Interview Summary Sheet
Project: **Memories of Fiction: An Oral History of Reader's Lives**

Reference No.

Interviewee name and title: Geoffrey Jackson and Angela Phelan

Interviewee DOB and place of birth: 24th November 1936, Sutton, Surrey (GJ), no DOB given (AP)
Interviewee occupation: Teacher/lecturer (GJ)
Book group(s) attended: Putney (both)

Date(s) of recording: 16th September 2015
Location of recording: Putney
Interviewer: Amy Tooth Murphy
Duration(s): 02.17.56
Summariser: Alison Chand

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Key themes: Reading habits, reading, reading groups, writing, memory, reading places, childhood, illness, comics, TV adaptations, travel, translations, family, academia, politics, morality, poetry.

All books and authors mentioned (those discussed for >20 seconds in bold):
Michael Innes
P. D. James
Ruth Rendell
Barbara Vine
Walter Scott
William Thackeray
The Guardian
The Observer
The Times
Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes*
Henry James, *The Wings of the Dove*
Jessie Burton, *The Miniaturist*
Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*
H. G. Wells
Bunty
Judy
The Hotspur
Billy Bunter
Anthony Buckeridge, *Jennings and Darbishire*
The Golden Thread
Lewis Carroll
Richmal Crompton, *Just William*

The Beano
The Dandy
Film Fun
Radio Fun
Eagle
Paul Mason, *The Cupboard Under the Stairs*
Kathleen Winsor, *Forever Amber*
William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis,* *The Rape of Lucrece, Hamlet*
Grace Metalious, *Peyton Place*
D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*
David Wilson, *Twelve Years a Slave*
J. B. Priestley, *An Inspector Calls*
Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*
Guy de Maupassant
Alice Munro
James Joyce
Jane Austen
T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land, Prufrock*
Emily Dickinson
W. B. Yeats
Rudyard Kipling
Charles Kingsley, *The Water Babies*
William Wordsworth, *Lucy* poems, *Sonnets Upon the Punishment of Death*
F. W. Bates
Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Alfred, Lord Tennyson
Christopher Ricks
William Blake
George Eliot, *Middlemarch, The Mill on the Floss*
Ezra Pound
J. K. Rowling
John Carey, *What Good are the Arts?*
Sarah Waters, *The Paying Guests*
Richard Flanagan, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*
Samuel Beckett
Colm Toibin, *Nora Webster**, Brooklyn.*
Claire Tomalin, *The Invisible Woman, Charles Dickens: A Life*
Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*
Country Life

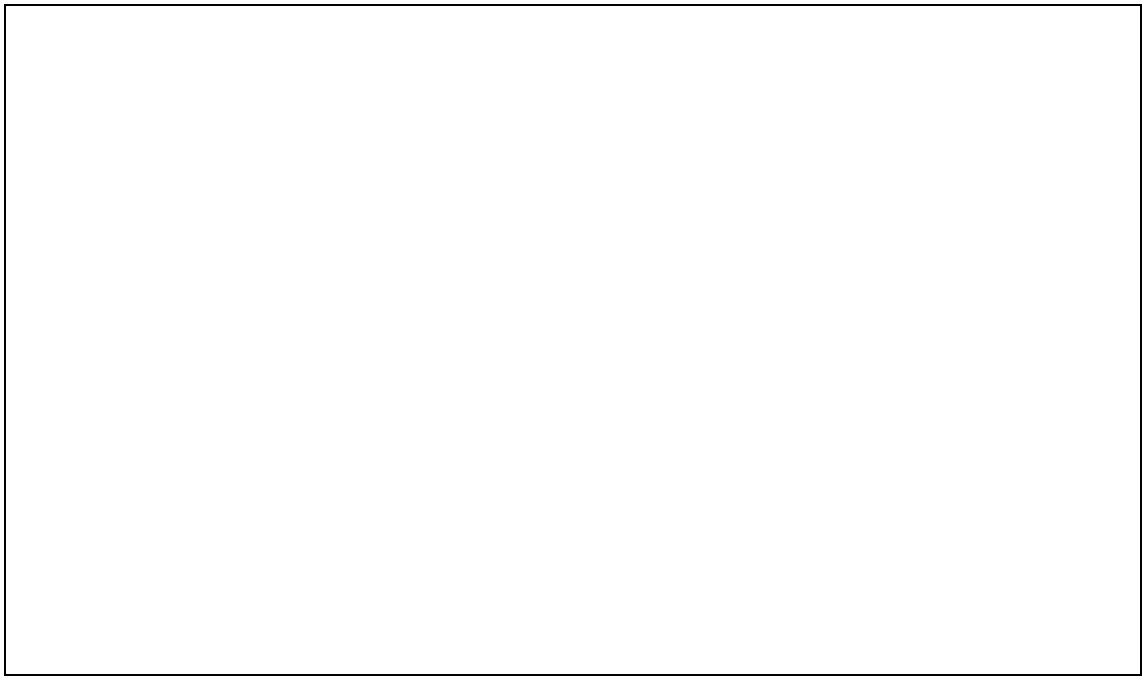
Interviewer/Summariser comments:
Part two of two

00:00:00	Introduction to interview, AP remarks on what reading habits say about her as person, openness to genres, interest in things outside reading, finding different subjects interesting, recent interest in scientific subjects, broadened reading habits, changes in self leading to changes in reading habits, changing as person, going through education system relatively late, developing

	interest in politics. GJ comments on phases in reading habits, previous interest in detective fiction, mention of Michael Innes, P. D. James, Barbara Vine, Ruth Rendell, reading more contemporary fiction as result of membership of reading group, own tendency to read classical fiction, intentions to read more William Thackeray, Walter Scott, non-fiction, literary criticism/theory, reading newspapers at night, dipping into non-fiction books, never reading end of novel before beginning, GJ and AP remarks on disliking spoilers, never reading blurbs on books.
00.07.40	Remarks on decision process behind buying books, reading/listening to reviews, recommendations, mention of *The Guardian, The Observer, The Times* recommendations. Further comments on not reading blurbs of books, cover pictures giving away details about books. Remarks on being attracted to/put off by covers, lack of influence of covers, impact of prizewinning/shortlisted books for prizes, mention of *Angela's Ashes* (Frank McCourt).
00.11.20	Remarks on biographies, photographs inside books, genres denoted by pictures.
00.12.00	Comments on enjoyment of all books read, some books being more engaging than others, not feeling that reading anything is waste of time, learning something from all books, comments on Henry James, dislike of author leading to reading other books by same author to establish views. GJ remarks on reading group enabling focus on reservations about books, needing to have reservations about books for discussion in group. Comments on reading group discussions, differences between reading for reading group/reading for seminars, not having time to develop discussions in reading group, making an effort for reading group.
00.15.50	GJ comments on regret about not making notes about books, forgetting books read, comments on idea of recording group discussions.
00.16.50	Remarks on most recent book read with book group, *The Miniaturist* (Jessie Burton), remarks on enjoyment of book, good research in book [phone rings].
00.18.10	GJ remarks on changes in memory over time. [AP comments on phone conversation.] GJ further comments on declining memory, knowing material taught well, inability to remember some books, memory of some childhood books, striking incidents/characters, reading settings being linked to books/occasions.
00.20.00	GJ comments on being ill as child, reading *Great Expectations* (Charles Dickens) in sun in garden, memories of H. G. Wells, comments on reading in garden, reading in bed, reading with torch under bedclothes as child.
00.21.00	AP memories of childhood reading, memories of characters, remarks on reading comics, *Bunty, Judy, The Hotspur, Billy Bunter,* also *Jennings and Darbishire* (Anthony Buckeridge), reading male and female comics, continued enjoyment of comics. AP remarks on reading childhood books as adult, attending children's literature class in Canada, reading *The Golden Thread* (unsure of author), books by Lewis Carroll, reading children's literature from academic perspective [phone rings]. Remarks on differences between reading children's literature as child/as

	adult, further comments on *Jennings and Darbishire*. GJ remarks on girls in children's literature, comments on *Just William* (Richmal Crompton), AP remarks on lack of interest in silly adventures, preference for *Jennings and Darbishire.* GJ remarks on enjoyment of *Just William*, listening to *Jennings and Darbishire* on *Children's Hour*, not reading books, enjoyment of reading about people getting into 'scrapes', desire to get friends together into 'gang'.
00.27.30	GJ remarks on reading comics in hospital when ill with scarlet fever, mention of *The Beano*, *The Dandy, Film Fun, Radio Fun*, Desperate Dan character, *Eagle*. AP remarks on buying own comics, parents not buying comics.
00.29.00	AP remarks on parents not restricting reading, parents not being aware of saucy reading. GJ remarks on 'out of bounds' books, *The Cupboard Under the Stairs* (Paul Mason), *Forever Amber* (Kathleen Winsor), recollections of *Forever Amber*. GJ further remarks on restricted books, William Shakespeare, reading Shakespeare hiding behind sofa, *Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece,* general innocence of childhood reading. AP comments on *Peyton Place* (Grace Metalious), racy nature of books, televised adaptations of books.
00.31.40	Remarks on adaptation of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (D. H. Lawrence), AP remarks on not having read book.
00.32.50	Remarks on televised adaptations, preference for reading book first, AP remarks on *Twelve Years a Slave* (David Wilson), differences between film and book. GJ remarks on adaptation of *An Inspector Calls* (J. B. Priestley), adaptations of plays, Charles Dickens adaptations, remarks on serial adaptations.
00.35.30	Remarks on *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* (Mark Haddon), creative nature of theatre version, Henry James theatre productions, *The Wings of the Dove*, sometimes getting more out of theatre productions.
00.36.40	GJ remarks on time spent in Germany from 1959 to 1963, initially going to study Anglo-Saxon and Germanic languages, starting to teach English, reading some German literature, reading in German rather than in translation, reading some English translations of German in reading group, description of unnamed book, comparisons of translation reading to reading in German, changes to substances of books, remarks on reading German poetry. AP remarks on not reading in other languages.
00.40.20	GJ remarks on occasionally reading in French, reading Guy de Maupassant, French not being as good as German, liking to attempt French when going to France. Remarks on reading group reception of Guy de Maupassant stories, Alice Munro stories, AP remarks on dislike of Alice Munro stories, lack of credibility of stories, GJ comments on liking Alice Munro stories, acceptance of author versions of events, GJ remarks on AP's greater perceptiveness about human relationships.
00.43.50	AP comments on need for psychological realism, need to relate to characters in books/stories, GJ comments on surprise by people's actions in real life, danger of wanting fiction to be more 'real' than real life. Further AP comments on lack of believability of Alice Munro stories.
00.45.30	General comments on short story genre, AP remarks on greater

	openness to short stories with age, mention of James Joyce short stories, moving nature of stories. GJ remarks on never voluntarily reading collections of short stories, great enjoyment of short stories in reading group, recommending short stories. Remarks on ideas of literature/short stories, mention of Jane Austen short stories, prejudice against short stories amongst readers, greater legitimacy of short stories amongst educated readers, unusual nature of authors only writing short stories.
00.49.10	AP remarks on poetry, Emily Dickinson, T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, enjoyment of poetry at school, basic nature of school teaching, mention of Rudyard Kipling, simple narratives of poems taught, preference for fiction, remarks on attending poetry group, writing own poems.
00.51.10	AP remarks on own fiction writing, writing short stories, GJ remarks on AP's writing, comments on lack of particular influences, surreal nature of content.
00.52.40	AP remarks on surreal/whimsical fiction, mention of *The Water Babies* (Charles Kingsley), comments on poet (unable to identify), comparison to own poetry, remarks on *Pan's Labyrinth* film. GJ remarks on reading AP's work, not spotting obvious influences, originality of work.
00.55.00	AP remarks on temptation to attend creative writing group in Putney, not attending other groups, reception of own poetry in poetry group, poetry written by other poetry group members, conventional nature of group, prescriptive ideas of poetry, amateur nature of poetry group, GJ remarks on disagreements with other poetry group member about lack of need to label poems, other member's greater interest in form rather than content. GJ comments on own poetry produced for group, impromptu exercises undertaken in group.
00.59.40	GJ remarks on work on William Wordsworth, reasons for beginning to study Wordsworth, not initially having experience to be moved by Wordsworth, initial preference for eighteenth century work, giving lectures in Germany, reading F. W. Bates's book on Wordsworth, interest in Wordsworth's relationship with sister, developing interest in *Lucy* poems, studying *Lucy* poems for PhD, development of interest in Wordsworth's poetry, mention of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, increasingly being moved by poetry content, enjoyment of working with manuscript, work for Cornell edition [interviewee goes to get Cornell volume of work]. Further mention of W. B. Yeats. AP comments on GJ's work on Wordsworth.
01.05.00	AP remarks on own reading while GJ working on Wordsworth. GJ further remarks on gradual nature of work on Wordsworth, being slow while teaching, dedicating book to mother, mother's pride in work, lack of understanding of work. GJ remarks on feelings about work on Wordsworth after completion, spotting mistakes. Mention of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, book on Tennyson by Christopher Ricks. AP further comments on GJ's work, GJ's description of work as 'way of life', travel involved in work. Remarks on forgetting some information about Wordsworth, comments on William Blake, not feeling like authority on Blake, interest in Blake's songs rather than prophetic books [interview pauses].

01.12.30	GJ remarks on views of family and friends on work on Wordsworth, opinions of first wife, AP, colleagues, children, impossibility of sharing aspects of work, isolation of academic life to a point, difficulty of believing work would ever finish. Remarks on mastering word processing skills, impact of technological changes on work. AP remarks on not being tempted by literary criticism.
01.15.20	GJ remarks on other works of literary criticism, editing manuscript volume for former school, interviewer gives title of edited collection, difficulty of getting in touch with people with material included [rustling of food packets in background], acknowledgement of AP in book. AP remarks on not having diligence for literary criticism/PhD, GJ comments on academia resulting in neglect of domestic responsibilities, mention of *Middlemarch* (George Eliot).
01.21.50	GJ remarks on *Middlemarch, The Mill on the Floss* (George Eliot), George Eliot's poetry, further remarks on T. S. Eliot. Remarks on relationships with brothers/sisters, family relationships in George Eliot and Wordsworth.
01.23.10	GJ remarks on current academic work, further remarks on development of views on Wordsworth, changes with age and experience, time being useful to appreciate many aspects of life, mention of getting more from Lewis Carroll with age, further comments on Shakespeare, possibility of Shakespeare being off-putting for children, mention of *Hamlet*.
01.25.40	GJ/AP remarks on reading habits of own children/grandchildren, range of ages of grandchildren, general lack of interest in literature.
01.26.40	AP remarks on interest in quantum science, interest in spiritual world. GJ comments on own rational tendencies, differences of views from AP.
01.27.40	GJ/AP comments on shared reading interests, mention of Henry James, T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land, Prufrock*, not bonding over literature, AP comments on not being keen on Wordsworth, not arguing over books, differences of opinion over Alice Munro short stories in reading group, disagreeing more about politics than books.
01.29.40	Comments on politics not influencing reading, not needing books to have moral message, remarks on complexity of life. GJ commenting on idea that good art does not promote morality, remarks on anti-Semitism of T. S. Eliot, not agreeing with views but still liking poetry.
01.31.30	GJ remarks on Ezra Pound, GJ and AP remarks on F. R. Leavis, further comments on moral messages in literature. AP comments on strong feelings about moral/political issues. Remarks on moral responsibilities of the arts, political views not always being evident in writing.
01.35.00	Comments on political/moral responsibilities of authors, remarks on J. K. Rowling's public views, going off Cilla Black because of Conservative voting habits, need for more authors to speak out against government. GJ remarks on Wordsworth, *Sonnets Upon the Punishment of Death*, defence of death penalty.
01.40.00	Remarks on people relating literature to themselves, examples from reading group, opinions of Japanese reading group member,

	people imposing own values on reading material. Remarks on need to analyse literature, GJ remarks on wanting to make students understand, not like, Wordsworth, reading group being more about 'liking' material.
01.44.20	GJ comments on recommending *What Good are the Arts?* (John Carey) to reading group, library not wanting to invest in book, stimulating nature of book.
01.45.40	Remarks on learning about self through reading, GJ remarks on need for stimulus of reading group, social nature of reading group, comments on predominantly female nature of reading group, greater inclination of men for non-fiction. GJ remarks on being asked for male views on sexuality in relation to *The Paying Guests* (Sarah Waters), remarks on reading group members not liking sexual scenes, brief reference to *Fifty Shades of Grey* (E. L. James). Further comments on Sarah Waters, mainstream nature of sexual writing, remarks on views of gay/heterosexual sexual scenes in books, feeling that many reading group members do not think objectively.
01.52.30	Comments on division of reading group into two separate groups, initial objections to division of groups, remarks on facilitation of group, confidence of members in speaking out, further comments on Japanese reading group member, Japanese member's views on *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (Richard Flanagan). Comments on some members not feeling confident in speaking out, liking to just listen to views of others.
01.57.50	Remarks on local literary arts and cultural events, going to Wimbledon BookFest, seeing authors speak.
01.58.50	AP remarks on Irish literature, Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, W. B. Yeats, returning more to Ireland as child, feeling like outsider in Ireland and England, still feeling Irish. Remarks on *Nora Webster* (Colm Toibin), reviews/blurbs of books, resistance to reading book in group, reading *Brooklyn*.
02.01.20	Comments on perceived hierarchies of literary themes.
02.02.20	Remarks on upcoming reading group books, *The Invisible Woman* (Claire Tomalin), comments on previously reading *Charles Dickens: A Life*. Further comments on upcoming books, *The Kite Runner* (Khaled Hosseini), remarks on plot of *The Kite Runner*.
02.04.20	AP comments on parents not pushing her into literature, parents not being academic, more academic parents potentially making difference to career path, potentially learning more from non-academic background. GJ remarks on greater learning potential from non-conventional routes to learning, rejection of some teaching from school, not being pushed by parents down particular route, mother's respect for teaching. Further comments from AP on parents not understanding academic world, parents' pride in children's academic achievements.
02.10.30	Remarks on experience of being interviewed, AP remarks on developing more positive view of self, GJ on developing stronger sense of identity, developing role of books in life.
02.12.20	GJ comments on doing work on English master after master's death, writing memoir, need to promote book, mention of *Country Life*, comments on master's obituary.
02.17.56	END