

Newsletter of the New South Wales Branch
of the Oral History Association of Australia
www.ohaansw.org.au

VOICEPRINT



43

October 2010

VOICEPRINT

Voiceprint is the newsletter of the NSW Branch of the Oral History Association of Australia and is published twice yearly.

ISSN: 13224360

Issue No. 43 –October 2010

Oral History Association of Australia
(NSW) Inc. c/ – State Library of New South
Wales, Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

email: ohaansw@hotmail.com

www.ohaansw.org.au

Editor: Joyce Cribb

(assisted by committee members)

Please send articles and correspondence to:

Joyce Cribb, 36/2 Ulmarra Place,
East Lindfield, 2070

email: jcribb@iinet.net.au or
rburge@ozemail.com.au

Layout and Design: Vanessa Block

The statements made and opinions expressed in this publication are those of their respective authors and are not to be understood as necessarily representing the policies or views of the OHAA(NSW) or its editors. Members notices are included solely for information as a service to members and are not to be understood as carrying any endorsement on the part of the OHAA(NSW) or its editors.



Editorial



This is an interesting edition of Voiceprint as we report on the retirement of our President Rosie Block and some of the history (we do not have a whole book to include it all) of Rosie's service to oral history. Your Committee commissioned an oral history from Rosie in order to document her interest and work with the development and the growth of oral history in Australia and particularly NSW. Virginia Macleod conducted four interviews earlier this year. The interviews have been logged and transcribed, photos added and the package of sound disc and transcripts added to the State Library's oral history collection. It is available if members would like to listen to Rosie's oral history. It is a long document, but have included in this edition two short transcripts. The first is about Rosie's "lessons in oral history practice" and the second tells of Rosie's "first interview".

I must thank all the members who have contributed to this edition. It was so wonderful to have contributions offered; I did not have to search round for material. I especially appreciate this help as I returned from overseas in need of rest and repair! I think we walked about London too much, ended up limping about with a very sore hip – then on our holiday cruise suffered further damage and had an interesting experience spending a day in an Estonian hospital. It is only now some two months later that I am feeling like getting up and going so having the contributions on hand was marvelous.

We have two interesting articles from oral history studies. Sharon Burke has recently commenced her course and has encountered problems that many of you will be familiar with. It is interesting to again think about overcoming difficulties and ending up with the best product. Robyn Hanstock on the other hand has finished her thesis and has told us a very interesting story about the women's groups which she studied. Other members have reported on some interesting ways oral history is making community connections. Ben Morris has told us of his experience at the World Conference in Prague and is seeking to make contact with others interested in interviewing war veterans. Beth Robertson has provided us with a transcript of the informative talk she gave at our May seminar about converting analogue to digital recordings – a challenge ahead!

We will have in our next Voiceprint the report of our scholarship winner who attended the Prague conference – look out for that. I hope you enjoy this edition of Voiceprint. Please think about sharing information on the projects you are doing with other members. Like Ben Morris you can seek contacts through this newsletter. I know there are many interesting stories out there – look forward to receiving them. Please remember I am working in Word 2003, it works well for me, so if you are using a more up to date program remember to send a file accessible to older software. Look forward to lots of contributions.

Joyce Cribb
Editor

Contents

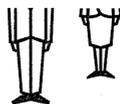


Editorial	1
Membership	3
President Retires	4
Nuts and Bolts	
Vale Jenny Hudson	9
Preserving Digital Records	10
Members Projects	
<i>Tafe Sydney Institute, Sutherland College Oral History Project</i>	10
Reports	
President's Report	13
Committee 2010 – 2011	14
Seminar May 8 2010 – Moving from Analogue to Digital	14
Seminar July 31 2010 – Oral History Going to Press	21
Notes on the XVI International Conference	23
Articles	
Members Remembering, Oral History for PhD Research in Women's Organisations – <i>by Robyn Hanstock</i>	25
My First Dalliance into Family Oral History – <i>by Sharon Burke</i>	32
A Three Generation Family Passion for Oral History and We have to Digitise our Audio Tapes ASAP – <i>by Trish Levido</i>	37
Diary of Events	41
Noticeboard	43

Web Site

Remember to look up our website: www.ohaansw.org.au for all the latest information and news of what's on. If you have news for circulation through the OHAA NSW web site, please email the OHAA webmaster: Sandra Blamey at: sblamey@ozemail.com.au

Membership



Welcome to all our new members. We hope you enjoy your oral history contact with the Association and benefit from the programs offered.

Hannah Forsyth	PHD Student
Zoe Dobson	Retired
John A Ebert	Lawyer
Michelle Richmond	Historian
Elaine Morel	Market & Social Researcher
Cecily Oakley	Project Officer
Kitty Thatcher	Teacher
Meg Bishop	Adult Educator
Linda Brown	Medical Secretary
Derrick Mason	Retired
Megan Rowe	Researcher
Guy Gibson	Sound Engineer
Allison Lawrence	Lawyer
Jenny Reeves	Teacher
Kathryn Hiller	Historian
Sally Zwartz	Editor
Denise Phillips	Student
Barbara Karpinski	Student
Glen Burns	Student
Geraldine Khachan	Public Servant
Steve MacDonald	Journalist
Sharon Burke	Auditor
Graham Levido	Retired
Carol Anderson	Archivist
Sophie Gelski	History Teacher
Maggie Hayes	Nurse
Rebecca Prescott	Student
Sara Pinney	Researcher
John Argall	Information Technology
Dept. of Commerce – Office of Industrial Relations	
Rotary District 9750	

Rosie Block, Membership Secretary

Rosie Block Retires

Our President Rosie Block Retires

After the formal AGM meeting on August 17th members gathered in celebration of Rosie's contribution to oral history. Our members Di Ritch, Frank Heimans and Margaret Park all spoke about Rosie's contribution to oral history and Paul Brunton from the Library staff also paid tribute to her achievements.

Di Ritch presented to Rosie a brooch as a gift from the committee. It was an enameled piece made to represent a radish – very bright and spicy and quite unique – like Rosie! Frank presented a copy of the oral history that the committee had commissioned to Rosie and the copy for the Library's oral history collection was received by Paul Brunton. It was a lovely evening and both Di and Margaret have provided copies of their words to include in Voiceprint. Ed.

I remember coming home from my first Oral History meeting in 1992 and saying to my husband, "I was with a group of people who speak 'Oral History'!" I had worked and thought and recorded my work alone for 8 years since my mother, Hazel de Berg, had died. I was working for the National Library and could phone them whenever I needed to talk about my recordings, but it wasn't the same as sitting with a group of like-minded people and talking the talk, about talking. Rosie, to my absolute delight, had asked me to join the committee of the New South Branch of the Oral History Association, and I immediately felt at home – not only because they were that rare group of people called "Oral Historians" but also because Rosie was that rare brand of person called "enthusiastic and welcoming".

I don't remember when or where I first met Rosie. I live around the corner from her and for years we had bumped into each other at various places. We met "oral historically" at Moriah College in the early

1990's where we were teaching children to interview their elders. From there our friendship began and she asked me to join the Oral History committee.

So began a wonderful time for me. Every couple of months we'd meet in the State Library or the Maritime Museum, and discuss Oral History and its promotion. We were lucky to have Rosie in our corner – she really went in to fight for Oral History, and fight she did. There was little or no support for Oral History in the Library – libraries were for books and printed material after all – and in the wider community there was practically no knowledge of it. Singlehandedly Rosie has turned that around. She has made the NSW Branch of the Oral History Association into the leading branch that it is and has promoted Oral History to a respected, admired and greatly used profession throughout the state.



In 1991 Rosie was installed as the inaugural Curator of Oral History in the State Library of New South Wales, and under her the collection has flourished. Today people proudly tell me that their tapes are housed in this Library. Rosie has given seminars and workshops at the Library, throughout Sydney and the whole of New South Wales, spreading the word like an Oral History missionary. In her own words "It's been a long struggle to bring Oral History to the attention of the public, I think we are getting there.....The reason I teach is to raise the standard of Oral History," and she has succeeded amazingly well. Project after project has been started by Rosie's enthusiasm for, and dedication to, the Oral History cause.

I have been to Oral History Conferences on Magnetic Island and in Canberra, Melbourne, Alice Springs and Brisbane, and have seen Rosie tirelessly participating both upfront and behind the scenes. Her greatest triumph was organising the 2006 International Oral History Conference where hundreds of people spoke thousands of words in English and Spanish – and everyone had a wonderful and inspirational time. It was here that I gave the first Hazel de Berg Award for Excellence in Oral History, so for me it was very special too. I remember when Rosie told me that the committee had decided (in one of the meetings I missed) to create an award in honour of my Mum. I was so touched that I cried, and I want to record my thanks to said committee for honouring my Mother in this way.

Over the years Rosie has cajoled, inspired and praised us into being the committee that we are and says that she couldn't manage without us – but we know differently, she could have done it all by herself.

And now she is leaving us and we will miss her. We will miss her stern, strict and competent command, we will miss her great voice and her wonderful way with words, we will miss being told how special, marvellous and fantastic we are, by someone who herself is special, marvellous and fantastic.

Di Ritch

Rosie Block Retires

From Margaret Park

On this special occasion as we farewell Rosie from her official duties as our President and as the Curator of Oral History at this auspicious Institution, I know all of the membership of the Association joins with me as we wish her good health, much happiness and the continuing of her zest for life and all it entails.

Such occasions also make us pause and reflect upon each of our own 'close encounter of the Rosie kind'. We all have one as she has been our beacon for the past 20 years! My first encounter was just about that long ago. I had successfully applied for and received a grant from the Library Council of NSW to embark upon a comprehensive oral history program for North Sydney Council's Stanton Library. This grant enabled me to contract an oral historian to write a practical guide to oral history and assist with the training of volunteers.

Well, where do I find this skilful individual? I turned to Rosie. Thrilled at the prospect of this effort in the field of oral history, Rosie was quick to recommend Paul Ashton and the project began. From this point singularity my relationship with Rosie developed. Rosie embraced it wholeheartedly. She nurtured my team

of volunteers as she has consistently done over the years with her course attendees. Nan Manefield, who started as a North Sydney volunteer is here tonight.

Eventually I found myself on the Committee and worked alongside Rosie and the team in all our endeavours to foster the philosophy and craft of oral history. When my time at North Sydney came to an end and I moved to Canberra, Rosie entitled me the 'Canberra arm'.

Rosie enjoys espousing the aims of our Association and also that it can be a matchmaker too! It was at the 2001 Oral History Conference in Canberra where I met my husband, George Imashev (also here tonight). George has his own 'encounter with Rosie' story and coincidentally it dates to about the same time as mine.

I will end my tribute to Rosie with one of our own reminders: Dear Rosie, now that you really are coming up for air – remember to breathe!

To Rosie – I thank you, we all thank you!!!

Margaret Park

Extracts from the Oral History of Rosie Block

Lessons in Oral History

(with Beth Robertson, Sate Library, South Australia.)

... I think Beth was the person, is to this day, the person in oral history in Australia. So I spent four days with her in incredible heat, typical December weather, but I had to buy a sweater, the air-conditioning was so strong, I couldn't bear being so cold, so I had to go and buy a sweater, in the middle of summer in Adelaide. But it was great. She's very clear, Beth. She's also very authoritarian, which I like, because I am the same. I literally set up the program here based on my notes taken over four days in Adelaide. Which included, also her going to make a presentation to promote oral history, to some First Aid crowd. So I got the lot. I got her as presenter. I got her as administrator. I got her as historian. I listened to interviews she had made, when she was busy doing something else. I used her system, though I thought her labeling, numbering system was very complicated so I never followed that. She had good reason for it. I learned how to archive material. They had some money, so they had quite a lot of stuff on quarter inch archival tape, and I knew it was never going to be possible for us. Just no money. ... I bought Mitchell minor stores stuff, like the recorder. I bought a recorder recommended by her, and the microphones and everything. It was a clone as near as I could get it, save for the labeling – the numbering of the tapes

which I thought was very complicated and not really user-friendly.

...So a wonderful, crash course.

It was a great crash course. It was just terrific. To this day I am extremely fond of her.

The First Interview

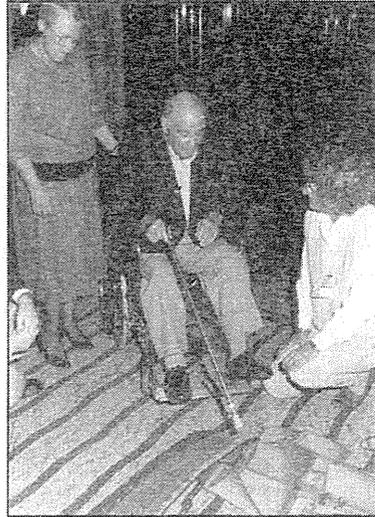
What about Giulio Ciurletti who did the marble floor?

Aren't you clever to have done all this research. Giulio Ciurletti was my, very, first interview. It is engraved on my mind, like the stones of the Tasman map, for ever. Because David Jones, who's a colleague, had been approached by people who knew Giulio Ciurletti, and they said, Giulio Ciurletti was the master stone mason for the 1942 building and he master-minded the Tasman map floor –

For the entrance to the Mitchell Library?

For the entrance to the now Mitchell Library, which was the General Reference Library. The whole building was masterminded by Ifould, who was State Librarian, Public Librarian, of the time. Melocco Brothers got the contract to do the floor and Giulio Ciurletti was their master stonemason, and now he was going back, as an old man, to die in his village in Italy. He was a bachelor, and he was about to leave. So great flurry around! The recorder that I used, and still do, to some extent, was the semi-professional Marantz, my first actual recorder. It had

arrived the day before. Luckily for me we had a Polish library assistant, who was a sound engineer. He taught me how to use the machine. I was in a dead panic, as you can imagine. David Jones, brought Mr. Ciurletti, in a wheelchair with his friends, a man and a woman. He was particularly friendly with the woman, he said he'd like to do it on the map because then he could remember how it happened. He was in his wheelchair, and I knelt, in those days I could kneel I suppose, next to his wheel chair and all the questions I was going to ask him about the floor, and he answered the questions extremely courteously, and he never looked at me once. He addressed his replies to David Jones, and to his friend's husband and in the old fashioned Italian way, he did not have conversation with women. And he was a bachelor. But he was extremely generous with his memories. He had been liberated, sprung, from an internment camp. He was not young when he came to Australia, and therefore was considered a danger and in internment camp immediately. Melocco brothers went to make representations saying, 'We can't finish the building without him.' They were building the floor in their studios, and it was going to be transported, stone by stone, marble piece by marble piece, to the Library. They said, 'We can't continue without him.' So they sprung him from the camp. That's what I love about Australia, one of the many things I love about Australia – so sensible – and he came and he finished the floor. He spoke about how he had done the actual design,



Courtesy State Library of New South Wales

used the Tasman map. He did it from the reproduction of the map, because the original map is on vellum and very hard to see. It is the most marvellous centerpiece. He did the floor of the crypt at St Mary's which is another dream icon, and he also did some stuff at the station, Central Station. He had been retired for many years, he was getting on for ninety when he came. It was again just again, great luck that this woman knew him and persuaded him to be interviewed.

Your first bleeding – first interview –

It's the worst possible area for sound. It's a foul, a double, triple volume, a murder – the tape's terrible, but it, the story's there.

I am sure you all can hear Rosie's delightful voice as you read these two extracts – fascinating listening 'in the mind's ear! Thank you Rosie for allowing Voiceprint to share these words with members – best wishes from us all. Ed.



Vale Jenny Hudson (1933-2010)

I suppose life would not be complete without regret and it is with sadness that I note the death of Jenny Hudson. She had been a member of OHAA (NSW) for some years before my arrival in 1991 – one of the ‘faithful remnant’ who had carried the flag since OHAA’s inception until the active participation of the State Library of New South Wales. She was a regular presenter at national conferences and had conducted a number of oral history projects. Among these was a large series of interviews with people living in the Western Division of New South Wales which provide a fascinating insight into how farmers and others were conducting their lives in that fragile land. She was a contributor to the NSW Bicentennial Oral History Project and had a particular interest in country communities and very especially in the Liverpool Plains where she and her husband Rusty own a property near Quirindi. In latter days she was commissioned to interview for corporate histories. Among these were Woolworths, Bonds, Utilux

(Tyco) and others. She was a pioneer professional historian and was always ready to share her fee structure, her advice and her methodology with interested members.

Added to my regret at her sudden passing is the fact that I did not think to make her a Life Member of the OHAA to acknowledge her long and valued contribution to the Association. I suppose I did not really want her to retire – and had been in touch to offer her some projects quite recently. It was only then, on her refusing these projects, that I was forced to recognize that her health was not good although she stayed the same cheerful, competent and lively companion. I thought then – ‘next year’ – and now we have left it too late. However, I do want you all to know that she would indeed have been nominated for 2011. But now I have to say alas, only ‘in absentia’ and in our memories. Vale Jenny – you will be much missed.

Rosemary Block

Note from Michael Clarke on Preserving Digital Records

The preservation of digital records is of concern to all, whether they be family records and images, historical and heritage data and images, business records and so on. State Records is addressing the problem and has established a website at <http://futureproof.records.nsw.gov.au/home> for people to learn about the techniques and to share information. The site is commended to all those interested in learning more about preserving their records for the long term. The introduction on the home page says:

'This website and blog is a place for people to learn more about the NSW Government digital recordkeeping strategy and to share information about their own activities, projects and experiences in regards to digital recordkeeping. It is also a place to ask questions and offer advice to others who may be going through similar experiences.'

Members' Projects

We hope members will tell us about the various projects they are undertaking. I am sure we are all interested to know what is happening in oral history. We hope some discussion and exchange of ideas may be generated. Ed

Tafe NSW Sydney Institute Sutherland College Oral History Project

By Carol McKirdy, TAFE NSW Sydney Institute

The TAFE NSW Sydney Institute Sutherland College Oral History Project is an ongoing oral history project that began in 2008. It has been set up to record the histories of students studying Social Inclusion and Vocational Access courses, teaching and general staff at TAFE NSW Sutherland College, past students and employees, and immediate family and friends where appropriate. The project is designed to be continuing so that as many histories as possible can be recorded. Oral histories recorded for the project are linked to History topics studied by students in the Junior History syllabus in NSW schools and History and Language and Literacy classes studied in courses at TAFE NSW. The project is digital and accessed from a TAFE NSW Sydney Institute branded wiki website.



The Project not only records individual histories for future generations but also provides History, Language and Literacy lesson materials based on the oral testimonies. The oral history recordings add to the database of resources available for historical inquiry and are especially appropriate for school stage 5 History students. Learning materials suitable for adult, emerging literacy students linked to levels 1 and 2 of the Australian Core Skills Framework are based on the oral histories and follow models of good practice in effective literacy and language tuition for adults. Functionally illiterate adults learn best with lesson content that is authentic, familiar, and relevant and at an appropriate text level. Lessons based on student and teacher experiences (oral histories) enhance learning because students can more easily engage with the text, bringing their own knowledge of the world to the literacy task.

Sutherland College has two campuses – Gymea and Loftus. So far, histories have been recorded of Adult Basic Education Loftus Campus students studying the Language Literacy and Numeracy course for personal improvement and further education, vocational training and/or enhanced work opportunities and students enrolled in Learner Support linked to vocational courses. ABE students often have extraordinary histories but little chance of their histories being preserved; especially in written format. ABE students typically struggle with written language. The appeal

of an oral recoding of personal history is immense for people who have remarkable and important history to tell but who lack the facility to record history themselves.

ABE students come from all walks of life. For example, in one Language Literacy and Numeracy class I taught several successful business people, a student aiming for an apprenticeship, two students who both had less than four years schooling, a young mother preparing to re-enter the workforce, a professional musician, a student whose ultimate aim is to study Marine Biology at university and students for whom English is a second language. All the students wanted to improve their literacy skills for differing reasons in order to achieve their personal, training and work goals. Efficient Literacy is a fundamental need in education, training and society.

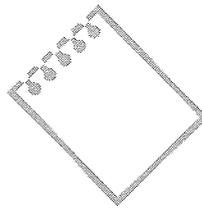
One of the advantages of using a wiki website, apart from the fact that no formal website building skills are required is that various digital resources are easily added to the site. Because of this the wiki has numerous relevant oral history links including direct access to the OHAA NSW and hundreds of images, an online book on Aboriginal history of the area occupied by Sutherland College, a virtual museum, songs, digital stories, examples of artwork and maps. Also, adult basic education students publish original writing based on historical themes in a dedicated section of the wiki and there is a “How to” page

Nuts + Bolts (cont...)

of templates and guides such as using Audacity for conducting oral histories. The wiki is easily accessible by teachers via TaLe – a teaching and learning exchange site and through the History Teachers Association website and via search engines.

Histories collected so far include: a childhood in Vietnam during conflict, escape from Communist Vietnam, working on the construction of the Sydney Opera House and the Snowy Mountains Scheme, life in Iraq during the Iran Iraq war, life as a child in Malta after WW2, a childhood in occupied Holland during WW2, life on board ship in the British Navy in WW2, Vietnam conscription and active duty in the Mekong Delta, the Hungarian Uprising, life as a musician in Sydney in the 1970/80's, Her Majesty's Theatre memories, the Stolen Generation, a Sydney childhood in WW2, the Local Defence Volunteers in England and before and after the fall of Saigon. Each history has a summary and/or a comprehensive themes synopsis.

The wiki can be found at <<http://oralhistory.sydneyinstitute.wikispaces.net>>. The support of TAFE NSW colleagues, especially technical support has been generous. The opportunity to increase my knowledge of oral history in the classroom through study in the UK with a NSW Premier's Westfield History Scholarship in 2008 was invaluable.





OHAA New South Wales Branch President's Report 2009/2010

My first remarks are as usual a tribute to my committee and as always it is a pleasure to put them into this first spot. Members of the committee are Sandra Blamey, Roslyn Burge, Michael Clarke, Joyce Cribb, Frank Heimans, Diana Ritch, Sue Rosen, Peter Rubinstein, Frances Rush and Berenice Evans our Treasurer. I have congratulated them in the past – and do so now again – for their being a marvellous 'think tank' with great ideas which are then put into action. They continue to conduct their friendly 'welcomes' to those attending the seminars at the State Library.

Voiceprint, our NSW newsletter attracts the interested attention of the membership and continues to appear regularly under the able editorship of Joyce Cribb. She is assisted in this by Roslyn Burge.

George Imashev, Sue McClean and Frances Rush addressed our 25 July 2009 seminar – George on his family, with particular focus on interviews with his mother, Sue on Burdekin House and Frances on Bea Miles. It was a wonderful mix! An eager group attended a fascinating session on 8 August as guests of Historic Houses Trust where Megan Martin, their senior librarian, gave us a talk and showed some of their treasures.

A goodly number of NSW members attended the successful national

conference in Launceston, Tasmania in September 2009. Janis Wilton was awarded the Hazel de Berg Award for Excellence in Oral History and she received Honorary Life Membership as well.

Our 7 November seminar featured Margo Beasley on the City of Sydney's oral history program which is gathering pace under her guidance. Anna Cossu gave us an up to date and loving report on Susannah Place which continues to rely on oral history for its 'furnishing'. Bill Bunbury presented his master class to a capacity, enthusiastic and appreciative group on 20 February 2010. On 8 May Beth Robertson presented her challenging session, 'Oral history: moving from analogue to digital recording – the race against time.' No compromise here – we cannot say we are not warned!

The NSW branch offered two scholarships of \$1000 each to help members towards attending the IOHA conference in Prague in July this year. These were won by Denise Phillips and Barbara Karpinski who will present their report on their experiences at our seminar on 6 November.

Our membership numbers in New South Wales hold steady, some of the applications being due to the excellent website fashioned and kept up to date by our webmaster Sandra Blamey. She is also on the panel to redesign the

Reports (cont...)

national website, as well as being part of a working party to amend the national constitution. The NSW website www.oahaansw.org.au is in continual expansion mode and we have just had some sound files added. Do visit!

Rosie Block, President

2010 – 2011 Committee elected at AGM, 17-8-10

Sandra Blamey, Rosie Block, Roslyn Burge, Michael Clarke, Joyce Cribb, Louise Darmody, Berenice Evans, Frank Heimans, Trish Levido, Graham Levido, Carol McKirdy, Diana Ritch, Sue Rosen, Peter Rubinstein, Frances Rush.

Seminar May 8th 2010 Moving from Analogue to Digital: Oral History's Race Against Time

Beth Robertson, Manager, Preservation State Library of South Australia, travelled to Sydney to talk about this important topic. Beth has very kindly provided the following condensed version. Thank you Beth.

While exemplary in many other ways, the State Library of NSW is lagging far behind national institutions and most other state libraries in ensuring the preservation of voice recordings in its oral history collection. When I was invited to Sydney by the NSW Branch in May, I came on a mission to convince OHAA members and the Library that both analogue oral history recordings and interviews held on early digital recording formats are in grave danger.

I am not alone. Michael Clarke has been ringing the alarm bells, most recently in the April edition of Voiceprint. He evoked the dangers of analogue cassettes' 40 year life span, deterioration and susceptibility to print-through. However the danger is even more fundamental.

Quite simply, the world is running out of the equipment required to play back cassette tapes so that they can be digitised with fidelity. The National Library's website puts it succinctly:

As the machines needed to replay the audio collection are no longer manufactured, the Library has stockpiled spare parts to maintain the necessary equipment. This approach will enable completing the digitisation program, although keeping the obsolete machines operational for the next decade or so will remain a challenge.

The timeline NLA is working to is 2020. The United States' Library of Congress and the great audiovisual archives of Europe are working to the same timeframe. They too are amassing replay equipment



and parts, well aware that the machine-hours left may fall short of the hours of audio needing transfer. Meanwhile, most conventional libraries and archives are unaware of the urgency, or believe that the future can wait.

My mission is to put 2020 firmly in your mind, as well as explaining how you can both calculate and minimise the work that needs to be done by that date.

Progress at SLSA

Oral history collections are typically made up of analogue open reel recordings from the 1960s and 70s, analogue standard cassettes from the 1970s until now and Digital Audio Tapes (DAT) from the 1990s. Many collections also hold some analogue microcassettes, MiniDiscs and unique spoken voice recordings on instantaneous discs.

The State Library of SA's oral history collection is now over 8,000 hours in size and includes all these formats, as well as some video. It is part of over 22,000 items in SLSA's South Australiana published and archival audio collections, which grow by about 740 items or 550 hours each year. We have been actively preserving the collections since 1987 – first to open reel and, since 2004, to electronic Broadcast Wave Files (BWF) stored on the Library's servers. Since going digital in 2004:

- 14% of the 22,000 recordings have been digitised or were received as digital audio files produced on digital field recording equipment and then ingested into our audio archive system.

- 32% are classified as stable. These are the vinyl records – an unusual audio format in that it remains stable stored at room temperature conditions and its professional replay equipment is still in production.
- 39% are unstable analogue and early digital formats at high risk of deterioration and playback obsolescence.
- The remaining 15% are the preservation open reels that we produced between 1987 and 2003. They represent a uniform set of recordings that could be readily prepared for digitising by a commercial agency if funding can be secured.

We do not expect to make the 2020 deadline without outsourcing some of the work as well as maintaining our in-house program. Hence, relentless rounds of funding proposals, like a five year program proposal currently in play that would more than double the proportion of the collection digitised by 2014, and put the 2020 deadline within our reach.

The implications for the State Library of NSW

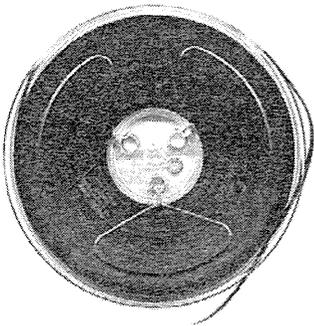
SLNSW has accumulated 13,000 hours of recordings, and the collection grows at the rate of 500 hours a year. These figures include sound recordings other than oral histories that are donated in association with archival manuscript collections, such as speeches and radio programs recorded by media monitoring.

Reports (cont...)

Projected growth

The following figures have not been supplied by SLNSW. They have been extrapolated by the author based on experience at SLSA.

	Annual increase	Analogue increase	Analogue size	Total size
2009-2010				13,000
2010-2011	500	450	13,450	13,500
2011-2012	500	350	13,800	14,000
2012-2013	500	250	14,050	14,500
2013-2014	500	165	14,215	15,000
2014-2015	500	165	14,380	15,500
2015-2016	500	165	14,545	16,000
2016-2017	500	150	14,695	16,500
2017-2018	500	150	14,845	17,000
2018-2019	500	100	14,945	17,500
2019-2020	500	55	15,000	18,000



Open reel tape

The column 'Analogue increase' shows the proportion of analogue recordings received each year declining quite rapidly over the next four years. Two digital field recorders are now available to interviewers and more donors are investing in their own digital equipment. The proportion of analogue being received plateaus at 165 hours or one third of the annual increase in the middle of the decade. This is our experience at SLSA. Two thirds of our annual increase is produced on our fleet of seven digital field recorders and the other third are older analogue recordings from interviewing programs conducted 10, 20 or 30 years ago but not donated until now. This kind

of material will continue to gravitate to repositories over time, but I've shown it dwindling to a mere 55 hours a year after 10 years.

This extrapolation provides a notional figure of 15,000 hours of analogue and DAT recordings for SLNSW to digitise by 2020. There are commercial businesses operating in Australia and overseas that can digitise analogue recordings to preservation standards. The current cost is between \$120 and \$140 for each hour of recording for straightforward transfers, such as a uniform sequence of 60-minute standard cassettes or open reels. This indicates a starting figure somewhere between \$1.8m and \$2.1m to ensure that all the voices in the Library's oral history collection cross the digital divide in time.

Each hour of physical recording media is transformed into 1.02 GB of electronic storage space when digitised to the preservation standard of 24-bit depth and 48 kHz per second sampling rate. SLNSW will require 18.4 TB of electronic storage by 2020. It is currently using only 10.7 TB to

store digital material, compared to 90 TB at the State Library of Victoria and 570 TB at the National Library. Going digital with oral history will have a significant impact on the Library's electronic storage costs and infrastructure.

SLNSW will also need to manage the digital audio files created on compact flash cards and other digital media. At SLSA we have invested \$250,000 since 2004 to establish and improve our two audio studios. Our digital audio archiving system is based around Cube-Tec International's AudioCube and Quadriga, as are those of Australia's national collecting institutions. We also had a considerable amount of legacy analogue equipment from our previous 17 years of analogue audio archiving.

Having an audio engineer on staff to provide technical training and support for interviewers is a tremendous advantage. The in-house audio engineer can deal with sensitive content that is ethically problematic to outsource, and technically challenging recordings that are outsourced at a premium cost. SLSA's calculations show that it costs about the same to digitise one hour of analogue audio in-house as it does to outsource the activity. Our audio engineers also add capacity to the organisation as a whole, providing another source of expertise in digital object management.



Reports (cont...)

As the window of opportunity begins to close, the most significant digital audio archiving costs facing SLNSW are:

- Outsourcing to provide critical mass in digitising activity.
- Increasing digital object storage and management.
- Establishing an in-house studio.
- Employing an audio engineer.

This amounts to at least \$200,000 in establishment costs, with recurrent costs of at least \$200,000 a year in salaries and outsourcing.

Alternative models

• Sponsorship

SLNSW is already planning partnerships with NLA and the Sydney Engineering Heritage Committee. Both organisations are paying for the digital preservation of particular SLNSW oral history collections. NLA is sponsoring 80 hours because it will result in excellent content for their online oral history service. The Engineering Heritage Committee (500 hours) wants to ensure the survival of a collection they created. However, there will be limited scope for most parts of the collection to receive this kind of sponsorship.

• Share arrangements

SLSA is the only cultural institution engaged in audio preservation in Adelaide, but Sydney is a much bigger city. There is a possibility that several institutions could join together to develop the facilities they need or to expand the operation of an existing facility. This model would certainly reduce the establishment costs of the parties involved, but is very hard to achieve in a world of competing interests.



Standard cassette



Digital Audio Tape



- **Selecting for preservation**

While an institution might wish to digitise 100% of its analogue sound recordings, this goal will be achievable for very few institutions. In reality significant amounts of analogue material will never cross the digital divide. In some cases this will be a tragedy of missed opportunity, but in well-managed collections it will be the result of pragmatic decisions to ensure that the most significant material is preserved in time. Preservation selection criteria can be applied in four stages, and it is useful to represent the process as a decision tree.

1. **Does our institution have preservation responsibility for the recording?**

If No:

Determine the recording's future status in the collection.

Consider return to donor, transfer, repatriation or destruction.

If Yes:

2. **Is the interview of sufficient significance and the recording of sufficient quality to justify preservation?**

If significant interview + excellent recording → high preservation priority.

If significant interview + poor recording → medium preservation priority → consider the alternative of preserving as a transcript.

If unsubstantial interview + excellent recording → low preservation priority.

If unsubstantial interview + poor recording → no preservation priority → benign neglect.

If high preservation priority:

3. **Is the recording format actively deteriorating or at risk of deteriorating?**

If No:

Maintain high preservation priority.

If Yes:

4. **Is the recording format's replay equipment obsolete?**

If No:

Maintain high preservation priority → digitise as soon as possible.

If Yes:

Digitise immediately.

This criteria was applied to SLSA's oral history collection between 1987 and 2003 to determine which interviews would be transferred to open reel tape. During that time 3,300 hours of original recordings from a potential 5,300 hours of acquisitions were reformatted. These preservation open reels, representing original recordings of 'high preservation priority', have maintained that ranking in SLSA's current digitising plan.

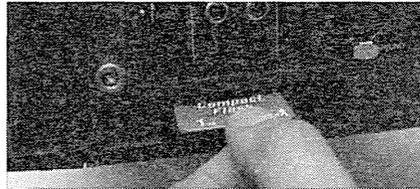
Reports (cont...)

Minimising the backlog

The task of digitising analogue recordings in time is daunting enough without adding to the backlog. Any archival institution still using analogue field recording equipment should change to a digital system capable of recording at 24-bit, 48 kHz, such as a solid state Compact Flash card recorder.

Since making the change, SLSA has been under great pressure from community groups and professional historians to sell the trusty Marantz CP430 cassette recorders that had been lent to local practitioners for almost 30 years. We quickly realised that this would do nothing to stem the tide of analogue recordings requiring transfer, and the field recorders have been consigned to storage in case they are needed in addition to studio cassette decks as replay units at some stage in the future.

We have built a fleet of seven Fostex FR-2 Compact Flash card recorders for loan. Interviewers are trained by our audio engineers, and only one person in five years has returned the equipment saying that it is all too hard.



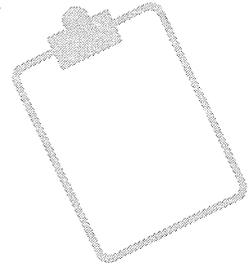
Compact Flash card being loaded into a digital field recorder

Conclusion

Analogue and early digital audiovisual formats are at far greater short-term risk than any paper-based materials held in libraries and archives. The need for oral history to move from analogue to digital by 2020 is urgent, and the time to start planning and lobbying for action is now. To make the case for intervention more compelling and more cost effective, SLNSW should examine all the audiovisual material for which it has preservation responsibility, rather than looking at oral history in isolation.

Every OHAA member has an important role to play in this race against time – starting by embracing the use of digital field recording equipment to ensure that you are not adding to the problem.

Beth M Robertson



Seminar July 31 2010

Oral History Going to Press: How to Publish from the Interview

Reported by Roslyn Burge

There was a terrific turnout to hear Laila Ellmoos and Dr Jo Kijas talk about their oral history projects based on two collective communities with different geographical challenge. *Our Island Home – a history of Peat Island*, is the title of Laila Ellmoos's book, commissioned by Aging, Disability and Home Care, Department of Home Services NSW and launched on Peat Island, in the Hawkesbury River, earlier this year.

The closure of Peat Island and its sale is imminent. Laila utilized documentary records and oral history in compiling a history of the site, the medical treatment and care of the many children, women and men who lived on Peat Island during the past 99 years. Sue Andersen recorded oral history interviews which have been lodged with the Mitchell Library. The oral history interviews were imperative in the writing and understanding the institutional history; interviewees were aged between 40-85 years and some had lived there for 50 years. Peat Island is significant not only for the people who lived there and their stories of institutional care and work but also for the physical fabric and the strong social value for workers and local communities. Laila's history of a changing community,

the landscape and its structures, is richly illustrated with wonderful portraits of residents taken at a surprisingly intimate range by William Newell and historic images of the Island taken throughout the twentieth century.

It is a sterling decision of Aging, Disability and Home Care to commission an oral history project of Peat Island and an historian to write the history, particularly for its intended audience - that very community itself. Hopefully the growing interest Laila's book has generated may result in its wider public distribution.

Dr Jo Kijas – Lighthouse keeping: a partnership
Lighthouses of Northern NSW Oral History Project

In the 1980s there was considerable opposition to the demanning of lighthouses, and by 1997 all the NSW lighthouses were demanned – with some of the houses and buildings subsequently adapted for new uses as tourist destinations. The architecture of lighthouses and the different methods of keeping the light are well documented

Reports (cont...)

but Jo's investigations showed there was very little known about the social lives of those who lived at the lighthouses. Thirty people were interviewed for this project, many contacted by phone and the web and there was a willingness to tell their story and the number of interviews recorded allowed the diversity of their stories to emerge from 'lives that were like everyone else'.

Lighthouse keeping is a unique partnership among the small coterie of families who have cared for the lights and lived in places of isolation and physical challenges. But the partnership operated within families and the history of NSW lights is inseparable from marriage and families. The light was the priority and the structure and work of the lighthouse keeper was regulated and paid while women kept house and cared for the children. The Head Lighthouse Keeper had a separate house close to the tower and the regularity of architecture used across different sites gave families a sense of familiarity as they moved. Until the late 1950s and 1960s lighthouses were staffed by ex-servicemen with maritime backgrounds. Women had to be independently resourceful. Interviews with wives were longer than the men and their recurrent comments about prospective families was that '*if people liked a cup of tea and went to clubs they were not the right sort of people to get the job*'. Many of the jobs were sourced through a network of individuals known to each other.

Jo recounted some of the ways families lived at South Solitary Island, 18 kms off Coffs Harbour, a 45 minute launch ride – on a good day. Jo described the challenges families experienced in undertaking a three year term, only leaving the island for their five week holiday. Despite living at such close quarters families didn't mix, apart from the fortnightly visit of the boat delivering supplies, when they'd wait together for the supplies to be landed by means of a basket lifted to and from the boat by crane. This extraordinarily precarious route was the same way people left the island too and considerable skill was required in manoeuvring the boat, gauging the swell of the sea and the distance from the crane's basket. One interviewee had a photo of her mother in a dress and laughed as she said that her mother left in a dress and returned in a mini-skirt, the material shrinking instantly as she was doused in the ocean.

Earlier this year Jo's *Lighthouses of Northern NSW Oral History Project* was Highly Commended in the Cultural Heritage: Corporate/Government category of the 2010 Energy Australia National Trust Heritage Awards. At the conclusion of the citation was the imperative: ***It must be published***, a sentiment all at the seminar shared.



References

Our Island Home – A history of Peat Island,
Laila Ellmoos
Aging, Disability and Home Care,
Sydney, 2010
*Lighthouses of Northern NSW Oral History
Project*, Dr Jo Kijas

NSW Department of Environment,
Climate Change & Water
2010 Energy Australia National Trust
Heritage Awards
Highly Commended – Cultural Heritage:
Corporate/Government

Notes on The XVlth International Oral History Conference, Prague, 7 – 11 July, 2010 *From Ben Morris*

The theme was *Between Past and Future: Oral History, Memory and Meaning*. There were 540 presenters, twenty-five of whom were Australians.

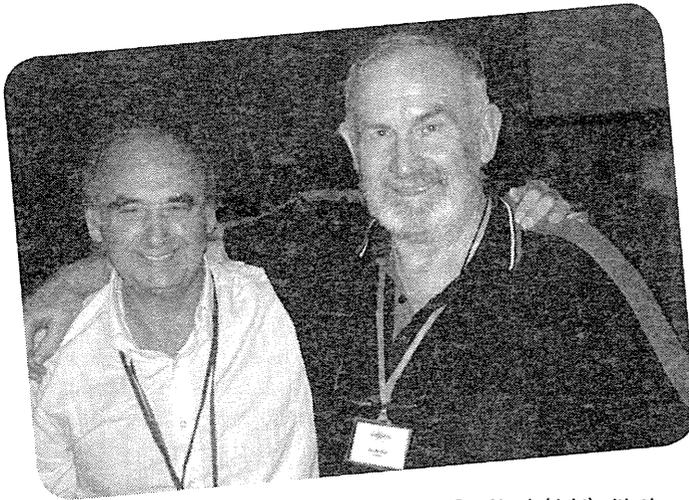
As a veteran interested in oral histories of Vietnam veterans, I found the conference most interesting and absorbing. A number of presentations were very relevant to my research at the University of Wollongong. A presentation by the curator of an archive of close to a thousand life stories of Dutch war veterans was my pick of the presentations as it was very relevant to my research. A working party was formed to set up a network of military historians with an oral history focus or oral historians who interview war veterans to promote better collaboration in this field and allow for the exchange of information. The network aims to have an online presence however initially it will collect information through a questionnaire collating the information

to establish the network. Anyone wishing to find out more information or join the network can contact either Dr. Stef Scagliola <S.Scagliola@veteraneninstituut.nl> or Ben Morris <taxmaster_1@yahoo.com>.

Dr Scagliola writes:

Let me begin with a small introduction. I am a military historian of Italian descent, based in the Netherlands, and curator of an oral history archive with close to one thousand life stories of Dutch veterans.

Based on our recent discussions at the IOHC, the aim of this letter is to make a first step towards setting up an international military oral history network in order to stimulate a more systematic exchange of knowledge and promote better collaboration in this field. My previous attempt to create such a network through an oral serv-list on the Internet failed; however the reactions of several colleagues I met during these last days in Prague were



**Ben Morris (right) with Alessandro Portelli
at the Prague Conference**

so enthusiastic, that I think it is time to make another attempt – I believe we now have a minimum critical mass. While we should be aiming for a permanent online presence in the future, I suggest a modest beginning for now, starting with informing each other about our backgrounds, fields of study, publications and ongoing research. This can be achieved with the help of a questionnaire. I will edit all the incoming information into a brief report and send it to all those who take the trouble to respond. It might also be a good idea to begin by creating a bibliography of war-related publications that include a strong oral history component with veterans or serving military as major sources. Although I am not averse of consulting publications by journalists, I suggest we make a start with academic publications – articles, book chapters, monographs as well as grey literature – so that we can come to an

assessment of the influence of oral sources in the field of academic military history.

About the form of future collaboration; I intend to look into the possibility of creating a digital cloud (e.g. through Google Wave) where we can deposit our documents, and to which we can gain access with a password. This saves us from sending an endless number of documents to each other. It would be nice to deposit on a joint platform in virtual space also the full text of the paper you presented to our Prague conference (many of you have only handed in an abstract. Many thanks for your assistance and cooperation. It is truly appreciated!

(Suggest interested members contact either of these gentlemen for questionnaire and further information. Ed)



Members Remembering Oral History for PhD Research in Women's Organizations

By Robyn Hanstock

Women who are committed members of their organizations are excited about finding that someone is researching them and they are happy to talk about their experiences. That is my conclusion after recording interviews with 31 women during research for my thesis 'Learning Journeys in Women's Organizations: Adult education outside conventional settings'. My institution is the University of New England, located in Armidale, NSW, and for the latter half of my candidature I was privileged to have Associate Professor Janis Wilton as my Principal Supervisor (1). The advice and feedback Janis gave me, along with her enthusiasm and friendship, smoothed what was often a difficult journey for me. Her experience and knowledge of oral history was invaluable in my recording of interviews and weaving the stories into my thesis during the writing.

Where environments were uncongenial for recording I took notes for several interviews and had countless conversations (for which I also took notes) on the telephone, at meetings and even with strangers at bus stops and railway stations. During my research a casual query on a railway station about a badge a fellow traveller was wearing (yes, that was a bit outspoken!) brought a passionate defence of her

organization when I responded that I had decided not to include it because of the number of different organizations already in the study. She begged me to change my mind and even gave me her name and telephone number for follow-up contact. I reviewed my list on returning home that day and decided that I had to restrict myself to the original organizations on which I was already working.

One of my most challenging, and yet rewarding, experiences in the use of oral history in my research was the two meetings I had initially with the members of the Newcastle Branch of the Embroiderers' Guild of NSW. I wrote about these women in a paper I presented at the Oral History Conference in 2006 (2). Ten women offered to record interviews with me on the day of the second meeting I attended and I hired an adjoining room to that in which they met for the recording.

The Newcastle branch is the only branch of the Embroiderers' Guild of NSW, all other groups being associated differently. There are at least ninety women meeting each Monday in a former cinema to stitch together, chat and learn. All of the women I interviewed were positive about their experience as members in learning, support, friendship and personal growth.

Articles (cont...)

On the recordings some of the comments they make include:

... very, very dear friendships – it's been wonderful.

It's just part of my life – I don't know what I'd do if I couldn't come – I really don't!

...life, I think, is an education no matter where you are, but it has helped me to be a part of a group, and given me confidence that I can go out to others (3).

Embroiderers are almost always enthusiastic about their skills and their craft, and this came across strongly in an interview I recorded with the late Marie Cavanagh, Curator of the NSW Embroiderers' Guild collection for many years until her death in 2007 (4). We sat at the table in the Collection Room in the Concord West headquarters for Marie's interview, surrounded by shelves, cupboards and drawers packed with the needlework and clothing owned by the Guild, ranging from a precious 17th century embroidery, through an incredibly ugly 19th century pincushion (kept to show what not to do!) to samples of exquisite recent work by members (5).

Marie was excited about showing off what she clearly saw as treasures, and would leap up to retrieve items she felt had to be included, forgetting that the microphone was attached to her blouse. Finally I detached it and put it on the table after rescuing the recorder more than once, but the interview continues to be punctuated with the noise which reveals

Marie's enthusiasm to the listener as she pushes the mike aside to spread out yet another beautiful embroidered garment or piece of linen. Marie sometimes gave talks on the Collection at various organizations like Probus and VIEW clubs, and she told me about some of these and the reception she received. At one they had expected that men would have no interest, but Marie assured them that she included a lot of history while discussing the embroidery she was displaying:

"I gave a talk to the First Fleeters down at History House, they asked me to come along, and I was able – I took along some historic pieces, pieces from the First World War and that sort of thing, and ah, a few pictures of men, and as I said to the group, 'I feel that if women hadn't embroidered – or sewn and embroidered and embellished we'd probably still be running round in animal skins!' But those men were quite interested, I s'pose because they had that background in history but the women generally were very disappointed that the Guild doesn't have any First Fleeter embroideries" (6).

Marie's employment career was in teaching Home Economics in secondary school and so education was something of which she was very much aware. She would take out items from the Collection for tutors, whose classes were comprised of groups of women whose brief was to select an item and use it as inspiration to create a new embroidery. As well, the Guild premises were, and still are, adorned with displays of the less fragile items, regularly rotated for protection and to allow as many as possible to be displayed



to members and visitors. Of course, history – and the geography and ethnic study included in research for some of the pieces – is only a very minor part of the education taking place in the Embroiders' Guild of NSW, and I found it to have the strongest educational base of any of the organizations I researched.

Nevertheless, according to my findings it would be very rare for a woman to be a member of a women's organization and not find that she was learning through her membership, often to the point of seeing transformation in her life through that learning. Most of the women I interviewed spoke of the increased confidence they achieved through participation in activities, especially taking office, and all appreciated the friendship they found – and gave – through the widened circle of acquaintances. Some went on to further education and new careers because of newfound abilities, and one is now a university academic, an achievement she attributes to learning begun in her organization. In fact, one of my main difficulties overall was finding women who were willing to be honest about the negative aspects they could see in their organizations.

Few Zonta women have much that is negative to say about their organization, which is a service organization for business and professional women, founded in the early twentieth century in the United States. Early in my candidature the women of the Armidale club took me to their

hearts, following my progress and inviting me to their dinner meetings to speak or to observe. This was enormously helpful in getting to know the organization and the women involved, as well as encouraging me when my enthusiasm flagged. The members of the wider organization in New South Wales have continued their interest and Zonta women have invited me to speak at their Area Workshops since my graduation.

The previous President of the Armidale Zonta Club, Mrs. Helen Gee, told me about the way that the club had established a Women's Refuge in Armidale, and the work to support the women and children who were residents, such as seed-funding for white goods when the women were setting up a new home (7). The club then allowed easy repayments so that the woman had the self-esteem of owning her own new washing machine or refrigerator. More recently, in Armidale and other clubs, Zonta women assemble birthing kits for use in remote areas in developing countries, away from medical assistance, to provide safer conditions for young women giving birth. While the small kit is primitive by western standards, items which include plastic sheeting, soap and surgical gloves provide some protection from infection. Breast cushions for mastectomy patients is another widespread project in Zonta Clubs. Closer to home, Zonta's scholarships and awards include Young Women in Public Affairs (YWPA) an annual award to girls at the end of high school. Isobel Pollard told

Articles (cont...)

me of the process the Armidale Club has, where its panel selects girls from local schools:

all schools are welcome, and we really encourage these girls – we provide a scholarship for them – and just to hear those girls speak is so encouraging. It is so encouraging. We had them just a couple of weeks ago and they're so inspiring (8).

I was invited to attend presentation dinners for YWPA awards and I was most impressed by speeches the winners and runners-up gave.

Zonta clubs also present a Woman of the Year award to a woman who has worked in her community to make a difference, as well as the Amelia Earheart Fellowship, awarded to postgraduate researchers working in fields which are traditionally male, most especially aerospace engineering. This award is in memory of the early woman pilot, Amelia Earheart, who was herself a member of Zonta in the United States. In all of this the members are broadening their worldview and learning new skills, not the least of which can be personal growth in areas like compassion (9).

Compassion is a strong point for Quota women where their major ongoing project is concerned. Worldwide, the Quota organization focuses on fundraising and lobbying for justice for the hearing impaired, along with other projects (10). My two interviewees were full of information about the work they had done in working for cochlea implants for those

they knew who needed them, including an active young boy in Armidale who had once left essential auxiliary equipment hanging in a tree in the rain! The women raised the funds for a spare so that he would still have hearing when parts had to be sent to Sydney for repair in such circumstances. Funds were also raised for building a centre and a scholarship sent a young audiologist to Milan for a conference about infant hearing screening. She went on to be instrumental in setting up the program in Australia. Although these two women live hundreds of kilometres apart they know each other well, and my second interviewee playfully insisted that she would keep speaking until her recording was longer than the first! They were the longest individual speakers at more than 75 minutes each (11).

My experience in researching the Country Women's Association (CWA) was different from Zonta and Quota in that I joined the organization and became involved, thus myself becoming a research subject and participant (12). I learned through experience that the stereotypical view of CWA by many people, who see it as 'tea and scones', is false. This unfortunate image was reinforced by the ABC series 'Not All Tea and Scones', which many members saw as promoting quite the opposite view to its own title because of its strong focus on the annual cookery competition. The stereotype persists as I write, with a cooking program soon to air featuring one hundred women from CWA. This view of women's organizations is not restricted to Australia.



Women's Institute, a British organization similar to CWA, is caricatured in fiction, as well as in the television series *Jam and Jerusalem* (13). The fictional character in a popular British novel series reveals what many believe about women's organizations in general:

'That's my place', said Mr. Willett. 'You must meet my wife sometime. She tells me you're going to join the WI.'

'Yes, I am.'

'Jumble-jam-and-Jerusalem!' commented Mr. Willet, with a rumbling laugh. 'That's what they call it, eh? Well, keeps you ladies out of mischief, I suppose. You want to watch they don't get you on the committee though. Fair sharpens their knives there, I understand.'(14)

Despite such views, CWA has many activities which have nothing whatever to do with cooking, or even craft, like the many hundreds of thousands of dollars they raise annually to benefit medical research, currently into prostate cancer. The women also promote farmer education for safe work practices and have a program to prevent the deeply troubling issue of rural suicide. The annual International Study program educates women in the societies and cultures of other countries, as well as promoting global harmony. Many scholarships provide opportunities for education to rural people, including several residential scholarships for students at the University of New England.

My own interest in some of the organizations features strongly in research into Christian organizations. These were

possibly amongst the most passionate of my interviewees, motivated as they were by their faith as well as love for their organization. Cecily Jackson was at the time national President of Christian Women Communicating International (CWCI) (15). Cecily was one of those who commented that my interview in itself was an education as she had not consciously connected the organization with the idea of education, but realized immediately the extent of learning achieved by the members. CWCI incorporates Know Your Bible (KYB), Bible Study groups formerly held only for women but now offering their studies to mixed or male groups.

Three members of Catholic Women's League in NSW were a challenge to interview because of their passion for their organization (16). The interview was originally to be with the Sydney President alone at their Sydney headquarters, but the State President happened to be visiting, and the Executive Officer was also present. Consequently, the decision was made to involve all of them, so the four of us sat around a table on which I placed the two lapel microphones, both of which recorded very well after I adjusted them slightly for proximity to speakers. The liveliness of the interview comes across faithfully on the recording, revealing the passion as the women sometimes cut in on each other in their excitement at being able to promote their organization in such a way. At one point there were tears as one woman tried to communicate what CWL meant to her and I treasure this recording as perhaps the

Articles (cont...)

best one of the collection in its honesty and emotion.

Mothers' Union (MU) is the largest individually worldwide of the church organizations whose members I interviewed (17). It is a women's organization of the Anglican Church, with three million members worldwide and has a voice for women and children at United Nations level with links to large international umbrella organizations, as do Zonta, Quota and CWA, among others. Interviewees and other research into MU shows the extent of the way members learn through their activities, as well as educating young parents in childcare and family living. MU is fortunate at present to have a shop front in the inner city of Sydney where goods such as handmade baby wear and quilts are sold and the organization is administered and promoted.

Recording an interview with the President of Sydney MU, as well as conversations with other members, provided great insight into the organization (18). The same applied to the interviews with members of every organization, proving to be a great advantage in my research as I could return as often as necessary during the writing to quote from speakers or check facts. It was a benefit that I had not foreseen as I had not used the technique before except to use some recordings by other interviewers as reference for my Bachelor of Arts honours thesis research (19). Almost all of my interviewees were warm and friendly and were willing to be open

about their experiences as members of the organizations included in the research. Only one woman refused permission for her recording to be lodged with the others in the State Library Oral History Collection because of her fear of 'repercussions'. As she had only referred in general to activities in her small organization, and had not made one negative comment, I found it difficult to understand her refusal, but I can only assume that she has had an unfortunate experience in the past.

I recorded those interviews I was able to on a Sony Minidisk Recorder with lapel microphones, but the process was sometimes less than successful. In one very early interview I was so nervous I forgot to switch on the microphones for the entire interview! However, it transpired that my interviewee was relieved and pleased because she regretted the extremely negative things she had said about the organization (to which she no longer belonged) and its members. In another similar situation, a woman who belonged to two different organizations was happy with her information about the first, but wished to retract her comments about the second. Amazingly, a probable power surge stopped the recording at just about the right moment, to that informant's great relief as well!

Most interviews, however, went off happily with only minor hiccups like extraneous noise. Often too, noise occurred from the lapel microphone before I realized that clipping it to clothing was not ideal



because speakers insisted on fiddling with it or jumping up and forgetting it was attached. Noise also resulted when it was moved across the table, so experience has taught me to always use a stand microphone in future. In fact, I regret purchasing the Minidisk recorder in response to pressure from the salesman, who did not tell me there was perhaps even then a possibility that it would be quickly superseded. I am looking forward to becoming at ease with the newest digital technology.

The experience of recording interviews was at times challenging, but the inclusion of women's voices speaking about their commitment to the organizations I was researching enhanced the outcome of my thesis to a considerable degree. The use of oral history provided, and in my view will always provide through its 'human touch', an immediacy and liveliness less likely to be achieved through textual research.

References

1. Doctor of Philosophy degree awarded by the University of New England 9th April, 2010.
2. Robyn Hanstock, 'Dancing Out of the Silence: Adult education in women's organizations', *Dancing with Memory: Oral history and its audiences*, 14th International Oral History Conference, Sydney, Australia, 12-16 July, 2006.
3. These three interviews and all others carried out for the research (except one) are held in the Oral History Collection of the State Library of NSW in Macquarie Street, Sydney.
4. Further details and contacts at the Guild website <<http://embroiderersguildnsw.org.au/>>
5. Interview with Mrs. Marie Cavanagh, recorded on 27/2/2006.
6. Interview with Mrs. Marie Cavanagh.
7. Interview with Mrs. Helen Gee recorded 31/7/2006.
8. Interview with Mrs. Isobel Pollard, Armidale, 24/3/2006.
9. See details on the Zonta website at <<http://zontadistrict24.org/District24/Home.html>>
10. Further details on the Quota International website at <<http://www.quota.org/gtku/aq.htm>>
11. Interview with Mrs. June Young on 11/6/2007; interview with Mrs. Gloria Cook on 10/7/2007.
12. <http://www.cwaofnsw.org.au>
13. Jennifer Saunders, *Jam and Jerusalem*, British Broadcasting Corporation, 2008.
14. Miss Read, *Tyler's Row*, in *Omnibus* edition Storm in the Village and Tyler's Row, London, Orion Books, 2008, p.86.
15. <<http://www.cwciaus.org.au/>>
16. <<http://www.cwlsydney.org/>>
17. <<http://www.musydne.org.au/>>
18. Interview with Mrs. Christine Jensen, recorded on 30/8/2006.
19. Unpublished thesis for BA Honours degree in History, 'Behave Like A Lady!: Twentieth-Century Private Venture Girls' Schools in the Blue Mountains', University of Sydney, 2003.

My First Dalliance Into Family Oral History By Sharon Burke

After the death of my grandmother, Mumma, who discussed family stories, I commenced my studies in Australian History, wanting to record family stories. I chose my cousin, Aunty Joan, for my first project as she is the last member of that part of the family still living; she is a connection to Mumma. Mumma was Aunty Joan's step-Aunty. I really wish I had recorded an oral history on Mumma but it is too late now. The stories of the 'olden days' have always intrigued me.

I chose to produce a digital story of photographs and oral history recordings, presented on a DVD. The intended audience was the interviewee's family and the broader community as this was a story of Aunty Joan's life and that of the life of Cessnock, Joan's home town, covering the late 1920s through to the present. The digital format is transportable and more likely to be absorbed by the family than an oral history transcription or many hours of interview recordings during their busy lives. The oral history interview is important today as it delivers an insight into the local person's life of a country community. Information about feeding babies before formula and washing nappies without a washing machine is likely to be found in history books, but the story of Joan's experiences will have more meaning for her

family and that of her community as she discusses her personal experience. There is important history in people's minds and memories. For me, it was important that this history was captured before it died with the individual, Aunty Joan. However, as an historian, one needs to remember that oral history needs to be supplemented with documentation and other scholarly work, as David Potts and Eric Eklund have suggested (1). Potts states that the audience should 'listen to other patterns of response' and I assume that what Potts is saying is to not rely solely on oral history when considering the history of a period and place(2). Eklund does state that it is necessary to have 'written evidence and a consideration of the social position that the respondent was in' as this gives added meaning to the memory of the individual and the history that comes from the memory (3). I consulted a number of scholarly works. In hindsight, I could have conducted more research on family life in Cessnock and oral history technique to improve my technique, product delivery, and, perhaps, ask more pertinent questions to the periods of Joan's life.



Aunty Joan

After watching 'When The War Came to Australia', I found that the narrative was weak. I realized that my product needed to have narration to give it a continuum so that the viewer could see where the story was heading and so the viewer felt like they were on the journey of Joan Grills' life (4).

The interview skills of an oral historian are something that require practise to improve the techniques and organizational requirements of the interviewer. I initially thought that I had good interview skills as

I conduct interviews for my professional position as an auditor. However, I found that an oral history interview is quite different to an audit interview in that an auditor is often asking questions to confirm, or deny, a client's interpretation of legislation whereas an oral historian is interested in a person's life and how that has shaped our history. The practicalities of arranging the interview were easily achieved through a telephone call to my aunt. As she is retired and at home looking after my uncle, a day and time were easily arranged. However, after the pre-interview, I realized that choosing a Friday would be most appropriate as my uncle is out on Fridays and this means that Aunty Joan is able to focus on the project.

Other practical idiosyncrasies around noise and interruptions needed to be attended to. The pre-interview was done in the kitchen and this meant that more outside noise was picked up as the kitchen is across the back of the house which is on a busy corner. The telephone is located in the kitchen also and it was ringing regularly as Joan's great-grandson was in hospital interstate with a serious head injury. Joan's husband required occasional attendance due to his health. The big interview was conducted in the dining room and this was quiet and less distracting.

The recording equipment choice took a lot of time. I wanted good quality sound. I was unable to purchase a suitable

Articles (cont...)

recorder within my price range at the time that I required the device. There was a device that I was interested in but it was out of stock. I contacted local libraries and historical societies. They were unable to assist me. I decided to use my mp3 player as it had an in-built microphone recorder and could be easily transferred to my laptop. The equipment worked well. However, afterwards, on reflection, I can hear the machine working during the recording which makes for a poor sound.

Interview styles take time and practise to develop. Initially, my interview style was cold and harsh. For example, my tone came across as demanding when I was really trying to show interest. Also, the choice of questioning techniques added to the harshness, particularly when I asked Joan why she left school in Year 8. The tone of my voice almost accused her of making a bad decision when I really just wanted to know out of interest. I became more comfortable as the interviewing continued. I need more practice. I need to breathe between responses and not talk over the top of the interviewee. I need to work on my listening skills as there were times throughout the interviews where it is obvious that I had forgotten information given previously. I need to improve on my open-question skills. I made use of prepared questions and this helped ease the nerves. As I became more comfortable with the interviewing, I was able to ask questions not on my list. The questions about memories of certain times, places, or events delivered better responses as it appears my aunt is not good

on detail such as dates and some names in some situations. This is not considered unusual as we tend to remember events by significance, not by dates (5). From my knowledge of Joan, I was surprised about this issue of memory. The less specific the question, the more eager a response was delivered. However, this was not always the case and in those circumstances, I would offer suggestions or examples. I also wonder if the memories of times enjoyed immensely are easier to be recalled. For example, the information recalled about trips to Emmaville including names of people and properties were easily retrieved.

My role and presence impacted on the flow and content of the interviews. My relationship to my aunt made it hard as I knew some of the content already and my aunt knew this so I think she held back in some circumstances as she thought I already knew what she was talking about. Also, my aunt has communicated to me that she was unsure of what to expect and found it hard to know what to say. In hindsight, maybe talking in more detail about the interview and how it will work is warranted, taking into account Joan's background and lack of formal education.

Sources other than the oral history were obtained from Joan and the local library. Joan gave me her personal notes on her life which included when she was born, married, and funny anecdotes of her life. The notes helped me develop the list of



questions that I used for the interviews. I obtained copies of photographs and these were used in the DVD produced and the photographs have contributed to the effectiveness of the product. I have photographs going across the screen with captions, narration from myself to explain, and my aunt's memories that tie in with the photographs. I also sought photographs from the Cessnock Library's local history online selection which supplement the reflections and memories of Cessnock's places and people.

Joan gave permission for the product and recordings to be used in my assignment, this article, and for dissemination amongst family members. It will also be supplied to the local Cessnock library. Joan has since requested the products to not be released to the local library until she has passed away. This request will be adhered to and was noted on the permission to use form.

The narrator, or interviewee, is Joan Grills. The DVD and recordings are her story and that of her parents and grandparents. Joan had very little formal education. In everyday life this is not evident. However, I seem to think that misunderstandings of what I was saying, and asking, could have been due to the lack of education. Or, maybe the misunderstanding was due to my skills, or lack of, in questioning (6). Joan presents herself as a woman who has had a simple, yet lucky, life. In the interview, Joan becomes a relaxed person, accepting of what life sends her way, and thankful for the life she has enjoyed.

The story of Joan Grills is one of memories of family life and that of the Cessnock community. The memories, stories, and reflections that Joan shared kept reinforcing to me that she had led a simple but enjoyable life who wanted for little and gained a lot from life's experience. Anecdotes abound throughout Joan's story. For example, Joan's father's experience at the Rothbury Lockout and the fear they experienced yet told with humour; how Joan was not taught to swim and her unhappiness at this fact. Also, there is an image of cycles of life. For example, as a child Joan had her parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles around her and now as a great-grandmother, she is now the matriarch and the children come to Joan. Joan was also able to explain how the telecommunication system worked before homes had telephones that could be used to call people directly. I have personal experience of this telephone system as we had one in the first home that I can recall. To hear what happened on the other side, at the exchange, was enlightening to me.

Joan was happy to discuss all topics presented to her. Some topics were discussed with more interest and warmth. Humorous stories and stories involving gore seem to be enjoyable for Joan to share. For example, when Joan talks of her bowel being laid out on an operating table or the car accident where Joan can still remember seeing the man's thumb on the road. When

Articles (cont...)

Joan talks of family members, particularly her Mum and Aunty Ethel (my Mumma), you can feel the warmth and love she has for these women. Humour is in the stories shared of these women too. For example, when Aunty Ethel almost slept with Joan's father after the bedrooms were changed over and Joan's father was not advised of the change of sleeping arrangements. This tells me that Joan does not look too deeply at life. Joan is happy to live a simple, carefree life.

There were times when Joan shared a memory that did not answer the question posed. For example, I asked about cooking done by her grandmother and I ended up with a story about Grandma's treatment of arthritis with rubbing the affected area with methylated spirits. I believe that this happens as words and images trigger memories.

There could be factual errors in this recording. A couple of issues were picked up during the interviews. For example, the death of Uncle Ted which was thought to be more recent than it could have been, and the lack of services provided by doctors today. I have not checked the majority of the facts.

The final product is a record of Joan's life and that of Cessnock over the past eighty-four years. There are also memories of times prior to Joan's life that have been passed down and of life in other country towns that the family have connections to. This product will be of value to Joan's family and the people of Cessnock. They now

have a resource that is full of information of times past through to the current day and they will have a better understanding of how life was and how Joan's life was shaped.

References:

1. David Potts, 'Tales of Suffering in the 1930s Depression', *Journal of Australian Studies*, Vol 41, 1994, p. 66. Eric Eklund, 'Memories of Place: Local History and Oral Evidence', *Oral History Association of Australia Journal*, Vol. 19, 1997, p. 76.
2. Potts, 'Tales of Suffering', p. 66.
3. Eklund, 'Memories of Place', p. 76.
4. Peter Butt (director), *When The War Came to Australia*, Episode 1 'Our Melancholy Duty' (DVD recording from The History Channel), 1991.
5. This was a comment from my lecturer Janis Wilton on my assignment.
6. This was a comment from my lecturer Janis Wilton on my assignment.



A Three Generation Family Passion For Oral History; And Why We Have To Digitise Our Audio Tapes ASAP – *By Trish Levido*

I wonder how many other people can go back three generations of oral historians in their family? My first was my maternal Grandmother who recorded her every day life onto a 'reel to reel' tape recorder which my Mother gave to her before departing for Europe for two years way back in 1967. It was my mother's way of 'keeping in touch' across the world during a period of history when making telephone calls home was prohibitive in cost; planned for weeks ahead of time; and difficult when you were travelling in places like Morocco over the European Winter. How excited she became when a new recording arrived. How precious to hear the day to day happenings, trivial though they were, but oh, how they instantly transported us all back to being together again. The tapes were infrequent – perhaps only 4 each year, but oh so precious. At the time I didn't think it was unusual to use this medium to supplement the weekly 'Air-o-grams' which flew backwards and forwards every week between Europe and Australia. Also Mum and I would write our weekly 'air-o-gram' in Montreal, Canada during 1967 when I moved there to marry and we recorded

on audio cassette our marriage ceremony to send to my Mum as she was unable to attend the service.

More the pity that none of those 'reel to reel' recording exist any longer. Too many moves, too much 'throwing out' of things perceived to be no longer needed. Until too late, you realize the priceless heritage that has been lost forever. Thank goodness the 'air-o-grams' still exist and become more and more treasured as the years go by. However nothing ever replaces the spoken words of the voice of a loved one. There was one positive from this early venture into recording life stories and that was that Mum did record her life story using, not a 'reel to reel' recorder, but a lovely compact audio cassette recorder which was the 'state of the art' back in the late 1970's. How much easier to use was this compared to the reel to reel recorder which was about the size of a small suitcase and weighed about 10kgs! Oh, how much, my Mum and Grandmother would have loved an audio cassette recorder, for their earlier tapings let alone a digital recorder. Down the years Mum became very proficient in using the cassette recorder and back in 1977 when her one and only grandchild was born she recorded her life for him and me. Since her

Articles (cont...)

passing in 1994, although I had not listened to the tapes, I still considered that they would be the one thing to 'grab in case of fire' along with the family photo albums and I had kept two audio cassette recorders specifically for this purpose.

We now move forward into 2010 and since attending the OHAA workshops and hearing how urgent it is to digitize the recording, before they are lost forever, the nagging voice of my subconscious eventually made me contact a friend who is a technical electronic whiz and ask if it was possible to plug the cassette recorder directly into my laptop and thereby cut out the tedious task of re-recording the tapes onto a digital recorder. Within a few minutes he had managed to connect the recorder to the P.C. and using the free Audacity program, I was at last listening to my Mum's lovely voice talking about her life. After about 10 minutes though, I was immensely disappointed to discover that there were sections of the tape that, due to age, the recordings had become jumbled, and instead of hearing her voice clearly, it was now almost incoherent, due to the fact that her voice was recorded on top of her voice, saying different words, making it impossible to understand. How very frustrating! (Trish was advised that "We don't know that she had recorded over some sections, and I don't know how she could have done so. I think it is much more likely what is called "print through" where the magnetic signal from one piece of tape

transfers over to the next layer because the layers are tightly wound against each other.") The moral of the story is to digitize those audio cassette tapes NOW, otherwise, like me, you take the risk that you and others won't be able to listen to them in the future.

Finally, on a positive note, one thing I did inherit from my Mum was a love of oral histories. In 1982, when my son went off to kindergarten and I had a few precious hours to myself, I decided to use this time to record the life stories of members of the Mosman Historical Society. I had joined this group of mostly elderly Mosman residents after moving to Mosman in 1979 and wanted to know more about the history of our new suburb. After attending a few meetings and getting to know some of the members I suggested that it would be a good idea to record their fascinating life stories. These included a sea captain who spent his life sailing his square rigger around the Horn; a member of the New Guard, who met in secrecy in Mosman and planned the overthrow of the State Government during the 1930's; and an elderly 'home guard' man who spent the entire period of the 2nd World War being a sentry on a pylon of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, equipped with a single action 1st World War gun to 'shoot down the enemy'. I distinctly remember him complaining of having to walk down the stairs to the ground (not the roadway) to attend his toilet and have his meal break, but thought he was much better off than his compatriots on the far pylon, who not only



had to do the same, but walk the length of the bridge as well!

So here I was, following in my Mothers' and Grandmothers' footsteps recording not just the day to day activities, but the fascinating lives of folk from another era. The more I recorded the more I became 'hooked' and even though I had to put my oral history recording on the backburner whilst I went back to work full time, I vowed that when I retired I would be taking it up again. During the intervening years I still managed to do oral histories of friends, friends of friends, terminally ill folk and family members but my passion had to wait, due to the demands of earning a living. Little did I imagine back then that it would be the digital age when I finally retired and my recorder would be a Zoom and the size of a pack of playing cards. Best of all, how marvellous to know that now, when I have the privilege of recording a person's life, that the recording will be able to be heard not only by their children and grandchildren but also, hopefully their great and even great, great grandchildren in the future. That to me is the very best part of the digital age and well worth the stress, time and bother, to conquer learning new equipment. No more will there be people like me who in years to come, go to their computer and not be able to hear their recordings as good as when they were originally recorded.

These days being a volunteer oral historian for Mosman Library has opened up another very big door for me. Mosman

Library has an extensive collection of oral histories, both audio and now digital under the excellent tutelage of our Local Studies Librarian, Donna Braye. It is through Donna's efforts and the Council's generosity that over a number of years now I have been able to attend the OHAA seminars and workshops. It was by attending these all important events on my calendar that I first discovered that there was a course at University of New England, for which, as a (very) mature aged student, I could apply and was duly accepted. This was a dream come true for me and so today I am in my second year of the Advanced Diploma in Local, Family and Applied History having just completed the Oral History unit with Prof. Janis Wilton. Once more it is brought home to me that the advantages of the digital revolution mean that no longer do you have to move to a University to participate in courses, the Universities are addressing this digital revolution by making their courses 'on line' with people attending on the web from places all over Australia (even, I was told, of one student who was submitting his work from jail!)

Who knows what will follow the current audio digitized era? Perhaps 3D audio visual interviews and recordings where future generations may be able to interact with our generation. What a future!

(Trish has been advised that most of print through can be cleaned off the tapes and later she will report on the method and success of the process. Ed)

Storycorps – *By Di Ritch*

A couple of years ago while walking along a shopping strip in Los Angeles I saw a caravan. On the caravan were written the words “STORYCORPS – ask now, listen forever”. A sign invited members of the public to enter the sound-proof booth and record a 40 minute interview with a loved one. Two copies of the interview would be made, one for the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, and the other would be a CD for the interviewer.

In March this year I found it again, this time in the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco. A booth had been set up in the museum and, due to popular demand, they had extended their stay. From these interviews the museum has local listening events and programmes incorporating StoryCorps.

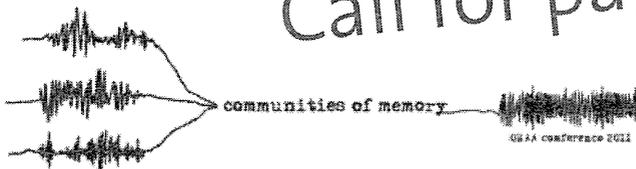
Founded in 2003, StoryCorps is the largest oral history project ever undertaken. It is not elitist and does not profess to be a deeply significant life story. The interviews are snippets from the lives of every day people. The founder, Dave Isay, claims that StoryCorps “demonstrates that our stories are the most important and interesting of all...If we take the time to listen to one another, we will find wisdom, wonder, and poetry in the voices and

lives of people around us.” They aim to “capture the wisdom of those whose stories are so often forgotten”.

This has taken oral history to a new audience. StoryCorps has a weekly radio programme with nearly 13 million listeners, is podcast on iTunes and at <<http://www.storycorps.net/listen/podcast>> and the Listen Pages at <<http://www.storycorps.net/listen>> feature hundreds of stories. You can even sign up to get their story of the week by email at <<http://www.storycorps.net/ml>>. StoryCorps travels around America collecting the stories of everyday people. Two books and a CD have been compiled from these interviews. This has generated yet another web page <<http://www.storycorps.net/book>> where you can download their “free discussion guide and learn how to organize a listening party, book club meeting, community or family events.” With this information you can arrange for a trained facilitator with professional recording equipment to come to your event for one or more days to record interviews. Those Americans really have it all covered.

As corny as their advertising seems – “our lives matter”, “we won’t ever be forgotten”, “listening can enrich your lives in small but powerful ways” – I think StoryCorps is a great idea. It’s grass roots oral history. When was one of your interviews heard by nearly 13 million people?

Call for papers



OHA Biennial Conference 2011

Communities of Memory

State Library of Victoria Conference Centre,
Melbourne, Victoria

30 September–2 October 2011

Closing Date: 31 October 2010

In recent years memory has been an increasingly significant resource for many different types of communities: for survivors of natural catastrophe and human-made disaster; in country towns dealing with demographic and environmental change; for cities and suburbs in constant transformation; in the preservation of special places or the restitution of human rights; for the 'Forgotten Australians' and 'Stolen Generations'; for migrants and refugees creating new lives; among virtual communities sharing life stories online. Memories are used to foster common identity and purpose, to recover hidden histories and silenced stories, to recall change in the past and advocate change in the present, to challenge stereotypes and speak truth to power. The concept of 'community' can be enlisted for change or conservatism; 'communities of memory' can be inclusive and empowering, or exclusive and silencing.

Oral historians, in a variety of guises and combining age-old listening skills with dazzling new technologies, play important roles in this memory work. Our conference welcomes participants who use oral history in their work with and within communities of memory across the many fields and disciplines that contribute to community, public and academic histories. We invite proposals for individual presentations, workshops and thematic panels.

The conference will include history walks and tours that introduce participants to Melbourne's rich and diverse communities of memory.

We welcome proposals for presentations in a variety of formats and media, including standard paper presentations (typically 20 minutes); short accounts of work in progress (typically 5 minutes); participatory workshops; and thematic panels comprising several presenters. Presentations should involve oral history.

For more information or to submit a proposal, visit the website
<<http://www.sites.google.com/site/communitiesofmemory/home>>
Or email the organizers:
<mailto:ohaa2011@gmail.com>

Diary of Events

Conference on Poetics and Discourse:

12-14 December, 2011

The Oral, the Written, and Other Verbal Media (OWOVM)

Hosted by Victoria University (Melbourne, Australia) at its City Campus

Testimony, Witness, Authority: The politics and poetics of experience

From ethnic cosmologies and narratives of survival to the lyricism of love and loss – cultures are built on verbal reproductions of experience, on their dissemination through arrays of oral, written, and other verbal media, and on the complex relations between participants in these discourses.

The Programming Committee welcomes your proposals and any preliminary queries. Please email these to: owovm@vu.edu.au. Contact Emma Dortins “<mailto:emma.dortins@gmail.com>”.

Committee Meeting Dates For 2010

Members are encouraged and welcome to attend meetings held at the State Library at 5.30pm. Please meet at the Mitchell Wing vestibule at 5.25pm. (Staff will direct you if you miss the group)

16 November

Seminar Dates for 2010

6 November

Digital Recording Equipment Available to OHAA, NSW, Members Only

Two Edirol R-09HR Solid State Recorders and microphones are available for short term hire (five days) at a cost of \$20.

A refundable deposit of \$200 is required.

Enquires to Graham and Trish Levido;

email <ohaansw@hotmail.com>

(If no email – Tel (02)99695177).

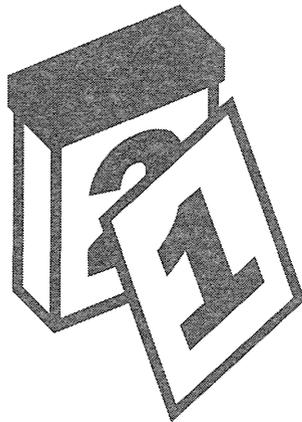
Our Edirols were purchased from Turrumurra Music Centre,

1267 Pacific Highway Turrumurra.

They offer a discount price to members interested in buying one. Contact Adrian:

<adrian@turramusic.com.au>

Tel: 9449 8487 to discuss offer for members.



Noticeboard



Website Oral History Association of Australia <www.ohaansw.org.au>

Do bookmark and visit this site from time to time to keep up to date with what is happening around Australia and especially for details and links to the International Conference.

Oral History Transcription Service

Professional transcriber
Contact Gabrielle Godard on
Tel: (02) 9699 6094 Fax (02) 9699 6094
tohillgabrielle7@gmail.com

Oral History Transcriptions

Expert transcriptions provided at Competitive rates. Accurate results/ Quick turnaround/ Convenient location.
Contact Pat Francis
canadianaustralian@bigpond.com
Tel: (02) 9389 0596
Mob: 0413 600 824

Treasure your family stories?

Louise Darmody, former ABC radio journalist can record your family's precious stories with sound effects and music on a beautifully presented CD.
Call "Sound Memories".
Tel: (02) 9925 0492
Mob: 0408 630 803
louised@bigpond.net.au

Oral History Audio and Video services

Film your story or subject! Transfer your audio tapes (micro and standard) to CD or to DVD the best archival format, and keep audio at best quality for years. Digital editing of tapes also available – make your radio documentary.
Call Sandra at Why Documentaries
Tel/Fax: (02) 4285 3545
Po Box 28 Bulli 2516
sandra@whydocumentaries.com.au

Memory Man

Record your life story for family Reminiscence & memorabilia talks
Memory Therapy
Call Bob Mitchell
Tel: (02) 9520 9232
Mob: 0438670145
bob@memoryman.com.au
www.memoryman.com.au

Oral History Transcriptions

Professional administrative services by a sustainable provider including oral history transcription and logging.
Please call Pamela Jones at
The Environmental Type
Tel: 0425 841 202
pamela@theenvironmentaltype.com.au

Members notices are included solely for information as a service to members. They are not to be understood to carry any endorsement from the OHAA(NSW) or its editors.



Web Site

Remember to look up our website: www.ohaansw.org.au for all the latest information and news of what's on. If you have news for circulation through the OHAA NSW web site, please email the OHAA webmaster: Sandra Blamey at: sblamey@ozemail.com.au
