



On Tape

June 2007

Editor: Suzanne Mulligan

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Hello Everyone!

Our Committee has been working hard on the National Conference in September 2007. You will already be aware that registration is now open and that has got off to a good start with lots of registrations through our web site. Remember early bird closes on 17 June so don't forget to register before then if you can.

The Call for Papers brought forth a variety of interesting proposals. As those presenters register, we will have that information under "Conference Program" on our web site at <http://www.ohaaqld.org.au>. So please keep an eye on the web site. We are printing some pamphlets to advertise the conference and these will be sent out to some members who will be asked to please distribute them widely at for example, libraries or Tourist Information Centres. So we are counting on you to help make our conference a success.

We plan to have a book stall at the Conference where we will sell oral history related material. If you would like to sell your work at our stall, whether it be books, DVD etc., please let me know.

We would appreciate it if some of you who are coming to the conference might volunteer some time to help out at the conference for short periods. The nature of that volunteering will become more apparent as the Conference

draws closer. So please email me your names if you would like to help out.

We had a great response to our call in the last newsletter for members who might be interested in collecting Indigenous oral histories, or working with community people to show them how to do it. There will be more on that in a future newsletter.

In this issue we have a report from member, Colleen Hattersley, from her travels in the outback. Colleen has a wealth of experience in interviewing indigenous people and her story raises an important point about preserving the flavour of the interview by not "over editing".

Apart from those members who have only recently joined and will therefore carry over their membership, fees are due on 1 July 2007 please. All eligible members will now have received their copy of the 2006 Journal so to ensure you receive your 2007 Journal in the first mailout, please ensure your fees are paid as soon as possible. Your membership fee is vital in keeping our Association financial and therefore greatly appreciated.

I look forward to seeing you all at our conference.

Suzanne Mulligan
Editor

Collecting Indigenous Oral History Colleen Hattersley

My first experience interviewing Australian Indigenous people was during the National Library's "Bringing Them Home" oral history project. Then there was the project for the Yuriny (say *yurinn*) Cultural Centre in Derby (WA), Women of the Clarence Valley (NSW), the Derby Historic Cemetery (WA), setting the Tweed (NSW) 5th City of the Arts oral history component going and now the incidental stories that are volunteered as I go about my work as a linguist with Aboriginal groups on both the East and West coasts of Australia. It seems that whenever I have a video camera or recording device people want to record their knowledge and experiences. I am an eager and privileged collector.

Recently I was accompanied on my annual trek from Brisbane to the West Kimberley by an Aboriginal friend who is interested in documenting the skills and knowledge of the old Aboriginal stockmen. His current topic is 'making greenhide rope'. My friend has memories of his own father drying and salting skins and making the rope components by soaking the skin in water until it was soft enough to work, then making a continuous cut in a circular motion until the centre was reached. It therefore came as somewhat of a surprise to have some Top End stockmen tell him a different story.



The interview, while linguistically rich showing the combination of Aboriginal language grammar with English vocabulary in the speech of the stockmen, also shows the ease of conversation when the interviewer can share the speech style of the interviewees but still retain his position of controller of the conversation. If the audio is entertaining, video would have been more so, capturing as it would, body language and facial expressions of these orally-based people.

Leslie Hogan and Rex Wilfred at Corroboree Hostel, Katherine NT May 2007

The moment such an interview is committed to writing, about half of the information is lost. If it is edited to suit the SAE literate reader, then, in my view, the purpose of the interview is severely compromised. The purpose to me is to record the special character of Aboriginal people and their own descriptions of their contribution to and participation in Australian society and economy; to include their patterns of speech amongst other Australian varieties and to enhance our national diversity in the written record. Heavy editing also masks the secondary story – that of the interviewer seeking confirmation of his childhood memories only to discover that this reality was different. In the raw text this is clearly apparent. I also believe that the interview is much richer than would have been the case had I, a non-Indigenous woman, been the interviewer.

Below are two edits of the material by way of illustration.

Greenhide rope

Edited for Standard Australian English (SAE)

Tuesday 8 May 2007. It's Vic Hunter from Broome talking with Leslie Hogan from Borroloola and Rex Wilfred from Ngukurr. I'm at the Corroboree Hostel in Katherine.

Leslie, you were saying that when you were on the station you made all the different greenhide ropes. Can you tell me about those different ropes?

You need a good big rope when you want to catch a bull or work with a bronco horse. On the stations we used to make greenhide rope.

We would skin a freshly killed beast, clean the meat off and peg out the hide. Then we'd make a slit in the centre and cut in a circular motion from the middle. You don't have to salt it or anything if you work when the hide is fresh. Then, when we finished cutting it we'd put it through a steel ring and twist it and leave it to dry. If you want to work on it the next day you can put it in a bucket of water overnight to keep it moist. .

We used that rope for all kinds of stock work. Made them different lengths for different jobs. Finished them up on the ends so they wouldn't come undone.

They don't do that any more. They buy rope in the store instead.

We used to make our whips out of greenhide too. We'd use horse hair or hair from the bullock tail on the end for the cracker.

Thank you for that.

Edited to maintain some of the characteristics of Aboriginal English

Leslie, you were saying that when you were on the station you were making all the different greenhide rope. Can you tell me what all the different type of ropes you were making?

When you want to get some big bull, you gotta make a big rope. Head rope, you know? When you want a bronco horse too, hmm?

And - tell me from the start, about what sort of material you made that rope out of, and how did you get it to begin with.

That's greenhide rope. When it's just killed, you gotta cut the meat off and cut it round like this. You gotta keep going circle like that. All 'round.

From inside?

Yeah you gotta peg it out first. Put a peg there, there, there, there. Always peg it, you know. Straight him out. You start a hole in the middle.

You put salt on it?

No, you don't hav'ta. Peg it out and cut it straight away, while he's soft.

You use it when it's wet?

No good he dry! When he dry he broke. You know? When you twist him 'round. Bang! He snap off.

Oh, right. But do you soak it with the water?

Yeah, you can soak it with the water. But it's fresh one I'm talking about.

Yeah, yeah, the fresh one.

He's different. You don't have to soak it. You just make greenhide rope and twist it straight away - or you can leave it in the bucket for tomorrow. Just, you know, leave'm for tomorrow. You get up in the morning. You can straight him out then.

You get that flap out. Little bit of the skin from inside the greenhide, and get a pocket knife and just cut the greenhide with that pocket knife.

From the inside and you're working out?

Yeah, yeah. And we finish, put a hole in the end of that greenhide and we put him in the fork or something. And then stretch him out and we stretch the greenhide and do the roll.

Yeah, we cut it and then we get the ring, eh? And then we put it in that ring. Take the end of that greenhide and put it in that hole - and tighten him up. So that ring can stop inside that greenhide.

And then we roll'm up buliki or calf like that for branding. And we make a little stay and we get all them cleanskin and rope'm up with that bronco horse and then pull'm and some bloke stay with that leg rope off that greenhide. That's a shorter rope. You make a long one and after that you cut it in half. Make two ropes.

Now you got it. You don't have to go buy cotton rope. Just like them cowboy ones. But today they don't make it. They buy it in the store. Yeah, they buy cotton rope.

Making that whip - that greenhide we make'm and we get'm horsetail hair, eh? and make that cracker. We just cut horsetail or even from bullock tail for the cracker.

Thank you very much for that.

Nah, you're right.

Colleen Hattersley
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Windmills on his Mind

Sue Pechey



One is never just too sure where an oral history workshop will lead and, unfortunately, we hardly ever find out where our participants go away with their new information. In my case, a recent workshop at QUT led me to a truly astonishing place.

It had been one of the best workshops of all time, seventeen well-informed, enthusiastic participants and a really productive day had by all. It was especially gratifying for me as it resulted almost immediately in a really zany workshop run by one of the participants.

Architect Don Watson had been involved for some time in the development and construction of a memorial to the Toowoomba Show Grounds and the windmills often exhibited there. He planned a two-day *Windmill Windfest* to celebrate the launch of a windmill sculpture by Russell Hall, now located just beside the Cobb & Co Museum in Toowoomba, once the Show Grounds and now occupied by Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE (some of which Don designed).

Among the enthusiasts present was an American historian and windmill specialist, T Lindsay Baker, who kept us enthralled with the detail of windmill manufacture and comparisons between American and Australian mills. Geoff Moore is the third generation in a family business that

manufactures windmills and is passionate about their part in the future of water recovery. Malcolm Walter has the largest windmill collection in Australia—in Western Australia and is a mine of information about the intricacies of their maintenance and repair. His newsletter is the fine source of information about mill parts and restoration techniques and the history of mills (*Windmill Journal* PO Box 155 Morawa 6623 WA—the web site of the Morawa District Historical Society will probably direct you to him also).

Russell Hall talked of his search for mills for his sculpture, in the course of which he collected a great deal of informal oral history and is planning more in a structured manner in the future. Another visitor from Victoria talked of his work in the restoration of a mill on the grounds of Rippon Lea, one of Melbourne's grand old houses, now in the hands of the National Trust.

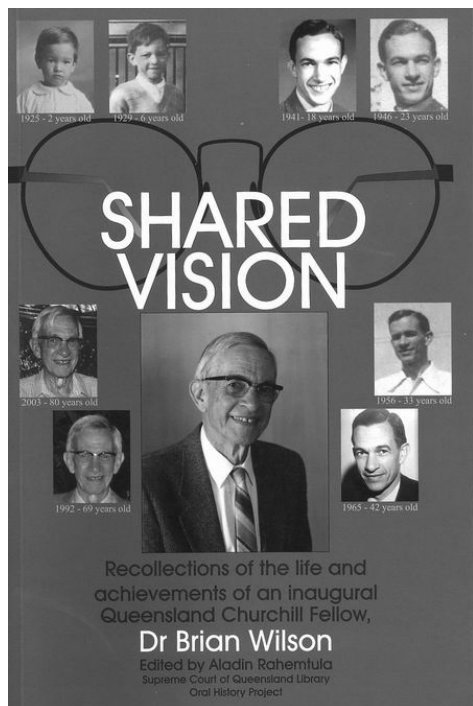
The event attracted many people from the old Southern Cross foundry, which made mills in Toowoomba for years, until bought out and asset stripped in the 1980s. Among them was Ray Ashford, now a driving force behind Highfields Pioneer Village, where there are three functioning mills.

The assembled experts discussed the minutiae of mill construction and maintenance for two whole days, without seeming to exhaust either themselves or the topic. I was present in the role of button pusher on the recording equipment and came away knowing far more than I really want to about the physical detail of windmills but a much greater appreciation of the diversity of their manufacture and distribution throughout Australia, the USA and Canada.

One fact that astounded me was Malcolm's story of a mill in WA that is still running on its original bearings, after 80 years, and they are made of—spotted gum. Amazing!

The meeting in Toowoomba was voted a huge success and may well become an annual or biennial event. If you have a passion for windmills there will be an unedited copy of the proceedings available on CD. Who knows where else this may lead?

Shared Vision—Recollections of the life and achievements of an inaugural Churchill Fellow, Dr Brian Wilson. edited by Aladin Rahemtula, Supreme Court of Queensland Library Oral History Project. 2005.



An unexpected contact with a former colleague has led me to the interesting discovery that the Supreme Court of Queensland Library is well into the business of oral history, and has a publishing list. Its inaugural publication, *Shared Vision*, is a biography, of Brian Wilson MB BS (Qld), DO (Syd), FRACS, FRANZCO, FC Opthal, FAAO), a surgeon whose work was in the field of eye surgery. The editor's preface places the work in the context of the Supreme Court's History Program, which has been operating for some seven years and has collected legal history with a view to 'open public access to both our legal heritage as well as the range of information and unique collections' held by the Supreme Court Library'.

The text is structured simply as question and answer interview—though we all know it must have been considerably edited by Aladin Rahemtula. One hears clearly the speaking voice of the subject as it moves through Wilson's family and professional and life and,

most interestingly, documents closely the process by which he became one of the first Queensland Churchill Fellows (he went abroad to look for a reliable test for glaucoma). It is oral history on paper in, its simplest form—one that, perhaps, interferes least with the speaker's intent.

Among several personal memoirs is one from his family. Personally I was particularly pleased to read the recollections of Dr Geoffrey Swan, one time member of our branch of the OHAA Society

Shared Vision is the beginning of a publishing list for the Supreme Court Library and is followed by the soon to be released *Lore and the Law* by John O'Keefe (based on interviews by Aladin Rahemtula held in the Library).

Reviewed by Sue Pechey



The Oral History Association of Australia will hold its biennial national conference in Brisbane from 27 to 30 September 2007.

The conference will be held in a delightful riverside setting 15 minutes from the centre of Brisbane and will bring together oral historians from around the country and overseas. The theme of the conference is: Old Stories New Ways. Sub themes include:

- interpreting story;
- working with community;
- understanding memory;
- oral history and independent practitioners; and
- addressing changing technologies

There will be social gatherings, cultural events, performances, papers and panels.

A rich variety of more than 60 papers have been accepted. As each presenter confirms attendance the conference web site will be updated with the details. Our Keynote Speaker is Dr Gwenda Davey AM from Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia.

Conference Venue

The Conference will be held at *Riverglenn Conference Centre*, 70 Kate Street, Indooroopilly which is on the beautiful Brisbane River and close to Brisbane city. Your conference fee will include morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea from Thursday to Saturday. Thursday evening is our conference welcome reception and will be held at Riverglenn. Sunday is a half day and only morning tea is provided. The Center provides conference rooms, dining, bar facilities. All conference rooms will have a range of audio-visual facilities. Riverglenn also has 44 single accommodation units for the convenience of delegates. Delegates accommodated at Riverglenn can also dine buffet-style for \$22.00. Please indicate when registering any nights you might like to dine at Riverglenn. For more information see: <http://www.riverglenn.com.au/>

Excursion Day

Join us on Wednesday 26 September for a journey to North Stradbroke Island, in Moreton Bay, which is located 1.5 hours from the conference centre. We will visit North Stradbroke Island Historical Museum which showcases both Aboriginal and early European occupation of the Island. The large collection of oral history recordings by both Indigenous and white Australians has been important to the museum and to the history and heritage work undertaken by Redland Shire Council. The Council will host our group for morning tea and a 'walk and talk' of Dunwich cemetery which is listed by the National Trust. We will follow this with a trip to the Gorge where we are likely to see turtles, dolphins and migratory whales. A swim in the clear blue waters of Cylinder Beach will be followed by lunch overlooking the ocean. The day will commence with a pick-up at 8.00 am at the Conference Centre or 8.15 sharp outside Roma Street Transit Centre in the CBD. We will have you back at the Transit Centre by 6.00 pm or the Conference Centre by 6.15pm. The day includes transport, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea (juice or water and fruit). For more information about beautiful North Stradbroke Island see <http://www.redlandstourism.com/stradbroke.htm>

\$66.00 (sorry no discounts for this trip). Please book and pay on the registration form.

Conference Dinner

Join us on Saturday evening 29 September for dinner at the historic Regatta Hotel - site of a famous feminist bar-chaining in the 1960s. The Regatta Hotel is classified by the National Trust of Queensland and was entered in the Queensland Heritage Register in 1992. The Regatta Hotel has also been entered into the Register of the National Estate of Australian Heritage Commission. Located in the suburb of Toowong (minutes away from the Conference venue), its beautiful verandahs look out on the Brisbane River where rowing regattas took place in a bygone era. The Regatta now boasts its own Citycat terminal which can take you cruising along the river. Entertainment will be provided – more details of that in future updates. Transport to the Regatta is not included but it is a short taxi ride from Riverglenn. Numbers are limited. See you at the Regatta – <http://www.regattahotel.com.au/>

\$70.00. Please book and pay on the registration form.

Visit our Conference web site at <http://www.ohaaqld.org.au>

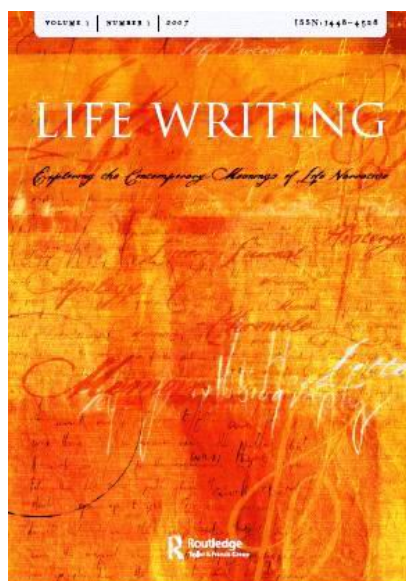
Or telephone Suzanne Mulligan on (07) 3376 1865 for more information.

Join us!



Life Writing New to Routledge in 2007

Life Writing is a fresh initiative in the scholarly exploration of biography and autobiography. The journal was launched in Australia in February 2004 by Professor Sally Morgan, one of the foremost exponents of Indigenous life writing. In March 2004 Professor John Eakin, a leading pioneer in the field, launched us a second time at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The enthusiastic support of these influential scholars indicates the quality which our young journal has succeeded in achieving. We invite authors to submit articles that consider any aspect of the contemporary meanings of life narrative. We are particularly interested in work that aims to incorporate interdisciplinary perspectives, since we recognise that the growing field of auto/biography is one in which anthropology, cultural studies, history, literature, philosophy, psychology, sociology and visual studies are all contributing exciting and revisionary scholarship.



We also welcome submissions which broaden the geographical focus of life writing. We aim to contribute to discussions taking place in "western" life writing circles, but we also encourage authors from places other than the US, Canada, Australia and Europe to consider submitting their work.

For more information about the journal, please visit the website at: www.informaworld.com/lifewriting

Editor's Note: Taylor & Francis Group will be one of the Conference sponsors. In return for this, they will advertise our Conference on their web site and have promotional material and items for sale at our Conference. They have also asked for our email membership list to contact you direct. Our Committee has agreed that we will provide these email addresses unless individual members object, by emailing me to that effect.

QAC Regional New Writer Scholarship



Writers with up to 14,000 words of a novel-in-progress can submit an entry to Queensland Arts Council's *Regional New Writer Scholarship*. The winner of the QAC *Regional New Writer's Scholarship* will receive a three-week residency at Varuna Writer's Retreat, with accommodation and travel paid.

The Varuna Writer's Retreat is an ideal opportunity for a writer to get three weeks of headspace and support to work on their manuscript and turn it into the next great novel.

Deadline for *Regional New Writers Scholarship* is 31 July. Applications and details can be found at www.qac.org.au, or call 3004 7510.

For further information, call 3004 7510 or visit www.qac.org.au to download the Guidelines and Entry

form for each competition. Please note that it is a regional scholarship, which excludes writers living in the city of Brisbane.

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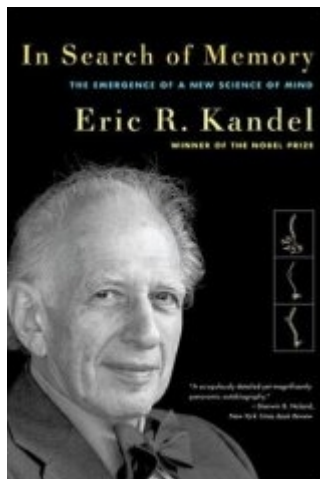
Memory Scapes Toby Butler

I have been developing new ways of using oral history collections as part of my PhD research. This week I am launching two 'memoriescapes'.

Basically these are two audio walks along the River Thames in London, England that use recorded memories with people that have lived or worked on the river. Edited clips are played on a walkman or ipod at specific places on the walk, in an attempt to relate oral history to landscape in an innovative way. Many of the recordings are from archives at the Museum of London, which is a major collaborator in the project. Please see www.memoriescape.org.uk for details.

Editor's note: Toby Butler made this contribution to the Oral History List in July 2005. I found it again when looking through my old emails and am sharing with you as it may give you ideas. It is a wonderfully innovative way to use oral history that could be applied to many community projects.

***In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of Mind*
by Eric R. Kandel**



Deborah Sampson contributed this to the Oral History List on 27 April 2007 as follows:

“The Royal Society Short list of Science book award has been released.

One of these books in particular might be of interest to those of us trying to understand the multiple layers of memory construction within society, communities and individual biology. This book discusses the science of memory in ways that are understandable for nonscientists yet scholarly and based in sound theoretical precepts. I would highly recommend.

In Search of Memory, by Eric R Kandel (WW Norton & Co). Nobel laureate Eric R Kandel charts the intellectual history of the emerging biology of the mind, and sheds light on how behavioural psychology, cognitive psychology, neuroscience and molecular biology have converged into a powerful new science. These efforts, he says, provide insights into normal mental functioning and disease, and simultaneously open pathways to more effective treatments.”

The W.W. Norton & Company, Publishers (<http://www2.wwnorton.com/catalog/fall06/032937.htm>) has a review, part of which is below:

“Charting the intellectual history of the emerging biology of mind, Eric R. Kandel illuminates how behavioral psychology, cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and molecular biology have converged into a powerful new science of mind. This science now provides nuanced insights into normal mental functioning and disease, and simultaneously opens pathways to more effective healing.

“A deft mixture of memoir and history, modern biology and behavior, *In Search of Memory* traces how a brilliant scientist’s intellectual journey intersected with one of the great scientific endeavors of the twentieth century: the search for the biological basis of memory.”

Paperback: 512 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton; 1 edition (March 19, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393329372

ISBN-13: 978-0393329377

Product Dimensions: 7.9 x 5.5 x 1.2 inches

Editor’s note: This book is available at Amazon.com for \$12.21US. On the Amazon site you can read some comprehensive reviews. If any of you read this book, I would appreciate your sending me a review, as we would all be interested in the oral historian’s perspective.



Oral History Association of Australia (OHAA)

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 2007 to 30 June 2008) (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 ☐

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