

FOREWORD

Memory and the historians: Ordinary life, eventfulness and the instinctual past

Geoff Eley

Invited some 15 years ago to write a foreword for a volume on *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, I took the chance to reflect on what seemed at the time to be a veritable ‘boom in memory’.¹ After a few signature volumes of the 1970s, either with a mainly literary emphasis or else working creatively with oral histories – Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and Modern Memory*² and Ronald Fraser’s *The Blood of Spain*³ each come to mind – the mid-1980s saw a cluster of interventions whose effects helped remake how we think about the ‘history and memory’ complex. In a time of ferment among historians at large, amid key political changes and challenges to well-tried assumptions of intellectual life, works by Carolyn Steedman, Ronald Fraser and Patrick Wright in Britain, by Alessandro Portelli and Luisa Passerini in Italy, by Lutz Niethammer and his collaborators in West Germany, and by Pierre Nora in France opened up exciting new avenues for study.⁴ These drew much impetus from wider developments in the arts, education, public policy and popular culture – from the growth of new museum practices and pedagogies, from the commemorative excess of the Second World War anniversaries and the French Revolution’s bicentennial, from prestigious historical exhibitions, from the growth of heritage industries and the proliferating of historical sites, from the making of memorials and monuments, and from varieties of nostalgia in entertainment and consumer culture. Long-smouldering controversies about the recent twentieth-century past would also intermittently burst into fire, country by country, most notably perhaps in Germany over *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past), but also in Italy via the routines and rituals of anti-fascism, in France over the legacies of Vichy, and so forth around the map. Holocaust memory was also finding

its powerful contemporary impact. As professional historians responded, the new journal *History and Memory*, launched in 1989, initiated and welcomed much of the resulting discussion.

Since the time of my earlier reflection in 1997, the shelves have become thick with discussion. Holocaust historiography, and more recently comparative genocide studies, provide an especially elaborate and intense set of examples, accelerating into the new century as events in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda laid down their effects. Traumatic memory, questions of restitution, crises of human rights, commissions for truth and reconciliation, cases before the International Criminal Court in the Hague – each offered spurs to historical research. Film, television, photography, artworks, exhibitions, architecture, landscape, the built environment – all kinds of visual representation afford rich materials for studying collective remembering and forgetting. Processing the Nazi past in Germany offers only the most salient of many other examples: debate over how exactly the Third Reich is to be remembered remains an ever-fertile source of controversy and scandal, each instance proving no less contentious than the last.

While often simplifying and sensational, media events also inspire an immense amount of inquiry, casting light back onto earlier twentieth-century problems while drawing growing attention in their own right. The memory work and memorializing of the past few decades have now themselves become an object of historical study. For some years now, whether in national historiographies or for Europe's history as a whole, this has been a primary means of addressing the impact and legacies of the Second World War. Tony Judt's highly regarded *Postwar* makes 'memory' into the organizing principle of its whole account, for example. Framing Europe's post-1945 history in such a way becomes entirely natural.⁵ The first quarter of one recent volume of essays on reconstruction between 1945 and 1958 is devoted to 'collective memory' and the 'burdens of the past'; another anthology on the transnational dimensions of contemporary European history does the same, staging its treatments via an argument about 'contested memories'.⁶

Building the architecture of a postwar history around 'memory' has definite implications. In Judt's case it suggests the underlying continuity of a burdensome past that overshadows and disables, presenting a series of constraints and inhibitions, even as the resulting silences about the war and the earlier part of the century helped a certain common ground of societal reconstruction to be assembled. For Judt, postwar memory functioned mainly as a negativity, as the nightmare sent from 'the house of the dead' to weigh on the brains of the living. After the divisiveness and destruction of the earlier twentieth-century and the wartime, he argues, the selective memorializing of the period between the 1950s and 1970s then worked productively for the rebuilding of society's cohesion, just as the changes of the 1980s and 1990s (and the receding immediacy of 1945 per se) allowed aspects of the wartime experience to be faced more openly: 'The first

postwar Europe was built upon deliberate *mis*-memory – upon forgetting as a way of life. Since 1989, Europe has been constructed instead upon a compensatory surplus of memory: institutionalised public remembering as the very foundation of collective identity.⁷ This affords one means of making the memory boom intelligible, historicizing its appearances to a particular period in the delayed, protracted and recursively uneven working through of the trauma of a long-lasting post-Nazi condition. Fredric Jameson's 'nostalgia for the present' is another, making 'memory' a source of bearings and locatedness during a time of severance and the precarious rapidity of change, where narrating and visualizing the present as history offers promiscuous consolation, in a surrogate claim to continuity.⁸

Where are we now with historical studies of memory? In contrast with the situation 15 years ago, the widely proliferating activity has become more explicitly theorized, made into a collective conversation, codified into a field. Earlier, the proposals of a few pioneers engendered excitement but remained idiosyncratic, their ideas and methods embedded in the brilliance of particular *oeuvres*. Characteristic in that respect was Raphael Samuel's remarkable *Theatres of Memory* published in 1994, an omnibus of unexpectedness and insight, an exhaustive array of possible ways of thinking about how societies remember and historians seek to capture the past.⁹ A handful of generalizing works long held a place for theory as such, but since around 2000 the landscape has become markedly transformed.¹⁰ Especially significant were three volumes edited by Susannah Radstone and Katherine Hodgkin, whose contents combined cases with theoretical treatments drawn from across the disciplines in latter-day cultural studies mode.¹¹ Alongside a profusion of publications on particular countries, including every possible aspect of the Holocaust, a variety of anthologies of European and sometimes global reach now appeared.¹² Above all, historians have acquired a systematic basis in theory, with one major anthology, *The Collective Memory Reader*, gathering together most of the major voices, both classical and contemporary, in 88 short extracts, and another, *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, commissioning 30 original contributions organized into three parts: 'Histories' (with sub-sections on 'Epochs' and 'Imagining Modern Memory'); 'How Memory Works' (sub-sections on 'The Inner Self', 'Subjectivity and the Social' and 'Public Memory'); and 'Controversies'. From multiple perspectives and a range of relevant disciplines, these volumes provide excellent access to the ground from which the questions of 'history' and 'memory' can now be engaged.¹³

This manifold activity has brought undoubted gains. Rather than talismanic invocations of Maurice Halbwachs and a few other classics, along with the contemporary salience of Nora's 'sites of memory', we now have an explicit and much broader theoretical basis for thinking about memory, one far more solidly grounded in appropriate interdisciplinary knowledges.¹⁴ Of course, the great wave of current enthusiasm is rarely innocent, but on the contrary harbours a variety of ulterior purposes, angling in one

way or another for the instatement of a new official version of the particular national past. Such renormalizing implications are nowhere more palpable than in the grand narrative ambitions of Nora's *Les lieux de mémoire*.¹⁵ With popular memorializing also comes much complicating of access to the past: not only the events of history are now being recalled – in the present volume, the past of the Second World War and its legacies – but also the intervening welter of representations where those events may now be obscured. For example, in the proliferating anniversaries and commemorations of the past three decades not just the events themselves are being remembered, but all of the cultural sedimentation built up around them between the 1940s and now. As I argued on a previous occasion:

History enters popular circulation at the beginning of the twenty-first century through such confusions of mass-mediated meanings. [These] construct the national past via a compulsive simultaneity of connotations, in a promiscuous mélange of imagery and citation, creating a dense palimpsest of referentiality. Symbolic capital accumulates thickly around national history's grand events in this manner, encumbering our access to their meanings. This is nowhere stronger than in popular culture's teeming archive of visual representations in film, television, advertising, magazines and the daily press.¹⁶

With respect to British historiography of the Second World War, I have three brief observations. One concerns the now well ensconced emphasis on ordinary popular experience as something distinct from the various versions of the longer-running official story. A strong set of assumptions foregrounding material life and its superior authenticities – the mundane continuance of everyday rhythms, the quotidian micro-political entailments of securing a wartime livelihood, the new social relations and cultural practices arising in a highly mobilized and unexpectedly shaken-up society, and the often messy pragmatics of finding ways of making it through – are set deliberately *against* the stalwartness of the older patriotic narrative, with its heroic mythologies, well-worn iconicities and Churchillian grandeur (the 'Dunkirk spirit,' the 'Valiant Years'). If, many years before, Angus Calder's classic account of *The People's War* had already debunked much of that earlier rhetoric of shared patriotic sacrifice, then the image of 'everyone pulling together' in the hour of the nation's need still kept remarkable staying-power.¹⁷ But over the past two decades several distinct literatures have now been questioning this consensual claim in its relationship to '1945' and the postwar settlement. Left-wing versions emphasize popular radicalisms going far beyond what the Clement Attlee government was actually prepared to achieve, while more 'realist' approaches see rather the ineffectual, costly and generally misguided quality of the post-1945 reforms. Pushing into the gap between government and people is yet a third view, which queries the depth or extent of popular interest in reform *per se*,

insisting that ‘the majority of the public were ill-informed, lacked “social solidarity”, and supported neither state intervention nor altruistic welfare policies’ in the first place.¹⁸ As Geoffrey Field puts it:

In an effort to break through the impeding layers of nostalgia and demythologize the war years, historians have paid growing attention to aspects of life omitted from the ‘orthodox’ heroic version, such as looting, black market activities, absenteeism, strikes, cynicism, and low morale. Some imply that the average person often has few opinions worth the name – and caution that the idea of a popular wartime consensus for reform was largely a myth manufactured by intellectuals.¹⁹

These new histories look beyond and beneath the war’s big events to explore those underlying dynamics of ordinary experience that social and cultural historians have always been so adept at addressing. But such studies easily run the risk of severing the ‘people’s war’ from ‘the people’s peace’ – that is, from the succeeding narrative of postwar reform and reconstruction that previously organized British collective memory and characterized the post-1945 consensus. Family, childhood and childraising, schooling, sexuality, courting, housing and neighbourhood sociality, domestic violence, crime and delinquency, dancing and cinema, workplace relations, hidden economies, black market – all these describe everyday settings where lives followed rhythms and patterns that remained relatively impervious to whatever government may have been trying to accomplish before or after 1945. These are indeed the uncharted territories gradually being mapped by some recent histories – ordinary childhoods, the dream worlds of teenagers, geographies away from London and other major cities, provincial landscapes away from the home counties, small and parochial lives of all kinds, especially those of women. These are what Carolyn Steedman has called ‘lives lived out on the borderlands, lives for which the central interpretative devices of the culture don’t quite work’.²⁰ Such lives contained, as Annette Kuhn remarks, ‘ways of knowing and ways of seeing the world ... rarely acknowledged, let alone celebrated, in the expressions of a hegemonic culture.’²¹

Yet, there is no need for imaginative social and cultural histories of this kind to diminish or discard attention to the national narrative or the spectacular, eventful course of the war. This is the second point I want to make. In fact, the beauty of such studies is profoundly to complicate how we can think about the categories of politics, social policy and governance, enabling new fields of connection between the national and the local to be opened and viewed, where the ‘local’ describes all those quotidian spaces (family, household, neighbourhood, work, schooling, play, entertainment, sexuality) far away from the recognized and legitimate public frames we generally use for the assigning of political meaning. While the wartime may not have dislodged many continuities of cultural practice and social

relations quite as radically as some older historiographies believed, its effects none the less included risk, fear, endangerment, death, loss, uncertainty, excitement and movement on the very largest of scales. We might see this as an existential disordering, a calling into question of the already available beliefs and assumptions through which people tended to think of their place in the continuum of the past and future social and political relations of their society. It was in such times that people could imagine how they might live differently in the future, particularly when the public rhetorics of citizenship, responsibility and governing actively urged them to do so, in the language of an unprecedented national emergency that placed not just the defence of the realm, but democratic freedoms and civilized values themselves at stake.

Of course, people might respond to this existential disordering in many differing ways. Large numbers were simply overwhelmed by the exigencies of an unmanageably difficult everydayness, with little practical room in their lives for thinking coherently or imaginatively about a future of any differing kind. *Politics*, as the professing of commitments and beliefs, as a practical domain of activism, or as an idiom of social being in the world, claims in any case only a limited and uneven resonance during ordinary times. For most people most of the time, politics in the conventional understanding of the term is an occasional presence, an encounter of the exceptional moment. But in the closing months of the war and its aftermath, as the killing stopped and the bombs ceased to fall, as a different kind of emotional, imaginative and practical space started to clear, political meanings might acquire unusual breadth of appeal. Those meanings embraced a variety of more optimistic or pessimistic ways through which the possible future might be thought.

Seeking to combine the new work on ordinary experience and popular memory with the classical frameworks of 'people's war' and 'people's peace', bringing more recent social and cultural histories into conversation with political histories of the war's spectacular eventfulness, will significantly shift the overall narrative, remaking our sense of what the category of the political might contain. A more complicated and nuanced *balance* between the national and the local, the dramatic and the everyday, the opening of new horizons and the persisting resilience of the old, will be the result. In this regard, a number of recent books can show us the way: Sonya Rose's account of the recasting of national citizenship, Geoffrey Field's study of the remaking of the working class, Martin Francis's treatment of class, gender and nation using the figure of the RAF flying hero, and James Hinton's use of the Mass Observation archive for examining nine exemplary lives.²² Making these connections between the smallness of ordinary lives and the bigness of political history is exactly what attention to cultural memory, with its dialectics of the 'public' and the 'personal', can best enable us to do.

Finally, in moving from 'history' to 'memory' – from revisiting the dynamics of popular experience during the wartime itself to exploring

how that experience became processed during the peace, including our contemporary moment of the present two decades – the aspects of visual remembrance become key. It is no accident that so much of the discussion in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War* revolves around visual media and materials, including film and television, exhibitions and memorials, websites and material culture (though not, interestingly, photography), because such work requires a very different archive from the one conventional political historians have usually presumed. Imaginative writing – genre fiction, comics, children’s literature, magazines, as well as poetry, novels and autobiography – together with private correspondence, personal diaries and the invaluable monthly journals collected by Mass Observation, provides a key form of written documentation.²³ But aside from the recognized visual media (film, photographs, television), the visual landscapes of the commercialized public sphere also become a rich resource – advertising and entertainment of all kinds, but also posters and postcards, multifarious collectors’ cards (accompanying cigarettes, bubblegum, packets of tea), commercialized bric-a-brac, all the commodified images of an expanding economy of consumption. Given how densely and confusingly the imagery and citations composing this visual landscape can accumulate across any individual’s lifetime, the prompting of memory may be not so much conscious and deliberate as *instinctive, visceral* and *sensory*.

In a complex and brilliant meditation on the workings of memory in their relation to the architecture of national identification and its spaces of ambivalence, Annette Kuhn begins with a famously diffused photograph of St Paul’s during the Blitz in December 1940. ‘A keystone in British popular memory of the “People’s War”’, this shows the cathedral rising unscathed above the smoke of fires and the ruins of burned-out buildings to become an icon of national belonging: ‘[It] comes to stand for the indomitability, under attack, of an entire nation. It offers uplifting testimony of survival through adversity. If it speaks of resistance, this is a resistance of endurance, of “taking it”.’ She ascribes an emotional immediacy to the meanings that continue to exceed whatever scepticism may now have developed around that mythology of national unity from the intervening historiographical judgements. As she writes, this photograph manages ‘to speak to me – to interpellate me – in a very particular way’, whether or not in her ‘considered opinion’ those older tropes of the ‘people’s war’ have stood the test of time.²⁴ The ability of such images to elicit a spontaneous reaction, calling forth instinctual or intuitive knowledge from a kind of ‘mute sensuality’, expresses what Julia Adeney Thomas calls our *prediscursive* or *visceral* response to a photograph, which needs to be considered in addition to all of the careful contextualizing historians otherwise seek to apply.²⁵ Such a response gives access to the accumulated common-sense meanings that help organize our sense of history and belonging. In the unexpectedness of such an encounter between history’s public appropriations and their personal

resonance, the complex workings of memory and its archive – both collective and individual, explicit and unconscious – can create openings to knowledge where historians' more conventional practices might not.²⁶

From this discussion, cultural memory emerges as an entire dimension of politics, one involving conscious and unconscious capacities, resources and interventions – that is, an apparatus of [mis]remembering (or forgetting), a complex of media and sites (film, television, radio, song, photographs, advertisements, museums, commemorations, tourist spots, fictions, ceremonial, buildings, popular histories, sermons, political speeches and more), a collective common sense, an entire repertoire of cultural scripts that are given to us, become memorized, are subject to all sorts of political influence and dispute, and by these complicated processes enable coherent understandings to be secured. In postwar popular memory, a particular rendition of the 1930s and 1940s became an especially persuasive story of how the present came to be, one that lasted well into the 1960s and 1970s. That powerful suturing of the Depression and the Second World War into a discourse of democracy and public good then passed into disarray. In many respects, the given story was brought forcefully and often brutally under attack, so that by the 1990s Thatcherism and other versions of a new right-wing politics seemed to have carried the day. The place of the war in cultural memory seemed to have been successfully re-narrated, leaving only a wasteland of ruined solidarities and dead metaphors behind. For thinking about that outcome – whether or not it proves perduring, and in what precise ways – this volume will prove an excellent guide.

Notes

- 1 Eley, G. (1997), 'Foreword', in M. Evans and K. Lunn (eds), *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Berg, vii–xiv. Here vii–xiii.
- 2 Fussell, P. (1975), *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 3 Fraser, R. (1979), *The Blood of Spain*. London: Allen Lane.
- 4 Steedman, C. K. (1987), *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press; Fraser, R. (1984), *In Search of a Past: The Manor House, Ammersfield, 1933-1945*. London: Verso; Wright, P. (1985), *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain*. London: Verso; Portelli, A. (1991), *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*. Albany: State University of New York Press; Passerini, L. (1984), *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Niethammer, L. (ed.), (1983), 'Die Jahre weiß man nicht, wo man die heute hinsetzen soll': *Faschismuserfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet* and 'Hinterher merkt man, daß es richtig war, daß es schiefgegangen ist': *Nachkriegserfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet*.

- Bonn: Dietz; Nora, P. (1984–92), *Les lieux de mémoire*, 7 vols. Paris: Gallimard, trans. (1996–8) as *The Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, 3 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, and (2001–10), *Rethinking France*, 4 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 5 Judt, T. (2003), *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*. New York: The Penguin Press.
 - 6 The first of these volumes, Geppert, D. (ed.) (2003), *The Postwar Challenge: Cultural, Social, and Political Change in Western Europe, 1945–58*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 25–97, titles its opening section ‘Coming to Terms with the Past’; the second, Jarausch, K. H. and Lindenberger, T. (eds) (2007), *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories*. New York: Berghahn Books, 23–77, has ‘Contested Memories’.
 - 7 Judt (2003), 829.
 - 8 Jameson, F. (1991), ‘Nostalgia for the present’, in *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 279–96. For my own thoughts, see Eley, G. (2005), *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 148–55; Eley, G. (2011), ‘The past under erasure: history, memory and the contemporary’. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 46(3), 555–73.
 - 9 Samuel, R. (1994), *Theatres of Memory, Vol. 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*. London: Verso; Samuel, R. (1998), *Theatres of Memory, Vol. 2: Island Stories: Unravelling Britain*. London: Verso.
 - 10 See, for example, Connerton, P. (1989), *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Fentress, J. and Wickham, C. (1992), *Social Memory*. Oxford: Blackwell; Terdiman, R. (1993), *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Hutton, P. (1993), *History as an Art of Memory*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England; Connerton, P. (2009), *How Modernity Forgets*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 - 11 Radstone, S. (ed.) (2000), *Memory and Methodology*. Oxford: Berg; Radstone, S. and Hodgkin, K. (eds) (2005), *Memory Cultures: Memory, Subjectivity, and Recognition*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction; Hodgkin, K. and Radstone, S. (eds) (2005), *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
 - 12 E.g. Peitsch, H., Burdett, C. and Gorrara, C. (eds) (1999), *European Memories of the Second World War*. New York: Berghahn Books; Müller, J.-W. (ed.), (2002) *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Olick, J. K. (ed.) (2003), *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection*. Durham: Duke University Press; Walkowitz, D. J. and Knauer, L. M. (eds) (2004), *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space*. Durham: Duke University Press; Geisler, M. E. (ed.) (2005), *National Symbols, Fractured Identities: Contesting the National Narrative*. Middlebury: Middlebury College Press; Friedman, M. P. and Kenney, P. (eds) (2005), *Partisan Histories: The Past in Contemporary Global Politics*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan; Leboy, N., Kansteiner,

- W. and Fogu, C. (eds) (2006), *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*. Durham: Duke University Press; Kuhn, A. and McAllister, K. E. (eds) (2006), *Locating Memory: Photographic Acts*. New York: Berghahn Books; Paletschek, S. and Schraut, S. (eds) (2008), *The Gender of Memory: Cultures of Remembrance in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Europe*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag.
- 13 Olick, J. K., Vinitzky-Serousi, V. and Levy, D. (eds) (2011), *The Collective Memory Reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Radstone, S. and Schwarz, B. (eds) (2010), *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*. New York: Fordham University Press. See also Perks, R. and Thomson, A. (eds) (2006), *The Oral History Reader*. London: Routledge.
 - 14 The several anthologies mentioned in the preceding footnote provide the indispensable starting point.
 - 15 See especially Schwarz, B. (2010), 'Memory, temporality, modernity: *Les lieux de mémoire*', in Radstone and Schwarz (eds), *Memory*, 41–58; Carrier, P. (2000), 'Places, politics, and the archiving of contemporary memory in Pierre Nora's *Les lieux de mémoire*', in Radstone (ed.), *Memory and Methodology*, 37–57; Wood, N. (1999), *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe*. New York: Berg, 15–37.
 - 16 Eley, G. (2001), 'Framing the people's war: film, British collective memory, and World War II'. *American Historical Review*, 106 (3), 818–38. Here p. 819.
 - 17 Calder, A. (1969), *The People's War: Britain, 1939–1945*. London: Cape; Calder, A. (1991), *The Myth of the Blitz*. London: Cape.
 - 18 Lowe, R. (1990), 'The Second World War, consensus, and the foundation of the Welfare State'. *Twentieth-Century British History*, 1, 152–82. Here p. 175. For a summary statement of this view, see Fielding, S., Thompson, P. and Tiratsoo, N. (1995), 'England Arise!' *The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940s Britain*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
 - 19 Field, G. (1992), 'Social patriotism and the British working class: appearance and disappearance of a tradition'. *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 42, 20–39. Here p. 27. Field himself does not share the view he describes. While questioning the degree of national unity grounded in social harmony, he shifts the emphasis onto the collectivism of working-class solidarity based in exactly the kinds of everyday wartime experience recent work has examined.
 - 20 Steedman (1987), 5.
 - 21 Kuhn, A. (2002), *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination*. London: Verso, 9. For a brilliant allegory to this effect, see Briggs, R. (1999), *Ethel and Ernest: A True Story*. New York: Knopf.
 - 22 See Rose, S. O. (2003), *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939–1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Field, G. (2011), *Blood, Sweat, and Toil: Remaking the British Working Class, 1939–1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Francis, M. (2008), *The Flyer: British Culture and the Royal Air Force 1939–1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Hinton, J. (2010), *Nine Wartime Lives: Mass Observation and the Making of the Modern Self*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- 23 For Mass Observation, see Hinton, J. (2013), *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937-1949*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Hubble, N. (2006), *Mass Observation and Everyday Life: Culture, History, Theory*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- 24 Kuhn, A. 'Phantasmagoria of memory', in *Family Secrets*, 125–6.
- 25 Thomas distinguishes 'recognition' and 'excavation' as distinct strategies of understanding, each of which historians need to bring to their readings of photographs. On the one hand, historians need to 'interrogate photographs much like texts', treating them as the complicated effect or trace of past social and cultural relations whose character requires meticulous reconstruction, stressing 'the photograph's embeddedness in a whole network of social arrangements' or 'the historical matrix out of which it came'. We need to ask 'where, when, or even whether [a particular] photograph appeared in print, how it was made, what it was used for, who owns the copyright, or what its [original] title is.' But on the other hand, we need to acknowledge the inescapably 'precognitive' or 'prediscursive' and 'visceral' relations of historians to the photographs they seek to use. See Thomas, J. A. (2009), 'The evidence of sight'. *History and Theory. Theme Issue: Photography and Historical Interpretation*, 48(4), 151–68. Here pp. 151–3.
- 26 See also Kuhn, A. 'From home to nation', in *Family Secrets*, 147–69, with its six theses: '1. Memory shapes our inner worlds'; '2. Memory is an active production of meanings'; '3. Memory texts have their own formal conventions'; '4. Memory texts voice a collective imagination'; '5. Memory embodies both union and fragmentation'; '6. Memory is formative of communities of nationhood.' Also Radstone, S. (2010), 'Cinema and memory', in Radstone and Schwarz (eds), *Memory*, 325–42.

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CONTENTS

List of Illustrations vii

Notes on Contributors viii

Acknowledgements x

Foreword: Memory and the historians: Ordinary life, eventfulness and the instinctual past by Geoff Eley xi

- 1 Introduction: 'Keep calm and carry on': The cultural memory of the Second World War in Britain 1
Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson
- 2 The generation of memory: Gender and the popular memory of the Second World War in Britain 25
Penny Summerfield
- 3 'War on the Web': The BBC's 'People's War' website and memories of fear in wartime in 21st-century Britain 47
Lucy Noakes
- 4 The people's war in personal testimony and bronze: Sorority and the memorial to The Women of World War II 67
Corinna M. Peniston-Bird
- 5 'When are you going back?' Memory, ethnicity and the British Home Front 89
Wendy Ugolini

- 6 Remembering war, forgetting empire? Representations of the North African Campaign in 1950s British cinema 111
Martin Francis
- 7 'A story that will thrill you and make you proud': The cultural memory of Britain's secret war in Occupied France 133
Juliette Pattinson
- 8 The 'missing chapter': Bomber Command aircrew memoirs in the 1990s and 2000s 155
Frances Houghton
- 9 Total war and total anniversary: The material culture of Second World War commemoration in Britain 175
Janet Watson
- 10 Memory, meaning and multidirectionality: 'Remembering' austerity Britain 195
Rebecca Bramall
- Index* 213