

OHAA On Tape

June 2005

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Hello Everyone!

I hope you have enjoyed the year so far. Hard to believe it's nearly half over!

I had a very sad experience in April when my 87 year old father died in a nursing home after a long illness. Many of you may have already experienced this terrible sadness but it was a new experience for me. The grief is almost unbearable and you wonder how you will get through it. We had a lovely small funeral where my sister, brother and I spoke about our memories of our father. It was a difficult experience but I felt very happy to have done it. We all have precious memories of our parents or grandparents and it is essential that these memories are preserved. That is one of the wonders of oral history. I had recorded my father's stories starting in 1986 and about four times since then as his condition deteriorated (he suffered the debilitating effects of strokes). Those stories have been preserved for the family and I have put his story on my web site. So what I would like to say to all of you who may not already have done so – go and tape those precious stories of your elderly loved ones, before it is too late!

On 8 May 2005, we had a booth at the inaugural Heritage Expo at the Brisbane

City Hall. There were many historical groups represented and there were many people walking through the Expo. I was on our booth for the morning and Jean Tremayne was on for the afternoon. Our Treasurer, Maxine Kendall, spent the day there. (Her report is on page 9). There was a lot of positive feedback on our booth and we sold several books and welcomed a new member:

Catherine Francis

Our President, Lesley Jenkins, will soon be off overseas for her Churchill Fellowship and we look forward to her reports on what she is learning in the oral history field.

I visited the Queensland Museum in April to see Eve Wicks' exhibition about Lithuanian immigration "Refuge Under a Southern Cross" and very much enjoyed it. It is a wonderful example of how oral history can be made accessible to the public.

I'd like to hear from you all to share with everyone what you are doing in the oral history field. I look forward to hearing from you.

Suzanne Mulligan
Editor

RUBY OF TROWUTTA – RECOLLECTIONS OF A COUNTRY POSTMISTRESS

I read an article in the latest edition of *Real to Reel* the newsletter of the Tasmanian Branch about a book by oral historian Christobel Mattingley. She has previously written *Survival in Our Own Land* about the Aboriginal history of South Australia; *Escape from Sarajevo* about a Bosnian refugee and *King of the Wilderness* about Tasmanian bushman Deny King.

Christobel first met Ruby in 1975 and “realised at once that I had discovered a living national treasure.” She was also a perfect oral history subject with crystal clear memory and a wonderful way of speaking. She told the story of her upbringing on the west coast of Tasmania – a very harsh environment peopled by strong characters. As Cristobel puts it “The memories of Ruby and her family evoke an era and its values; a community and its spirit; a family, its kinship, its loyalties, its faith in its members through four generations and its celebration of its Irish heritage. I was immensely glad I was allowed to record it.”

Christobel had a battle to get her book on Ruby published. She believed “passionately in the importance of Ruby’s story for its historical significance” and as “a great expression of an indomitable human spirit” which she likened to Bert Facey’s *A Fortunate Life*.

The book was finally accepted by a small Tasmanian publisher, Montpelier Press, which does not have a distributor. Therefore the book must be purchased from the publisher by mail order. Christobel describes the book as “an important addition to Australia’s published oral history, a lively and engaging account of twentieth century pioneers, who did not see themselves as such.”

This sounds like a very interesting book about a wonderful character living in one of the harshest environments in Australia. I will be sending for a copy and will write a review for the next newsletter.

If the little I’ve told you about it tempts you the book *Ruby of Trowutta: Recollections of a country postmistress* can be ordered direct from Montpelier Press, PO Box 196, North Hobart 7002. Phone/fax 03 6234 8080 for \$31.00 (\$25 + \$6 postage and handling).

Suzanne Mulligan



Oral History Websites

Oral History Association of Australia (Qld Inc.)

Oral history is the recording of memories of people's unique life experiences which complements existing written history and preserves the voices, accents and vocabularies of individuals interviewed. Through oral history we learn about our past from "living history books". Oral historians may undertake community projects, interviewing people about the early days of a local area or interviewing family members about their history. The Oral History Association of Australia promotes and encourages the use of oral history as a valuable addition to the historical record.

Learn more about oral history by checking out these web sites:



<http://www.ohaa.net.au>



<http://www.ioha.fgv.br/>

<http://www.nla.gov.au/ohdir/>

Australia's National Library

<http://www.home.gil.com.au/~mulligan>

Suzanne Mulligan's Home Page

<http://www.recordinghistory.com.au>

A professional oral history service

<http://www.oral-history.com>

Everyone has a story to tell – professional service

<http://www.americancenturyproject.org/>

The American Century Project - uses oral history as an educational tool in the classroom

<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/>

Veterans' History Project (American)

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/>

Making Sense of Oral History – a guide by Linda Shopes presenting an overview and specific information about undertaking an oral history project.

http://www.dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html

Step by Step Guide to Oral History

<http://www.tellingstories.org/>

Oral History of the Holocaust

http://www.ss.ca.gov/archives/level3_ohguide1.html

California State Government Oral Histories

<http://www.brisbanelivingheritage.org/>

Brisbane's Living Heritage Network Ltd

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~oralhist>

Oral History Association of
Australia (Victorian Branch)

<http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/hearhervoice/>

"Hear Her Voice" presents stories of women
who have undergone the migration process

http://www3.baylor.edu/Oral_History/Workshop.htm

Baylor University for Oral History

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/mycentury/>

BBC – My Century

<http://www.personalhistorians.org/>

Personal Historians

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/history/verbatim/>

ABC Radio National - Verbatim

<http://www.storypreservation.com/>

Preserve Your Family Story

<http://personalhistoryhelp.com>

A guide to compiling a personal history

<http://www.localheroes.8m.com>

Oral history of World War II - Australia

<http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/>

Oral History Society, United Kingdom

<http://www.historicalvoices.org/oralhistory/audio-tech.html>

An online Oral History Tutorial

TRANSCRIPTS

Nature of a Transcript

A transcript does not read like a book. It is **like spoken language**.

It must be as nearly as possible, **a word for word record** of what is on the tape. If not, it is a bad transcript.

The transcript will **reflect the language and expression used** by the speaker. If they use colloquial expression, a transcript does the same.

A transcript **will not change what was said**. In transcripts, there is no such thing as 'bad' grammar or 'good' grammar. It is not edited to 'correct' the way someone has spoken.

Transcripts must be like this if they are to be **a true record of the interview**. So don't be worried if your transcript doesn't read like an essay.

We don't always speak in full sentences. We don't always speak with 'good' grammar or 'correct' syntax etc. An interview is not a 'polished performance'. It is impromptu. A good transcript **follows the speech obediently**.

Purpose of a Transcript

It is **a ready reference** to the material on a tape.

It is **more accessible, more quickly** than listening to a tape, so saves research time.

It **clarifies detail** that may be difficult to hear on tape.

It **provides definitive information**, like correct spelling of words, which is not available from the spoken record.

It can **provide additional interpretive information** about the subject, the interview and/or the person speaking.

Reviewing a Transcript.

If possible, **follow the transcript while listening** to the tape.

Look for anything you said in the interview which has been **left out, or changed** in any way.

Highlight the section of the text on the transcript.

Write any corrections in the margin adjacent to the omitted or changed words.

If spelling of names or places etc is not accurate, please give the **spelling you know to be correct** in the margin nearby.

If you find you have made **a factual mistake** in what you said on tape, **highlight the mistake**. Briefly **write a correction** in the margin adjacent, or on the back of that page.

Should you know of **useful reference books** or other **additional information** which helps interpret your account on the tape, please **add notes on the back of the sheet** nearest to the part it clarifies.

John Ferrell
4 September 2001

(Editor's note: This was John Ferrell's contribution to a recent OH-List discussion about interviewee's fear of transcripts, which he has forwarded to me).



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Competitions

The FAWQ administers or hosts a number of prestigious writers' competitions for Queensland and Australia-wide authors:

[R. Carson Gold short story competition](#)

Short Story Competition - set in Australia - Magazine style story - entrant must be Australian born as stated in R.Carson Gold will.

[Soapbox article writing competition](#)

Climb upon your Soapbox and write a punchy or opiniated article on any theme to a maximum of 2000 words

[Lovers of Good Writing Competition](#)

Short Story open theme to 2000 words. Poetry open theme to 40 lines or bracket of poems to 40 lines. Alternating yearly.

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Editor's Note: One of our members brought this to my attention so that I could share it with other members. So if you would like to try your luck in one of these competitions, check out the web site at:

<http://www.connectqld.org.au/asp/index.asp?pgid=18718>

International Conference on Engaging Communities

An initiative of the United Nations and the Queensland State Government in Australia

The United Nations and the Queensland State Government are working together to plan for the *International Conference on Engaging Communities* to be held in Brisbane in 2005.

The Conference is a three day event from **14 to 17 August 2005** at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Background

Around the world, greater engagement of citizens, clients and communities is becoming a feature of many governments and organisations. People are expecting to be able to be involved and to have a say in the business of government and in the decisions of organisations that affect their interests. Many are concerned about low levels of knowledge, trust and confidence in public and private institutions and their representatives, and of the poor relations that can impede effective decision-making and the achievement of social and economic development and environmental sustainability outcomes. Many also recognise that the legitimacy, effectiveness and success of their organisations depends on redressing this 'disconnect'. Accordingly, some governments and organisations are responding with a renewed commitment to effective engagement and innovative methods of doing so in order to deliver better results for clients, citizens and communities.

In many different contexts and at local, state, regional, national and international levels, there are public, private, tertiary and community organisations engaging in ways that are making a difference and that are worth hearing about and learning from.

Objectives

Conference objectives include:

- promote understanding of the concept of engagement and participative practices and its role in good governance
- explore 'what works', showcase innovation and promote good practice
- share practice knowledge across the globe, at local, regional and state levels; and promote learnings across disciplines and sectors

- discuss and develop conceptual and theoretical frameworks and directions for the future and the evidence base which underpins this practice
- build understanding and evidence of leadership, capacity and capability issues for citizens/community and government/institutions
- create ongoing national and international networks and collaboration creating communities of interest around the issue

Who should participate?

It is expected the Conference will be attended by senior members of governments, leading researchers, senior executives from key international agencies (e.g. the United Nations agencies, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, OECD, Asian Development Bank) consultants, practitioners and representatives of the private sector (both large and small business), non-government organisations and community organisations.

Participation in the *International Conference on Engaging Communities* program as a presenter offers an opportunity for you and your organisation to showcase your work in a major international forum.

More information

Conference arrangements are being jointly managed by an Executive Secretariat from the Department of Communities and the Department of Main Roads within the Queensland Government and assisted by the services of a Professional Conference Organiser. If you would like further information, or to register your interest in this Conference, please email info@engagingcommunities2005.org

Further information, 'Call for Abstracts & Presentations' and the 'Sponsorship and Exhibition Prospectus' are available at www.engagingcommunities2005.org.

Brisbane Heritage Expo

by Maxine Kendall

The Oral History Association of Australia Qld Division was asked to participate in an exhibition organized by the Museum of Brisbane and held at the Brisbane City Council Auditorium on Sunday the 8th May 2005. Our Association was only one of a large number of Historical and related organizations that were invited to attend.

Suzanne Mulligan, Jean Tremayne and myself, Maxine Kendall, manned our booth. We were able to explain to a large number of people the aims of the Association. A new member was signed up and a number of books were sold. This all adds to the revenue for the Association. The majority of the books sold i.e. *Talking Together* and the *Oral History Handbook* were to other exhibitors at the Expo.

For the Expo Lesley Jenkins organized for a number of the line drawings in the publication "Talking Together" to be blown up to A3 and laminated. Also made was an infill picture frame with a creative arrangement of objects from Jean Warendorp who participated in the Woolloongabba Profiles Exhibition which was an Oral History project conducted by Lesley in 1997. This will ensure that the Association has items to put on display at other Expos and History Fairs in the future.

The Association's booth was situated in front of the stage in the Auditorium, which meant that we had a birds eye view of the entertainment that was put on during the day for the public. This included such things as, an aboriginal dance group, a swing dance group, an individual aboriginal didgeridoo player plus a lady who undressed and then dressed in the style of the 1840s, going from pantaloons to parasol right there on the stage.

We were fortunate to be situated next to the booth for The St Johns Ambulance Brigade who were giving away a publication, *First in First Aid* written by Murdoch Wales and John Pearn, every 30 minutes. The first name drawn out of the barrel was mine and this for a person who never wins anything. It is a book on the History of St John Ambulance in Queensland and gives a very interesting insight into the history of that Organization.

There were many organizations represented at the Expo, they were as diverse as the Musgrave Park Cultural Center, Friends of Toowong Cemetery, many local history groups and Science Education Australia.

We were able to hand out a large number of the new pamphlet which gives the what, the how and the who of the Oral History Association of Australia plus a listing of the publications available from each state branch which incorporates a membership form. Hopefully this will generate a flow on effect with organizations ordering books in the future, and maybe new memberships.

All organizations participating at the Expo were given a questionnaire to complete. We were asked for our thoughts on the way the Expo was organized and anything that we thought could be improved. The suggestion that your Association made was that this Expo should be conducted biennially to be offset with the Qld Association of Local and History Biennial Family and Local History Fair which will be held on Saturday 3rd of September 2006.



Oral History Association of Australia (OHAA)

ABN 16 832 377 060

Membership of the OHAA includes a subscription to the Journal of the Association, published annually. There are branches of the Association in all Australian States. Northern Territory members are attached to the SA Branch and ACT members to NSW. Branches hold regular meetings, run workshops and publish regular newsletters, and also provide a friendly and informative forum for those interested in oral history from any perspective.

Membership Fees (1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006) (please tick the appropriate box)

Individuals **\$35** ☐

Institutions **\$55** ☐

Students, Pensioners, unemployed **\$25** ☐

Household **\$45** ☐

I wish to join OHAA (please tick) ☐

I wish to renew my membership ☐

Name

Address

Occupation

Pension/Student No.

Interest(s)

Telephone

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**Not registered for GST. I enclose cheque/money
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Please return this form to:

The Treasurer
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4 Cadiz Court
BRAY PARK QLD 4500

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