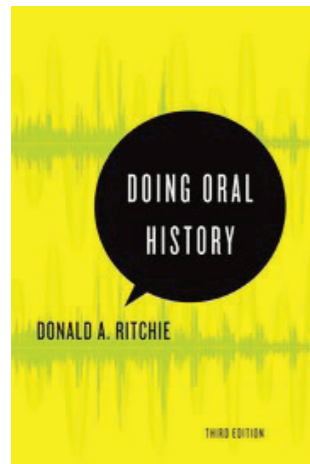
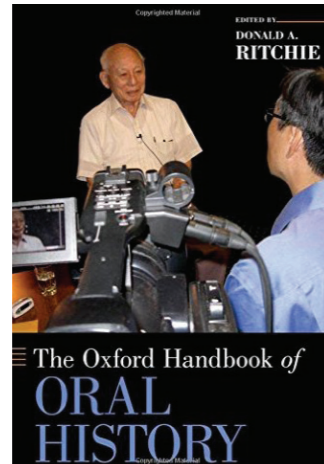


Field Notes

With Anne and Donald Ritchie



Oxford University Press;
2 edition (August 7, 2003)



Oxford University Press USA;
Reprint edition (18 October 2012)

Q: Could you provide us with your notes on doing Oral History in the 21st century with regards to practice and methodology?

We both began doing oral history back in the days when people were debating the merits of cassettes versus reel-to-reel tape recorders. The field has come a long way since then, technologically and methodologically. One reason that we keep attending meetings is because there is always new information to be gained, particularly about the creative uses of digital recordings. We anticipate that this will continue to grow into things we cannot even imagine now. In addition, the methodology has grown more sophisticated and many issues touching on ethics and diversity have developed in recent years.

Q: What you envision for the future of this field?

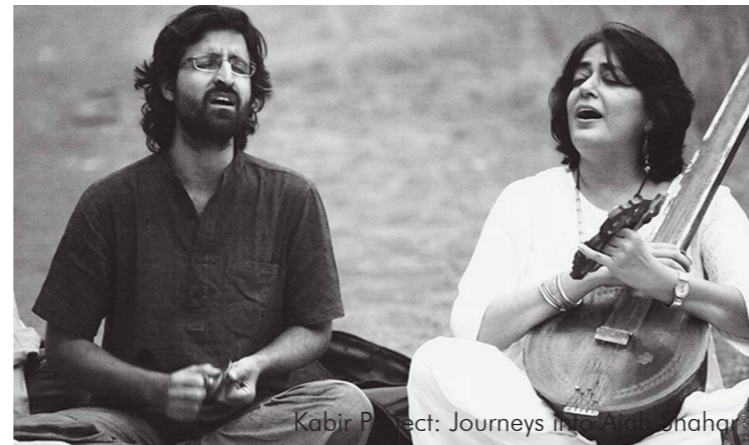
The literature keeps growing, often spurred by papers presented at IOHA and other oral history conferences. Oral history today is light years ahead of what we first encountered, and we anticipate that will continue, perhaps even at a faster pace in the 21st century.

Anne Ritchie is the oral historian at the National Gallery of Art. She is also active in state, regional and national oral history activities. Donald Ritchie served as the historian for the United States Senate, till his retirement in 2015. At IOHA 2016, Donald chaired the second public panel titled, "Shifting perspectives: oral history and the memory of disaster".



Spotlight

Ajab Shahar



Conceived of as an online 'wondrous city' of songs, poems and conversations around the mystic and saint Kabir, Ajab Shahar celebrates the oral traditions of northern South Asia, from Pakistan to Bengal. The project features works from the Sufi, Baul and Bhakti movements, and all have been researched, translated, annotated and curated by the Kabir Project team in both Hindi and English.

Over the last 13 years, the Kabir Project has inquired into mystic poetry through a series of documentary films, music CDs, books, festivals and events. The project readily shares an approximate of 100 curated and edited video hours for free browsing, consisting of 450 songs, 250 couplets, 200 reflections, 30 photo essays, stories and artworks on a fully bi-lingual website (Hindi-English), which is estimated to grow through their future work and browser contributions. Their uploads can be found on youtube.

The poets featured in Ajab Shahar are mostly voices from the Bhakti movement that swept India from the 12th century onwards, or they are Sufis from the western border regions between India and Pakistan, or they are Baul poets of the east. They questioned religious bigotry, sectarianism and violence, and urged seekers to find answers within themselves. Their message to interrogate one's own self and the world outside has been a powerful and ever-relevant one, inspiring countless village singers and listeners to keep it alive over the centuries through the living oral traditions.

Ajab Shahar enables singers to listen to voices from other traditions, learn and download lyrics and deepen their understanding of these traditions through the practice of others. The project endeavours to set a new standard for the design of digital archives by creating an online database that reflects the fluidity and musicality of its content while offering a stable platform and advanced search options.

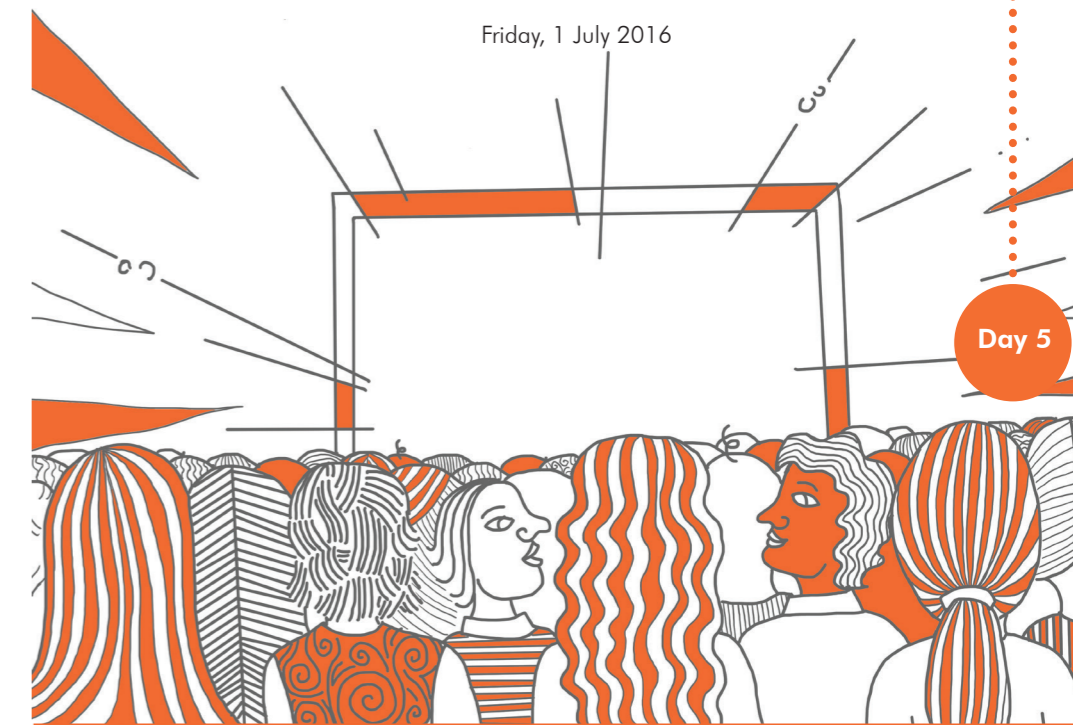
Visit their website at <http://ajabshahar>.



The daily Listener

Newsletter / IOHA Bangalore 2016

Friday, 1 July 2016



Film screening / Proyección de la película: "The Walnut Tree" by / por Ammar Aziz (Pakistan) **Closing Plenary / plenaria de clausura:** "The Dialogue between Oral History and History: Convergences and Divergences" / "El diálogo entre la Historia y la Historia Oral: Convergencias y Divergencias"
Speakers / Ponentes: Shahid Amin (India), Martha Norkunas (USA), and Alessandro Portelli (Italy, via Skype) and Yogesh Raj (Nepal) **Chair:** Pilar Dominguez (España)

@IOHA #heardatIOHA

Tristeza! It is with certain sadness that the Editorial team offers to our queridos lectores/dear readers the fifth and final edition of *The Daily Listener*, the student curated newsletter of IOHA 2016. After a rigorous four days of public panels and sessions, exhibitions and performances, el dia cinco of the conference proudly presents a screening of 'The Walnut Tree' by Ammar Aziz of Pakistan. The closing plenary features a much-anticipated conversation via Skype with Alessandro Portelli.

Inside *The Daily Listener* today, we have Shahid Amin talk about the 'unfamiliar' nature of historic events. Ben Rogaly regales us with his insights into his work on oral history and migration studies, especially the geographies of migrant labour groups. Donald and Ann Ritchie's reflection on the methodology of oral history also feature in this edition. In 'Spotlight,' we explore the 'wondrous' Ajab Shahar of the Kabir Project, a digital collection of songs, poems and conversations around the mystic and saint Kabir. With these songs on our lips and gratitude in our hearts, we at the Editorial Team: Nikhila, Pavithra, Neeraj, Derek, Keerthi, Tapasya and Arpita say hasta la vista...for now! Gracias! Dhan'yavadagalu! Shukriya! Thank you!

Ear to the ground



Day III Panels in session



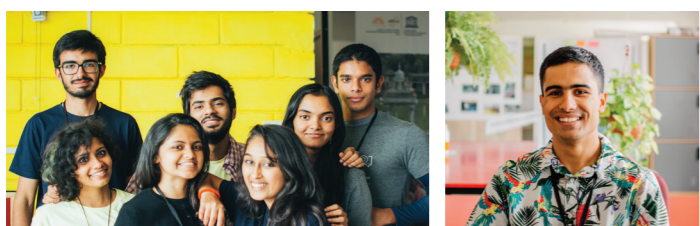
The Spanish contingent



OHA! meeting in progress



Public Panel II



The Newsletter team Dipesh of Hri institute

On record



Shahid Amin

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“How to tell unfamiliar stories without letting the detailed reconstruction choke the narrative drive, is a problem that the writing of alternative histories will have to address sooner or later.”

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Shahid Amin is a Professor of History at Delhi University. He has authored the book *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura 1922-1992*. OUP.

Shahid Amin was born fifteen miles from Chauri Chaura. Chauri Chaura came into prominence in 1922 when its inhabitants whole-heartedly participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement started by Mahatma Gandhi against the British Raj. It was the scene of the infamous Chauri Chaura incident, when, after the police had shot and killed several demonstrators, a police chowki (station) was set on fire by a mob of angry citizens, killing 22 policemen inside. Amin brings in an empathetic knowledge of the region and a keen ear for the nuances of the culture and language of its people in his study of the incident.

“When I wrote about Chauri Chaura, nobody had heard of the characters that people my book, because that event being spontaneous (a ‘riot’) nothing was written about it. All we had was the story of how Gandhi reacted remorsefully to this massive peasant violence in his name, so there’s no familiar reader for me in India for the ‘rioters of Chauri Chaura’, as there would be if I was writing about Gandhi’s experiments with truth. Hence, this new narrative or new history, cannot take for granted a familiar reader.”

“We must accept and live with the fact that the storylines of many of our histories will remain unfamiliar to each other for quite some time to come. These alternative histories might then pick up events or different characters in the same event that are unfamiliar even within the larger or dominant histories of the location. India, in my case, is an alternative retelling of unfamiliar events from a national past that may lead the historian to people from that event with an entirely different cast of characters, unknown even in their national location. The historian may then be telling a story about historic deeds of characters who are unfamiliar to both national memory and to textbook history, but referring to an event in which there is both textbook history and national memory, but which doesn’t have any characters or has a character which is in a sense outside of that event. How to tell unfamiliar stories without letting the detailed reconstruction choke the narrative drive, is a problem that the writing of alternative histories will have to address sooner or later.”

Rewind



Ben Rogaly

Ben Rogaly reflects on his years as an oral historian.

Ben Rogaly, the head of department at the School of Global Studies with the University of Sussex, says he can’t claim to have entirely ‘entered’ the field of oral history. Trained as an agricultural economist, his engagement with oral history, has evolved over a long period of time and it still continues. He says he was early to denounce the ‘technocratic tendencies’ of his discipline. His post-doctoral thesis, on migrant agricultural labourers was itself an ethnographic study. This was followed by a study on the ‘seasonal migration for rural manual work in eastern India’ which took oral history interviews of four labourers, to examine how meanings of seasonal migration changed over individuals’ working lives, and its connection with structural change in social and economic relations in the Indian countryside.

He later moved back to England to be closer to his family and to study issues that he could be more personally and politically involved with. His focus remained on migrant workers and understanding associated structural changes. Between 2005 and 2008, after joining the University of Sussex, along with Becky Taylor, he undertook a decolonial study of social housing estates around his previous place of work, University of East Albia. Here, oral history interviews helped explore class injustices experienced by working class people in terms of material relations and discursive categories as well as how they changed across people’s lives.

In 2010 the ‘English Defence League’, an anti-Islamic organisation, planned to carry out mass rallies in the city of Peterborough, a place made up almost entirely of international migrant workers who are bussed out daily to work in the Fens of Eastern England. Resistance to the rally from religious faith groups, municipal authorities, trade unions and others from the city, inspired him to study the movement there. The ‘othering’ of migrants was challenged by using several oral history interviews and the arts (film, theatre, photography) to trace commonalities between those who moved for work and those who were dispossessed by economic change where they continued to live.

Ben is currently writing a book that builds on the decolonial approach to this research and has argued for the contribution that oral history can make to the geographical study of labour and class. In addition, he has argued the potential for theories of mobility, fixity and diversity to add to existing oral history work on migration.