



Oral History and the Study of Contemporary British Politics

A workshop for early-career researchers

25th November 2015, 10am – 5pm

Foyle Visitor and Learning Centre, The British Library

Oral history constitutes one of the core research methodologies of the contemporary political historian. From interviews with former Cabinet ministers and high-ranking officials to the recorded testimonies of grassroots activists and ordinary citizens, oral history can enrich and complicate narratives of change and continuity about government and politics in the recent past. It also poses considerable intellectual, ethical and practical challenges both to researchers conducting their own oral history projects and those utilising the archived oral sources collected by others.

This event will bring together early-career (defined as within 10 years of award of PhD) researchers and a small number of more established scholars to reflect on the value of oral history for the study of British politics since 1945. The sessions will showcase new research in the field and consider key methodological, ethical and practical issues, such as project design and recruitment, the deposit and re-use of recordings, and the dissemination of oral history beyond the academy.

The event, hosted in partnership between the **Mile End Institute** at Queen Mary University of London and the **British Library**, forms part of a wider programme of activity on the theme of Rethinking Contemporary British Political History,

which is funded by a British Academy's Rising Star Engagement Award held by Dr Helen McCarthy at Queen Mary University of London. For more information: <http://mei.qmul.ac.uk/news/2015/152398.html>

For information about the British Library's extensive oral history collections visit <http://www.bl.uk/oralhistory> Over 3,000 interviews can be accessed in full at <http://sounds.bl.uk/oral-history>

Please email Dr McCarthy to reserve your place (h.mccarthy@qmul.ac.uk), including a brief paragraph on your area of research and interest in oral history. Priority will be given to advanced postgraduate research students and early-career researchers (defined as within 10 years of award of PhD) working on British political history, broadly-defined, since 1945.

Full or partial travel bursaries will be available to those travelling from outside London. Lunch will be provided. Please provide details of any dietary requirements.

Provisional Programme:

10am: Registration

10.15 – 11.15am: Welcome from Dr Rob Perks (British Library) & Dr Helen McCarthy (QMUL) followed by plenary address:-

Dr Anna Bryson (Queen's University Belfast): Oral History in the Shadow of Conflict: Ethics, Risk and Trust

11.15am – 12.30pm: Activism and Community

Dr Natalie Thomlinson (University of Sussex): Women's Liberation and the Politics of Race

Daisy Payling (University of Birmingham): Social activism, local government and the Left in Sheffield, 1970-1990

12.30pm – 1.15pm: LUNCH

1.15pm – 2.30pm: Parliament and Constituency

Dr Emma Peplow and Dr Priscila Pivatto (History of Parliament Trust): The History of Parliament Oral History Project

Dr Emma Peplow and Dr Kayleigh Milden (History of Parliament Trust): 'From the Grassroots': Oral History and Party Politics in Devon

BREAK

2.45pm – 4pm: Government and Policy

Dr Catherine Haddon (Institute for Government): The Contemporary History of Whitehall

Dr Thomas Lean (British Library): Privatisation and the Politics of Power: Oral History and the Privatisation of the Electricity Supply Industry in Thatcher's Britain

4pm – 4.45pm: Collecting, Archiving and Re-use

Informal discussion led by Mary Stewart (British Library) followed by final reflections led by Rob Perks and Helen McCarthy

5pm CLOSE OF EVENT