



# On Tape Newsletter

**1 December 2011**

Hi OHAA(Qld) members, this is the latest newsletter which incorporates information that would have been in a November e-Bulletin. There is a lot of information to absorb particularly about the 17<sup>th</sup> National Oral History Conference held in Melbourne from 6-9 October 2011, which I attended. Please also check out our Blog which is regularly updated. You can send information for the e-Bulletin to Lesley Jenkins at [recordinghistory@optusnet.com.au](mailto:recordinghistory@optusnet.com.au) or Suzanne Mulligan at [mulligan@gil.com.au](mailto:mulligan@gil.com.au) and use OHAA E-Bulletin in the subject line. The editor reserves the right not to publish if any information is judged to be inappropriate. Our web site is [www.ohaaqld.org.au](http://www.ohaaqld.org.au). Hope you all have a great Christmas and look forward to being in contact with you in 2012.

**Suzanne Mulligan**

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## **Oral History Association of Australia (Qld Inc.) Annual General Meeting**

The Queensland branch had its AGM on 19 November 2011 and we were pleased to see a number of members come along. Our President, Ariella Van Luyn reported on the activities of the branch for the last year:



At the AGM in October 2010, I took the reigns—or rather the microphone—from previous president Elena Volkova. Over 2011, the Oral History Association of Australia, Queensland branch (OHAA Qld), has been engaged in a number of activities intended to promote the ethical practice of gathering, preserving and disseminating oral history interviews in Queensland, with a particular focus on workshops and training. These activities would not be possible

without the dedicated work of the executive committee and committee members. This report will provide an overview of the activities of our committee members, and some of the collaborative work of the branch.

### **Executive Committee and Committee Members**

This year, Suzanne Mulligan worked tirelessly in her capacity as branch Secretary to share invaluable oral history information with members through the OHAA Qld's blog and monthly e-newsletter. Suzanne and Lesley Jenkins have revitalised the Queensland branch's newsletter, and put the blog space on the Queensland website to good use, inviting the casual browser, or branch member, to keep up-to-date with the latest oral history news and branch activities. Our members now receive elegant and engaging monthly newsletters that are designed to spark interest and promote oral history in Queensland and beyond. Suzanne also organises the logistics of each of our workshops, fielding inquiries, sharing details, gathering feedback and shepherding those participants inclined to wander, pointing them in the right direction. Suzanne regularly updates the OHAA Qld's online bookmarking site, 'Delicious,' and shares her reviews and interviews on her own blog. In addition, Suzanne fields countless inquiries—from myself included—about conducting oral history interviews and the running of the Queensland branch. Suzanne's knowledge and experience remain invaluable to the branch's activities.

Like Suzanne, Treasurer Kate Roberts has shown incredible dedication to the branch. This year, Kate has continued to provide us with clear and up-to-date reports, managing payments for workshops, membership fees, facilitators' fees and standing orders in a competent and concise manner. Kate also gives very helpful advice during committee

meetings, and I probably would have done well to pay more attention to her warnings of burn-out when embarking on our schedule of workshops.

Webmaster Karen Barrett has hung in there, despite suffering extended periods of sickness and extreme busyness at work. Karen continues to update the OHAA's facebook site and has also been instrumental in the ongoing process of organising an oral history workshop in Toowoomba in early February next year.

Committee member Lena Volkova has been invaluable support during the workshops. Lena attended every workshop, provided advice, tea, biscuits, emotional support, and pens and paper. Lena gives her expertise and advice freely and willingly during meetings, and has helped shaped the direction of workshops.

Helen Klæbe has been one of the main facilitators of oral history workshops, designing and planning the content with Lena and I, and facilitating the basics, and interview techniques, workshops. This year, Helen was awarded the Smithsonian Fellowship, and will spend December, early and mid next year in Washington DC, investigating and collating ways to measure the success of cultural activities such as exhibitions, talks and workshops. Helen's research will have a direct impact on the OHAA's activities, and I look forward to hearing the outcome of her investigations. Helen has also taken up the position as Oceanic Representative for the International Oral History Association, and edits the International Oral History Association Journal, *Words and Silences*. Helen's dedication to the OHAA Qld branch is obvious. She brings expert advice and experience to our endeavours, and a fresh, international perspective.

Our newest committee member, Catherine Cottle, has enthusiastically taken up the baton of oral history, and was great help in the workshops and during committee meetings. Marsali Mackinnon and Jen Barrkman, who regularly attended our committee meetings this year, have provided much needed advice, support and suggestions. Throughout the year, Marsali has been updating the branch on the ARC funded *Australian Generations Project*, run by Professor Alistair Thomson.

## **Workshops and Training**

With the help of these dedicated supporters, OHAA Qld has run a series of five workshops over the past year. During 2010, OHAA Qld's approach to running workshops was typically ad hoc. This year, Helen, Lena and I decided to take a different approach. We re-designed the workshops to cover five fundamental topics, to be facilitated by key committee members in a sequential manner throughout the year. From February through to July, Lena, Helen, Bryan Crawford and I delivered content on:

- Oral history basics: an introduction to the oral history project;
- Ethics and permission forms;
- Photography and filming for oral history projects;
- Interview techniques and storytelling strategies;
- Transcribing and editing audio using Audacity and Express Scribe;
- What to do with your materials.

As a result of reflecting on these workshops, Helen and I have decided to trial a new approach to training in 2012. OHAA Qld will return 'back to basics,' conducting two basics workshops a year for individuals and community groups, outlining what an oral history project entails. We will encourage organisations looking for more in-depth experience to request workshops tailored to their individual projects. For individuals, Helen and I plan to co-ordinate an intensive CPE/university based unit dedicated to semi-structured interviewing and oral history theory as a qualitative research method.

### **Response to natural disaster: Cardwell workshop**

After the Cyclone Yasi devastated their committee and reduced their museum to rubble, the Cardwell Historical Association contacted OHAA Qld requesting we travel to Cardwell to conduct an oral history workshop. The OHAA Qld paid for the airfares of three facilitators, Helen, Bryan and I, to conduct the workshop. The OHAA Qld also donated one of our recorder kits to the community. We spent two days delivering a basics of oral history workshop to community historians and museum workers Cardwell Historical Association, Innisfail and District Historical Society, Mission Beach Community Arts Centre, and the Millaa Millaa Historical Society. On Saturday, Helen and I gave an overview of interviewing techniques, ethics and permissions, and how to manage an oral history project, while Bryan travelled around the town, taking pictures for the museum's display. On Sunday, we demonstrated how to use the OHAA equipment, and then interviewed residents at the Cardwell nursing home, who were evacuated during the cyclone.

Later, Cardwell Historical Association received RADF funding for Helen, Bryan and I to return in September to conduct a workshop in preparation for their museum display on the cyclone.

### **Gambling Community Benefit Fund Grant**

This year, the OHAA received a grant from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. This grant will cover the costs of the workshops that involve the use of the sound and video recording equipment that was purchased in 2008 from the grant of the Gambling Community Benefit Fund and was successfully used since then by the members of our Association for their communities' oral history projects. The grant of \$6,200.00 will pay for facilitators' fees to conduct workshops in rural areas.

### **Rural Workshops**

As a result of putting the details of our series of workshops online, a number of organisations contacted OHAA Qld to request workshops in their local area, as it was impossible for them to attend the workshops in Brisbane. Helen and I are currently in the process of organising workshops in Toowoomba in conjunction with Karen Barrett, in Townsville, in conjunction with the Townsville Library, in Mackay, in conjunction with the Mackay Library and in Cunnamulla, in conjunction with the Cunnamulla Library.

These workshops will be run early to mid 2012. The OHAA Qld will pay facilitators from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund grant, while the communities will pay for

facilitators' airfares and accommodation, and arrange venues. Facilitators are working with the libraries to tailor workshops to suit their needs.

### **Bursaries**

The OHAA also granted two bursaries of \$500 to attend the OHAA conference, held in Melbourne in October. Catherine Cottle and Sandy Liddle both presented outstanding applications, demonstrating their commitment to oral history and were successful in receiving the bursary. Catherine presented her insightful report on the conference at the AGM on 19 November.

### **Conference**

The Queensland branch was well represented at the National conference this year. Helen Klæbe presented a paper (written by Helen and Dr Donna Hancox), titled 'Saying Sorry in the Twenty-First Century: Public Apologies in a Digital World.' I presented a paper on 'Stories of Cross-Dressing and the Body: Family Memories in Fiction.' Helen, Lena and I presented a paper on the series of workshops, titled 'Training the Public to Collect Oral Histories in the Community: the OHAA Qld Chapter's Model.' Our presentation of the paper, in a session with Elaine Rabbitt, who spoke about introducing an accredited oral history curriculum, has sparked discussion in the national committee, prompting a review of training standards. This discussion will be on-going through the next year and beyond. Suzanne Mulligan, Catherine Cottle, Joy Stacey, Ian Kath, Jen Barrkman, Anne Monsour, Hamish Sewell, Pam Willis Burden and Sandy Liddle also attended the conference. .

We elected a new executive committee. Ariella Van Luyn, Kate Roberts and Suzanne Mulligan retained their positions as President, Treasurer and Secretary respectively. A new position, Vice-President, was filled by Catherine Cottle. Non-executive positions of Web Master and Loans Officer were filled by Karen Barrett and Lena Volkova respectively. Dr Helen Klæbe continues in her role as workshop facilitator. Branch members can be assured that this team, with the help of other members will provide them with continued support for their oral history projects and keep them up-to-date with current oral history news.

Gavin Bannerman from the State Library said the Library was going through a "re-alignment". The Administration unit that supports the John Oxley Library is now called "Queensland Memory". This will cover public content, arts portfolio, research advocacy and partnership. Gavin is managing the section "Original Content", which includes photographs, personal papers and oral history. Gavin said SLQ has a big campaign to digitise taped interviews. For more information about "Queensland Memory" see first 13 pages of this report <http://www.nsla.org.au/sites/default/files/publications/Member%20Library%20Reports%20to%20HCF,%20November%202011.pdf>

Member Ian Kath told us about his work collecting stories of interesting people which he shares on his site as podcasts <http://yourstorypodcast.com/> He attended the recent National Oral History Conference in Melbourne to learn more about oral history as he'd only recently been introduced to the concept. He observed that at the conference there were not enough young people or men. Ian edits the interviews to make an interesting story and he is not concerned with

whether it is true or not. Also he does not use release forms. He promoted some discussion on the ethics of his form of storytelling.

Catherine Cottle was one of our Bursary winners, attending the recent Conference. She said that in the USA, from where she came over 12 months ago, mostly men and younger people are involved in oral history. Catherine is doing a project for the Mater Hospital. She was impressed with Steven High's presentation at the recent Melbourne conference when he talked about the displacement of mill workers when the mill closed down. She said it had some similarities to her project. The interviewees identify with that place, the Mater. Some still participate as volunteers, even into retirement. Catherine said generational interviews were discussed at the Conference, particularly young people interviewing elders. She has just completed interviewing an elderly woman who used to live at Gayndah and found the project very worthwhile. The woman's descendants down to a fourth generation have been following the project with great interest. Catherine said the technology shown at the Conference was a major factor now in dealing with oral history and the way we provide access for people to see oral history interviews on line.

Member Dennis Magennis provided an interesting update on his project interviewing former Army intelligence officers. He emphasised that these personnel are deployed in peace as well as war. His Museum of Australian Military Intelligence at Canungra comes under the Army History Unit, which is a national body. Intelligence is involved in many areas and the unit is exploring historical lessons to use by current personnel. There are between 30 and 40 interviews to be done. Care needed to be taken with the selection of the interview team as team members need to maintain a rapport with the interviewee. Former or current members of Defence are mainly used. They have purchased a Sony NEX VG-10 video recorder, now costing about \$2,700.00 which has produced excellent material with very good sound quality. For the museum, five to six minute excerpts are shown that is not of a militarily sensitive nature.

There were a number of members who attended the AGM and we thank Catherine, Ian and Dennis for their presentations. It was very interesting to learn about their work and that of other attendees and we enjoyed the discussion that ensued.



Some of those who attended AGM, at back Lena Volkova, Kate Roberts, Ariella Van Luy, Ian Kath, Dennis Magennis; front Helen Klæbe, Suzanne Mulligan, Catherine Cottle.



## Report on National Oral History Conference “Communities of Memory” Catherine Cottle

### ***Communities of Memory Comes Alive***

The Annual Oral History Association of Australia Conference provided us with a dynamic and fascinating display of oral history projects throughout the country during the 17<sup>th</sup> National Conference held in Melbourne, 6-9 October 2011.

<http://sites.google.com/site/communitiesofmemory/home>



As a first-time attendee, I was delighted to sit in on various sessions and have provided a brief summary of my notes. First of all, I must say that the venue set the mood for the theme of the conference, ***Communities of Memory***. Housed in the beautiful State Library of Victoria, the conference gave attendees a real feeling for the historic and the new with age-old storytelling and the latest in technology. The State Library is a major meeting place where hundreds of people gather every day, sitting outside and enjoying the vast collections, both old and new, inside.

### ***Pre-Conference Public Seminar***

***Talking About Australian Generations: Making Oral History*** was first up on my list. (See <http://arts.monash.edu.au/australian-generations/>) This pre-conference public seminar gave us an update on what is viewed by many as one of the nation's most ambitious oral history projects. The project is exploring the lives of 300 Australians born between 1930 and 1980 in order to capture the changing experiences of generations. The panellists described the process of first collecting expressions of interests (EOIs) from Australians throughout the country who might like to share their life history interviews. Interesting to us oral history types is the fact that the EOIs will be archived and will be available as part of the collection.

Kevin Bradley, Al Thomson and Michelle Rayner noted the challenges of the project as each represented different aspects of the oral history collection process respectively; the National Library, academics (Monash University) and ABC Radio National. A major challenge was choosing a representative sample that involved coding to ensure a broad sample. This included gender, region, age and so on. The panellists found that a serious challenge to the project was getting younger generations to find it relevant. They also found that a large number of respondents had major health problems. Another challenge was how to access quiet people. On top of everything was a discussion about generation itself. Is it significant? The project will include timed summaries linked to each audio with searchable key word searches.

### ***Opening Day***

The Conference was opened with a ***Welcome to the Country*** by Aunty Carolyn Briggs. A descendent of Melbourne's first people, Carolyn talked about the tradition of storytelling and indigenous people who had experienced visions for the future. She noted that one historic tale of

vision included seeing into the future where strength, power, heritage and culture would again be celebrated.

She reminded us of the fragility of sustainability in Australia with the following two statements: “Don’t harm the land” and “Don’t harm the children.” She welcomed all and encouraged everyone to tell stories of “Where I Came From.”

Keynote Speaker Steven High opened the conference with a talk about ***Communities of Memory in Practice: A Reflection on the Montreal Life Stories Project***. This gave the conference a strong start, as he talked about the concept of communities of memory. He noted that collective memory connects and divides us, especially when we think about collective memory in terms of survivors, transformative change and moments of crisis in our communities. In the Montreal Life Stories project, Steven has recorded the stories of people displaced by war and of genocide. He also conducted life stories with displaced mill workers. Both projects resulted from crisis of community. He feels that recording the stories was very empowering as he utilized a collaborative approach with survivors who participated in the research and the process. The end products include theatre productions, online digital stories, radio and research projects.

After Steven’s Keynote Address, we broke into sessions. I attended the session entitled ***Indigenous Memory & Intergenerational Storytelling***. Sharon Huebner talked about a very unique oral history project: ***Interpreting the Silences of the Past through Contemporary Narratives by Noongar (Nyungar) and Koorie Communities***. She uses visual genealogy to trace five indigenous women who were removed from Western Australia to Victoria in 1867. Sharon provided the descendants with a conduit to their ancestors with photographs and archives. An important aspect to her project was giving voice to where we come from. She has assisted Koorie people with gaining knowledge about their ancestors in a way that enriches their memories and current lives.

Gwenda Baker and Joanne Garngulkpuy also spoke at the session about their project: ***For the Children: Memories, Stories and Well Being in an Indigenous Community***. This project centers on Elcho Island and the Yalu Birthplace of Learning Research Centre. Here people of the island explore topics: “How did we get here?” “How can we help the children?” A main goal of the Research Centre is to build the children’s self-respect by showing the responsibilities of clan relationships in passing stories on to the next generation. The oral history project explores the memories of those who lived on the Methodist Mission on Elcho Island. It was put together to educate and enrich the current generation of children on the island with stories, photographs and archives about the Mission and life there. Joanne spoke poignantly about the changes in the community and the family structure.

Rachel Selby followed with a talk about ***Unexpected Pleasures: Grandchildren Interviewing Their Grandparents***. The grandchildren involved in the project were 20, 30, 40 and 50 years old. Regardless of age, they listen with deep and loving respect to the stories of their grandparents and about New Zealand’s Maori people. Rachel notes that it is unexpectedly powerful to retell the stories, and that relationships were made much stronger as a result of the telling. She also notes that there was some reciprocity involved where grandparents shared lessons learned and then called upon grandchildren to pay back and do their share! The oral histories explored a stream that the Maori abandoned in 1953 due to pollution. The stream appears to have become symbolic of life in the telling about it as it was a place for food and spiritual cleansing before it had to be abandoned.



Another session that I attended was *Generational Communities*. Sue Dockett and Tuija Turunen utilized oral histories to explore *Family Members' Memories about Starting School*. The interviewees all started school in Australia between 1935 through the 1990s. The interviews included participants from 10 families and were multi-generational. This autobiographical approach revealed strong social constructs about fitting in, finding a place, feelings, school work and parents. The purpose of the project was to provide generational comparisons of how transition to school memories might impact generations starting school now. The study also reveals generational comparisons not just within particular families.

Another conference session looked at *Creative Approaches to Documenting Lives*. Here Ariella Van Luyn provides a unique approach to oral histories as she utilizes memories in creative and fictional narratives. She asks whether notions of oral histories can inform fictional writing while utilizing storytelling framework and strategies. The *Stories of Cross-Dressing and the Body: Family Memories in Fiction* session gave us a glimpse of tremendous possibility of different ways to use memories in a meaningful way. Ariella spoke of interviewing a mother and daughter who both talked about encountering cross-dressing men in Brisbane and about their own issues with body size. The use of fiction enabled Ariella to incorporate and explore the relationships of memory across generations. In this case, the mother and daughter memories are captured in a novel. The fictionalized account allows us to glimpse another's interior life and emotion through literature.

There were many more excellent sessions that provided all of us with food for thought at the 17<sup>th</sup> National OHAA Conference. The information was stimulating, fresh and relevant to the work that I am doing with oral histories in Queensland. I met people from throughout the country who are approaching oral history issues with respect and careful consideration for the interviewees. I thank the OHAA/Queensland for giving me the opportunity to attend, to learn and to enjoy.



Queenslanders Jen Barrkman, Ariella Van Luyn, Catherine Cottle and Lena Volkova enjoy the Welcome Reception at the Conference

## **Dignity Therapy**

**Suzanne Mulligan**

"Dignity therapy" is a type of recording that allows the dying to validate their lives in a dignified way when someone is willing to listen and record their stories. OHAA Qld has touched on this aspect of oral history in the past and I'd like to revisit it now.

Recently on the OHAA Blog, we featured the story of West Australian, Annice Henderson, who spent 20 years working with the dying, as she helps them record messages for their family. Mrs Henderson, is a volunteer with Silver Chain's Hospice Care Services which provides palliative care in the home, grief counselling and other support services to dying people and their families. Click <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/lifestyle/a/-/health/9519706/the-last-goodbye-stories-from-the-dying/> for the full story.

Last year I had some email correspondence with Dr Michelle Winslow, Research Fellow, Academic Unit of Supportive Care at the University of Sheffield who is interviewing dying patients which she says has a "cathartic element." She said she is careful to dissociate her team from the clinical team as they don't want patients to think they are part of their care, but she accepts "there can be a therapeutic element". She added "Though this is probably the case for oral history in any setting." You can read her paper "Recording lives: the benefits of an oral history service" featured in the 2009 "European Journal of Palliative Care" on the Blog page of our web site <http://www.ohaaqld.org.au/> under the heading Oral History and Palliative Care.

I agree that while this "therapy" is principally targeted at dying patients, many of you who have done oral history interviews with elderly people in particular will appreciate that the process is valued by the interviewee and family alike in providing a means of recording important memories and showing we value the interviewee's contribution to our society. I've found that interviewees are pleased that I am interested in their lives and they get an enormous boost by telling their story to someone who genuinely wants to hear it. So although we may not always be dealing with the "imminently dying", many of our interviewees are quite elderly and, I believe, would be "dignified" by the process.

"Dignity therapy" would be a valuable oral history contribution in itself for those of you who might like to pursue this path. You can read a report from the "Journal of Clinical Oncology" published in 2005 entitled "Dignity Therapy: A Novel Psychotherapeutic Intervention for Patients Near the End of Life" by clicking

<http://jco.ascopubs.org/content/23/24/5520.full.pdf+html?sid=90eec852-afdd-47bd-9951-875ca2c10c09> A more recent study published in 2010 in "Palliative Medicine" is entitled "Learning from dying patients during their final days: life reflections gleaned from dignity therapy". Read the abstract by clicking <http://pmj.sagepub.com/content/24/7/715.abstract?etoc> I'd very much like to see a paper on this topic at the next National Oral History Conference.

## **Report on National Oral History Conference “Communities of Memory”**

### **Suzanne Mulligan**

My report will focus on workshops and selected papers that may interest members. In order to put my notes in context, I have preceded them with the abstracts. Most of my notes will include links to further information about the papers which I believe will interest you. You can see a summary report on the Conference on my Blog at <http://www.mulligan53.blogspot.com/>

#### Workshops



On the morning of 6<sup>th</sup> October I attended a Recording Techniques workshop at the ABC which was run by Michelle Rayner. There was a large group and we all talked about our projects and the audio recorders we used. There was a strong recommendation for the H4N Zoom which has good recording quality and can use external microphones. Michelle uses a Sound Devices recorder in the field which is quite expensive. We then went in to a recording studio to see how the radio people edit their work. For her radio programs, Michelle prefers a mono recording 48 Hz, 24 bit, saying that stereo was not necessary and uses a lot of memory. When recording it is okay to occasionally “go into the red.” There was some discussion about the use of handheld vs. lapel mikes. It seems a matter of personal preference and what suits the situation. Michelle played part of a recording, then played the same recording after it had been “cleaned up”. She recommended wearing headphones throughout the interview. The ABC uses WaveLab made by Steinberg for sound editing which is about \$400.00 for the cheap version. One participant recommended Hindenburg sound editing program which can be downloaded for free. We were interested to learn that the Audacity sound program compresses files.

In the afternoon we went to the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in Federation Square where we had some practical advice on video recording given by Catherine Gough-Brady. She recommended using Sony HDV camera, with 3 pin input for good sound, uses mini DV tapes. She said hard drives are fragile and should only be kept for two years before transfer to a new one. Always use a tripod and film at eye level. Person operating should be next to camera and looking at the screen. If there are two people being interviewed, move camera slowly, get as wide as you can and as close as you can. Always wear headphones. When outside, use body to screen wind if possible. Interviewee will often “fiddle” with something so give them a soft ball to squeeze. If using lapel mike, position it below the throat.

Following the work inside we then went out into Federation Square to practise what we’d learned, taking it in turns to be camera person, subject and “lookout” (ensuring camera person and/or subject don’t bump into someone or something). This was an enjoyable exercise. We then returned to the theatre where each group’s work was critiqued and we learned more from that. Catherine has given permission for me to publish part of her “handout” for your information (below) credited to her company 'Snodger Media' [www.snodger.com.au/shop/](http://www.snodger.com.au/shop/)

## Video Interviewing Tips

### Framing

- Don't cut off the talent at a body joint
- put the head at top of frame
- people move – so frame to allow for this or adjust whilst filming, (they often slouch over time)
- keep the camera and the frame still, beginners often make the mistake of over using the zoom and moving too much
- think about the position of the talent's hands in the frame – is the person expressive with their body?
- What is behind them? Does it distract from the talent or reinforce the themes explored?
- when filming 'off the tripod', *never* zoom (it makes the camera shaky), film in wide angle and then *move yourself* closer to the subject to get a close up
- when filming 'off the tripod', one eye on the shot, one eye on what is about to happen

### Lighting

- We want to see the whites of their eyes, set your exposure for this
- Use the zebra at 70% to let you know about overexposed sections of your frame
- The sun moves, so be aware of this if using natural light for a long interview
- All light has a colour, the colour of sunlight (blueish) is very different to flouro (greenish), and different again to light bulbs (yellowish), be aware of this when mixing natural and non-natural light.
- Is there something bright in shot? Eg a window, or filming a white person in a black jumper? The camera can only cope with a limited exposure range, and so you may need to adjust exposure manually. You will need to adjust exposure for filming black people as camera factory settings are for white people. (black and white reflect different amounts of light back to the camera)

### Audio environment

- How loud is the background noise? (turn off fridges and coffee machines etc for duration of interview – and remember to turn them back on before you leave)
- How loud is your talent? Always test this and adjust recording levels.
- How echoey is the room? – hard surfaces vs carpets and curtains. If you are unsure you can test this by clapping.
- It is best to separate the audio from the vision, so if shooting solo, lapel mics give a good intimate sound for a primary subject and mean the camera can point or be positioned anywhere
- If using the camera mic, make sure you are close to the subject in a quiet room
- Always wear headphones, if you don't wear them, don't bother filming
- If your camera can do it then split tracks into two mono tracks and set the recording levels slightly differently – this is so you always have at least one track with a good quality sound. Or split tracks so lapel goes to one and onboard camera mic to the other track.

### Tape / Camera

- Don't break the timecode on a tape (easily solved by never rewinding or forward winding whilst on a shoot)
- Know how much tape is left and change early if you think the next answer will take some time. Have your next tape unwrapped, labelled, and ready in your pocket for a quick change over.

- Lay 10 sec of black at beginning of tape (use lens cap or your hand to cover lens) and lay ten sec of black at end of a location, and also end of tape. This helps with digitising and editing.
- Turn off your recording light and recording beep – this is found in the menus. It's distracting to the talent.

### Script

- Create a shot list. Know what shots you will need to be able to edit the piece together – eg 'cutaways' of what is being talked about. Film these at the end of the interview.
- When filming a cutaway count to at least 10 in your head
- Absolutely overshoot cutaways – you will always need ten times what you think you do.



Catherine instructing





## Day One of the

Conference itself began on 7<sup>th</sup> October with the first Keynote Speaker Steven High. Abstract:

### *Communities of Memory in Practice: A Reflection on the Montreal Life Stories Project*

The Montreal Life Stories Project ([www.lifestoriesmontreal.ca](http://www.lifestoriesmontreal.ca)) is recording the life stories of those displaced by war, genocide and other human rights violations. These stories are then incorporated into online digital stories, arts and performance, radio programming, scholarly writing, commemorative activity and pedagogical resources. As a “community-university research alliance”, the project is premised on the idea of communities becoming partners in research and not simply objects of study. Survivors of mass violence are therefore an integral part of the project. My keynote address will reflect on the “community of memory” idea as revealed in our collaborative practice.

**Steven High:** Chair in Public History and co-director of the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University, Montreal; publications include *Corporate Wasteland: The Landscape and Memory of Deindustrialization* (2007). See <http://storytelling.concordia.ca/high/>

Stephen spoke about communities experiencing the aftermath of catastrophic change. He said “we know ourselves through the art of remembering”. Is a community people or an area? He cited the example of a mill which had been the lifeblood of a town being closed down. For the workers, the job meant more than a paycheck. All called the mill “home” and referred to the workers as “family.” There were strong kinship ties as memories went back generations. The mill had a large binder which told the history of the mill which was the most precious document saved from the destruction of the mill. It allowed former workers to remember what once was.

He also spoke about the Montreal Tutsi refugees and the way they are remembering the 1994 genocide. The younger people born since then are unsure of their identity. There are also refugees who arrived before the massacre and watched helplessly as the horror unfolded. Steven said digital stories had been drawn from the interviews. They have a wall covered in “memory cards”, which are little histories drawn from individual memories. It was a very powerful presentation.

In the discussion that followed, Steven mentioned the book *Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* by Robert Bevan (see <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/1861892055.html>). What story do you want to tell the world? Steven said Holocaust survivors have been interviewed many times about their lives between 1939 to 1945, but then how has life been for them since then? Henry Greenspan’s book *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History* (see <http://www.henrygreenspan.com/work1.htm>) delves more into the lives of his interviewees as they try to understand it too.

### *The South Sydney Project: Interacting with the Archive*

Part of the oral historians’ role is to gather, document and enable histories, stories and memories to be collected, distributed, archived and interpreted. In my presentation I will explore how new media artists can work alongside this practice in mapping those histories, stories and memories to place, enabling them to be interpreted in innovative and interactive ways that can grow stronger communities of memory. In exploring these ideas



I would like to present The South Sydney Project, a practice based research work in the visual arts that I am currently developing. The work examines the relationship between memory, history and place in the context of interactive installation art. The project centres on an oral history video archive created by Dr Sue Rosen in 1993-4. The interviews chart a social history of 20th century South Sydney through the memories and testimonies of 60 people who grew up there. The research involves the re-interpretation of this archive into an immersive interactive installation artwork. During my presentation I will outline the process of collaborating with Dr Rosen and the material and conceptual practice of utilising this video database in a visual arts project, in particular examining issues surrounding the use of oral histories in new media art.

**Jessica Tyrrell** - University of Sydney [jes@eatingmywords.net](mailto:jes@eatingmywords.net)



Jessica described art works which she created using oral histories. She quoted “Experience which has passed from mouth to mouth is the source from which all storytellers have drawn” from *The Storyteller* by Walter Benjamin. One of her works “Spaces Between” is a video using the spaces between the aural content, taking out words to create a beautiful and unusual work. Another work is “The Braille Box” which is an installation using Braille inside a “box” to activate and immerse the visitor with different voices and video as blind people tell their stories. Another she told us about was “Narrative Drive” where visitors sit in a car and interact using the steering wheel to show videos on the inside of the windscreen. See Jessica’s site at <http://eatingmywords.net/>

Jessica’s main subject for this presentation was “The South Sydney Project” which uses interviews of South Sydney residents done by Sue Rosen in the mid-1990s for her book *We never had a hot bed of Crime*. Jessica has “reworked” the videos to give them a surreal quality. This is an ongoing project and you can see the results to date at <http://eatingmywords.net/tendaysinchippendale/>. There was some discussion about the use of this old material being used this way and put on the web, something the participants would not have anticipated at the time. There is perhaps a need for the consent form to include the words “future projects” to encompass non-commercial projects such as Jessica’s. This was a very interesting presentation showing us innovative artistic ways for oral histories to be shown to the public.

### ***Testimony Software – providing engaging oral histories on-line.***

This presentation will introduce the concepts behind Testimony Software, developed in Australia and commercialized through the Australian Centre for Oral History (<http://www.acoh.com.au>), an initiative of Turtle Lane Studios Pty Ltd. Testimony software has been used by the University of Alaska's Project Jukebox oral history program to deliver rich oral histories through the web. Testimony Software provides for the delivery of video, audio, images and text to a client browser. The user is in charge of the interaction, directing the story to whatever places they want, thus relieving them of the play and wait syndrome common in web video applications. As the story is told, the transcript scrolls in time with the storyteller, images depicting what is being discussed appear and a rolling table of contents provides a contextual reference point for where we

are in the story space. Testimony Software displays each of these media and maintain complete synchronization between them. The listener or user can utilize the transcript or table of contents to fast forward to any time in the story or select from the image library where they would like the retelling to commence. Present work involves the integration with a more traditional 'back of the book' style of index to provide a finer grain control mechanism. Testimony Software has already been used to publish online conference proceedings, museum kiosk applications and several demonstration projects for major collecting institutions. This paper will demonstrate the power of the Testimony Software approach through real life examples of products already developed.

**Bob Jansen** Turtle Lane Studios [bob.jansen@turtlelane.com.au](mailto:bob.jansen@turtlelane.com.au)

Bob Jansen spoke about the benefits of the software and showed examples of its use. It includes video, image, audio, table of contents, synchronised parallel streams of media. He said he wants to do 10 interesting people a year. In the future he plans to have an index and want to work with collections to make available and preserve these fascinating stories. The cost of the software is about \$660.00. For more information, check out the web site <http://www.acoh.com.au/>

### ***Panel: The Art of Interviewing for Film***

“The interview can certainly be an art, but it is also just one among the many possible forms of relating... As with any structure that shapes one’s activities – even momentarily – one cannot use it without being used by it... I would say that the interview is at its best, a device that interrupts the power of speaking, that creates gaps and detours, and that invites one to move in more than one direction at a time.” Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Cinema Interval*, p. 4. This panel discussion focuses on the art of interviewing for film. Discussion will centre on the practical issues involved in preparing, conducting and editing audio-visual interviews as well as exploring the conceptual and ethical dimensions of these practices. Key issues will include:

- On what basis do filmmakers select interviewees for their film projects?
- How do they construct and conduct their interviews for desired outcomes?
- How is material from the completed interviews selected for inclusion and incorporated into the final film?
- How the recording of an oral history interview can have a different dynamic to an interview filmed for a documentary.

The panel session will comprise presentations from and audience Q & A with the following filmmakers:

[Ken.Berryman@nfsa.gov.au](mailto:Ken.Berryman@nfsa.gov.au)

### **Robin Hughes**

Robin Hughes AO is an experienced documentary writer, director and producer. She has occupied leadership positions in the Australian film industry as CEO of Film Australia and as Chair of the Australian Film Radio and Television School (AFTRS). She has worked for the BBC, the ABC, commercial television, and as an independent filmmaker. The *Australian Biography* project, with Robin as interviewer, has recorded for the archives and for SBS television the lives of nearly eighty Australians. The AFTRS regularly engages Robin to give workshops and masterclasses in the Art of the Interview.

### **John Hughes**

Writer, director and producer in creative documentary, John Hughes’ work is usually Australian in orientation examining art, cultural politics and history. The work begins

with engagement in the social world, and is driven by creative exploration. His career since the late 1970s in documentary includes teaching, commissioning (SBS Independent 1998-2001), Juries (IDFA 2001, Pacific Meridian, Russia, 2004) and advocacy. Recent awards: NSW Premier's History Prize (audio-visual) 2007, Critics Circle, 'Best Feature Documentary' 2006, ATOM (best tertiary resource) 2006, 'Joan Long Award for achievement, Australian film history', 2006 'Stanley Hawes Award for commitment to Australian documentary'.

### **Graham Shirley**

Working for four decades in the Australian film and television industries, Graham Shirley directed a number of documentaries Australian on social, war and media history, most of which involved oral history. These films included *Prisoners of Propaganda* (1987), *Blood, Sweat and Tears* (1988), *Behind the Lines: The Secret War of Z Special Unit* (2001) and *Road to Tokyo* (2005). Graham also conducted archival and general research for other people's documentaries, has recorded many oral histories for the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA), and is co-author of the book *Australian Cinema: The First 80 Years* (1983). In 2006 he joined the NFSA as a senior curator, more recently becoming that organisation's inaugural Historian.

### **Daryl Dellora**

Writer/Director/Producer, Daryl Dellora, has been making documentary films for many years. His most recent work *Michael Kirby: Don't Forget the Justice Bit* screened on ABC1 in 2010 and was a finalist in the ATOM awards. Daryl has been a recipient of an AFC Documentary Fellowship, the Gold Plaque at The Chicago International TV Festival and an Australian Human Rights Award. In 2005 he was accepted to the prestigious Rockefeller Foundation study centre in Bellagio. Daryl co-produced the feature *Hunt Angels* (2006) and was an executive producer of *Celebrity: Dominick Dunne* (2008). He has an undiminished enthusiasm for talking heads.

Robin Hughes spoke first at this very interesting panel discussion. You can find a summary of her film career with a link to an interview with her at <http://aso.gov.au/news/2011/4/5/documenting-robin-hughes/> She said it was important to build a rapport with the interviewee. She worked on the half hour SBS program "Australian Biography" for many years. The original idea was to build an archive, long interviews, up to 15 hours of technically high quality material. The criteria was for gender balance, community backgrounds, not just the famous, different professional background. The first interview was with Nugget Coombs. Personalities, the values, philosophies are confirmed by the events that affect their lives. The fabric of Australian life was there to see. Oral history is a form of human heritage. Our purpose is to create a space for people to say what they really mean, capture the truth of the person you are talking to. Need to keep our questions simple, clean and open. Don't inhibit the person. Robin does not use questions, she prepares thoroughly.

John Hughes has been involved with The Archive Project [http://www.acmi.net.au/ctq\\_archive\\_project.aspx](http://www.acmi.net.au/ctq_archive_project.aspx) which looks at the Realist Film Unit in Cold War Australia between 1945 and 1956. (An abridged version of the film was shown during the lunch break.)

Graham Shirley – how do film-makers choose their interviewees? Do research, pre-interview and you need to be flexible. Let the interview tell the story their way. Free form – tell me what you remember. If they have not talked about some stories before, outcomes can be emotional.

Should the interview continue? Most people want to continue. Interview for film will be more confined than a full oral history interview.

Daryl Dellora loves to see people on the screen. Film is about telling a story. People are interested in telling stories about their own lives. Daryl did film interview with Michael Kirby. Plan the film and know what you are doing with it. What you want to achieve to but interviewee may not tell you what has been planned. Daryl does an audio interview first and then does the film interview. Perhaps what you say on an audio tape may be different to what is said on video. Interviewees may change their story but does not mean they deliberately lie. Memory may not be in accordance with the historical record. It is about having a relationship with the person you are filming so you know whether they are going to go. It is not easy. Choose the people who will be in the film.

**Panel: Intergenerational Digital Histories**

*Lest We Forget; old memories, new media, new audiences*

In Our Words: Stories of Victorian veterans is a project being run by the Victorian Government in partnership with the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) and the Shrine of Remembrance that aims to record up to 200 1st person stories of the wartime experiences of Victorian veterans and civilians as short documentaries and digital stories. Conducted over a four year period and concluding in 2012 these stories are from those who have experienced World War II and conflicts in Vietnam, Korea, Malaya and Borneo, through to peacemaking, peacekeeping and current conflicts. This panel proposal will discuss the interesting collaborative model adopted to develop these audio-visual personal histories. The content gathering process has involved extensive 'hands on' production workshops for the veterans facilitated by ACMI and delivered in metropolitan and regional Victoria. These workshops utilise an intergenerational methodology collaborating with a local RSL and local school to provide a unique opportunity for the students to 'team up' with a veteran and assist the veteran to realise their stories.

The collaborative nature of the project also extends to the ways in which the content is collected and exhibited. The final stories form part of the collections of each of the agencies and are repurposed into exhibitions within the institutions for touring and exhibiting online. The repurposing also takes advantage of new distribution platforms as a way to reach broader audiences. Specifically a significant selection of these veterans' stories feature on the ACMI online distribution platform 'Generator'. Generator offers an online creative studio space where students and teachers can view the stories with appropriate contextual material and utilise the web 2.0 production tools to allow them to create new works by repurposing the existing materials and publishing these back to the site. The project recognises the importance of capturing personal accounts as a way to understand our war history and as a way to engage with the widest audience possible but with this accessibility and engagement with new media it brings a raft of issues around consent licensing and technical delivery and this panel will discuss these as a project case study.

**Helen Simondson** Australian Centre for the Moving Image

**Patricia Pollard** Veterans Unit, Department of Planning and Community Development

**Jean McAuslan** Shrine of Remembrance

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&

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“In Our Words”, stories of Victorian Veterans project. Helen said she had been running digital storytelling workshops for 10 years. We need people who know their communities. She is four years into the project, which is intergenerational. They have a portable workshop and “buddy up” a student with a veteran. Workshop includes story class, interviewing etc. The main value of the program is the first person nature of the digital storytelling, teaching people how to tell stories. We’ve placed the individual at the centre of the story. Intergenerational component was important, sharing the talent and resources. Veterans felt valued. Students really “got into” the veterans’ stories. Emotional impact for the students, gained an awareness and appreciation of ageing, learning about history first hand. Content distribution on site “The Shrine” launched officially on 19<sup>th</sup> October. Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, new media and new audience – “Generator” web site on ACMI – teachers use them, see <http://generator.acmi.net.au/> . Content was delivered to schools. Veterans supported their stories going to school site. Web 2.0 offers “engagement”. Site has resources, Storyboard tool. Schools not allowed to use You Tube so can use Generator. People can publish to the website. Has “Educators’ Lounge” for teachers <http://educatorslounge.acmi.net.au/> .

The third keynote speaker, Peter Read, abstract:

### ***The Limits of Oral History***

38 Londres (St.) Santiago, was an infamous torture and extermination centre in the early years of the Pinochet regime in Chile. After it reopened to the public, amidst much controversy, in 2008, a historical exhibition was curated by some of the survivors, not much more than explanations and illustrations of what had occurred, on the walls of each room. In 2009 that included a hand drawing of a naked human form, held by the legs, being up-ended into a barrel of sewage. (This form of torture, and the drawing itself, are relatively well known in the histories of the dictatorship.) The following year the display had not changed very much, but the drawing had gone. The guide, who had no close personal connection with the building, knew nothing about its disappearance.

I shall use this example to begin a discussion of the apparent limits of what can be publicly shown or heard using material drawn from oral history. Who did, and who did not, want the Londres drawing displayed? Why, and why not? What types of things that victims remember and want to communicate are too terrible to display publicly? What are the constraints? Who is, and who deserves to be, the final arbiter?

**Peter Read:** Australian Research Council Professorial Fellow, University of Sydney; publications include *Tripping Over Feathers. Scenes in the Life of Joy Janaka Wiradjuri Williams. A Stolen Generations Narrative* (2009) and *Returning to Nothing: The Meaning of Lost Places* (1996). See <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/history/staff/profiles/read.shtml>





Peter talked about the coup in Chile in 1973, showing photographs of mosaics created as part of a memorial to those lost at that time. He said primary lore includes oral history, dance and art – purpose with reconciliation. Is the primary experience and the secondary part compatible? Many buildings were commandeered between 1973 and 1989 by Pinochet for prisons. One was 38 Londres Street in Santiago which was a house that was a terrible prison. There was a roll call every day. The building's location was no secret. In 1990 then relatives of the “disappeared” had to be silent under threat. Photographs of the victims were shown and demonstrators were tolerated. The photos were painted over during the night. So images of the “disappeared” had themselves disappeared. Government wanted to buy the building as a “Institute for Human Rights.” Doors were locked. 10 December 2007 Pinochet died. The building was officially opened. People had been waiting outside. What was

inside? 100 people moved forward, went into the building which was darkened. People went up and down the staircase. By 2010 there was a short description of what each room was used for. The primary experience has finished. There was a timeline shown. Now the government has a central purpose, reconciliation in Chile, amnesties to some, hide the past.

Aboriginal reconciliation – sentiments are trite. Reconciliation Place in Canberra does not say what it is all about. Is this similar to Londres 38? One memorial that was not designed by the government, designed by aborigines themselves. This is where we will find the oral history, accept the truth – it will set us free.

Reconciliation without history – is there a point? Primary testimony like oral history is vital even if it is not compatible with reconciliation. That testimony will be of value to people in the future. Our work today may be too confrontational but it is important to the future. We are recording for the future. Read said he was “turned on by place” and we must hear the voice of the subject – value the voice! Every generation will tell the story in a different way. He finished with a quote (translated) written by a young woman on a cigarette paper to her friend (also imprisoned), that was secreted out of her Santiago prison, knowing she would soon be killed. “I remember when I met you in the house of terror. In those moments in which a light was a dream. Or a miracle, however, you were light in the mist. We were one in one reverse. Today thousands of reverses. Later I see you as you were before, as I know you are today, in some other place, always looking to windward. We will meet across the fog that we will dissolve. Do not forget me.” When Read stopped speaking the audience sat silently stunned.



## **Two New Publications: *Oral History and Photography*; *Place, Writing, and Voice in Oral History***

The Palgrave Studies in Oral History series welcomes two new publications to its list. *Oral History and Photography*, edited by Alexander Freund and Alistair Thomson, is a collection of essays that explores the "photographic turn" in oral history, and reflects on how oral historians can best use photographs in interviewing practice and best understand them in the interpretation of oral histories. The essays in *Place, Writing, and Voice in Oral History*, edited by Shelley Trower, demonstrate oral history's unique role in understanding locality and considers the importance of paying attention to the specifics of place in the context of global issues such as environmental concerns and communication technologies. They also consider how oral history interviews themselves--the sounds of voices--are recorded and listened to in particular places: on walks, in theaters, at home, and online.

Further information about both books and the others in the series can be found at <http://us.macmillan.com/series/palgravestudiesinoralhistory> .

Inquiries about proposals to the series should be addressed to the general editors, Linda Shopes at [LShopes@aol.com](mailto:LShopes@aol.com) and Bruce Stave at [Bruce.Stave@UConn.edu](mailto:Bruce.Stave@UConn.edu)

## **Imagining the City iPhone application (Brisbane)**

‘Imagining the City’ is a location-based book of short stories set in inner city Brisbane, Australia. Once downloaded, users can locate each story in relation to where they are on the map and read the story in-situ. When in-situ, bonus material, including author’s notes, inspirational images and an audio recording of each of the stories read by the author, will be unlocked.

‘Imagining the City’ was produced as part of an Australian Linkage Council Grant (LP0882274), ‘Respecting the Past and Imagining the Future: Using Narrative and New Media in Community Engagement and Urban Planning.’ Researchers at Queensland University of Technology’s Creative Industry Faculty invited writers to imaginatively respond to personas, or characters, developed in an earlier phase of research to help inform the design of inner-city apartments.

More information about the application is available here: <http://itunes.apple.com/app/imagining-the-city/id475264436?mt=8>

The application is available for free download from the iTunes store. We encourage you to download the application and engage with these new and imaginative location-based representations of the city.

If you have questions or comments, please contact either As. Prof. Helen Klæbe ([h.klaebe@qut.edu.au](mailto:h.klaebe@qut.edu.au)) or Ariella Van Luyn ([a1.vanluyn@qut.edu.au](mailto:a1.vanluyn@qut.edu.au))

## Copyright for Oral Historians

### Francis Good

As Oral Historians we need to be aware of copyright issues, how to protect our own work and to be mindful of not infringing the rights of others when reproducing material created by other people. Copyright is an important ethical issue and is discussed in the OHAA Handbook, pages 14 -17. What this article sets out to do, is to give members a further up to date reference point for issues which may affect their work from time to time.

In Australia, copyright law is set out in the *Copyright Act 1968* and as this is Federal legislation it applies throughout Australia. The original Act may be over 40 years old but it has been amended to keep up to date as technology evolves. There are also a large number of court decisions which have interpreted the Act in relation to numerous situations which also need to be considered in relation to similar situations. Copyright is quite complex and the Act very long, so there is no way we can address all the issues that might confront oral historians in a short article, however the Oral History Association of Australia feels this is an issue that members need to keep in mind.

The Australian Copyright Council provides excellent information which is available online to the public. We do suggest that members go to their web site [www.copyright.org.au](http://www.copyright.org.au). The council has an A-Z listing of its information sheets which are freely available to download and print. In particular a copy of their information sheet G010v16, *An Introduction to Copyright in Australia*. – has 11 pages of information that will give you a basic understanding of the issues involved, an excellent reference. We would suggest another information sheet, *Family History and Copyright* (G042v09) also has specific information for the many members interested in family history. Another information sheet on *Duration of Copyright* (G023) has a timeline chart that will allow members to make an informed decision about the use of old photos, papers, letters etc. Do browse the web site A – Z list for information that may be applicable to a particular project you are undertaking especially if you have an interest in using other media and remember that the information sheets are regularly updated.

Copyright does not have to be registered with any organization and is free, so do think about copyright and protect all your own creative work with the copyright symbol ©, your name and most importantly the date. Also in undertaking commissions the question of ownership of the copyright should be addressed in the agreement. Members can get further information from the information sheet *Assigning and Licensing Rights* (G24). The site covers many issues with its information sheets and also has a key word listing that may be searched in relation to a particular topic. A search of the site will hopefully provide answers to questions as they arise.

The Copyright Council also conduct a program of information seminars and details of those scheduled for Sydney. These can be found on their website [www.copyright.org.au/seminars/](http://www.copyright.org.au/seminars/) Members may wish to attend and extend their knowledge in this area.

*This article has been re-printed from the NSW newsletter “Voiceprint” with kind permission of Editor, Joyce Cribb.*

Note – see also SLQ web site - <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/home/copyright>

## The Hazel de Berg Award, 2011 for Excellence in Oral History



**Frank Heimans, Hazel de Berg Winner** photo by Lena Volkova

Franklin (Frank) Arthur Heimans' oral history activities began in the mid-1970s with documentary films for television, as writer, director, producer and interviewer. At that time there was little awareness of the value of oral history within the film and television community. Over the ensuing 35-year period Frank has produced twenty-five documentary and biographical films for television with a strong oral history component.

Frank's is an imposing record - he has conducted more than 850 audio interviews with a wide cross-section of the community, people in the arts, religion, literature, music, theatre, education, medicine, architecture, aviation, sports, economics, politics, science, engineering, broadcasting, law, business and administration. He has produced eight documentary films for television with a strong oral history component, and as originator of the first truly Australian archival interview series, Frank produced 32 programs in the *Australian Biography* series.

He deposited his material with the National Film and Sound Archive following its establishment in 1984, with footage of the *Australian Biography* series being transcribed, timed, documented and deposited with Australian Archives. Frank has given many lectures and presentations to OHAA conferences, community groups and local libraries and has presented at the IOHA international conference in Mexico. Since 2001 he has written on oral history topics for OHAA Journals and *Voiceprint* newsletter and he has often participated in OHAA workshops to bring knowledge, practices and skills to participants.

Frank was one of the first Australian filmmakers to carry out interviews on film and to then log, transcribe and archive the material. He also pioneered a prototype archive system for documenting video material which was subsequently adopted by the CSIRO and named 'Frank'. Frank has been a valued mentor and for many who feared new recording technologies, has made good sound recording appear effortless. As testament to the quality and significance of his work, Frank has won many awards.

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## **OHAA Queensland Supports Interviews about the Northern Territory**

### **Catherine Cottle**

The OHAA Queensland was contacted by the Northern Territory Archive Service for volunteers to interview a Queenslander who had grown up in Darwin and had a tale to tell. Intrigued, I raised my hand and ended up going on a journey of discovery that can only happen while conducting oral histories.

#### *There's gold in those hills!*

Pat Vogler was born in 1942. Her father wanted to prospect for gold in the Northern Territory. Her mother went along with it and they set up camp in Tennant Creek. The men prospected and worked for the mines, mining tin and the women set up house to help the men. Life was hard. Several families got together and collectively rented a property near Cooktown fondly called Mt. Poverty. The search for gold was on. When asked whether or not the men found gold, Pat responded with a tart, "Well, we wouldn't be sitting here now if they had!" Enough said!

#### *From prospecting for gold to prospecting for sinks and beds*

Life was difficult in the Northern Territory. With no results from prospecting, work could be found in Darwin after World War II. The family moved to Darwin and into Sidney Williams huts, corrugated iron buildings that had been used by the Defence Forces during the war to house personnel. The buildings were delegated for workers, and were partitioned off for families. Each family built out their portion of the huts with plumbing, walls, and so on. Pat said that Darwin was a real scavenger society then. "People knew where the good stuff was buried," she said about items buried during the war. Her father "discovered" many items and used them to build out their "home", including sinks and a hospital bed for her mother! But, she said, "There were areas in Darwin where we children were not allowed, because of buried explosives."

Police raided the house at one point because of the scavenging for salvage. Father had been buying scrap metal that had been melted down. Mother had bought copper wire on Father's behalf and was arrested for buying stolen goods from the Post Master General!

Even though life was hard work for Pat's family, they enjoyed themselves in the huts. Pat remembers jam sessions where Father played the guitar, Mother played the ukulele and a man named Fidler played the fiddle. Father got work on the wharf, unloading ships in Darwin Harbour. Pat remembers sunken ships in the harbour from the World War II bombings, 13 or 14 that she could see. She remembers the bullet holes in the city buildings, including the post office. That was just normal everyday life in Darwin.

#### *"This is no idiot's dream"; moving to social activism and fun at the same time.*

When the family moved to Fannie Bay, Mother got involved in the Fannie Bay Progress Association. Both parents marched in Labour Day Parades from Wanelli to Darwin. They made floats to protest the living conditions of workers in Darwin, hoping to raise community awareness.

Her parents became members of the Darwin Workers' Club that had been formed in 1946. By 1952, the local newspaper declared on the front page that the club was proposing a £50,000 new building. Mr. Jim Carter, secretary of the Workers' Club, told the *Standard*, "This is no idiot's

dream. A club of this sort will be a necessity and will quickly pay for itself if the promised increase in the number of workers in the Northern Territory comes about as a result of the uranium find at the Rum Jungle and other developments.” (*The Northern Standard*, 1952) In the same paper’s editorial, Darwin by then was compared to a cross between the French Riviera and Surfers Paradise, providing us with an interesting view of hard work and leisure time.

Pat said that while she enjoys living in Queensland now, nothing could replace the memories she has about growing up in the Northern Territory. Today, Darwin continues to recognize Territorians like Pat and her parents for their commitment to social justice for workers and the love they had for the area by naming parts of Darwin after them. If you are in Darwin, you might see street plaque named for Territorians and yes, one is for Pat’s mother.

#### References:

£50,000 BUILDING PROPOSED FOR WORKERS' CLUB. (1952, June 27). *Northern Standard* (Darwin, NT : 1921 - 1955), p. 1. Retrieved August 26, 2011, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article49474799>

## Report on National Oral History Conference “Communities of Memory” Sandy Liddle

My elation at being awarded (as the representative of the Wynnum Manly Historical Society) one of the OHAA Qld bursaries to attend the 2011 National Oral History Conference in Melbourne was only surpassed by my actual attendance at the conference.

Unfortunately, my well laid plans of arriving at the conference for the first session were thrown into chaos when my flight into Melbourne was delayed by an hour due to fog closing Melbourne Airport. I did however manage to arrive during the morning tea break and was thankful I had taken the time to study the program prior to arrival so I knew which presentations I wished to attend first.

I took so many notes during the conference that it is hard to condense it all into this report so I will limit it to the presentations that captured my attention the most. I will add that the theme of the conference was *Communities of Memory* and this was reflected throughout all the sessions I attended.

### Day 1

As the Wynnum Manly Historical Society (WMHS) is keen to incorporate digital storytelling into its projects, it was relatively easy for me to choose to attend the ***Digital storytelling and new technologies*** stream in Session 1.



Helen Klæbe

Helen Klæbe mentioned in her presentation *Saying sorry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: public apologies in a digital world* that the Forgotten Australians have barriers to using digital recording equipment even if they do have access to, or possess, the equipment. This is equally true of the older generation who have not been brought up with the newer technologies. Actually being able to operate (or perhaps a reluctance to operate) the new digital recording equipment recently acquired by the WMHS is one of the issues we are encountering. I liked Helen's statement that there is great power in digital stories. This was demonstrated many times throughout the conference.

Jessica Tyrrell is an artist who is using oral histories to interpret these memories into art form. Who would ever have thought of creating art from oral histories? This was something totally foreign to me until Jessica Tyrrell from the University of Sydney showed how she was in fact doing this as part of the South Sydney Project.

***Generational communities*** was the next stream I opted to attend. Tuija Turunen from Charles Sturt University talked about *Family members' memories about starting school*. I thought this could give the WMHS some ideas for its *Slates to iPads* project. Tuija explained how different generations of the same family were interviewed in order to gauge the differences between generations. They were interviewed separately so as not to influence others' stories. She stressed that they did not use answers from previous interviewee's questions to ask the next



interviewee from the family. One thing Tuija discovered from the project was that memories of starting school may be inaccurate. She said that the people may not necessarily have lied but that these are their memories as they believe them to be. I found that interesting as when my sister and I look back on our school day memories, we often have different recollections of the same event yet we both are adamant that our respective memories are accurate. Being the oldest, I am of course correct!

*Communities of memory and identity: problems and prospects for continued vitality and transmission of oral history from one generation to the next* by Dana Ernst discussed how the connection between oral tradition and folklore is relevant. Community memory is important and Dana iterated that storytelling is a way of transmitting tradition from generation to generation particularly in cultures where text does not exist. Sometimes the details of the entire story as related were sometimes changed but in some instances the entire story was identical as passed down from generation to generation. Will the younger generation from these cultures continue on with this storytelling tradition?

## Day 2

On day two, I found the *Training community oral historians* extremely interesting. *Training the public to collect oral histories of our community* presented by the Queensland branch was very informative. I know from the experience of the WMHS, it was great to have an all day session conducted at our venue which was designed and geared towards our own society's needs. I do however think it is important to still have the basic workshops which are open to all and I intend to attend more of these as time permits.

Elaine Rabbitt spoke on *Towards a new curriculum – an accredited oral history course*. Elaine would like all OHAA branches to develop a course equivalent to a Cert 3 in TAFE (oral history training package) which is nationally accredited.

This does seem like a good idea in principle but from a personal viewpoint (that is not being a professional oral historian and being involved with a small volunteer organisation), I know the majority of our members (mainly retired older persons) would not be interested in accreditation. They just want to know how to go about undertaking oral histories.

## Day 3

The morning of day three I opted to attend the *Intergenerational digital histories panel*. *Lest We Forget: old memories, new media, new audiences* was the first presentation discussing an intergenerational project where students interviewed older veterans in workshops. The presenters spoke of how this enabled the students and the veterans to get to know each other well and for the students, they gained a sense of respect and admiration for the older generation. For the veterans, they felt a sense of meaning because the younger generation were so interested in their stories.

This got me thinking about the WMHS project and whether we could perhaps look at getting older primary school students or high school students (with the assistance of their teachers) to help with our oral history project *Slates to iPads*. It may promote an interest in our area's local history to the younger generation.

A recurring theme throughout the conference attendees I spoke to was how to engage and reach new audiences. This presentation also touched on this subject and there was some discussion about ACMI Generator which provides teachers with information to teach history to students. It provides prompt questions for teachers to help them guide the student interviews. It also contains a stock library of footage which can be downloaded into digital storytelling. My immediate thought was that it may not only be useful for schools but also for small volunteer organisations.

*Our history – now and then: a 21<sup>st</sup> century tool kit to find ways into the past* discussed Museum Victoria's Making history: research / create/ share project which was created for upper primary and secondary students to help them create short digital histories. It provides tools to help them get started <http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/websites/making-history/>

It made me wish I was a school student again with all the opportunities which are available now that were non-existent in my day! Maybe I will be able to influence my grandchildren, when they are of school age, to become involved in oral history through digital storytelling.

## **Summary**

As a librarian (just about to graduate with my Masters in Information Studies specialising in Archives and Records Management), I found it interesting that, throughout many of the presentations, reference was made to the need to catalogue, index and archive oral histories for future users. This is one area dear to my heart and one that I try to stress to everyone. It was great to see that others see the same need and that I am not just being a paranoid librarian.

It was fabulous to be able to network with other like-minded people. One of the highlights for me was catching up with my oral history lecturer, Janis Wilton, from my days as a student at the University of New England studying for my Advanced Diploma in Local, Family and Applied History. I blame Janis for being the person who first piqued my interest in oral history.

Being an oral history novice, I will admit to feeling very inadequate at times during the conference because of the vast knowledge of so many conference attendees. After speaking with a few other novices, I know I was not alone in this regard! I did however come away from the conference feeling very enthused and inspired to progress forward and deepen my knowledge.

In all, I had a wonderful time and cannot thank OHAA Queensland enough for affording me the opportunity to attend the OHAA National Conference 2011. My only complaint about the conference was that it was very difficult trying to decide which presentation streams to attend. There was such a great choice available and I would have attended them all given the chance. For anyone who has not yet attended an OHAA conference, I would highly recommend attending one in the future. I know I will certainly be attempting to attend another one.

## ***OHAA Journal Submissions***

This year our President, Ariella Van Luyn, took on the role of chair of the *OHAA Journal*. If any of the Queensland members are interested in submitting papers or project reports, I invite you to do so. The deadline for peer review articles is 27 February 2012 and for project reports, 1 April 2012. Please go to the website for author guidelines and a document I put together fielding many queries, titled 'FAQs about the Peer Review Process' (<http://www.ohaa.org.au/page/publications.html>) and/or direct questions to me ([a1.vanluyn@qut.edu.au](mailto:a1.vanluyn@qut.edu.au)). There is also an excellent report on peer review articles by Francis Good, which was a paper Francis presented at the 2007 National Conference. Francis updated the report before we published it on our website <http://www.ohaaqld.org.au/> in 2010. Click on Conference Papers and download the "booklet" (3 MB) and it is one of a number of interesting papers featured there.

## **National Library of Australia**

### **eResource Focus: Times Digital Archive**



Interested in world history? This online resource provides access to the first 200 years of *The Times*, one of the world's major newspapers. Users can retrieve full facsimile images of specific articles or entire pages, complete with original advertisements, illustrations and photos.

Use your Library card to access the **Times Digital Archive** - <http://www.nla.gov.au/app/eresources/item/1088>

Don't have a Library card? **Register online** - <http://www.nla.gov.au/getalibrarycard/>

## **Your Community Heritage program grants applications**

For information see <http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/burke/2011/mr20111117.html>

## **Oral History in Times of Disaster: OHAA Queensland's Training in Cardwell**

### **Ariella Van Luyn**

Helen Klæbe, Bryan Crawford and Ariella Van Luyn arrived in Cardwell to find the town half in ruins. Behind them stretched kilometres of trees stripped bare by the wind and bent almost double, as if bowing to the mountains. Later, a resident of the nursing home would describe how she had never seen the shape of the mountains so clearly outlined against the sky; the cyclone had tumbled the trees that usually covered them, obscuring their undulations. The outskirts of the town were separated from the beach by a ribbon of highway. Buildings that stood only metres back from the beach had been flattened. The walls of a church had been knocked away, leaving the rows of pews, bolted to the wooden floorboards, exposed. The mass of Hinchinbrook Island dominated the horizon.

After Cyclone Yasi devastated many communities along the coast of Northern Queensland, the Cardwell Historical Association (CHA) contacted the Oral History Association of Australia, Queensland branch (OHAA Qld), asking if facilitators could visit the small coastal town to train community members in gathering oral histories about the disaster. Dianne Smith, Secretary of the CHA, had noticed the series of five workshops advertised on the OHAA Qld website, and hoped we could deliver something similar in the cyclone devastated town. OHAA Qld agreed to pay for airfares for three facilitators. On the 26 March 2011, Helen Klæbe, Bryan Crawford and Ariella Van Luyn flew into Townsville airport at around 9am, and drove 164 kilometres to Cardwell.

The Historical Association's building had been knocked to the ground by the force of the wind, and its recording equipment was buried in the rubble. The facilitators brought with them one of OHAA Qld's recording equipment packs to replace the damaged one. This pack was left with the community, to be used to record oral histories in far North Queensland.

Dianne had arranged for the workshop to be held upstairs in the Aboriginal Community Centre. While Bryan wandered the town, taking photographs for CHA, Helen and Ariella delivered a workshop designed to give an overview of an oral history project. Attendants included the community members from the Cardwell Historical Association, Innisfail and District Historical Society, Mission Beach Community Arts Centre, and the Millaa Millaa Historical Society. Helen discussed what an oral history project entails, planning and budgeting, how to stay on track and on time, and helped participants articulate what they hoped to achieve. After a lunch of fresh sandwiches and fruit platters, Ariella gave an overview of ethics, copyright and permission forms, how to transcribe using Express Scribe, and continued the discussion about planning and organising an oral history project in Cardwell.



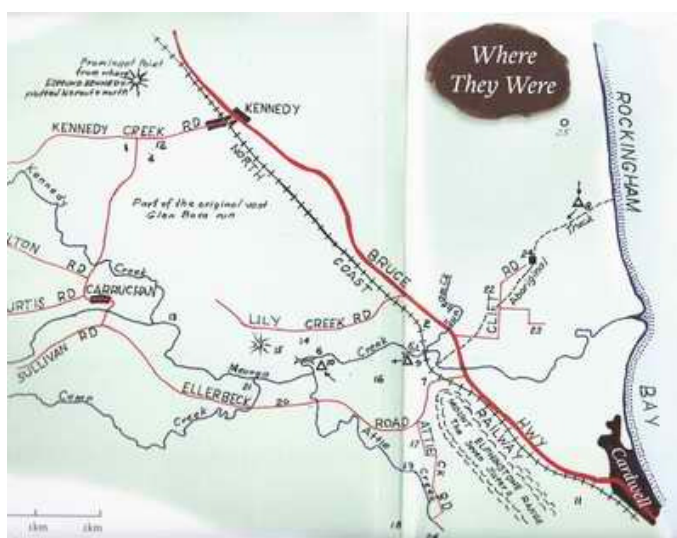
On Saturday night, Dianne kindly billeted the three facilitators in her home, which had thankfully suffered minimal damage, except where the cyclonic winds had spun the ceiling fans above her deck so fast and furiously that the blades had left circles scraped into the paint.

On Sunday morning, the women from the Cardwell Historical Association arrived at Dianne's house. Bryan demonstrated how to use OHAA Qld's equipment, and Dianne, Anne Mealing, Stephanie Berger and Joyce Kanowski practiced interviewing each other. Anne told them how she returned to Cardwell to find her poddy calf alive and well, while Joyce told them she weathered out the cyclone at a friend's house with her feet in the bath.

Anne, Stephanie and Joyce tested out their new skills using the recording equipment at the Rockingham Nursing Home later in the day. The team interviewed and photographed three residents at the home. Staff and residents had been evacuated to Townsville during the cyclone. The decision to evacuate had been a long time coming, and when it did, staff had little time to prepare before the cyclone hit. One interviewee with a walking frame described how she had difficulties hauling herself up the stairs of the bus that was to drive them to Townsville, while others unable to walk had to be driven in ambulances.

In Townsville, they stayed in the town hall with residents from two other homes. They slept on low mattresses lined up in rows, but another of the interviewees had to sleep sitting up in her wheelchair, because she knew that if she lay down on the ground, she wouldn't be able to get up again. When they were moved to the Mater hospital the following day, all the interviewees were relieved. One described a nun as an angel, who provided her with a clean nightie and a comfortable bed to sleep in.

Speaking to Helen Klæbe about Cyclone Yasi triggered an older cyclone memory for one resident. She described how she had been staying in a caravan with her baby and husband while he worked for Main Roads, cutting a section of the Bruce Highway through the dense rainforest in Northern Queensland. They had decided to weather the cyclone in the caravan. She said that when she heard the cyclone coming, she pulled the mattress off the bed, strapped the baby in its cot to the frame, and then flung herself over the top. As the cyclone swept through, she heard a terrifying sound close by, and the van shook violently. When it was all over, and she knew she and her child were safe, she saw that a huge tree had been uprooted and blown across the side of the caravan, leaving a huge gash running along the side.



After the facilitators supported the women to gather the interviews and modelled interviewing techniques, Helen, Bryan and Ariella were presented with the CHA's latest publication, *The Calophyllum Shore*, a history of the district by Sandy Hubinger, with endpapers depicting a map hand drawn by one of the oldest surveyors in the area.

Dianne described how the Callophyllums, the trees after which the book was named, had been uprooted from the beach in the cyclone, leaving residents a clear view of the beach and the island beyond. Ariella presented CHA with copies of Lesley Jenkins's *Talking Together* and Beth Robertson's *Oral History Handbook*. Helen, Bryan and Ariella then left for Townsville airport, arriving back in Brisbane on Sunday evening tired, but pleased with their efforts.

Dianne later successfully applied for a Royal Arts Development Fund (RADF) grant for Bryan, Helen and Ariella to go back to Cardwell. On 24 and 25 September 2011, the facilitators returned to support CHA as they put together an exhibition on the cyclone, largely based on the interviews they'd collected since March. Helen and Ariella worked closely with Dianne as CHA prepared for the workshop, gathering and transcribing interviews, and organising and labelling the many images they had collected. This was a huge job, and the women at the CHA worked incredibly hard to pull all their resources together for the workshop and exhibition.

The workshop was held at the back of the Al Arish pub, which the owners had kindly donated for the weekend. The pub was an old wooden building with wide verandahs hung with ferns. The front, where the public bar stretched around the corner to the poolroom, was decorated with cartoons, photographs of men holding giant fish, pigging dogs and pin-up girls tacked to the walls.

On Saturday, Ariella took a workshop on storytelling and narrative, offering suggestions for ways to make the exhibition engaging, and working with the participants to uncover common threads that emerged from the interviews, which could be the basis of the exhibition. Shared themes in the interviews included displacement—many interviewees described, for example, the sand that was hurled with such force that it became ingrained in the cracks and crevices of houses so that a key wouldn't open the door for all the sand wedged inside, while others returned to find boats from the Marina plunged through their windows—and the community's resilience and desire for independence from a bureaucracy that was often frustratingly slow and lacking in common sense. They discussed the possibility of accessing the Department of Main Road's before-and-after Yasi maps of the area to use for the exhibition, and pinning cards, with excerpts of the interviews, to sites where the story took place. Later, after discussing text messages received during the cyclone, someone came up with the idea to invite exhibition-goers to write the text messages they remembered getting during the cyclone on post-its, and adding these to the display.

Meanwhile, Helen and Bryan drove around with Stephanie, visiting residents in Cardwell and surrounding areas, gathering vox pop interviews for the exhibition.

After eating steak the size of dinner plates in a rich mushroom sauce, Bryan, Helen and Ariella stayed at Mission Beach. In the morning, they walked along the shoreline, where palm trees knocked down from the cyclone still lay stretched along the sand.





Ariella at Mission Beach

Back at the Al Arish pub, Bryan began cutting the interviews gathered the day before. Helen and Ariella arranged participants in groups, where they worked editing the transcripts so they could be used in displays and digital stories. They shared new skills using Word. Then they worked as a group to highlight on printed transcript the parts of the interview to be used as a script for the digital story, then selected photos to go with it. They all gathered around Bryan as he cut the audio and paired it with the images using Final Cut Pro software. Bryan spent another day working back in Brisbane, finalising the digital stories and vox pop interviews, and sending his work back to Cardwell saved on an external hard drive.



As four o'clock drew near, Helen, Bryan and Ariella had to pack up and return back to Brisbane. Dianne is still in contact with the OHAA Qld and looks forward to advertising the exhibition opening. CHA also plans to create a travelling exhibition for local schools. The OHAA Qld wishes Cardwell all the best in its endeavours. OHAA Qld will keep members updated as Cardwell and surrounding districts document and preserve the community's response to natural disaster.

## NSW Workshop – Connecting the History in Oral History

In our e-Bulletin of 31 October we told you about this workshop in Sydney. Sue Rosen chaired the seminar with historians Associate Professor Paula Hamilton, Dr. Judith Godden and soon to be Dr, Emma Dortins who discussed their engagement with and use of oral history in their professional history undertakings. Sue said the Oral History Association of Australia NSW has always been a broad church with a diverse congregation who employ various forms of practice according to their purpose or need. There are broadcasters and documentary makers, family historians conducting personal project, educators, community development practitioners who wish to use personal story to empower and we have historians who draw on oral history along with documentary sources – manuscripts, maps, plans, photos and art works to investigate some part of our past whether it be biography, the history of an industrial process or of a community. The NSW Branch has generously made sound recordings of the seminar available until 31 December 2011.

Click [http://audio.mediaheads.com.au/OHAA/Connecting\\_the\\_History\\_in\\_Oral\\_History/](http://audio.mediaheads.com.au/OHAA/Connecting_the_History_in_Oral_History/) the 'Connecting the History in Oral History' audio **1. click on link 2. once page loads in web browser right click on and 'save as' each .mp3 file separately.** It is assumed that by choosing to download these files that you agree to using these recorded talks for research purposes only. The permission of the presenter must be obtained for any further publication especially if an edited copy is to be made. Contact details can be obtained from the Oral History Association of Australia NSW Inc Email: [ohaansw@hotmail.com](mailto:ohaansw@hotmail.com) **Sound files of the seminar will be available until 31.1.12.**

## When Teenage Meets Old Age

At the recent Melbourne Conference there was much discussion about young people learning stories from their elders. ABC1 has a new series starting at 9.35 pm Sunday 4 December. See <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/guide/abc1/201112/programs/ZX6343A001D2011-12-04T213651.htm?program=When%20Teenage%20Meets%20Old%20Age> In the series four young people volunteer to work as carers in a retirement village. Should make interesting viewing.

**When an old man dies, a library burns to the ground (African proverb)**