

OHAA On Tape

September 2004

Editor: Suzanne Mulligan

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Hello Everyone!

Well, did you all enjoy the Olympic Games. It was great see Australia perform so well in this international arena. It made me think of Olympics past and whether there are untold stories out there of not so well-known Australian medallists.

I've enjoyed completing a couple of my oral history projects that are now on my web site:

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

One is 96-year-old Charlie Gibbs who experienced the wonders of Antarctica on an expedition in 1936. It was a time when Australia was only beginning to realise that we needed a stake in that continent. The other is Olwyn Green, widow of Charlie Green, the highest ranking Australian soldier to die in the Korean War. She embarked on a second career after her retirement, learning to be a chef in France and then returning to Australia to research the Korean War. She then learned just how remarkable were the achievements of her late husband.

Lesley Jenkins is running one of her oral history workshops on 16 October 2004. If you haven't done Lesley's course, I highly recommend that you attend for an

interesting and educational day. Please "spread the word" about this course.

Don't forget our workshop planned for 13 November 2004 with Reminiscence Therapist, Marilyn Roberts. Please be sure to book early for this workshop so you don't miss out. We'll also have our Annual General Meeting on that day.

Lesley Jenkins and Helen Klaebe attended the recent International Oral History Conference in Rome. They learned a great deal and enjoyed networking with oral historians from all over the world.

Special thanks to members who contributed articles to share with other members in this newsletter. We are so pleased to read about the work that you are all doing.

Please don't forget to renew your membership. As a small non-profit organization, membership fees are vital to keep our branch going. A form is included in this newsletter. Those who have joined in the last three months will carry on their membership. If you receive a hard copy of this newsletter, there will be a pink dot on the envelope denoting that your membership fee is due please.

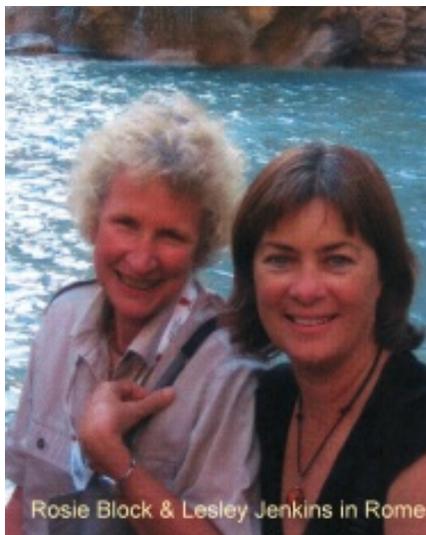
Suzanne Mulligan
Editor

IOHA Conference held in the Campodoglio, Capitoline Hill, Rome 23 – 26 June 2004

The theme: Memory and Globalization

This was a conference full of surprises and many delights. The biggest delight was to find ourselves part of the largest Australian contingent ever and under the (Australian) International president, Janis Wilton. The convener was Alessandro Portelli, who is a legend in the oral history world and held in visibly high regard by those there who knew him. Congratulations to him in having the city of Rome as a principal sponsor so that the marble floor, august portraits, hideously uncomfortable chairs and glorious view of the principal meeting room, the Sala della Protomoteca, were ours for these days.

The first surprise was that the ‘breakout’ sessions (11 parallel sessions) were to take place in rooms around the base of the Capitol Hill and we spent a delightful first few hours researching their whereabouts. The map furnished was hopeless, but ‘You must understand Alessandro is a man of words’ so the printed directions were reasonably clear with the odd lacuna of unnamed streets.



The biggest surprise was to follow the opening address by Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Globalization and memory’. This paper is not included in the conference proceedings which is a pity because it was very difficult to hear although what could be heard might have been interesting if it had not been only in islands of audibility and comprehension. But after this talk, surprise, surprise, the curtains in the lovely room were flung open and below on the terrace overhanging the Imperial Roman Forum was a delicious and totally (until then) unannounced welcome reception prepared. Much greeting and mingling followed and the conference was back on a high note.

The Conference is officially bilingual – Spanish and English. However, the bilingual, and sometimes multilingual, nature of the ‘breakout’ sessions, although expected, brought its own surprises. Rosie chaired 2 sessions, one entirely in Spanish, and attended another where there was little attempt to translate the proceedings. The Italian presenter gave an interesting précis in English and then read his whole paper in Italian! By report very few of the ‘breakout’ sessions managed to field their full complement of speakers, and in one case they were refused the room and took refuge in a pub! However, the spirit was very positive and luckily the audiences (sometimes there was only one person) were good-natured and often helped with the translating. There is a lesson here already learnt – in 2006 we shall have every speaker supply a single page précis translated in either Spanish or English, or both if the presentation is in a third language.

Lesley attended a session entitled ‘Families and Generations’ and she was pleased she disregarded the advice proffered by Italian staff sharing the venue that the session was in another location. She soldiered on and eventually found the room along a labyrinthine corridor, but unhappily only three other attendees (including the third speaker) were as intrepid. But it was worth the effort as Kim Lacy Rogers from the United States provided a fascinating insight into the civil rights movement in Mississippi before proceeding to analyze the current grief, mourning and rage felt by Black elders at developments since the 1960s. This complex series of reactions is evident despite statistics which point to a range of improvements in health, education and opportunity within the Black community.

Simultaneous translation took place in the main venue and this was wondrous. Almost all the sessions held here produced their full complement of speakers and topics included methodology, narrative, digital technologies and new media, religion, memory and history, digitisation (mainly editing for multimedia documentaries and a virtual archive of analogue recordings). Many of these papers begged for a ‘hands-on’ workshop to flesh out the detail and we have taken note for the Sydney Conference.

Some sessions attempted to challenge the boundaries of oral history and Paula Hamilton's paper, 'Shark! Oral History and Fear' was one which raised fascinating issues. The Australians were grateful that this paper was given after the decision to go to Sydney in 2006 and that she made no mention of crocodiles and snakes!



Ever hopeful we were surprised at how little technical support (outside of the main room) was supplied. Even overhead projectors failed to make their humble appearance. However, the speakers tended to make do and the audiences were generally good-natured.

The last speaker on the last day was Estela Carlotto who spoke as part of the Madres de Plaza Mayo, a group of mothers and grandmothers of the 'disappeared ones' in Argentina. Her daughter, then pregnant, was taken away by the military at the end of 1977. Later her body was returned to her mother for burial, but of the child, a boy, no trace at all. There is recently an attempt to make a DNA bank for future identification purposes. In the meantime these mothers and grandmothers make recordings of their family history and other stories so that should these lost children ever come to find their families there will be a voice, a connection. Her grandson would be 26 now and she lives in hope that before she dies he will find her, but if not, then she has left him her voice and his family. It was no surprise that we were all deeply moved. She was matter of fact – we were in tears.



We noted that the most poignant papers are often the ones best remembered because they fully utilise the enormous power of the first person narrative. Although Estela's story was a painful one to hear she summed up the importance of her work for herself and others by saying,

"You can't build a society without a memory" a reference to the early attempts to silence the group, and in closing, "love can do everything and essentially is everything".

In conclusion, if it is true that people remember conferences only for the food and the venue, the Rome conference will last as long as Trajan's Column (a near neighbour of the Campodoglio) and therefore etched forever on the consciousness of the participants! And even easier to read than the Column will be the collection of papers preserved on that handy CD.

PS The young volunteer staff wore t-shirts printed with the conference name and place – and the date read 26 – 23 June 2004. Well time does go backwards for oral historians we suppose!

Rosie Block, Lesley Jenkins and Janis Wilton

Churchill Fellowship for OHAA (Qld Inc.) President

I recently attended the International Oral History Conference in Rome - well how could I not attend when it was in such a place! I was also following up some intriguing details about a case I documented in a book I wrote about Italian migration many years ago. At the conference it was announced that the next International Oral History Conference is to be held in Sydney in 2006- the first time it has been held in the Asia Pacific region. My article co-writers are Rosie Block (Curator of Oral History at the State Library, Sydney and National President of the OHAA) and Dr Janis Wilton, (Lecturer in History at UNE and former International President of the Oral History Association).

When I returned from Italy I found out that my application for a Churchill Fellowship had been successful. My study tour aims "to investigate cultural and heritage projects featuring oral history with emphasis on training and documentation techniques, support programs for volunteers and oral history collection management procedures - UK., USA.

I will be spending time investigating oral history projects at the British Sound Library in London and attending an Oral History Summer School at Columbia University (two weeks) and an advanced workshop at the University of Berkley in California. I will also be linking up with historians and cultural workers from Wales to Las Vegas - yes there is something bizarre and interesting happening there as well! I plan to travel next northern summer - June, July, August 2005. Given the absence of such training in Australia I am particularly interested in comparing what is offered at Columbia with that offered at University of California, Berkeley and how this might translate to the Australian context. I shall keep you all informed and I hope that some tangible outcomes will result.

Lesley Jenkins
President OHAA (Qld Inc.)
recordinghistory@optusnet.com.au

Call for contributions to IOHA newsletter

We invite you to contribute to the next issue of IOHA News, the International Oral History Association's online newsletter. The deadline for the next issue is October 15, 2004. Please send your contributions, in English or Spanish, as a Word or RTF attachment via e-mail to both co-editors.

English text to Don Ritchie - oralhistorians@comcast.net
Spanish text to Pilar Domínguez - pdprats@dch.ulpgc.es

Maximum Length:

Future conferences, meetings, other announcements - 250 words

Conference reports 500 words

Archive News 500 words

New Projects 1000 words

Book Reviews 500 words

Journal Reviews 500 words

Images and illustrations should be scanned at 72dpi, saved for the web at a low or medium resolution, and in jpg format.

We look forward to your contribution by 15 October 2004
Don and Pilar

Journeys into Inheritance – oral histories of Irish migration to Australia

Pat Ryan

For several years towards the end of the last millennium, I was actively involved with community radio broadcasts, in particular with the Irish program on Radio 4EB. I often interviewed people who were re-discovering their Irish heritage and quite often their quest began with family stories about a journey of migration to Australia. So, in late 2002 I embarked on “Journeys into Inheritance, stories of Irish migration to Australia.” As well as recording stories from the descendants of migrants of the period 1867-1916, I interviewed people who migrated after World War II, those who came in the years from 1947-1987.

It was timely to collect these stories because several of the interviewees were elderly and have retired into nursing homes since the recordings were made. The interviewees each received a copy of their recording and the collection was lodged with the John Oxley Library in Brisbane. I also collected the stories into a book, copies of which were presented to each of the participants in the project and a copy deposited with the State library. The project was informed by the Guidelines of the Oral History Association of Australia and earlier this year on March 27th I presented a paper on the project at the European Social Science History Conference at Humboldt University, Berlin. Academic historians at the conference were greatly impressed by the oral historians’ ability to collect stories “in the field.”

Out of curiosity I researched places of historic interest mentioned by the interviewees such as T.C.Beirne’s store in Fortitude Valley in the 1940’s or the whaling industry in Moreton Bay in the 1960’s. I added these historical research notes to the book for the interest of participants and readers alike. I was particularly struck by the similarities between the oral accounts and recorded history in matters such as dates and placenames. I was also fascinated by the personal insights into the legacy or experience of migration, such as the ancestor who met his future wife on board ship and offered her a tightly bound ring of shamrocks as a wedding ring, an object lovingly preserved by their descendants. Or the spirit of enterprise shown by one man who quickly changed his occupational status from ploughman to road builder, bought a horse and cart and commissioned a sign writer to write his business name on the side of the cart.

Post war migrants shared with me their experiences of sea journeys, migrant hostels, new friendships and strange and unfamiliar foods. By the 1960’s air travel had replaced passenger shipping; twenty-four hour flights replaced the six-week long sea journeys of the 1950’s. Interviewees spoke of their reasons for migration. Post war young male migrants were hopeful, adventurous and intended to return to Ireland. Instead they married and settled in Australia. During the 1960’s and 70’s some migrants fled the war in Northern Ireland and in the 1980’s others fled economic recession and unemployment. A couple sought postgraduate professional opportunities. Ultimately, all wanted a home and secure future for their children. They formed cultural clubs, theatre groups and sporting organisations, held raffles, ran dances and broadcast radio programs.

At the turn of the nineteenth century a quarter of Australia’s population was Irish born. The Irish born now form a much smaller percentage of the overall Australian population, however, 1.9 million Australians claim Irish parentage or Irish descent. Australia is very popular with young Irish backpackers and many Australians travel to Ireland to work or to enjoy a holiday while exploring their Irish heritage. Ireland now has in excess of 200,000 immigrants, many of them returned sons and daughters of migrants so it would seem that journeys in search of heritage and tradition seem set to continue into the future.

Bringing Them Home

Colleen Hattersley

I had followed the Royal Commission into the Removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families with deep interest and was aware that the first recommendation urged that personal stories related to those events should be placed on the national record. By the time the National Library had the 6-month pilot oral history project in progress I was making plans to return to Derby in the West Kimberley for a few months.

My registration as an interviewer for the main *Bringing Them Home Oral History Project* was a good opportunity for the Library to place an interviewer in a remote area at minimum cost; and an entrée for me to learn more about the Aboriginal history of an area to which I had been drawn many years.

I completed basic training on interviewing techniques and use of the DAT recorder and conducted my first interview before leaving Canberra. The interviewee was a friend and former work colleague so there was no problem about having our chat at her home. I felt privileged and humbled that she shared such personal experiences with the nation through me and so was totally horrified when I saw the poor standard 'professional' transcription of our interview. I decided that henceforth I would do my own transcriptions!

Once in the Kimberley it was my job to advertise the project and contact potential interviewees. In an area that hosted many missions and government stations it should perhaps have been a simple matter to find willing participants. But not so. Kimberley people had been the subject of several media reports since the Royal Commission hearing there and emotions were running high. Though most Royal Commission interviewees had expressed the view that the child removal era should be part of public knowledge, few were willing to re-live their experiences yet again and run the risk of being misquoted or sensationalized.

New interviews were necessary because of the confidentiality element of the Royal Commission interviews, so I was fortunate to have an established network of contacts within the Aboriginal community. The other vital element was time, but seeing the trusty '83 Subaru had blown head gaskets, I wasn't going anywhere in a hurry. In fact, I became quite an icon in Derby in 2000 tentatively riding a bicycle with a carefully balanced backpack centred over my shoulders as I headed off to record yet another story of incredible personal strength and survival.

The decision to do my own transcriptions meant a high level of accuracy – surely the least that could be done for such brave people. It also meant that I lived the stories twice in quick succession. I found I was able to listen impartially to tales of deep personal grief – well, maybe the odd tear would well up, but mostly I was composed. It was a different story though in the small hours and the privacy of my own room in the house on the edge of Kamalingunga Reserve, as I made timed summaries and completed the full transcriptions.

The most challenging interview was the matriarch who was keen to talk but her family were very angry and still in shock. They had only recently become aware of her story because it was part of the evidence at the successful Karrajarri Native Title claim. Her police aide son insisted that family members be present for 'support', but it was they who needed consoling. There were five extra people at that interview, but not all at once. They came and went 'quietly' – tip toeing around and sliding the screen door to go outside for a smoke – all of which was picked up by the sensitive DAT of course and very distracting for me and the interviewee. Fortunately I had known Nita for some years and in different situations, so we were able to work through the difficulties.

Perhaps the most satisfying interview for me was of a man now recognised as the originator of Indigenous tourism in the Kimberley. In fact, an annual award is named after him and his wife in recognition of their contribution.

As a child Sam was taken from Calwinyarda outstation of Noonkanbah to Moola Bulla near Halls Creek but his older brother was sent in the opposite direction to school in Derby – at the Leprosarium. About 700 kilometres separated them during their maturing years and they reconnected only in later life. Sam told his story in a slow bushman's drawl with lots of pauses and silences and illustrated by a slow smile that culminated in a burst of eye twinkle. He appears to bear no bitterness for the harsh treatment he received in his younger years. He is now well known and respected across the Kimberley community and by national and international visitors. It gave me great pleasure to learn that he was included in the National Library of Australia's exhibition of National Treasures in about 2002 and that an extract of our interview was heard by thousands of visitors to the Library that year.

The full record of the *Bringing Them Home Oral History Project* is contained in the National Library's publication *Many Voices: reflection on experiences of Indigenous child separation*. A full list of interviewees can be found at the NLA web site (www.nla.gov.au) oral history section if you search for **Bringing Them Home**.

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Colleen Hattersley was born in Sydney NSW in 1944. With her family she travelled extensively through NSW and southern Queensland, settling in Canberra in the mid 1950s where she completed her secondary schooling. She spent some years in Papua New Guinea in the 1960s before returning to Australia to raise her two sons and various 'care' children. Her formal education straddled a career in administration and teaching with tertiary degree studies being undertaken in recent years. She graduated from the ANU in 1999 with a BA in Aboriginal Studies focusing on Australian anthropology and linguistics.

Colleen has had an active interest in oral history since 1998 when she went to the West Kimberley (WA) to fulfil a promise to help an Aboriginal woman in Derby put down her story. A long association and deep friendship has developed from that exercise.

Other projects undertaken include:

- storytelling project for Yuriny Aboriginal Cultural Centre, Derby WA. Book *Booroola Nganka* (Derby Stories) published by Yuriny Aboriginal Cultural Centre, 2001.
- interviewer and transcriber for the National Library of Australia's oral history project *Bringing them Home*. Book *Many Voices* published by the National Library in 2002. Ask for it at your library. Extract from one interview is on the CD-ROM that accompanies the book.
- *Women of the Clarence Valley* – an oral history project for the NSW Department for Women in partnership with Gumbainggir woman Robyne Bancroft. A book and web publication are currently under consideration.
- Invited by Magabala Books, Broome, to accept a 12 month appointment as the first Travelling Editor – visiting communities in the Kimberley to encourage people to consider publishing their stories and identifying what assistance they need to achieve that goal.
- Various Australian language-related projects (Nyikina) for Jarlmadangah-Burru Aboriginal Community near Derby, WA (2000-2004)
- Editorial input for the Nyikina Community Language Project, Derby, 2004.
- Voluntary literacy and language activities while in the Kimberley including teaching computer skills to people with minimal formal education.

(Colleen has now returned to southern Queensland for family reasons and will consider any serious offers of employment.)

Inaugural Magarey Medal for Biography 2005 (\$10,000 in first year)

Most generously donated by Adjunct Professor Susan Magarey, the Magarey Medal for Biography is a prize of \$10,000 in the first year and thereafter indexed to inflation. The Medal is awarded to the female person who has published the work judged to be the best biographical writing on an Australian subject. The awarding of the prize is administered and judged by a panel established by the Australian Historical Association and the Association for the Study of Australian Literature. Consisting of a cash award and a medal, it is normally presented biennially for a book published in the two years preceding the year of the award. It will, however, be presented in both 2005 and 2006 and once every two years thereafter. This means that the 2006 Medal will be for a book published in the preceding year.

Nominations are now invited for the inaugural Medal, in 2005:

- for a published biography in the form of a book
- on an Australian subject
- published in 2003 or 2004
- by a female author

Nominations may be made either by the author or, with the nominee's permission, by the book's publishers or by any member of the Australian Historical Association or the Association for the Study of Australian Literature. Entries must be accompanied by a letter of nomination, giving author's full name and postal address (where applicable, institutional address preferred).

A panel of three judges nominated after consultation between the Association for the Study of Australian Literature and the Australian Historical Association will choose the winner. The Award will be announced at the Australian Historical Association and Association for the Study of Australian Literature conferences in mid-2005. If two winners are chosen, the cash prize will be shared between them.

Nominations should be sent by 28 February 2005, with three copies of the nominated book, to:

The Secretariat,
Australian Historical Association,
Department of Modern History,
Macquarie University,
Sydney, NSW, 2109.



Oral History Training Workshop

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

The Oral History Association of Australia – Queensland Inc will be conducting an oral history training workshop. Lesley Jenkins, an experienced oral historian, will facilitate the workshop. The day will cover the following aspects of oral history:

- Introduction to oral history – what it is, how it can be used and what can be made from the recordings
- Memory – its reliability, its triggers, its possibilities
- The interview and interviewing techniques – researching, the questionnaire, the venue and ambience
- Tapes, equipment, copyright and ethics
- Making the tapes accessible – indexing, transcribing and logging

When: Saturday 16 October 2004
10am – 4pm

Where: Bulimba Library, cnr Riding Rd & Oxford Street

Cost: \$60.00 (members) \$66 (non-members))

ENROLMENT ESSENTIAL

Please enrol by making cheques payable to the OHAA-Qld Inc and send to Lesley Jenkins at 93 Petersen Street, Wynnum 4178. Email enquiries can be sent to Lesley at recordinghistory@optusnet.com.au

- If you have a working tape recorder please bring it along.
- Morning and afternoon tea provided. Please bring your own lunch.
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For more information on oral history, visit web site:

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



Sharing Australia's Stories

The *Sharing Australia's Stories* grants programme is a new \$3 million, three-year grants programme that gives all Australians the opportunity to show how their stories have contributed to the great events and themes that have shaped our nation. It was announced by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell on 20 August 2004.

Grants of between \$5000 and \$50 000 are available under the programme to:

- not-for-profit community organisations
- schools
- individuals and
- local government authorities

Applications will be received until 15 October 2004.

What projects are eligible?

Projects that contribute to an understanding of at least one of the following:

- the course or pattern of Australia's natural or cultural history
- an aspect of Australia's natural or cultural history that is uncommon, rare or endangered
- information that contributes to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history
- the principal characteristics of a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments
- the aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group
- a creative or technical achievement at a particular period
- the social, cultural or spiritual history or life of a particular community or cultural group
- the life or works of a person or group of persons of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history or
- an important part of Australia's Indigenous tradition.

Eligible projects could:

- be about a place (including a site, area, region, track or route, or a series of related places), community, activity, event, tradition, institution, or a family or person
- tell the story of an aspect of Australia's natural heritage that has been important in shaping the flora, fauna or landscapes of the continent
- involve activities such as publishing brochures, books, guides or websites or developing events, displays, interpretive exhibitions or signage.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Not-for-profit community organisations
- Schools
- Individuals and
- Local government authorities

When do applications close?

15 October 2004

Contacts

For more information visit www.deh.gov.au/heritage/programs or contact

Department of the Environment and Heritage

GPO Box 787

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Phone: 1800 653 004 (free call)

Fax: (02) 6274 2092

Email: storiesgrants@deh.gov.au



Reminiscence Therapy Workshop

“In order to come home to ourselves, all of us need sustenance, companionship, solitude and the sharing of experiences. Story making and storytelling are habits which people have used since time immemorial to vitalize past and present, thereby creating trajectories into the future.”

Marilyn Roberts is a Story therapist and Storyteller whose career contains many varied occupations, from a Nurse's Aide in an Aged Care facility while she gained her Teaching Certificate, to a Tour Guide in Sugar Mill as she brought up her small children. From teaching, Marilyn moved into Public Libraries gaining a BA in Library and Information Science and a Diploma in yoga teaching as well as a Diploma in Creative Art Therapy. The loss of a son in 1990 led to a number of changes in Marilyn's life and it was during this time she discovered the healing power of story. Since then she has dedicated her path to helping others find resolution and strength through hearing stories and telling their own. Marilyn gives talks and conducts seminars and workshops for individuals, community groups, churches, aged care facilities, hospitals, schools and preschools using story, poetry song and the arts as a healing tool.

In this session, Marilyn will discuss the value of using autobiographic recall to strengthen the past and present for the interviewee and explore methods to assist the interviewer in eliciting memories and enriching the interviewee's stories using successful themes and sensitizing questions. Interviewers will also get some practical ideas to enhance their empathetic listening skills. This will be a very experiential session, you will need to be in comfortable clothing.

When: Saturday 13 November 2004
10am – 12.30 pm

Where: Commissariat Store, 115 William Street, Brisbane

Cost: \$15.00 (members) \$20.00 (non-members)

ENROLMENT ESSENTIAL

Please enrol by making cheques payable to the OHAA-Qld Inc and send to Lesley Jenkins at 93 Petersen Street, Wynnum 4178. Email enquiries can be sent to Lesley at recordinghistory@optusnet.com.au

The workshop will be followed by a light lunch and the Oral History Association of Australia (Qld Inc.) Annual General Meeting.

For more information on oral history, visit web site:

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

