

**ORAL  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY**

**Annual  
Conference  
2016**

#ohsconf16

Image: Brett Jordan – www.flickr.com/photos/x1brett

# Beyond Text in the Digital Age? Oral History, Images and the Written Word

**University of Roehampton, 8-9 July 2016**

## **CALL FOR PAPERS**

Raphael Samuel's essay 'The Perils of the Transcript' (1972) drew attention to the limitations of using written versions of oral history interviews. The standard practice of transcribing or at least summarising interviews, and then selecting quotations from those texts for exhibitions, articles and books based around such interviews, meant the auditory dimension of oral history was for decades notoriously underused. Digital technologies, however, and especially the internet, make the 'raw' and 'cooked' materials – audio and video oral history interviews as well as extracts – much more readily available, as Michael Frisch and other commentators have observed. Does this signal the death of the written text?

The conference will investigate the extent to which the written word is

redundant in oral history. Should we still transcribe or even summarise? What is the status of textual representations of our interviews in the digital age? We also want to revisit the relationship between oral history and text more broadly. Another conference theme will therefore explore the challenges and opportunities of using oral history recordings, and the various ways in which interviews can be used effectively alongside other kinds of text – diaries, letters, novels, maps, photographs, films and social media, for example – from collection, through archiving to dissemination. What benefits or problems do we encounter?

In addition, we encourage sessions on new technological developments, including re-use, mash-ups, social networking and the new ethical and legal challenges all this brings.

We invite proposals on related themes, such as the following:

- Archiving oral history interviews with other texts, eg diaries, photographs (from storing and cataloguing to making accessible to wider audiences)
- Ethical implications, advantages and disadvantages of online access to recordings
- Interpreting and working in more integrated ways with other texts
- Exhibiting or otherwise disseminating oral history interviews alongside other texts
- Oral histories of writers, and readers (eg to cover memories of reading, being read to, and participation in reading groups)
- Oral history and life writing
- Oral history and social media
- Oral history and fiction
- Folklore and oral history

**HE Strand:** This conference will also be the first to include a strand to develop the Oral History Society Higher Education network, and we welcome proposals to discuss any aspect of teaching and learning oral history in HE. If you would like to discuss your ideas, please contact Jenny Harding: [j.harding@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:j.harding@londonmet.ac.uk)

All proposals for oral history-based contributions, including papers, panels, presentations, workshops, posters and displays should be submitted (maximum 250 words) by **18 December 2015** to [belinda@essex.ac.uk](mailto:belinda@essex.ac.uk)

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