

Keeping and making diaries: historical sources and perspectives A two-day international conference

Churchill College, 23-24 March 2022

Conference organisers

This conference is co-organised by Myriam Boussahba (GRIC/ Université Le Havre Normandie; LARCA-CNRS 8225/ Université de Paris, France), Eve Colpus (University of Southampton, UK) and Allen Packwood (Director of Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge University, UK).

List of abstracts

Keynote speakers' biographies and abstracts of talks

Claire Langhamer (Director of the Institute of Historical Research, UK)

Biography: Claire Langhamer is Director of the Institute of Historical Research and a Trustee of the Mass Observation Archive. She is interested in everyday life and emotions in modern Britain. She has used the life writing and diaries collected by Mass Observation to write about a range of topics including love, happiness, home, and children's lives. Her current project is a history of feeling in the workplace; her most recent book was *Class of 37*, written with Hester Barron.

Keynote talk: Feelings at Work in Mass-Observation's Diaries

From its inception in 1937 until the present day, the social investigative organisation, Mass-Observation has generated and collected very many diaries, of many different types. These texts sit in a liminal space between private reflection and public record: diaries were explicitly solicited, diarists were (initially at least) coached as to their contents, and the texts were mined for Mass-Observation's many publications and reports. They were written for wildly different reasons, adopt a diverse range of styles, and offer varying degrees of introspection. In fact they raise important definitional questions about what a diary might, or might not, be. They are also awash with feeling.

This paper interrogates the work of feeling in Mass Observation's diaries from three perspectives: the methodological, the empirical and the relational. First, it examines the status of feeling within Mass Observation's research method and explains why the organization believed it to be such a useful category of analysis. Second, it discusses the emotional texture of the diaries written by Mass-Observers and considers the work that historians might do with this material. Third, it explores the role of feeling in binding together Mass Observation, its writers and its researchers; in the mid-twentieth century moment and beyond. The paper suggests that the organization's work with feeling anticipated some of the ways in which feeling would come to be considered a privileged form of knowledge in twenty-first century Britain.

Denis Peschanski (European Center for Sociology and Political Sciences, Paris, Sorbonne, EHESS and CNRS, France)

Biography: Denis Peschanski is senior researcher in history at the CNRS, European Center for Sociology and Political Sciences (Paris, Sorbonne, EHESS and CNRS). A specialist in French history during the Second World War (Vichy, Resistance, Holocaust studies), in historical methodology (archives, historians and experts in society etc.), in police and in French communism, he has published nearly thirty books and one hundred articles throughout his career. A specialist in memory studies, he is driving a transdisciplinary technological platform named MATRICE, and, with the neuropsychologist Francis Eustache, a large-scale programme dealing with memory of 11/13 2015 terrorist attacks against Paris.

Keynote talk: The paths of memory and history

As a historian of communism, a historian of the Second World War and then a promoter of new memory sciences, I have been constantly confronted with the question of testimony as individual memory and its interaction with collective memory. I would like to return to what made me very reluctant about testimony as a source for the historian, and then to question the truth of the witness as an object of transdisciplinary research. At the end, as at the beginning, the double question of the relationship between testimony and truth and the articulation between individual and collective memory is raised. It is at the heart of vast research programmes that rely on an epistemological wager and new conceptual tools to highlight the pillars of the new memory sciences that I am calling for.

Speakers' abstracts of papers

Aparna Bandyopadhyay (Diamond Harbour Women's University, West Bengal, India), *'Diaries as a source of intimate history in colonial Bengal'*

The proposed paper emphasises the importance of women's diaries as a source of a history of intimate history. My research in women's lived experiences of heterosexual intimacy in colonial Bengal was initially plagued by a paucity of sources. I had relied on autobiographies but I was disappointed. A woman writing her 'self', with one or two exceptions, chose not to reveal the intimate aspects of her life to the reading public. They were, however, more candid and less inhibited about expressing themselves in a diary. My paper will focus on diaries penned by four Bengali women in the early twentieth century - *Amiyabalar Diary* (Amiyabala's Diary) by Amiyabala Devi, Subarnaprababha Das's *Dinolipi* (Diary), the novelist, Nirupama Devi's diary and the poet, Priyambada Devi's *Notebook*. Amiyabala started writing her diary after she was deserted by her husband. Subarnaprabha's *Dinolipi* reveals her growing unhappiness in a marriage she had entered of her own choice. Nirupama Devi and Priyambada Devi, widowed at an early age, outwardly conformed to societal prescriptions of austere and celibate widowhood. Their diaries, however, reveal their cravings for love, their inner turmoil, the angst of conformity and the agony of self-denial. My paper will examine how diaries unveiled women's turbulent mindscapes and their daily acts of contestation with repressive patriarchal mores that contrasted with the ideal of passive, de-eroticised womanhood upheld in this milieu. Diaries, my paper will emphasise, serve as an 'archive of emotions' for historians seeking to excavate the subjectivities of women in the context of heterosexual intimate relations in colonial Bengal.

Toni Booth and Claire Mayoh (National Science and Media Museum, UK), '*Cinema diaries as historical resources*'

This paper examines the potential of diaries in the context of business to function as a rich historical source. Cinema was a burgeoning market of mass entertainment in the early twentieth century; the cinema diary, published by film distributors and issued to local cinema managers, was a core record informing business practice. The standard printed diary gave managers the ability to record films shown, film number, duration and distributor. Managers used the diaries to forecast film scheduling to sustain and attract audiences. The popularity of a film is never guaranteed and a manager's knowledge of their local audience's film preferences could make or break their cinema operation. Cinema diaries were created as a business record; however, this belies the rare insight they provide into the development of cinema, allied with social and economic events of the time.

This premise is evidenced through examining the Harold 'Harry' Sanders Archive (held at the National Science and Media Museum, Bradford). Sanders managed several cinemas across the UK from 1913-1963, a period which saw huge advances in film technology and a surge in cinema attendance. Sander's cinema diaries, dating from 1920s-1950s, reach beyond film showing details and cinema management. They evidence his broad engagement with audiences including non-film events, advances in film technologies (sound/colour), local and national events (particularly during the Second World War) and even weather conditions. This study concludes that cinema diaries are multifaceted, documenting cinema management development whilst offering a rich seam of historical data for the times.

Kate Bredeson (Reed College, USA), '*Judith Malina's lifetime diaries as historical chronicle, company history, and personal poems*'

My paper features an analysis of my ongoing process to edit Judith Malina's lifetime diaries, a discussion of diary-keeping as a practice (drawing on Alexandra Johnson's work), and my argument that Malina's diaries offer a historical chronicle, a history of her theatre company, and form a lifelong personal poem. Judith Malina (1926-2015) was a radical German-American activist, innovative woman stage director, and a visionary artist who in 1947 co-founded New York experimental theater company, The Living Theatre. Over the course of her career, Malina changed the international theater landscape through her collective nonviolent anarchist art. She outlined her passion and vision in her daily diary entries, which I am editing for publication. Malina published two versions of her edited diaries, 1947-57, and August 1968, which are major texts in the fields of theater history and cultural criticism; my book volumes expand on these and share her lifetime writings, giving a window into her candid observations about political and social movements, as well as records of the daily life of her theater company. My paper discusses both my working process and the importance of Malina's diary-keeping to theatre and cultural histories.

Sophie Bridges (Churchill Archives Centre, UK), '*"To explore the past as I live my present": the diary of Phyllis Willmott*'

Phyllis Willmott (1922-2013) was a social researcher who was closely connected with the Institute of Community Studies in Bethnal Green, London, whilst also pursuing an independent career as an expert on social services. She was a lifelong diarist, keeping a diary from 1938 until her death in 2013. This paper will explore the long-term nature of her diary keeping,

examining her motivations, particularly in relation to emotions, memory and identity, and looking at continuities and changes in the form and content of her diary over time. It will also consider the interconnectedness of her diary with her other life writing projects, including memoir, biography and family history, and the relationship between her diary and her expertise in recording life experiences and making observations in the course of social work and social research. Finally, it will touch on her own reading of the diary, her sharing of it with other readers, and her imagining of a future audience, in particular the preservation of her diary at Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, and the associated archival processes of collection development, description and access.

David Brown (University of Southampton, UK), '*Making sense and use of Lord Shaftesbury's diary*'

The Victorian philanthropist, the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury (1801-85) kept an extensive diary for more than half a century but had an equivocal relationship with it. Though he clearly felt keeping the journal was a duty (echoing notions of the diary as an account book of time) he was less certain about why, and for whom, he wrote. He told his official biographer that his volumes of diary were 'of no value to anyone but myself,' and 'they have never been seen by anybody, and they never will be. They are a mass of contradictions; thoughts jotted down as they passed through my mind, and contradicted perhaps on the next page – records of passing events written on the spur of the moment, and private details which no one could understand but myself.' This very personal idea about a book of (or about) the self is superficially plausible, but Shaftesbury knew that the personal journal had become much more than this. He declared his intention to destroy the diaries several times, but in fact preserved them and rather than keep them for himself in the end handed them over to his biographer to use, which that biographer did, liberally. Shaftesbury's diary is a number of things simultaneously: autobiography, general historical record, aide memoire, spiritual journal (or dialogue with God), and a medium for self-reflection, self-development and self-fashioning. This paper looks at this specific diary, which I am editing for publication, and asks who and what was (is) it for? and how are we to use it as a source?

Kathryn Carter (Wilfrid Laurier University Canada), '*Reconsidering a genealogy of diary writing in Canada*'

One widely accepted version of the history of diary writing in Canada begins with the records left by explorers and fur traders through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One reason is that these records were *kept*. Diary writing was a mandated task, part of the colonial and mercantile project with which explorers were engaged. Their journals were sent back to London, England, and archived at the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company, creating a record of early Canadian diary writing decidedly geographical and commercial in its focus. This political valence—the focus of journal-keeping on the expansion of a fur trading enterprise which later merged with the goals of empire building—left a significant imprint, shaping Canada's national history of diary writing in particular ways.

However, the canon of Canadian diary writing must confront this confounding factor: the diaries that were lost, never written, or written in a language other than English complicate what we can say about the national history of this genre and its intersections with history. This paper will propose, then, a genealogy of *absent* diaries. Recent scholarship (in the award-winning collection *Moving Archives*, edited by Linda Morra) encourages researchers to create

intentional archives to answer these gaps and absences. Is it possible, that sites of [colonial] trauma might be a “foundation for creating a way of transforming loss into collective memory”? The diaries of the fur trade are penned at sites of trauma in Canadian history, and this means scholars must look there in order to reconsider and offer alternatives to the existing genealogy of diary writing in Canada.

Lilith Cooper (University of Kent, UK), ‘Daily squares: Covid comic diaries on Instagram’

During the first UK-wide COVID-19 lockdown, which began in March 2020, single panel or short comics started turning up on my Instagram feed, recording and sharing the day to day experiences of their makers. These comics blend accounts of working from home, quarantine, long covid and daily walks with social and political commentaries, intimate personal reflection and comedy. Bringing together the comics shared on Instagram during 2020-2021 by Monique Jackson (*Still Ill Corona Diary*), Holly Casio (*Cool Schmool Comics*), Natasha Natarajan (*FML Comics*) and Rachael House, this paper will consider this form of diary keeping, and how framing these comics as “liminal affective technologies” (Stenner, 2017) illuminates some of their personal and social use. These comics artists utilised a range of digital and physical mediums to create their comics and they also sit within a wider landscape of diary comics. They are linked by the ways their form was shaped by Instagram, where photos are normally shared in a square, and the specific context of the COVID-19 lockdown. Building on work within graphic medicine, this paper presents a reading of how these comics makers engage specifically with physical and mental health. Through an (auto)ethnographic and phenomenological approach, it explores how COVID-19 Instagram diary comics inform notions of sharing, disclosure and enclosure, and the dialogic in diary keeping, and their significance within the extra-ordinary and yet everyday liminal period of lockdown. It will end by considering some of the challenges of collecting and archiving these comics, placing this within wider discussions about ethical collecting during Covid.

Angelina Giret (Université Le Havre Normandie, France), ‘The journals of Honoria Lawrence (1837-1854): between domesticity and travelling, the adventures of a British woman in India’

Honoria Lawrence started her first journal on her journey to India, a journey she took to marry her future husband, the addressee of her journals. Lawrence wrote before the conventional date of the Raj, before the 1857 Mutiny, which is considered as a great historical shift for colonisation in India - and more particularly for British women’s colonisation. After this event, staying at home became the best way to remain safe for these women. For Lawrence; the shift can be noticed in several types of sources, including diaries written before the British Raj. Her writings are a testimony of the way British women lived in India before the Raj with the possibility to travel. Lawrence was a female *Robinson Crusoe* who followed her husband in his military missions in India and even in Nepal. Moreover, she did not put domesticity at the centre of her work, choosing to write only briefly about chores or the relationship with the servants. Lawrence also differed from her post-1857 contemporaries. Not only did she adopt an ‘anthropological’ point of view through observations and drawings of the population, but Lawrence also analysed the Indian fauna and flora of the places she visited as a naturalist would do.

Matt Houlbrook (University of Birmingham, UK), 'On not writing a diary in autumn 1918'

What did it mean to not write a diary in autumn 1918? Or, to put it differently, how do we make sense of a sequence of blank diary pages in a volume that is otherwise filled with cramped handwriting in blunt pencil?

For many months Gwen Wells recorded the progress of the Great War in a One-Page-A-Day Onoto Diary. A haphazard chronicler, she bore witness to daily life in a nation at war from her vantage point in a west London suburb. Courtship and marriage, the dynamics of domestic life, gossip about friends, and her work in the Westminster offices of the new Department for Scientific and Industrial Research – these familiar rhythms of everyday life were punctured by the sound of air raids and the sight of bombed buildings, visits to wounded friends in hospital, and the unpredictable letters and leave of her brother. In October 1918, however, Gwen Wells's diary-writing faded out, petered out, and stopped. Diary pages filled to bursting with tiny writing turned into blank white sheets. Later – perhaps when some of her strength had returned – Gwen Wells revisited these empty pages, annotating “Now starts a good fortnight of ‘flu with all its symptoms” across the space for 30 October. Her body had been overcome by the virulent contagion known as “Spanish influenza.” Beginning among the army camps of France and Belgium in spring 1918, by the end of 1920 this pandemic had killed 250,000 people in Britain and as many as 100 million worldwide.

Focusing on the diary of Gwen Wells, this paper takes up the challenge of reading a series of empty pages at a particular (and particularly freighted) historical moment. A history of unspoken thoughts, unarticulated sensations, and evidential silences, I explore the ways in which acute illness could be registered and written. In setting this diary against Virginia Woolf's essay “On Being Ill”, I show how the frayed edges of intimacy mark the difficulties of understanding the individual experience of a global pandemic. Not writing a diary might prompt us to interrogate the ways in which historical subjects recognised decline when they saw or felt it. So, too, might we trace the interchange between the individual and broader patterns of social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental life in order to understand what it meant to inhabit a body (or a society) in decline. These thoughts on not writing a diary in autumn 1918 are, in short, the first steps towards a cultural history of decline.

Frank A. J. L. James (University College London, UK), 'When do notebooks become a diary? The example of Michael Faraday'

The nineteenth-century English natural philosopher Michael Faraday (1791-1867) kept detailed notebooks of his experimentation and theorising between 1820 and 1862. In them he recorded, amongst other things, his discoveries of electro-magnetic rotations and induction (the principles behind the electric motor, transformer and generator), the universal nature of magnetism and the formulation of field theory, one of the cornerstones of modern physics. In most of the notebooks he used a sophisticated information retrieval system by numbering each paragraph (16041 in total) which he used over the decades to index and cross reference. The ten manuscript notebooks (held by the Royal Institution and now inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register) were published in the 1930s in seven large quarto volumes (reprinted 2008) as *Faraday's Diary*. This talk will consider how Faraday developed his system of notetaking (which while not unique at the time, was certainly the most extensive), how he used them, what he achieved and, finally, how and why they became a printed diary, illustrating the closeness of the scientific notebook and diary genres.

Amanda Jones (Churchill Archives Centre, UK), 'Diary writing, war and witness: how two women writers used their diaries to explore the experience of war and memory'

This paper examines the role of diary writing as a form of writer's witness in the diaries kept by women writers during the Second World War. The first diary documents the experiences of its writer, Lady Mary Spears who set up and ran a mobile military hospital. Mary Spears was a published writer under the name of Mary Borden and had also run a mobile military hospital in France during the First World War. The second diarist is Noel Streatfeild, who wrote extensively for children (most famously Ballet Shoes) but also wrote for adults. During the Blitz, Streatfeild worked as an ARP warden and volunteered extensively in the East End of London.

This paper examines how Borden and Streatfeild use their diaries to record and witness an extraordinary period in their lives. Uniting archival material and published works, it looks what they wrote and also, what they omitted.

Borden's wartime diary is held at Churchill Archives Centre. The diary referred to here opens with the outbreak of the Second World War and records how she set up and served with the Hadfield-Spears Mobile Military Hospital. This paper will draw together themes and connections to the diary which was written by Noel Streatfeild in London during the Blitz. Whilst these two diarists came from apparently different backgrounds, they share more than might first appear. This paper identifies a common dialogue with their time and finds each writer in her own way to be using her diary to record and process their experiences of the war.

James Keating (University of New South Wales, Australia), 'The diary as a flexible archive: Vida Goldstein and the curation of a political self in the fin-de-siecle British World'

Among the few documents left for posterity by Vida Goldstein (1869–1949), the trailblazing Australian suffragist, pacifist, and journalist, are a series of diaries and notebooks. Each coincided with a formative moment in her career: her 1902 tour of the United States; her first Senate campaign in 1903; the conclusion of Victorian women's campaign for state suffrage in 1908; and her time as a Women's Social and Political Union organiser in 1911.

Victorian women's diaries, whether meant for discovery or not, are often interpreted as personal documents; spaces for documenting self-improvement or recording thoughts difficult to express in cultures that lionised feminine modesty and restraint. Yet, as the events associated with each text, Goldstein's bequest of them to the world's then foremost suffrage archive, London's Women's Service Library, and her practice of interleaving newspaper cuttings, photographs, acquaintances' inscriptions with her marginalia suggest these were intended as records of a political life. This paper will situate Goldstein's diaristic practice alongside those of her contemporaries and consider her bricolage as an example of Antipodean suffragists' 'flexible archives'. Following Goldstein's adoption of the formal and physical conventions of the diary, I trace her curation of a political self, complicating the notion that she remains 'curiously absent' from her own archive. Through collecting, clipping, pasting, and annotating—second nature to a newspaperwoman—I argue that Goldstein not only authored accounts of the Australian and international campaigns for the vote, but left a record of herself, albeit one told through the words of others.

Helen McCarthy (University of Cambridge, UK), 'The self of record: revisiting the diaries of Beatrice Webb'

The diaries kept by the Fabian socialist Beatrice Webb (1858-1943) over the course of a long life and career are well-known to historians of modern Britain and to literary scholars interested in women's writing. They have a complex archival and publishing history, beginning as personal manuscript diaries before being revised and heavily excerpted by Webb in her 1926 autobiography, *My Apprenticeship*, and the posthumously published second volume, *Our Partnership*. The diaries were subsequently edited and selections published by Margaret Cole, a friend of the Webbs, in the 1950s, and then again in a fuller, four volume version in the 1980s, issued by the feminist publishing house, Virago Press. Beatrice's travel diaries, which were co-written with her husband, Sidney, have been published separately in stages, each with a different editor. In 2012, the London School of Economics digitised the full manuscript diaries and made them freely available online.

My paper considers this complex publishing and archival history in light of wider debates amongst historians about life-writing, selfhood and subjectivity. I argue that Webb's diary-keeping should be understood as encompassing a range of life-writing 'projects', each of which produced a different kind of self. I briefly describe these projects as 'the solitary self', the 'relational self' and the 'self of record', paying particular attention to the last of these. When did Webb begin to imagine that she was writing for a wider – and future – public? Was the diary conceived as a form of autobiography from the outset? How did editorial interventions after her death produce new 'versionings' of Beatrice's self of record, and how do those versionings shape our encounter with Beatrice when we study her as a diarist? *Who* exactly do we encounter?

Kirsten Mulrennan and Rachel Murphy (University of Limerick, Ireland), 'Opening a window to the past: creating an online research guide to using diaries for historical research'

This paper presents a collaboration between two departments at the University of Limerick: Special Collections and Archives at the Glucksman Library and the Department of History. The project aimed to facilitate excellence in teaching and learning by creating an online research guide that draws on the cognate disciplines of Archives and History.

The online resource (<https://specialcollections.ul.ie/research-diaries/>) was designed to assist students and researchers at all levels with their research. It is based on three diaries held in the University of Limerick's Special Collections and Archives Department. Using these diaries as working examples, it aims to build basic archival and information literacy, and outline useful historical research methods. Its five lessons offer both a broad introduction to the work of the Special Collections and Archives Department and its collections, as well as specific research advice relating to historic research methods, the consultation of archival diaries as sources for social history, and guidance relating to the reading and transcription of archival sources.

In this paper we discuss rationale for creating the research guide and the steps taken to develop it. Drawing on feedback from students and staff, we assess the extent to which the project has achieved its intended aims.

The project was funded by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in Ireland. It coincided with the launch of the University of Limerick's new Digital Library, which

hosts a number of digitised collections from the Special Collections and Archives Department, including the three diaries included in the resource.

Polly North (The Great Diary Project, UK), *'Practices and politics of archival collecting: how does a diary become an archive and what is a "diary"?'*

This paper explores issues raised by archiving and reading diaries. Two fundamental characteristics of the form are at the paper's heart. Firstly, diaries almost always bear the marks of their authors' personalities: though akin, no diaries are quite alike. Such a host is a bunch of exceptions, each singularly disproving a rule and all united by being so different from each other. Handling this looseness requires its own disciplines. Secondly and further to this point, the diary will almost always be vitally personal, and dealing with it often touches on important, fascinating but ambiguous ideas. Even a casual, let alone a serious, diary encounter quickly leads to an interrogation of what it is to discern, verify and describe the nature and content of our human experience. Put academically, this exploration quite quickly becomes epistemological and ontological.

The first section of the paper is a summary of the practicalities of indexing diaries and making them publicly available. The middle section develops ideas posed in the first with an analysis of theoretical concerns shared by diary historians, critics and archivists, including ambiguities around honesty and self-deception; subjectivity and objectivity; and facticity or historical reliability and fiction. Much of this equivocal terrain derives from the acutely personal nature of diary writing. In this context, the form (and truth) is well-described as a hybrid of fiction-fact and is an apt display of the play between, what Einstein described in his diary as, the "physically real" and "psychologically real". Introspective diarists and scholars of diary will, whether intentionally or unintentionally, turn over similar questions (including our issue with being both the object and the subject of our perceptions, thoughts, critical judgements and experiences). However, their language, approaches, tools and goals will differ. For example, much as most or many diary critics theorise the practice of diary writing and the nature and content of human experience in the abstract, at least some diarists practice or play out the same or similar concepts in their jottings. Diarists do so in a very real and visceral sense and even as they also and differently consider it in the abstract. A deliberately introspective diarist will often work spontaneously and perhaps with a half-defined purpose, meanderingly; they will bring an earnestness and energy to the meanings they find that has its own eventfulness and validity. Thus, the diary often appeals and applies to any discipline that, at some point, considers the contours of human experience and the critic might find much in the modus operandi of diarists, particularly when it comes to developing interpretative strategies.

The final section suggests fresh approaches to the ambiguities we inevitably face when discussing a form defined by its variety. We also describe how these approaches can perhaps help us navigate the ineluctable and tricky questions diaries often lead to.

Jérôme Ordoño (Université Le Havre Normandie, France), *'Diaries and male homosexuality: a confidential matter?'*

It seems the way diaries talk about male homosexuality at the beginning of the 1950s is linked to the criminal laws still prevailing in Great Britain and it might explain this feeling of a confidential matter. This paper aims to question three aspects of the link between male homosexuality and diaries: the way they talk about the matter; the format(s) of the intimate story; the vocabulary they use to talk about it.

This paper uses, as a starting point, the recent discovery done « by mistake » by researchers at the University of Oxford of a 1810 diary talking about homosexuality as a freer and more natural subject than it is a century and a half later. What's more, is it possible not to find the subject only « by mistake » in ordinary people's diaries when the diary is not written by a well-known member of the cultural world (Oscar Wilde)?

We'll try to check this hypothesis through a contemporary diary written by a couple of ordinary British men from the 1940s to the 1970s, mainly focusing on the coded and uncoded ways they talk about their homosexuality.

Finally, must these lives always be talked in a diary format or may oral history (interviews/ testimonies) precede a written trace and why is it so easy to find (auto) biographies dealing with male homosexuality, positive as negative, and so hard to find diaries and to identify the places where they are kept?

Victoria Oxberry (Durham County Record Office, UK), 'What can I tell you? The value of diaries in archives'

Diaries provide primary, empirical, source material for a time and place, yet they are inherently biased to the background and values of the writer. My personality and experiences inform my life, and your personality and experiences inform yours. I believe that plural perspectives are really important, and diaries provide these. Having a variety helps us to look back at history and see it not as one thing, but the rich, complicated, jumble that we know our world to be. The vastness of archival collections can also provide unexpected perspectives. I will use diaries from the Durham County Record Office collections to show this, including providing a comparison of entries of the same date by different diarists.

I really became aware of how valuable diaries are as historical sources while working on the Durham at War project. Volunteers transcribed diaries from the Durham County Record Office collections and I checked and formatted them for the web. In doing so, I connected with the stories they were telling, and the people telling them, and these stories are not always represented in the official histories. The personal can also be an easier access point for learning about a subject.

From an archival perspective, promoting diaries as a source also helps to demonstrate that archives aren't just 'old stuff', that everything was new once. By collecting diaries, we can hope to broaden representation in the archive, again, creating multiple experiences of history. I also feel that the last year and a half of the pandemic has highlighted how important diaries will be as sources in the future.

Colin G. Pooley and Marilyn E. Pooley (Lancaster University, UK), 'Diaries as records of everyday mobility: examples from unpublished personal diaries in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain'

Historical study of the mundane everyday movements that people made as they went about their daily lives is difficult. Most of these journeys are not recorded in any official documents and for the most part go unremarked and unremembered. However, such everyday travel is an essential dimension of almost all aspects of society and economy enabling work,

socialisation, and the myriad other activities that construct the fabric of society. Personal diaries that were written up (almost) daily, and which may meticulously record a day's events, can provide important insights into the nature and meaning of these everyday movements. We have used 60 unpublished personal diaries drawn from a range of archival sources to reconstruct some aspects of everyday mobility in Britain since the early nineteenth century. All the diaries were written by 'ordinary' people who had no public profile and whose diary writing was purely personal. In this paper we examine the nature and scope of the sources that have been used and provide examples of the ways in which diary writing can reveal changes in everyday mobility over time and space, as well as during an individual's life course. The diaries also provide clues to the ways in which travellers engaged with their journeys and how they managed the inevitable inconveniences that on occasion occurred. In conclusion, we assess the potential for further historical investigation of the many diaries that survive in archives and personal collections.

Judith Rainhorn (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France /Maison Française d'Oxford, UK), 'Alice Hamilton's diaries, helpful items for staging herself'

The aim of my paper is to present a diary as a non-place of self-presentation. The diaries in question are the diaries kept by the American physician Alice Hamilton between 1916 and 1939. Alice Hamilton (1869-1970) was a pioneer in making occupational hazards and suffering at work visible in American industrial society. An important figure in women's social reform circles during the Progressive Era, Hamilton was a member of a women's reform community with a special focus on immigrant populations in Chicago (1889-1919), and later became a professor in industrial medicine at Harvard Medical School (1919-1939). Her reputation and academic career opened the doors to international expertise in public and occupational health, and she worked in the inter-war period for the United Nations Health Committee and the ILO, travelling to international congresses and making field trips (Moscow, 1925).

The materiality of the diaries as artefacts is important: they are small, with the dates pre-noted on each page, easy to be carried in a pocket or a small bag, which corresponds to their main uses: to note down retrospectively the author's peregrinations, appointments, the daily correspondence, the weather, fugitive feelings. These diaries, however, say little about Alice Hamilton's intimacy, which must be sought in her autobiography and her correspondence, of which the diaries are one of the fundamental supporting elements. I will try to show the place of these diaries within the whole of Hamilton's writings (notes, reports, articles, private and professional correspondence, etc.), mostly as a tool to write other pieces that serve to portray the historical figure.

Rebecca Rogers (Université de Paris, France), 'The Bachellery family diaries (1835-1851): pedagogy, politics and practices'

This paper explores the diary-writing practices of the Bachellery family from 1835 until the early 1850s. Joséphine Bachellery, a feminist boarding school headmistress, started a journal in 1835 so that her two young daughters would have a record of their early lives. Progressively the journal mingles descriptions of early learning experiences with details concerning Joséphine's professional career. The journal also includes entries dictated by her daughters, their first writing experiments as well as her husband Felix's occasional thoughts on childrearing, particularly when their eldest daughter dies. The final of the five notebooks that

constitute this diary collection are written almost exclusively by Felix, and focus more broadly on the state of French society in a period of revolutionary turmoil. In addition to this diary, the Bachellery family also kept in their familial archive a diary kept by their third daughter during several months in 1855-1856 when she was nine. In this case, Joséphine was clearly using the diary as an educational tool.

The paper characterizes the diversity of uses revealed within the diaries as well as what these usages reveal about gendered educational approaches in France in the mid-nineteenth century. Unlike the journals of young girls studied by Philippe Lejeune, Joséphine's diary harks back to earlier familial record-keeping while bearing clear traces of modern forms of subjectivity, both in terms of the form the diary takes as well as in its content. The conference will offer the opportunity to compare these two forms of diary writing to other journals in Western Europe.

Sharon Ruston (Lancaster University, UK), 'Examining one of Humphry Davy's 1800 notebooks, RI MS HD 13D'

In this paper I focus on one of Humphry Davy's notebooks, kept in Bristol in 1800 in the company of S. T. Coleridge, Robert Southey and others, which is mainly occupied with an attempt at a philosophical poem, variously called 'The Child of Genius', 'Child of Nature', and 'Lover of Nature, or the feelings of Eldon' but is also used to write up his nitrous oxide experiments and first efforts in electrochemistry. Science and poetry exist in the same notebook and Davy's commitment to both can be seen in his 'Resolution' to work for two hours from six to eight in the morning on his poem before working 'From nine till two in exp^{ts}.' He intended to spend his evenings reading and philosophising. The poem evinces many of Davy's preoccupations of this time and declares his identity as – perhaps uniquely coined – a 'physiopathest' and 'philsologist'.

The notebook literally moves from poetry to science, taking in philosophy, a fictional prose text, autobiographical notes, and ideas for future texts along the way. I will argue going that, in other respects too, ideas expressed in poetry and philosophy here in his notebook find their way into Davy's scientific work. In particular, the poetic and philosophical worldview demonstrated here, a belief that everything is made up of small particles, called 'atoms' which are continually circulating, moving and transforming into new beings, can also be witnessed in Davy's science at this time.

Karoliina Sjö (University of Turku, Finland), 'Life writing and narrated self in the diaries of Kirsti Teräsvuori'

My presentation focuses on the historical diaries of an ordinary person called Kirsti Teräsvuori (1899–1988), which she wrote as a girl and a young woman in the early 20th century Finland. I explore life writing in Teräsvuori's diaries and more specifically, how she built a narrative about herself and her experiences on the pages of her diaries, with thousands of words in them. Teräsvuori was a very talented writer, and she possibly dreamed about becoming a professional one. Yet, she could not imagine herself as an active subject in the literary field. Teräsvuori was very talented at school, but she had to quit her studies and stay at home at the age of 16 due to her illness. She was not able to work, and at some point, she was unwillingly in a mental hospital for several years. While she could not make herself visible in the everyday world, she made herself and her life meaningful by writing in her diary. Altogether she wrote tens of thousands of pages of diary text. She also made a clean copy of her writings

to which she made comments afterwards. This way, the different temporal layers in her diaries offer important insight for example to the questions of temporality in life storytelling. Her diaries are unique source materials in many different ways, and they are stored in the archive of The Finnish Literature Society. They stayed quite hidden for many decades, and I'm the first person who investigates them.

Simon Sleight (King's College London, UK), 'A "new brand of girl": May Stewart's teenage diary and landscapes of intimacy in 1900s Melbourne'

Self-assured and outgoing, 18-year-old May Stewart appears the epitome of a 'new brand of girl' noted by travelling American feminist writer Jessie Ackermann as emerging across colonial settings. May's 1906 diary – recently rediscovered and subsequently exhibited – casts a crisp and rare light on the life of a young working-class Melbournian. It can be read in multiple ways. From its pages we can gain insights into such matters as domestic arrangements, shop work, and urban mobility. This paper focuses on May's frequent social interactions both within her boarding house in north Melbourne and spilling out across the streets, parklands and entertainment quarters of the city. May's diary-keeping reveals her playing with her landlady's children, 'mashing' (flirting) with young men on trams and 'smoozing' (kissing) favoured acquaintances. As well as seeking to reconstruct May's social world, the analysis addresses the physical artefact of May's diary: a humble exercise book packed with often-breathless writing. If diaries can be regarded, following Penny Summerfield, as 'technologies of the self', May's yields insights into some intricate gearing. Cross-cut by demarcations of age, class and gender, May's recorded life counters Edwardian ideologies of domesticity and instead casts her as a 'pioneer' of social space in the terminology of Joanne Meyerowitz. Through May's expressive pencil handwriting we can perceive the 'patches of sunlight' noted by Emma Griffin as characteristic of working-class lives, encounter occasional shadows, ponder comparisons with the diaries of other young women elsewhere, and reflect on the habits of maintaining a document intended for private, meditative, use.

Victoria Stevens (ACR Library & Archive Conservation & Preservation Ltd, UK), 'Chalet tales: changing times revealed by the conservation of the Alpine study diaries of three Oxford colleges'

Chalet Des Anglais is a traditional wooden building nestling in the heart of the French Haute Alpes. Originally bought by Balliol tutorial fellow Francis Fortescue Urquhart, affectionately known as Sligger, in the late C19th, it has been jointly owned by three Oxford colleges, Balliol, New and University, since 1971. Every summer, each college in turn uses the chalet for reading and study trips for students and staff, with the parties taking care of the chalet and its grounds as part of the broad learning experience.

The activities of successive groups are recorded in detail in a series of Chalet Diaries, compiled by each study group from the start and providing a rich seam of information on the changing makeup of the student body across three separate institutions. Well-illustrated with photographic images over the years, the diaries chronicle changing attitudes, demographics and individual freedoms, record the activities of now famous visitors such as Gertrude Bell and Harold Macmillan, and create a powerful timeline for how student society and teaching has changed in the last 125 years.

This paper seeks to pull out some of these changes and show both similarities and difference between the early study parties and those that have taken place in the last few decades, revealed through the conservation and digitisation of the diaries. It will also highlight the challenges and opportunities created by the conservation these key records of student life, which has secured them for future generations of alpine explorers, as well as the wider heritage community, to enjoy.

Charlotte Tomlinson (University of Lincoln, UK), *'A space to negotiate: citizenship, diary writing and femininity in Second World War Britain'*

Between 1939 and 1945 more than one million British women joined the Women's Voluntary Services, a government organisation set up to mobilise the population for the future war effort. Whether they were driving ambulances in air raids, providing food and shelter to refugees, or running community classes on 'Make Do and Mend', during the war they were all 'doing their bit', as volunteers, as women, and as citizens.

In this paper I will examine the wartime diaries of several WVS volunteers, in order to explore diary writing as a form of engaging with wartime citizenship. Citizenship is a complex concept, but fundamentally it has been understood as a relationship between the individual, the state, and society. Historians have traditionally analysed notions of citizenship 'from above', focusing on public and political manifestations of participation, rights, and belonging. However, I will argue that if citizenship is a relationship between the individual and the collective, the public and the personal, then it also imperative that we explore it from an individual and subjective perspective.

By studying the writing of wartime volunteers, this paper reflects on and addresses several key questions: How can diaries help us unlock more nuanced and inclusive definitions of citizenship for women? How have historical actors used diary writing to negotiate citizenship and exert agency? How do diaries reveal the ways in which individuals embrace, adapt, reject, and remake the meaning of citizenship? How important are diaries to the ways in which citizenship has been articulated, experienced, and understood?

Cherish Watton (University of Cambridge, UK), *"Keep the cutting for the scrap-book": Adeline and Maurice Hankey's scrapbook diary collection'*

The material qualities of diaries are often acknowledged but rarely analysed. Most scholarship utilises diaries as a textual source, yet it is also essential to recognise their materiality: how they are physically constructed, organised, and preserved. This paper asks how our understanding of the diary changes when we move beyond conventional textual analysis and into the realm of the material. It uses a series of scrapbooks created by the diplomatic wife Adeline Hankey as a lens to examine the blurred boundaries between diary-keeping and other genres of life writing, archiving, and collecting.

Drawing on the concept of the 'diplomatic partnership', I explore the valuable archival work carried out by Adeline Hankey when scrapbooking her family's life in the early-twentieth century. Throughout her husband's career, Adeline used doodles, menus, postcards, and newspaper clippings to showcase the informal, confidential aspects of his work, which only she could record from her unique, privileged position as a diplomatic wife. Bringing her scrapbooks into dialogue with correspondence from other collections reveals the emotional

potency of diary-keeping and how these emotions reverberate long after their creation. A close reading of the scrapbooks also exposes how it was not just Adeline who left her mark on the page but Hankey's biographer and scholar-archivist of Churchill Archives, Stephen Roskill. To conclude, this paper will consider how labelling a source a diary, an album, scrapbook, or collection can concurrently open and obscure the meaning and utility of life writing material.