Pilmeny Development Project (PDP)

Leith anti-sectarianism project (LASP)

Oral History Programme

Evaluation Report

September 2014
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Executive Summary

Ryan McKay (Anti-sectarianism Development Worker) has written the following report in collaboration with Anne Munro (Project Manager) in relation to the delivery of the Leith anti-sectarianism Project’s - Oral History Programme (OHP).

The report provides an evaluation of the 12-week Oral history programme that was delivered as part of the Leith anti-sectarianism project and includes an exploration of the key findings and outcomes of each session. Major successes of the programme will also be highlighted, in addition to some of the delivery challenges. Lastly, recommendations for future development will be underlined and areas of unmet need highlighted.

Background/ Evidence of need

1.1 Scope of the work

Context - Leith is vibrant, multicultural and busy district of Edinburgh, being home to an eclectic mix of people and cultures. This diversity contributes heavily to Leith’s unique and distinct character. Pilmeny Development Project (PDP) has worked with and supported residents of Leith for over 25 years, with the overall aim being to support local residents and groups and to encourage appropriate self-help initiatives. In doing so PDP supports local people to improve their quality of life, and to identify and deliver actions, which contribute to sustainable development of both individual and local groups. According to the last census, the Leith Walk ward in which PDP is located is the most diverse in the country and one of the most populated:

http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk/medialibrary/briefings/dynamicofdiversity/code-census-briefing-scotland_v2.pdf

Supporting Communities to Tackle Sectarianism (SCOTTS) – In November 2012 Pilmeny Development Project (PDP) was approached by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) to conduct a piece of community led research for their Supporting Communities to Tackle Sectarianism (SCOTTS) pilot project looking into participants experiences of sectarianism. In addition, PDP participants experiences of intolerance, bigotry and faith based discrimination were also viewed as desirable
themes to be explored. The project took place over 3 months from January to March 2013 and a Research Report (copy available on request) evidencing the key issues and the need for further work in Leith was produced. It had been noted that people in different communities experience sectarianism in different ways. Moreover different manifestations of sectarianism require alternative approaches. Whilst substantial research and project work on sectarianism has been undertaken in the West of Scotland – the East coast setting and the area of Leith in which PDP is based, has the potential to provide a fresh approach to understanding the phenomenon of sectarianism.

The overall aim of the Leith anti-sectarianism Project (LASP) is:

To increase the scope of anti-sectarianism development work taking place in the Leith community and to develop reminiscence work exploring the history of sectarianism in Leith, in order to help challenge community tensions and to encourage better integration of the religious groups that make up the Leith community.

As a result of this unmet need, the LASP has developed programme of anti-sectarian initiatives. This has included the development of reminiscence work to explore the history or sectarianism in Leith and the delivery of a 12-week Oral history programme (OHP), which this report will focus on.

1.2 - Oral history Programme - Aims and Outcomes

As part of the OHP - aims, activities, outputs and outcomes were developed.

The overall aim of the OHP was to explore the history of sectarianism in Leith with local residents via reminiscence and oral history work.

a.) Develop a 12-week oral history programme – approx. 10-12 participants, running from March – May 2014 (2-hrs per week 1-3pm) based at PDP premises – No.15 Buchanan Street.

b.) Produce an evaluation report of learning achieved, current and future needs identified.

In conducting the OHP the following project outcomes were also identified:
There is greater knowledge, understanding of sectarianism and increased integration of the religious and cultural groups that make up the Leith community.

There will be a greater understanding of the key issues and tensions around intra-Christian sectarianism by people living in Leith.

Partners will have an increased understanding of the sectarian issues that affect Leith.

2.1 Work Undertaken

Throughout the period of October 2013 to the end of May 2014, the anti-sectarianism development worker undertook a variety of work that contributed to the successful planning and delivery of the OHP. This included:

- Undertaking background research and information gathering, including planning and delivering a Christmas feedback recruitment event.
- Attending relevant training events
- Overseeing an excursion to the Citizen Kane exhibition exploring the history of Leith.
- Planning and delivery of the 12 week OHP.
- Evaluation of the OHP.

The project was open to all residents and anyone with a stake in the Leith community however, PDP’s NE Edinburgh Older Men’s Health and Wellbeing Group (50+) was particularly targeted:

- NE Edinburgh Older Men’s Health and Wellbeing Group (50+)

North East Edinburgh Older Men’s Health and Wellbeing Project aims to increase the social integration of older men (50+) in North East Edinburgh, by developing opportunities for older men and by providing activities which promote their mental health and wellbeing. A holistic social model of health is adopted with a focus on older men. The project works inclusively with older men, including recently bereaved, depressed, on low incomes or who may be deemed socially isolated/lonely and ‘hard to reach’.
2.2- Undertaking background research & Information Gathering

Prior to any practical activity being delivered, substantial background research and information gathering was undertaken. This included the anti-sectarianism worker setting aside time to research the topic of sectarianism.

Time was also taken to establish what other organisations were undertaking anti-sectarianism work and in particular if any were Edinburgh based. From this, potential partnering organisations were contacted to gather a feel for the types of work that was being delivered. VAF’s short directory of anti-sectarian projects was used for this task.

During this initial period promotional material was also designed and drafted which included: a Promotional flyer and Participant information sheet – which detailed the aims of the project and how participants could become involved. It also provided some additional information on the link between the project and the wider anti-sectarianism agenda.

In December 2013 a Christmas feedback event was also staged in order to conduct some information gathering and research in relation to the proposed OHP. Moreover, the event provided the participants from the original SCOTTS pilot project with the findings from this initial piece of work. In any piece of community led action research, it is fundamental that the participants involved are provided with feedback. This was achieved through the use of a power point presentation; highlighting the key findings from the work the original participants took part in.
13 participants attended the event, with many of the older men who were involved in the original project, keen to discuss their views on the findings. This resulted in lots of discussion throughout the presentation and was an excellent opportunity to gauge interest in future anti-sectarian activities.

As one older man described having ‘a great wee day today’ it was clear that there was some initial positive interest in the project. Copies of the full SCOTTS report were also made available for participants requesting more detailed feedback. Refreshments and a buffet were also provided, which acted as an extra incentive to attend.

The buffet also allowed positive working relationships, with the participants who attended to be further established. In exploring a complex phenomenon such as sectarianism that can often be challenging, making the participants feel as comfortable as possible in exploring the issue was fundamental. Therefore, by planning and delivering this event prior to the OHP starting, positive working relationships could begin to be established from the offset.

Overall it was agreed during this initial period that by trying to implement as many of the recommendations as possible from the original SCOTTS project, the project specific outcomes could be best achieved. In doing so the needs of the community could also be best addressed.
2.3 Recruitment – Citizen Curator Exhibitions

In February 2014 an excursion to the City Arts Centre to visit the Citizen Kane exhibition on the history of Leith was delivered. This event acted as a recruitment activity, while providing the ideal opportunity to encourage our participants to attend the OHP. Accordingly, time was taken to explain in more detail how the OHP would run and publicity material circulated which included an OHP Promotional flyer and an OHP information sheet.

15 participants attended the City Arts Centre and included men who had taken part in the initial SCOTTS pilot project. Overall all enjoyed the trip, but in particular the older men relished sharing their personal stories and experiences of living in Leith.

This excursion also enabled the participants to sample some of the reminiscence techniques that would subsequently be utilised during the OHP. For example the various art and exhibition pieces on display were fantastic at encouraging the group to reminisce about growing up in the Leith community.

As part of the trip, a tour guide also escorted the group around the exhibition, answering any questions they had. Such focussed engagement with the exhibition helped to prepare the participants for the future OHP sessions, where the use of oral history and reminiscence techniques were actively used and promoted.

2.4 Training

Prior to the OHP starting the anti-sectarianism development worker attended a variety of training and networking opportunities including:

- In October 2013 attending the Action on Sectarianism website launch.
- Attending both Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) networking events and training in evaluation sessions.
- Delivering anti-sectarianism awareness training in collaboration with Youth Scotland to both PDP staff and delivery partners, in house.
Prior to and throughout the OHP being conducted the LASP was also part of the SCDC’s co-inquiry group, which met with 8 anti-sectarianism projects based in individual communities from across Scotland.

These co-inquiry events provided the opportunity for challenges in exploring sectarianism and delivering anti-sectarianism projects to be shared. The co-inquiries were also an opportunity for learning to be shared from across the different projects, examining how sectarianism exists at a community level both in the past and present.

All of the projects also contributed to the blog www.scotlandscommunitypatchwork.org as a way of building a learning resource. 2 of these blog entries – Religion in Leith: Changing attitudes and No Popery in Leith: The Protestant Action Society were based on sessions delivered as part of the OHP.

All of the training activities contributed to the overall promotion of the OHP, enabling potential delivery partners to be targeted with information and positive working relationships to be successfully established. As a result, several of the organisations who attended these events for example Engender and Youth Scotland, subsequently became delivery partners in the OHP.

### 2.5 Partnership Working

In exploring a phenomenon as complex as sectarianism, the LASP recognises the great benefits working in partnership can bring. Through joint working rather than exploring the topic independently, a wider range of skills, resources and support can be utilised. Accordingly, in developing the OHP a wide range of delivery partners were sought to ensure the participants were given as detailed an exploration of the topic as possible.

By drawing on the skills and knowledge from a selection of delivery partners currently undertaking anti-sectarian work, resources and expertise could also be shared on how to tackle the topic more effectively. Organisations who became delivery partners in the OHP included: Living Memories Association, Youth Scotland, City Arts Centre, Scottish Community Development Centre, Engender and X-Change Scotland.

Following establishing partners who had agreed to deliver as part of the OHP, planning meetings were arranged with the majority of organisations taking part. From these meetings, the topic the session would explore and the methodology was
agreed. Session plans were also created giving an overview of how each session was intended to run.

**Delivery**

3.1 **Methodology**

All sessions during the OHP ran for 2 hours (1.00 – 3.00pm) every Thursday for 12 continuous weeks and varied in delivery style, depending on what topic was being covered and who was facilitating.

Sessions were also carefully selected to enable a broad exploration of sectarianism to take place. Importantly, whatever part of the sectarianism debate was being explored, an overarching theme of oral history and reminiscence ran throughout the programme. Topics covered and facilitators delivering included:

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<td>Introduction to oral history programme/ reminiscence work</td>
<td>John McCaughie (Living Memories Association) – <em>Combination of group discussion, showcasing of different reminiscence skills</em></td>
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<td>Introduction to sectarianism</td>
<td>Peter Jonson (Youth Scotland) - <em>Mixture of group activity and presentation from facilitator. Film was also utilised.</em></td>
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<td>People’s history</td>
<td>Danny McShane (PDP) – <em>Primarily discussion led by facilitator, lecture format.</em></td>
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<td>Exploring Leith through objects</td>
<td>Diana Morton (City Arts Centre) – <em>Very interactive, group encouraged to explore objects to promote reminiscence discussion.</em></td>
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<td>Religion in Leith</td>
<td>Robin (Scottish Community Development Centre-SCDC) –</td>
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In order to promote the event an *OHP promotional flyer* and *OHP – information sheet* were circulated around relevant potential volunteers. This was primarily made up of participants already attending pre-existing PDP services.

In total **133** participants attended the OHP over the 12 sessions that were delivered. Interestingly, although the OHP was made up of a core group of the older men who were involved in the initial SCOTTS pilot project, overall the programme ended up being very much intergenerational.

This was clearly highlighted with the oldest member of the group being **94** years old and the youngest **19** years old.
### 3.2 Session Highlights

**Week 1 – Introduction to Oral history programme/ reminiscence work**

This first session of the OHP facilitated by *Living Memories Association*, aimed to provide an introduction to a variety of oral history skills and reminiscence techniques, which the participants subsequently utilised in future sessions, in their exploration of intra-Christian sectarianism in Leith.

This session also provided the opportunity for the filmmaker to be introduced to the group and the aims of creating an anti-sectarianism film introduced. Importantly, ground rules were also established in this session, establishing the setting and conditions for the group to learn in a safe and respectful way.

The techniques explored in this session included: pictures, film, objects, memorabilia and recorded audio which all encouraged the participants to think about their experiences of living in Leith.

Throughout the session participants were instructed to partner up, primarily in intergenerational and mixed sex groups, in order to reminisce over the various photos and objects that were distributed.
This exercise was excellent at encouraging in particular, the older participants to recall stories of growing up in Leith. It also created a relaxed and open atmosphere, as one elderly man noted ‘it’s good that everyone was so open’. It also highlighted how reminiscence work can go in many different directions. For example, for one group, a picture of a classroom resulted in discussion about territorialism in Leith. With one younger member explaining to his older group partner, ‘even now it’s a very territorial place to live in’.

This session also ensured that the group were well aware that they would be exploring the topic of sectarianism in forthcoming sessions; positively they were more than happy to do so, with initial feedback being very promising, ‘More people need to know about this group.’

Interestingly, although this session did not set out to explicitly discuss intra-Christian sectarianism, the group raised the topic themselves. For example one participant from Ross County in the North of Scotland highlighted the influence of The United Free Church of Scotland in daily life, particularly for women, ‘If you were even seen smoking and you were a woman it was really frowned on’.

The perception of this Church organisation as controversial was also stated by one local resident, ‘The Wee Frees were a sect of the Protestant Church who were as wrong and narrow minded in their focus as the Taliban today’. Following this discussion, there was also dialogue on intra-Christian tensions in the local community in the past with one older member stating:

‘There was a time in the 30s and 40s when being Catholic/Protestant was sort of completely opposite to each other, they were very, very belligerent to each other as well.’

These conversations clearly highlight how comfortable the group felt in discussing what can often be a very sensitive topic.

One feature that could have been improved in this session however was more detailed discussion focussing on how the oral history skills and techniques that would be utilised in future sessions.

With the aim of this session being principally to educate the group on the use of oral history skills and techniques, it was not essential for sectarianism themes to be discussed. Although it was a fantastic bonus to have themes of intra-Christian sectarianism shared, more explicit discussion on the use of the oral history techniques, would have better prepared the participants for future sessions.
Week 2 – Introduction to sectarianism

This session facilitated by Youth Scotland introduced the topic of sectarianism and provided the participants with a range of engaging activities that really helped them to define sectarianism on their own terms.

These activities included a mixture of discussion topics and interactive games used by Youth Scotland to train youth workers in exploring the topic of sectarianism with young people. This session also made excellent use of film in order to further explore the topic, particularly from the perspective of young people.

The session also provided the participants with an overview of the current Scottish Government definition of sectarianism and anti-sectarianism agenda. It also asked ‘What does sectarianism mean to you?’

By instructing the group to think about this a baseline understanding of what the term can mean to individuals was captured. The initial recorded feedback could also be contrasted with ideas on the definition of sectarianism obtained in later sessions.

Examples of ideas gathered from looking at the definition of sectarianism included: ‘Sticking to your own groups’, ‘You can substitute sectarianism for tribalism’, ‘People and their beliefs’, and ‘Discrimination in the workplace’.

Ideas on the definition were also not entirely centred on intra-Christian sectarianism, as one older member highlighted:

‘Historically, not just with Christianity, people have used their religious beliefs to manipulate things for their own end. A classic example of this currently is in the Middle East.’

In order to keep the group engaged this session utilised a variety of games, discussion activities and film to explore what sectarianism means. This approach was very well received by the group as one participant noted, ‘the workshop was very informative’.

The Bob the Bigot activity also worked really well in making the older men and younger members of the group aware that across generations, people have all experienced sectarianism to some degree and everyone can relate to sectarian language.

Many of the older people did not realise that many young people are still affected by sectarian issues in much the same way they were, when they were young. Additionally, they were also surprised to discover how much of the language the young people used in the videos, was still used when they were young:

‘The word Hun was used obviously to indicate he was a Protestant.’
There was also some good discussion today on the impact of social media and the films Peter showed, provided some great examples of how young people may become victims or commit sectarian acts online. This was very pertinent considering the current focus by the Scottish Government on trying to challenge sectarian abuse online.

This session also positively continued to highlight fascinating example themes of intra-Christian sectarianism. Most profound was one older participant’s discussion on the Protestant Action Society (PAS), a militant anti-Catholic group lead by John Cormack, who would often hold public meetings in Leith, ‘There was one man called John Cormack and he used to hold anti-Catholic meetings and that happened on a regular basis.’ Surprisingly from this conversation another older participant disclosed his family connection with the PAS, with no prompting, highlighting his openness to engage in the debate:

‘My mother was a member of the Protestant Action Society, she wore an Orange sash.’

The unexpected sharing of this fascinating story led to discussion across the whole group about what is very much a hidden part of Leith’s history. Although the majority of older members had at least heard of the PAS, to most of the younger members this was a revelation, ‘I haven’t heard of the Protestant Action Society before’.
This conversation also led one younger participant to question the older participant in regards to his mother:

‘When you married your first wife, would it mattered to your mum if she was Catholic or Protestant?’

‘If she had been Catholic, she would have said that’s not for you’.

This reply clearly highlights an example of the level of anti-Catholic sentiment that would have existed in Leith at this time. Sadly due to limited time in this session, the PAS conversation had to be drawn to a close early.

The level of engagement shown by the group however did provide a great indicator of their interest in exploring the PAS further. Consequently, the group were very pleased to hear that the 5th OHP session would be looking at ‘Religion in Leith’ and would include a substantial focus on the PAS.

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### Week 3 – People’s history

This session helped to fill the gap left from the first session by going into more detail of how history skills can be utilised to explore a topic such as sectarianism.

Importantly, it gave the participants improved confidence in the skills and knowledge in acting like an historian by focussing on the following key questions: ‘What is history?’, ‘What resources does a historian need?’, ‘What critical questions does a historian need to ask?’, and ‘What role does history play in a community?’

This session was primarily delivered in a lecture style with lots of additional reading material provided. Some members of the group appreciated this delivery style although it must be noted, others did prefer a more discussion and group based approach.
The facilitator who delivered this session also emphasised how the participants could utilise these skills in future sessions. This was very important, as this emphasis was somewhat missed in the first session.

It was clear from this session that many members of the group already had a strong grasp of the techniques and skills required to be a historian. It was particularly apparent to see that the group also has a strong understanding of the benefits that studying history can bring:

'We can look back at immediate or even ancient history and realise we are sleep walking into the same situation.'

'Personal learning from family.'

This was highlighted from both younger and older members of the group. The group also took a keen interest in discussing primary/secondary and qualitative/quantitative types of evidence.

One older participant shared their story of how they did not follow in their father’s career; this was very unusual at the time. This encouraged younger members of the group to explain that very few young people nowadays follow the same career path as their parents.

There was also some interesting debate around economics and jobs with all members of the group sharing their experiences. One participant also highlighted the impact of religion in daily life, in the past. This was particularly in regards to the influence the church previously had on the economy, for example all shops closed on Sundays.
There was also very positive chat at the end of this session, about the contribution the OHP could make to the wider anti-sectarianism debate, ‘A guide for current problems' and 'From older generations you can have a live, living history book'.

With the older men in particular being very keen to offer their stories and experiences. The focus on how anyone can become a historian really supported this, and helped to improve both the confidence and self-esteem of the participants.

**Week 4 – Exploring Leith through objects**

This interactive session facilitated by the City Arts Centre consisted of showing various historic items and pieces of memorabilia that had a connection with Leith, in order to promote reminiscence discussion.

Using this approach encouraged a lot of reminiscing, particularly from the older members of the group and the wide range of objects and memorabilia shared stimulated discussion on a wide range of topics.

As one participant described the session as being, ‘*interesting and good for thinking about numerous topics*’. One older member, who explained, ‘*coming here and meeting people and talking about the past has really helped*’, also underlined the benefits of using reminiscence work in this session.

A wide exploration of sectarianism in Leith was able to take place, as although objects that were explicitly linked to intra-Christian sectarianism were not shown; unexpected conversations that were linked to this theme arose.

For example when sharing clothing and objects connected with the Fishwives of Newhaven, one participant explained how religion played a significant role for the fishwives, in that they typically sang in a choir.

Interestingly, whether they were Catholic or Protestant was not significant, rather they all sang together. This participant also explained that the fishwives often sang Dutch folk songs with their origins in the Presbyterian Church.

The gender role of the fishwives at the time was also highlighted, with them not being seen as womanly. Due to the long working hours they also were seen to have difficulties in looking after their children.

Another positive feature of this session was that several of the participants also requested print outs of the mind maps (see 3.3 Evaluation & Monitoring).
Although this session was very engaging it did have a feel that it was perhaps at times more of a gathering, than an actual structured workshop. This was due to many of the participants at times talking over one another.

The passing round of the objects was also arbitrary and there was very little structure in regards to what types of objects were shown. By sharing objects with direct links to sectarianism, more explicit discussion of intra-Christian sectarianism may also have taken place.

Additional planning time in future in regards to what is being shown could help to improve this session and focus the discussion on intra-Christian sectarianism.

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**Week 5 – Religion in Leith**

This session was the first to explicitly begin to ask questions in relation to intra-Christian sectarianism in Leith. This was achieved through a combination of a power point presentation, which included a quiz on Churches and ex-Churches in Leith and discussion based activities.

The overall engagement of all participants in exploring the activities and questions they were asked was great to see in this session. The quality of responses also provided a very rich picture of intra-Christian sectarianism in Leith, with lots of unplanned learning taking place.
A very mixed group of participants also attended and even included 2 practitioners who had previously delivered as part of the OHP, a theme which would continue throughout the remaining sessions and a concept we would like to term as *Equal partner co-production* (see 4.2 unanticipated outcomes). The range of activities and the church quiz used also helped to keep the entire group engaged. Moreover, the activity focussing on the Protestant Action Society was a topic that the group found very interesting.

In regards to discussing religion in the past in Leith, there was overwhelming agreement from the older participants that Christianity played a bigger role in all aspects of life. Although much of this was viewed as negative, positively the group also highlighted the positive aspects of community that religion brought to daily life:

‘*The church controlled your life in every aspect and every aspect of...that was when I was young, yeah the church was all powerful and if you were a non-conformist then...I’m talking about the 50’s.*’

‘The church was all powerful’.

‘*For me it wasn’t all powerful...it was the social aspect and school trips and things but you saw it as more of a fun thing*’.
'There was a positive side, for those who could accept these ways, it was a family thing. You were a member of a large extended family which would protect you in times of need because we didn’t have the kind of social set up that we have today. So by not being in that family way you risked exclusion’.

One participant also highlighted the influence the Church played previously in family life, by recalling the story of when the local priest paid their house a visit. This was to see his sister who had married outside the Church, in a local registry office. This was due to her husband being in the Navy and them needing to get married quickly. The priest’s take on this however was that it was a sin, and he did not hold back in telling her she was living her life a sinful way.

Several members of the group had also not heard of the Protestant Action Society and found this very interesting. This led on to some interesting discussion on the topic of the PAS and the Orange Order:

‘Well my mum was a member of the orange order and she used to go to their meetings but it never affected me…it was just something that she had time to do, although our family there were 6 brothers and 2 sisters but she still found time to go to these meetings with Cormack…no he (my father) didn’t bother’.

Posing the question of whether another PAS group could be established also stimulated lots of discussion on inequality and challenges the working poor have to deal with. Several members of the group also commented on UKIP and how this political party is already mirroring many of the controversial views the PAS held.

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**Week 6 – The Troubles of Northern Ireland**

Prior to this session taking place there was lots of interest, and the final turn out of 14 participants clearly showed that the topic of the Troubles in Northern Ireland was one that interested a lot of people.

This session also attracted participants with both substantial and no prior knowledge of the topic:

‘I learned not a lot more than I already knew, but I have a keen interest in NI.’

‘Most info was new as never really explored the Troubles before.’

Primarily delivered through the use of a PowerPoint with the facilitator taking a more lecture-based form of delivery, this session disseminated a lot of information.
This included providing brief highlights of the key events throughout the Troubles.

This session also provided a platform for personal accounts of the Troubles to be shared. For example an interesting link with the previous week was also shared in this session with one participant emphasising that during the troubles the Catholic Church discouraged mixed marriages. This unfavourable outlook on mixed marriages resonated strongly, with one participant’s experience of his sister marrying outside the Catholic Church in Leith.

One participant also shared their story of how they were nearly injured during an IRA nail bombing in London. They emphasised that it was taking too long to finish their drink which stopped them being caught when the bomb went off. Describing the horror of the bombing they explained:

‘One man’s face was like a bowl of spaghetti with the blood dripping down his face’.

This personal story highlights the impact that the Troubles have had directly on a local Leith resident.

The facilitator’s presentation style and the use of academic material to put across many of the points did not work well for everyone. Although it must be noted that many in the group reacted well to this delivery, and a few participants in particular relished the thought provoking debate and hand out material. Several of these participants also requested a bibliography and recommendations for further reading. Exploring such a complicated period of history in such a short space of time was also challenging. This meant that staff had to support several participants with no or limited knowledge of the topic, in order for them to grasp what was being discussed.
**Week 7 – Recording memories of Leith**

This session halfway through the programme provided an opportunity for the group to have some reflective time in order to record their memories of Leith. This included allowing the participants the chance to try out using digital recorders.

It also allowed the group to discuss what they had learned from the programme so far, while providing some dedicated time to begin discussing how they wanted the anti-sectarianism film to be produced.

This session asked the following questions: ‘*Where about in Leith did you grow up? If you didn’t grow up in Leith what is your connection?*, ‘*What is your most unusual Leith memory?*, ‘*Leith is often seen as a place with many cultures – do you have any memories which back this up?*, ‘*Leith and sectarianism. What comes to mind when you hear these two words together?*

Participants were also encouraged to bring along an object that they felt represented their connection to the Leith community. Interestingly, one Northern Irish participant brought an old book on the history of Irish-Anglo connections.

![Old book on Irish-Anglo connections](image)

In addition to this, another participant brought along his membership book for when he was part of the Masonic Lodge, something he was very proud of.

Although numbers in this session were reduced significantly from previous sessions, the reduction in participants actually made for a more relaxing session. With previous sessions having been primarily lead by the facilitator it was good to see the participants take more ownership of the discussion throughout. Furthermore, the smaller group size also enabled some of the quieter members of the group to have the confidence to contribute.
The questions posed in this session led to many interesting conversations, including lots of discussion on different cultures.

For example there was some interesting debate about the Jewish community in Leith, with one participant asking the question, ‘Is there a Jewish synagogue in Leith?’ This was supplemented with conversation on both the Muslim and Sikh community in Leith.

Interestingly the group spoke very favourably of the Sikh community. This was juxtaposed against a negative view of the Muslim community by several of the older participants, with one stating that Muslim culture ‘was shoved down your throat’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 8 – Football and sectarianism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This Football and Sectarianism session co-delivered by SCDC and LASP was delivered as a presentation, with additional group work activities. There was also a quiz element in this session that worked really well, with the participants being asked to guess the names of famous players and teams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importantly, rather than simply discuss football and sectarianism within the narrow focus of the Celtic and Rangers old firm rivalry; football in Edinburgh was explored alongside the heritage of both Hibs and Hearts football clubs. The focus on heritage in this session emphasised how football only plays part of the role, in understanding the complex phenomena that is sectarianism and led to lots of interesting learning taking place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A key piece of learning that arose today was when one participant emphasised that it was not only Protestant Irish soldiers who had died in WWI, but in fact many Catholic soldiers also perished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As one participant highlighted ‘10,000s from both nations died’. This surprised many members of the group and was particularly pertinent when we were discussing Hearts and their new strip to commemorate the McCrae’s battalion. This also led on to an interesting discussion on football in Northern Ireland and the issues that exist between Protestant and Catholic clubs there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today also offered a great opportunity to discuss the histories of both Hibs and Hearts. Surprisingly there were several participants who had not heard of the McCrae’s battalion and their connection with Hearts. Many of the older participants also had less knowledge on this subject than what was expected:</td>
</tr>
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</table>

‘Hibs Catholic culture, McCrae’s Battalion. Interesting to see the comparison between the IRA and the McCrae’s battalion.’
In discussing the history of Hibs the majority of the group were aware that the team was founded by the Catholic Young Men’s Society who were based at St Patrick’s Church in Leith. This lead on to an interesting discussion by one participant who highlighted the existence of the St Mary’s Star of The Sea social club. The group were also keen to highlight the role Hibs played in helping establish Celtic.

There was agreement today that although sectarianism may exist between Hearts and Celtic, sectarian issues between Hibs and Hearts are few and far between. Several participants shared their individual experiences of how venomous the atmosphere at matches between Hearts and Celtic.

Overall there was also an agreement that the rivalry between Hibs and Hearts was grounded much more in football rather than sectarian divide. Due to a lack of Rangers currently in the league it was more difficult to comment on how the participants viewed relations between Hearts and Rangers and Hibs and Rangers.

In discussing the Irish/Catholic heritage of Hibs and British/Protestant heritage of Hearts, the group was undecided today on whether these heritages should be readily promoted.

There was also disagreement to the extent these heritages exist, as one participant stated ‘[Hibs] Irish heritage associations are nothing to do with religion’. This participant took the view that although Irish Catholics founded Hibs, they have never retained any religious element. Several Hearts fans in the group who believe that Hearts have retained some of their Protestant heritage juxtaposed this.

The agreement however on whether Hearts should have a promoted Protestant heritage was mixed. One participant in particular had mixed feelings on the recent strip dedicated to the McCrae’s battalion.

On one side it commemorated thousands of young men who had died; yet it also reminded him of how thousands of men were recruited into a war perhaps unaware of what they were getting themselves in for. Overall however Hearts fans even if they had mixed feelings about the war and McCrae’s battalion, they felt commemorating the event was impressive.

One aspect which was a bit disappointing in this session however was many of the participants did not regularly attend football matches. Fewer participants than expected also had a strong knowledge of Scottish football and the teams that were discussed today. Accordingly, delivering this session to current groups of fans as a focus group could work really well.
Week 9 – Sectarianism in film

This session encouraged discussion on the topic of sectarianism through the use of various films containing themes of sectarianism. Films which were shown included:

‘Just Another Saturday’ – Set on the day of the Glasgow Orange Walk, this feature length film play tells the story of a young man who is the baton twirling parade leader, who in the course of the film gradually comes to terms with the unpleasant and violent truth behind the marching and symbolic pageantry.

‘Ae Fond Kiss’ – This film tells the story of a romance between Casim, a second generation Scottish Pakistani man who works as a DJ, and Roisin, a Catholic women who is a teacher at his younger sister’s school. The story focuses on how their families and communities react to their relationship.

‘Just a Boys Game’ – The plot revolves around the life of Jake McQuillan who lives in the shadow of his dying grandfather, who used to be Greenock’s hardest man.

The following questions were also asked:

1) What themes can be found? Is there anything happening which you would describe as sectarian?

2) Can you link anything in the clip to your own experiences of Leith and sectarianism in Leith?

3) Is there anything which links with topics we have covered throughout the Thursday Oral History Group?

As a medium the choice of film was fantastic at engaging all of the participants in this session. From the particularly high attendance of 16, this session also highlighted how popular film was in persuading people to attend.

One younger participant was also able to relate to footage in ‘Just another Saturday’ when the lead protagonist in the film is threatened by a Catholic for being a Protestant and being part of the Orange walk. For this participant he could link being threatened for a belief to his own experience of being threatened for belonging to a perceived group. This also led on to some discussion on mixed pubs in Glasgow where both Catholic’s and Protestant’s would attend.

One older participant was also very keen to highlight his understanding of the Orange order, sharing his historical analysis, as he noted ‘The Orange Order is the latest theme of Oliver Cromwell’s capture of Ireland’. Moreover:

‘It’s a closed circle and that’s the whole problem with the Orange Order. It’s a closed circle
and always has been since the 1600s and they don’t want to change because they see no alternative. Nothing been shown to them that would benefit them if they gave it up’.

Another participant was also keen to share his views on how he could relate what he seen in the clip, to his own experiences of sectarianism in Leith. Interestingly this did not centre on intra-Christian sectarianism; but instead focussed on the immigration of predominantly South-East Asian migrants and resources they had for purchasing property in the local community:

‘We have a group of shops and various businesses that have all been opened by one family group, from the sub continent of India. Ordinary business people do not seem to be getting the same opportunity’.

‘Now they are talking our Church. It was never even offered for sale. It was simply given to this group of people’.

When challenged on if this was sectarianism it was clear this group had some disagreement in agreeing on a definition. What was apparent however was that many members of the group felt that sectarianism was wider than the intra-Christian focus being taken by the Scottish Government.

Conversely, another group in discussing the first 2 clips took a different view of what they thought was represented. This included a sense over community spirit and people of all ages taking part in the Orange walk. One participant from this group also commented on the music being played ‘I recognised a few tunes that they played, people always said they had the best tunes’.

This lead on to a discussion on the appropriateness of singing these songs. One older participant was also surprised to see the amount of drinking taking place in the first clip. This group also discussed what the pubs were like during this time, being places very much solely for drinking and primarily for men, ‘The woman weren’t allowed in the main bar’.

With the first 2 film clips having explicit themes of sectarianism it was very easy for all the groups to engage in discussion. Following watching the final clip however, all the participants initially had difficulty in relating to the topic as it did not have explicit themes.

For future sessions aiming to maintain an intra-Christian sectarianism focus, film clips with more of a distinctive sectarian theme perhaps could work better.

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**Week 10 – Gender and sectarianism**

This session delivered by Engender was particularly relevant as it explored how sectarianism affects men and women in different ways. Furthermore, it provided a platform to encourage more female participants to attend. Importantly, Emma who facilitated the session was also keen to highlight the complexity of sectarianism. She also underlined how little research had
been conducted into exploring the role gender plays in sectarianism.

The improved number of females participating in this session also helped to give a better balance to the group discussions, with previous sessions having a male majority. Utilising a combination of PowerPoint presentation and discussion based activities; the group were asked the following key questions: ‘How have things changed for women and men in Leith during your lifetimes?’ and ‘How does sectarianism manifest itself in Leith? Has this changed over time?’

These discussion tasks encouraged some productive debate and overall the participants were very keen to share their views. In discussing how the role of women and men has changed in Leith, there was a clear agreement from many of the older participants of the hard work that women previously did:

‘I know that women during the 30s used to get up early in the morning at 6 o’clock and go to the wash house.’

This stimulated lots of discussion about working life in the past and also the role of ‘Steamies’. These traditional communal wash houses provided some interesting stories from several of the older participants, who were keen to highlight the social function they served:

‘Life was completely different back then because when you had your steamies, not only were they social networks, they were family networks as well’.

‘They were the social glue of communities, they held people together.’

In addition to exploring the role of women in the workplace, this session also raised points about other aspects of society in which the experience for women in Leith would have been different.

As one older participant highlighted, women could also have different experiences when socialising, ‘Women would be isolated in a small, what you call a jug bar’. Not being allowed in male only pubs, meant women had to drink in alternative venues.

Although this session had an overall theme of gender, there was lots of variety in many of the topics that were raised and discussed. One participant for example spoke passionately about their extreme anger with what they deemed ‘hidden organisations’ such as the Freemasons and membership of other hidden networks.

This debate raised some interesting discussions on how we tackle these organisations and also how women can be part of hidden organisations such as the Eastern Star.

‘What you call the Orange Order, where they also have women’s sections in the Orange Order you tend to find they are made up of more working class people remaining in them, even though they are gradually running out. The more affluent people get, the more communities start breaking down.’
In the final part of this session, the participants were asked how they would go about challenging sectarianism in their local community. Ideas that were offered by the group included:

'I will try to tell people we are all together, Leithers and Scots, not separate groups.’

'We need to spread out knowledge more widely’

**Week 11 – Picture building evaluation**

This penultimate session was really engaging and got all the participants focussed on discussing what they felt were the key issues of sectarianism; sharing objects which helped them link ideas with the programme and provided feedback on what they felt had worked and not worked so well.

The picture building activity was also very engaging and enabled the participants to capture visually what they felt were the key issues of sectarianism.
With no filming taking place this week, there was much more space than previous weeks to get the groups around the tables and involved in the picture building activities. Importantly, this session also provided an evaluation of the participants’ understanding of both intra-Christian sectarianism and also their feedback on how the OHP was delivered.

As part of the picture building methodology, the participants were also encouraged to bring along objects that helped to convey what they had learned from attending the OHP. Handouts of all the mind maps from each session were also distributed to remind all the participants of what had been covered in each session (see 3.3 Evaluation & Monitoring – for more detailed discussion on mind maps).

One participant brought a photograph of himself as a marine, this lead on to discussion of his reasons for joining ‘it was 14 shillings a week, a good wage at that time’. This participant also brought along his lodge book he received when he joined the Masons in the 1960s. His reasons for joining were that he had 5 brothers who had joined previously and they encouraged him to join too.

This was the first time this participant had revealed that he was also part of the Masonic Lodge, which was fascinating to hear about. This participant also underlined that he felt there was lots of misconceptions of the Masons.

One participant also brought along a photo of his parents that he linked with the notion of religious difference. Again recalling the story of how his sister married outside of the
church, this participant highlighted how it was his mother who as a convert to Catholicism, was blamed for this taking place.

He also underlined how his father was Catholic, yet his mother was always a better Catholic than he ever was. Another participant also linked this scenario to many of the themes highlighted in the film *Ae Fond Kiss* that was shown during the *Sectarianism and Film* session.

The number and variety of objects that the participants brought with them to this session was fantastic to see. This was clearly something that they enjoyed and it added a lot of richness to the discussions. There was also lots of great links made between the objects they brought and the individual sessions delivered.

For example one participant brought a book on Dave McKay and a cassette of Ulster songs, which he linked with our previous sessions on *Sectarianism and Football* and *The Troubles in Northern Ireland*. The sharing of the Ulster songs also helped one participant to recall his memories of being stationed in Northern Ireland in the war and hearing similar songs.

This session was particularly useful for gathering participant feedback on how the OHP had been over the previous 11 weeks. Key positives that came out of the discussion were that all of the participants particularly enjoyed the welcoming atmosphere and everyone getting together:

‘*Informality and openness – making it easy to contribute*’

‘*Nice, relaxed and comfortable.*’

‘*Interesting and the ideas and conversations were good, was interesting being able to relate my life growing up to the topic.*’

The group also positively felt the facilitators all knew what they were talking about in each session.

For areas where the group thought things could have been improved, they felt additional input from John from *Living Memories Association* would have been good. They also would have liked dedicated sessions on music and other media.

It would have been useful to feedback at the end, what the 2 different groups had covered. Timing was restrictive however in this session due to starting slightly later and also the fact that the group ran slightly over.

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**Week 12 – Make sectarianism – A History Lesson – Poster writing workshop**

The final session in the OHP was delivered by X-change Scotland and drew on the Loesji
As part of this workshop the participants were asked to complete a tree mapping exercise by answering the following questions in small groups, before feeding back: ‘What does sectarianism look like?’, ‘Where does sectarianism come from?’ and ‘What keeps sectarianism alive?’. Positively all the participants reacted well to the questions and were happy to answer them.

Planning meetings prior to today’s session taking place suggested that the participants would have full involvement in designing their own posters. Moreover, it was hoped that these posters could also be used as an evaluation tool, helping to catalogue each individual participant’s views and understanding of sectarianism.

What happened in reality however was a group discussion took place on a number of questions with the answers being placed on a central piece of flip chart. The ideas gathered from this exercise were then taken away for the posters to be drafted up by the X-change Scotland staff. This approach missed a great opportunity to be more participatory and also to try a creative method of evaluating.

Perhaps more information and clearer explanation of the Loesje poster writing method may have resolved any misunderstanding. Furthermore, there was also no real explanation of what the Loesje poster writing method entailed with the participants.

Some discussion of the background and process of this would have also improved the participatory function of the session significantly.

3.3 Evaluation & Monitoring

A wide range of evaluation tools were used to ensure that all learning was captured throughout the programme. This included all sessions being evaluated informally through staff discussion and staff evaluations being written up following each session. In addition to this, photos were also taken from all the sessions delivered, and audio recordings made through the use of a digital recorder, capturing any learning-taking place. In regards to monitoring, weekly attendance sheets were also taken.

The final session of the OHP also provided a dedicated evaluation session, evaluating both the participant’s understanding of sectarianism in Leith and also their views on
how the programme had been delivered. As the session 11 highlights in this report underline, this was achieved primarily through the picture building methodology.

A vital part of the evaluation process was also the post programme evaluation period. With 12 weeks of activity and the majority of sessions recorded digitally, there was a huge amount of learning to be analysed. A particular challenge during this process was picking out the learning that linked directly with intra-Christian sectarianism and the agreed outcomes.

The feedback from the participants was also used to create mind maps for each session, highlighting the key points covered. At the start of each session the mind map from the previous week was shown, enabling the participants to recap what they had covered in the last session.

Putting up the mind maps each week also allowed any new participants who joined the group throughout the duration of the OHP, to gain an understanding of what had been covered in previous sessions.

This was very important for the running of the group as a whole, as although there were a number of key participants who attended each week, there were also a large number of participants who simply hand picked a session(s), which took their interest. Accordingly, it was important there was a system in place that would help keep new members to the group updated on learning that had already taken place.
The feedback on this evaluative method was overall fantastic, as one participant highlighted ‘the mind maps are really good’. Several of the participants also requested hand-outs of the mind maps, which were distributed in the penultimate ‘Picture building evaluation’ session of the OHP.

This session also utilised the picture building methodology in order to capture what the participants felt were the key issues of sectarianism. The participants were also encouraged to bring an object that they felt represented some of the stories or experiences they had shared while attending the OHP.

Throughout the course of the programme many of the sessions were also filmed. These clips provide some excellent footage of the group running and help provide a flavour of what the sessions were like.

The co-inquiry sessions that the anti-sectarianism development worker attended also significantly aided the evaluation process. With the LASP being staffed by only one part time worker and being the only grass-roots organisation delivering anti-sectarianism work in Edinburgh, having the opportunity to meet and share ideas with other organisations conducting similar work was a valuable asset.

**Key Findings/Themes**

4.1 Key Findings/Themes

Over the course of the 12 – week Oral history programme a huge amount of learning was shared in relation to the impact of intra-Christian sectarianism in Leith, both in the past, and how it is viewed currently. Key findings from the OHP included:

- The importance of creating an exciting programme and taking a wide approach in exploring the topic of sectarianism was fundamental. This ensured the participants were engaged throughout the programme and also helped to draw out any intra-Christian sectarianism specific pieces of learning. The overarching theme of oral history also acted as an incentive for many participants to join the group, highlighting that the OHP was more than simply a group that met to discuss sectarianism.

- The participatory approach taken in designing and delivering the OHP contributed significantly to its success. This was achieved through implementing the recommendations that the participants from the SCOTTs...
pilot project had made, primarily that they would like to explore the history of sectarianism in Leith through the use of oral history and reminiscence work.

- The *equal partner co-production* approach taken ensured that both participant and facilitator were equal in exploring the topic. In a debate that has previously been top down, this feature helped to promote a strong grass roots ethos. This in turn empowered the participants to value their own understanding of sectarianism and feel confident in sharing their experiences of intra-Christian sectarianism.

- Over the 12 weeks it was clear that whatever each participant’s views and understanding of sectarianism was, the majority were keen to become involved in the debate. This is very promising for any future pieces of work that may be undertaken and highlights willingness for local Leith residents to engage with the topic.

- In exploring Leith in the past it is clear sectarian issues were far more prevalent than in present day.

- Being locally based helped significantly in attracting local residents to engage with the OHP. Moreover, PDP having already established and regular groups provided a steady number of keen volunteers.

- Overall the OHP had a positive impact on all participants who attended. In particular however, the older participants whom the idea for the project had stemmed from benefited particularly well. With social isolation being a serious issue for many of the older men, ‘I’ve been on my own now for almost 6 years now, I find that hard’, having a safe space to come along to, where they could share their experiences and knowledge was fantastic for improving both self-confidence and esteem.

Although each individual session had its own unique pieces of learning and knowledge shared, a number of key themes emerged throughout the duration of the programme. These themes also often overlapped, highlighting the complexity of sectarianism as a phenomenon. These themes included:

- **Religion**

  Throughout the duration of the programme religion was a theme that unsurprisingly arose, although interestingly this was not always in the mould of intra-Christian sectarianism. In discussing religious difference one participant also highlighted how it occurs in many different places ‘it comes up everywhere in my opinion’ ‘giving
examples of politics, football and gender to name a few. Most profoundly for the majority of older participants who attended, they were keen to emphasise the influence the Church had in the past on all aspects of daily life. As one participant noted, “The church in those days and probably up to the 50s and right up until the 90s, ruled the country”. Moreover, over the duration of the OHP, the acceptance of intra-Christian sectarianism in the past as an issue was unanimous:

“It was quite a serious thing then religion, Catholics and Protestants.”

“I remember the 30s as well and it was very much different then as much as Catholics and Protestants just didn’t mix particularly well.”

“My family broke away from the Church for one reason, in the matter of fact my sister married in the register office. During the war her husband was in the forces and they got married and then the priest came up to the house and said she wasn’t married in the eyes of God and that she was living in sin and things like that’.

- Defining sectarianism

From the initial sessions, through to the end of the OHP, defining sectarianism was a prominent discussion point. Regardless of each individual participant’s definition of the term however, two themes were apparent. The complexity of sectarianism; and the acceptance that it exists out with the intra-Christian sectarianism debate:

‘Sectarianism is very complicated.’

‘There’s a lot of different things that fall under sectarianism’

‘Sectarianism comes under different cultures as well.’

The perception of defining sectarianism being a complex process was also one that was only heightened as the participants explored more of the debate. Accordingly, as each week went on and new topics of the debate were introduced, new ideas on it’s meaning were contributed.

The variety of definitions and complexity in defining the term clearly highlights how sectarianism can impact differently on individual communities. Importantly, for the participants who attended the OHP, it was not solely focussed on intra-Christian sectarianism. With Leith’s history of immigration and the high population within Leith of people from differing backgrounds and religions this does not come as a surprise.

Agreement on whether it remains an issue in Leith was also contested in the group.
'Just because you don’t see it, doesn’t mean it doesn’t happen. It’s like mental health, just because you can’t see it, doesn’t mean someone doesn’t have it.’

Although consensus was strong in agreeing that intra-Christian sectarianism was a significant issue in the past, over the course of the OHP the group could not decide on whether it remains a current issue or not, ‘Sectarianism is less prevalent than in the past’

‘Sectarianism is actually located in a historic context’.

For several who did not view it as a current issue one major influencing factor was the impact of war, 'Things changed after the war as much as things didn’t seem to be as prevalent. In the East anyway’.

- Politics

Over the course of the OHP, one feature that became apparent to staff was the clear interest that all the participants had in politics. This arose both explicitly and unintentionally and was made up of discussion on both local and national politics.

In regards to local politics this included debate ranging from the PAS right through to current local issues and concerns. It was clear even for the participants who were initially unaware of their political awareness that many of the issues they were discussing were politically charged.

For participants who lacked the awareness of their political voice, it was clear the OHP provided a platform for them to begin to become engaged.

- Multiculturalism of Leith

The multiculturalism of Leith was a theme that was regularly raised throughout the duration of the programme. Overall this was mainly in a positive sense, with the vast majority of the participants speaking favourably of the multiculturalism that exists in Leith.

It must be noted however alongside this viewpoint there were negative views. One participant in particular stated that Muslim culture was ‘shoved down your throat’.

Interestingly, in order to be a Leither, the participants highlighted that you did not have to be born in the Leith community, it could be something which you became later in life.
For many of the older participant’s however, what actually constituted as the boundaries of Leith was very defined.

Linked in with much of the discussion on the multiculturalism of Leith was also what constitutes a Leither. For the majority of participants who attended the group, even if they did not live in Leith, they often described themselves using the moniker ‘Leither’.

This way of describing someone with a stake in the local community was viewed by the majority in the group as a positive achievement. It also came up frequently when discussing the gentrification of Leith.

- Schooling

Throughout the OHP the topic of schooling was discussed and led to many interesting debates about the impact of denominational schooling. Central to this debate was the juxtaposition of denominational Catholic schools and non-denominational schooling.

This was often in the form of shared experiences from older members of the group who had attended Catholic schools, as one participant noted, ‘I went to a Catholic school until I was 12, my family fell out with the Catholics at that time and I went to a Protestant secondary.’ Interestingly, this participant described attending a Catholic primary school, yet rather than saying denominational secondary he says ‘Protestant secondary’.

Discussion on schooling also helped to underline how anti-Irish sentiment could arise in the playground. As one older participant described his time at school:

‘Wee silly things like on Saint Patrick’s Day people used to go around with a lump of paper, and they would be walking around saying to ye Scot’s or Irish? If you said Irish you got battered with paper.’

Note this behaviour although viewed as jovial, clearly underlines how normalised anti-Irish sentiment and perceived Catholicism could become. It also highlights how sectarian behaviours could manifest in non-denominational schools. Regardless of how light hearted the game may have intended to be, it is not difficult to understand how this may have affected Catholic pupils who attended this school.
• **Gender**

Although this theme was primarily and explicitly explored in gender and sectarianism session delivered by Engender, it was a theme that arose sporadically across the OHP.

This was often in relation to the social differences which existed for men and women in the past. As a result, many of the older participants shared stories of the various places in which women either couldn’t drink or had limited access.

For example in the presence of jug bars in Leith was mentioned frequently. Moreover, in the 1960s the prevalence of lounge bars was also shared on several occasions. Overall from both these examples there was a consensus that women’s experience was different from men, ‘you couldn’t take your girlfriend into the main bar.’

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**4.2 – Challenges**

Throughout the running of the OHP a number of challenges arose. These included:

• **Understanding intra-Christian sectarianism in Leith post-1990**

Although not primarily an older people’s group, the OHP was made up of a core of older men who had taken part in the initial SCOTTS project. In regards to exploring the history of intra-Christian sectarianism in Leith, this naturally had great benefits, as many of the older participants were able to comment about aspects of Leith’s history that younger members simply could not.

Moreover, their enthusiasm for sharing personal stories and experiences undoubtedly contributed to the understanding of the impact intra-Christian sectarianism had on Leith in the past. This was particularly the case when the older participants spoke of their working lives, and the period of time between the end of WWII and the late 80s.

Following 1990 however when many of the older participants were no longer working and had fewer connections in the local community, the amount of learning from this time that was gathered did decrease.
• Time challenges in delivering the programme

Due to a delay in funding being administered from the Scottish Government for the LASP, additional time pressure was added in getting the OHP planned and delivered. This was particularly the case in meeting with delivery partners to plan sessions that they were due to facilitate. In some cases this led to limited time to meet in order to plan each session’s activity, and in the case of the ‘Exploring Leith through objects’ session, no planning meeting taking place whatsoever.

Agreeing on days and dates that worked for each delivery partner was also very challenging. This meant that the order in which each session took place was not always the most logical. For example session 4 – ‘Exploring Leith through Objects’ would have been more appropriate as the second session. This session did not focus specifically on sectarianism and thus would have been better suited following on from the Introduction to oral history skills and before the Introduction to sectarianism session.

• Appropriate level for the participant’s ability

In designing the OHP, getting the right balance in regards to topics that were interesting and also pitching them at the right level for each participant’s ability was demanding. With such a varied group in terms of age, sex and background this was a particular challenge. Through the use of topic themes and utilising a wide variety of approaches this was successfully overcome.

• Delivery style and Approach

Deciding on which presentation and delivery style was also a challenge due to the variety of participants who attended the OHP.

For example in session 6 – The Troubles of Northern Ireland, the facilitator’s presentation style and use of academic material to put across many of the points did not work well for everyone. Although it must be noted that many in the group reacted well to this delivery, and a few participants in particular relished the thought provoking debate and hand out material.

Exploring such a complicated period of history in such a short space of time was challenging. This meant that staff had to support several participants with no or limited knowledge of the topic, in order for them to grasp what was being discussed.
4.3 Unanticipated Outcomes

- Unexpected outcome – Partnership working and Equal partner co-production

This was an unexpected outcome that arose during the delivery of the OHP. Primarily the concept I based on the idea that both facilitator and learner are equal in the learning process. This concept was discovered when several facilitators who had delivered as part of the OHP returned to previous sessions as participants. In doing so they engaged along with our participants whom they had previously delivered to. This was a very empowering experience for the participants as it highlighted how everyone is an equal partner in the anti-sectarianism debate at the LASP.

The participants also took great confidence in engaging in activities alongside facilitators who in previous sessions had been leading the group.

For future reference this concept will be referred to as Equal partner co-production, when describing the equal partnership of both facilitator/participant in the learning process.

For more information and detail of the concept, please check out the following link:

http://www.scotlandscommunitypatchwork.org/?page_id=41

Conclusion/ Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

To conclude, the OHP proved to be a resounding success and was highly effective in engaging local Leith residents and PDP participants in exploring the topic of sectarianism.

This was achieved through establishing an exciting programme; one that took a wide approach to exploring the topic of intra-Christian sectarianism, ensuring the participants remained engaged throughout.
The use of oral history played a key role in this and encouraged many participants to join the group who may not have otherwise. Furthermore it highlighted how the OHP was more than simply a group that met to discuss sectarianism.

By taking a participatory approach, being locally based and also through having access to already established groups that were running at PDP, the OHP was also able to attract a high number of participants from the Leith community.

The unexpected outcome of the *equal partner co-production* approach that arose also empowered the participants to value their own understanding of sectarianism and feel confident in sharing their experiences of intra-Christian sectarianism.

Although it became clear that sectarianism was far more of a problem in the past in Leith, the vast majority of participants who became involved in the OHP were keen to share their experiences. Moreover, the OHP had an overall positive impact on all the participants who attended. This enabled a rich and detailed picture of sectarianism to be captured.

Lastly, the overall engagement of those who took part in the OHP and their eagerness to share their experiences of sectarianism highlights the willingness of the Leith community to engage in the anti-sectarianism debate. It is also very promising for any future anti-sectarian activities that may be delivered.
5.2 Future Recommendations

- **Oral history programme – running hours**

The Oral history programme should be delivered again, with running hours that would better accommodate participants who were unable to attend the first time. Although numbers for the initial programme were excellent and a wide age range of participants attended, it was clear when promoting the project that a large number of people could not attend due to the 1.00 – 3.00pm running time. Therefore, an evening time slot would allow participants who perhaps work or have other commitments to engage in the programme.

- **Development of a Schooling/denominational schools specific session**

Throughout the duration of the Oral history programme the issue of schooling and the existence of denominational schools was a key discussion point. Moreover, it was clear from feedback from many of the participants, that this was a topic that they would like to explore further.

Accordingly, a session looking at this issue in more detail should be developed and undertaken with participants who attended the original programme.

The developed session could be delivered as a stand-alone activity to new participants, or incorporated into another OHP, such as the recommended one targeting participants who could not attend the first.

- **Findings shared in future resource pack/tool kit**

The findings and learning shared from delivering the initial OHP should be incorporated into a resource pack/tool kit on how LASP has explored the issue of intra-Christian sectarianism in Leith.

The produced resource could thus support other communities to undertake their own OHP. With the phenomenon of sectarianism impacting differently on each individual community, it is particularly pertinent that the learning from this Leith OHP be shared.

Through the creation of a tool kit, young people could also be targeted and introduced to the anti-sectarianism debate. This could include local youth groups and schools, thus maximising the impact of tackling sectarianism.
With schooling having been a key theme throughout the OHP, the historical accounts of both denominational/non-denominational schools, could also provide useful material for pupils at current schools to engage with in their exploration of intra-Christian sectarianism.

- **Promotion of Equal partner co-production**

The concept of *Equal partner co-production* should be promoted to enable other groups conducting ant-sectarianism work to learn from the benefits of this approach. In particular, it can highlight how ensuring both facilitator and participant are equal in the learning process can be used to explore sensitive topics such as intra-Christian sectarianism.

- **Protestant Action Society**

Moving forward we would like to actively promote this topic. As very much a hidden piece of Leith’s history, we feel there is a great deal of learning that can be shared by informing people about the PSA and the activities of John Cormack.

- **Media session**

Following the success of the film session, an additional session should be designed and delivered which explores a wider selection of media. From participant feedback in the final session of the OHP, it was clear music; television and books are all additional pieces of media that could be explored. In doing so, understanding of intra-Christian sectarianism in Leith could take place.
Acknowledgements

6.1 – Acknowledgements

We would firstly like to thank all of our participants from both PDP services and across the local Leith community, who gave up their valuable time to take part in the OHP.

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Lastly, thank you to the Scottish Government for funding our project and to VAF for their continued support.
6.2 – Further Information

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