Aiming to introduce some key issues of fieldwork, the keynote speakers had outlined the conference theme, which addressed a range of ways by fifty two selected papers, loosely grouped thematically in eighteen parallel sessions, poster presentations- a selection of "visual findings" which were part of a physically exhibited backdrop to the proceedings, and one website under construction with an open editor feed. "With so much compressed and varied activity, what was possible to accost in a short summary panel session?"

The opening presentation of a conference has capacity to act as an intellectual and ethical compass. Andrea Kahn, Founding Principal of consulting practice, design|CONTENT, New York, and Adjunct Professor of Urban Planning at the Graduate School of Columbia University, delivered this and set a clear tone which established some critical directions in the opening conference lecture of FieldWork. While revising her particular work as contributing editor of Sites: Design: Concepts, Histories and Strategies (with Carol Bare, 1993), she touched on how we apprehend site, how we delineate boundaries, how we understand site specificity, site scale, and actions of and as site construction. The critical motif that she offered and elicited was from John Dewey's work, quoting and revisiting, "Thinking is secreted in the interstices between habits." She observed and cautioned the conference's described intentions: perhaps a longing of questions, a saturated, thick concept which might be in charge of leading to a thin discourse of basic questions are overlaid. With rich terminologies and text intensifying thematics, what are the values that guide us? What values guide site and fieldwork activity in and of Architecture, or even define and discipline the disciplinary field? To what end and to whose benefit are these activities undertaken?

After a full day of diverse and stimulating papers, a view of the presentations in the Matthew Gallery, and an enjoyable dinner in the early twentieth century space of the Sculpture Court, honed with case of the "glamorous" Parthenon frieze, award winning UK, Broadcast and oral histories. Alan Thrane, opened the conference gathering on Saturday morning. He shared knowledge and practices of fieldwork, through his oral history and audio essays which are usually based in urban landscapes, and in this session he visually journeyed from a Birmingham industrial estate to Edgerton Mill in Pontmeirion to ongoing work at the changing area of Kings Cross in London. Explaining his ambitions to unlock memories, to explore living memory, to craft a new construction, he exposed his position in relation to an 'outsider art' of two traditions- voice and sound- which both connect with worlds of pasts, and ultimately potentially create new values. The lingering impressions of constructed images and voice are achieved with a close and practiced relationship with particular tools- microphone, recording equipment, and an implicit relationship with the subject- person and place. Oral fieldwork is a slow, open process, and an opening up of questions of storage of the gathered material, and the openness of dissemination resonated with Andrea's opening question of the ethics of benefit and one.