Recent change is an emerging field of research in English linguistics, and is developing fast as new corpora become available to investigate changes over shorter spans of time. This talk will present findings from a project on changes in the English verb phrase from the 1960s to the 1990s, based on a corpus of spoken British English. Findings include declining frequencies for the core modal verbs (especially must, may and shall) and for the past perfect (as in They had met her the day before). Possible explanations for the findings will be discussed. The talk will also look at methodological issues arising from the research, concerning ways to measure corpus frequencies and evaluate change.