

# NOHANZ

## Newsletter

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

**Newsletter:** 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.

### Oral history news

#### *Elayne retires from MOTAT*

Elayne Robertson worked with great enthusiasm at MOTAT in various roles from 2001 to 2005. She found her metier in the Walsh Memorial Library and worked with the tenacity of a bloodhound researching the MOTAT photograph collection and cataloguing it.

But really Elayne's lasting achievement was the establishment of the MOTAT Oral History section. In 2002 the new MOTAT Director, Jeremy Hubbard, took advice from the existing staff and volunteers and approached Elayne.

His faith was very well rewarded when Elayne immediately drew up equipment lists, plans, and budgets. She recruited volunteers to carry out interviews and brought all the resources together, organised training for us in interview techniques, machine operation and project planning. She was a model of how to do things and was unflagging in her energy which even extended to assisting with organising the 2003 NOHANZ conference in Auckland. She and Ian gave many, many hours of their weekends to the hard work of copying and time coding, liaising with Alexander Turnbull Library and monitoring the output of the interviews as well as arranging and training staff.

So it was with great sadness that we allowed Elayne to resign from the Walsh Memorial Library and the Oral History Section. I did nag her to stay in at least one of her roles here but realised that Elayne's will to be free of early mornings and the draughts in our building was not to be stymied. Such energy, professionalism and leadership could only be rewarded one way – with a surprise party on a MOTAT Melbourne tram similar to one driven by Elayne when she and Ian lived in Melbourne. She rose to the occasion and was even persuaded to drive the

tram back along Great North Road to MOTAT from the Zoo stop.

We all miss her astute observations on the world but know that she has finally taken up a very well-earned retirement.

**Megan Wishart**  
Museum Librarian, MOTAT

***International Oral History  
Association Conference  
Sydney 12-16 July 2006***

The 14<sup>th</sup> International Oral History Conference will be across the Tasman in Sydney next year – probably as close as it will ever get to New Zealand. The theme is Dancing with memory: oral history and its audiences. The conference committee received over 400 proposals for papers to be presented. They are currently sending out notices to successful presenters with instructions about writing papers, sending them in by February so they can be published before the conference and reminding people about registering before 30 April 2006.

The conference website is [www.une.edu.au/ioha2006](http://www.une.edu.au/ioha2006)  
Registration details will be available on the website which will also provide up to date information for those interested.

The conference is an opportunity to meet other oral historians, hear about what's happening in other countries, make useful contacts with others who are interested in similar areas of research, make friends, learn about different ways of doing things and new developments.

Check out the website!

**Rachael Selby**

***Tau Te Mauri Breath of Peace*** recipient of the 2004 Sonja Davies Peace Award, is a feature documentary film that had its beginnings as an oral history project. The film was recently launched in Christchurch by the Minster for

Disarmament, Marian Hobbs. *Tau Te Mauri – Breath of Peace*, shares the stories of eight peace activists. Spanning six decades, they share stories of being a conscientious objector during the Second World War, the early days of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the beginnings of the Peace Squadron, the anti nuclear campaign of the 70s and 80s, the work of Greenpeace and the Rainbow Warrior; the Anti Bases Campaign; the Indigenous Peoples Initiative for Peace; Ploughshares activists and the World Court Project.

For a copy of the film on either DVD or VHS you can send \$20 plus postage to Wickcandle Film, PO Box 8390, Riccarton, Christchurch. Over the next three months *Tau Te Mauri – Breath of Peace* is being launched in different cities and towns around the country. For dates and venues refer to [www.wickcandlefilm.co.nz](http://www.wickcandlefilm.co.nz) or email Kathleen Gallagher (Director of the film) at [doygalpress@yahoo.com](mailto:doygalpress@yahoo.com)

**Ruth Greenaway**

***Oral histories of leprosy sufferers*** were commissioned by the Nippon Foundation based at the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, Oxford University, England, as part of an International Leprosy Association Project.

The recent film *Molokai* about the life of a catholic priest, Father Damien, who cared for leprosy sufferers isolated on Molokai, an island off Hawaii, was a reminder of the conditions and ostracism endured by leprosy sufferers prior to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the advent of antibiotics during the 1940s, and more specifically the development of sulphones, the plight of leprosy sufferers radically changed forever. The new treatments rendered patients no longer infectious, so long term isolation ended and patients were allowed to return to ordinary society. I was commissioned to gather the life stories of elderly leprosy sufferers in the South Pacific

region who, like their counterparts in the north were isolated, but in the south they were taken to a leprosarium established on a small Fijian island, Makogai.

The leprosarium was opened by the British Fijian government in 1911 and run by a French Catholic order of nuns, the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary. Some of the interviewees had contracted leprosy as children and were sent to Makogai, where they spent anything from a few to over twenty years, but were fortunate to experience the introduction of the new sulphone treatment in the late 1940s, were cured and able to return to their homes. Interestingly, on a parochial note, these people were the beneficiaries of a local Christchurch charity run by Pat Twomey who by the 1930s became known as 'The Leper Man' as did his charity. From a highly energetic one-man operation to a dedicated team who ran the Trust Board, the charity grew into the Pacific Leprosy Foundation which continues operating today providing aid to leprosy sufferers in the South Pacific islands.

In 1969 the leprosarium at Makogai was closed but patients needing treatment continued to be cared for by the SMSM sisters at the P. J. Twomey Memorial Hospital in Suva, built especially for leprosy sufferers. Here I interviewed the elderly patients, who had returned to the hospital in their old age for various reasons, where I was enormously impressed by their courage and generosity of spirit. Three of the main findings from the oral histories were:

- Interviewees said that the job skills and instructions to care for themselves taught by the staff at Makogai enabled them to return and lead relatively normal lives, many of them marrying and having children.
- The SMSM sisters showed little interest in converting patients to

Catholicism, but their dedication and humanitarian mission gained the undying love and respect of their patients.

- Despite the heart rendering separation from family and isolation on a far-off island as young leprosy sufferers, many had looked forward to the lifestyle available at Makogai, and everyone I spoke to looked back to the years on that beautiful island as some of their happiest memories.

**Dorothy McMenamin**

### ***From Memory sparks interest***

There has been a positive response to the From Memory Oral History Programme, run by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. The programme aims to encourage people to gather oral histories from war veterans within their families and communities. The initial emphasis is on the Second World War and interviews can be offered to the Alexander Turnbull Library for archiving in the From Memory collection.

There is interest from all parts of the country. People are enthusiastic and the website is proving very popular. We have already received several interviews and know that people are working on others.

The From Memory website, launched three months ago, offers a guide to oral history, relevant background information and suggested questions.

The first From Memory training course was run in Wellington last month by Megan Hutching and Alison Parr and the nine participants are all committed to completing an interview by December. Training courses are planned for other main centres.

[www.nzhistory.net.nz/from-memory](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/from-memory)  
**Alison Parr**

## Workshops

### • **Introduction to oral history**

#### **Dates:**

*Day 1:* Saturday 15 October

*Day 2:* Saturday 12 November  
(9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

**Venue:** Presbyterian Support Centre,  
407 Moray Place, Dunedin

**Tutor:** Helen Frizzell, Oral Historian

**Fee:** Waged - \$165.00

- Low income/unwaged - \$140.00

The course will cover: use of recording equipment, project planning, interview techniques, ethical procedures, processing oral history and making the material available for use.

*Further information from:*

Helen Frizzell, tel 03 477 7115 (office hrs); fax 03 479 2020

email: [helenf@psotago.org.nz](mailto:helenf@psotago.org.nz)

Closing date for enrolments: Monday 10 October.

### • **Introduction to Oral History**

Wed 26 October

At the Kauri Museum, Matakohē, Northland.

**Tutor:** Mary Donald.

*Enquires to Betty Nelley at:*

[NelleyB@kauri-museum.com](mailto:NelleyB@kauri-museum.com)

### • **Oral History Summer School**

*Auckland University of Technology*

- *Monday 28 and Tuesday 29*

*November 2005*

- *Thursday 26 and Friday 27 January 2006*

The first AUT summer school in oral history will be held over two, two-day sessions in November and January. The summer school is designed for anyone thinking about recording the oral histories of individuals, families, communities, or events, and is open to everyone interested in the remembered past.

It will be taught by Anna Green (AUT), Megan Hutching (Ministry for Culture and Heritage) and Jane Moodie (University of Waikato).

Topics covered in the summer school will include:

- contemporary theories about the nature of memory
- stories and life narratives
- what oral histories can add to our understandings of the past
- ethical issues
- conducting an oral history interview
- options in terms of technology
- what to do with the tape recording

Participants will be asked to record an oral history interview with a person of their choice during the period between November and January, and talk about their experiences (and questions) at the January session.

**Venue:** Arts Building, Auckland University of Technology (opposite the Town Hall, on the corner of Rutland, Wakefield and Queen Sts)

**Cost:** \$400 (inclusive)

**Accommodation:** student accommodation may be available.

### **Numbers are restricted to 15**

*For more information, or to register, please contact:*

Margaret Linzell-Jones, Secretary, School of Social Sciences, on 09 921 9999, ext 8419 or email: [margaret.linzell@aut.ac.nz](mailto:margaret.linzell@aut.ac.nz)

## Recording Equipment Wanted - to hire or buy

- Sony Walkman WMD6C Professional Cassette recorder with lapel microphones, headphones and other accessories. If hiring, this would be for approximately 6 months for a project in Tauranga. Please phone **Kate Clark** on 07 543 0483 or email her on [rainbowsforever@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rainbowsforever@xtra.co.nz).

- I have a Sony TCM-5000EV for sale. I bought it some years ago but it has been used rarely.

When I decided to sell it, I had it checked over by UNITEC. It is in perfect condition.

I believe the machine is currently worth somewhere around \$1500. Please contact me at:

annek@xtra.co.nz

**Edith Ryan**

- Getting together - Hiring and borrowing recorders – do you have one that's not used much?

A number of projects have been successful in receiving funding for recording equipment and there may be recorders being underutilised in bottom drawers or carefully stored unused for significant periods. If you have a recorder that you would be prepared to hire to an oral history researcher for a week or a month at a time, please email me. I will keep a list of people around the country in this position and put others in touch with you.

**Rachael Selby**

R.A.Selby@massey.ac.nz

## Conference report

### **Using the War: Changing Memories of World War Two**

*Annual Conference of the Oral History Society  
Kings College, London, July 2005*

Papers at this conference covered a wide range of aspects of oral history. Participants came mainly from North America and Europe, although two from Japan made valuable contributions on post war memory in that country. There were also papers examining young Germans and memories of the Nazi period, and the experience of German POWs in the United States.

Other papers included those on the experience of African Americans in the Second World War, women's memories of war, and the use of war memories in rehabilitation.

Alison Parr from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage presented a

paper on the experience of Second World War veterans who have disclosed trauma during oral history interviews.

The main plenary session was presented by renowned oral historian Alessandro Portelli. He used the bombing of Rome in the Second World War to explore the meaning of history from 'below and above' – in this case, literally, the bombed and the bombers. One of the purposes of oral history, he suggested, was '... to bring the two to the negotiating table ... to make each aware of the other ... and to expand our capacity to see'. Portelli suggested that, as oral historians, what we do is connect the narratives with our view of the facts. We operate, he said, in a 'no man's land', adding to the official narrative.

**Alison Parr**

## Oral history on the web

I have been developing new ways of using oral history collections as part of my PhD research. This week I am launching two 'memoryscapes'. Basically these are two audio walks along the River Thames in London, England that use recorded memories with people that have lived or worked on the river. Edited clips are played on a walkman or ipod at specific places on the walk, in an attempt to relate oral history to landscape in an innovative way. Many of the recordings are from archives at the Museum of London, which is a major collaborator in the project. For details please see:

[www.memoryscape.org.uk](http://www.memoryscape.org.uk)

**Toby Butler**

*(This piece originally appeared on H-ORALHIST in July 2005.)*

- And a reminder that if you're interested in the issue of recording using digital media, a good place to start is the H-ORALHIST archives at: [www.h-net.org/~oralhist/](http://www.h-net.org/~oralhist/)

