

NOHANZ Newsletter

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Newsletter: The NOHANZ Executive has agreed to take responsibility for seeking material for the newsletter over the next year. Expect to hear from us as we seek news and views from around the country about what is happening, courses that are being offered, reports on projects in progress or completed. Email contact is Rachael Selby at R.A.Selby@massey.ac.nz who is looking forward to receiving your contributions.

NOHANZ news

At the NOHANZ conference in July this year, we talked about what members would like NOHANZ to do. Below is a list of those ideas. If you have any more, or suggestions as to how we might implement them, or can offer to help with some of them, please get in touch with either Linda Evans (linda.evans@natlib.govt.nz 04 474 3000) or Megan Hutching (megan.hutching@mch.govt.nz 04 496 6338).

- regional contact lists for events, discussions, etc
- sample contract for oral history services
- certificates for attendance at training courses
- networks of mentors or 'buddies' for debriefing after recording interviews
- advice regarding purchase of analogue recording equipment
- future technologies
- courses: abstracting; critiquing interviews/ongoing professional development; transcribing and editing interviews; using oral history on web sites; presenting oral history back to the community; using oral history; archiving and using oral history in archives, museums, and libraries

If we are to develop regional contact lists, you would need to send us your email address. If you would like to do this, send yours to Megan Hutching.

- We haven't had much response to the proposals for changes to the NOHANZ journal, *Oral History in New Zealand*, (see September newsletter), so please send yours to Megan or Anna Green.

NOHANZ conference report

As a first time NOHANZ conference goer I was thoroughly impressed with 'Know Your Place: Locating Oral History', at Auckland University Conference Centre, 19-20 July

2003. Over 70 people attended from all around Aotearoa/New Zealand.

I appreciated the talks by the keynote speakers: Te Ahukaramu Charles Royal and Judith Binney on Saturday and then Linda Shopes on Sunday. In contrast to these plenary sessions there was always a difficult choice to make between the parallel streams for the remaining presentations. However, in these more intimate settings, personal exchanges flowed freely between presenters and participants.

The conference was really important to me because of the people I met and exchanged ideas with re doing oral history interviews and projects. I came away feeling inspired and refreshed having met a cross-section of oral historians from the community, local and central government, through to more academic settings. I valued the different perspectives that each person brought, from the more technical backgrounds through to those with archival knowledge.

Meeting oral historians face-to-face from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and the Oral History Centre, Alexander Turnbull Library, was a bonus. Putting faces to contributors to the NOHANZ newsletters and journals was also an important aspect of being able to attend this conference.

Another highlight was the Saturday night tour of MOTAT. We were picked up from the university in an old Auckland Regional Authority bus driven by Ian Robertson. The tour to Western Springs began in style! On arrival at MOTAT we were treated to a look through the Solent flying boat, and after a tram ride we went through the pumphouse before hearing about tram restoration by the volunteer workers. Most important to me was hearing the stories of those who work at MOTAT and their passion for maintaining a part of our social history. The subsequent

chance to socialise over drinks before a scrumptious dinner at the Colonial Arms Restaurant was a fitting end to a full day.

Sunday morning's AGM was worth attending. I learnt a more about NOHANZ by going, which was an extra bonus. Offering a spot prize was a very enterprising way to ensure a good attendance! The remote possibility of winning a portable CD player tempted me out of bed for this 9am start.

Thanks to the organisers for making 'Know Your Place: Locating Oral History' such a success. It was a well-organised and excellently catered conference. I was impressed by the amount of background information on the NOHANZ website particularly for people like myself who don't know Auckland well. This was the friendliest and most enjoyable conference I've been to. Thanks to the organisers for all their time and effort. And to everyone else who participated in the conference thanks too – let's meet again in two years' time.

Nicola Robertson, Christchurch

Project reports

Women's Electoral Lobby oral history project:
WEL Women who made a difference.

This was a one-year project funded by the Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust for Awards in Oral History in 2002.

The project records the memories of women who were active in WEL from its inception in 1975, when most of them were at home with young children. Many of these women now occupy positions of great responsibility in the paid workforce, including in parliament, local bodies and academia.

WEL aimed to overcome discrimination against women, to change legislation to benefit women, and to get people into public

office with attitudes and policies which advanced women's rights.

At its height, WEL had 26 branches throughout New Zealand, from the Bay of Islands to Invercargill. In 2003, one branch survives: Kapiti WEL of which I am a relatively new member. My membership started in 1995, whereas the branch began in 1977.

I conducted 12 of 16 interviews with 21 women. Because of pressure of work and health problems, Kath Offer and Tricia Keiller conducted one interview each, and Danna Glendining completed two interviews.

Three of the interviews were with pairs of women and one was with a group of three women. This was partly to save time but also because I hoped that the women would spark each other off and elicit information that would not otherwise be forthcoming. This proved to be the case.

The women interviewed represented WEL branches throughout New Zealand. They included Dorothy Wilson (Hokianga, Kaeo-Kerikeri, West Auckland), Judy Pickard (Waikato), Judie Alison (Gisborne), Tricia Keiller (Taranaki), Janet King, Tina Phillips, Frances McMillan (Kapiti), Danna Glendining, Di Grant, Pauline McLeod (Wairarapa), Margaret Shields, Joan Isaac, Elspeth Preddey, Marijke Robinson, Judith Davey, Louise Ryan (Wellington) Elaine Taylor, Elizabeth Scott (Motueka), Patsy McGrath (Nelson), Zeta Burgess and Pat Dennis (Southland).

I took a short cut so far as pre-interviews were concerned, given that most of the interviewees were well-educated, articulate women to whom oral history is a familiar technique. In most cases, I talked over the phone about the interview and emailed interview information sheets, and also

biographical forms, which were completed and emailed back to me. Only in two cases did I make a pre-interview visit. This was mainly because I detected a nervousness about the interview in phone discussions I had with two of the older women.

Each interview started with an open question asking the women to talk about their family backgrounds and what made them into the feminists they are today, or variations on that theme. Each interview developed organically with one topic naturally arising from another. As interviewer I had a number of themes to cover - such as the main activities of the particular WEL branch, perceived differences between branches, the non-partisan goal of WEL, relationships with both male and female politicians, branch activities, and the interviewees' perceptions of the over-all impact of WEL on New Zealand society. Each interview wove itself around such themes.

Most interviews covered four sides or two one hour tapes, with two interviews covering six sides. The interviews include some wonderful stories about local branch activities, including protests regarding such issues as abortion law reform.

In addition to the WEL content, the tapes also include valuable personal histories of a group of amazing women who have made a significant contribution to New Zealand society.

The interviews and abstracts have been archived at the Alexander Turnbull Library's Oral History Centre, after a celebration on 17 September, to mark the completion of the project.

Maureen Birchfield

Note: The project was conducted concurrently with the compiling of the documentary history, The WEL Herstory, by Elspeth Preddey, Women's Electoral Lobby/Fraser Books, 2003.

The Settlement of Refugees in New Zealand

During 2003 I was fortunate to be awarded a Research Fellowship under the Royal Society of New Zealand's Science Mathematics and Technology Teacher Fellowship Scheme. My research was centred on the settlement of refugees in New Zealand.

A major aspect of my project was to record oral histories of people who arrived in New Zealand as refugees. I aimed to interview former refugees from as wide a variety of ethnic backgrounds as possible. I was also keen to ensure that I interviewed people who had arrived in the earliest days of refugee re-settlement, as well as in more recent times. The support of one of my host organisations for this project, the Refugee and Migrant Service, was invaluable, especially in providing initial contacts.

At the beginning of the year I knew very little about what was involved in oral history interviewing, so it was a steep learning curve. Three workshops, run by Judith Fyffe for the Oral History Centre at Alexander Turnbull Library, launched me into the whole process. Planning and arranging the interviews, interviewing and abstracting, were all covered in three one-day courses, held over a period of three months.

The interviewees spanned a fifty year period of refugee re-settlement. The earliest arrival was one of the Polish children, the first group of refugees accepted by New Zealand, and brought here during the Second World War. This group of over 700 children lived in a camp at Pahiatua. Most were orphans whose families had originally been deported to labour camps in Russia. Released from these camps when Germany attacked Russia, they escaped south to Iran, before being offered sanctuary in New Zealand. Other interviewees fled occupation by foreign armies, revolution, civil war and religious persecution to begin a new life in a country that most knew very little about.

All the people I spoke to had features in common. Virtually all of them arrived in New Zealand by chance. Sometimes it was a chance encounter with a New Zealander, or someone who mentioned New Zealand to them. For others, who were more aware of refugee resettlement in Canada or Australia, it was the arrival of a New Zealand selection team in their refugee camp. All of them were willing to give up everything they had to flee to an uncertain future in an unknown country, on the other side of the world. Not only had they given up on the prospect of things improving in their homeland, but many feared for their freedom, and their lives, if they remained.

All the interviews follow a similar format. Their life when growing up in their country of origin is followed by their description of the upheaval that caused them to flee. The flight from their homeland, and the period of displacement they all faced prior to their acceptance by New Zealand make up the rest of the interview. The upheavals covered in these interviews took place in Iraq, Somalia, Poland, Lithuania, Sudan, Bosnia, Tibet, Afghanistan, Russia, Iran and Hungary.

This project gave me a wonderful opportunity to record some fascinating and exciting events in the lives of a group of people who have found a sanctuary in a tiny country, far from their homeland. All of them are grateful for the opportunity that New Zealand has given them to re-establish their lives. The issue of refugees has been a contentious one over the past decade. The stories on these tapes will reinforce just how lucky we are to live in a country that recognises and values human rights.

Gordon Campbell

Note: These interviews are archived at the Oral History Centre, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Christchurch Environment Centre, a 30-year history

In May 1973, the first Environment Centre in New Zealand opened in Oxford Terrace, Christchurch, in a soon-to-be-demolished building which was offered free by the City Council to a group of keen environmentalists. It aimed to provide resources and information for the public on environmental matters, a meeting space for environmental groups and a networking opportunity for those keen to get involved in environmental work.

Janet Holm had just returned from an international environmental conference in Stockholm (where she went as a non-governmental organisation representative from NZ). It was there that she had the vision for a local environment centre which reflected the concerns of the community. She had been actively working on environmental issues, in particular lobbying the Christchurch City Council on the ever increasing problem of air pollution in the city through her work with the Clean Air Society.

Others who were there on the night before the official opening doing last minute touch ups to the vivid green paint work included University students from the group Ecology Action, Alisdair Hutchison, Andrew Macbeth, Professor Knox and a keen young 5th former from St Andrews College, Rod Donald (now co-leader of the Green Party).

The Centre, known first as the Canterbury Environment Centre, was opened by the Mayor of Christchurch, Mr Pickering and the first Commissioner for the Environment, Peter Brookes. The Centre lasted in its first location only for a couple of years before having to move as the building was to be demolished to make way for the new over bridge to Durham St. It moved to the old Students' Association building at what is now the Arts Centre where it stayed until 1996, before moving to the Old Chemistry building where it also merged with the Peace Forum and became known as the Environment and Peace Information Centre (Epicentre).

Those who visited the Arts Centre during the early 1990s might remember it as a vibrant shop selling a wide range of NZ t-shirts supporting the work of groups like Greenpeace, the Maruia Society, Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific NZ and Trade Aid. The Centre operated then as a thriving retail outlet, the first of its kind in Christchurch but also still as a resource centre with a growing library and as a meeting space for many local environmental groups. Groups included the Native Forest Action Council; Peace Forum; Bicycle Planning Association, One Earth Trust; Royal Forest and Bird Society; Campaign against Foreign Control in NZ; CND; Clutha Action Committee; Ecology Action; Organisation to Preserve the Heaphy Track; Friends of the Earth; NZ Clean Air Society; Project Jonah and many more.

The Centre has always circulated a newsletter which offers groups a regular column, a news section for national and international news; a listing of local events and a submissions calendar as well as interesting articles on environmental philosophy and gardening. The Centre took a neutral stance on campaigning when it first began, however during the time of the Epicentre it reviewed that stance and took more of a 'watchdog' role by initiating submissions and coordinating lobbying efforts in support of its many member groups.

Today the Centre is located in Kilmore Street next door to the Regional Council, ECAN. It remains a meeting space for environmental groups; it still offers a weekly newsletter now via email as *Ecoweb*. It has developed close ties with both the Regional Council and the City Council. It has been very influential in seeing a new network of environment centres develop over the years, with there being nearly 20 Centres operating today. The Centre has always sought funding for its work through various means and relies a lot on volunteers but for the past couple of years it has received an operating grant from the Ministry for

the Environment; for which it lobbied and drafted the original proposal to fund Environment Centres.

A history is now being put together to celebrate the past 30 years that the Centre has been in operation. It is a quite a remarkable history. Many colourful characters have brought their energy and enthusiasm to the Centre and this has shaped its work and direction over time. It has been influential on a number of environmental issues through its support of member groups and their campaigning work. Successes include seeing legislation for lead free petrol in 1986; a ban on set net fishing on Banks Peninsula to protect the Hector's Dolphin; support for a Nuclear Free NZ; cycle ways in Christchurch; Environmental Education in schools through its association with the NZ Association for Environmental Education; supporting education on organic growing and development of community gardens in the city and supporting the campaign for a GE Free NZ.

Fourteen people have been interviewed about their involvement with the Centre over the past thirty years. Together with information obtained from the Centre's archives, the interviews will create a record that portrays the various events that have shaped the life of the Centre and its contribution to the environmental movement as a whole. If you would like to know more about the Christchurch Environment Centre please visit their website: www.environment.org.nz or email info@environment.org.nz

Ruth Greenaway
tapestries@paradise.net.nz

Second World War oral history projects

Pacific War Stories

Sixty years after New Zealand troops stormed a Japanese-held island in the Solomons, a group of old soldiers and airmen came to Wellington to be honoured for their role in the Pacific during the Second World War.

Their stories, recorded on video and audiotape, were added to the oral history collection held in the Alexander Turnbull Library at a handover presentation on Tuesday 11 November.

New Zealand troops and airmen were sent to the Solomon Islands in 1943 to be part of an Allied attack on Japanese strongholds in the Pacific. There has been little written about New Zealanders' experiences in the Pacific and many of the veterans have been

reluctant to talk about their war service, for fear of being ridiculed.

Even today Bob Dunlop, a retired farmer and auctioneer, says he is reluctant to admit he served in the Pacific. "We had no choice. You went where you were shoved and we did."

A Wellington journalist and documentary maker, Anna Cottrell, was in the Solomon Islands making a video for an aid group when she met Bob Dunlop with a group of New Zealand war veterans who had returned for Anzac Day. She discovered many were reluctant to talk about their Pacific war because they felt their efforts were belittled by those who had fought in Europe and North Africa. They resented being labelled 'coconut bombers'.

Exactly 60 years ago, Dunlop was part of the landing force on Mono Island, which was held by the Japanese. This was the first opposed landing by New Zealand forces since Gallipoli. In the chaos of rushing ashore he saw mates killed, some by the Japanese, some by friendly fire. With antiquated and inappropriate weapons, many felt ill-equipped for jungle warfare.

A wartime pilot who came to Wellington for the handover of the project is George Luoni, now 82, from Tauranga. He was shot down by the Japanese, and drifted for nine hours at sea until he washed up on an enemy-held island. He hid in the inhospitable jungle for a month, trying to elude the Japanese, surviving on land crabs and water until local Solomon Islanders found him. They saved his life.

Keith Mulligan, from Raumati, was another pilot forced to bale out when his plane was involved in a mid-air collision. Mulligan scrambled to the coast where he was eventually picked up by an American rescue craft. Recently the marine who rescued him found his address and sent back the compass Mulligan gave him in 1943.

"I don't remember much of the rescue except that I was dehydrated and sunburnt and mighty pleased to be hauled into the boat," said 82-year-old Mulligan, who has published his own story of war in the Pacific, *Kittyhawks and Coconuts*.

Over the years, many of the former soldiers have raised money for the Solomon Islanders whose lives were seriously disrupted by the war. The Islanders helped the New Zealanders as scouts and guides during the war, putting themselves and their villages at

risk. The Mono Trust has raised money for health, education and welfare.

Pacific War Stories was partly funded by an Award in Oral History.

Second World War oral history project

Megan Hutching and Alison Parr at the Ministry for Culture & Heritage are looking for people to take part in the final two series of this large project. The aim is to record interviews for two books, one on the Pacific campaign and another on the Home Front.

Helen Clark launched the Ministry for Culture and Heritage's Oral History Project after visiting Gallipoli in 2000. The histories record the experiences of World War Two veterans across a range of theatres.

"The oral histories bring to life, in words and pictures, personal wartime experiences and record them for future generations of New Zealanders," Helen Clark said.

"Tens of thousands of New Zealanders were involved in the Pacific War or Home Front, in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and in auxiliary groups such as the Women's National Service Corps, the Home Guard, and the Women's War Service Auxiliary."

Veterans are being invited to complete a questionnaire relating to their particular wartime experience. A selection of those who complete questionnaires will be invited to be interviewed. Their memoirs will be published as part of the series.

The first two books in the oral history series have already been published - *'A Unique Sort of Battle': New Zealanders Remember Crete* was launched in 2001, followed by *Inside Stories: New Zealand Prisoners of War Remember* in 2002. A book on the Italian campaign will be published in April 2004, followed by books on the North Africa campaign in 2005, the Pacific campaign in 2006, and the Home Front in 2007.

Videohistory workshop report

Film School, Wellington, 8-9 November 2003

The second such course to be held for New Zealand oral historians, the recent video history workshop held at the Wellington Film School was a great success. Tony Hiles of the Film School and Judith Fyfe coordinated the course, attended by thirteen people. Most attendees wanted to use video history techniques for upcoming work-based projects and were not disappointed by what the course had to offer.

The course presented practical content alongside broad discussions of the theoretical and ethical aspects of video interviewing. Tony and Judith offered beginners the basics, while providing challenges for those with some experience in video interviewing.

We all thoroughly enjoyed the practical aspects of the course which included practice interviews with other participants, opportunities to hone our filming skills outside on Adelaide Road, and chances to film photographs and artefacts alongside interviews. I particularly enjoyed this aspect of the course and gained good experience by combining the use of images with interviewing techniques. Using and experimenting with the technology also provided us with a good grounding while still in the company of experts!

Emma Dewson

Oral history around the world

Recent articles in *Oral History*, the journal of the British Oral History Society include:

- 'From the interviewer's perspective: interviewing women conscientious objectors': Rena Feld
- 'Issues in cross-cultural interviewing: Japanese women in England': Susan K Burton
- 'A second take: revisiting interviews with a different purpose': Joanna Bornat
- "Dear reader I killed him": ethical and emotional issues in researching convicted murderers through the analysis of interview transcripts': Barry S Godfrey
- 'Sisterhood? Exploring power relations in the collection of oral history': Yvonne McKenna
- 'The last rock in the empire: evacuation, identity and myth in Gibraltar': Caroline Norrie
- 'Costeño voices: oral history on Nicaragua's Caribbean coast': Padmini Broomfield and Cynara Davies

(Vol. 31, no. 1, Spring 2003)

- 'Analysing the analysed: transference and counter-transference in the oral history encounter': Michael Roper
- 'Hardship, help and happiness in oral history narratives of women's lives in Ireland, 1921-1961': Caitriona Clear
- 'Support not scorn: the theory and practice of maternity almoners in the 1960s and 1970s': Rona Ferguson
- "I live on my memories": British return migrants and the possession of the past': Alistair Thomson
- 'Stories of love, pain and courage: AIDS orphans and memory boxes': Philippe Denis and Nokhaya Makiwane
- 'Unseen stories: video history in museums': Steve Humphries

(Vol. 31, no. 2, Autumn 2003)

H-ORALHIST

If you wish to keep up to date with current issues and concerns in the oral history world (admittedly, mostly from the United States), you can join the oral history email list, H-ORALHIST.

Here's how. Send an email message to:

LISTSERV@H-NET.MSU.EDU

Don't include anything in the subject box, but in the body of the message, type:

SUBSCRIBE H-ORALHIST

You'll get an email back, asking for information about yourself, and once you've sent that off, you'll have joined the list. For some idea of the sorts of things discussed, go to the web site for a preview:

www.h-net.org/~oralhist/

Conferences

Annual conference of the British Oral History Society
12-13 June 2004, Bournemouth

'Oral history on display: Presenting testimonies through museums, virtual displays, multi-media and publication'

Oral History on Display sets out to investigate the challenges, implications and opportunities from putting oral history on display. By capturing the memories, testimonies and histories of individuals, oral history offers a dynamic means of exploring the recent past. Oral history is increasingly central to the appeal and popularity of museum exhibitions, community arts projects and television or radio programmes because oral history provides a vital tool for engaging audiences. Using oral history either as a key element of, or to illustrate and illuminate an exhibition, web site or gallery raises ethical, technical, practical, editorial and theoretical issues. The following questions provide a starting point for exploring these issues:

- In the context of museums and galleries, what is the relationship between artefact and oral testimony?
- What are the implications of incorporating the memories of those still-living into long-term exhibitions?
- What are the archival responsibilities of those who 'record to order' for display or broadcast?
- What practical and theoretical issues arise from technological innovations in display?
- How does the current media culture and the proliferation of 'reality TV' impact on how oral history is perceived and received by exhibition audiences?

- What are the possibilities and limitations of using oral history on museum websites and exhibitions?
- What are the cost implications of using oral history as part of display and how can smaller exhibitors and community projects best display oral history?
- How can print publications best display oral history?

To discuss the issues raised by oral history in the context of display we invite proposals for papers from museum, archive and library practitioners, community groups, media presenters and producers, display designers and local historians as well as history and museum studies students and researchers. We also welcome case studies which demonstrate the role of oral history in display and interpretation, or which explore the technical implications of exhibiting oral testimony in both the real and virtual environments.

The closing date for paper and poster presentations (500-750 words) is 31st December 2003. For further information about Oral History on Display please contact Frances Cambrook by email: fcambrook@bmth.ac.uk

Cassette recorders for hire

- Auckland War Memorial Museum Library has recorders for hire. Contact Bruce Ralston on 09 306 7062 or library@akmuseum.org.nz
- In Wellington the Oral History Centre has equipment for hire. Ph: 04 474 3162 or email Gillian.headifen@natlib.govt.nz
Both charge \$10 a day.

This newsletter has some good examples of reports which keep us all informed of what others are doing. The next newsletter is due out in March 2004, so please send us contributions by mid-February. The 2003 journal is expected out in January.