

Welcome to the first Mass Observation Bulletin. It keeps you updated on

- developments on the current Mass Observation Project
- the researchers using the Mass-Observation Collection
- partnerships and collaborations, courses and events
- fundraising.

We hope you enjoy Mass Observation's new look by Bank Design.

## 70 Years of Mass Observation

2007 is an auspicious year for the Mass Observation Archive. We celebrate 70 years of the Mass Observation movement and the Archive is hosting several events to mark the occasion.

On Friday, 11 May, we are holding a Conference at the University of Sussex, *Celebrating 70 Years of Mass Observation: from the 1930s to the Digital Revolution*.

Event supported by Adam Matthew Digital

On 10 May, we are also hosting a public event in Brighton itself at Komedija, as

part of the Brighton Festival, featuring Simon Garfield's *Our Hidden Lives* from the BBC4 *Lost Decade* season. See [www.komedija.co.uk](http://www.komedija.co.uk) in due course.

The *New Statesman*, which covered the original launch of the MO movement in 1937 has just published a major article (29 January 2007) by Joe Moran and the *Guardian* has promised to carry a feature around the time of our celebrations. It feels like MO is really making its mark.

For more information on our 70th MO Anniversary events, keep an eye on our website: [www.massobs.co.uk](http://www.massobs.co.uk)

## The Nella Last diaries



ITV recently showed an acclaimed performance of *Housewife, 49*, starring Victoria Wood as Nella Last, an MO diarist who wrote all through WWII. Her last instalment to MO was February 1966. To coincide, Profile Press has produced a new edition of *Nella Last's War*. Richard Broad, formally a Director at Thames TV and a co editor with Suzie Flemming, originally conceived the idea of using Nella's diaries as a drama documentary. Richard will be speaking at the MO Conference on 11 May about his work with the diaries.

The continued media and public interest in Nella's life demonstrates the influence and foresight of the MO project.

### STOP PRESS

Victoria Wood is appearing at the Dome on 11 May talking about how she wrote *Housewife 49* and got into role.

A Brighton Festival Event in collaboration with MO.

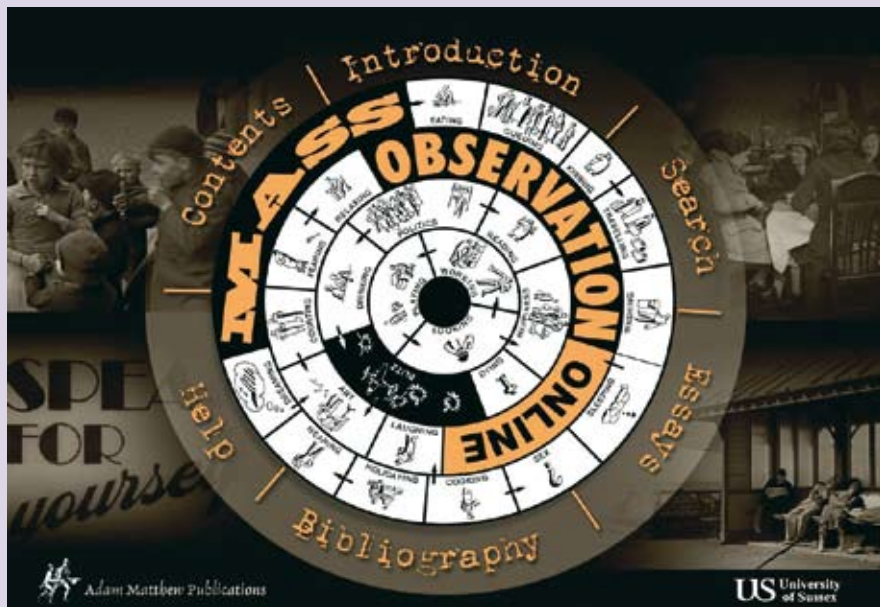


Dorothy Sheridan (back row, centre) and staff from Special Collections at the University of Sussex

### The Archive's Director receives award

Dorothy Sheridan will be made a Doctor of the University by the Open University at its graduation ceremony at the Brighton Dome in April this year. The honorary degree is in recognition of "scholarly distinction". Dorothy was also elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in February. Dorothy says "This is wonderful for me personally but I know perfectly well that these sorts of awards are also in recognition of a very special Archive and all the wonderful people who have worked with me over many years".

## MO goes Digital



Early MO work is about to go online. Adam Matthew Digital is making this resource available to anyone in the world. There will be full transcripts in original layouts, and easy navigation. Professor Stephen Brooke, Department of History, York University, Toronto, says "The publication of Mass Observation Online will afford

undergraduate students, postgraduate researchers and professional historians access to one of the great treasure troves of twentieth century British history. This is an absolutely critical resource". There will be information at the MO Conference and details, including pricing, can be found on [www.digital.co.uk](http://www.digital.co.uk)

## Current MO Projects

Responses are coming in thick and fast to the Autumn MO Directive. Part 1, *Your Home* was done in collaboration with Alison Clarke from the Royal College of Art. You may have seen her on *BBC2's Home*. Part 2, *Quotations* was commissioned by Professor Ruth Finnegan, one of our Archive Trustees. The third part, on *Ageing*, was a follow-up of an earlier theme by gerontologist, Professor Paul Kingston at the University of Staffordshire. Responses to the Summer Directive on *History Matters*, *Core British Values*, and *The World Cup* are now available for research. The Spring Directive will be on *Domestic Violence*, and the new *Smoking Ban*.

If you'd like to commission a directive, contact the MOA Director, [d.e.sheridan@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:d.e.sheridan@sussex.ac.uk)

## Sex and Sexuality

The survey on sexual attitudes which Mass Observation carried out as far back as 1949 provided the basis for a recent documentary directed by Steve Humphries of Testimony Films. *Little Kinsey* was broadcast in October 2005 as part of *BBC4's Lost Decade* season and included interviews with Dorothy Sheridan and Hera Cook, from the University of Birmingham, who specialises in the history of sexuality. The programme generated considerable publicity not just in the UK but internationally with controversial statements about the prevalence of prostitution and gay sex in the 1940s. Once again, Steve will be one of the presenters at the MO Conference.

## New website

Thanks to the Friends of the Archive our website is being redesigned by Community Sites, who specialise in heritage and life story websites. Our first website, created in 2001, was financially supported by Friend of the Archive, Dr Rhea Sheddon. The new site will be launched this year.

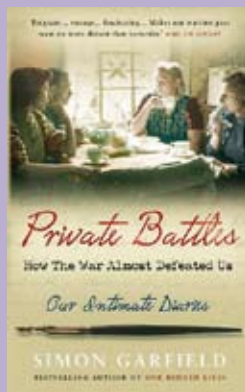
## New books

*Private Battles: how the war almost defeated us* (Ebury, 2006) is now published; it is the final book in Simon Garfield's Mass Observation diary anthology trilogy. Simon's previous books, *Our Hidden Lives: the everyday diaries of a forgotten Britain 1945-1948* (2004) and *We are at War: the remarkable diaries of five ordinary people* (2005) have helped to attract new recruits to the contemporary Mass Observation Project.

*Waiting for Hitler: Voices from Britain on the brink of invasion*, Midge Gilles, Hodder and Stoughton, publication March 2007. For further information call Karen Geary 0207 873 6141 or email [karen.geary@hodder.co.uk](mailto:karen.geary@hodder.co.uk)

Louise Purbrick, *The Wedding Gift: Domestic life beyond consumption*, Ashgate 2006.

Jenna Bailey, *Can any Mother help me? Fifty years of friendship through a secret magazine*, Faber 2007. The book is based on a Co-operative Correspondence Club collection donated to the Archive by one of their members and former Mass Observer, Rose Hacker.



The Mass Observation Archive specialises in material about everyday life in Britain. It contains papers generated by the original Mass Observation social research organisation (1937 to early 1950s), and newer material collected continuously since 1981. The Archive is in the care of the University of Sussex and is housed in the Library in the Special Collections department. The Mass Observation Archive is a registered charitable trust (no 270218) and is recognised by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council as having outstanding national and international importance under the Designation Scheme.

The MO Bulletin is produced periodically. It is distributed to Mass Observers and members of the Friends of the Archive scheme. Why not join our Friends scheme - not only will you be kept up to date with the latest MO related news, but you will also help to support Mass Observation's activities. See our website for further details: [www.massobs.org.uk](http://www.massobs.org.uk) or email [moa@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:moa@sussex.ac.uk)  
For research enquiries and visits, please contact Special Collections library.specialcoll@sussex.ac.uk or tel 01273 67 8157.

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