

MASS OBSERVATION

BY

ROUGHHOUSE THEATRE

in association with Bolton School

Mass Observation, according to artist Julian Trevelyan, was the product of three minds: Humphrey Jennings' Surrealist visions of industrial England, Charles Madge's ability to discern poetic overtones from a few casual words and the observations of Tom Harrison, 'the anthropologist with the notebook'.

RoughHouse Theatre is thrilled to announce a year-long collaboration with Bolton School that will develop a brand-new piece of theatre about Boltonians, played by Boltonians with material generated by Boltonians.

Using the 1937 Mass Observation project that originated in Bolton as a starting point, RoughHouse Theatre and Bolton School will embark upon a brand-new series of interviews, assignments and interactive pop up events that focus upon the people and communities of Bolton, 80 years after the original project, culminating in a brand-new piece of theatre.

In 1937 there were deep divisions within society. The British Monarchy was in crisis, following King Edward VIII's abdication. Fascism was on the rise in Hitler's Germany. The country was savaged by economic turmoil. The rise of Nationalism brought Spain to its knees during years of Civil War. The Mass Observation project sought to look beyond national and international upheaval to uncover what they called, "a new science of ourselves – a study of everyday lives of ordinary people in Britain". (David Hall *WorkTown* 2015)

"We were called spies, pryers, mass-eavesdroppers, nosey-parkers, snoopers, envelope-stealers."

Humphrey Spender, Mass Observer, 1937

RoughHouse Theatre, with the help of a team of student citizen journalists, will aim to discover what, if anything, has changed in those 80 years.



For further details:

**RoughHouse Theatre: Shane Morgan and Moira Hunt
info@roughhousetheatre.com**