities out. Thompson described the campus felt as if it had been 'set out with a divider and a ruler,' with 'student residences and social buildings segregated,' and no functioning centre of campus 'where the staff and students can easily intermingle,' (**Thompson, 2014: 25-6; 1970**). Early students and staff recalled encountering a large, open site with brutalist, white, square buildings sparsely distributed across the campus, and separated by building sites, cranes, and seas of thick red mud.[x] Shattock himself described the university site in the 1960s as 'pretty disgraceful,' (**Shattock, 2013b**). Student Union president from 1968-69 Alan Philips remembered the path between central campus and Gibbet Hill was not initially illuminated which made it 'difficult then for women [...] one or two people were attacked,' (**Phillips, 2014**). The modern white tiling affixed to the first buildings was falling off by 1969 (**Kemp, 2014; Hall, ND**). These failures led, understandably, to student discontent; however interestingly many early memories of the university emphasise comradery, adventure, and opportunity. What kind of outcomes did students derive from navigating the hidden curriculum of the growing pains of the new university?

Secondly, how far were other New Universities, older university institutions, or other non-university higher education institutions influenced by association of breadth with practicality? Warwick is something of an outlier of the New Universities (**Muthesius, 2000: 122**). Breadth as a practical virtue was far from the only factor influencing their design: a broad education for the elite of a meritocracy was a major determinant of York's commitment to breadth. At Stirling, commitment to breadth as a practical virtue appears perhaps stronger than at Warwick. The CATs became universities after 1965 and notably underwent 'academic drift', reportedly losing some of their vocational character, a charge also made against the polytechnics. How much was this drift an attempt to liberalise their teaching in order that this might increase their students' capacity to contribute to society?

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Thirdly it raises some intriguing questions about the social purpose of broad (interdisciplinary) study, research and undergraduate education provided by universities today, at a time when 'national needs' are measured by proliferating metrics: of impact, engagement and concepts like 'student satisfaction' (**Collini, 2012**). Considerations of spatial interactions are particularly pertinent in the coronavirus pandemic. Social distancing measures restrict the possibility of valuable informal pedagogies of extracurricular interactions in spaces such as societies and sports but perhaps also offers up alternative possibilities for new forms of connection. Perhaps not uncoincidentally, 'breadth' is a virtue which appears to be alive and well at Warwick, as the *Then & Now* project shows.

Acknowledgements

Josh Patel is a PhD student at the University of Warwick, supervised Claudia Stein and Mathew Thomson. His thesis explores the roles leaders of higher education imagined their students would play in society in Britain during the long 1960s. His research nuances widespread narratives of a 'rise-and-fall' of social democracy. Josh's wider interests include historiography and interdisciplinarity historical method. He is also a Head Swimming Coach at UWSWP and interested in how sport can improve learning outcomes and student wellbeing in higher education.

List of Images

Figure 1: 'Meriden, the traditional centre of England, is only five miles away, after all. More to the point, Coventry lies on the inter-city electric rail network and at the hub of the national motorway system […] London is a non-stop one-and-a-quarter hours away by train and most major cities are within two hours' motoring,' (**UoW, 1972: 2, 4**). Reproduced with permission.

Figure 2: Warwick Campus Map in 1970, showing the construction of the arts building and the space between the concentric circle rings (**UoW, 1970: 120**). See also the access gallery in the centre of the map, running vertically up from the library (G) all the way through physics (C). Reproduced with permission.

Figure 3: The then brand-new swimming pool, apparently in 1974. See, outside the window on the left, the site of the new Arts building which is currently under construction. (**Sargent, 1974: 13:04**).

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Endnotes

i February 2020 saw no acknowledgement by the university, students union, and, more surprisingly, Warwick student publications such as the *Boar*.

ii I joined the University of Warwick in 2013 as an undergraduate and stayed to complete my masters and PhD. While I do not consider myself an outsider to Warwick's student community, I am certainly an outsider to most of Warwick's institutional history and to the social democratic programme of higher education expansion of the 1950s and 1960s.

iii Perkin states there were altogether 'over 8,000 State-aided establishments in Great Britain, with 2.6 million students,' including evening institutions training young people alongside the institutions of advanced further education. Of this number 787,000 students were under eighteen.

iv Only 1% of the total population of young women entered further education institutions. These proportions included overseas students but excluded a number of training courses such as nursing and secretarial work (**CHE, 1963: 33**)

v The number of students at the University of Warwick reached 20,000 in 2000, and was just over 27,000 in 2018 (**Shattock and Warman**, **2010**).

vi Warwick's founding professor of philosophy Allen Phillips Griffiths remembers the course as titled 'Logic and Language' and joked that the common language of the university should be English (**Griffiths, 1991**).

vii The university was named after the town of Warwick as part of a political manoeuvre to secure support from Warwickshire County Council. The university before this decision had been promoted as the University of Coventry. (**Shattock, 2015: 27-8**)

viii Some of these rings survive today on central campus, for example, University Road, and the later Academic Loop Road, and in the propensity for student residences to be constructed further away from central campus.

ix Including connecting sections of the social science building, between Rootes Social Building and the Students Union Building, between the International Manufacturing Centre and International Automotive Research Centre and the engineering building across University Road, between the Zeeman Building and the computer science building, and in what is in effect an extension of the central access gallery which connects the library to the library extension to the south.

x Mud which could, at the time of writing, still be seen around the new Sports Hub, completed in 2019.

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Towards Inclusivity at the University of Warwick: An oral history study

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Abstract

As part of the Then & Now project, oral histories were collected from staff and alumni about their experiences at the University of Warwick. During these interviews, participants often spoke about their own experiences of inclusion and exclusion at university, often in comparison to the perceived experience of students at university of today. Looking back to earlier decades of the 1960s, 70s, 80s and 90s, those interviewed described the institution as primarily white, male, and middle-class. But, in their oral history testimonies participants reported feeling that that inclusivity at Warwick has undergone a transformation over the last 50 years. This article reviews these interviews and considers what the interviewees' experiences can add to discussions about inclusivity and accessibility within universities. By focusing on three themes that were identified from these interviews - gender, race and ethnicity, and class - the article explores changing attitudes and experiences of inclusion and exclusion at the University of Warwick 1965-present. The interviews indicate that significant changes have taken place with regards to gender equality, but that less sustained changes have been perceived to have occurred in relation to class and race. By reviewing a small sample of interviews that were collated as part of Then & Now, this article demonstrates the potential that further oral histories could offer to our understanding of inclusivity at the University of Warwick and the history of Higher Education.

Keywords: Inclusivity; oral history; University of Warwick; higher education; gender; race; ethnicity; class

Introduction

As part of the Then & Now: Arts at Warwick project, we interviewed alumni and long-standing members of Warwick's academic staff about the transformations they had witnessed since the university's founding or joining the university. We also examined oral histories that were collected to celebrate the universities 50-year anniversary and stored within the Modern Records Centre Archive. A key transformation that several interviewees identified was social inclusion. When Warwick was founded in 1965, many interviewees remarked that the profile of students and academic staff was primarily middle class, male, and white. Describing his fellow academics in the early Politics and International Studies (PAIS) department, Professor Wyn Grant explains that:

> *It certainly wasn't very diverse in terms of its [PAIS department in 1971] composition. Everyone in the department was a white male and quite a few of those were Scottish. The head of the department in the 1970's would not appoint a woman under any circumstance* (**Grant, 2020**).

This article reviews these oral history interviews and considers what the interviewees experiences can add to our understanding of the history of inclusion within universities. By focusing on three themes that were identified from these interviews - gender, race and class – the article explores changing attitudes and experiences of inclusion and exclusion at the University of Warwick 1965 to present. This article builds the case that many of those who were interviewed believe that despite visible transformations in inclusivity at Warwick, there is still progress to be made. In particular, although many note that the university has experienced visible transformations in respect to gender, including the movement of women into top positions within departments such as History, all interviewees discussed the structures, cultures and hierarchies that they believe continue to exclude some individuals and groups from feeling included at the University of Warwick, and university culture more broadly.

The structure of this article centres the voices of interviewees within its analysis. This article is structured by key themes that interviewees themselves identified: gender, race and ethnicity, and class. The article explores what we can learn about experiences and perceptions of inclusivity by listening to oral history testimonies. It also demonstrates the potential of oral history interviews as evidence for understanding transformations in inclusivity in universities, and provides the basis for further research into these important topics.

Methodology

As part of the Then & Now project, oral histories about student experience were collected from Warwick alumni and staff. Ethical approval was sought from Warwick's research ethics committee to conduct this research. Interviewees were identified with the support of the alumni office or volunteered in response to emails inviting participants to take part. Six interviews were conducted with alumni and three with current academic staff. The interviews took place over Microsoft Teams and varied in length from 45 to 90 mins. The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. A qualitative analysis of the transcripts was then conducted to select the material included within this article.

This article also makes use to two earlier recorded oral history interviews with Professor Sarah Richardson and Professor Bernard Capp, both from Warwick's history department. These were conducted as part of the Voices of Warwick project in 2015. They were selected for analysis for the purposes of this article due to their focus on themes of inclusivity and because they enabled contextualisation of the Then & Now interviews with other current history department staff members.

This article uses these oral histories to reflect on transformations in inclusivity at the University of Warwick since it was founded in 1965. The subjectivity of oral histories is well suited to the challenges of this question. It enables the space for new perspectives and, considering the issues discussed, captures the strong emotions attached to experiences of inclusion and exclusion. The nature of oral histories does mean that many of the issues discussed are framed in our modern understanding - for example, in relation to 'inclusion' and 'diversity' - which are not necessarily how such issues were understood or conceptualised at the time. This situation extends both to how I have examined the interviews, as well as how as interviewees themselves discussed their past experiences.

Through the interviews, three characteristics were identified around inclusivity that became the key themes in this article: gender, class and race and ethnicity. The three sections within this article explore interviewee responses to these themes and compare interviewee experiences and perceptions of change. That is, how things were 'then' in compared to 'now', and the nature of change from 1965 to present.

The first section explores the growing inclusion of women in academic positions at Warwick. The interviewees, including the first women to join the history department, discuss transformations that have taken place in higher education in relation to gender. It highlights that inclusivity, as these women experienced it, required more than just appointment and representation. The second section considers internationalisation and the

inclusion of black and minority ethnic students at Warwick, as well as the inequalities and discrimination experienced by these student groups. It shows that these issues remain, despite efforts to broaden the curriculum and transformations towards inclusivity headed by black and minority ethnic students, staff and allies in recent years. The final section considers how class and widening participation, focusing on how transformations in student fees and grants have, in some interviewee's opinion, perpetuated education's elitist structure and caused class divisions to become more prominent in university admissions.

Warwick's position as a 'plateglass' university means that it offers an interesting case study for considering changes since 1965 to the present in the broader context of UK Higher Education. Since most of the people interviewed for this research were from the history department, this department provides a focal point for the analysis in this article.

Gender

Certainly, in my case, I wasn't taught by any women, all my lecturers were male, so that's been quite a shift when we think of history departments now (**Roberts, 2020**).

Gender equality at Warwick has taken substantial steps since the university's founding. In this section, the focus is interviews conducted with several female Professors in the history department describing their experiences of being the first women to work within this previously male-dominated space. Through their testimonies we get a glimpse at the increased presence of women in the university, particularly as part of the academic staff. Their reflections demonstrate that university culture was often resistant to change and that we still cannot claim gender equality at Warwick, and in universities more broadly.

Turbulent social and political times meant that not long after the history department was formed in 1965, hiring was frozen, with virtually no new appointments until the late 1980s. Professor Bernard Capp was part of the history department during this period and describes the severe impact economic uncertainty and depression had:

[The 1960's] was the phase when the whole group of new universities had been founded… they were all new universities, new departments, new jobs… So although it was tough, there was actually some jobs to go for. Whereas 10 or so years later, when the hard times hit there was an almost total freeze… In this department, we went for something like 11 years where literally nobody came and nobody left, no vacancies and no departures (**Price, interview with Bernard Capp, 2015**).

Professor Sarah Richardson was the first women to be appointed to the department. Her recruitment in 1988 finally broke the stalemate that had seen no female appointments before this point. However, she was only hired on a temporary contract:

> *I decided that I would take the teaching job at Warwick. Warwick also was a bit of a gamble because I was the first woman to be appointed and…this was 1988, the last permanent appointment they had made was in 1976. So, there was a big age difference between me and my fellow colleagues, um and as I say all of them were men. So I did feel it was a bit of a gamble* (**Price, interview with Bernard Capp, 2015**).

It was not simply a freeze on recruitment that delayed women's appointment into university posts. Speaking about the Politics Department, Professor Wyn Grant highlights the sexist attitudes of senior members of the department:

> *In one case, a perfectly good and indeed quite strong woman candidate was simply not shortlisted. She got the job at Manchester University. She was clearly very capable, and the head of department wasn't going to have any women because he thought they were trouble* (**Price, interview with Bernard Capp, 2015**).

Such attitudes acted alongside budgetary restraints to prevent the hiring of women to department posts earlier in Warwick's history. However, the decision to hire Sarah set a precedent that eventually led to greater female representation in the department. As Sarah noted, when interviewed for the *Voices of the University* project in 2015, it was not always easy for newly appointed female members of staff within the primarily male environment of the history department at that time. Recounting her first experience of double-blind marking a special subject she noted:

> *So I marked it and at that stage it was all blind double marking and the other academic said to me, 'Okay read out all your marks'. So, I went through the candidates and said you know x, 60 whatever, and he didn't respond at all… and normally what happens in this situation they would go, 'Oh well, actually I thought much better of it, I gave it a 75' or 'I thought it was awful I gave it a 50' and then you discuss it. I just had to read all of mine out, I had no reaction, so I had no idea whether my marking was inline, it was very very intimidating. And in fact at the end he said 'Actually you know we are really close' and so I did tell him that I thought that was appalling behaviour… so there were things like that where I felt like I was being tested quite a lot* (**Schluze, interview with Sarah Richardson, 2015**).

Despite such experiences, Sarah felt able to express herself within the department and challenge practices that she felt were discriminatory. She explains that the department's experience of being male dominated for so long seemed to allow sexist practices to have continued unchallenged before her arrival:

> *I got on well with a lot of my colleagues… [but] it was odd being the only women, it was very odd. At that stage we interviewed everyone, and you interviewed on your own and I remember we used to write little cards… [One of my] colleagues put 'this student is a raven-haired beauty' and I said 'you can't put that, so what would you say if I put that a guy was really fit, he's got a great body, or something' and it was that sort of era where there was a lot of, semi-conscious I would say, sexism that was just seen as acceptable in a department that had just been all men* (**Schluze, interview with Sarah Richardson, 2015**).

Professor Rebecca Earle noted that although some male colleagues supported their new female colleagues, interactions with others was more problematic. She recalls her experience joining Warwick in the late 1980's:

> *I had good colleagues, who didn't make my being a woman problematic. I mean, there were some peculiar people who, you know, never really wanted to look me in the eye when I walked down the corridor, particularly when I was a postgraduate student. There were people, just, you know, they were old style men who just, they just wouldn't look at me. I think some of them never learned my name even after I've been in the Department for, I don't know, six or seven years* (**Earle, 2020**)**.**

Professor Penny Roberts had a similar experience, with some colleagues unsure how to address her when she was appointed in 1992:

> *So that was quite an interesting situation, to the point that some colleagues didn't know how to refer to me. I had a very well-known colleague who used to refer to everybody as 'old boy' and ended up calling me 'my girl'. He was the only one of my colleagues I would have ever let get away with that!* (**Roberts, 2020**).

What these testimonies make clear is that male academics were sometimes hostile or even unsure of how to respond to the increased presence of women within the department. Maternity leave seemed a particular source of confusion, in terms of how it required new management and organisational approaches, as Rebecca explains:

> *I remember when I went and told my head of Department, who was a wonderful person in many ways… I said that I was pregnant, and I was going to be going on maternity leave and he said, 'When are you going*

to do that?' And I said, well, I think because of, you know, the due date, probably I would want to go on leave something like week eight of the first term or something like that. And he said, 'Well, you can't do that. That's the middle of term. You can't, just, you know…' [I said] 'I think I can 'cause it's like one month before my baby is due' and he said, 'I don't think so'. I mean, you know, then he looked into it and found that indeed it was true, that's how maternity leave worked… [But] he was kind of treating it as if it were a request to just take study leave. It was very funny. He was completely flabbergasted by the notion that somebody would just have to leave in the middle of the term (**Earle, 2020**)**.**

When interviewed, Sarah described her experience as a working mother, and the difficulty of reconciling childcare and the structure of a university day. The existing culture of evening teaching and late research seminars was a particular challenge for Sarah who, as a single parent, had to ensure childcare cover for her daughter:

One of the things that the women in the department, the young women did do was try to stop the culture of late seminar, late research seminars. Because we all found it incredibly difficult because we couldn't go home, I sometimes had to go home and get a babysitter and then come back. You know it isn't the case that you can just leave a child for hours, there was one day I was teaching an evening class and it started to snow at about 3 o'clock and I made the decision to cancel class and go home because [my daughter] was being looked after by a babysitter who was 16 or 17 and I didn't know if I would be able to get home because of the snow and the students, the part-time students made a complaint (**Schulze, interview with Sarah Richardson, 2015**)*.*

When interviewed, Penny also described the odd comments that she encountered in discussions about mixing academic work and motherhood:

There were some really odd comments… this wasn't all male colleagues by any means, but you always had the minority who would say things like, 'Well, I think, you know, that really mothers should be full time at home'. So the idea of combining work with motherhood was something that to some colleagues was not acceptable, suggesting that 'You'll have to come back and do all your marking even though you'll be on maternity leave', which is actually illegal! (**Roberts, 2020**).

The increased presence of women within the department highlighted issues of maintaining a balance between work and childcare provision. This is not to say these issues did not affect male academics in the department, but as more women joined the department these topics became notable points of contention, especially in the case of parental leave for childbirth.

Penny's interview revealed the impact of power and gender dynamics of the time which made young women, in particular, susceptible to unwanted approaches. Penny noted:

> *I can think of things that happened to me, particularly early in my career, and I think this is probably true of young women in most situations, you're much more vulnerable to unwanted approaches... Not so much at Warwick, it was really before I came to Warwick... I was exposed to that sort of situation... by colleagues and you just kind of put up with it. Unfortunately, I think that we were all really used to that kind of stuff and I put up with it in a way that I just wouldn't have done later in my career. That says something, when you're young, when you're vulnerable, you don't want to rock the boat and you become much more susceptible as a consequence* (**Roberts, 2020**).

All of the female members of the history department whose oral history transcripts were investigated remarked on how much things had changed since when they first joined. As Rebecca explained, since the 1970s, the gender balance and culture of the department has significantly changed:

> *Certainly, the gender balance of the Department really is totally transformed. The male world that I entered is absolutely no more... I mean there's been good career progression now for women [within my department], which wasn't the case for a long time. Like for a long time, so if there were women, we were gathered towards the bottom. But that's changed significantly, and so we also were much closer to the undergraduate intake. Which, if anything, is slightly, you know, is skewed towards women* (**Earle, 2020**).

As demonstrated by the esteem of the female academics interviewed, it is clear women have succeeded in accessing the top positions within the Department of History and Faculty of Arts. However, we cannot assume that issues of gender are no longer a concern. Penny for instance, holds reservations about claiming unequivocal success:

> *But as we started to recruit as the economic climate improved, it was clear that for every 1 woman they were appointing, they were appointing 3 men and from a base of zero, so there were some difficult conversations in the department. The department felt like it was doing really well, because the women that it did appoint, me, Penny and Rebecca were quite articulate and we would speak in meetings and challenge things so they felt like they had made loads of progress, when actually they hadn't. They were also fortunate that due to some changes in things like education, they were given Carolyn Steedman and Maria Luddy, and Maxine Berg came from economics. We had suddenly got these senior women coming in, again which none of them*

had been appointed by the department... It is a similar situation now with the professoriate in the history department, there are 4 female professors, I think and 13 or 14 male professors, although our gender profile looks good, there are a lot of women at Associate Professor level and not a lot of women at Professor level (**Schulze, interview with Sarah Richardson, 2015**).

The findings of Warwick's Equality Monitoring Annual Report 2018/2019 reflect Penny's observations about the continued need to improve gender equality, particularly within the academic staff. The report found that across the university, in teaching and research roles, only a third of posts were filled by women (**University of Warwick, 2019: 11**). In the Faculty of Arts, there is a more equal split, with women accounting for 43.2% of the teaching and research staff. However, there is still a gendered work division, with 71.4% of Teaching Focused academic roles occupied by women (**University of Warwick, 2019**)**.** Compared to the entirely male academic staff that Sarah described before her arrival to the department, this is a radical change but the continued impact of gender related issues in the faculty is clear.

Penny argues that we need to ask fundamental questions about why we are not attracting a more diverse range of applicants. In this case, she feels that the types of history that the department teaches is crucial in pushing this change:

Since often it will be said 'Oh well, we aren't interviewing any women because nobody who was particularly qualified for this, or who was as strong as the other candidates, applied', whereas the position should be, 'Is there something wrong with the way we are advertising it, if we're not attracting those people to apply? The question isn't just what kinds of colleagues [should we be recruiting] but also what sorts of topics do we want to be teaching... [there has been a] change over the last 40 years or so that moved women's history from being a marginal activity, to gender being a key feature of all historical analysis, [which] has significantly changed the sorts of things people think [of as] history and what topics we teach. I think that is not disconnected with the larger number of women in the historical profession. So that is a steering mechanism that one can think about (**Roberts, 2020**).

Female representation in the department of history has certainly improved and is undeniably different to the Warwick that Wyn and Bernard initially described. Yet, simply increasing the number of female appointments does not offer all the solutions. As highlighted by the experiences above, there is a view that it necessary for a review of the types of history that are taught as well as working practices and cultures to enable more women to feel that they can succeed in academia.

Ultimately, Penny offers a pessimistic evaluation of gender inclusivity as it stands and the implications it has for inclusivity more broadly: '[But] back to the gender issue if I may, because it is striking that if we can't get that sorted then I don't think we have much hope with anything else' (**Roberts, 2020**).

Internationalisation, Race and Ethnicity

You also have to have everybody in the Department thinking about what kind of Department do we want (**Earle, 2020**).

Warwick has seen a significant rise in international students since the 1980s, and especially within the last couple of decades. Although international students were nothing new to British institutions, the 1990s saw a more concentrated effort to recruit and provide for students from overseas. Silver and Silver place Oxford Brookes as the first university to establish an Advisory Service for International Students, which was then followed by other institutions (**Silver & Silver, 1997: 74**). By 1995 around 150,000 international students were studying within the UK, 10% of all students. A drastic rise from the 25,000 recorded in 1965 (**Silver & Silver: 73**). On Warwick's current website a page applauds its 'International Profile' where it states that at Warwick there are currently 10,453 'non-UK domiciled students (from approx. 150 countries)'. The rise in international students has increased the diversity of nationalities amongst the student population. It is also worth noting that today '42.9% of all Academic/ Research/ Teaching staff have non-UK nationality' (**University of Warwick, 2018**). This reflects rising international student numbers nationally, and places Warwick just outside the top universities with the highest number of overseas students (**Great Britain, 2021**).

Within the Arts Faculty, the founding of the Global History and Culture Centre (GHCC) in 2007 was similarly a crucial step in orientating the curriculum and research in the department away from national focused histories to a global outlook, recognising the interconnectedness of histories from around the world. When interviewed, Professor Maxine Berg spoke about her experience forming this centre, in the context of the broader rise of global history:

But then in 2000, I think things had been going on before that time, but certainly in 2000, Ken Pomeranz's book, The Great Divergence was published…Ken Pomeranz was travelling the world and he came to Warwick. Masses of people turned out to see him. It was like one of those big lecture theatres was completely full …So, we got a new Vice-Chancellor, and that is the time to seize the moment, so I went to our new Vice-Chancellor… It was Nigel Thrift, and I went to see him and said, 'Warwick needs a Global History Centre, there is not one

anywhere, there has been this amazing intellectual moment in history, and we can create a Global History Centre here'. So that started in the Autumn of 2006… And it was just incredible success, and it was partly because I had such wonderful colleagues, Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello… and then more modern historians became involved and so it just went from there. And various people, we managed to keep it going… So, we became quite well known across the world (**Berg, 2020**).

Maxine goes on to explain that this intellectual turn was influential in raising new questions and methods within historical study as a whole:

One of the early things we did with the GHCC, we held a conference at the British Academy, called 'Writing the History of the Global' and the British Academy they took, they were very keen on this conference idea and they funded it and we had a big conference, a lot of people came and all the major speakers in the area, but also a whole number of people who weren't necessarily doing global history. I mean people like Linda Colley, and we interviewed them… asking them about how this global turn was affecting the way they saw history, that they saw their history writing. So, I think that was quite a change, and it didn't necessarily mean everyone had to become a global historian, but that they were interested in just this methodology, the approach, the sort of subjects that were being brought into history that really weren't being looked at very much. I mean many of the history departments at that time were just full of British Historians… but they did not have many historians of the wider world (**Berg, 2020**).

These changes map an evolution in the department's academic and teaching focus towards more global perspectives.

However, oral history interviews and other evidence demonstrates that a trend towards more global research and teaching have not always produced greater inclusion or equality for the staff or student body. Penny reflects on the limited improvements she has seen since her time joining Warwick:

We've gone quite a long way with gender, but we've made very little headway with ethnic minority or BAME appointments or other sorts of protected characteristics. Indeed, somebody who joined the University recently expressed to me quite how surprised he was by how white Warwick is in terms of staff. There has definitely been more of a shift towards a more diverse student base, and people say, 'Oh it's a pipeline you have to wait, this will eventually feed through', but again I don't believe that's necessarily the case. Unconscious bias and existing prejudice remain, and many studies show that without appropriate training people appoint those who look and sound like them, who

appear to have the same views as them, so it becomes self-reinforcing (**Roberts, 2020**).

This is supported by evidence, such as the Monitoring Equality Report's finding that only 3.4% of staff with an academic contract at Warwick identified as Black Asian or Minority Ethnic (**University of Warwick, 2019: 26)**.

In respect to creating greater access and equality for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students, another current member of Warwick's History Department, Meliesa-Ono George, has argued in a recent article that changing the curriculum, alone, is not enough and that anti-Racist pedagogy practices also need to be utilised. She describes mechanisms that can be employed to disrupt exclusionary education practices, through challenging objectivity in education and the hierarchical structure in academic teaching (**Ono-George, 2019: 503-4**). When she spoke to current minority ethnic students at Warwick about their experiences, they reported feelings of isolation, daily experiences of overt racism and microaggressions, and lacking staff to whom they can relate. Overall, she concluded, this creates a 'lack of confidence in institutional process and response' (**Ibid: 501**). This demonstrates the shortcomings of Warwick as an inclusive institution, but also criticises teaching practices in Higher Education more widely. Ono-George turns the spotlight towards pedagogy, arguing that simply improving diversity will not be enough to break down the institution's exclusionary practices (**Ibid, 2019: 502**).

It seems that things are changing, especially following movements like RhodesMustFall and BlackLivesMatter. The need to improve inclusivity of minority ethnic students and staff has finally been given the focus that it deserves. Penny explains how such issues are now discussed in meetings, when previously they were not:

> *Equality and inclusivity as issues are much more on the agenda than before, for instance, above the line and openly discussed in meetings, including around promotions and appointments. There is still a long way to go, but there has definitely been a big change in a positive direction. In particular, people are being made more aware and, therefore, prepared to speak out. So we have come a long way but there is still work to do, but I suspect that there is always going to be work to do* (**Roberts, 2020**).

Maxine also spoke about the impact of BlackLivesMatter and how it informed her own need to re-evaluate her research:

> *So, you see the subject has come up, there is another good reason for doing this, the reason I took it up in the summer was a response to Black Lives Matter... there has been all this recent work on the history of*

capitalism and the role of Slavery in American modernization, but it has all been about America, and all been about the cotton industry. But that impact of that slavery was also very important in Britain and it was much earlier and it was about sugar… It is sugar plantations which were the crucial connection… I just really wanted to write an article that undergraduates could read and have an informed view, that took the subject seriously, and didn't just say it was not important cause it didn't contribute more than 2% to GDP and that's what the position of economic historians largely is (**Berg, 2020**).

However, such changes are only because of extensive campaigning by minority ethnic students and staff who have challenged exclusionary practices within institutions like Warwick. The work by individuals such as Ono-George has been crucial in drawing academic attention to the inequalities experienced by minority ethnic students within Higher Education today. The improvements we see have been hard fought for and compared with improvements in female inclusivity certainly have a long way to go. The recent attention paid has not overcome years of exclusionary practices that have meant students from a diverse range of backgrounds felt unwelcome within, and unable to access, university spaces.

Class

You could still say that universities are good in the sense that everybody is just chucked in together regardless of their educational background, but once they leave that can still come back into play … who your parents are, where you went to school, especially if you want to go and work in the city (**Roberts, 2020**).

When considering the improvements in diversity that we have discussed so far, although success has varied and – certainly in the case of race and ethnicity – there is a long way to go, what is notable is the seemingly linear nature of this progress. When comparing to the white, male dominated academia that existed in the 1960s, Warwick today has experienced diversification, women now accounting for 43.2 % of teaching and research academic staff, and Black Asian and Minority Ethnic staff accounting for 3.4% of the academic staff within the Faculty of Arts (**University of Warwick, 2019: 11, 26**). This model of linear progress does not seem to apply when considering discussions of socio-economic background. Historically, universities were dominated by middle class students. However, grants and significantly lower fees meant that students were not forced to accumulate the levels of debt experienced by students of today.

In the 1960s, issues of elitism and class dominated British universities. As a student coming from a grammar school, Bernard describes the overt elitism he witnessed as a student at Oxford:

> *Pembroke was kind of a middle of the road place, there were public school people there but there was also quite a few people from state schools, so I sort of fitted in reasonably well. Whereas the big college just across the road, Christchurch was almost entirely top public schools and the culture of the place was that. In fact one lad from my secondary school a year or two later did actually get into Christchurch, and I remember meeting him and we were discussing how things were, and he said 'People on my staircase won't talk to me because I came from a state school'* (**Price, interview with Bernard Capp, 2015**)**.**

At the same time, numbers of students attending university were relatively low. Roughly four in every hundred young people entered full-time courses at university. Of those entering higher education, the percentage of working-class students was low, with only three per cent of working-class boys and one per cent of working-class girls going on to full-time degree-level courses (**Barr & Glennerster, 2014: xvii**).

The Robbins Report**,** published in 1963**,** was a significant turning point in Higher Education provision. The report argued for an expansion of Higher Education, drastically increasing spaces available. The government recognised that too many young people who could have benefited from a university education had been missing out on the opportunity (**Ibid**). The founding of a wave of new universities, including Warwick, resulted from this changing thought.

After completing his PhD at Oxford, Bernard began his first teaching post at Warwick in 1968. Reflecting on the difference between Warwick students then and now, he explains that during Warwick's early years there was a greater diversity of students across different socio-economic backgrounds**:**

> *There was a much bigger… range in terms of social economic background then than Warwick's students today. There's an increasing proportion of our students now from Independent schools, probably because the entrance requirements are so, so high. That many comprehensives for example struggle to match those. But in the early days overwhelmingly students were from the grammar schools or comprehensive state schools anyways. There were always some really high flying students who had made a conscious decision not to even apply to Oxbridge because they thought York or Warwick or Sussex or one of these new places were going to be more exciting and adventurous and they wanted to do that… I did a stint as an admissions*

> *tutor in the 70s I think it was and our standard offer in those days was BCC… It's mindboggling, now the average is sort of 3 A's plus and Warwick was already a respectable place by then* (**Price, interview with Bernard Capp, 2015**).

Bernard believes that the lower grade requirements in Warwick's early years was one factor that allowed students from state schools more opportunity to apply. The 1967/68 prospectus for the university describes the requirements for History as 'passes in two approved subjects at the Advanced Level are required' (**University of Warwick, 1967: 113)**. Another significant difference identified by interviewees was the scale of funding available to students to attend university in this period. Rebecca Earle describes the transformative effect this financial support had:

> *And I think I mean going along with the introduction of fees--one should also say even before that the elimination of the bursary--once upon a time there were no fees and students got a bursary. A much smaller number of people went to University, but it also provided a route for people who came from backgrounds that couldn't afford the fees and couldn't afford the living expenses to be able to do it. And I think there is huge amounts of research on how transformative it was for the generation of people who benefitted from that in the 60's and 70's* (**Earle, 2020**).

However, Penny explains that we need to be careful to assume that this era was a golden time for social mobility:

> *But, of course, as the university sector expanded, obviously a different kind of financial model was required… Actually, when I went to university, it was still pretty middle class, I'm not sure how much you can look back to a golden era, therefore. Selective schooling and other advantages mean that because it's always been a selective system, you still need the grades to get here* (**Roberts, 2020**).

The creation of new universities like Warwick did not fix the culture of elitism tied to universities. Katherine, an education graduate who attended Warwick from 1990-94, describes her experience coming from a lower socio-economic background and how, despite a wider availability of funding options, class divisions were still obvious:

> *One bad memory from an education seminar, where about 20 of us were in a circle and uh, the guy, the professor said 'oh let's go round the circle and say your name and where you are from' cause it must have been early days and I said 'I'm Katherine and I'm from Nuneaton' and he went [in an exaggerated accent] 'ah Nuneaton, we've got a local girl' and he just, I was so embarrassed that he had made fun of my accent and I realised at that moment that even amongst the mature students*

> *who were quite local, I was the only one with a local accent. And I just… half of me was embarrassed and half of me was outraged, how dare he do me in for having a local accent. Um, I did find somebody on the course from Tamworth who had an accent as strong as mine, so we chummed up, we were friends for a bit. But yeah there was that side of things. I don't imagine it's as bad now but back then you still had to be of a certain class really to get into university, umm a lot of my friends from my local school… I was in the top class at school, with really intelligent people the vast majority of whom did not go to university because it just wasn't in their culture to go. Most people back then, you didn't go to university unless you were from a fairly middle-class background to be honest, and um… I do remember one girl who I loved, she was so nice, Sue, couldn't cope… our first teaching experience they took us into Chelmsley Wood in Birmingham and oh there was all these ruffian kids running around and we came back and we had to do kind of feedback from it and this poor Sue said, 'Oh My Goodness,' she said, 'I don't know if I am on the right course, I went to a Covent school, I've never seen anything like it'. She was lovely and it was fairly clear from the lectures we went to she was going to be a really great teacher actually, she's probably in a private school somewhere. Somewhere nice. But I loved her to bits, she was so honest about you know… about it being way beyond her scope of experience. That is kind of the sort of people that went to university* (**Katherine, 2020**).

This experience of feeling out of place does not appear uncommon. Considering her own experience travelling South to study her degree, Penny explains a clear bias in Warwick's student population that does still exist:

> *I am from the North West, and what struck me most when I went to university was being a state-educated northerner among many privately-educated southerners. It was remarkable and really striking… [Warwick] too draws most of its students from the South East. It's difficult to shift this bias because, once you have established that sort of link with where people typically come from, so more people come who look and sound the same* (**Roberts, 2020**).

These stories all demonstrate how class divisions have remained a consistent feature of university life over the last fifty years at Warwick. Compared to other Russell Group universities, Warwick does not have the worst ratio of state school to private school students. Overall, the independent school sector educates around 6.5% of the total number of school children in the UK (ISC, Research, 2021). However, figures published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency, comparing the school background of all undergraduates in the 2017/2018 year, found that 41.8%

of Oxford's cohort had attended private school. Warwick did significantly better when compared to Oxford, with only 23.9% of its students having previously attended a private school (**HESA, 2019**). This, though, still shows a disparity, whereby private school students are disproportionately represented at the university. In an article published by The Boar in 2019 it was reported that Warwick's proportion of state educated pupils had fallen compared to the previous year's data (**Kinder, 2021**).

When comparing the Warwick of 1968 that Bernard described to the university community that we see today, it is unclear whether the institution has become more or less inclusive to students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. What is clear is the impact of changes to funding arrangements. The initial decision to abolish student grants to be replaced by income-contingent student loans in 1998 started a process whereby gradually tuition fees rose and maintenance grants transformed into maintenance loans (**BBC News, 2009**). The decision that from 2012 universities could charge tuition fees of up to £9,000 per year was undeniably controversial (**Coughlan, 2010**). Debates around the impact of fee rises have been unclear, however it has left one interviewee, Katherine, concerned that any improvements in accessibility to universities would be reversed. She is worried that were she making this decision today, she might not have undertaken her degree:

> *[I] feel very lucky that financially I didn't have to take on any kind of burden to go there and I loved it, I really enjoyed the course... But just the whole experience was really good and I just feel privileged I did it at a time when I didn't have to pay and I think that is how it should still be… if I had had to take on a loan to do it. I wouldn't have done it, and if I was 18 now I would not be going to university…I think a lot of people from my sort of background won't take up that option* (**Katherine, 2020**).

The interviews examined certainty paint a complex picture of class in the context of Warwick and higher education more broadly. Compared to improvements in gender or progress being made in efforts to address racial equality, we cannot see a clear narrative of progress. Class has been a dividing factor and complex issue for students across Warwick's history, and as we progress forward with higher fees and ever more competitive entry requirements, the experience of the interviewees demonstrate that elitism remains. Certainly, as I consider my own accumulation of over £70,000 of debt, it is not difficult to see why for those of a lower socio-economic background this could be a substantial deterrent.

Conclusion

Considering the interviews conducted as part of the *Then & Now* Project, it is evident that Warwick has certainly changed since its founding in 1965. Warwick, and Higher Education more broadly, has become more inclusive because of active changes pushed for by both students and staff. In terms of gender there has been linear progress (although issues remain), and in the case of race, a clear commitment to address outstanding issues, such as the under-representation of both minority ethnic students and staff. Within the history department it has been shown how efforts to promote gender and racial inclusion have been extended across staff hiring and management arrangements to the research, the curriculum and pedagogic practice in the period 1965 to now. At the current moment, we can hope for further improvements on the horizon, pushed on by recent campaigns to widen the curriculum and transform teaching practices. Through the efforts of certain individuals and groups, we can begin to see progress towards greater inclusivity for both staff and students.

Class contrastingly paints a more complicated picture. We cannot see a clear narrative of progress, unlike with gender and ethnicity. Differences in class have historically divided and excluded students, and interviewees have outlined fears about how this could worsen if we progress forward with higher fees and ever more competitive entry requirements. The experience of the interviewees demonstrates the elitism that still exists in many British universities, including Warwick.

Overall, Warwick has undergone transformations towards inclusivity. However, this transformation has not been enough to address the exclusionary nature of Higher Education in Britain. There is continuing pressure on the institution to act and help in making Warwick a place welcoming to students whatever their background. But COVID has halted progress, as Rebecca explains:

> *Which is why it's so important that we be able to increase the diversity of the academic staff, not just in terms of gender. In terms of ethnicity, that's incredibly important, and it's distressing that the current financial exigencies that the Department is facing because of the pandemic is really making it hard for us to do anything about that because [hiring is] frozen. We can't hire anybody for the foreseeable future.* (**Earle, 2020**).

We can only hope that current financial issues do not freeze the university's progress as it did in the 1970's and 80s, but that we can continue to push for a more inclusive Warwick.

Acknowledgements

Originally from Bristol, Lauren completed her undergraduate at the University of Warwick in History and Politics. Currently she is undertaking a Masters in Global and Comparative History at Warwick, with the goal of working in the heritage industry after her studies.

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Charles, April 2020.

Katherine, April 2020.

Pierre, March 2020.

Professor Penny Roberts, July 2020.

Professor Maxine Berg, December 2020.

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Then & Now Arts at Warwick Student Project: Co-creation in the COVID-19 crisis

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Abstract

This article overviews the 'Then & Now: Arts at Warwick' student-led research and public engagement project that took place at the University of Warwick from January to August 2020. It discusses the methods of student co-creation and student-led research that underpinned the project and provides a detailed description of the pedagogic practices employed. The value and challenges of student co-creation are examined alongside the experience of managing a complex project in the crisis situation of COVID-19. The project's impact in building learning community and enhancing the student academic experience is evaluated, and critical commentary is provided on some aspects of the project's design. This article demonstrates the benefits of utilising digital technology for the facilitation of student co-creation in the arenas of research and public engagement, and for the development of learning that enables students to participate in 'real life' academic activities and shape the pedagogic approaches that are used in their teaching.

Keywords: University of Warwick; Co-Creation; Student Led-Research; Student Engagement; COVID-19

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Introduction

Then & Now: *Arts at Warwick* was an experimental student-led research and public engagement project run by the University of Warwick's Arts Faculty from January to August 2020. The project brought together undergraduate and postgraduate students, archivists from the Modern Records Centre (MRC), alumni, and academic staff. It explored the evolution of the Arts at Warwick from 1965 to the present and compared student experiences 'then' and 'now'. The project aimed to trial new approaches and methods of student co-creation, student-led research, and public engagement. It also sought to foster a sense of learning community for the Arts Faculty, as well as provide students with the opportunity to undertake interdisciplinary learning and develop new skills through 'real life' academic research, exhibition curation, and public engagement activities. Student engagement in the project was entirely voluntary. This article provides a reflective account of the project as a pedagogic intervention from the perspective of its two academic leads: Dr Kathryn Woods (Director of Student Experience for Arts), who conceived and led the project until April 2020, and Pierre Botcherby (PhD candidate in History), who led the project from April 2020 until its competition in August 2020. The article demonstrates the value of the *Then & Now* project in creating learning community for students, especially when studying at distance during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how the project's team of staff and student co-creators managed and evolved the project in this challenging context.

Then & Now's inspiration was the construction of Warwick's new Faculty of Arts Building, due for completion in 2021. This move represents a significant change for the Arts Faculty which has been housed in the Humanities Building since 1970. Among other things, the transition to the new building, featuring a range of new 'open' learning spaces and bringing all the Faculty's departments under one roof, aims to foster a greater sense of learning community and promote interdisciplinarity. In advance of this move, *Then & Now* aimed to celebrate the history of Warwick's Arts Faculty and stimulate collective thinking about its future through critical analysis of its past. It sought to empower today's students to take an active role in shaping the next chapter in the Faculty's history by encouraging them to reflect – and communicate and evidence to others – the various ways that past generations of Warwick students have been involved in making the Faculty and the University what they are today. Warwick University's strategic promotion of student co-creation and student-led research also provided inspiration for the project.

The project equally sought to redress the traditional silencing of student voice within institutional and educational histories that have tended to focus on the politics of institutions and education in the post-war period, and ignore 'grassroot' student archives, cultures, and histories. This is a trend that has continued in a recent wave of 'new' educational histories, despite calls by the likes of Gary McCulloch and Tom Woodin for the development of a new social history of learners and learning (**2010**). A key aim for *Then & Now* was thus to develop a student history 'from below' that focused on grassroot student experiences and student archives, and involved students in the making of their own history. Connected to this, it was considered important for the project to encourage students to rediscover parts of Warwick's history that may have been forgotten, deliberately obscured, or underemphasised within established histories. As the site of the 1960s student-management disputes documented by E.P. Thompson in Warwick University Ltd, a foundational text in critical university studies, Warwick provides an excellent case study for exploring the student side of the ongoing and polarised debate over the rise of the 'neo-liberal university' (**Vernon, 2018**). Warwick also made a good case study due to its history of leadership in the development of new pedagogies, including the concept of 'student as producer' that was developed by Mike Neary when he was lead of the Reinvention Centre for Undergraduate Research at Warwick 2004-2007 (**Neary & Winn, 2009**).

Then & Now at once sought to collapse the hierarchies that often exist between university staff and postgraduate and undergraduate students, and create closer symbiosis between academic teaching and learning, research, and public engagement. The project trialled new public engagement approaches by engaging the 'public' – current students, staff, and alumni – through all stages of the project life cycle. *Then & Now* was especially innovative in enabling students to take responsibility for the project's overall direction, planning, research questions, and outputs. As the project's academic 'leads', our primary roles involved starting the project, facilitating its administration, and supporting the students in achieving their aims, mainly through academic guidance and mentoring. In allowing decision making power to be gradually transferred to the students as the project progressed and enabling them to co-produce the pedagogies employed through reflexive practice, *Then & Now* tested the partnership model – most commonly used in staff-student co-creation projects – and operated around the highest rungs of Arnstein's 'ladder of citizen participation' (**Arnstein, 1969**).

The article reflects on the benefits of student co-creation and initiatives that empower students to take leading roles in arenas of academic activity beyond traditionally conceived teaching and learning. It discusses how the methods employed by *Then & Now*, and the contexts in which it took

place, encouraged the student participants to progressively assume power and autonomy over the project's management. The article begins by outlining the project's background and initial aims, before providing a discussion of its process and methods. It ends with an overview of the project's outputs and legacy. In producing this article, Kathryn focused on the project background, theory, and aims, whilst Pierre focused on the processes, methods, outputs, and evaluation. This approach mirrors our different roles in the project. This piece aims to support student co-creation in academic research, pedagogy, and public and student engagement, by showing how digital technology and digital learning environments (which have become more commonly used since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic) can usefully blur the boundaries between these knowledge arenas and activities, and create a space that students can enter, relatively easily, as learning partners and producers, as well as communicators of knowledge (**Bagga-Gupta, Dalberg & Lindberg, 2019**).

Theoretical Approaches

Then & Now's approaches to student engagement were informed by theories of co-creation and student-led research that have emerged since 2000. Cook-Sather, Bovill and Felten define co-creation as a 'collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualisation, decision making, implementation, investigation, or analysis' (**2014: 6-7**). Co-creation approaches deliberately collapse traditional hierarchical arrangements between teachers and learners, repositioning both as joint learners and creators of knowledge (**Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018**). In recent years, Warwick's senior management have expressed a sustained desire to embed co-creation into every education practice (**Warwick Education Strategy, 2018**). This has been supported by institutional bodies such as the Institute of Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL) and the Warwick International Higher Education Academy (WIHEA). In practice, multiple understandings of what constitutes student co-creation exist simultaneously. Most student co-creation projects involve students as 'partners': 'power is […] redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders' who 'agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities' (**Arnstein, 1969: 216-7**). *Then & Now* was initially conceived as partnership project. As the project developed, however, it felt natural to give students a greater role in the project's planning and management and the pedagogies employed. Student participation in the project thereby moved upwards on the 'ladder of participation', towards positions of 'delegated power' and 'citizen level' control (**1969: 216-7**).

Then & Now's development was also informed by theories of research-led teaching and student-led research (**Zamorski, 2002**). In 2005, the Council of Undergraduate Research and the National Conference on Undergraduate Research declared undergraduate research as 'the pedagogy for the 21st Century' (**Walkington, 2015: 4**). As Walkington notes, definitions of student research encompass a broad church of interpretations, including everything from project work and dissertations to paid internships. It can also include arrangements where 'students are supervised by postgraduate students rather than academic staff, or work in teams including staff, graduate students, and undergraduates' (**Ibid: 10**). It is this latter approach which best encapsulates *Then & Now*'s co-creation ambitions. The project was equally shaped by the concept of 'student as producer'. This pedagogic concept evolved in the 2010s and identified technology and digital scholarship as key enablers for student led-research and supporting changes to the relationship between tutor and student that underlie research-engaged teaching, including through facilitating students' communication with each other, partners, and communities across multiple sites, both on and off campus (**Neary et al., 2010: 12-13**).

Like student co-creation, student led-research involves different levels of student participation. Walkington has identified five different categories or levels student participation. *Then & Now* was initially conceived to operate at level three: 'staff initiated, decisions shared with students'. At level three, 'staff frame the enquiry initially but students have a much greater role to play in decision-making with respect to development of methods, reframing, determining courses of action and taking responsibility for the outcomes and dissemination' (**Walkington, 2015: 10**). For example, when the project began students were not provided with specific research questions or expected projects outputs, only suggestions. This allowed the students to adapt the project according to their own interests and assume responsibility over its research questions and outputs.

At the same time, student participants were encouraged to develop their own research agendas and outputs connected to the project theme. As the project progressed, many of the students acted more independently, either working alone or in small groups, and started to engage at levels four and five of student participation. Level four student-led research participation is defined as 'student initiated and directed'. An example of this from the project are the 'isolation diaries', which the students developed and worked on almost entirely independently in response to COVID-19. Level five, meanwhile, is defined as where 'students initiate the research for themselves, but all of this is done in consultation with university staff at a level determined by the student'. A prime example of

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this from *Then & Now* is Malina Mihalache's article about the project, independently published in Art Space magazine (**Mihlalache, 2020**). Therefore, although *Then & Now* initially engaged students as partners, it also created opportunities for students to act more independently and develop their own independent research agendas within it. As is discussed below, over the duration of the project this enabled students to assume greater power over the project's overall management and reflexively shape the pedagogies employed.

Process: January to March 2020

At the start of the project, undergraduate and postgraduate student participants were recruited from across Warwick's Arts Faculty. There was no limit on numbers or formal recruitment process, beyond asking students to express interest via email. Nineteen students from seven departments came forwards: seven from History of Art, six from the Centre for Cultural and Media Policy Studies, and the rest from across the departments of History, Modern Languages, Global Sustainable Development, Film and Television Studies, and Politics and International Studies. This recruitment of students from different departments and with different skillsets was considered important to facilitating the interdisciplinary and learning community development aims of the project.

The project was run through regular weekly meetings on Wednesday afternoons. These sessions were held in the MRC to familiarise the students with the university archives. Liz Wood from the MRC attended all of the project's early meetings and ran parts of sessions to introduce the students to the MRC's archival holdings and methods of conducting archival research. Melissa Downing, the MRC public engagement lead, also attended meetings to provide guidance on developing public engagement initiatives. Most meetings began with updates from us and the student participants. This gave the meetings and the project a coherent structure week-to-week. As project leads, we directed the meetings by responding to the students' updates or set the students particular tasks to report back on and work on during the meetings. In the second half of meetings, students could talk with us and our MRC colleagues either one-on-one or in small groups, work individually or in small groups, or consult archival holdings. At the end of each meeting, we identified actions for the next session. A Microsoft Teams space was created to facilitate communication, information sharing, and ongoing engagement between sessions. Students were encouraged to start using this space by sharing a blurb 'about them', their interests, and what they wanted to get out of the project, and to connect with others who expressed similar interests. This set up the

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expectation that dialogue should flow between the students outside the weekly meetings via the Teams virtual learning space.

Early in the project the students organised themselves into three smaller sub-teams: Digital, Interview, and Research. Within these teams, the students played different roles and selected their own leaders. The Digital Team focused on developing a social media and marketing strategy. They also led planning for the exhibition. This was the largest team and members often worked on sub-projects in pairs or small groups. The Research Team focused on archival materials held in the MRC, the Student Union, and the university's Mead Gallery. Members of this team often worked independently (alone or in pairs) and with the least supervision from us as the project leads. The Interview Team were tasked with interviewing former and current students to uncover the personal side of student experience. This team worked more closely with us than the other two teams because of the complexities of identifying interviewees and negotiating the University's Research Ethics Committee. Pierre – whose research utilises oral history – was initially introduced to the project in March to support the Interview Team.

By late spring term, the collaborative approach was bearing fruit. The Digital Team had developed a timeline counting down to the exhibition launch, a framework to manage the project's progress, a launch event plan, and a social media style guide and project logo to ensure professional-looking marketing. The Research Team were well underway with their archival research and had uploaded a range of photographs of archival material on the project's Teams space. They had also each identified their areas and questions of research. With the assistance of the Research Team, the Interview Team had identified their interview questions for research participants. They had also successfully submitted a research ethics application and started working with alumni, fundraising, and friends and family to identify research participants. Around this time a notable shift was apparent among the student cohort, where they were increasingly comfortable working together and friendships started to emerge. In February the whole team took part in a half-day workshop to plan the layout and main themes that would be included in the physical exhibition.

Process: Post March 2020 and During the COVID-19 Lockdown

In March 2020, project work was disrupted by the COVID-19 lockdown and emergency remote teaching measures. The lockdown caused widespread teaching upheaval and moving to an online-based model of learning was challenging for staff and students (**Batty and Hall, 2020; Czerniewicz et al.**

2020). The project's weekly meetings were quickly moved online to Microsoft Teams, which the students were already familiar with as the main project communication hub. This was relatively simple, and our experience aligns with research that has suggested teaching and learning that already involved use of digital learning environments made a more effective transition to wholly digital learning during the pandemic (**Czerniewicz et al. 2020; Hodges et al., 2020**). Although a small number of students (around three) left the project at this stage, the majority of students continued. This hinted at how far the students had become invested in the project and felt responsible for its overall success by this stage. At several of the online meetings the students noted how the project helped them feel connected and supported during the COVID-19 crisis. Indeed, in many ways the COVID-19 situation seemed to strengthen the project's learning community and increase the sense of project ownership among the students. It was also early in the lockdown that students began to develop their own ideas for research and outputs, such as the isolation diaries and the online launch event.

Another challenge occurred in April when Kathryn, as project lead, left the university for a new job. We were concerned about the potentially destabilising effect of this change, especially in the COVID-19 context. In reality, this shift seemed to encourage the students to take greater leadership over the project and find greater freedom within it. It is noteworthy that after Kathryn's departure the project became essentially entirely student-led, as Pierre was still a postgraduate student at this time. Although hard to prove, it is likely that without Kathryn's departure the students would not have felt so confident in taking the reigns over its management in its latter stages. After leaving, Kathryn continued to operate as an active 'friend' to the project, which would have been challenging had the project not moved to an online learning environment due to her having physically relocated for her job.

COVID-19 also produced a range of challenges for the delivery of the project. The first was the necessary cancellation of the physical exhibition. Relatively quickly, the students decided the best solution was to focus on developing an online exhibition and launch event. There had always been plans to develop a basic website to accompany the exhibition, but an entirely online exhibition required something more sophisticated. To lead this work, a new Website Team was formed to collate the different teams' findings and populate the site pages. The Research Team faced challenges as they could no longer access physical archives, limiting their research to materials they already had and digital resources. That said, the MRC staff were incredibly helpful in scanning material and sending it to students where possible. The biggest change for the Interview Team was that they could not meet people in person. Instead, they decided to conduct their

interviews through Skype. Although this created some challenges, it was this shift that also created the opportunity for the Team to develop the isolation video diaries; an element of the project that used digital media to effectively blur the boundaries between the creation and dissemination of knowledge in ways that Bagga-Gupta et al describe as characteristic of virtual learning (**2019**).

Another challenge with operating online was the potential for inequality in students' participation in group meetings due to issues of technology access, connectivity, access to appropriate spaces to participate in meetings, and variations in digital literacy (**Czerniewicz et al., 2020**). The students also showed different levels of confidence in engaging online. This risked creating a sense of hierarchy, where some voices are allowed to be 'louder' than others, which co-creation seeks to avoid (**Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018: 48-49**). As an informal project we did not have the capacity to resolve the essential issues of digital inequality, but we were able to avoid the creation of a hierarchy by giving each student a specific opportunity to speak, with more open discussion facilitated towards the end of the meeting. Students were invited to share their thoughts before the meeting via email if that was more suitable for them, whilst the Teams channel provided an ongoing discussion space in between the weekly meetings.

Nevertheless, there were limits to how far the in-person meetings could be reproduced. With audio and video conferencing technology, the physical cues people rely on in group in-person interactions are more difficult to read (**Naughton, 2020**). In Spring 2020, Teams was still an evolving software so only a small number of students were simultaneously visible on screen and cultures around the use of 'hands up' and 'chat' functions were still being created. Some students also chose to have their cameras switched off, either due to personal preference or because of their connection quality. Others were out-of-synch, had poorer quality audio and microphones that made them hard to hear, or dropped out of the call entirely. These issues limited the discussion's flow and caused hesitations and silences. This meant that as project leads, we had to take greater responsibility for managing the conversation. Overall, however, the Teams meetings were successful, especially in terms of allowing the project to continue despite COVID-19. On the project website, some student participants commented that remote working actually created 'so much more room' for working together. They noted that it made them realise that the online Teams space was far more than just an add-on to the in-person meetings. These findings suggest that despite some aspects of teaching being difficult to replicate online, there are a wide range benefits to online learning for students including, as Neary's research has suggested, increased scope for collaboration across multiple sites and the

extension of research communities (**Neary et al., 2010**). These findings accord with other emerging research on the student learning experience during COVID-19 and their implications for future pedagogy (**Czerniewicz et al., 2020; Hodges et al., 2020**).

Another potential moment for the project's co-creation principles to slip was towards the end of the project, nearing key deadlines. As we desired to ensure the creation of the online exhibition, it was increasingly tempting for us to take decision-making power away from the students by setting formal deadlines or work schedules, rather than helping them establish these amongst themselves. We had to avoid turning student-led co-creation into a staff-led project and imposing traditional vertical leadership over the shared model which had been established (**Angelo and McCarthy, 2020**). We had to be prepared to let the project's outputs to not materialise as hoped if the students were unable to complete all the work required due to time pressures of formal university commitments (exams and coursework deadlines) or the constrictions and stresses of COVID-19.

To get around this challenge, we actively encouraged student team members to step forward into roles to manage deadlines and scheduling, and assume greater responsibility for the project. A 2013 study on personality and ability's impact on teamwork and team performance amongst undergraduates examined traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness. It showed that extravert, conscientious students were more inclined to take a leadership role, 'police' other participants by encouraging timely completion of work, and set an example by delivering their own work promptly. They are usually clear communicators and highly engaged and invested in the project (**Rhee et al., 2013**). With this in mind, we encouraged certain students with these personality traits to come forward to lead the dedicated Website Team. This team, with group agreement, acted as managers through this final stage of output delivery. This management arrangement avoided any disruption of the participants' sense of equality or shared leadership.

The Website Team delivered the website on time and the final output far exceeded expectations. On 12 June 2020, the online exhibition was launched through a Teams 'Live Event' curated by the student participants. It included presentations by Kathryn, Professor Penny Roberts (Chair of the Faculty of Arts), and the artist Matthew Raw (who is creating the ceramic artwork that will front the new Faculty of Arts building). The students offered a guided tour of the website, a Q&A session, and an interactive quiz. The event was supported by extensive advertising and promotion by the Digital Team through the project's social media and

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various university communication channels such as the Student Union and departmental mailing lists.

After the launch, we held several meetings with the student participants to summarise and reflect on experiences of the project, and came together with Gaz J Johnson, editor of *Exchanges*, to discuss the journal process (with publication of a journal special issue being another output the students on the project noted interest in exploring). We continued to act in mentoring roles for the students as they developed their research articles for this special issue. The Teams space was again used to facilitate this communication between participants and engagement remained high even through the summer vacation period.

Outputs and Evaluation

As a feature of the *Then & Now* online exhibition, the students involved in the project were asked to reflect on their experiences. These free-form reflections, provided in full on the project website, demonstrate the pedagogic success of the project, and how the students understood the benefits of being involved. Many of the students noted being attracted to the project because of the opportunity it provided to work in a different way with staff and students from across the Arts Faculty. One student wrote: 'I'm very excited to be part of this project, as it has enabled me to learn from staff members and other students, and to experience their amazing creativity, imagination and determination to keep this project alive!'. Other students commented: 'I've gotten involved with the interview team because I love getting to know people and I am really interested in finding out about student life before I went to uni', and 'It's been a very unique and rewarding experiment, and I say experiment because it is nothing like anything else I have tried at university. It's an amazing mix of new discoveries, archival research, learning and sharing what we have found with the larger public'. Among other things, students cited the opportunity to learn more about Warwick's history and engage in archival research, interviewing, and the curation of an exhibition, as key reasons why they got involved. One student wrote: 'I joined the project as an opportunity to gain experience in archival research and working within a multi-faceted project, that demands co-ordination and collaboration between team members'. Another student reflected that by participating in the project they were also helping build their employability: 'I want to do curation after university, and like to have the chance to do a project where we are basically creating from scratch an exhibition and doing the interviews and finding the archive material. I have not had any other experience like that at university'.

In their testimonies, several students reflected on what they had learned from their experiences on the project. Many noted the importance of working closely with team members: 'I definitely learned how important it is to keep your team members engaged and especially when we are working in an international and interdisciplinary team'. Learning digital skills and the opportunity to be creative in an online environment, especially in the context of COVID-19, was identified as of particular value by several students, with one writing that: 'The experience has been enlightening to see how much more we can do online, than I originally thought. In my head the online was just extra, whereas I feel now that we are properly utilising it. COVID has opened new doors'. Furthermore, some of the students reflected that engaging in the project during the COVID-19 crisis had helped them build resilience and think creatively. One student noted: 'I would lie saying that the current crisis of COVID-19 hasn't affected me. Of course it did, but moving from the physical to the digital space has not been such a big challenge for me at least workwise. It made us think more creatively and we managed to keep the project alive'. Another student reflected how the project had pushed them out of their comfort zone and, by doing so, had helped them build confidence, writing: 'I get very stressed when talking in front of a group or to people I've never met before. So, participating in meetings and speaking before everyone and conducting interviews has really pushed me out of my comfort zone which I really appreciate because I find it hard to do that'.

Altogether the students' testimonies demonstrate how much they enjoyed participating in the project due to its interdisciplinary and collaborative focus, co-creation, project and problem-based approach, and the opportunity it provided to apply their learning to 'real life' research, curation, and public engagement, and for their work to be 'seen' by the public. They show how the students who participated in the project understood it as bringing them tangible benefits in terms of feeling part of a learning community and making friends, learning new academic and employability skills (research, problem solving, digital literacy, critical thinking, communication, and problem solving), gaining employability experience, building confidence and resilience, and having the opportunity to be creative and give something back to the community. Their testimonies also reveal how far they understood the project's virtual learning environment and digital scholarship as key to its success, and how COVID-19 created the context for the collaborative learning and co-creation opportunities that virtual learning environments create to explored to the fullest.

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Then & Now has generated several highly successful outputs. Some of these were planned from the project's inception, while others evolved organically from ideas presented by the students. The main output was the online exhibition. The online exhibition website showcases the breadth and depth of the students' research. The website launch event was attended by 79 people and the recording has been viewed 89 times as of 1 February 2021. The number of page visits to the website since speaks volumes for the project's success as a public engagement initiative as detailed in Table 1.

	Total Hits (month)	Average hits (day)	Maximum hits (day)	Minimum hits (day)
June 2020	7231	241	594	40
July	4194	135	236	2
August	3894	126	180	109
September	3539	118	150	94
October	2909	94	165	68
November	2563	85	156	63
December	2201	71	109	55
January 2021	2217	72	99	51

Table 1: User numbers for the Then & Now: Arts at Warwick Website. June 2020-Janaury 2021.

Feedback received both during and after the project's virtual launch event provides a qualitative measure of the positive reaction to the project as a pedagogic intervention and research and public engagement activity, and how it successfully created a sense of learning community. During the launch, some viewers used the Live Event's 'Question and Answer' chat box to express their opinions on the exhibition. These comments included: 'Fantastic tour of the website, real showcase of your brilliant research'; 'There's a lot of work and research in this project! Really well done! Such an interesting project!'; 'The whole project is brilliant'. In addition, after the launch, members of the university's senior management got in touch via email to note: 'This was fascinating and really interesting to watch, particularly the presentation; hearing about the history, comments and visuals on the community and campus, both old and new, and lockdown experiences from staff and students' and 'This is really great. I especially liked the "on campus" film'.

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The other major output was the project's Instagram account. This launched on 30 March 2020, just over two months before the exhibition launch. Based on the Digital Team's previous experience and the average popularity of other university-related Instagram accounts, the target was to reach 300 followers. This target was reached in just a fortnight and the project counted 400 followers by early May, 450 by the exhibition launch, and 465 on 1 September 2020. The account's natural growth was due to word-of-mouth and a deliberate strategy of following the existing Warwick Instagram community, both official university accounts (university library, clubs, societies, etc.) and individual students. To ensure varied posts, themed content was uploaded on different days: Tuesday was 'In Depth' focus on aspects of research, Wednesday's 'Behind the Scenes' posts documented student participants at work, '#ThrowbackThursday' used documents from the archives and old photos of campus, and 'Interactive Friday' mixed quizzes, polls, and asking questions of followers to help shape the research. The project's social media presence far exceeded initial expectations.

Other outputs developed by the students included Malina Mihalache's article in *Art Space*, and Madeleine Snowdon's art piece in the Arts Faculty Digital Arts Lab Showcase. Following the exhibition launch, Pierre and Elena Ruityke were interviewed for the Warwick student newspaper, *The Boar*, whilst Eilidh McKell wrote a personal account of her experiences for the same publication (**Karageorgi, 2020; McKell, 2020**). Pierre produced a reflective blog post on the project for IATL (**Botcherby, 2020**), and was interviewed as part of *The Exchanges Discourse* podcast (**The Exchanges Discourse, 2020**). The wide range of planned and spontaneous outputs, as well as the special issue of *Exchanges* in which this article features, are the basis of the project's legacy. The level of positive engagement with the project is indicative of its success and its ability to create a sense of learning community amongst the project's student participants and staff and students from across the university. Moving forwards, it is envisaged that new iterations of *Then & Now* and other similar student-led research projects will feature as part of a student portfolio option available to second year Arts undergraduates at Warwick.

Critical Evaluation

Against the project's successes, it is useful to reflect on how it could have been improved. Firstly, there could have been greater cohort diversity. There was an interdisciplinary bias in the numbers of students recruited towards History of Art and Cultural and Media Policy Studies due to the project's framing. Several large departments – History (1), Modern Languages (1), English (0) – were under-represented. The subject bias translated into the project outputs, with the exhibition firmly taking centre

stage, and its focus on campus architecture and art collections. Recruiting more students from other disciplines might have resulted in more varied outputs. For instance, students from English or Theatre Studies might have directed the project towards more creative or performative responses.

The cohort was also gender biased, with 18 female students and 1 male student. In comparison, the Warwick undergraduate student population is almost 50:50 male-female (**Warwick University Equality Monitoring Annual Report, 2018/19**). For postgraduates (taught and research) the ratio is also roughly equal, though amongst postgraduate taught students nearly 54% are female, compared to 46% male (**Warwick University Equality Monitoring Annual Report, 2018/19: 63, 66**). Of the 6 postgraduate students, all were female. The 18:1 gender split on this project does not reflect the university's overall population. It is unclear why this project proved more appealing to female students rather than male.

The cohort was also skewed towards white European students. The small minority of Asian students involved dropped away before the project's completion and during the COVID disruption in March 2020. The university is predominantly white at undergraduate (59%) and post-graduate research (60%) level, although amongst taught post-graduates the largest ethnicity is Asian (50%) (**Warwick University Equality Monitoring Annual Report, 2018/19; 61, 66, 69-70**). This bias was reflected in the online exhibition where the experiences of international students and of ethnic minority students were largely missing. The project's voluntary status may have limited its inclusivity as evidence suggests that ethnic minority student groups are more likely than white students work alongside their study and/or have caring responsibilities (**Singh, 2011**). Future projects could frame their areas of focus differently - for instance, focus on the historical experience of ethnic minority students or international students - and look at how students are supported to take part to encourage higher engagement from these student groups.

Secondly, no formal attempt was made to track the students who were involved or students' experiences at different stages of the project. Nor was formal feedback was sought from the participants, beyond their informal 'Behind the Scenes' contributions. On reflection, collection of such feedback would have been useful for providing insights into how to develop and improve similar projects in the future and address some of the shortcomings outlined above. Gathering demographic and study data about the students involved in the project may have also enabled more critical examination of whether the intervention supported progression, attainment, and employability. How far this sort of information is gathered for research purposes does, however, need to be carefully balanced in co-

creation projects such as this as it has the potential to disrupt the power balance between participants. In our case, we felt the student created reflections was the most appropriate feedback method as it enabled it to be student produced without direction by us.

Conclusion

Then & Now was an experimental and wide-ranging project that evolved amidst extremely challenging circumstances following the COVID-19 pandemic. So much activity took place on the project that encapsulating it in a single article is almost impossible – partly why the project has an entire special issue! With so much of the work taking place independently of us, it has also been difficult to fully comment on how students conducted their work and achieved their aims. In this article we have instead focused on our vision, practice, and experiences on the project, and what we have understood as its value and contributions to practice. The students speak more fully to this in their own testimonies on the *Then & Now* project website and in their contributions elsewhere in this special issue.

Then & Now involved as many learning curves for us as for the student participants. Pedagogic models of student co-creation, student-led-research and student as producer all provided useful approaches. Applied to research which focused on the history of student voice and engagement, this combination of approaches created a potent mix for enabling the student participants to assume leadership over the project as a whole. Working in such uncharted pedagogic territory, we had to develop innovative pedagogic approaches with the students to support them in feeling empowered and capable of taking responsibility over the project's management, and associated research and public engagement activities. Overall, we treated the students as partners, and collectively recognised and built upon the different skills and experiences we all brought to the project. The delivery of the project through the digital learning environment provided by Teams - both before and after we moved entirely online in the COVID-19 pandemic - was key for enabling collaboration between students both on and off campus, creating spaces for research exchange, inspiring student creativity, and developing thinking for how technology could be used to blur the boundaries between research, learning, and public engagement.

As teachers, relinquishing the power of the hierarchical teacher-student relationship was not always easy, especially towards the end of the project when the temptation to step-in to ensure outputs were achieved was strong. However, throughout the project we worked together to reflect on our concerns and find solutions that supported the students' independence. Our transparency with the students over our wishes to enable them to operate in this way seems to have been key to the

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delegation of power to the students. In being transparent with them and asking them how we could support them most effectively, we used teaching approaches that were tailored to students' needs. Giving up the power of being the expected authority in the room enabled us to enjoy the project and participate in ways not possible in traditional teaching and research activities. Upon reflection, although a clear challenge at the time, the move to emergency remote teaching was a significant enabler in allowing the students to assume greater autonomy over the project.

Our deliberate relinquishing the reigns over the project's management allowed the student participants to excel themselves and go beyond the project's original output aims. They came up with research topics and outputs more innovative and engaging than we could have developed alone or have predicted. It enabled the project to feel inclusive and community-led; although, as we have noted, the project regrettably seemed less appealing and inclusive to certain student groups. With similar projects in the future, ensuring greater gender, racial, and ethnic inclusivity would be a priority for us both. The project being largely student-led also seemed to promote wider engagement with its outputs from staff, students, and the broader Warwick community, than could have been achieved if it were just managed and directed by staff.

In enabling the student participants to make a 'real' impact on the future of Warwick's Arts Faculty and to participate in 'real' life research and public engagement initiatives, the project quickly assumed 'real' meaning for students. From the start, they were invested in its success, enabling them to take leadership over the project increased this commitment. The challenges of COVID-19 and the changing management furthered the students' resolve in making *Then & Now* a success, and encouraged them to think bigger and bolder about their activities and what they wanted to achieve. The project stands as a showcase to the enormous skills of undergraduate and postgraduate students, and their capacity for hard work, innovation, creativity, and collaboration. It shows how much students can achieve if given resources, support, opportunities, and encouragement to succeed.
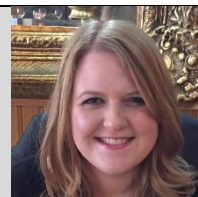
The success of *Then & Now* suggests great potential for how teacher-student hierarchies and boundaries between different arenas of academic activity can be blurred in co-creation projects that take place, at least partially, in digital learning environments. Involvement in the project has been, for us both, one of the most enjoyable experiences of our careers. We know the students on this project better than any other students we have worked with and feel deeply connected to the project's learning community. It has been hard to leave this project behind, and it will leave a lasting impression on us both. We are so proud of all the students who

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have been involved at different stages of the project, and grateful to them for all their distinct contributions. We sign-off *Then & Now* with confidence of the lasting impact that it will have on shaping, for the better, the future experiences of Warwick students.

Acknowledgements

Kathryn Woods is Dean of Students at Goldsmiths, University of London. She was previously Director of Student Experience for the Faculty of Arts and Teaching Fellow in the History of Medicine at the University of Warwick. She was awarded a PhD in History by Edinburgh University in 2015. Her research interests include the eighteenth-century body, and higher education in Britain 1950-present. Kathryn recently co-edited a collection of essays entitled *Negotiating Exclusion in Early Modern England, 1550-1800* (Routledge, 2021). She has previously published articles in *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, *Cultural and Social History*, and *Frontiers in Education*.

Pierre Botcherby is a PhD candidate in the University of Warwick's history department. His thesis studies the impact of de-industrialisation and (post-industrial) regeneration on community via a case study of St. Helens (Merseyside). He is also Administrative Assistant for the Warwick Oral History Network. Pierre has been a seminar tutor for 3 years, holds Associate Fellow status of Advance HE, and is a Student Fellow of the Warwick International Higher Education Academy (WIHEA). He was joint Project Officer for 'Then & Now' and is currently the Student Experience Intern for the Faculty of Arts where he is responsible for the Student Research Portfolio.

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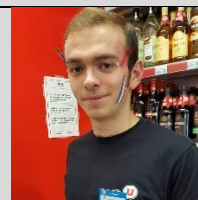
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Afterimages: Reflections on an artistic response to site and community at The University of Warwick

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Abstract

Afterimages is a series of artwork I developed after becoming involved in the Then & Now: Arts at Warwick project from initial exploration of the Modern Record Centre's archive. The construction of the new Faculty of the Arts building is the central focus for my work, which is interested in the impact that communities have on their spaces and vice versa. This article aims to discuss and analyse the concepts presented in Afterimages and the process of creating the work. This includes the methodological influences of psychogeography, the architectural theories of Léon Krier, and the contextualisation of the work amid the global pandemic. Following the events of the past six months, much of the student experience of Warwick has moved online. In light of this, this article also seeks to reflect upon how this shift in community has impacted elements of the artwork and its investigation into the built environment.

Keywords: Art; space; psychogeography; architecture; built environment; community

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In the beginning of 2020 and the new academic term, I was presented with an opportunity to produce artwork as part of my History of Art degree module option centred around a practical, studio based artistic practice. Working with the *Then & Now* project, I quickly became interested in the history of the University of Warwick's campus. I was immediately drawn to images from the Modern Record Centre's archive shown to us by Dr. Kathryn Woods, Melissa Downing, and Liz Wood. When we look at images of the past, there is often an immediate instinct to place ourselves within the scene we see before us. This was my experience as I poured through the archival images found in the Modern Record Centre's collection. The photographs showed me the campus as it was at the very beginning of Warwick, in the first years of the university's life. Obvious changes in architecture, design, and layout within the old buildings led me to think about how people might have interacted with these spaces. It seems a distinctly human notion to want to actively shape our built environments, even in spaces often considered lacking in traditional beauty, such as those built at Warwick during its inception (**Perrigo, 2015**). Before life was interrupted by the global pandemic, while strolling down the dark corridors of the Humanities Building, we would have seen bunting strung up, and watched people chatting and leaning against old walls with chips and scuff marks still present from interactions with a long since graduated cohort.
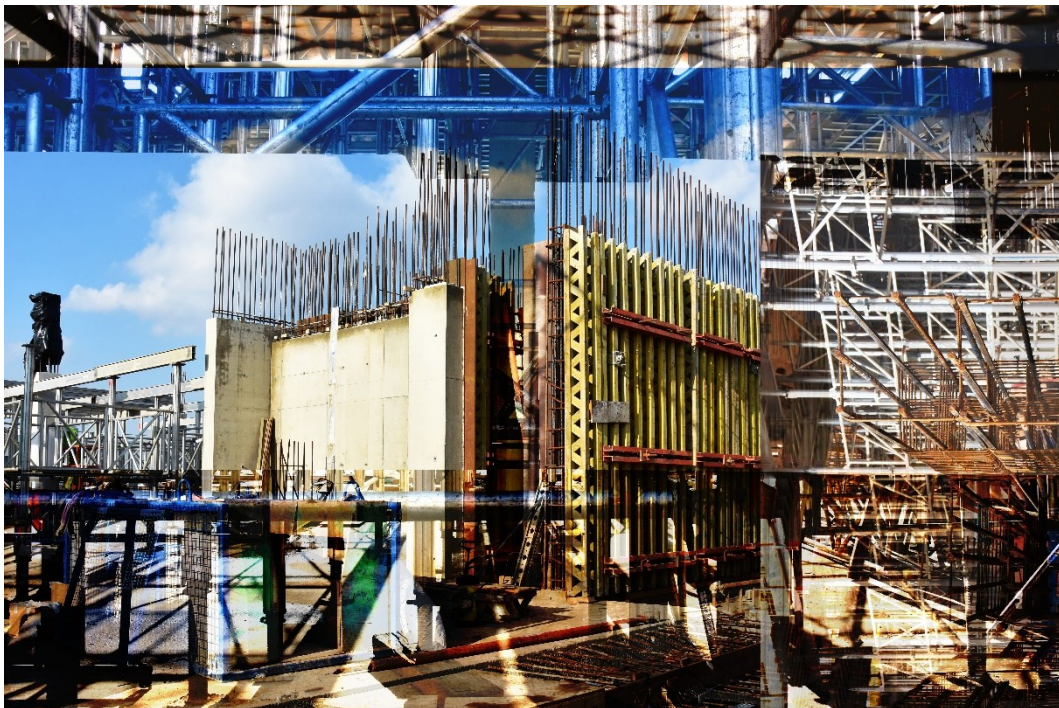

Figure 1: Afterimage 1: 6000 x 4000 px, digital collage. Source: Author's own work.

Imagine now a building without people, devoid of all the characteristics of community: common room decorations, out of place furniture, and the comforting imperfection of a lived-in space. Shortly after spending time

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with the archival images, I tasked myself with seeking out such a place. I felt that there was humanity to be found through the promise of future history, even within the sometimes cold and uncompromising bleakness of concrete. In this way, a building site becomes a gestational space, full of potential. This idea of architecture having potential through its interactions with communities is, of course, not new. Architect Léon Krier alluded to this in referring to the sentiments of Winston Churchill, writing, 'we make buildings and then they make us' (**Krier, 2009: 29**). Churchill was arguing for the rebuilding of the bombed Commons Chamber in its original rectangular shape, claiming that this architectural form had shaped the two-party system of British democracy (**UK Parliament, 2020**). Krier took this statement further in *The Architecture of Community*, asserting that: 'Whatever their size, buildings influence the world' (**Krier, 2009: 29**). This statement strikes me as particularly true in the context of a university setting, where students may not share the same cultural history, faith, or background, but community is nonetheless forged through the bringing together of individuals within the built environment of the campus.

It was with this thought in mind that I sought to visit the new Faculty of the Arts building in its development. This turned out to be no mean feat: it took some degree of convincing to allow an undergraduate armed with a camera and tripod, not to mention a noticeable lack of their own steel-toed footwear, to wander around a building site. It was with great patience for my cumbersome camera and frequent stops for photographic opportunities that project manager Alastair Dixon (University of Warwick Estates Office) and site manager Kevin Williams (Bowmer & Kirkland) led me around the site. This was the structure that would eventually supplant the old Humanities building with which I was so familiar. When I began to document the building site, I wanted to draw out the future from its vacant space. I was keen to know more about the site, not only its human spaces, but also the infrastructure that would become its beating heart, without which the building would be uninhabitable. However, I was also interested in the small and seemingly insignificant details that collectively make up a place. This interaction was something I had been introduced to through research into psychogeographical practices employed by writers and artists of the past.

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Figure 2: Afterimage II. 6000 x 4000 px, digital collage. Source: Author's own work.

In the 1990s, artists looked to the Situationists of the 1950s, such as Guy Debord, and saw value in what Debord calls the *dérive*, the act of interacting with the built environment with curiosity and awareness through walking without destination (**Marcus, 2002: 4**). The term psychogeography, as discussed by Coverley, was coined by Debord himself, who described it broadly as a study of how a place can impact the emotions and behaviours of those who experience it (**Coverley, 2010: 8**). Artists such as Francis Alÿs, who conducted and recorded various walks in Mexico City, took great inspiration from this approach (**Craig, 2016**). In creating Afterimages, I took inspiration from the manner and attitude with which these artists viewed the world, not with the action of walking, but with my photographic methods. It seemed that the process of photographing the space in an imaginative way, and not for a particular shot or angle of the building, liberated me from becoming overly focused on form as opposed to honest documentation. I was then better able to capture the details and idiosyncrasies of the site.
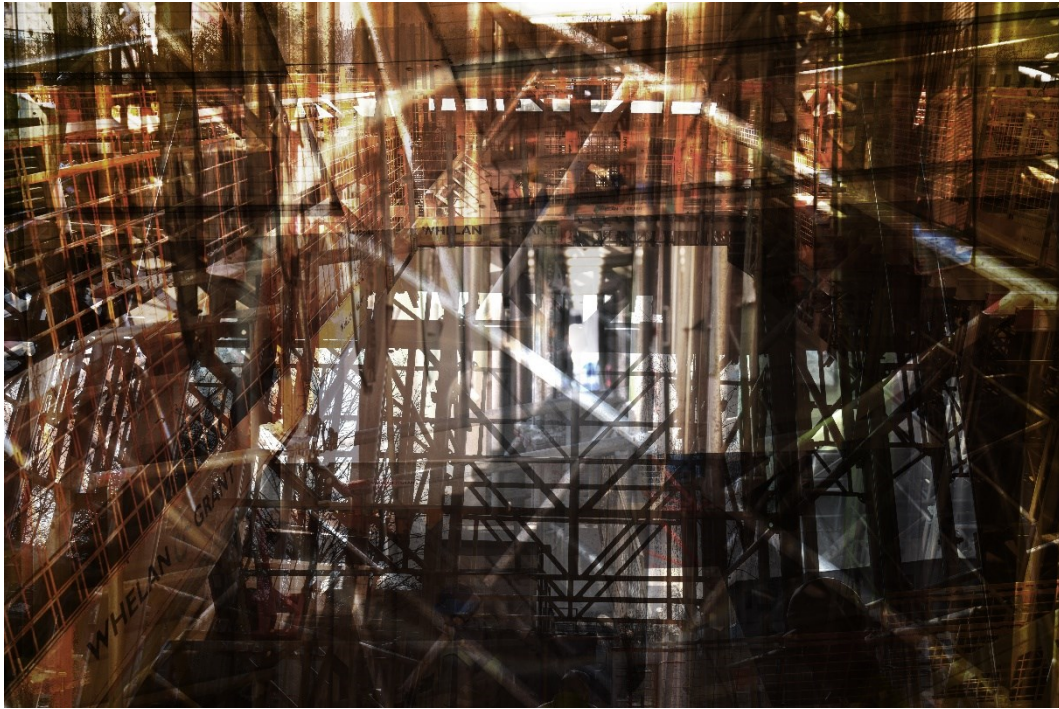
Figure 3: Afterimage III. 6000 x 4000 px, digital collage. Source: Author's own work.

Perhaps psychogeographic methodologies are even more relevant and useful now than in the past. Due to our increased reliance on the digital world, particularly in light of the COVID-19 crisis, it may be easier to lose engagement with the physical spaces we inhabit (**Ofcom, 2020**). The result of this way of examining our environment has an entirely new context in light of the events since spring 2020, when once-daily walks became a means of escape, and we found ourselves all too familiar with the built environment of our homes. My approach to the photographing of the community-devoid space of the building site would have undoubtedly been different if the visit had occurred after the UK had gone into lockdown, if it would have taken place at all. With hindsight, the almost abstracted skeleton of the building as captured in my images appears as less of a glimpse of a vibrant and vital future, but rather, an uncomfortable allusion to the current emptiness of our built environments, in a world without gatherings. In the painting titled *After Site* that I completed during lockdown as part of the Afterimages series, a glimpse of two figures can be seen, standing close and talking. This scene was extracted from an image I had taken months before of the Humanities Building café, which while creating the piece became for me a reminder of the ways in which the world has dramatically changed. I had visited the Humanities Building shortly after the building site visit, this time focusing on photographically capturing elements of what made the building feel lived-in and a catalyst for community. This was both a way to look back at the past and record a building that will soon be demolished, and a way to look to the future and envision the Arts community at Warwick translated to the new building.
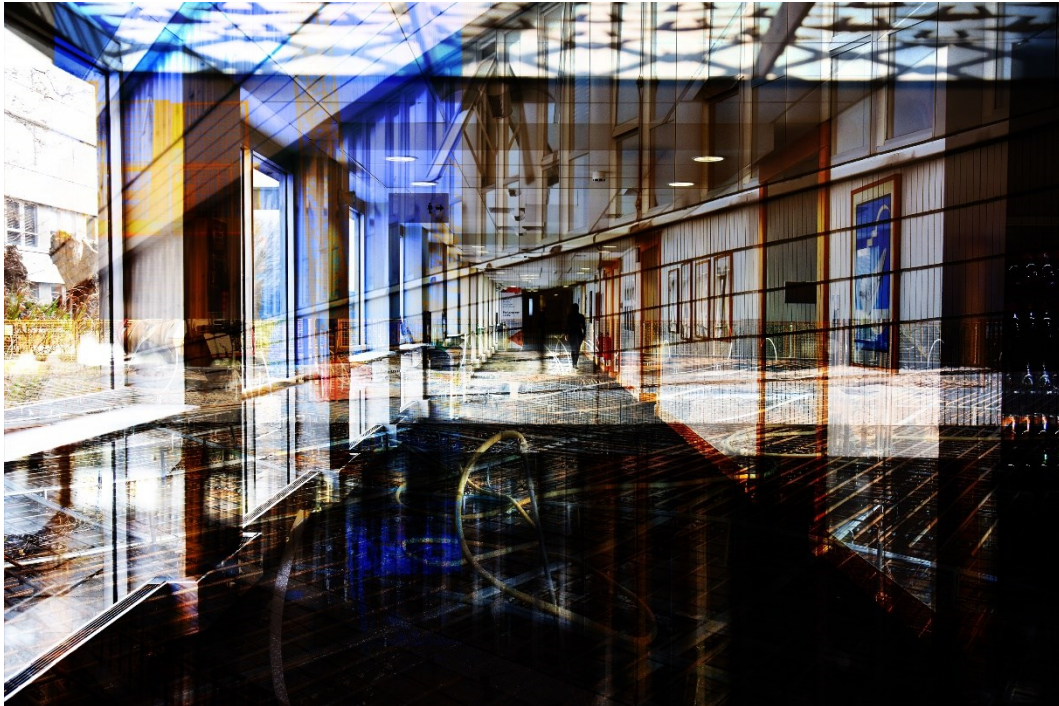
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Figure 4: Afterimage IV, 6000 x 4000 px, digital collage. Source: Author's own work.

The resulting work from visiting and documenting these sites at Warwick was in the form of the Afterimages series itself. The term 'Afterimages' attempts to describe the transient and faded memories that are tied to the site: a chair out of place, a scuff mark on the wall, an abandoned thumbtack no longer pinning anything. Whilst the images are often obscured, glimpses of bunting from an old Humanities corridor, construction workers, scaffolding, notice boards, and more are present in each print. The works, as shown in this article, are digital prints produced using numerous overlays of the images I took at both sites. Each image varies and displays different viewpoints of the two buildings, with characteristics from each intervening in the space of the other, often to the point of abstraction. The contrast between finished and unfinished, lived-in, and vacant space attempts to demonstrate how human it is to actively participate and engage with the buildings we inhabit. It also reflects upon how history unfolds in these spaces with both the building and the people changing and interacting with each other.
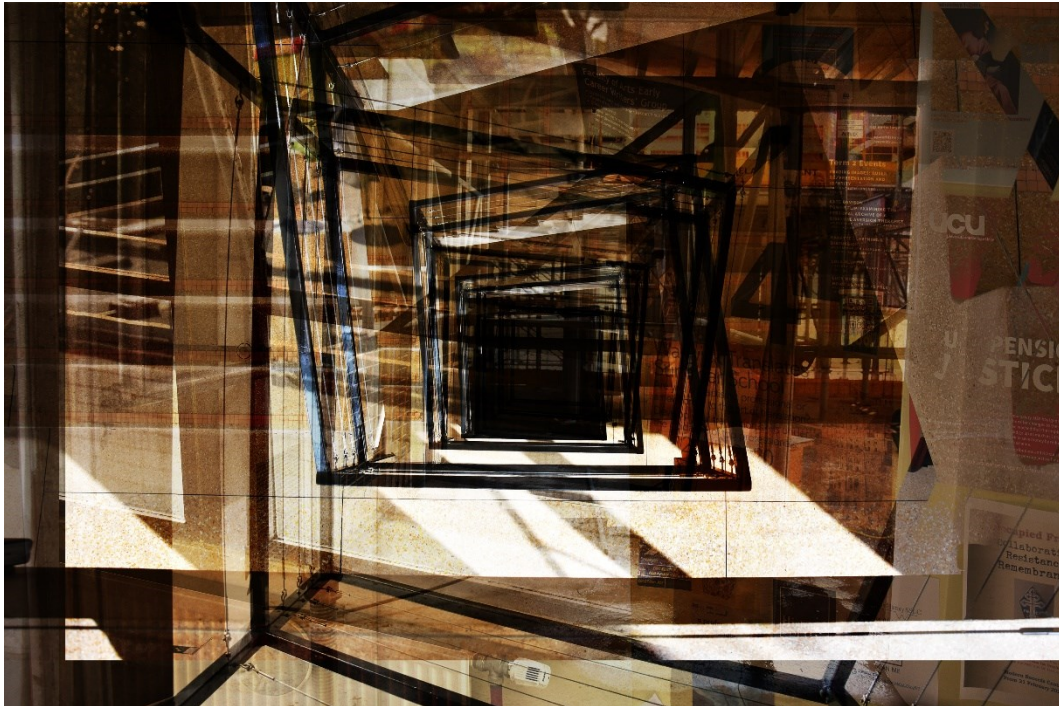
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Figure 5: Afterimage V. 6000 x 4000 px, digital collage. Source: Author's own work.

As previously mentioned, the final piece of work resulting from this project, After Site, was a large-scale painting created far away from the Warwick campus, during lockdown at my home in rural Norfolk. This situation was difficult, for instance being unable to return to the Faculty of the Arts building site to re-photograph it to capture its development, as had been my intention. However, I was able to utilise the images I had taken on campus using large scale projection and manipulation to create a more complex merging of the different photographs. My approach to composing the painting was quite different from my digital work, in which I focused on creating a high density of imagery. Within my painting there is a greater emphasis on absence within space, which is perhaps apt given the comparative isolation of lockdown in which the work was created.

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Figure 6: After Site detail view, 225 x 160cm, acrylic; ink; pencil on gesso primed plasticised poster paper, image render.
Source: Author's own work, render courtesy of Zac Rosamond (Birmingham City University).

Figure 7: After Site scale view, 225 x 160cm, acrylic; ink; pencil on gesso primed plasticised poster paper, image render. Source: Author's own work, render courtesy of Zac Rosamond (Birmingham City University).

Exploring the campus of Warwick and reflecting upon its past, both within the *Then & Now* project itself and in creating the Afterimages series, has given me a greater appreciation of how the university is constantly growing physically and culturally. As Warwick's campus continues to evolve, students may arrive, and graduate never having experienced the physical site of their education without the presence of building sites and construction. The physical changes happening around campus at the moment are of particular concern to Arts students with the construction of the new Faculty of the Arts building. For students, the campus and its buildings as a place of both work and socialisation may form an integral part of the culture of a university in that we are inherently affected by our built environment, as suggested by the ideas of Krier. In the current state of the world and in the face of a reduced physical interaction with Warwick's campus, it is perhaps even more important to retain its culture and sense of community through documentation and engagement, as exemplified by the *Then & Now* project. The Afterimages series therefore attempts to capture the fleeting moment of transition as the Arts community at Warwick anticipates the new building, drawing from the past and future to represent a community in flux.

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Acknowledgements

Madeleine Snowdon is a final year History of Art undergraduate student at the University of Warwick. Her main interests lie within the study of contemporary art practices and critical theory, which feeds into her own artistic practice. Her artwork was featured in the Warwick Faculty of the Arts Digital Arts Lab showcase 2020. She is currently working on her dissertation, which focuses on the psychogeographic enquiries of Internet-concerned art practices.

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Reflections on 'Then & Now': Arts and cultural management and the shortcomings of student-led research projects

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Abstract

This article provides a student reflection on the management process of a student-led research project entitled Then & Now: Arts at Warwick. The project sought to document the history of the Arts Faculty at Warwick University and communicate it to the wider community. It was an interdisciplinary and collaborative co-creation project that brought together undergraduate and postgraduate students from across the Arts Faculty. Setting and aiming the goals of the project activities, managing teamwork and research processes, and planning and implementing the public engagement strategy in the unprecedented times of the Coronavirus pandemic were challenging and rewarding experiences. The article, framed by scholarly perspectives, summarises the key aspects of the project management process by discussing and analysing the role of an arts and cultural manager. The Then & Now project provided an opportunity to reflect on the significance of the profession while developing and learning new online-based project management practices.

Keywords: arts management; cultural management; project management; student co-creation

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Introduction

In early 2020, undergraduate and postgraduate students of the University of Warwick's Arts Faculty were invited to join a student-led research project initially entitled 'History of Arts at Warwick', later renamed 'Then & Now: Arts at Warwick'. The project sought to recruit students on a voluntary basis to act as exhibition researchers and social media engagement officers. These opportunities were presented as a chance to develop project management, research, and interview-based research skills, as well as team working, event management, marketing, public engagement, digital and social media, and communication skills.

Looking back at this invitation, I think of it as an ideal position for a student of arts and cultural management. Most likely, they would already have some of these skills but the project was a great opportunity to improve and gain new ones while engaging in a co-creation process. When I received the invitation, I took it as an opportunity to put my knowledge and previous experience into practice in the current learning community, but not necessarily as an opportunity for myself as a professional arts and cultural manager, despite actively working in the field since 2015. Reflecting on this experience has suggested the need for an analysis of the characteristics of cultural managers, their background, representations and their functions. Indeed, who are cultural managers? What is their role and functions? What makes someone an arts and cultural manager? What is their social status in terms of position in the cultural field? Is it recognisable as a profession or is it still *terra incognita*?

With these thoughts in mind, this article explores the role of an arts and cultural manager through the lens of *Then & Now*, discusses the role of leadership*,* and draws on personal experience from the project. It outlines the importance of an arts and cultural manager as a figure engaged in a project management process and mediation between human resources, production and expected creative deliverables. Finally, this article addresses the need for wider recognition of already existing and emerging cultural intermediaries.

The Nature of Arts and Cultural Management

Since the times when our ancestors were sharing stories by the fire, creating cave paintings illustrating their ideas or histories it is easy to imagine there were 'managers' promoting these events, appreciating, and taking care of these creative products. Nevertheless, the emergence of professional arts management dates back only to the 1960s which is related to the growth of public arts institutions, changes in their operational models, and the rising number of non-profit arts organisations seeking public funding (**Palmer 1998: 443**). However, at that time there

was no clear distinction between an art director, arts manager, and administrator as a discipline of arts management was not part of higher education. Only in the 1980s were arts management postgraduate courses established in a number of countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia (**Ibid, 437**). In the last three decades, from a small base, the field has slowly developed into a recognisable discipline around the world and has expanded. The main reason for that is the growth of the arts world into the cultural and creative industries (CCI), where art organisations are operating like any other private sector businesses.

Together with the growing importance of the CCI and their significant contribution to social and economic wellbeing worldwide, arts and cultural management is recognised as 'a field where creative people are engaged' It is not a narrow direction of the management's discipline but 'a comprehensive sphere' (**Tavkhelidze 2017: 388**). In various scholarly discussions (**Chong 2009; Byrnes 2015**), it is emphasised that this is because the arts have become more like businesses. Reorientation towards profit generation has brought various changes and challenges in the operational models of arts organisations. It led to the expansion of the circle of stakeholders, challenges in keeping the ideological approach, and incorporation of the new elements of management: strategic planning and leadership. More importantly, the art world, art organisations, and creative people usually possess a specific way of working that requires a corresponding and specific management approach.

As Ian Palmer (**1998: 436**) puts it: 'managing creative people requires a sensitivity', not to interfere with and disturb their creative freedom by overloading them with various management objectives. Scholar Peter Bendixen (**2000: 5**) emphasises: 'one would not be able to manage an artist, an arts project or an arts organisation without some knowledge of and at least some feeling for the subject'. To fully understand arts and cultural management, we need first to understand *arts* and *culture*.

In many languages *culture* is one of the most complicated words (**Williams 2014**) and all uses of it, all variants of it, can be attacked and defended (**Gray 2015**). On the one hand, it incorporates artistic expression, practices or products, and on the other hand, *culture* is seen through a more sociological and anthropological lens, 'as a way of life' (**Bell and Oakley 2014: 17**). *Arts* are understood as imitation and representation of nature and reality through the artist (**Davies 2005**). The *Arts* are a form of communication, transmitting and inspiring emotions, feelings, and thoughts, but at the same time, through a functionalist lens, they serve a particular purpose, like providing an aesthetic experience (**Ibid**). Hence, *arts* exist within *culture* and both terms exist within society. Therefore, I

prefer an occupational title with a broader meaning – arts and cultural manager – rather than an arts manager. However, the latter is widely used in scholarly research. For these reasons, in this article, the terms arts manager, cultural manager, and arts and cultural manager (management) are used interchangeably.

Undoubtedly, in a creative environment within which cultural managers are working a primary role is played by artists and creatives. They have the skills to create new connections, compositions and communicate through various art forms, e.g., music, theatre, painting, sculpture, poetry, etc. 'It is [also] clear that art is based on human senses and these senses need to be managed' (**Tavkhelidze 2017: 388**). The competition between emerging artists, between many art organisations in the CCI field is constantly growing. In order to keep the creative process and its outputs relevant and accessible, fulfilling the primary purpose of the creative business, the role of arts and cultural management is becoming more important. Even though knowing and understanding the field is one of the main elements for an arts manager to succeed, the overall management needs are similar to basic management skills in other industries.

According to William J. Byrnes, managing in the arts include these four functions of management:

- *Planning is deciding what is to be done.*
- *Organising is deciding how it is to be done and who is to do it.*
- *Leading is deciding how other people are to get it done.*
- *Controlling is deciding if it is or is not getting done, and what to do if it is not.* (**Byrnes, 2015: 23-24)**

These four functions are the basis of arts and cultural management and are applied in all operational areas. To be an effective arts and cultural manager one needs these skills. However, the current competitive environment also requires possessing multidisciplinary abilities. These include, for example, marketing, public relations (PR), audience development, human resource (HR) management, financial management, fundraising, public policy, knowledge of legal issues in the arts and culture, information management, and research methods (**Tavkhelidze 2017**). One should not forget that constantly changing economic, political and legal, socio-cultural, and technological environments also require cultural managers to be flexible and adaptable.

As it is clear from the discussion, arts managers are constantly balancing between 'the traditional understanding of management as a process of directing and optimising conditions in order to reach a given objective' (**Bendixen 2000: 4**) and shaping cultural activities, creating social scenes, and experiences. The role of a cultural manager is to 'prepare the ground

for day-to-day operations as well as long-term strategy' (**Ibid, 8**). From my experience, an arts and cultural manager is a versatile person, a mediator, who has skills and knowledge of a broad range of issues and topics. They are professionals who may raise funds for a performance, initiate and implement cultural policies, or manage an artist or a troupe, and overall, play an important role in the socio-economic organisation of the CCI sector.

In this context, it is useful to examine the practice of project management in which arts managers engage and where a broad range of skills and knowledge is needed. The next section will investigate the theoretical framework of this practice that I deployed when engaging in the *Then & Now* project.

Project Management in the Field of Arts and Culture

The discipline of arts and cultural management allows one to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to become a professional within the arts and culture, and work in policy making, various arts companies, museums, galleries, and many other related areas. As previously mentioned, it combines the tools of business with the tools of audience and community development to mediate between the arts, creatives, and audiences. During their career cultural managers may be responsible for a specific portfolio such as government relations, production, audience development, marketing, or hold the title of Executive Director. However, the fundamental practice they all engage with is project management.

In management, 'a project is defined as a one-time, usually a new task, that pursues a clearly defined goal; it differs from daily, routine tasks as it has a clearly defined beginning and end, and is carried out using limited time, financial, human, and technological resources' (**Lubytė 2008: 87**). In its essence, the project management process includes the same management functions as mentioned earlier and requires organisation, good communication, creative problem solving, adaptability, and empathy skills as well as being a leader in a teamwork process. It is a tool that involves budgets, schedules, timetables, problem-solving, task lists, and group leadership techniques (**Byrnes 2015: 473**).

Therefore, the emphasis in project management is on establishing clear performance objectives and targets, and to schedule an action plan of implementation in the given timeframe. For this reason, it is recommended, that 'any project should follow the guidelines of project management using the *Logical Framework Approach*' (**Walcott 2004**). Every manager has their own most convenient version of it, but the basic logic of any project is a clear goal or overall objective, specific objectives, activities, and expected results. Each must have clear indicators, sources

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of verification, and risks/assumptions. One of the ways to check whether the *Logical Framework* of a particular project makes sense is to look at the activities and follow this logic: IF these activities are undertaken AND the risks/assumptions are true THEN the expected results will be reached. The same goes for the expected results: IF the expected result is achieved AND the risks/assumptions are true THEN the overall objective (the goal) will be achieved. It definitely sounds more complicated than it is in practice.

Using this technique enables a manager to set a common understanding among the team and stakeholders of what the project entails with agreed and focused objectives, and gives a systematic framework for monitoring and evaluation. Also, it enables planned activities and outputs that are collectively necessary and sufficient to achieve the specific and overall objectives (**Sansom 2011**). Below is an example of the *Logical Framework* that I am using in project management work.

Logical Framework Approach (logframe)

	Intervention logic	Success Measures	Source and means of verification	Assumtions / Risks		
Overall objectives	WHY? What are the overall broader objectives to which the action will contribute?	What are the key indicatos related to the overall objectives?	What are the sources of information for these indicators?			
	To improve... / To contribute...					
Specific Objectives / Purposes	WHY? What specific objective is the action intended to achieve to contribute to the overall objectives?	Which indicators clearly show that the objective of the action has been achived?	What are the sources of information that exist or can be collected? What are the methods required to get this information?	Which factors and conditions outside the Beneficiary's responsibility are necessary to achieve that objective? (external conditions) Which risks should be taken into consideration?		
	1					
	2					
	3					
Expected results / Outcomes	WHAT? The results are the outputs envisaged to achieve the specific objective. What are the expected results?	What are the indicators to measure whether and to what extent the action achieves the expected results?	What are the sources of information for these indicators?	What external conditions must be met to obtain the expected results on schedule?		
	1.1.					
	1.2.					
	2.1.					
	2.2.					
	...					
Activities	What are the key activities to be carried out and in what sequence in order to produce the expected results? (group the activities by result)	Means:(inputs) What are the means required to implement these activities, e. g. personnel, equipment, training, studies, supplies, operational, facilities, etc.	What are the sources of information about action progress? Costs: what are the action costs? How are they classified?	What pre-conditions are required before the action starts? What conditions outside the Beneficiary's direct control have to be met for the implementation of the planned activities?	Responsible partner / person	When?
	1.1.1.					
	1.1.2.					
	1.2.1.					
	1.2.2.					
	2.1.1.					
	2.2.1.					
	...					

Figure 1: Logical framework example. Source: author's own work

Once the Logical Framework is ready, the next planning stage is to work on deciding what is to be done and what resources are needed. For that, managers use one of the most popular techniques: the *Gantt Chart.* It helps 'visualise workflow in such a way that it allow[s] managers to better

integrate the timing of human and material resources needed to complete a project in a timely manner' (**Byrnes 2015: 79**). According to Donnelly (**2019**), the greatest advantages of *Gantt Charts* are: visually represented projects; easier communication amongst the team; realistic schedules; and clearly organised thoughts in one place. Although a Gantt Chart can be overly complex and overloaded, especially in arts and cultural management, it is a powerful and very useful tool no matter how big the project or the team is.

Regarding the team and its work, it is important that the manager is familiar with the main principles of the teamwork process, individual roles in the team, and leadership. It is necessary to understand that project management is always about teamwork. For a project team to be successful, the roles of the team members in management theory need to be considered. A widely recognised team role theory was suggested by Meredith Belbin in 1981. Based on the theory, there are nine main roles: *plants*; *resource investigators*; *monitor evaluators; co-ordinators; shapers; implementers; team workers; completer-finishers; specialists* (**Mackechnie 2015**). *Plants* offer creative ideas; *monitor evaluators* analyse solutions and anticipate team structure; *implementers* anticipate and implement a course of action; *co-ordinators* control the execution of an idea; *team workers* unite. According to arts management scholar Elona Lubyte, strong teams usually have an experienced *co-ordinator*, a *plant, a resource investigator*, and a few members of other roles*.* The most effective team consists of 4-6 people (**Lubytė 2008: 93**).

The theories and techniques mentioned above are just a few out of many that exist, but this is the base that I am, as an arts and cultural manager, following and using in my work. In my experience, an arts manager's job always includes strategic planning, organisation, leading, monitoring, budgeting, HR management, audience development, and public relations or marketing. Participating in the *Then & Now* project was a very different experience for me and it gave me an opportunity to analyse the theories and reflect on the project management process from a different perspective.

*Then & Now P*roject Management Experience

This section covers my observations and reflection on the management process of the overall project and reflects on the digital team practices. As mentioned in the short bio about the participants of *Then & Now* (**2020**), I initially joined the project as an opportunity to work in an interdisciplinary team of students by offering my own skills and knowledge in public communication, and event and project management. I joined as a student, as a social media engagement officer, but not with the idea to contribute as an arts and cultural manager. On the one hand, this reflected my

insecurity and uncertainty about my profession. On the other hand, I wanted the opportunity to observe the overall management process of a student-led project by contributing only by leading the digital team. I had no intention of assisting in managing the overall project. However, in order to manage a sub-team of the project, I had to be aware of the overall processes and activities, which also led me to take on more responsibilities than I initially intended.

Then & Now was a student-led project based on a student co-creation method. In my opinion, this overall concept was very beneficial in empowering the participants to work together as a team and to use their expertise to achieve a common goal. However, as much as I found it beneficial, I also found it to be missing a structured and logical project management approach. It might be that, because it was an experimental project, some of the key elements got mixed or lost in the process. Yet, in that case, it suggests that the project lead team was not sure about the *logical framework* in the first place. For me as a participant, the goal, specific objectives, expected results, and action plan of the project were not clear. Did the project lead team have an agreement and clear knowledge on what were their goals, expected results, potential risks and how to facilitate that process? Or was it a naïve expectation that the students, without receiving overall management guidelines, would directly take responsibility and plan and outline expected outputs? Also, it was not clear if we, the students, should come up with another logical framework for our aim to promote a greater sense of learning community amongst the Arts Faculty by creating an exhibition. Perhaps it was just me raising these questions and feeling the need for a more facilitated and managed creative process, but confusion was present among the rest of the team too.

Based on our interests we organised ourselves into three smaller groups. I naturally took the role of a *co-ordinator* of the Digital team. I did not rush to the managerial part of planning, as at first, I found it important to get to know why each of us joined *Then & Now* and the Digital team, what our abilities and skills were, and what our expectations were. It was important to create a safe space for teamwork. Afterwards, I initiated an improvised brainstorming session that helped to set a clearer idea of our objectives and activities. I did not focus on creating *a logical framework*. As it was mentioned, the project did not have the *logical framework* and creating it just for a sub-team would have caused more chaos. Secondly, it might have been an overload of various management tools for the team, whose members are not well familiar with it. Instead, we focused on planning and organising: deciding what was to be done, how it was to be done, and who was to do it.

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Digital team members agreed on their individual responsibilities based on their interests and expertise. It included managing teamwork and planning digital communication and marketing, social media management and content planning, graphic design, and organising the physical exhibition launch event. However, as the project was volunteer based, it meant that students were joining and/or leaving the project when it was convenient for them. In order to achieve the planned outputs, it was very important to keep all team members engaged by balancing their capabilities, personal expectations, and the tasks in hand. Using a *Gantt Chart* helped us to visualise our workflow in regards timing the needed resources to complete our objectives.
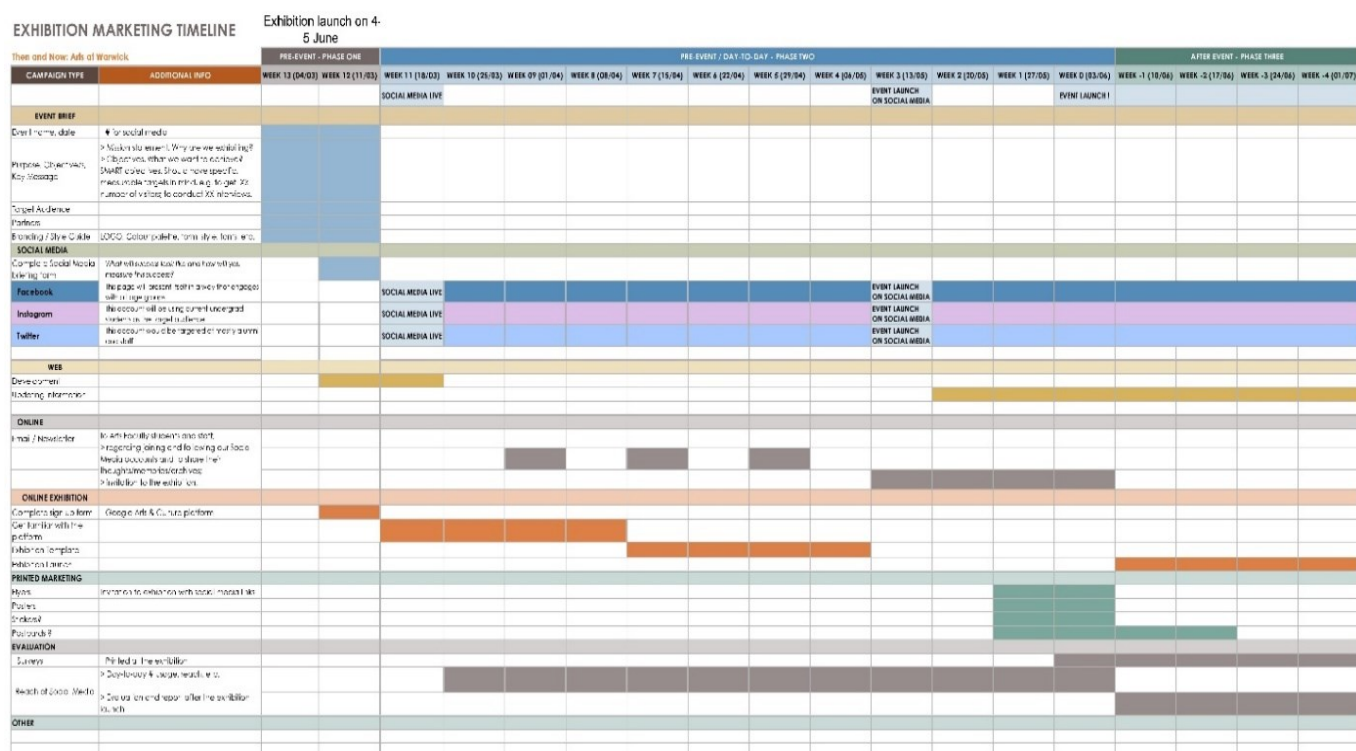

Figure 2: Initial Gantt Chart of marketing and public engagement. Source: author's own work

Notably, the digital team was not creating new content per se. Our role was that of cultural managers, mediating between the content creators (Research team) and the public via digital communication, e.g. social media. Thus, one of the biggest challenges we faced was other teams being less organised and/or lacking consistent leading and monitoring, which caused disruptions in our teamwork. As a result, it was highly necessary for the project leads to take the role of leading the whole project by setting a structure and a timetable for an online exhibition.

Moreover, working with researchers, or the students who feel more comfortable working individually, is very similar to working with an artist. According to Bendixen (**2000**), when during a period of creativity, the artist more or less isolates themselves from the outside world, they create and

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use their own specific artistic 'language'. It helps to keep their inner world of imagination and inspiration, but it is not necessarily the language of the public. It requires an interpretation. The arts manager may not be a professional arts interpreter but definitely has the skills and abilities to manage that 'language gap' between the artist and the public. This is the task I and the other arts manager, Alejandra, took on when we were overviewing the development of the online exhibition. We planned and formulated very concrete tasks for the researchers on how they were expected to present their findings so that we could interpret it and present it to the public an engaging way.

Overall, I feel it is hard to say if *Then & Now* was a success or a failure because it is not clear how and on what basis this might be measured. My golden rule is *if you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it*. The Digital team had clear indicators of success regarding its activities, but was it the same in the overall project? It is true that the overall objective of creating an online exhibition was achieved, but at what costs? Was the management of the project effective and successful? I would doubt it, but it is just my opinion as an arts and cultural manager, who is constantly involved in the creative project management process.

Conclusion

Exploring the characteristics of arts and cultural managers, their background, representations, and their functions, both in a theoretical framework and within the *Then & Now* project has given me a greater appreciation on how important the occupation is in the facilitation of a creative process. As much as it is wanted and expected from the public to understand the artistic language and to appreciate the arts, a cultural manager is a key mediator. In today's world, they are experts knowing the wants and the needs of the public, understanding the cultural field, and are masters at audience development and public engagement.

Given the multidisciplinary nature of arts management, there is a danger of becoming a jack of all trades and master of none. However, a successful manager emphasises creating clear goals and objectives, achieving results, and identifying techniques to measure it. Therefore, *Then & Now* is a great example of a project having a very strong ideological approach but missing the logical framework and the strong leadership – the basis of the creative project management. Leadership is not the same as creating a hierarchy in a team. By experimenting with and choosing the most appropriate leadership model, I strongly believe this project could have achieved even more ambitious results. Nevertheless, leadership is just one part of the whole management process. Ultimately, successful management is about continued planning, organising, leading, and controlling.

List of Figures

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Scaling Up: The pedagogical legacy of Then & Now

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Abstract

This reflective article explores the aftermath of the Then & Now project and demonstrates how the Faculty of Arts at the University of Warwick has sought to open up the opportunity to a greater number of students whilst simultaneously retaining the key learning elements of the programme. This piece demonstrates the compromises and challenges inherent in 'scaling up' a student intervention of this kind, alongside detailing the opportunities for improvement presented by repeating the engagement opportunity with a new group of students. The article also considers some of the difficulties presented by running the programme during the 2020/21 COVID-19 pandemic and reflects on learning opportunities and future plans.

Keywords: Student research; resilience; creativity; pedagogy; employability; engagement

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Introduction

As *Then & Now: Arts at Warwick* drew closer to its conclusion in the summer of 2020, it was clear that the students were engaged in a special endeavour. The level of engagement demonstrated was remarkable, and the students' excitement was infectious. Thoughts turned to how to capitalise on the possibilities created by this project; how to improve the programme and widen both its appeal and participation whilst remaining true to the elements that captured student interest. The interdisciplinarity of the project had ignited the students' imagination, and the level of creativity, digital skills, and teamwork demonstrated by the students directly addressed a number of priorities of the University of Warwick's Education Strategy (**University of Warwick, 2018: 10-15**). The challenge, then, was to effectively scale up and out from the initial scheme without undermining the elements that had made it a success.

The 'Student Research Portfolio' (SRP) was conceived as the successor to *Then & Now.* It was launched in February 2021 and currently supports four separate student groups engaged in concurrent projects. The structure of the new programme remains recognisable, with a few notable alterations. The focus of the research is no longer the Faculty of Arts itself. The SRP allows each student group to choose their own research focus, limited only by issues of scope and availability of materials. Thus, studying the history of the Faculty of Arts remains open as a research possibility but is no longer the only option. Each group in this year's cohort has chosen a topic with an interdisciplinary focus, including early modern witchcraft, representations of suffrage, and historical ghost stories. Interestingly, one group also chose to research student life at Warwick, having been inspired by the work done on *Then & Now.* Participants have been encouraged to consider public engagement possibilities, relevant funding opportunities, and the lifecycle of their project beyond the boundaries of the SRP, further expanding the scope and impact of their chosen topics.

The programme retains its focus on creativity and interdisciplinarity and employs a number of similar strategies and methodologies that proved successful on *Then & Now.* The pedagogical methodology which underpins the programme, however, has shifted from co-creation to student-led research. Our aim this year was to test whether or not reducing the engagement with co-creation in favour of increased scaffolding and a greater focus on learning community would enable the SRP to successfully support an increased number of participants in future years, whilst still successfully meeting similar learning outcomes.

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The scope of the programme has also been expanded to define new factors in its aims and outcomes. As it is free from the spectre of grading, this extra-curricular programme allows for a level of freedom of expression that would be challenging to offer on modular learning. Students cannot 'fail' the SRP, thus they are both supported in exploring their own capabilities and expected to take charge of their own project. Students on the SRP are encouraged to take risks and push the boundaries of their own experience without consequence. As such, both creativity and resilience have been embedded in the programme.

Table 1:SRP Learning aims and outcomes

Learning Aims and Outcomes	
Student-led archival research	*Creativity*
Interdisciplinarity	*Reflective practice and lifelong learning*
Learning community	*Resilience*

This article reflects on the process of transforming *Then & Now: Arts at Warwick* into a programme that may in future provide the capability to expand its reach, supporting both a larger proportion of the student body at the University of Warwick and a more diverse cohort. It offers insight into the opportunities presented by a second iteration of the programme – itself a pilot scheme – whilst also considering the alterations that were necessary in order to continue to champion authentic student-led arts and humanities research. Finally, this piece highlights the questions that remain unanswered one year on from *Then & Now* and the unexplored pathways that are open to the research programme in the future.

Co-creation vs Student-led Research

Any second iteration to this student research programme had to have at its centre a commitment to broadening its reach; the capability to offer the opportunity to greater numbers of Arts students and of attracting participation from a broader pool of disciplines and backgrounds. As Healey and Jenkins stated in 2009, 'all undergraduate students in all higher education institutions should experience learning through, and about research and enquiry' (**Healey & Jenkins, 2009: 3**). Yet to do so while retaining the co-creative methodology championed by the initial project presented a hurdle: the level of academic involvement that Dr Kathryn Woods had undertaken in the early days of *Then & Now* was unsustainable in a larger programme. Kathryn's departure from *Then & Now* had demonstrated, however, that co-creation was not central to the success of the students' research endeavours. The students had been successful in moving on from the project's co-creation roots into a student-driven space (**Woods & Botcherby, 2021**). This was central to the programme's

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redesign, showing that it was possible to create an equally immersive experience without this element of practice.

Thus, as *Then & Now* sought to embed co-creative methodologies in the Faculty of Arts, the second iteration focussed more keenly on student-led research, moving the focus of the project from level three on Walkington's 'Levels of Participation in Student Research' to level five: 'students initiate the research themselves, they frame their own enquiry and they carry out the research, but all of this is done in consultation with university staff at a level determined by the student' (**Walkington, 2016: 10**). Distinct from co-creation, student-led research empowers students to direct their own projects, thus reducing the dependency on academic staff. Furthermore, student-led research 'play[s] an important role in helping students to gain the skills of independent learning together with those of working with others' (**Keenan, 2015: 30**). This shift has moved the project from a research-tutored model to a research-based model, thus enabling project participants to focus as much on the skills developed through the act of managing one's own research as the content produced or knowledge acquired (**Healey & Jenkins, 2009**). Through this model, participants actively develop their leadership, project management, and teamworking skills.

The new structure effects the development of a key employability skill difficult to recreate on credit-bearing modules: resilience. As a student-led research project, participants must make their own decisions and correct (or embrace) their own mistakes. Through a practice of reflection, participants are invited to consider their progress and understand their 'mistakes as milestones rather than cliff-faces. In this way participants are invited to engage in an authentic experience that more closely mirrors an academic research experience, thus supporting the framework of 'students as participants' (**Ibid**).

The programme also offers a focus on creativity, innovation, and knowledge creation, thus aligning with modern approaches to student employability which seek to move away from outmoded 'tick-box' structures to a more authentic experiential pathway. As Bridgstock notes, current students are often 'underprepared to self-manage lifelong professional learning', whereas the greatest value is to be found in 'innovation and enterprise' (**Bridgstock, 2017: 344**). Allowing students to lead their own projects increases the opportunity for greater and better development of deeper skills learning that focuses not only on a series of attributes or competencies, but on networks of practice and increased capability to manage and reflect upon their own learning and progress.

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Embracing a student-led research methodology has been successful so far on the programme. Each project benefits from the support and guidance of the programme co-ordinators in fortnightly hour-long meetings. This engagement does not require the time-commitment necessary from a co-ordinator in a co-creation project, thus one academic co-ordinator is able to supervise numerous concurrent research projects. Numbers were kept intentionally low this year to ensure that any cracks in the new structure were easily identifiable and could be addressed in a timely and effective manner. It is clear however that a greater number of projects and far more participants could have been successfully supported by the core project team as a result of the shift in approach. The simplicity of the new structure will enable *Then & Now*'s original project plan to be scaled up in future years without requiring greater resources or reducing the benefit of the programme to its participants.

Scaffolding and Learning Community

The shift away from co-creation presented other complications, however. Whilst co-creation was not deemed necessary to the success of the programme, it certainly furthered the personal and professional development of those enrolled on the project. The co-creative methodology enabled the participants to benefit from a personalised level of support and attention, with queries answered quickly and problems solved directly. In order to ensure that participants on the SRP continued to meet these learning outcomes, it was vital that we addressed this skills-gap. The decision was taken to re-create this scaffolding through a series of interventions strategically timetabled throughout the duration of the programme. These sessions seek both to anticipate the needs of the student groups and broaden the range of their experiences on the programme.

Each session is delivered once to all participants via MS Teams, and is recorded to sustain maximum reach. Scaffolding events include workshops on public engagement, digital skills and academic writing, and sessions on project management and archival research. The majority have been delivered by relevant stakeholders from across the University; one session was run by former participants from *Then & Now* who offered a reflective seminar on their experience of leading a student research project. Others have included 'Design Thinking', 'Public Engagement' and 'Research Publications'. Participants on the SRP are encouraged to ask for further sessions if and when they feel it is necessary, and each session lead has demonstrated great commitment to working with the student groups beyond the bounds of the session.

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This active demonstration of a learning community allowed the participants to better understand their own place at the centre of Warwick, further supporting them in meeting one of the original aims of *Then & Now* which had been retained by the SRP: to increase the sense of learning community across the Faculty of Arts. Smith and Bath's review of the literature in 2006 clearly demonstrates that 'skills tend to be best developed in contexts of high interaction, collaboration with peers and faculty, and engagement in a community of learning' (**Smith & Bath, 2006: 266**). Environments in which students are empowered to situate themselves as part of a larger whole and are supported in engaging in co-operative learning activities with peers and staff allow for better development of interpersonal skills, communication skills, accountability, positive interdependence, and what Kreke and Towns referred to as a 'warmer learning climate' (**Kreke & Towns, 1997: 6**). This focus has also served to further break down barriers between staff and students, with an active focus being placed on encouraging students to independently contact those involved in the scaffolding activities if they wanted to discuss the content, or its relevance to their project. Central to this endeavour is the fact that many of these stakeholders are not departmental staff, but rather members of professional services or 'third space' academics. This broadens the students' understanding of learning communities at the University of Warwick and allows participants on the SRP to learn with members of this community with whom they would not normally engage in the course of their disciplinary learning.

A significant benefit of running multiple projects at once is that this allows the development of an interdisciplinary learning community within the programme itself. In the new structure, student groups are able to interact with each other, learn about the various projects, methodologies and outputs currently being undertaken by each group, and garner a sense of community from shared experiences beyond the confines of their own research teams. A mid-programme mini-conference has been embedded into the programme as a result of the new structure. This element further supports the development of the learning community whilst simultaneously giving participants the experience of presenting their research to external stakeholders.

Multiple concurrent projects allowed the SRP to address a concern born out of *Then & Now*: the likelihood that participants may feel marginalised, alienated, or lost on the project, a problem which stood in opposition to the co-creative methodology that underpinned the initial programme design. It was hypothesised that placing participants in smaller groups would allow for a greater likelihood of bonding between group members and increase the opportunity for each group member to have their voice heard. The new small-group structure also allows for breakdowns in group

dynamics to be more noticeable by the programme leads as it is easier to spot one marginalised member in a group of five students than two or three in a group of twenty.

Finally, the small-group structure enabled the SRP to further broaden the scope of the programme by empowering each group to choose their own topic. Each group was given the opportunity to define the focus and direction of their own project rather than joining an established undertaking. This departure from *Then & Now* was taken both to return power to the participants and to increase the draw of the opportunity to groups who perhaps were not engaged by the scope of the original programme. Participants were guided when making their choices; they were invited to attend an introduction to the resources and artefacts available to them in the Modern Records Centre (digital only in 2021), and were given support in understanding how to translate bodies of evidence into coherent research topics. Furthermore, students were introduced to academic members of staff working on interesting projects that they could work alongside, and were supported in understanding how to direct their findings outward and engage stakeholders in their work beyond the confines of the SRP. Where necessary, participants were also supported in understanding and navigating relevant processes such as ethical approval or funding applications.

Digital Spaces

A further lesson learned from *Then & Now* concerns the usefulness of online spaces for running extra-curricular interdisciplinary programmes. When *Then & Now* moved online due to COVID-19 restrictions in March 2020, it was not clear how the project would function in a digital space. The learning that took place over the remainder of the project's lifecycle was central to the creation of a robust and resilient programme this year (**Woods & Botcherby, 2021**). At no point during the planning of the SRP was it clear whether face-to-face learning would be possible by project launch. As such, a flexible design was decided upon. Whilst it was hoped that it would be possible to run some in-person activities – the launch was delayed until February 2021 in the hope that students would be allowed by then to visit and engage with the Modern Records Centre archives in person – digital spaces featured heavily in the programme's organisation. Despite the delay, no face-to-face elements have been possible and the programme currently exists entirely in the digital space (**Cabinet Office, 2021**). Unlike *Then & Now*, participants in this year's programme have never met each other or the project leads in person nor have they been able to engage with any un-digitised artefacts or resources.

What is particularly interesting, however, is that due in large part to the success of *Then & Now*'s engagement with and use of digital spaces, even the more favoured SRP model that included partial face-to-face engagement still utilised digital spaces more prominently than the physical, marking a sharp departure from the initial planning for *Then & Now.* The capabilities, flexibility, and connectivity offered by MS Teams enhanced project management and engagement, and enabled the programme to be offered in a more inclusive and flexible manner, as is discussed elsewhere in this issue. The absence of in-person workshops and commuting coupled with the ability to record meetings with ease has enabled the SRP to offer a more accessible experience that is in-line with current student opinions on remote learning (**Knight, 2021**).

MS Teams allows students to participate on their own terms, contribute without always being present, and catch-up easily at their leisure. Furthermore, the possibilities for open communication offered by the central message board allows participants greater freedom to discuss their work in spaces that are at once both public and private. Similarly to other digital spaces such as WhatsApp, MS Teams allows instantaneous communication, clear records of discussions and agreements, and low-stakes involvement. Unlike other technologies, however, it is visible to, and ultimately controlled by, the programme organiser and is a 'professional' digital chatroom. These digital tools have created not only the possibility for running such a project successfully in a remote environment, but of democratising such opportunities for effective teamworking and contribution frameworks to students in a range of different circumstances. Indeed, at the JISC conference 'How to shape digital culture in higher education' which took place in March 2021, participants most noted the word 'collaboration' when asked to highlight what digital culture in education meant to them (**Dyer & Harris, 2021**). It has never been easier to weave structures around such a broad scope of experiences and the opportunities this shift can offer are significant.

This is not to say that the digital space is free of drawbacks. Running a programme in this manner requires active awareness of technological inequality (**JISC, 2021**) and careful navigation of the problematic concept of the 'digital native', which has been widely criticised in the last decade (**Bennett et al., 2008**). This programme has sought to manage both of these issues. Firstly, we provided participants with a variety of methods through which to communicate, thus negating the need for expertise in one area. Participants have overwhelmingly chosen to use the flexibility offered by MS Teams, communicating through calls, chats, and channels. Furthermore, synchronous contact is maintained to support the establishment of the learning community, but an asynchronous framework is in place to enable participants to manage their own time,

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personal circumstances (for example times when they are unable to access private spaces or quiet spaces), and connectivity issues. There is no requirement that participants' cameras are switched on. All scaffolding sessions are recorded and uploaded to the MS Teams space, as are group meetings and supervisor meetings. Therefore, participants are empowered to engage with the learning on their own terms. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, support for digital skills-learning was embedded into the foundation of the programme to scaffold the participants not only in navigating the digital spaces utilised by this programme, but also in expanding their own capabilities within the digital space. Due to the numerous benefits presented by MS Teams and the success of both *Then & Now* and the SRP as a digital programme, it is unlikely that this programme will ever be run as an entirely face-to-face programme again.

Challenges

So far this year, the SRP has exceeded expectations. The student groups are engaged, work well together, and are creating exciting and relevant projects in the field of arts and humanities. There is plenty of scope for improvement, however, especially in the field of inclusion. It was noted during *Then & Now* that the project would benefit from greater diversity. Despite significant efforts in this vein this year, including broader advertising and reduced limitations on both engagement and topic, the SRP has not made clear enough headway in this arena. This year's cohort is 30% male and 70% female. This represents a significant increase in engagement from male students from *Then & Now*, but is still far from parity; male students currently represent 51.3% of Warwick's student body (**University of Warwick, 2020: 58**).

Equally, participants in this cohort are 70% white European. The remaining 30% of students are of Asian background. It is true that the largest minority ethnic community at the University of Warwick is Asian, representing 28% of the student body as a whole. As such it is unsurprising that there is a greater number of students from Asian backgrounds participating on the project than there are black students (**Ibid: 61**). That said, there are currently no black students enrolled on the SRP, despite black students representing 6% of the undergraduate student body at the University of Warwick (**Ibid: 61**). Thus, in part at least, the SRP has not been successful in addressing the diversity issues present on *Then & Now.* Further research and engagement work is required to ensure that the project becomes more inclusive and welcoming in future iterations.

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The SRP has maintained the interdisciplinarity that was central to *Then & Now*, sustaining involvement from five different academic departments and matching the profile of *Then & Now*. This was a key aim of the programme, as interdisciplinarity is key to the learning outcomes of the SRP. As de Greef *et al.* have noted, 'to reach a more comprehensive explanation of complex, real-life problems, insights from several disciplines have to be reconciled and combined' (**de Greef et al., 2017: 10**). Moreover, in order for students to properly reflect upon and understand the relevance and situation of their disciplinary learning within a wider context, they must be supported in both looking beyond the boundaries of their own academic space, and also in grasping the necessity of their own discipline in a multidisciplinary approach (**de Greef et al., 2017**). *Then & Now*'s strong engagement with students studying History of Art was replicated on the SRP (**Woods & Botcherby, 2021**). Furthermore, the SRP was successful in vastly improving engagement among students in the History department - a discipline that was under-represented on *Then & Now*. Whilst it is gratifying that the SRP maintained the interdisciplinary profile from its parent programme, however, it has not been successful in improving upon it. Several departments remain under-represented on both programmes, including large departments such as English and Comparative Literary Studies (ECLS) and the School of Cross Faculty Studies. It should also be noted that it was not possible for the SRP to maintain the strong connection seen on *Then & Now* with students from the Centre for Cultural and Media Policy Studies (CCMPS) as these students were studying at the postgraduate level, and the SRP was only open to undergraduate programmes. CCMPS did, however, launch an undergraduate degree in the 2020/21 academic year, so as this first cohort of students move into their second year of study next year, it will be interesting to see if they are as drawn to this programme as their postgraduate counterparts were to *Then & Now.*

Further Opportunities

There are certainly more improvements to be made to the SRP in the coming years. In the first instance, we hope to see a vast increase in uptake across the student body. It is hoped that success stories from students engaged in this year's programme, coupled with a more targeted marketing campaign and fewer restrictions on teaching next year, will allow us to better engage the undergraduate population across the Faculty of Arts. The benefits and opportunities provided by this programme for skills learning, teambuilding, and employability are worthy of exploration and expansion.

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Beyond this, we hope to strengthen our offer to participants in the field of public engagement. This year's project has connected participants with the Warwick Institute of Engagement and the support of the WIE Fellows has greatly improved the possibilities and plans for public engagement in each project on the SRP. It is clear, however, that the SRP would benefit from introducing these themes earlier in the schedule, and from providing the participants with more scaffolding in engagement work. This would benefit a number of learning outcomes embedded in the SRP. Firstly, participants would gain new opportunities to demonstrate and explore their own creativity, resilience, and teamworking skills, both as they improve their understanding of and capability in theoretical public engagement, and through the acquisition of learning in the relevant practical tools and technology utilised in this area. In addition, the learning community would be strengthened as this element would broaden the participants' understanding of their community, and of community boundaries. Furthermore, improving this aspect of the programme would reinforce both the interdisciplinary reach of the outputs and the participants' opportunities for lifelong learning.

Finally, we hope to broaden the possibilities for participants to take control of their project afterlives. Many of our students have begun to produce exciting and innovative outputs through the SRP this year; we intend to ensure that these projects are not forgotten after graduation. In the first instance it is our intention to ensure that a record of this year's outputs remains hosted on the University website to ensure that students can direct interested parties to a working example of their skills and talents. This will also serve, in future years, to broaden the learning community once again, allowing it to stretch across years as well as disciplines and professional boundaries (**Wenger, 1998**). Where participants are interested, we aim to connect them to a wealth of further opportunities such as student conferences, journal articles and other avenues for publication, alternative opportunities to engage in student-led research across the University (such as Warwick's summer Undergraduate Research Support Scheme (URSS)), and funding and enterprise schemes based at Warwick and beyond. Some of this year's participants have engaged with the URSS, written and published articles, and successfully secured further funding for their projects. Furthermore, it is hoped that participants will also, eventually, be given the opportunity as final year students to supervise their own SRP projects in our place, thus giving them a more advanced perspective on student-led research, project management, and learning community whilst also providing even more avenues for student research at the intermediate level.

Acknowledgments

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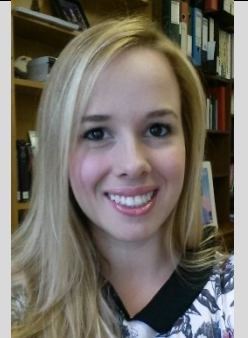
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Best Practice versus Reality: Arts at Warwick, coronavirus, and remote interviewing in oral history

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Abstract

COVID-19 was repeatedly labelled 'unprecedented'. In unprecedented times, we rethink conventional wisdoms. This short article explores oral history, an important element of the Then & Now student-led research project explored in this Special Issue, with such rethinking in mind. Then & Now's alumni interviews had to be conducted remotely but remote oral history interviews are not universally popular. The Oral History Society (OHS) is hesitant and suggested postponing interviews, reflecting best practice concerns about rapport-building, audio quality and archiving, data protection and security, and community building. For groups like the Disability Visibility Project (DVP) and oral historians like Sarah Dziedzic, remote interviewing is the only viable method and ideals of best practice are too rigid. For oral history to uncover the experiences of those disregarded by conventional histories, access to it and its employment as a research tool should be as universal as possible.

This article examines and questions best practice guidelines in light of the pandemic and the experiences of the DVP and historians such as Dziedzic. It draws on personal experience of interviewing and from the Then & Now project. This article argues that oral history, an inherently fieldwork-based activity, needs to take remote interviewing as seriously as face-to-face interviewing to become more widely accessible and sufficiently flexible to adapt to conditions in the field.

Keywords: student-led research; oral history; remote interviewing; Coronavirus; COVID-19; Disability Visibility Project

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Introduction

COVID-19 has caused huge disruptions across Higher Education. Early reports indicated incoming Freshers would delay studies if pandemic-related social distancing measures around teaching, socialising, and sports remained too restrictive (**Conlon et al., 2020**). Universities scrambled to pivot to online teaching and it was quickly apparent how unprepared most were regarding resources and staff training for this transition (**Batty & Hall, 2020**). In Britain, the lockdown from March 2020 similarly disrupted ongoing research projects – including *Then & Now*, as discussed in this Special Issue. Teamwork-based, *Then & Now* experienced 'teaching' and 'research' disruption: its weekly meetings and collaboration between student participants occurred remotely; its archival research, alumni interviews, and final exhibition relied on digital resources and tools.

The pandemic was repeatedly labelled by the Anglophone press as 'unprecedented'. In unprecedented times, we rethink conventional wisdoms, as has been the case for both teaching and research in Higher Education. This short article explores oral history, an important element of *Then & Now*, with such rethinking in mind. The project's alumni interviews, planned as traditional face-to-face interviews, were ultimately conducted remotely. Remote oral history interviews are far from universally popular. The Oral History Society (OHS) is hesitant about them and recently suggested 'if possible you should postpone your oral history interview' until face-to-face interviewing can resume (**Morgan, 2020: 4**)**.** Their hesitancy reflects concerns over best practice for rapport-building with interviewees, audio quality and archiving, data protection and security, and the 'community building' impact of interviewing (**Ibid: 3**). However, as OHS guidance acknowledges, remote interviewing is not just a response to the pandemic but is, for groups like the Disability Visibility Project (DVP) and oral historians like Sarah Dziedzic, the only viable interviewing method. In such cases, like in the pandemic, ideals of best practice prove too rigid. Given that oral history seeks to 'uncover the experiences' of those who have been 'disregarded by conventional histories', should not access to it and its employment as a research tool be as universal as possible (**Abrams, 2016: 4, Portelli, 1981: 97**)?

This article examines best practice guidelines from the OHS and other organisations. It contrasts these with the experiences of the DVP and historians like Dziedzic, and draws on experiences of interviewing from *Then & Now* and from my other research. Whilst ethics and safeguarding are always a priority, as an inherently fieldwork-based activity, oral history practice must reflect conditions in the field (whether an actual field, someone's house, a cafe, or a computer screen). Ultimately, this article argues that oral history needs to take remote interviewing as seriously as

face-to-face interviewing to become more widely accessible and sufficiently flexible to adapt to conditions in the field.

The Oral History Society's COVID-19 advice

The OHS' 'Advice on remote oral history interviewing during the COVID-19 pandemic' leans heavily towards postponing interviewing until face-to-face is possible again. It highlights several problems with remote interviewing:

- difficulties building rapport, being sensitive to mood changes, providing non-verbal feedback, and establishing a successful relationship with interviewees

- poor quality recordings which cannot easily be archived

- challenges around data security, data storage, and interview documentation

- negative impacts on oral history's 'community building' potential (**Morgan, 2020: 4**)

The guidance further suggests avoiding first-time interviews and/or long 'life story' interviews (**Morgan, 2020: 4, 6**). Video calls are said to be more tiring than face-to-face meetings, notably because non-verbal cues are harder to discern so long interviews might be challenging (**Morgan, 2020: 9, Naughton, 2020**). Shorter follow-up and/or 'focused' interviews, the guidance goes on, might be feasible, as are ones not intended for archiving because the recording quality matters less (**Morgan, 2020: 4, 6**). The guidance stresses that the pandemic has left many people – interviewers or interviewees – 'in financial, psychological and personal distress' (**Ibid: 5**). Though some might appreciate the interview as a 'coping mechanism' or distraction, others might find the process 'intrusive or insensitive' and, particularly if the interview discusses sensitive or traumatic experiences, lack the necessary support (**Morgan, 2020: 5, Abrams, 2016: 190-191**).

Beyond concerns over the safety and support of the interviewee (and the interviewer), the guidance highlights technological pitfalls of remote interviewing. These include:

- interviewees – and interviewers – being uncomfortable or unfamiliar with, or lacking access to, remote recording software

- the terms and conditions of remote recording software (audio rights, confidentiality, storage)

- poor internet connections or phone coverage

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- general low quality of in-built microphones on computers and laptops

- differences in volume level on either end of the recording

- background noises which might be picked up (**Morgan, 2020: 7-9**)

This guidance, as its author acknowledges, was compiled in an uncertain climate, as indicated by it being on its sixth iteration by May 2020, just a few months after the pandemic began (**Ibid: 1**). It views COVID-19 as temporary and envisages a future return to face-to-face interviewing (**Ibid: 3**).

General Concepts of Best Practice in Interviewing

The OHS' recent advice reflects its general preference for face-to-face interviewing, shared by many involved in oral history. The OHS' introductory training session is clearly geared around face-to-face interviewing, as is its online 'doing the interview' advice. Specifically, this guidance emphasises interviewing in the interviewee's home, where they are likely to be most comfortable, ideally in a quiet room away from noisy roads, with mobile phones and appliances such as radios and televisions switched off, and sat as close as possible to the interviewee to better guarantee a high-quality recording (**Oral History Society, n.d.**).

Other oral history organisations replicate this advice. Old North West Sound Archive documentation concerns only face-to-face practice, reminding interviewers to think about clothing, check the recording equipment before travelling, shake the interviewee's hand, avoid strip-lit rooms with noisy electrical appliances such as fridge-freezers, and ensure pets (specifically dogs, cats, and caged birds) cannot interfere with the interview or the equipment (**North West Sound Archive, n.d.**). The Heritage Lottery Fund guidance similarly advocates face-to-face interviewing somewhere quiet in the interviewee's home or another location where they feel comfortable. Such guidance underlines non-verbal feedback, as 'lots of 'yes' and 'umms' on the recording can be off-putting for the listener' (**Heritage Lottery Fund, 2014: 18**). As with the OHS' warnings about remote interviewing, there is emphasis on obtaining archive-quality recordings.

Major literature routinely included as 'suggested reading' for budding oral historians discusses interviewing in the same way. Donald Ritchie gives barely a page to remote interviewing in his wide-ranging thirty-page chapter on the interview process, offering a cursory justification of the merits of video interviews over phone interviews but little advice on optimising remote interviews (**Ritchie, 2014: 98-99**). Paul Thompson allots a sole paragraph to remote interviewing in his chapter on interviewing,

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saying that whilst 'it is now possible to consider' them (if an interviewee is particularly busy or lives abroad, for instance), they are 'unlikely to achieve the deep interview which can be made in person' (**Thompson, 2017: 320**). Thompson describes how and where to conduct interviews in the same way as the organisations mentioned above (**Ibid: 317-319, 322**). Lynn Abrams evokes the 'democratising' effect of the 'digital turn' on oral history in terms of 'anyone with a mobile phone' being able to conduct a face-to-face interview and/or disseminate the output online. However, she does not discuss the potential of this technology for facilitating remote interviewing (**Abrams, 2016: ix, 173**).

'It should not have taken a global pandemic for oral historians to evaluate the safety and accessibility of our in-person interviewing practice. But here we are'[i]

Sarah Dziedzic, an oral historian with an immunodeficiency condition, advocates strongly for remote oral history interviewing. She urges practitioners to consider the quality of the interaction between interviewer and interviewee over the setting:

> *Our interaction was good because she listened to me explain my unique, embodied experience, and listened respectfully — and in turn, I respected and trusted her. Isn't this the fundamental core of oral history? How had being in the same room with someone become the only predictor of quality?* (**Dziedzic, 2020**)[ii]

For Dziedzic, remote interviewing is equally as valid as face-to-face. Oral historians, she says, should use the pandemic's enforced postponing of face-to-face interviewing to learn 'how to conduct good, remote, safe, and accessible oral history interviews […] leaning into our skills as listeners – no matter the recording format – and re-evaluating the long-standing insistence on doing this work in person' (**Dziedzic, 2020**).

Whilst admitting that oral history currently lacks the equipment and technological 'know-how' to conduct entirely satisfactory remote interviews – particularly archival-quality ones – Dziedzic believes the bigger barrier is a lack of 'willingness' (**Ibid**). To increase oral history's accessibility, Dziedzic suggests re-evaluating the field through a 'disability justice lens' to better understand who has been excluded or put at risk by an insistence on face-to-face interviewing (**Ibid**). The standard guidance on face-to-face interviewing ignores that, for someone like Dziedzic, meeting in person and/or physical contact (like handshaking) is often impossible due to her immunodeficiency (**Dziedzic, 2020**). Interestingly, the Heritage Lottery Fund guidance urges oral historians to consider the accessibility of archived interviews – for instance, 'are disabled people able to get into and around the building, and/or readily access the material via the web in

accessible formats?' – but does not extend this to the interview process itself (**Heritage Lottery Fund, 2014**). Treating face-to-face and remote interviews equally would enable mutual decisions between interviewer and interviewee based on 'health, wellness and physical access' (**Dziedzic, 2020**). Rapport-building via phone or video call might feel unusual for many but 'we *can* re-orient to another body through a video call, just as we can re-orient in person' – and it is up to oral historians to develop this capacity (**Dziedzic, 2020**).

Dziedzic argues that, for many people, remote contact has long been 'necessary, commonplace' and a key source of community strength and resilience (**Ibid**). A prime example is the Disability Visibility Project (DVP), founded by activist Alice Wong in 2014 in the run-up to the American Disability Act's twenty-fifth anniversary. The DVP describes itself as 'an online community dedicated to creating, sharing, and amplifying disability media and culture' (**DVP, 2020a**). In particular, in partnership with StoryCorps, it encourages disabled people to record oral histories of their disability experiences, either in person at a StoryCorps recording booth or remotely via 'StoryCorps Connect' or the StoryCorps app (**DVP, 2020b**). By 2016, the DVP had collected over one hundred oral histories, with more added since (**DVP, 2016**).

The remote options are particularly important as the DVP aims to collect testimonies from across America but StoryCorps only has recording facilities in a handful of cities (plus a roving 'mobile booth'). The internet – and the remote social contact it facilitates – has long been a source of 'disability community formation', highlighted recently by COVID-19 during which 'the online disability community […] demonstrate[d] its seemingly boundless collective capacity to care, listen, and inform' (**Gaeta, 2020**). The DVP cannot currently reach all disabled people due to the 'audist nature' of oral histories but, by embracing remote interviewing options facilitated by modern communications technology, it has increased its reach and replicated the community formation visible online (**Gaeta, 2020, DVP, 2020c**). It is to such communities and projects with long-standing experience of negotiating barriers to face-to-face interactions, Dziedzic suggests, that oral historians should turn to understand the possibilities offered by remote interviewing.

Face-to-Face or Remote Interviewing: Common sense and case-by-case in the field

The general preference for face-to-face is partly attributable to widespread access to remote communications technology – landline telephones aside – occurring relatively recently. Practice in the field has not yet caught up with the available technology. The OHS' COVID-19

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guidance is very reluctant towards remote interviewing generally, not just in the context of the pandemic. Read between the lines, however, many of its points feel more like reasons against interviewing during the pandemic rather than convincing arguments against remote interviewing itself.

Caution around COVID-19 is sensible. For many people, it has been distressing and traumatic. Oral history interviews are complex and delicate, and ethics and safeguarding of both interviewee and interviewer are of paramount importance however one conducts the interview. This complexity and delicateness only increases in times of crisis (like COVID-19) and/or when the interview is covering difficult – perhaps traumatic – ground (**Abrams, 2016: 175-194**).[iii] In this respect, it feels contradictory that the OHS' guidance warns against remote interviewing but gives projects documenting the pandemic as an example of ones which might continue – particularly as it expressly cautions against interviews with new interviewees (**Morgan, 2020: 3, 6**).

Many of the issues mentioned above stem from unfamiliarity with remote interviewing or highlight the exclusionary nature of face-to-face interviewing and the need for oral historians to exercise common sense judgement in the field. Some – particularly technological limitations such as unfamiliarity with software, how to complete the accompanying documentation, how to ensure clear sound quality – could be solved, or mitigated, if oral historians engaged fully with remote interviewing. The question of the interview's urgency, meanwhile, demonstrates the need for common sense. This really concerns the ethics and safeguarding which form part of all oral history practice. If both interviewee and interviewer are happy to do the interview, can access support if needed, and are comfortable with the remote format, why not proceed? Others, of course, are more difficult to resolve. If an interviewee does not feel comfortable being interviewed remotely, it cannot be done, but nor can a face-to-face interview proceed if the interviewee is uncomfortable. Some interviewees will lack access to or familiarity with the necessary equipment and some places lack reliable internet or phone coverage; though it is reasonable to think that both of these will be less of a barrier as time goes by.

The legalities around who owns the rights to recordings made on platforms such as Skype or Zoom and the potential ramifications for confidentiality and data protection do pose questions of ethics and safeguarding. One short-term option is making the interviewee aware of these risks and ensuring they are comfortable proceeding. Long-term, oral history should look to communities and projects familiar with remote technologies. The DVP works with StoryCorps, an 'independently funded non-profit organisation' set up in 2003 to 'preserve and share humanities' stories'

and create 'an invaluable archive for future generations' (**StoryCorps, 2020**). Other projects use telephone – rather than internet-based – interviews, with various techniques employed to record the conversation (**H-Net, 2020**). The OHS guidance lists various software which produce better quality recordings than video-calling platforms but many are expensive, limiting their accessibility (**Morgan, 2020: 14-18**).

Similarly, regarding inclusivity/exclusivity, though the community-building element of oral history projects is valuable, those for whom face-to-face interviewing is inaccessible are excluded from this without remote interviewing. The DVP – like the disabled community more widely – has shown that community building is very possible remotely. Concerns over low quality microphones in computer or laptops and issues of inconsistent volume on recordings, meanwhile, are cosmetic and arise from current archiving standards advocated by bodies like the OHS. That lower quality recordings are not considered archive-quality excludes those without recourse to professional equipment or who cannot conduct their interviews in distraction-free environments. Given the digital turn has democratised the ability to conduct interviews, widening the potential reach of oral history, should not requirements for archiving recordings be democratised to match?

Neither face-to-face nor remote interviewing are flawless. Both suffer from barriers to access. Remote interviewing's data protection risks can be paired against potential physical risks with face-to-face interviewing, for instance incidents where interviewers suffer 'problematic encounters' or even assault (**Zembrzycki, 2018**). Being able to use both would help overcome their respective limitations and increase oral history's accessibility, particularly once in the field where conditions rarely permit exact adherence to best practice guidelines. Case-by-case decision-making and common sense are often required of oral historians.

This has certainly been true of my own oral history experiences for my thesis research and as Project Officer for *Then & Now*. In interviewing local residents of St. Helens (Merseyside) about their experiences of de-industrialisation and (post-industrial) regeneration, I conducted my face-to-face interviews in interviewees' homes, pubs, cafes, and even at an interviewee's workplace, always a case-by-case decision to accommodate the interviewee. Though not something I considered at the time, this mitigated the safeguarding risk for myself as interviewer; a public place is safer than entering a stranger's home alone. It also enabled me to offer the interviewees a drink (non-alcoholic) as a thanks for their time. There were drawbacks: background noise (music, conversation, cutlery/crockery), interruptions (by colleagues, once by an interviewee's friend), and public interviews are less conducive to discussing distressing

or emotional material. Whilst not examples of best practice, in these public interviews the conversation between the interviewee and myself was always audible and the material gathered was very rich – as rich as that gathered from conversations in other interviewees' homes.

Then & Now, meanwhile, is a perfect example of adapting to changing circumstances, as discussed elsewhere in this Special Issue. Alumni interviews were a key aspect of the project throughout. They were planned as face-to-face, with interviewers being sent out to the interviewees wherever possible. With the pandemic, remote interviews were the only option given the project's June 2020 exhibition launch. Despite my criticism of the attitude towards remote interviewing of organisations like the OHS, their guidance does agree that remote interviewing is viable – albeit with a distinct tone of 'last resort' – where deadlines are unchangeable (**Morgan, 2020: 3**). Amidst the project's wider adaptation to remote working, the student interviewers devised strategies for remote interviewing. Given the circumstances, they proved very resourceful and sensible. One used a combination of Microsoft Teams and Zoom to conduct the interviews, which lasted around forty-five minutes on average. Digital signatures were used for the accompanying documentation, and a copy of the email chain between them and the interviewer was retained as further proof of consent. Another interviewer used Skype and again found interviews lasted on average forty-five minutes – although one chattier interviewee talked for over ninety minutes, showing that some people are comfortable with longer interviews remotely. The decision to proceed with remote interviews has been vindicated by the webpages which draw from them being amongst the most popular of *Then & Now*'s online exhibition: 1123 views for 'Student & Alumni Experience', 1002 for 'Isolation Diaries', and 918 for 'Interactive Campus Map' (**Then & Now, 2020**).[iv] As with the work of Dziedzic and the DVP, *Then & Now* showed that effective oral histories can be conducted even when circumstances do not allow adherence to established concepts of best practice.

Conclusion

The OHS' caution about interviewing, even remotely, is understandable and sensible given the challenging and potentially distressing COVID-19 context. *Then & Now* was fortunate that its oral history interviews concerned peoples' memories of Warwick which, mostly, were positive and enjoyable to recall; albeit care had to be taken with the lockdown diaries which directly concerned COVID-19.

The OHS' attitude towards remote interviewing more generally, however, reflects a wider reticence amongst oral historians. As the website statistics indicate, *Then & Now*'s remote interviews and lockdown diaries proved

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very popular, suggesting the exhibition would have been poorer without them. In being decidedly *ad hoc*, the approach taken was no doubt imperfect, but there was still a conscious and deliberate attempt to maintain ethics and safeguarding in terms of interviewee consent and accommodating their needs (for instance anonymity).

For oral history to fulfil its role of uncovering the experiences and stories of those absent from the historical record, it cannot rely solely on face-to-face interviews. Rather than listing the current drawbacks with remote interviewing as reasons to eschew it, oral historians should look to remedy them by actively engaging with the remote process and by learning from communities and projects already making use of it. Interviewing is complicated and messy with subjective results, but a flexible interviewer can obtain interesting material from interviewees with very different attitudes and personas (**Thompson, 2017: 308, 311-313**). Flexibility also enables interviewers to be fully accommodating of an interviewee's needs, crucial in terms of safeguarding the interviewee's wellbeing. Decisions on how and where to conduct an interview – like decisions on how to interact with an interviewee during the interview – should be made on a case-by-case, common sense basis. If oral history becomes more open to multiple ways of interviewing and works to ensure they can be collected with proper ethics and safeguarding, it will become more accessible to a wider audience and will put both interviewees and interviewers in a safer, stronger position.

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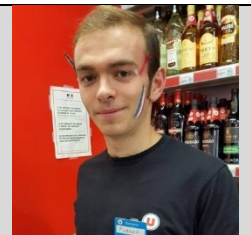
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Endnotes

[i] A quote taken from (**Dziedzic, 2020**).

[ii] Thompson describes interview interactions in similar terms: 'lying behind [the interview] is a notion of mutual co-operation, trust, and respect', (**Thompson, 2017: 323**).

[iii] Abrams devotes an entire chapter – new to the second edition of her book – to 'trauma and ethics', reflecting the recent trend in oral history projects dealing with traumatic events. The trend is significant enough for Abrams to call it a 'sub-genre' with 'a distinctive field [that] has grown up around the methodological, conceptual and ethical' challenges it poses (**Abrams, 2016: 175**).

[iv] Statistics correct for June 2020-February 2021. Accessed: 01 February 2021.

ᵛ The Warwick Oral History Network runs a range of research seminars and provides guidance and support to oral history projects. Email: oralhistorynetwork@warwick.ac.uk or visit: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/schoolforcross-facultystudies/networksandinitiatives/oralhistorynetwork/ for more information

ᵛⁱ For more information on the Student Research Portfolio see: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/applyingtostudy/currentstudents/studentresearchportfolio/

ᵛⁱⁱ Note, the more up-to-date guidance on its website does not discuss remote interviewing either: Oral history guidance, https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/oral-history-guidance [Accessed: 28 August 2020].

ᵛⁱⁱⁱ This document, alongside reading lists and print-outs of training PowerPoints, was amongst various papers and books left behind by the Warwick Oral History Network's founder and former Director, Angela Davis.

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