

Recording the History of Alternative Theatre in Britain (1968-88) through oral history  
interviews and the collecting of archive material -  
Working with the past to inspire the present.

## Unfinished Histories Newsletter July 2015

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### **BOOKS**

#### **Send Me a Parcel with a Hundred Lovely Things**

By Carry Gorney (Ragged Clown Publishing ISBN: 9781 910667 019)

Carry Gorney's autobiography gives a vivid account of her childhood in a secular Jewish family in Yorkshire, growing up between cultures and languages. Her grandparents were German Jewish immigrants to Britain who ended up owning a shoddy mill, recycling rags, lived through the First World War in Dewsbury in an atmosphere of mistrust and spent the post-war period between Yorkshire and Berlin. Carry's mother spent much of her teenage years in Berlin where as holders of British passports gave them an escape route from the advancing horrors overtaking their wider family and community. But escape to wartime Britain brought internment on the Isle of Man for her German Jewish husband as an enemy alien. It's a densely packed and compelling narrative interspersed with an account of her mother's final years, even before we reach Carry's birth and 50s childhood. The memoir's main interest in the context of this newsletter is the account of Carry Gorney's meeting with Ed Berman, playing games with kids under the Westway and her subsequent breakneck narrative of hurtling up and down the M1 in a psychedelic Morris between teacher training in Leeds and intensely-packed weekends with Inter-Action. Lively descriptions follow of the establishment of Interplay in Leeds and later work at Inter-Action (Milton Keynes) along with the excitement of involvement in the early Women's Movement in 1972 and the personal costs of all this in a brief period of breakdown, and then more work with children and young people. There is some confusion around the odd date: the Drury Lane Arts Lab was long gone by the time Judy Chicago's Dinner Party was made in 1979. But it is an inspiring, copiously illustrated and very welcome account of the times, the work and what drove it at a period of highly important creative upsurge. (Susan Croft)