



## Oral History Society newsletter

Summer 2012

### Oral History Society annual conference

#### Displaced childhoods: Oral history and traumatic experiences

Booking is now open for this exciting conference, which will showcase how oral history is increasingly being used to explore the effects on children and their adult selves of traumatic events such as war, evacuation, conflict and growing up in care. We have a diverse line up of speakers from both the UK and overseas, presenting papers on a range of topics around displaced childhoods. The conference will be of interest to all those working in the field of oral history, as papers will also look at methodological and ethical issues.

Key themes of the conference:

- Internal migration and the global movement of children from Spain, India, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda
- The 'Forgotten Children' forcibly migrated to Australia
- Childhood experience of civil disasters
- The effects of growing up in care and long-term hospitalisation
- The development of therapeutic environments for children and young people with emotional, social and behavioural disorders



Keynote speakers are: Dr Joanna Sassoon, project manager of the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project at the National Library of Australia; and Professor Lynn Abrams, author of *The Orphan Country: Children of Scotland's Broken Homes* and *Oral History Theory*

The conference is taking place at Southampton Solent University – apologies for the change of venue but various administrative issues meant that the previous venue was no longer suitable.

As well as commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, Southampton is also marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of Los Niños, Basque children who fled the Spanish Civil War. An oral history of Los Niños is being published this year as a book and the project will be discussed at the conference. For more information on booking and registering go to [www.ohs.org.uk/conferences/2012.php](http://www.ohs.org.uk/conferences/2012.php)

An A4 copy of the poster forms the last page of this newsletter. Please display it in your workplace if applicable. Thank you!

## **New Heritage Lottery Fund programme to give away £1m**

In April the Heritage Lottery Fund launched a new funding programme, All Our Stories. The £1m fund will provide grants of between £3,000 and £10,000 to community groups, heritage organisations and charities who want to find out more about their local area. The fund is being launched to coincide with a BBC programme, The Great British Story – A People's History. The deadline for applications is 31<sup>st</sup> July. For more information go to [www.hlf.org.uk/news/Pages/AllOurStories.aspx](http://www.hlf.org.uk/news/Pages/AllOurStories.aspx)

## **The Listening Project**

The BBC has launched a website to accompany the Listening Project. The programmes are short snippets of conversation between close friends and relatives, intended to create a picture of Britain today. Anyone can record a conversation, some of which will be broadcast on Radio 4 and archived by the British Library. To learn more go to: [www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/the-listening-project](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/the-listening-project)

## **Archive on 4: the Great Listener**

In this Radio 4 documentary Alan Dein, oral historian and radio documentary maker, tracks down some of the people interviewed by Tony Parker, a ground-breaking and pioneering oral historian. The programme aired on 12<sup>th</sup> May but is still available on the Radio 4 website. You can also hear Alan's series Lives in a Landscape, documentaries about contemporary life in the UK, on Wednesday mornings at 11am until May 22<sup>nd</sup>. To listen to either Lives in a Landscape or Archive on 4 go to [www.bbc.co.uk/radio4](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4)

## **Regional networkers' annual event – November 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>**

All regional networkers are invited to this year's annual event to be held at the University of Leicester. This is a great opportunity to catch up with other networkers and offer and receive support. It includes a session on continuous professional development. This year's theme is Celebrating Anniversaries Using Oral History and we would love to hear your ideas on what to include in the programme.

The night before the event there is a business meeting at 6pm, followed by an evening meal which all networkers are welcome to attend. More details will be sent out in the autumn. Networkers without institutional support can claim the cost of travel and accommodation.

Contact Juliana Vandegrift to submit programme ideas or for more information:

[juliana.vandegrift@btinternet.com](mailto:juliana.vandegrift@btinternet.com)

## **Oral history and labour history**

Thirty people met at the Bishopsgate Institute on March 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss oral history and labour history. The symposium, organised by oral history project Britain at Work, showed that there is a great deal going on across the UK and interest in a follow-up event. Join the email discussion group at: [oralhistory-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:oralhistory-subscribe@yahoo.com)

## **Reminiscence Theatre Archive launch**

The Reminiscence Theatre Archive of Pam Schweitzer is now at the University of Greenwich. Between 1983 and 2005 Age Exchange Theatre generated oral history interviews, transcripts, correspondence, show reports, photographs and play scripts. From these, students performed 10-minute plays at the launch on 5th May. For more information contact Heather Lilley [lh23@gre.ac.uk](mailto:lh23@gre.ac.uk)

## **Writers needed**

History Workshop Online ([www.historyworkshop.org.uk](http://www.historyworkshop.org.uk)) is seeking contributions to its online content in the form of articles, reviews and submissions to its Radical Objects section. Articles need to be around 1000-1500 words long and ideally accompanied by copyright-friendly images. The site, which describes itself as a forum, laboratory and virtual coffeehouse devoted to the practice of radical history, will also publicise relevant events and notices. Contact Lorna Richardson for further information or to post a notice: [lorna@historyworkshop.org.uk](mailto:lorna@historyworkshop.org.uk)

**If you have any news items please email [annecgulland@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annecgulland@yahoo.co.uk) You can find the OHS on Facebook, follow us on Twitter [@OralHistorySoc](https://twitter.com/OralHistorySoc) or visit our website: [www.ohs.org.uk](http://www.ohs.org.uk)**



## Oral History Society newsletter

Autumn 2012



### Oral History Society annual conference

Thank you to all the speakers and delegates who came to the Oral History Society's annual conference in Southampton on July 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> and made it such a success.

The theme of this year's conference was *Displaced childhoods: Oral history and traumatic experiences* and papers focused on a range of subjects: the effects of growing up in care; the experiences of refugee children; and stories of children evacuated during the war. Speakers and delegates came from the fields of oral history as well as education, social care, psychiatry and psychotherapy and papers covered a huge range of themes and topics.

There were two keynote speakers. The first was Dr Joanna Sassoon, project manager of the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project at the National Library of Australia. And the second speaker was Professor Lynn Abrams, author of the books *The Orphan Country: Children of Scotland's Broken Homes* and *Oral History Theory*.

The conference also included a discussion session for the first time, led by a psychotherapist and psychiatrist, where delegates talked about the practice of interviewing children and young people.

Abrams summed up the importance of recording lives. "Life story work is seen as an essential tool to help children who have had traumatic childhoods develop a coherent narrative and identity... Knowing who I am is fundamental," she said.

### OHS and Institute of Historical Research joint seminar programme

The Oral History Society and Institute of Historical Research are pleased to announce the joint seminar programme for this academic year. The seminars began last year as a forum for the discussion of current research in oral history, particularly for students and academics working in higher education, but open to all. Building on the success of last year's programme the society has increased the frequency of seminars from one to two per term.

The dates are:

- November 1<sup>st</sup> 2012: Professor Paul Thompson, University of Essex, 'Pioneers of social research: Interviewing our own elites'
- December 13<sup>th</sup>: Professor Lynn Abrams, University of Glasgow, 'Liberating the Self: Epiphanies, conflict and coherence in the life stories of post-war British women'
- February 7<sup>th</sup> 2013: Dr Anindya Raychaudhuri, University of St. Andrews, "'My other mother": Separated families and mourning as agency in narratives of the 1947 Indian partition'
- March 7<sup>th</sup>: Professor Penny Summerfield, University of Manchester, 'Oral history, subjectivity and gender: Some reflections on theory and practice'
- May 16<sup>th</sup>: Dr Toby Butler, University of East London, 'Memoryscapes: Making place-based oral history'
- July 4<sup>th</sup>: Donald Ritchie, historian of the United States Senate, 'Top down/bottom Up: Using oral history to re-examine government and other institutions'

Seminars are at 6pm at the Institute of Historical Research. For more information go to:

[www.history.ac.uk/events/seminars/325](http://www.history.ac.uk/events/seminars/325) or contact Shelley Trower [shelley.trower@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:shelley.trower@roehampton.ac.uk)

### **Alessandro Portelli lecture – November 6<sup>th</sup>, Royal Holloway University**

Leading oral historian Alessandro Portelli will be speaking at the launch of the new Public History Centre at Royal Holloway, University of London. The title of Portelli's lecture will be: Reflecting on a life in progress and the stories of oral history.

In this lecture Portelli, professor of American literature at La Sapienza, the University of Rome, will reflect on his work to date..

All are welcome to the lecture which takes place at 6.15pm in the Windsor Building, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey. For travel details go to:

[www.rhul.ac.uk/aboutus/ourcampus/locationmap.aspx](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/aboutus/ourcampus/locationmap.aspx)

### **Regional networkers' annual event – November 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>**

All regional networkers, a vital link between practising oral historians and the society, are invited to join the OHS's annual regional networkers' event in Leicester, whose theme this year is Celebrating Anniversaries. Speakers will discuss oral history projects commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival in Leicester of Ugandan Asians and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The event takes place 40 years after the seminal Leicester conference on the problems of oral history which led to the founding of the OHS in 1973. Members of the society can read a report of the original conference in *Oral History*, via [www.oralhistory.org.uk/journals/journal\\_indexes/01.php](http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/journals/journal_indexes/01.php) (*Oral History*, Volume 1, No 3 1971-73). Networkers will be asked to think about the “problems” raised at the conference and whether they are still relevant today.

For more information please contact [Juliana.vandegrift@btinternet.com](mailto:Juliana.vandegrift@btinternet.com)

### **Oral History Society annual conference 2013 – Corporate voices: Institutional and organisational oral histories. Call for papers, deadline December 1<sup>st</sup>**

The OHS’s 2013 conference, which will take place at Sussex University on July 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 2013, will explore the hidden histories of institutions and organisations, from private companies to hospitals, universities and charities. The organisers would like to hear about what interviews with those who work in organisations tell us about organisational history and memory, the institutional or educational community, and more.

Conference organisers are looking for papers on topics including: personal voices; institutional voices; organisational memory and oral history; the role and use of oral history in business settings; and archiving. For more information go to [www.ohs.org.uk/conferences/2013.php](http://www.ohs.org.uk/conferences/2013.php)

### **New committee members**

The OHS welcomes two new committee members and bids farewell to Anna Green, who is returning to New Zealand. New member Sarah Lowry has worked in oral history since 2004 and has managed two large-scale Heritage Lottery Fund projects, the Refugee Communities History Project and Foundling Voices. She currently works as an accredited trainer as part of the British Library/Oral History Society training team.

The second new member is Fiona Cosson, who runs the Oral History Noticeboard blog ([www.oralhistorynoticeboard.wordpress.com](http://www.oralhistorynoticeboard.wordpress.com)). She is completing her doctoral research at the University of Northampton, is a research associate and tutor at Manchester Metropolitan University and is founding organiser of the Unofficial Histories conference.

### **Oral history book wins prestigious history prize**

Congratulations to Wendy Ugolini, lecturer at Edinburgh University and OHS committee member, who has won the prestigious Gladstone Prize, awarded by the Royal Historical Society, for her book *Experiencing war as the “enemy other”: Italian Scottish experience in World War II* (Manchester

University Press). Ugolini undertook 45 interviews with members of the Italian Scottish community and the book contrasts these personal narratives with official records and newspaper reports.

The judges said: "It adds another dimension to our knowledge of social interaction and identity in the Second World War." The award further underlines how far oral history is now accepted by historians as a valid research methodology.

### **Oral history with people using palliative care services**

The charity Macmillan Cancer Support has announced that it will fund a pilot project to record oral histories with people who use palliative care services. The project will be led by the Academic Unit of Supportive Care, University of Sheffield, which has been recording oral histories as a service for patients, family and friends since 2007.

Five project pilot sites, all based in the north of England, will be confirmed shortly, after which volunteers will be recruited to work with them as oral historians. A call for volunteers will appear on the OHS volunteer page in the coming months: [www.ohs.org.uk/volunteers/index.php](http://www.ohs.org.uk/volunteers/index.php) . For more information contact Michelle Winslow: [m.winslow@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:m.winslow@sheffield.ac.uk)

### **Oral history of Speakers' Corner**

A new oral history organisation, On the Record, has won £41,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £2,800 from the Barry Amiel and Norman Melburn Trust to create a permanent archive of oral histories and memorabilia of Speakers' Corner.

The organisation is looking for volunteers to conduct 20 oral history interviews with speakers, listeners and orators which will be held as a permanent archive at the Bishopsgate Institute in London. The project, called Sounds in the Park, will culminate in an exhibition, a radio show and a website.

For more information contact [info@on-the-record.org.uk](mailto:info@on-the-record.org.uk)

**If you have any news items please email [annecgulland@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annecgulland@yahoo.co.uk)**

**You can find the OHS on Facebook, follow us on Twitter [@OralHistorySoc](https://twitter.com/OralHistorySoc) or visit our website: [www.ohs.org.uk](http://www.ohs.org.uk)**

## **Oral history seminar – 19<sup>th</sup> April, Institute of Historical Research, London**

Steven High from Montreal University will be speaking about his project, Montreal life stories, in this joint Oral History Society (OHS) and Institute of Historical Research (IHR) seminar. The seminars, which were launched in October, have provided oral historians from all backgrounds with a great opportunity to hear interesting speakers and discuss their work with others. At the last seminar, Carrie Hamilton from Roehampton University talked about her work interviewing female members of the Basque separatist group ETA and Cuban women. For next academic year's programme keep an eye on the OHS website. For more information go here: [www.history.ac.uk/events/seminars/325](http://www.history.ac.uk/events/seminars/325)

## **Spring School in Oral History – 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> April, IHR, London**

The OHS, again in collaboration with the IHR, is pleased to announce the inaugural Spring School in Oral History. The three-day programme will give participants the opportunity to discuss issues such as memory, the role of the researcher and teaching oral history in higher education. The course will be led by four leading oral history academics and OHS committee members. For more information go to [www.ohs.org.uk/viewevent.php?elink=118](http://www.ohs.org.uk/viewevent.php?elink=118)

## **Oral History for Family Historians – 2<sup>nd</sup> May, Weston Park Museum, Sheffield**

The OHS and the British Library are offering a course on oral history for family historians. It will take place in Sheffield with a further date scheduled in London in the autumn. The course will cover the application of oral history to family research, ethics, basic interview techniques and how to identify and access existing oral history material in local and national archives. The course will be led by two oral historians experienced in family history research. For more information and to book go to [www.ohs.org.uk/training/family-historians.php](http://www.ohs.org.uk/training/family-historians.php)

## **OHS Annual Conference – 13-14<sup>th</sup> July, University of Reading**

The theme of this year's conference is Displaced Childhoods: Oral history and traumatic experiences. The conference will bring together oral historians and others working with oral history to explore the topic of disturbed, disrupted and traumatic childhoods within academic, community and therapeutic settings. It will look at contemporary topics, such as children living in war zones and the experience of children in care, as well as historical subjects, such as the children who were forcibly migrated to Australia, Canada and the United States during and after WWII.

The event will be held in association with the Research Centre for Evacuee and War Child Studies, University of Reading. This event, which is open to all with an interest in oral history and childhood, promises to be a stimulating event with world-class speakers. For information on how to book please keep an eye on the society's website: [www.ohs.org.uk](http://www.ohs.org.uk)

## **OHS website**

Plans are underway to update the look of the OHS website and develop its content. As part of the changes we will be making more material available for members, including podcasts, educational resources, and showcasing of members' projects. The web team is always pleased to receive feedback about the website and if you have any thoughts that you wish to share with us, please email Michelle at: [m.winslow@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:m.winslow@sheffield.ac.uk)

## **Oral history interviewer job vacancy – deadline February 5<sup>th</sup>**

National Life Stories at the British Library is advertising for an oral history interviewer for its programme to document the history of the electricity industry in Britain. The successful applicant will co-ordinate, initiate, research and carry out a series of interviews, averaging 10-12 hours each. For more information go to [www.ohs.org.uk/vacancies/showjob.php?id=263](http://www.ohs.org.uk/vacancies/showjob.php?id=263)

## **Call for papers – deadline February 13<sup>th</sup>**

The Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex is to hold a conference in July to celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since its founding in 1937 by Tom Harrisson, Humphrey Jennings and Charles Madge the archive has played a distinctive role in British public life. The conference organisers welcome proposals for individual 20-minute papers as well as submissions of panels. For more information go to: [www.massobs.org.uk/conference](http://www.massobs.org.uk/conference)

## **Social History Society annual conference – 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> April, University of Brighton**

Booking is open for the Social History Society's annual conference, which covers a range of topics including: political culture, feminism and sexual reform; gender and masculinity; and poverty and hunger. Speakers include Professor Penny Summerfield from Manchester University on life writing. For more information go to: [www.socialhistory.org.uk](http://www.socialhistory.org.uk)

## **Diamond Jubilee website collection**

The British Library is setting up a special collection of websites about the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. In recognition of the uniqueness of the event – only the second time a Diamond Jubilee has been celebrated by a British monarch – the library is working with a range of organisations including the Mass Observation Archive, the IHR and the Royal Household. If your organisation is setting up a jubilee-themed oral history project why not take a look:

<http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/webarchive/>

## **Volunteer needed**

Volunteer required one day a week, with the possibility of working from home some of the time, to transcribe filmed oral history interviews, from the project at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, West London, entitled 'Hidden Memories'. See link to a blog done last year. Must have previous experience of doing transcriptions in an oral history environment, audio or otherwise. There will also be the chance to help out with the general film collection. For more information contact Michelle Losse, [archives@kew.org](mailto:archives@kew.org)

If you have any news items please email [annecgulland@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annecgulland@yahoo.co.uk) You can find the OHS on Facebook, follow us on Twitter @OralHistorySoc or visit our website: [www.ohs.org.uk](http://www.ohs.org.uk)