

Scottish Oral History Centre Activities, 2017

Report for the UK OHS

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 9 affiliated staff and 12 postgraduate research students deploying oral history methodologies.

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. These events have included oral history training in Old Kilpatrick and Oban, and in Glasgow for the Chinese Community Development Partnership for an exciting new oral history project on the Chinese community in West Scotland.

The SOHC was also involved in co-organising with Scotland's Sounds and the Scottish Oral History Group a one-day conference at the NLS, Kelvin Hall, in April 2017 on the theme of **Oral History & Archives: Connecting Scotland's Sounds**. This was a stimulating workshop which brought together more than 50 archivists and oral historians to discuss a range of issues associated with doing and archiving oral history.

The Centre has also continued to run its innovative **Work and Community Placement in Oral History class** in 2016-17 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*. Those involved in delivery are Erin Jessee (2016-17), Alison Chand and Angela Turner.

A series of **conferences, workshops and seminars** have been organised at the Centre over the past year. The monthly seminar series, organised by SOHC PGs Martin Conlon and Lucy Brown, included some great talks, including a filmmaker Ilona Kacieja who discussed the integration of oral testimony in her 2014 film on environmental pollution from the Ravenscraig Steelworks **Red Dust**.

Research students: The SOHC has also added to a strong and growing cohort of Masters and PhD students this year and several SOHC postgraduates have recently graduated. A special mention should go to Andy Clark who was awarded his PhD, started a first post-doc job at Stirling University and has recently been appointed as a Research Associate in oral history at Newcastle University to work with Prof Graham Smith. The wide range of oral history research projects currently being undertaken by students in the SOHC 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), 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 in 2017 include Juliette Pattinson, Arthur Mclvor and Linsey Robb, *Men in Reserve: British Civilian Masculinity in the Second World War* (Manchester University Press Jan 2017) and Erin Jessee, *Negotiating Genocide in Rwanda: The Politics of History* (Palgrave Macmillan's Studies in Oral History series. 2017).

Other research activity: 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 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 Canadian SSRC. SOHC staff and postgraduates (Lucy Brown; Andy Clark; Martin Conlon; Arthur Mclvor) have spoken on aspects of oral history and deindustrialisation at several events, including the a conference in Bochum, Germany in Dec 2016 and the European Labour History Network conference in Paris, Nov, 2017. Mclvor and Clark have chapters on their work which came out in early 2017 in S. High, L. MacKinnon and A. Perchard (eds), *The Deindustrialized World* (University of British Columbia Press, 2017).

Erin Jessee continued to coordinate the centre's undergraduate classes on *Oral History Theory and Practice* and postgraduate class on *Advanced Oral History* in 2016-17 as well as contribute to training days and related events. Her book *Negotiating*

Genocide in Rwanda (noted above) came out in 2017 with Palgrave Macmillan's Studies in Oral History series. Erin has now taken up a research post at Glasgow University.

David Walker: The SOHC was commissioned by the international drinks company **DIAGEO in 2016** 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, has continued to lead on these projects, which is currently in phase 3 with interviews scheduled at a further five plants. These are being cranked up technically with a two person shoot. All of the data will be open to researchers.

Following on from the success of this project David and the SOHC secured further contracts to work on oral history projects **with Guinness, Dublin and Irish Distillers in Cork and Dublin**. The Guinness interviews were completed in summer 2016 and are archived at the Guinness Archive at the Storehouse, Dublin.

Laura Kelly began her Wellcome Trust-funded research project on the history of contraception in Ireland, c.1922-92, in June 2016. This ongoing project involves 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 has presented some of this research at several conferences including the European Social Science History Association conference in Valencia. He currently has a new project on the go – a Wellcome Trust Seed Award funded project on Sport, mental health and sexuality which incorporates a number of oral interviews.

Sue Morrison, SOHC Research Associate and freelance Oral History Consultant, has been involved with a number of oral history projects over the past year.

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. Amongst the archived material are 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. 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 2018.

Arthur McIvor, SOHC Director, University of Strathclyde.

October 2017