

Working with Narrative, Memory and Life History: A Postgraduate and Graduate Afternoon for Sharing Projects, Skills and Job Experiences

The Centre for Life History and Life Writing Research (University of Sussex) and the Centre for Research in Memory, Narrative and Histories (University of Brighton) are delighted to co-host this mini-conference.

13:00 - 13:15 Welcome from Margaretta Jolly, Graham Dawson and Sam Carroll

13:15 - 14:30 Presentations from:

**Jenna Bailey
Daisy Asquith
Edward Knight
Sue Maclaine
Jo Palache**

14:30 - 15:00 Discussion

15:00 - 15:30 Break with refreshments

15:30 - 16:45 15 minute presentations from:

**Frances Cornford
Noelle McCormack
Lucy Pearce
Catherine Page
Sarah Hitchings and Jenny Stewart**

16:45 - 17:15 Discussion

17:15 - 17:30 Round up session followed by visit to pub (The Basketmakers).

Daisy Asquith (University of Brighton)

Nothing Worse Should Happen: Making a Documentary about Holocaust Survivors

Daisy intended her MA as a way out of her established job making documentaries for television where she found telling stories to order frustrating and demoralising. This course made her regard her work in a different way; reinvigorating it with new ideas and approaches. Daisy recently applied for a history commission with Channel 4 on the present day lives of Holocaust survivors. She will discuss how her work and study have interacted and how she has learned to be robust about the way she wants to tell a story. She will show a short clip from the film in order to demonstrate how it was hugely enriched by further study.

Jenna Bailey (University of Sussex)

Can Any Academic Help Me? A Personal Perspective on Balancing Academic and Commercial Interests in Life History Research

Since graduating, the two main projects that Jenna has worked on have been her first book, 'Can Any Mother Help Me?' and forthcoming second publication, a band biography about the Ivy Benson Band. Jenna will discuss her experience of researching and publishing life history based books that are geared toward a popular audience. She will focus on the lessons learned while transitioning between the academic arena and the world of commercial publications, looking both at issues of content selection and research practice. Finally, she will touch upon her experience of working as a consultant on both a theatrical adaptation and television screenplay of her first book.

Frances Cornford (University of Sussex)

Crafts Lives at the British Library

Frances will give an overview of the Crafts Lives project, which is part of National Life Stories at the British Library. She will focus on what the project interviewer's job involves, the nature of the collected interviews and discuss some of the challenges of interviewing craftspeople. She will suggest some approaches to encouraging the interviewee to speak about ingrained habits and skills that operate at a non-verbal level.

Sarah Hitchings and Jenny Stewart (University of Sussex)

Turning an MA in Life History Research into a business

Sarah and Jenny will talk about their Life History business 'Spoken Memoirs'; their motivation for setting it up, how it evolved and some of the challenges they have faced along the way. They will also share their successes and the positive support network established with other students. They will discuss the discrepancy between the academic world and the 'real' world and some of the strengths and limitations of an MA course in preparing students for a future career in life history.

Edward Knight (University of Brighton)

Writing and Narcissism: Adventures in Sitting Down and not Speaking to Anyone

Since graduating Ed has written a novel, which is to be published in the Autumn. He will present on how his experience of the MA and his chosen area of study led to setting the style of the novel. Ed will discuss the difference between writing - or more broadly 'creating' - and the more reserved and objective methods of academic research; where the two sides coincide and the confusing territory of how we wish to relate to the world we describe and where our reserved detachment collapses, both as writers and academics.

Sue MacLaine (University of Sussex)

The me in you and the you in me

Sue MacLaine is a writer and performer. Her artistic practice is located within the auto/biographical construct and has been informed and influenced by her MA Studies in Life History and Life Writing at the University of Sussex. For this presentation she will focus on her current production 'Still Life: An Audience with Henrietta Moraes' to example the journey from autobiographical impulse through academic research to biographical creative product.

Noelle McCormack (University of Sussex)

Life History and Disability

Since graduating in 2007 Noelle has been involved in a variety of life history projects concerned with recording the stories of people with disabilities and dementia. One funded project supported her to record the story of a mother of a profoundly disabled child, resulting in a multi-media exhibition 'Inside My Dance' at the Jubilee Library. Noelle will discuss her present project work where she supports mixed ability learning disabled adults to tell their stories using sound, film and photography.

Catherine Page (University of Sussex)

A Licence to Explore

Since graduating Catherine has written a street history 'My House, My Street' and has interviewed for the 'Speaking Up for Disability' project. She is now working up her own oral history research concerned with the disappearing lifestyles of West Sussex. Catherine is on the management committee of QueenSparkBooks. She will discuss how the MA in Life History Research has given her natural inclination to enquire in to other people's affairs, a quasi-official status.

Jo Palache (University of Sussex)

From individual experience to public perception

Jo Palache shares her experience of working on oral history projects in the museum environment, and in particular collecting interviews to engage the public and provide an exhibition narrative. She will discuss the tension that arises in achieving the archival depth appropriate for future researchers and upholding the integrity of the individual story whilst providing the brevity of expression required for museum displays.

Lucy Pearce (University of Brighton)

Moving between two worlds - activism and academia

Since graduating with a degree in African and Caribbean Studies, Lucy has worked as a professional campaigner. Fifteen years later she returned to study part time, whilst continuing to work part time in campaigning. She will explore how she has experienced these two separate yet connected parts of her life, their complementarities, and tensions. Key words will include reflection and language. Lucy does not know where her studies will take her, and looks forward to questions, comments, and thoughts on this creative tension between professional activism and academia.