

Scottish Oral History Centre Activities, 2016

Report for the UK OHS



Staff member Emma Newlands speaking at the SOHC

The SOHC operates as an interdisciplinary research centre for oral history and as a knowledge exchange hub between academic and community oral history. We have had another very busy, exciting and productive year supporting oral history projects, providing training, responding to a wide range of enquiries on aspects of oral history, and expanding our research activities and academic and knowledge exchange collaborations. The Centre currently has 11 affiliated staff and 14 postgraduate research students deploying oral history methodologies.

An important new initiative in 2016 was the running of our first **international oral history 'Summer Institute'**. This is a co-organised collaboration between the SOHC and the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (Dir: Steven High) at Concordia University, Montreal. The event ran over two days, 2-3 June 2016, in Montreal and

provided a really stimulating forum to discuss a range of key interpretative themes relating to oral history theory and practice. There were 28 participants from the two Centres, together with invited guests, including three staff, five postgraduates and one research affiliate from the SOHC. The discussion themes were:

- Oral History in Practice (based on the questions raised the first morning)
- Analysing Emotions and the Senses
- Narrative Analysis: Interpreting Life Stories
- Analysing Memory in Oral History Interviews
- Writing Oral History: Challenges and Opportunities
- Where is the field of Oral History headed?

It will be the turn of the SOHC to host the Summer Institute next year in May 2017 in Glasgow and we are very much looking forward to continuing the conversation then.

The SOHC has again been involved in an extensive programme of **training, CPD and support for local community projects** in Scotland delivered by David Walker, Angela Turner, Alison Chand and Sue Morrison. One project that might be highlighted this year has been the training and support provided for the HLF-supported ENABLE learning disability charity oral history project 'History Boys and Girls'. Four specially designed sessions of oral history training were delivered at the SOHC between Dec 2015 and February 2016 for learning disabled school children by disability historian Angela Turner, assisted by David Walker. The project is nearing completion and includes an oral history based DVD narrating the history of special education in West Central Scotland. Angela Turner is also continuing researching and writing her monograph (based on her PhD here) on the history of learning disability in Scotland and working with Arthur McIvor on the history of disability in the Scottish coalfields. Another initiative with schools was the delivery of a class on oral history techniques applied to medical history (led by SOHC PG Simon Walker) to one of the University MUSE project affiliate schools (Bellahouston Academy). This was designed to get pupils thinking about how oral history can be deployed in understanding connections between work and the body. The MUSE project on medical history is organised by Emma Newlands. Final year SOHC PhD student Andy Clark, who pioneered an SOHC oral history training programme for 14-15 year-old school pupils at Springburn Academy in 2014-15, has also appeared on BBC Radio Scotland's 'Good Morning Scotland' current affairs programme to discuss the historical context of the Hillsborough disaster following the conclusion of the long running inquiry that vindicated the Liverpool supporters. Andy then produced and presented a fifteen minute feature on the station's 'Pipeline' programme in which he discussed the multifaceted impacts of deindustrialisation on traditional Scottish music, particularly the decline of colliery and industry based pipe bands.

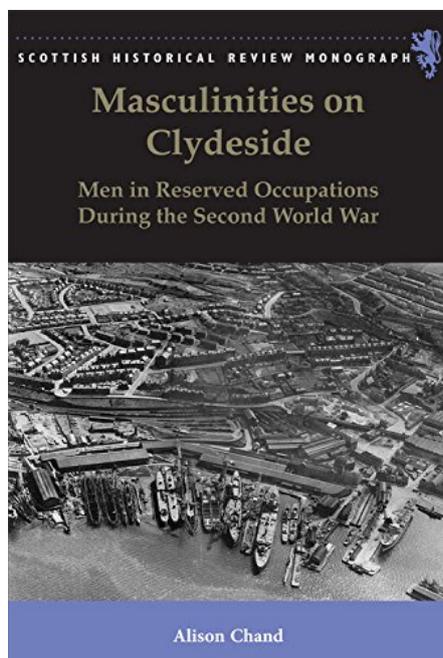
The SOHC has also continued to run its innovative **Work and Community Placement in Oral History class** which builds and extends collaboration between the Centre and Scottish museums and archives. This is led by David Walker. David has located SOHC

students in a wide range of workplaces to gain practical experience of interviewing and the running of oral history projects, including at a number of Glasgow and Edinburgh Museums, Summerlee Industrial Museum, Clydebank Museum and the Scottish Jewish Archives. This third year and honours option class is one element in an oral history pathway for students at Strathclyde University sandwiched between *Oral History Theory and Practice* and the Masters level class *Advanced Oral History* (both led by Erin Jessee). The SOHC also continues to provide oral history training within the Scottish Graduate School in Arts and Humanities and the SGS in Social Sciences.

A series of **conferences, workshops and seminars** have been organised at the Centre over the past year. These include conferences on 'Gender and Deindustrialisation' and the Scottish Business Archivists Annual Conference which was on the theme of oral history. The monthly seminar series, organised by SOHC PGs Martin Conlon and Lucy Brown, included Callum Brown (Glasgow University), co-founder of the SOHC back in 1995, who spoke on 'Laughter in Oral History Interviews'. Other speakers at the SOHC over the past year have included visiting SOHC fellow from Pennsylvania Tracey Weiss (on women and the YMCA), Annie Pohlman from the University of Brisbane (on crimes against humanity in Indonesia), Andrea Matošević, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Croatia (on oral narratives of Croatian miners), Jessica Douthwaite, SOHC (on memory montage in oral history), Jeff Meek, Glasgow University (on the oral history of homosexuality) Wendy Ugolini, Edinburgh University (on the Italian Scots), Valerie Wright, Glasgow University (on the oral history of multi-storey living), Joanna Allan, University of Leeds (Saharawi women's accounts of torture) and Alison Chand, SOHC (on reserved occupations in Clydeside during the Second World War).

The SOHC recently organised and held the third **SOHC oral history postgraduate conference** on the theme 'Oral History in Dialogue' (May 2016), which was a resounding success. PGs participated from Universities across Scotland and wider afield, including four from Queens, Belfast, where Sean O'Connell and colleagues have formed an oral history research hub (see the Northern Ireland regional report). Martin Conlon and Lucy Brown are the current organisers of the annual PG conference. The SOHC has also added to a strong and growing cohort of Masters and PhD students this year. New postgraduates systematically integrating oral history interviewing in their studies include Lorna Barton (transgender experience in Denver, USA), Stuart Bradwel (Diabetes and the consultative relationship), James Ferns (deindustrialisation in the steel industry), Alex Chandler (jointly with Glasgow University on masculinities and film in Scotland), and Marion Henry (a co-tutelle with Sciences Po, Paris working on music and social class in the British coalfields). Other current oral history postgraduates affiliated to the SOHC are Andy Clark (the female factory occupations in Scotland), Martin Conlon (memory and heritage in Glasgow), Lucy Brown (cultural representations of deindustrialisation), Jessica Douthwaite (Cold War), Helen Foster (Creative Writing), Rachel Meach (Diabetes in Britain and the USA), Iain Ferguson (a social history of Acne), Simon Walker (military

bodies in the First World War), David Evans (breakaway trade unions), Jan Brownfoot (women and gender relations in post-war in Malaya), and Anni Donaldson (domestic violence in Glasgow).



Research outputs and publications include Alison Chand's oral history based CDP PhD thesis (with Glasgow Museums) which was revised for publication, appearing as *Masculinities on Clydeside* (Edinburgh University Press) in July 2016. The SOHC hosted a book launch where Alison spoke about her work in Oct 2016. Nicola Graham succeeded in defending her PhD which integrates oral interviews in an analysis of occupational health and safety in the Second World War in Clydeside. Juliette Pattinson, Arthur McIvor and Linsey Robb also completed their oral history based book, *Men in Reserve: British Civilian Masculinity in the Second World War* which is due to be published by Manchester University Press by the end of 2016. Stephen Mawdsley, who recently joined us from Cambridge University, also saw his new book published, *Selling Science: Polio and the Promise of Gamma Globulin* (Rutgers University Press). The book incorporates analysis of oral history evidence related to trials of new drugs to combat polio.

The SOHC also continues to pursue and promote **oral history research** that focuses on a series of themes: working lives; deindustrialisation; the social history of health and disability; conflict, genocide and war; gender history; memory studies and heritage studies. The SOHC is collaborating in the formation of an international research network on the history of deindustrialisation, supporting a bid to the AHRC. SOHC staff and postgraduates (Lucy Brown; Andy Clark; Martin Conlon; Arthur McIvor) have spoken on aspects of oral history and deindustrialisation at several events, including the Association of Critical Heritage Studies conference in Montreal in June 2016, the

Deindustrialisation and Oral History Workshop at Newcastle University in Oct 2016 and the European Labour History Network conference in Bochum, Germany in Dec 2016. McIvor and Clark have chapters on their work coming out in early 2017 in S. High, L. MacKinnon and A. Perchard (eds), *Deindustrialization and its Aftermath* (University of British Columbia Press).

Erin Jessee continues to coordinate the centre's undergraduate classes on *Oral History Theory and Practice* and postgraduate class on *Advanced Oral History*, as well as contribute to training days and related events. She recently launched a new project on "Rwandan intimacies in historical perspective" funded by a Carnegie Trust Research Incentive Grant that examines how Rwandan traditions around marriage, formal friendships, and related social bonds have changed over time in response to shifts in the nation's political sphere since the pre-colonial period. In addition to publishing an article in *Conflict and Society* on Rwandan women genocidaires' narratives in the post-genocide period, her book *Negotiating Genocide in Rwanda: The Politics of History* is now forthcoming in 2017 with Palgrave Macmillan's Studies in Oral History series. She also has journal articles forthcoming with *Oral History Review* and *Memory Studies*, among other contributions.

The SOHC was commissioned by the international drinks company **DIAGEO** to conduct two filmed oral history research projects with former and current staff employed at several of their whisky distilleries and workshops. **David Walker**, who formerly worked on a similar research project for InverHouse Distillers, led on these projects. The first project consisted of undertaking fifteen interviews at the internationally renowned Lagavulin Distillery which this year celebrates its 200th anniversary. Once this project had concluded it was on to Abercrombies where teams of coppersmiths and engineers manufacture and maintain the stills and condensers used across the highlands and islands of Scotland. The next stop was to interview the coopers at Cambus who overhaul and maintain the huge supply of casks that are needed to hold the valuable output from the distilleries. Following on from those interviews more were conducted with the staff who operate the stills, maintain the stocks held in the warehouses and those who work in the many visitor centres. The distilleries visited included Dalwhinnie (the highest whisky distillery in Scotland), Glenkinchie, Glendullan, Mortlach and Cardhu – the home of Johnnie Walker. The project also attracted interest from Scottish Television who broadcast interviews with David and one of his interviewees. The outcomes, consisting of 52 filmed interviews and transcripts, will soon be dual archived at the Scottish Oral History Centre and the Diageo Archive at Menstrie. All of the data will be open to researchers. Following on from the success of this first phase of the project more interviews will be conducted over coming months at Talisker (Skye) and at Glen Ord and Dufftown distilleries.



SOHC Research and Knowledge Exchange Officer David Walker interviewing Thomas Logan, former stillman, at the Lagavulin Distillery (Diageo Hidden Histories Project).

Laura Kelly began her Wellcome Trust-funded research project on the history of contraception in Ireland, c.1922-92, in June 2016. From next year, this project will involve a significant amount of oral history interviews with birth control activists and Irish men and women in order to shed light on this topic. Kelly's second monograph, provisionally entitled, *The making of the Irish medical profession: medical education, identity and student culture, c. 1850-1950* will be published by Liverpool University Press in autumn 2017. The final chapter in this book utilises oral history interviews with 25 Irish doctors who graduated in the 1940s and 1950s in order to explore the history of medical student life and culture in this period.

Matt Smith has continued his interviews of American mental health professionals as part of his AHRC-funded project on the history of social psychiatry. He presented some of this research at the European Social Science History Association conference in Valencia this past spring. In June he hosted a conference entitled 'Preventing Mental Illness: Past, Present and Future', which involved a witness seminar featuring psychiatrists from the US and the UK.

Sue Morrison, SOHC Research Associate and freelance Oral History Consultant, has been involved with a number of oral history projects over the past year. These include: the 'Perth Theatre – Research, Record and Reveal' project, which encourages the community to engage with the history and heritage of Perth Theatre; East Lothian's Archive and Local History Service based at the John Gray Centre, Haddington, which is working through a number of research and oral history projects connected to the town; the Dunoon & Cowal Peninsula Oral History Project is utilising oral history methodology to explore the history of Dunoon Burgh Hall whilst it undergoes renovations; Isaro Social Integration Network's 'Everyday People: Untold Stories' focused on the experiences of migrants to Clydebank – in addition to delivering oral history training and consultancy, Sue created audio films, website content and two films, the most recent of these was selected by HLF for its 'Film Friday' schedule; 'Twechar: An oral history of a pit village' is a new project that will incorporate a range of creative elements to enhance the oral history of the village, which was home to the former Baird & Co.'s mining training centre. Information relating to these and a number of projects that are ongoing from last year may be found at: <http://www.suemorrison.co.uk>. In addition to project work, Sue delivered a six-week oral history course to service users at The Marie Trust, a wonderful charitable organisation that endeavours to alleviate homelessness and poverty in Glasgow. Finally, Sue has delivered a number of lectures across Scotland and was one of the two keynote speakers at the 46th Annual Conference of the International Association of Labour History Institutions, which focused on 'Global Connections in Labour History: Collecting and Discovering Migrant Workers' Heritage'.

Finally, the **digitisation of the SOHC Archive** is proceeding, with the management of our archive migrating to the University Archives. This has been assisted with the aid of a resources grant from the Wellcome Trust. Once the transition is complete the SOHC Archive (with interviews going back almost 20 years) will be professionally managed by archivists, with improved online access to interviews, dependent, of course, on narrators' wishes and clearance. The SOHC has added to its archive over the past year, including, notably, additions to the 'Working Lives' project interviews, a major oral history project (75 interviews) on health conducted in Glasgow over 1989-91 (donated by Glasgow GP Kenneth Collins) and a fabulous collection of 40 filmed interviews undertaken by the film-maker Martyn Cox of Second World War Special Operations Executive personnel. We are grateful to the Hudson Trust for funding to enable the latter acquisition. This adds to a substantial collection at the SOHC relating to Second World War, including of home front reserved occupation workers (over 100 interviews). The Diageo project interviews (see above) will also be added shortly. The University Archives are currently working on a full catalogue of SOHC holdings, which should be available and online in 2017.

Arthur McIvor, SOHC Director, University of Strathclyde.

October 2016