



We'd wanted to expand our community outreach audience to include teenagers, using a particular business collection (MS 11 Baxter Bros) which included some material on Baxter Park, a well-used park close by the works complex. However, we had no real idea of how we could work with the material or what the end product could be. Getting Douglas for three full days was brilliant - he helped us focus on the aims of the project, came up with potential ideas of a product and generally guided us in terms of what material could be most effectively used. By the end, we had a proposal, to which we worked to identify records not just in our collections but also in the City Archive and the Local Studies library. Douglas continued his invaluable support, acting as a sounding board in the following weeks.

Unsurprisingly, the biggest obstacle was being able to implement the project; the community group whom we'd originally had in mind weren't really suitable as were unlikely to commit to the time needed, and although we had personal contacts with the local school, we weren't really getting any response. We'd put it all on the back burner when we were told about the Developing the Young Workforce project and made contact with Rachel, their local liaison adviser. Within weeks we had a meeting with staff at the school and now have plans to do the project as part of the S3 curriculum in January 2020.

Without Douglas' guidance, we would have had a pretty nondescript project that probably wouldn't have got off the ground. Thanks to his creativity and experience we have something that will engage the pupils, meets several of the curriculum's elements and will provide a product that the whole community can access. (project proposal attached) The opportunity to have Douglas onsite not only helped us with this one project but also encouraged us to think more creatively and to understand the basic elements of an educational initiative.

Dr Jan Merchant, Senior Archivist, University of Dundee



## ARCHIVE SERVICES

### BAXTER PARK: WITHIN EARSHOT

2019

#### 1. Project Background and Description

'Within Earshot' aims to produce a series of recorded imagined audio conversations which celebrate and enhance community use of Baxter Park.

Researched and recorded by pupils of Morgan Academy, the project will comprise of a series of 'overheard' conversations between people from the past, each conversation reflecting an aspect of the Park's long history.

Access to the conversations by members of the public could be accomplished via QR codes, available on posters, which link to the conversations housed on the University Archives' web pages.

Each conversation could also be rehearsed and performed live for a public audience as a guided walk at the launch of the resource.

#### 2. Project Scope

- a. Using archive resources and guided by Archive staff pupils will research the history of the Park, from its inception in the 1860s to its recent regeneration. The archive records provide evidence for specific topics which could be used by the pupils to create a series of conversations:

- 1861 Sir David Baxter and arborist discussing why the park is being provided and how it will look
- 1863 Attendees at the opening of Baxter Park
- 1890s Workmen removing the statue of Sir David after it was vandalised, and chatting about activities in the Park
- 1900s Women (mill workers) visiting the Park comparing their lives with more well-to-do visitors
- 1914 Members of a local family discussing how the Park offers respite from working conditions, recent industrial unrest and potential war
- 1943 Soldiers and girlfriends comparing the current state of the Park with the way it was between the wars
- 2007 Attendees of the official Park reopening discussing the Park's past and its future potential

Each conversation reflects an aspect of the history of Baxter Park and wider Dundee, taking into account living and working conditions of the population for who the Park was built.

- b. Pupils will also investigate how the recordings can best be archived and made available for listening by the public.

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### 3. Available resources

The following lists and locations of archival records have been identified as sources for each of the conversations. Both Dundee City Archive and the Local Studies Library are, along with the University Archive, willing to loan original material under supervision for the introduction to the project, and will welcome and guide researchers visiting their searchrooms. Where feasible, surrogates of items can be made for use in the classroom.

#### University of Dundee Archive Services:

Plan of proposed park, 1860  
 Plans of Dens Works, 1869-1904  
 Pictures of workers at Baxter Bros looms, 19<sup>th</sup> cent  
 Photographic portrait, Sir David Baxter  
 Copy of Mary Anne Baxter portrait  
 Extract biography of Sir David Baxter  
 Linen samples  
 Baxter Park Trustees minutes of meetings, 1863-1908  
 Baxter Park notice of bye-laws, 1864  
*Dundee Social Union Report on Housing and Industrial Conditions*, 1905  
 Oral History Project: Lily Thomson, weaver, 20<sup>th</sup> century  
*Personal Memories of Stobswell Baxter Park and Morgan Academy in the Forties and Fifties*, Jimmy Smith  
*The City Echo*, 1911-1912  
*Dundee Street and Trade Directories*, 1824-1974

#### Dundee City Archive:

Baxter Park Restoration Plan, 1998  
 Baxter Park: Historic Landscape Analysis, 1998  
 Dundee Town Council minute books, 1880-1960 (also available at University Archive)

#### Local Studies Library, Wellgate:

*Dundee Advertiser & Dundee Courier*, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> cents  
 Picture postcards, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> cents  
 Music sheets: The Baxter March, 1863 and the Baxter Quadrille, 1863 (copies also available University Archive)  
 Copy of painting, 'Opening of the Baxter park, Dundee', 1863 *Friends of Baxter Park*

The Friends have indicated a willingness to support the project. Members are likely to have invaluable information about the Park which could be gathered as part of the pupils' research, for example, recording memories of their childhood in the Park or of the 1990s regeneration and re-opening in 2007.

### 4. Deliverables

#### Pupils' outcomes:

- broad general education: including collaborative working, organization, enquiry and critical thinking, and an understanding of their local culture and history



- curriculum links: including Social Subjects (People and Place), Health and Wellbeing, Expressive Arts (drama performance), Literacy and IT
- a resource created by and for the local community
- intergenerational dialogue

Morgan Academy outcomes:

- building links and demonstrating the school's connection with the local community
- creating a lasting local resource
- commitment to interdisciplinary learning which builds skills for improved employment prospects

Archives' and Local History Centre outcomes:

- use of their original and primary sources in research
- working with new audiences
- outreach to local communities and the education sector

Friends of Baxter Park outcomes:

- intergenerational dialogue
- potential archiving of members' recorded reminiscences
- help people learn more about the history and nature of the Park
- encourage visitors to the Park

## 5. Implementation Plan

Choices include:

- June change of timetable.  
New S2-5 pupils who have finished the academic year and looking for short, sharp projects that give a taster of elements of the next academic year while developing invaluable soft skills.
- May alternative timetable.  
Senior pupils who are not sitting exams in May looking for short, sharp projects that give tasters of different activities and industries while developing invaluable soft skills.
- 2019/20 curriculum  
Planning now means teachers could incorporate the project to the class curriculum for some time between August and December. Likely to be S1-3, but potential for more senior pupils in specific classes.
- Additional Support Needs  
Smaller groups working on the project quite intensely, various age groups available.

To do:

Rachel McEwan of DWYDA to contact Morgan Academy and arrange a date for all the partners to speak and begin the planning process

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