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# NOHANZ

## Newsletter

Volume 17, number 3

SEPTEMBER 2003

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President:

Linda Evans

Executive Committee:

Rachel Baskerville Morley

Maureen Birchfield

Emma Dewhurst

Lesley Hall

Gillian Headifen

Megan Hutching

Alison Laurie

Rachael Selby

Anne Thorpe

Distance members of committee:

Marie Burgess

Jacqui Foley

Helen Frizzell

Anna Green

Rught Greenaway

Bruce Ralston

[www.oralhistory.org.nz](http://www.oralhistory.org.nz)

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](mailto:R.A.Selby@massey.ac.nz) She is very happy to receive your contributions.

### NOHANZ news

#### Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting was held on 20 July 2003 in Auckland at the conference. Thirty members were present with Linda Evans in the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 11 June 2002, were confirmed as a true and accurate record. Matters arising from that meeting included whether or not we could reduce the quorum necessary for an AGM as it is difficult to get 15 members along in the years when the AGM is not held in conjunction with the conference. The 2003 meeting agreed that the quorum be reduced to 10 members for a trial period of four years. An auditor for the accounts has been found and it was proposed that an amendment to the constitution be prepared for the next AGM as it is not necessary for our accounts to be audited each year. This was agreed.

Linda Evans (president) and Bronwyn Officer (treasurer) then presented their reports. (Please let us know if you would like a copy of the financial report.)

Before the election of officers took place, there was some discussion about the way in which the executive committee meets. The discussion included whether or not meetings could take place every two months, instead of monthly as is the current practice; whether tasks that are essential for the smooth running of the organisation could be undertaken by 'distance members' of the committee (that is, people who stayed in touch via email but did not attend meetings), and distributing the tasks around the members of the committee, so that each person was responsible for some area.

Linda Evans then stood aside from the chair while the election for president took place. She was re-elected president. Megan Hutching was re-elected secretary and Rachel Baskerville Morley was elected treasurer. The following agreed to be on the executive committee—those with their location in brackets are 'distance members' as mentioned

above: Emma Dewson, Maureen Birchfield, Lesley Hall, Rachael Selby, Anne Thorpe, Alison Laurie, Gillian Headifen, Ruth Greenaway (Christchurch), Helen Frizzell (Dunedin), Jacqui Foley (Oamaru), Bruce Ralston (Auckland), Anna Green (Hamilton), Marie Burgess (Gisborne).

Under general business we discussed the location of the next conference—this may be Christchurch; the International Oral History Association conference in 2006 which will be held in Australia; ideas for changing the annual journal, *Oral History in New Zealand* which will be published in the newsletter, and reviewing the constitution.

The outgoing executive committee was thanked for its work.

Megan Hutching, *Secretary*

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### ***Oral History in New Zealand:* proposals for discussion**

#### **Background**

The National Oral History Association of New Zealand publishes the journal *Oral History in New Zealand* once a year. Megan Hutching has done much of the work for the journal for some years, and its continuation and quality owe a great deal to her on-going commitment to oral history/historians as sole editor and secretary of NOHANZ. However, at the meeting of the Association held in Auckland in July, Megan and other long-serving members of the executive indicated a clear desire that others come forward to take responsibility for some of the key roles in NOHANZ.

At the meeting I indicated a willingness to take on editorship of the journal (subsequently Megan and I discussed the possibility of editing it jointly), with

the qualification that there were some changes I would like members of the Association to discuss first. As always with our meetings, time was fast running out, and it was agreed that I should write a discussion document for publication in the next newsletter. I would therefore like to put forward for debate and discussion the following two proposals.

#### **1. A 'refereed' journal**

The first issue concerns making the journal formally 'refereed'. This practice entails sending out articles submitted to the journal to be read by appropriate and qualified reader(s). It is customary to send out the articles anonymously to ensure fairness. The reader then writes a report on the article, often suggesting revisions (which may be small or quite substantial), and recommending (or otherwise) publication. Academic journals follow this process to ensure that published material is of the highest possible standard.

The argument in favour of adopting this process for our journal is that it would then be more likely to attract articles from a wider range of researchers using oral history, particularly those studying and/or working in our tertiary education institutions. Despite the relatively widespread use of oral history in women's studies, history, anthropology and sociology, among others, the journal does not attract sufficient contributions from these sources. One of the reasons is that little professional credit is given to work published in non-refereed journals.

However, it is very important that we do not lose the community-oriented focus of the journal. It should continue to have sections devoted to short reports on oral history research projects, reviews of books and exhibitions, and news about regional oral history groups and meetings, similar to the format of the journal *Oral History* in the U.K., for example. Secondly, we would have to work hard to make sure the review process did not slow down production of the journal, while the journal editor waited for readers to write their reports. A reasonably quick turn-around of

material sent out for review would be essential (four weeks?).

## 2. Name of the journal

Secondly, what about the name of the journal? Should we try to make it both more interesting and reflect the bilingual heritage of this country? An example of a journal that seeks to do this is *Labour/Le Travailleur* in Canada. However, unlike that journal, NOHANZ does not presently have the resources to provide translation from one language to another, and we may need to discuss this issue further.

Titles are best kept short and unfortunately some obvious choices like *Oral History*, *Oral History Review*, or *History and Memory* are already taken! I sought the advice of Tom Roa, in the School of Maori and Pacific Development at Waikato University, on the issue of a bilingual title around the words 'remembering', 'memory' and 'oral history'. Tom suggested a number of alternatives, but commented that his 'preference is for the graceful simplicity of Maumahara...', so the title could perhaps be something like this:

*Remembering/Maumahara*

## Your comments and responses

We really need your feedback on these ideas, and indeed any other suggestions you might wish to put forward regarding the form and content of the journal. Please let us know what you think:

Anna Green: [agreen@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:agreen@waikato.ac.nz)

Megan Hutching:

[megan.hutching@mch.govt.nz](mailto:megan.hutching@mch.govt.nz)

or by mail to Megan Hutching,  
Secretary NOHANZ, P.O. Box 3819,  
Wellington.

We'll write a follow-up article summarising the views of NOHANZ members for the next newsletter.

Anna Green

## Reports

### Marlborough Sounds oral history project

There are both advantages and drawbacks in being a new member of a small community. The advantage has been the chance to do so many public talks, and a disadvantage has been slow entry to parts of the community for access to interviewees. As a result, one of the aims of the Project: to examine the historic inter-relationships of Maori and Pakeha in the Sounds communities, has yet to gain a real focus. However, opportunities are opening up as I make new contacts, and there are hopes for this in the near future.

Mike Taylor at Picton Museum has a strong interest and some experience in oral history, so has encouraged (aided and abetted!) my activities, and is gradually 'discovering' a considerable number of previously-recorded and undocumented tapes. These are being gradually sorted and paperwork prepared to make them accessible and useable. I am presently checking the archiving condition and consents of the oral history collection.

With more enthusiasm than good planning, I have been interviewing local residents, mostly the aged, who are first approached by Mike. This programming needs to be reviewed and improved, to choose interviewees in keeping with a theme. Generally they were worth recording, but a more focused plan of action would be more useful, and I intend to try and introduce series of topic-based interviews (which need not exclude biographical material) in future.

The major successes of the Award have been to equip Picton Museum with oral history equipment, and to gain local publicity for oral history in the community. Through press announcements, firstly of the Award, and then about a short volunteers' course, I have been asked to talk at a succession of local groups, generally made up of older residents, so the idea and purpose of oral history is becoming more widely understood. The training course was enthusiastically received by 12 people, who have promptly retired into the woodwork apart from one dear soul who is willing only to transcribe tapes. I hope to rethink this and try again next year.

The project has had a positive input to the collection of oral history in the Sounds area. New interest has been aroused, and an existing collection is being unearthed and organized, and new material added in a more useable manner. Public access to the collection is being addressed, and thanks to the Award we feel we are moving forwards.

Loreen Brehaut

### 25th Anniversary Conference of the Oral History Association of Australia, Perth, Western Australia, 4 - 7 September 2003

This was, much to my disgrace, my first attendance at an Australian oral history conference, but it won't be my

last. Participants included independent researchers, public historians, archivists, museum curators, journalists and postgraduate students, although there were relatively few teachers or university staff. Consequently the programme was diverse, covering everything from workshops for independent oral history contractors to papers exploring theory and methodology. The conference was very well organised, but above all, it was friendly, and every effort was made to include those who came from some distance (Mexico and Singapore, among other places). My only queries might be the high registration fee, possibly dictated by the cost of hiring appropriate venues, which must deter those without institutional funding; and the length (four days). The conference organisers elected to run only two parallel sessions, and to give each presenter 45 minutes. By international conference standards, this is extremely generous: but it resulted in each session having a good-sized audience and adequate time for wide-ranging discussion and debate.

Frank Heimans, an independent oral historian and documentary-maker, presented a technically informative and entertaining paper about an oral history project he undertook for the Department of Public Works Services (since renamed). The Department asked him to record interviews with construction workers, unionists, and builders/contractors who had given evidence to a royal commission investigating the building industry in Sydney. It was not clear (and he was unable to elaborate) why the Department wanted this project done, since they already held the transcripts of evidence presented to the Commission. Frank took us through the entire process of tendering for the project to burning the final C.D. He was given four months to do the whole project: including background research (reading all the volumes of the Royal Commission took three weeks), locating interviewees and recording interviews, and editing a compilation tape. In the course of his paper he played excerpts from the tapes, and we heard about rorts in the building industry by both employers and unionists. Building contractors engaged in collusive contracting and fraud; unionists sought extra payments because a 'flea' had been found on site, or cooking smells wafting across from Chinatown made the men feel hungry. But the best story related to Heimans paying his niece \$50 to stand and shake a tree outside a house where he was recording to keep the cicadas quiet!

A paper of interest to librarians and archivists related to the role of oral histories in archival institutions. Julie Horne argued that oral histories had become central to the collecting function of archives. She described recent deposits of personal papers at her institution in Sydney, and argued that the range of content was very limited. By the time documents relating to working life had been removed (minutes of meetings, published material, etc) there was virtually nothing left. There were few personal letters, and no records of electronic correspondence, such as email. The absence of such personal written material, she suggested, meant that oral biographies were the way of the future for archives.

Finally, if anyone thought the ANZAC legend was in danger, fear not. Peter Rubinstein, a journalist, had prepared a radio programme to be played upon the death of Australia's last surviving ANZAC soldier. When Alec William Campbell died in Tasmania at the age of 103 years, the programme was syndicated throughout Australia.

Rubinstein discussed his interviews with Alec Campbell, then played the programme in full. Some members of the audience loved it; others were appalled. I found the use of background music (in turn martial, sentimental or nationalistic) while Campbell spoke both intrusive and emotionally and intellectually manipulative. There was clear conflict between Campbell's actual memories of war - death and destruction - and the glorification of sacrifice implicit in the whole presentation. Finally, the repeated assertion that Australian national identity derived from the Anzac experience had historians in the audience rolling their eyes. Legends, indeed.

Anna Green

#### Peace Stories from Otautahi Christchurch

In July 2002 the Christchurch City Council officially declared Christchurch as New Zealand's first Peace City, under the UNESCO Cities for Peace Network. The idea was initiated by the Peace Foundation and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and supported by over 20 local groups and some politicians. Over a period of 18 months a small group met with council staff, Mayor Garry Moore and some councillors to discuss a presentation to council.

The Council adopted the proposal which included the establishment of a peace website, peace signs at the entrance to the city, 'graffiti art', a peace library including oral and written archives, a peace museum, peace awards, peace park, formal friendship links with Nagasaki and Hiroshima, peace festivals, a children's art exhibition and exhibitions such as the one from Hiroshima and Nagasaki Mayors and the Gandhi exhibition. There was also support for exploring how Christchurch could develop an international centre for conflict resolution.

Over the past six months the Peace Foundation has held several meetings with representatives of the

Christchurch Public Library, the MacMillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury and Lincoln University Libraries and the Museum with a view to coordinating the collection of historic peace movement papers, artefacts/memorabilia, photos, posters, display boards, tapes, books, journals, videos and slide shows. They would like to set up links between these collections so researchers know where this peace material is located.

Within these collection already are valuable writings and papers from: Harold Evans; Barry Mitcalfe; Bob Stowell; The War Resisters' International; The Christian Pacifist Society; Nelson Peace Group; New Zealand Nuclear Free Peacemaking Association; Richard Kennaway; Rev David Taylor and Dr Neil Cherry.

The Canterbury Museum is interested in collecting any memorabilia from our peace history such as quilts, banners, badges, art, poetry, photos, old petition forms, slides, cards, minute books, symbolic models of items such as missiles, 'justice scales' etc. We have already had someone agree to gift the mug they used in the 'Hautu' prison camp during WW II and other precious items from that time.

With regard to the oral archives, the Straw Umbrella Trust has taken up this side of the project. With a grant from the Peace and Disarmament Education Trust a group of interviewers have approached some of our older peace people who are either from Christchurch or have had a significant link with the city. Some of the people that have been interviewed to date include: Rev George Armstrong about his role in the Peace Squadron (late 1970's); Mary Woodward about her work for the CND and 1963 petition to the government (No bomb south of the line); Larry Ross and his work in the Nuclear Free Zone Committee and Nuclear Free Peacemaking Association (1980's); Pauline Tangiora and her many varied work and activism in particular; solidarity with Indigenous Peoples of the world.

These peace stories will be held as a collection in the MacMillan Brown oral archive collection at the University of Canterbury. The STRAW Umbrella Trust and the Peace Foundation hope to either produce a publication using excerpts from interviews and peoples writing and creative work in response to peace; a radio programme, exhibition and/or an educational resource.

We hope that this project will inspire people in other centres throughout New Zealand to profile the peace stories of their own regions. In doing this we will gradually establish a tangible resource that tells the stories of the positive peacemaking development in our nation's history. These oral history interviews bring the stories of peace work back to life and celebrate the grassroots efforts of people from many walks of life who have strived to educate, work for and to maintain a history that celebrates peace.

For more information about this project please contact - Ruth Greenaway, STRAW Umbrella Trust, PO Box 33208, Christchurch or Dr Kate Dewes, Disarmament and Security Centre, PO Box 8390, Riccarton, Christchurch [www.disarmsecure.org](http://www.disarmsecure.org)  
Ruth Greenaway

## Notices

*Words and Silences*, the journal of the IOHA, is seeking contributions for the 2004 issue on any of the following themes:

**Healing the past, rewriting the future: oral history as legal evidence**

Oral history and oral tradition have been the foundation for not only rewriting history but for actually struggling against the consequences of past wrongs and injustices. Peoples who in the past were conquered and colonized today are utilizing oral tradition to reclaim land, language rights and cultural autonomy. Survivors from persecution by military or oppressive regimes today bring their underground memories to confront official history and demand both social recognition and legal punishment of those responsible for violating human rights. And perhaps in less dramatic ways common people expect respect for their memories and traditions. Oral history research, and at times oral historians themselves, enter the arena of the law as memory and oral tradition are among the evidence used to demand restitution, whether it be of land or dignity. We are calling for medium-length articles (2500 words) that report on research and reflect upon the force of divided and divisive memories, the confrontation of customary and written law, of subordinated memories and hegemonic history, just to mention some of the issues involved in such undertakings.

### The most frustrating interview

*Words and Silences* published an issue devoted to oral historians' recollections of their most memorable interview (vol. 3, no. 4, 1999). That issue was both amusing and enlightening as to what oral historians value in an interview. In the same spirit but with a twist we are now asking for short (500 words) and thoughtful contributions about the most frustrating interview. The issue of frustrating experiences comes up often in shop talk or in teaching oral history but seldom finds its way into writings on method or techniques. We would like contributors to recall frustrating interviews, or moments during interviews, select the worst and then describe it and reflect on questions such as how you handled the

feeling, how did it affect the interview, what if anything did you learn from it. There will certainly be other questions to address as you reflect on your most frustrating interview.

#### Collections and archives

This section is devoted to discussion of practical problems encountered in the creation and preservation of oral sources. Please send in short pieces (500 words) and share your accumulated wisdom in the field.

Contributions may be written in English or Spanish (or both, which would save us translation work). In short pieces please include references, if necessary, in the text (author, title, place, publisher and date) and not as footnotes. In longer pieces place footnotes at the end, as text.

Please email your contribution as an attachment to:

[wordsandsilences@inah.gob.mx](mailto:wordsandsilences@inah.gob.mx) or  
[gnecoechea.deh@deh.inah.gob.mx](mailto:gnecoechea.deh@deh.inah.gob.mx)

The DEADLINE for receipt of contributions is 1 February 2004.

#### 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](mailto:library@akmuseum.org.nz)
- In Wellington the Oral History Centre has equipment for hire. Ph. 04 474 3162  
Email: [gillian.headifen@natlib.govt.nz](mailto:gillian.headifen@natlib.govt.nz)  
*Both charge \$10 a day*

#### 2003 Awards in Oral History

Lois Webster  
Siu ki moana (\$1000)

New Zealand Theatre Archive  
Development of professional theatre in the early '60s (\$2000)

Paekakariki Informed Community Inc  
Paekakariki—Telling Our Story (\$2140)

Patricia Wallace  
An oral history of Ngati Porou weaver, Nanny Whai Pooti Hitchiner (\$2500)

Friends of Porirua Hospital Museum  
Oral history project (\$3386)

Denis Grennell  
Ngati Kinohaku: Recording the oral histories of the last generation to grow up on Ngati Kinohaku marae (\$3500)

NZ Cartoon Archive Trust  
New Zealand cartoonists (\$3916)

Helen Bollinger  
West Coast oral history project: Hidden Treasure (\$4050)

Jacqui Foley  
Harbour/Tyne St oral history project, Stage II (\$4426)

Sydney J Shep  
Documenting Wellington's rural heritage: An oral history of the Horokiwi rural community (\$4735)

Museum of Transport & Technology  
Aviation Memories (\$4750)

Ruth Low  
An oral history of the lives and works of drovers in Feilding and district (\$5295)

Tung Jung Assn of NZ  
An oral history of Chinese migration to New Zealand (\$5330)

Wellington Niue Island Assn Inc  
'We came to work and educate our children in this strange land' (\$5550)

Auckland Sexual Abuse Help Foundation  
Auckland Sexual Abuse Help oral history project (\$5850)

Amnesty International NZ  
'Pacific Solution' refugee interview project (\$8000)

Mary Donald  
Art Taranaki (\$8000)

#### Forthcoming workshops

- **Videohistory**  
This two-day workshop will be tutored by Judith Fyfe and Tony Hiles.  
8 – 9 November, Film School, Oxford Tce, Wellington  
Tony Hiles is an experienced film producer and director who has produced several documentaries using oral history projects as resources. He is currently a tutor at the Film School.  
Judith Fyfe has a background in the film industry as well as a career in oral history.

- **From Tape to Type**  
This course will be run by Judith Fyfe, Megan Hutching and Linda Evans for three weekly sessions of two hours, 5:30 – 7:30, in late November.  
It will be a mixture of discussion of the issues and practical exercises regarding turning your oral history interviews into the printed word.  
Issues to be covered will include how to make sense of the narrative without changing the words; how to convey sounds and expressions—and silences; how to retain the voice of the narrator and not the editor, and practical things like font size and type face.