

In the words of survivors: what was 'ordinary' about the Holocaust?

By Dr Madeline White, Curator of Oral History. Reflecting on the Holocaust Memorial Day 2023 theme of 'ordinary people', I wondered what – if anything – the word 'ordinary' meant to the people who survived the genocide. In a time that was by all accounts extra-ordinary, what value does the...

Recording of the week: Bob Cobbing (1920-2002)

This week's recording of the week was selected by Steve Cleary, Lead Curator, Literary and Creative Recordings. Above: Image of Bob Cobbing from a scan supplied by Jennifer Cobbing in 2008. Photographer not known. This is a selection from the personal tape archive of the British sound poet Bob Cobbing....

Why do hammer-headed fruit bats honk?

The Hammer-headed Fruit Bat (*Hypsignathus monstrosus*) is the largest of the African bats. Named for its unusual appearance, this species is a classic example of sexual dimorphism at work, with males and females displaying significant differences in both size and appearance. While females are smaller and possess the familiar fruit...

Recording of the week: 'Reggae Fi May Ayim' by Linton Kwesi Johnson

This week's post comes from Daisy Chamberlain, Preservation Assistant for Unlocking Our Sound Heritage. Linton Kwesi Johnson was born in Chapelton, Jamaica in 1952. His mother, Sylvena, migrated to Britain just before Jamaica

gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1962, and Linton followed three years later, aged 11. His...

Recording of the week: ‘Wayn tkhallīnī’ by Iraq’s Rashīd al-Qundarjī

This week’s post comes from Hazem Jamjoum, Audio Curator for the British Library Qatar Foundation Partnership Programme. Rashīd al-Qundarjī (1886-1945) was one of the early recording artists of Iraq’s Maqam repertoire. In musical contexts, the Arabic word maqam usually denotes melodic and rhythmic modes. In Iraq, however, the word is...