

## Trent Park House

### Oral history volunteer role description

Trent Park House are looking to recruit a group of volunteers to work on an important oral history project throughout 2023.

#### Background to Trent Park House

Trent Park House, in Enfield, is recognised by Historic England as being of significance on a par with Bletchley Park. One of London's grandest houses, it was home to the 'Secret Listeners' during World War II - a story that has remained hidden in the house for over 70 years.

During the War, Trent Park House became one of the Allies' most successful secret weapons. State-of-the-art listening devices were wired throughout the House and gardens, and highly-prized Prisoners of War – including some of Hitler's most loyal Generals – were transferred to the site. Teams of 'Secret Listeners' – many of whom were German-Jewish émigrés – worked from the basement, recording and translating the conversations taking place on the floors above. Their discoveries were crucial to the outcome of the War.

In the lead up to the War, Trent Park was home to Sir Philip Sassoon, a central figure of both British inter-war politics and the anti-Nazi movement. Sassoon designed Trent Park to be both a political and social entertaining venue. He entertained guests ranging from King George V, Edward VIII and a young Princess Elizabeth, to Sir Winston Churchill, Charlie Chaplin, TE Lawrence and Rex Whistler.

The House and gardens are currently being restored as a new heritage attraction which will immerse visitors in these extraordinary histories.

#### Oral history project

To help better understand the history of Trent Park and the role it has played among Enfield's communities, an oral history project will take place throughout 2023 to capture stories of those with personal connections to the House. From descendants of 'Secret Listeners' to those who have links to Trent Park's post-war activity, it is hoped that a wide range of memories will be documented.

#### Volunteer role

The oral history volunteers on this project will:

- Attend one day of oral history training, giving you the knowledge and skills needed to conduct interviews including how to prepare and ask questions
- Be shown how to use recording equipment to capture high quality audio interviews
- Practice interviewing and receive feedback from the Oral History Lead before embarking on interviews with Trent Park interviewees
- Learn about recording agreements, copyright and GDPR for recording people's stories
- Conduct at least one oral history interview for the project
- Learn how to write interview summaries and write them for any interviews conducted
- Have the opportunity to learn more about Trent Park and meet other people with similar interests

In addition, you will have the opportunity to:

- Visit the National Archives with the project's Research Lead to learn more about archives and how to conduct your own research
- Receive training in how to edit audio files and support the Oral History Lead with editing clips from the interviews for use online by Trent Park House

You will be working directly with the Oral History Lead for the project, Rib Davis, as well as with the Community Engagement Manager, Jen Kavanagh, and the Research Lead, Rachel Pistol.

### **Timeframe**

- Saturday March 11<sup>th</sup> 2023 – welcome/taster session to find out more about the project and to ask any questions before the project starts – location to be confirmed
- April 2023 – training will take place
- May to September 2023 – interviews will be conducted, both in person and possibly online where needed
- October to December 2023 – audio editing will take place with the final interviews and extracts being handed over to Trent Park House

### **Your commitment**

The minimum commitment we require for you to take part in this project is:

- 1 full day of training
- 2 days for practicing interviewing and reviewing the outcomes
- 1 day for preparing for and conducting an interview
- ½ day for writing an interview summary

It is likely that plenty more interviews will be available for you to conduct and there is also the opportunity for additional archive and audio editing training as mentioned above.

### **Expenses**

Travel expenses of up to £10 per session will be covered for all training and interviews as well as the optional archive visit.

### **To register your interest**

Please send an email outlining why you'd like to volunteer on this project and what interests you about the opportunity to [community@trentparkhouse.org.uk](mailto:community@trentparkhouse.org.uk).

Emails must be received by Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March. You are invited to then attend the taster session on Saturday March 11<sup>th</sup> at 11am-12pm to find out more, meet the team and decide on whether you'd like to commit to the project. Please note that some selection may need to be made depending on the number of people who apply and your experience. This role is on a voluntary basis and does not create a legally binding arrangement or paid employment contract.