

Annual Report

VAHS New Researchers

Committee Members (April 2013):

Anjelica Finnegan, University of Southampton (Chair)

Angela Grainger, LSHTM

Anna Bocking-Welch, University of York

Bridget Lockyer, University of York

Charlotte Clements, University of Kent

Claire Sewell, University of Warwick

Gareth Millward, LSHTM

Michael Weatherburn, Imperial

Oli Betts, University of York

Megan Webber, University of Hertfordshire

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Summary of Activities

In early 2012, George Campbell-Gosling became chair of the VAHS new researchers at a time when the group was relatively inactive. During his time as chair the new researchers Organised two workshops in March 2012: *Gendering the History of Charity and Voluntary Effort* (Huddersfield) and *Making Connections: Transnational Networks in European Welfare History* (Oxford Brookes). Wanting to ensure that the group would continue to evolve and to encourage new researchers from outside the group to get involved, George looked to handover to a new chair. Anjelica Finnegan subsequently became chair in Summer 2012.

This academic year has been a busy one for the New Researchers. Since October 2013 we have welcomed three new members: Claire Sewell from the University of Warwick, Bridget Lockyer and Oli Betts, both from the University of York, and Megan Webber from the University of Hertfordshire.

Workshops

Following feedback from previous workshops the VAHS New Researchers have agreed on an effective format for our workshops which places emphasis on all-delegate participation. For a one day workshop we look for six presentations of 15-20minutes. The papers are presented in two session of three, allowing for discussion after each group. A workshop closes with a roundtable discussion for which we aim to find an established academic in a relevant field to chair it. In the last 12 months we have run three workshops.

1. Gendering the History of Charity and Voluntary Effort, University of Huddersfield, March 2012

The New Researchers had been keen to run a workshop on this theme and so it was first on the agenda when the group restarted. It used the remainder of the second EHS workshop series award, which had been intended for the 2010-2011 academic year. This was topped up with funding from Huddersfield. It was a successful day with loads of papers: perhaps too many. Although delegates felt that the workshops delivered what it did well, questions were raised about the event's format. It was decided that the workshops should not be treated as mini-conferences but as a more interactive day.

Kate Bradley wrote a blog summarising the event which can be found on our website: <http://www.vahs.org.uk/2012/04/gender-bradley/>

2. Making Connections: Transnational Networks in European Welfare History, Oxford Brookes University, March 2012

This workshop came from call for interest in new transnational histories network. Prof Virginia Crossman responded, saying she was already putting together two 'Making Connections' events exploring transnational histories and transnational historical networks in European welfare history.

She kindly used some of her grant for us to have a morning event (on welfare and humanitarianism in a broader context to her European focus) to accompany her afternoon workshop.

Therefore, this workshop was not only useful for New Researchers interested in transnational networks in European welfare history but also in establishing the transnational network.

Kevin O'Sullivan wrote a blog post based on the event which can be found here: <http://www.vahs.org.uk/2012/05/transnational-osullivan/>

3. Voluntary Work, University of Southampton, 10th October 2012

This one day workshop brought together new researchers from around the UK to discuss the important issue of unpaid voluntary work over the last hundred years. At present there is considerable unemployment, particularly among young adults, coupled with shifting expectations as to what individuals can expect from employers, and vice versa. Part of this process includes the increasing number of UK graduates conducting unpaid internships (currently 250,000), an area not overseen by industrial policies, but in fact by government legislation relating to voluntary work. Current research into this phenomenon offers little or no historical context with regard to unpaid voluntary work in twentieth century Britain, which in turn hinders our understanding of it today. The workshop worked to bridge this significant knowledge gap.

With the presence of the Work Futures Research Centre (WFRC) the University of Southampton was an ideal location for the event. The workshop aimed to attract social scientists and historians with interests in charity and the voluntary sector, social care, government policy, unions, gender, industry, and activism.

Thirteen people, including the speakers, attended the workshop. Eight attendees were from the University of Southampton and a further five from York, Imperial, Birmingham, Kent and the Institute of Historical Research. In addition to new researchers, among the delegates were lecturers, research fellows and one member of the wider University staff who had a particular interest in the third sector. There was no mention of the size of the event (either positively or negatively) in the feedback. What was good to see was the range of ways in which the delegates found out about the conference: Twitter, the VSSN Network, the IHR website, e-mail and the VAHS New Researchers were all listed.

The event received an average score of 9.4/10, with the roundtable session and the discussions following the paper presentations cited as the best aspects of the event. This echoes feedback from other VAHS New Researcher workshops and reinforces that the current format - 2-3 short papers grouped together followed by discussion and a closing roundtable session – is a good one. When asked what could be improved one person suggested that the two panels could have been tied together more explicitly, no other suggestions were made. The conference was free of charge and we were able to cover lunch and other refreshments, all travel costs and workshop materials.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE

[\[http://www.vahs.org.uk/newresearchers/events/past-workshops/\]](http://www.vahs.org.uk/newresearchers/events/past-workshops/)

Future Workshops (2013/14)

The committee have been proactive in organising future workshops. There are two proposals which are currently being developed. These are detailed below.

1. *Archive Workshop, British Library, November 2013*

Using Voluntary Sector Archives will integrate training sessions with research presentations and discussion. Three training sessions, delivered by expert archivists and historians, will give a rounded view on the issues and practicalities involved in working with 'informal' archives. These will be interwoven with research presentations drawing extensively from voluntary sector archives (predominantly those not held in formal repositories) which reflect on the process of accessing and using these materials as well as sharing research findings, and short presentations which will enable new researchers to get input into their work. The event ends with a historian-led round table discussion.

As of 10th May 2013 we are still waiting for confirmation of funding from the British Library. This will determine whether the workshop is a one or two day event.

2. *Oral History Workshop, University of York, Autumn 2013*

This workshop is for new researchers who are using/thinking about using oral history interviews to explore the history of voluntary action and voluntary sector organisations. It will include papers from those currently using these methods in their own research, as well as a roundtable discussion led by experienced practitioners of oral history. The workshop will consider what oral history can offer those working in the field of voluntary action history, and will be a chance to share experiences and discuss practicalities, benefits and potential limitations.

We are seeking funding to host this workshop at the University of York.

5th International Conference

We successfully applied for funding for two bursaries each worth £300 from the History Workshop Journal and the Economic History Society. We received eight applications for the bursary, two of which came from applicants outside of the UK.

The successful applicants are:

- Emily Baughan, a PhD candidate from the University of Bristol, has been awarded the Economic History Society Bursary. Her paper is entitled: 'The Save the Children Fund, the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child and a Charter for Stateless Children, 1919-1940'.
- Marie-Luise Ermisch, a PhD candidate from the McGill University in Canada, will receive the Workshop History Bursary. Her paper is entitled: 'Oxfam's Operation Oasis: Teaching British Youth About Global Poverty'.

Both Emily and Marie-Luise will be writing feature articles for the blog based on the papers that they will present at the conference. These will be available on the VAHS blog on 1st June 2013 and 1st July 2013 respectively.

Writing Group

The writing group has been set up and coordinated by Charlotte Clements. The group has two elements:

1. A monthly online feedback group where members submit writing and receive feedback from other new researchers
2. An offline 'shut-up-and-write' meeting where researchers get together to chat and, more importantly, to write.

Participants do not have to be a member of the Voluntary Action History Society or its New Researchers Committee to take part.

We update the website with the time and place of the Shut Up & Write Group and advertise it on twitter. It was decided that the group should remain small and informal so as to allow for flexibility, therefore we are not actively publicising it beyond these two forums.

Blog Contributions

A number of new researchers have contributed to the VAHS Blog and Forum:

[Charlotte Clements](#): *Breaking new ground or digging up the past* (March 2013); *Charity Closures and changing Fortunes* (January 2013)

[Gareth Millward](#): *Disability and Voluntarism in British Policymaking* (February 2012); *Resulting Brands – Changing Names, Changing Identities* (January 2013); *Campaigning through the Courts* (April 2013).

[Anjelica Finnegan](#): *Setting the Research Agenda for Voluntary Action History* (September 2012); *Unemployed and Working for Free – history repeating?* (March 2013); *Supporting New Researchers* (April 2013)

Funding (from October 2012)

From October 2012 the New Researchers have so far been granted £1200

Item	Funding Body	Amount (£)
Voluntary Work Workshop, University of Southampton (October 2013)	Work Futures Research Centre	600
Conference Bursary	History Workshop Journal	300
Conference Bursary	Economic History Society	300

So far this academic year we have taken to applying for small grants for individual events. We will continue to apply for block funding but are not relying on such a source of income. In previous years the Economic History Society gave us block funding but are no longer willing to do this and prefer to be approached on the basis of individual events. **The Institute of Historical Research has agreed to allow us use of one of their rooms to host workshops in the future.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ANJELICA FINNEGAN – a.s.finnegan@soton.ac.uk

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