

Hearing Her: New Feminist Oral Histories

This symposium will explore why and how oral history has been privileged as a methodology for capturing women activists' experience in very different countries and contexts.

We will compare interviewing, archiving, interpretation and publicising methods and identify good practice that we can share. We will also identify strategies for future oral-historical research on transnational and cross-cultural feminism.

Featuring seven innovative feminist oral history projects

- ▶ Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project
- ▶ The China Women's University Women's Oral History
- ▶ Unfinished Histories: British Alternative Theatre, 1968-88
- ▶ Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement: The Heart of the Race
- ▶ The Trade Union Congress Recording Women's Voices Series
- ▶ Subverting Stereotypes: Asian Women's Political Activism in the UK
- ▶ Unbecoming Men: Masculinities and the Women's Liberation Movement, 1970-1985

Join us

Date	Thursday 11 April 2013
Time	09:30-16:30
Venue	University of Sussex, Silverstone Building, Room 309
Cost and registration	The day is free but registration beforehand is essential. Please contact Margareta Jolly at m.jolly@sussex.ac.uk

This event is co-sponsored by The University of Sussex (Centre for Life History and Life Writing Research and the Dept of History) and The University of Brighton (Centre for Memory, Narrative, History). We also thank the British Academy for its generous contribution.

Further information

<http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/mnh>
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/clhlwr/>



Hearing Her: New Feminist Oral Histories: Conference Programme

09:30 **Registration and coffee**

10:00 **Welcome and introductions**

10:30-11:00 **Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project**
Dr Margaretta Jolly and Dr Rachel Cohen, University of Sussex

Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, directed by the University of Sussex, and partnered with The British Library, and The Women's Library, London. The British Library will archive 60 interviews of core activists and intellectuals across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, including with Susie Orbach (London Women's Therapy Centre), Jenni Murray, (Woman's Hour), Barbara Jones (Hilda's Builders), Jan McKenley (National Abortion Campaign), Jane Hutt (Welsh Assembly) and Rowena Arshad (Scottish Equal Opportunities Commission).

11:00-12:00 **The China Women's University Women's Oral History**
(Translation time allowed)

Professor Li Hongtao; Dr Wang Ying; Dr. Liu Zhaohui, China Women's University
The China Women's University Women's Oral History, funded by the PRC state Finance Department in partnership with The China Women's University, has collected 100 lives of women aged 70 or above, including women's rights activists, Communist Party pioneers and ordinary women whose stories document extraordinary changes in marriage, motherhood and sexuality over the last half century. Recordings are archived at China Women's University.

12:00-12:30 **Unfinished Histories: A History of British Alternative Theatre, 1968-88**
Professor Susan Croft and Jess Higgs, Independent Curators]

A project recording British Alternative Theatre, 1968 -88, through interviews and the collecting of archive material, funded by Heritage Lottery. Companies involved were among some of the first Black, Asian, lesbian, gay, women's, disabled, political, experimental, TIE and community-based theatre groups seen in Britain. Work ranged from experiments in physical and visual theatre or performance art, to vernacular drama, agit-prop and satire, championing a generation of artists whose work has influenced and shaped present day theatre.

12.30-13:30 **Lunch will be provided free for everyone registered**

13:30-14:00 **The Heart of the Race: The Black Cultural Archives' Oral History of**
the Black Women's Movement

Dr Suzanne Scafe and Janet Browne, London South Bank University and Black Cultural Archives

As part of the Documenting the Archives project undertaken by Black Cultural Archives in 2007 and based on The Heart Of The Race by Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie & Suzanne Scafe (Virago, 1985), which had examined Black women's lives in Britain using oral testimony, a series of over 30 oral history interviews were made. The aim of the project was to collect testimony from a range of Black women involved in the



movement for the rights of Black women in the UK, which covered activism, organising, campaigning and lobbying at a grassroots, national or international level.

14:00-14:30

Subverting Stereotypes: Asian Women's Political Activism In The UK - A Comparison of Grunwick And Gate Gourmet

Dr Anitha Sundari, University of Lincoln, Professor Ruth Pearson University of Leeds and Professor Linda McDowell, University of Oxford

The overall aim of the proposed research was to challenge generalisations about gender, ethnicity and work and stereotypical representations of Asian women workers in Great Britain through an analysis of their experiences in workplace struggles during the Grunwick strike in 1976-7 and the Gate Gourmet strike in 2005. This included exploring Asian women's identities as waged workers and active participants in labour struggles and how this changed over time/ between generations through the collection of oral histories. The project was led by the Universities of Oxford and Leeds and funded by the AHRC.

14:30-15:00

The Trade Union Congress Recording Women's Voices and The Equal Pay Story

Jo Morris, Jenny Morgan and Chris Coates, TUC Library and Independent Oral historians

These films in the TUC Recording Women's History series make up a unique oral history archive. They explore the trade union struggle for equal pay through the eyes of participants - by industrial action (Ford, Dagenham) and the law courts (Julie Hayward, Belfast cleaners, Hull fish packers, speech therapists, Yorkshire Dinner Ladies). Funding from the European Social Fund/Equal also supported a longer film 'The Story of Equal Pay', and a new microsite within The Union Makes Us Strong website.

15:05-15:30

Tea and discussion: Why feminism and oral history? Do our projects have anything in common? What is new about our new feminist oral histories?

15:30-16:00

Unbecoming Men: Masculinities and the Women's Liberation Movement, 1970-1985

Dr Lucy Delap, Kings College London

This oral history-based research project investigates the involvement of men in the feminist movements of the late twentieth century. The Women's Liberation Movement has recently begun to prompt extensive historical examination, aided by the depositing of personal papers and the gathering of oral histories. As yet, there has been no investigation of men's role in this, despite the extensive network of men's centres, men's groups, national and local conferences, men's childcare initiatives, and the men's therapy movement.

16:00-16:30

Closing discussion: How do we archive and publicise and who are our audiences? How can we join together?