



INSTITUTE OF
HISTORICAL
RESEARCH

SCHOOL OF
ADVANCED STUDY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

Institute of
Historical
Research

Wohl Library

Researching Local
History:
Biographical
Resources and the
History of Social
Housing in Britain

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Institute of Historical Research Library

- Over 200,000 primary sources, guides, reference works and periodicals.
- From early medieval to contemporary.
- Print, electronic, microform collections.
- Collections strengths: Britain, Western Europe, Colonial history, the Americas, local and regional history.
- We work collaboratively with other libraries around Bloomsbury, especially Senate House Library, the other libraries within the School of Advanced Study.

history.ac.uk



Local History Collections in the IHR

- Some of the largest collections within the library.
- Includes collections on English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh local history, as well as a separate collection of London history.
- Strengths include:
 - Large holdings of local history society publications.
 - Directories and Poll Books
 - Publications of the Victoria County History
- There are also significant local history holdings in some of our other collections including France, Spain, Italy, Germany, the Low Countries and the United States.





Social/Council Housing

- There is a range of sources on the history of housing in all the library local history collections.
- These include:
 - Theoretical Works on Town Planning
 - Government Papers
 - Biographical Works
 - Diaries and Letters
 - Oral History Titles

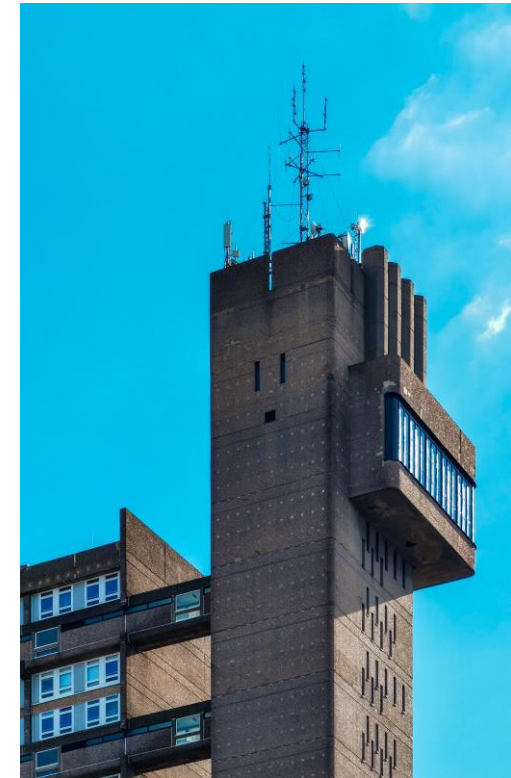
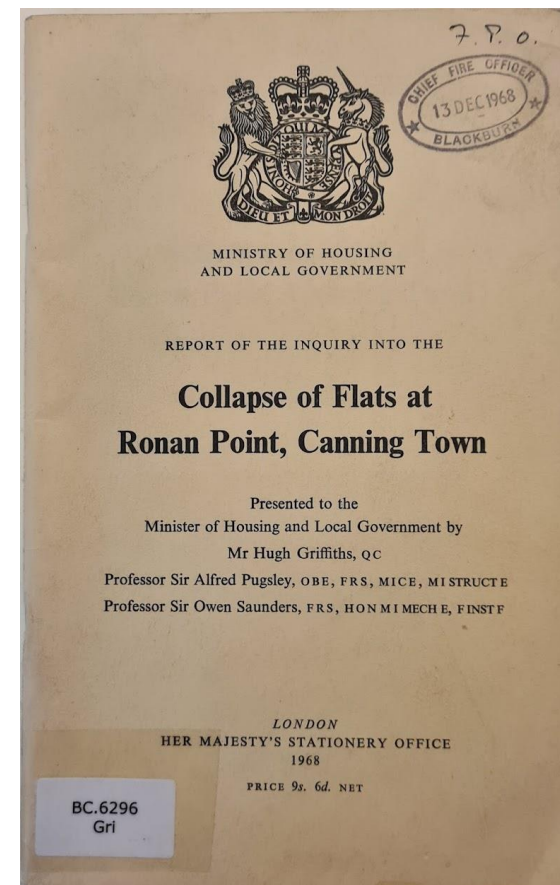


Photo of Trellick Tower by [the blowup](#) on [Unsplash](#)



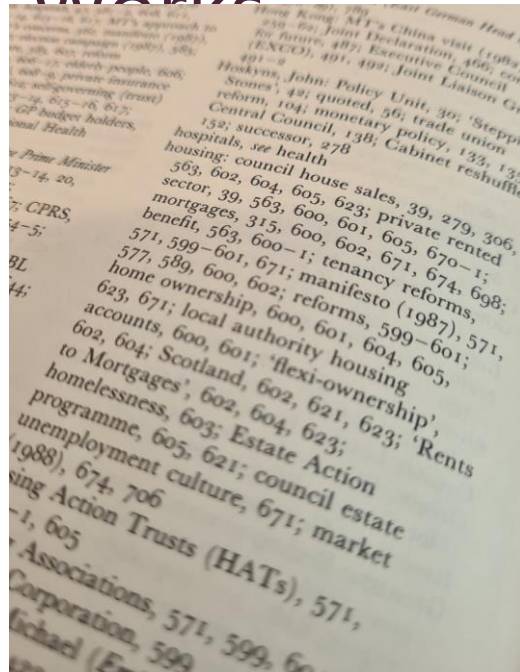
Official Works and Reports

- Planning Reports
 - Patrick Abercrombie. *Greater London Plan 1944*
- Incident Reports
 - Ronan Point
- Government Papers
 - *Labouring Classes Dwellings Act* and *Sanitary Act* (both 1866) are accessible within the library through UK Parliamentary Papers online.

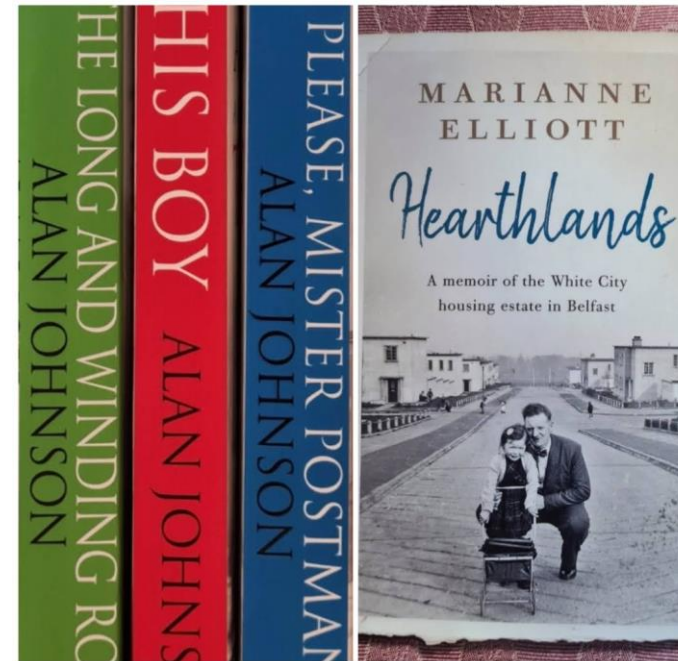




Personal Experiences: Biographical Works



Index entries on housing in Margaret Thatcher. *The Downing Street Years*



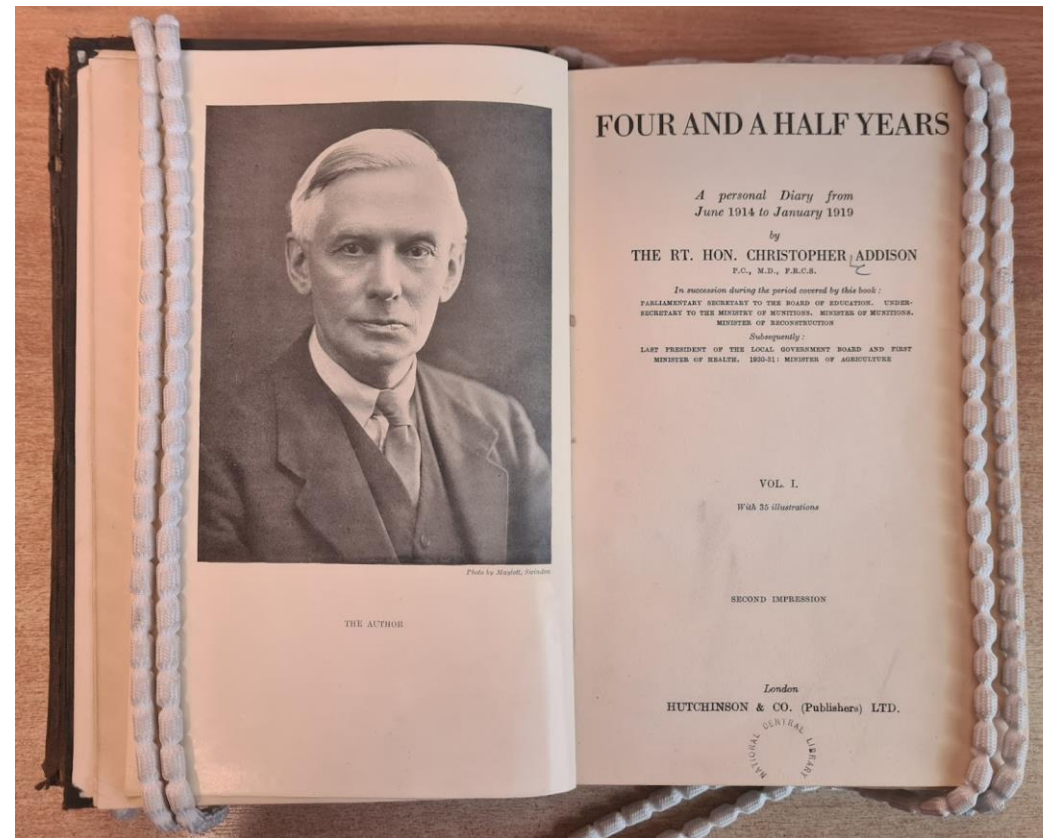
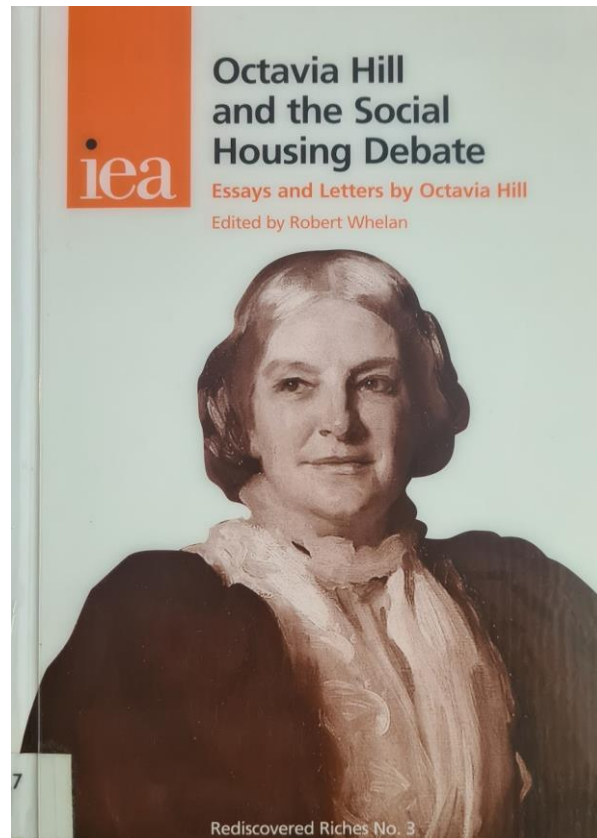
Alan Johnson's memoirs and *Hearthlands* by Marianne Elliott



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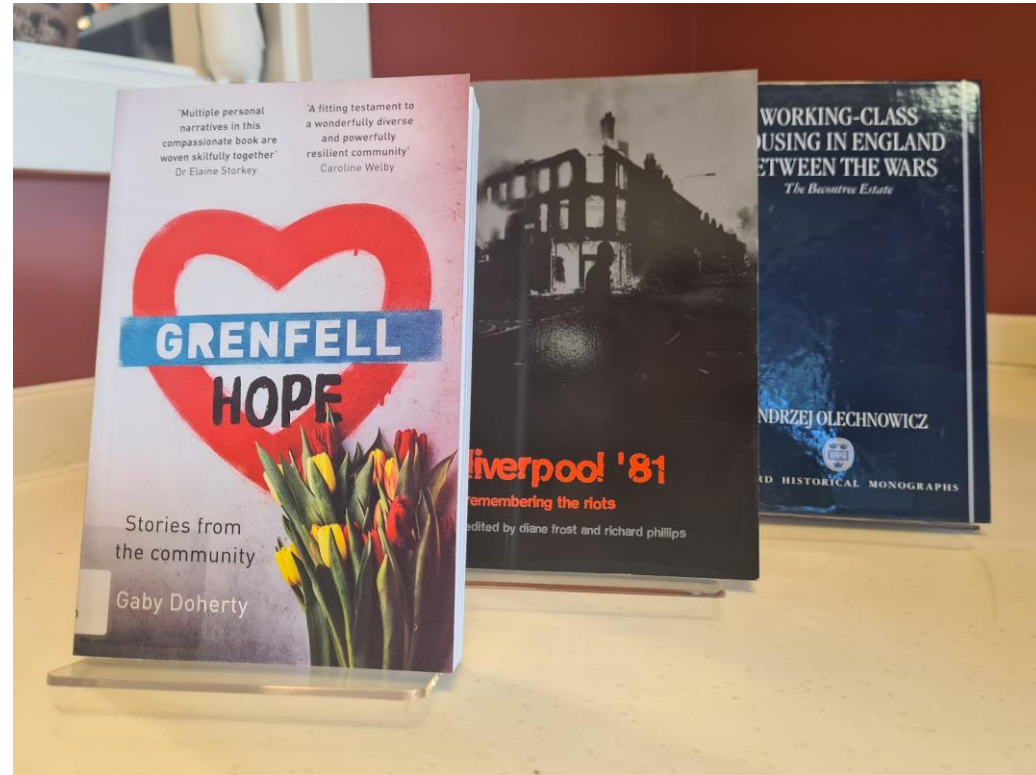
Personal Experiences: Letters and Diaries





Personal Experiences: Published Oral History Testimonies

- There are a number of works in the library that include oral history.
- Some use interviews among an array of sources.
- The primary focus of other titles is to publish large excerpts or even whole interviews.





Personal Experiences: Online Oral History Projects

- Search for local community oral history projects.
- Some examples include:
 - Sheffield University. *Oral Histories: Housing and Community* – www.witness.group.shef.ac.uk/oral-histories-housing-community
 - *Winstanley Stories* (Winstanley Estate, Clapham) – www.winstanleystories.org.uk
 - *Our Oxhey* (Oxhey Estate, Hertfordshire) – www.ouroxhey.org.uk/content/category/topics/early-memories-of-south-oxhey
- As long as the online resources are maintained they are a valuable resource.



Personal Experiences: Layers of London

The screenshot displays the Layers of London website interface. At the top, a navigation bar contains icons for home, search, layers, and other functions. The main content area features a historical black and white photograph of the Simpson family at Christmas 1954. Below the photo is a caption and a detailed description of their living conditions. To the right, a map shows the location of Turnage Road in Dagenham, with various street names and landmarks visible.

The Simpson Family Christmas 1954

25 December 1954

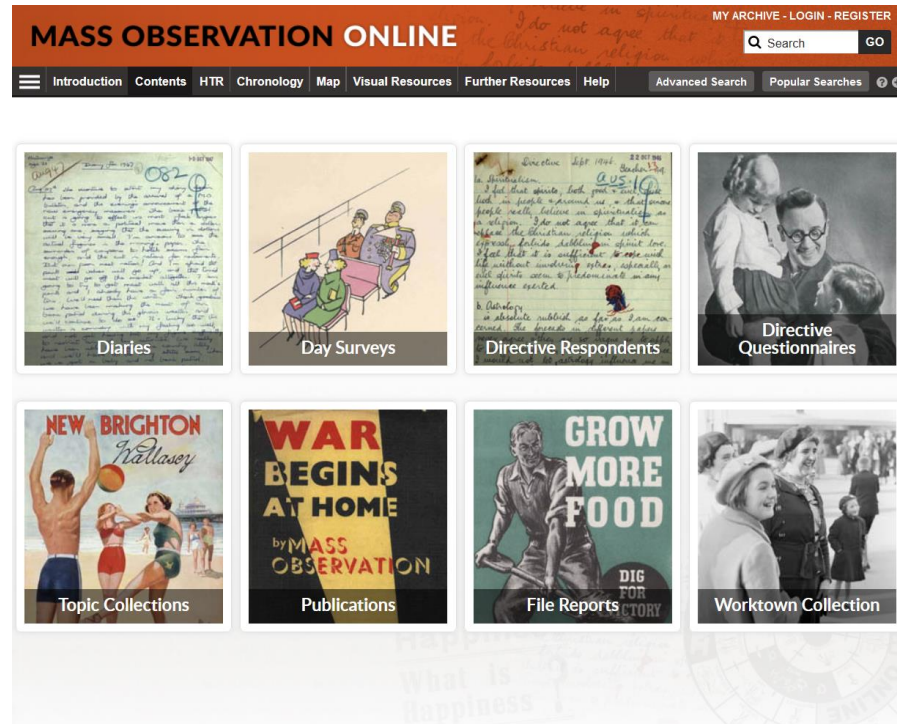
Simpson family Christmas in a three bedroom council house in Turnage Road Dagenham. It was two rooms with double doors that could be opened up to what is now known as a through lounge. The bathroom had a bath and a toilet and everybody used the downstairs sink to wash their hands etc. The larder was in the hallway where the dad made ginger beer as a special Christmas treat. Decorations were homemade paper chains. We had chicken for Christmas dinner at a time when chicken was terribly expensive. The chicken was a barter with the next door



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Personal Experiences: Mass Observation



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AMexplorer

US University
of Sussex

AM Adam Matthew
Primary sources for teaching and research

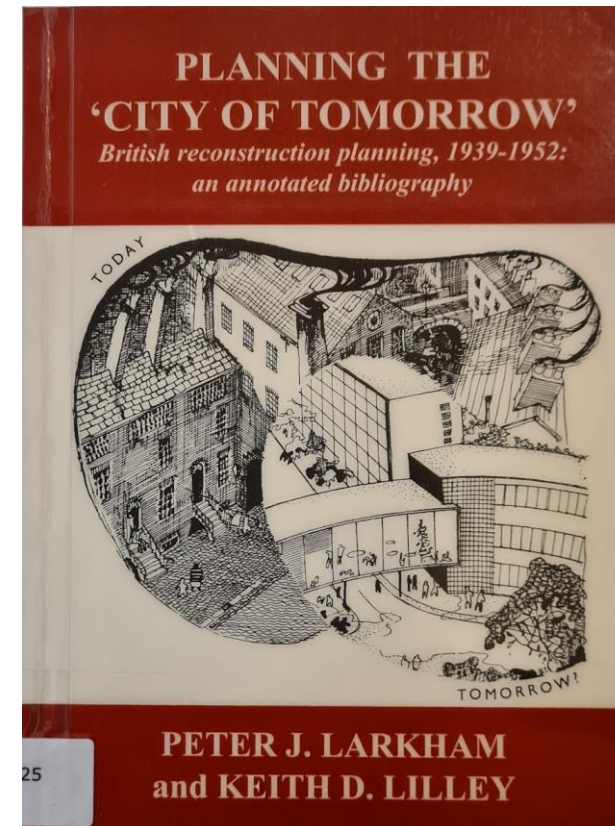
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history.ac.uk/library/collections/online-resources



Finding Resources

- Catalogues
 - Library Catalogues
 - [Library Hub Discover](#)
 - [National Archives Catalogue](#)
- Bibliographies
 - General such as the *Bibliography of British and Irish History* ([BBIH](#))
 - Topic Specific
- Guides to Sources
- Guides to Collections
 - The Directory of Rare Books and Special Collections in the UK and Republic of Ireland*
- The Snowball Method





Membership and Contacts

- Membership is free to everyone – to join to fill out an online form (<https://www.history.ac.uk/library/library-membership/join>) and opt to either collect your card from the IHR reception or have it sent to you in the post.
- You can contact us in person, via email or telephone as well as on social media:
 - ihr.library@sas.ac.uk
 - 020 7862 8760
 - @IHR_Library