

Recollecting Popular Music Memories in Merthyr Tydfil

Gathering and sharing cultural memory in the local community

The activities for this project took place over a week at the Dowlais Library, Theatre Soar and local schools in Merthyr Tydfil. Intergenerational community groups gathered together to share photos, oral histories, and material relating to popular music in the area between the years 1955-1975.

Local primary schools were invited to participate through a collaboration with First Campus, a HEFCW funded partnership to widen participation and access to HE in South East Wales. The children then re-enacted the memories in a live performance, learning about the local history as well as the musical legacy of the area.

In 2018 the materials were gathered to form an exhibition 'The History of Popular Music in Merthyr Tydfil' on display at Redhouse Cymru. A symposium brought together researchers from across the UK and a bilingual version of the exhibition was created for the 2018 Cardiff Eisteddfod, and then donated to Theatre Soar. The project was awarded the Best Impact in Arts and Culture by University of South Wales in 2018.

Due to his work on the project Paul Carr was invited to become part of a Welsh Government steering group to redesign the music curricula in schools, and to map and report on the impacts of COVID on the Welsh music industry. In early 2020 BBC Wales commissioned a documentary about the project research, but production was suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There are ongoing plans to create a podcast.

The images, oral histories and recordings from the exhibition are available online at People's Collection Wales website, which is also facilitating ongoing community contributions to the collection. There is also ongoing community-led engagement through groups on social media across Merthyr Tydfil and South Wales.



People:

- [Paul Carr](#), Professor of Popular Music Analysis, University of South Wales

Institution:

- [University of South Wales](#)

Collaborators:

- [Dowlais Library](#)
- [Theatre Soar](#)
- [People's Collection Wales](#)

Area:

- Wales

Being Human Festival year:

- Lost and Found, 2017

Learn more:

- [People's Collection Wales - The History of Popular Music in Merthyr Tydfil](#)

“ It seemed to capture the right moment and happen at the right time... the Being Human event was one of the most enjoyable research things I've ever done.

– Professor Paul Carr