

<p>Interview Summary Sheet Project: Memories of Fiction: An Oral History of Reader's Lives</p>
<p>Reference No.</p>
<p>Interviewee name and title: Jackie Spencer</p>
<p>Interviewee DOB and place of birth: Early 1960s, Maidstone. Interviewee occupation: Civil servant/administrative work. Book group(s) attended: Putney.</p>
<p>Date(s) of recording: 3rd June 2015 Location of recording: Fulham Interviewer: Amy Tooth Murphy Duration(s): 01.35.15 Summariser: Alison Chand</p>
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<p>Key themes: Family, reading, reading groups, holidays, work, education.</p>
<p>All books and authors mentioned (those discussed for >20 seconds in bold):</p> <p>Mills and Boon Noel Langley, <i>The Land of Green Ginger</i> Tove Jansson, <i>Finn Family Moomintroll</i> Norman Hunter, <i>Professor Branestawm</i> Thomas Hardy, <i>The Trumpet-Major</i> William Shakespeare, <i>Macbeth</i> <i>The Guardian</i> <i>The Times</i> Charles Dickens Fyodor Dostoyevsky, <i>Crime and Punishment</i> Jonathan Franzen, <i>The Corrections</i> Guy de Maupassant, <i>Short Stories of Guy de Maupassant</i> Ned Beaman, <i>The Teleportation Accident</i> M. L. Stedman, <i>The Light Between Oceans</i> Simon Mawer, <i>The Glass Room</i> Tan Twang Eng, <i>The Garden of Evening Mists</i> Agatha Christie Dorothy L. Sayers, <i>Lord Peter Wimsey</i> Henning Mankell, <i>Kurt Wallander</i> P. D. James Arthur Conan Doyle, <i>Sherlock Holmes</i> George R. R. Martin, <i>A Game of Thrones</i></p>

Jill Murphy, *Whatever Next!*
Chris Bentley, *Thunderbirds*
Helen Macdonald, *H is for Hawk*
Richard Flanagan, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*
Penelope Lively, *Ammonites and Leaping Fish*
Zadie Smith, *NW*
Donna Tartt, *The Goldfinch*
Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*
Jane Austen, *Emma*
 George Eliot
 Alan Ayckbourn
 John Godber, *Up 'n' Under*
Reginald Rose, *Twelve Angry Men*
Irvine Welsh, *Trainspotting*
Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*
Kate Morton, *The House of Riverton*
Lindsey Kelk, *I Heart Vegas*
Barbara Taylor Bradford

Interviewer/Summariser comments:

Part one of two

00:00:00	Introduction to interview, comments on previously being civil servant, being made redundant, working in administrative role for husband, age given as in fifties.
00.01.10	Comments on not doing 'masses' of reading, reading a lot as child. Comments on being born near Maidstone, near Kent, in early 1960s, parents being from Sussex, English origins of family, normality of family members having two children, interviewee only having one child. Remarks on different family members, parents and grandparents and siblings, older brother doing family tree back to 1600s, becoming closer to brother when brother moved to Tokyo, brother returning from Japan, living near Newbury.
00.03.40	Remarks on father being Royal Engineer in Army, mother's secretarial/insurance work. Comments on moving to Cheltenham aged two, birth of brother in Cyprus, father travelling with job.
00.04.40	Comments on living in London since 1985, moving to Fulham on marriage in 1992. Comments on parts of London lived in prior to marriage, moving to London for work in Home Office.
00.05.20	Remarks on visiting stately homes/museums, mother's interest in visiting museums/theatres, agreement with stepmother. Comments on mother reading to interviewee, visits to countryside, anecdote about climbing hill in Gloucestershire. Comments on husband/son not being interested in visiting stately homes, husband's work as building surveyor.
00.07.10	Comments on fiction/non-fiction books at home growing up, mother buying books for children, basing decisions on blurbs. Comments on mother buying books as presents for son, mother's enthusiasm for reading, reading six books at once, reading to

00.09.30	keep up memory. Comments on mother reading alone, mother reading to interviewee, mother's interest in biography, Booker nominated books, intelligent books. Dismissal of Mills and Boon. Remarks on mother inspiring interest in reading, going to elocution lessons, winning books/poetry as prizes from school, memories of books as prizes.
00.11.10	Comments on struggling to get to end of some books, making an effort to finish.
00.11.40	Comments on favourite children's book, <i>The Land of Green Ginger</i> (Noel Langley), enjoyment of <i>Finn Family Moomintroll</i> (Tove Jansson), <i>Professor Branestawm</i> (Norman Hunter).
00.12.30	Further comments on <i>The Land of Green Ginger</i> , first reading book aged around seven, remarks on plot, illustrations, lack of blurb on back of book. Comments on being member of Puffin club [phone rings], receiving badges. Comments on not being into science fiction at young age, interest in excitement. Remarks on re-reading book at young age, reading again before reading to son (son's age given as 13), disappointment at son not liking book.
00.17.10	Further comments on <i>Finn Family Moomintroll</i> , owning most of series of book, first hearing about book from mother, enjoyment of reading about people getting into scrapes. Comments on favourite character in book, son's lack of interest in books recommended by mother.
00.19.10	Further comments on <i>Professor Branestawm</i> , remarks on plot, fantastical nature of book, set within English town. Remarks in interest in magic as child, comments on book about magic tricks.
00.20.40	Remarks on lack of memory of learning to read, learning to read fairly quickly, methods of teaching in early 1960s, making poem in junior school, lack of memory of mother reading at home.
00.21.40	Remarks on reading avidly as child, going through picture books quickly, brother reading keenly, receiving brother's books, enjoying same books as brother, describing self as tomboy, not liking princess books. Comments on brother learning to read aged two, not getting on with brother as child, anecdote about brother tape recording child game.
00.23.30	Comments on childhood hobbies, mildly disruptive behaviour, hiding toys, drawing on walls. Remarks on toys played with, playing with action men.
00.24.10	Remarks on attending school in Cheltenham, going to grammar school, enjoyment of junior school, not enjoying grammar school so much, not making many friends, coming from different area of Cheltenham to other pupils.
00.25.20	Remarks on being put off reading for 25 years by reading unidentified Thomas Hardy book at school aged 13, struggling with book, character having fit in book. Remarks on studying classic fiction, not contemporary fiction, at school. Comments on interest in William Shakespeare, studying <i>MacBeth</i> . Further comments on finding Thomas Hardy too wordy. Comments on continuing to read school textbooks, avoiding fiction books.
00.27.40	Comments on picking up reading again on joining Hammersmith reading group, joining reading group to start reading again, Hammersmith group closing, starting to attend Putney group. Comments on reasons for starting to read again.

00.28.50	Remarks on hobbies in early adulthood, visiting exhibitions on moving to London, keeping busy without hobbies, not reading non-fiction.
00.29.20	Comments on reading newspapers, mother reading <i>The Guardian</i> , being brought up reading newspaper, starting to read <i>The Times</i> .
00.29.50	Remarks on mother's lack of awareness of reading from teenage years, leaving home in early twenties, mother being unaware of reading material.
00.30.30	Comments on mother's library membership, being library member as child, becoming member of Putney and Hammersmith libraries as adult, using both libraries.
00.31.10	Remarks on negative memories of Thomas Hardy, speculation on reading <i>The Trumpet-Major</i> at school.
00.32.00	Comments on starting to read again as adult, joining library reading group to avoid buying books, Hammersmith reading group having spaces. Remarks on differences between Hammersmith and Putney reading groups, Hammersmith group not talking much about books, more about social issues. Further comments on closure of Hammersmith reading group, Hammersmith library cuts, lack of librarian leading group. Comments on trying Fulham library reading group, going on waiting list, joining Putney reading group, lack of waiting list, ease of joining.
00.34.50	Comments on reading preferred books quickly, taking full month to read disliked books.
00.35.20	Comments on buying particular books, reading book group books first, reading other books if time available, ability to remember plots after passage of time.
00.36.30	Remarks on not being restricted to particular genres of book, not liking classic books, difficulties with Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, preference for modern books, difficulties with some modern books, struggling with <i>The Corrections</i> (Jonathan Franzen), reading group members liking book. Comments on reasons for dislike of <i>The Corrections</i> , parts of book disliked.
00.38.00	Remarks on reasons for dislike of 19 th century material, enjoyment of reading <i>Short Stories of Guy de Maupassant</i> , dark themes of 19 th century material, dislike of bleakness.
00.38.40	Comments on reading book group books would not otherwise read, reading <i>The Teleportation Accident</i> (Ned Beaman). Remarks on books particularly enjoyed, <i>The Light Between Oceans</i> (M. L. Stedman), <i>The Glass Room</i> (Simon Mawer), <i>The Garden of Evening Mists</i> (Tan Twang Eng), comments on plot of <i>The Garden of Evening Mists</i> . Remarks on range of material enjoyed, being attracted to plots and stories, greater interest in fictional plots than non-fiction/bibliography. Comments on liking historical and modern day material.
00.41.20	Remarks on crime fiction, enjoyment of Agatha Christie, <i>Lord Peter Wimsey</i> (Dorothy L. Sayers). Comments on reading <i>Kurt Wallander</i> (Henning Mankell), not reading P. D. James. Comments on enjoyment of plots and twists in Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers. Mention of <i>Sherlock Holmes</i> (Arthur Conan Doyle), not being able to guess outcomes [phone rings].
00.42.50	Further comments on Putney reading group, initial large size of

	group, 16 to 20 members, differing views of reading group members. Further comments on differences between Hammersmith and Putney reading groups, expectations of reading groups, interest in semantics of books as well as stories, preference for discussing stories but interest in balance between semantics and stories, Putney group being split into two groups. Comments on new format of group in two groups, problems with sharing books. Remarks on some group members reading different books.
00.47.00	Comments on librarians making book suggestions, members putting forward opinions by emails, putting forward suggestions. Comments on group being split into people who had been members longest/newer members, newer group able to read books already read by older group. Comments on facilitation of two groups, group member leading discussion once every two months, some members feeling able to speak more in new format.
00.50.10	Comments on idea of book groups in people's houses, not wanting to spend money on hardback books.
00.50.40	Remarks on not re-reading books, not re-watching films, greater interest in reading for story than writing style, losing pleasure of reading once plot is known.
00.51.40	Remarks on reading places, on sofa, in bed, on train, not reading on buses/coaches. Comments on reading on train alone, not reading on tube, needing to concentrate, reading newspapers on tube.
00.53.00	Comments on husband not reading much, reading son's children's books, comments on <i>A Game of Thrones</i> (George R. R. Martin), son's interest in fantasy material. Comments on reading to son, reading from 10am to 10.30am when son was baby, remarks on books read with son, <i>Whatever Next!</i> (Jill Murphy), <i>Thunderbirds</i> (Chris Bentley). Further comments on <i>Whatever Next!</i> , description as son's favourite book. Remarks on keeping son's childhood books, son receiving books from Book Trust as toddler. Comments on son's current reading, son reading in bed, playing computer games during day. Comments on allowing son to find own preferred reading material, picking up some books from library children's section, generally not steering son's reading.
00.57.10	Comments on <i>H is for Hawk</i> (Helen Macdonald), expectations of book, not wanting to take library book on holiday.
00.58.00	Remarks on lack of particular interest in biography, reading books because set by reading group, trying to finish most books for reading group. Comments on being happy to be told what to read, different genres covered by reading group.
00.59.00	Remarks on prizewinning books read, <i>The Narrow Road to the Deep North</i> (Richard Flanagan).
00.59.30	Comments on <i>Crime and Punishment</i> (Fyodor Dostoyevsky), not finishing book, also giving up <i>The Corrections</i> .
00.59.50	Remarks on other reading group books, <i>The Teleportation Accident</i> , Penelope Lively book. Comments on lack of memory of reading group books.
01.00.40	Comments on brother not recommending books, mother reading voraciously, getting lists of recommended books from mother,

	recommending books to mother. Comments on mother being in reading group in Cheltenham, nature of reading group.
01.02.00	Comments on appeal of library book group. Comments on librarian giving list of books from Blackie's Library.
01.03.00	Further comments on coming back to reading after 25 years, feeling that time is more fulfilled.
01.03.50	Comments on books 'should' have read, reading group books taking up most of reading time, not having more than one book on the go at once. Description of self as slow reader, not skim reading, not skipping to end to find out how books finish.
01.05.10	Comments on <i>NW</i> , Zadie Smith book, lack of convenient places to stop. Remarks on uncertainty about stream of consciousness style.
01.06.10	Comments on <i>The Goldfinch</i> (Donna Tartt), remarks on sections of book disliked, general enjoyment of book, comments on length of book.
01.06.40	Remarks on tendency of reading group to assign two books in case of reading short books. Comments on Putney library not always having enough copies of books, getting some books from Hammersmith library.
01.07.40	Comments on <i>Madame Bovary</i> (Gustave Flaubert), getting book from Hammersmith, indifference to book.
01.08.00	Interviewer questions about Jane Austen, George Eliot, remarks on reading <i>Emma</i> for A level, struggling with book, not having read many 19 th female authors.
01.08.40	Comments on reading Shakespeare at school, mother being actress when young, being brought up knowing Shakespeare, going to theatre with mother from age of two, Shakespeare feeling normal. Remarks on current theatre attendance, going to theatres when husband and son go skiing every February. Comments on not usually going to musicals, seeing and disliking <i>Wicked</i> , preference for plays.
01.11.00	Comments on favourite playwrights, Alan Ayckbourn, John Godber (<i>Up 'n' Under</i>), 'angry young men' playwrights, <i>Twelve Angry Men</i> (Reginald Rose), not usually reading plays. Remarks on previous membership of amateur theatre group, not enjoying reading scripts. Comments on stage fright when acting, moving to backstage activity, stage fright in <i>My Fair Lady</i> . Remarks on backstage activities undertaken, giving up theatre group after having son.
01.14.40	Interviewer lays out plans for next interview, remarks on son's after school activities, going to classics club. Comments on son's school, son's hobbies, interest in rugby and cricket, enjoyment of Latin.
01.17.20	Comments on learning German, not being able to study Latin, learning French, husband speaking French. Comments on stepmother leaving house in will, having to go through technical/legal French.
01.19.00	Further comments on career in civil service, 'falling into' job, wages better than in travel agency. Further remarks on redundancy, other jobs worked in, working at Home Office, remarks on role, helping to set up National Lottery, helping to set up electronic tagging prior to 2000. Remarks on having to apply

	to move jobs within civil service. Comments on working with Food Standards Agency, moving to work for husband, remarks on redundancy process, difficulty of finding job in fifties, comments on administrative role undertaken for husband, remarks on proofreading.
01.25.00	Comments on proof copies of books in charity shops, having eye for detail, being methodical reader. Further comments on never skipping to end of books.
01.26.00	Remarks on spoiling endings for other reading group members.
01.27.30	Comments on emotional impact of books, becoming more emotionally involved in films than books, further comments on <i>The Goldfinch</i> .
01.28.20	Comments on moral feeling about books, not wanting to read <i>Trainspotting</i> (Irvine Welsh), disliking <i>A Clockwork Orange</i> (Anthony Burgess), remarks on prudish taste in reading.
01.29.10	Remarks on current book set by reading group, further comments on <i>The Narrow Road to the Deep North</i> .
01.29.40	Comments on being less inclined to read prizewinning/nominated books.
01.30.30	Remarks on reading book from Richard and Judy book club, <i>The House of Riverton</i> (Kate Morton).
01.30.50	Comments on holiday reading, not taking book on most recent visit to France, taking book of crosswords. Remarks on reluctance to take library book abroad, fear of forgetting book. Comments on husband buying <i>I Heart Vegas</i> (Lindsey Kelk) for holiday to Las Vegas, lack of interest in chick lit. Further comments on chick lit.
01.32.40	Comments on romance books, Barbara Taylor Bradford, buying books at charity shop, lack of expectations of book.
01.33.20	Remarks on being put off books by covers, reading blurbs on back of books, seeking out books by same authors if books enjoyed, further remarks on Penelope Lively, <i>Ammonites and Leaping Fish</i> .
01.35.15	END