

OHAA On Tape

March 2006

Editor: Suzanne Mulligan

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Elena Volkova
Jen Barrkman

Hello Everyone!

We're well into 2006 now and there are lots of exciting oral history events for us to think about.

I am pleased to welcome new members:

Chris Knight
Anne-Maree Fewtrell
John Fowke
Patricia Merlehan
Jen Barrkman

We've already had a great start to the oral history year with a well attended digital storytelling talk on 23 February. Lesley Jenkins and Helen Klæbe gave an interesting insight into this relatively new field demonstrating how this medium may be applied to make oral history more accessible and interesting.

This talk was followed by our AGM with office bearers voted as follows:

President	Lesley Jenkins
Vice President	Sue Pechey
Treasurer	Maxine Kendall
Secretary	Suzanne Mulligan
Editor <i>On Tape</i>	Suzanne Mulligan
NQ Rep	Vacant
Committee members	Jean Tremayne Helen Klæbe

If there are any North Queensland members who would like to take on the role of NQ representative, please let me known.

At that meeting we also formed an organising committee with the same members for the National Conference that the Queensland branch will be hosting in 2007.

Our President, Lesley Jenkins, has another interesting instalment from her Churchill Fellowship trip on pages 3 and 4 Lesley is conducting one of her training workshops on 22 April. See page 7.

A reminder about the International Oral History Conference on 12-16 July 2006 in Sydney. Earlybird registration for the conference is now open so don't miss out! For more information see the Conference website at:

<http://www.une.edu.au/ioha2006>

I like to hear what you are doing in the oral history field so that I can share that information with other members. So please, let me now what you are doing.

Suzanne Mulligan
Editor

President's Report

Presented to the AGM 23 February 2006

Lesley Jenkins

Our branch remains small; with a hardworking management committee that continues to run seminars and workshops, attend expos and generally get the word out about oral history. I would like to thank our treasurer, Maxine Kendall, for her sterling efforts and those of Suzanne Mulligan, our secretary, newsletter editor and publicity officer, who always manages to fit one more thing into the heavy workload she already undertakes for the Association. Sue Pechey remains our oral history ambassador at large and committee member, Jean Tremayne, has offered useful advice over many months. Unfortunately we lost the wise counsel of Kate Roberts who has embraced motherhood and our North Queensland representative, Sandra Hodgson, who moved to South Australia.

The Association still offers advice, support and training, and referrals come to us from a range of agencies, including the State Library of Queensland. This year we were happy to hear that new member, Janette Garrad, a library technician, has taken over some of the responsibility for oral history at Queensland's premier oral history collecting agency – the John Oxley Library. We hope that in the future an oral history curator's position will be created. I have written to the State Library as President of the Association advocating for the allocation of resources to the collection of oral history and that greater links be developed between the collection and public programs.

This year has been a busy one for me as I took up my Churchill Fellowship in Oral History. I have written four articles about my study tour and a report to the Churchill Trust. All but one of the articles has been printed in our own newsletter and those of the other state branches. The 4th and final article will appear in the next newsletter. I also presented an

illustrated talk about my findings in November 2005 and I was interviewed by ABC radio. The 2006 AGM follows on from a digital storytelling seminar to discuss my overseas experiences at the Digital Storytelling Centre in California and the work being conducted here by Helen Klæbe, public historian with the Kelvin Grove Urban Village Project at QUT.

This year Sue Pechey ran a very well attended workshop in editing transcripts for publication. Maxine, Suzanne and Jean attended the Brisbane Heritage Expo on 8 May 2005 and erected an oral history display and stall. Maxine attended a submission writing workshop as the representative of the Association, which was conducted by a range of government and non government agencies. Eve Wicks, a member, launched her display on 20th February 2005 which featured oral history storyboards for her exhibition at the Queensland Museum titled: "Refuge Under a Southern Cross- The Lithuanian Migrant Experience in Queensland." General oral history training workshops did not take place in 2005 due to organizational problems and lack of numbers. The Association has actively supported the forthcoming International Oral History Association conference to be held in Sydney in July 2006 by making a grant of \$500 available to the organizing committee. I continued to represent the Queensland branch at quarterly teleconferences with the National Committee and to carry out a range of tasks which flow from this involvement.

I look forward to next year, even though it will be a busy one, as it is our branch's turn to host the OHAA national conference in September 2007. My fond wish is that we form a conference planning committee to lighten the load.

Lesley Jenkins returned from her Churchill Fellowship in Oral History in September 2006. The following article is the third instalment of a series she is writing which chronicles her journey.

Washington and San Francisco

When I arrived the train doors opened and an overwhelming heat welcomed me to the nation's capital, Washington D.C. I followed the instructions to the National Mall. I found the festival marketplace and the richly decorated Filipino truck; I asked a question of a harried volunteer and wended my way through thousands of visitors to the administration van. Dr Betty Belanus emerged to welcome me to the 39th Annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The festival featured four programs – Oman: Desert, Oasis, and Sea; Forest Service, Culture, and Community; Food Culture USA; and Nuestra Music: Music in Latino Culture. As the handsome program book stated; '...the Festival once again presents a sample of the diverse cultural heritage of America and the world to large public audiences in an educational, respectful, and profoundly democratic way... True to form, the Festival illustrates the living, vital aspect of cultural heritage and provides a forum for discussion on matters of contemporary concern'.

I had never met Betty before she asked me to stay with her, husband Steve, and adolescent daughter, M.E. (pronounced Em-me) '13 going on 20' Betty advised. My own daughter aged 18 joined me as she had the 4th July long weekend off from her job as a Summer Camp leader in Wisconsin. So we stayed in leafy Arlington and time together enabled me to talk to Betty, a trained folklorist, about the inclusion of oral history in her project work and the development of each festival. I learnt that Queensland is to be celebrated at the Festival in 2009 and links have already been developed with the Queensland Premier, Peter Beattie, and the organizers of the Woodford Folk Festival, an annual event held just north of Brisbane. Betty had her eye on me as an advisor on the ground, I think, and I have given her multiple leads to pursue along with the names of artists who include oral history in their work. Our mutual exchange of ideas and experiences included introducing the almost bald Steve to Vegemite but as he was not partial to the taste he thought he might try it as a hair-restorer. A recent email informs me that he now looks like Fabio.

I met Jens Lund again at the Festival, Jens had offered an insight into his work when I was on placement at the Washington State Arts Commission. He now had a new job as folklorist with the Forestry Service and I went with him to talk to Wally McCrae, a cowboy poet and environmentalist. Wally had been to Australia on a poetry tour and had spent time at the Stockman's Hall of Fame in Longreach. The Festival is set up with multiple stages of different sizes and visitors move between them to hear speakers, participate in learning new crafts, dance with the performers or just to watch the passing parade. Introductions to speakers are a little like oral history interviews, as they tend to take a question and answer format. Both parties are knowledgeable about the subject and they focus on the interviewee's experiences over time. They are also documented in some way, which may include an audio recording. The Festival is a huge event and this year it took place over six days separated by a week in-between which when it was closed to visitors. This allowed the workers and performers to rest and for some fine-tuning to take place.

I also visited Peter Bartis, Senior Program Officer, at the American Folklife Centre in the Library of Congress. Peter manages the Veterans History Project and has written two booklets that support the collection of oral history and personal wartime recollections.¹ These booklets encourage individuals or communities to record the first person recollections of American War Veterans. The project is supported financially by the United States Congress, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP-Founding Corporate Sponsor), and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Charitable Service Trust. The Archive has 35,000 interviews and most of them haven't been listened to or

¹ Library of Congress American Folklife Center, *Veterans History Project Field Kit – Conducting and Preserving Interview*, Washington, n.d., Veterans history Project Memoir Kit – guidelines for Writing Personal and Wartime Recollections, n.d. Peter Bartis also wrote the document that predates the above two, *Folklife and Fieldwork – A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques*, 1979, Library of Congress, Washington.

viewed by anyone. The volume precludes this and the other feature of such a large community driven project is the variability of the material that comes in. As Peter put it, "From crap to quality, we get it all". Some filmed material doesn't survive entry into the Archive as the US Postal Service has been irradiating material to the Library of Congress since the Anthrax scare. Some elite interviews are undertaken with people of particular importance but these interviews are still quite short at around one hour's duration. Researchers and filmmakers use the material, but the Archive's main importance is as a country wide participatory project that documents individual stories in oral, film and written form for families.

My next stop was Berkeley in San Francisco. I spent an enjoyable two days at the Digital Storytelling Centre engaged in creating my story at the Digital Storytelling Workshop. Digital Storytelling can be about any aspect of our lives but there are seven elements to the process of constructing a story:

- Point of View
- Dramatic Question
- Emotional Content
- The Gift of Your Voice
- The Power of the Soundtrack
- Economy
- Pacing

My two days were long ones but as there was only myself and one other student I received personal tuition from a wonderful teacher for most of the time. This was fortunate because the main software programs we used were Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Premiere. I have a nodding acquaintance with Photoshop but Premiere was totally unfamiliar to me and quite complex. I managed to produce a 3 minute scripted film but I couldn't repeat the exercise because two days was too fast to practice what we learnt. Digital Storytelling may not seem to have a lot to do with oral history but it can be

used as another way of encouraging people to tell their stories. Some examples of this can be found at the site of OHAA fellow member, Helen Klaebe:

<http://www.kgurbanvillage.com.au/sharing/dstories/dstory1.shtm>

During my month in the United States I made contact with nine independent practitioners, mostly through the Association of Personal Historians and the Listserv for Folklorists. They all used oral history as the basis of their businesses but only three were also members of the Oral History Association. The Association of Personal Historians is a members' organization for people involved in producing life stories through books, oral histories, audiotapes, videos or DVDs or in training others to do this. The Association is growing at about a member a week and currently has approximately 500 members, a few of whom are located in Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and Europe. They have a very active and supportive discussion list, which is particularly encouraging of newcomers. The skill level of members (and the quality of their products) varies greatly and I asked those I met about moves the organization had made towards a system that recognises this difference. The President, Lettice Stuart, who is a former journalist, told me that discussions had taken place some years ago with the membership about implementing a credentialing system and it was thought that a panel of experienced members might judge the work submitted by others. This proved to be a divisive issue as questions were raised about who should do the judging and how to assess the skills, experience and knowledge of judges and practitioners. Nothing was put in place but a simmering unrest about the issue remains.

To Be Continued.....

‘Putting Down’ *Reflections of a Kimberley Woman* **Colleen Hattersley**

I received a call from a friend in the Kimberley to say his sister had been appointed to the board of AIATSIS. The family were concerned that their eldest sister was non-literate and would be in strange country so, could she stay at my place for the meetings in Canberra? Thus began a long association that resulted in Lucy Marshall asking me, in 1988, to help her ‘put down’ her story. It was ten years before the real work began.

In 1998 I drove from Canberra to Derby, WA to fulfil the promise. It was my first journey into the field of oral history, but Lucy had a wealth of experience working with linguists she was totally at ease with recording procedures and, at the beginning, lead the entire process. She knew what she wanted to record and indeed, had I controlled the elicitation process much cultural information would have been omitted. My first lesson was – listen.

Media: Sony analogue field recorder (borrowed from ANU) with 90 minute tapes donated by TDK.

Mic. mostly the on-board mic in the Sony unit. Occasionally I attached an external cardioid mic but it eventually became dysfunctional with the heat, dust, less than careful treatment or combination of all the above.

Location: Three main locations: Lucy’s house (many noise and comfort issues to be solved. Also Lucy’s home that officially housed her and three foster-care children was regularly home to 8-12 people including two elders who had looked after her during her growing up time. And the telephone was constantly ringing); my house (aircon and a non-co-operative house mate to deal with) or Bedanburru community.

By far the best recordings were obtained in the evenings at Bedanburru community when everyone else had retired, the jenny was silenced and the tape unit perched between us on an upturned flour drum. Here, with the clear night sky and soft sounds of the bush, memories were released, philosophies crystallized, cultural stories came to life and tapes were sometimes over-recorded in the faltering torchlight.. Or I became so involved in the stories that I completely forgot about taping at all. It didn’t

matter. I was assured the stories reside in the land and would be waiting there for our next visit.

Organization: I invented a numbering system for tapes. It consisted of the working title ‘Ilambirri’ and a consecutive number but often had a sub-category consisting of the main speaker’s initials and a consecutive number for them. I tried to note the key points of discussion on the outside of the tape as well as on the tape box. Sometimes there was too much information in one session and this did not always work.

Challenges: Capturing the whole story – people who function in an oral world use their whole bodies for communication, often moving off mike and making good recordings difficult. There is also much non-verbal communication, and in Lucy’s case there was Kimberley Sign Language that was not recorded at all. Video would have been a better medium than audio recording. For matters of cultural significance the elders must be consulted. They may be shy of the microphone - and their speech is definitely NOT standard English.

Understanding what I was being told. In the beginning I had absolutely no local knowledge – and an Aboriginal perspective was not available to me in reference books. I had to live the experience and learn quickly.

Recognizing a different style of storytelling. The circular style of storytelling means that we often began a familiar story in an unfamiliar section and it took me quite some time to work out which parts belonged together. This became a further challenge when it came to formalizing the story in print.

Transcribing: We recorded 36 tapes. I transcribed them all for hours on end and learned first-hand about the mistakes I had made in recording. Some were beyond my grasp as they were the old man telling animated stories in very fast Kriol. When time permitted Lucy sat with earphones listening to these recordings and giving me an English summary of what was being said.. However, there are still some gems yet to be re-discovered.

I returned to Canberra and worked for a year, but out of their cultural context the stories and memories lacked relevance and despite my best efforts the transcription was poor.. I became another voice on the phone asking questions and interrupting the current crisis at Derby. So, in 2000 I returned to finish transcription in situ. This time, interviewing for the *Bringing Them Home Oral History Project* managed by the Australian National Library provided some financial support.

Lucy's enthusiasm began to wane. She thought writing a book would be a quick process. It became difficult to engage her in checking details, finding photographs, contacting people for permission to mention their name. She became impatient with my questions and did not understand why I needed to go over things she had already told me. Often checking released a whole lot of new information which was not captured on tape. Because Lucy is non-literate, I could not ask her to read a chapter and comment. Doing spot checks also became a fraught task, so I printed out two copies of the edited transcript and asked her family to give feedback. They were pleased to assist in the task and gave a page of useful amendments. There were some confronting issues for the family to face, but they decided that it was mum's story and she was entitled to tell her life experiences. as she saw them.

Ethical issues. An important community member is an outspoken man who was often publicly critical of Lucy. They had grown up together and it was clear that current events had influenced comments about the man's personal qualities. The relationship is an important one for the whole community and could not be omitted entirely, therefore many of the stories involving this person were minimized or referred to obliquely. 'Sideways talk' is a technique widely used in Aboriginal culture to avoid conflict. Local people will understand the references, outsiders will not be unduly troubled.

The other difficulty arose in the recounting of life on the stations and why Lucy's first child was taken from her. It is one thing for a writer to describe the attitudes of managers towards Aboriginal women, quite another for one of those women to recount her

experiences of sexual harassment involving a well known figure and grandfather to many of today's community people. The man in question has been deceased for some time and it was the family's decision to retain the story and to defend any criticism that may arise because of it.. To date, no objections have been raised.

Publishing: The local publishing house was not comfortable with the oral history genre, nor with the last point mentioned above and required extensive changes before they would consider accepting the script. They also doubted the book would have appeal outside the local area. I was not prepared to make the changes because they would turn the book into another outsider's narrative on behalf of an Aboriginal person. Several other publishers were approached but the waiting time for script assessment was too long. As a 72 year old Indigenous Australian, Lucy had already outlived her life expectancy and was not in good health. We had to realize the dream while she could experience it.

A small amount of private finance was eventually obtained and 150 copies printed.. The book contained colour photos which made it expensive to produce, so it was sold for cost price with no discounts. Most of the copies sold quickly and Lucy was constantly asked when a reprint would be available. That finally occurred at the end of 2005, again privately financed but this time the photos are black and white so it has been possible to drop the recommended retail price. If the 300 copies all sell the original financial outlay will be recovered and Lucy will see some return for her bravery, patience, tolerance and resilience.

The book *Reflections of a Kimberley Woman* is available for \$25.00 plus postage from:
Lucy and Colleen,
PO Box 1194
DERBY WA 6728

More information and an order form are available at www.geocities.com/kimberleyreflections. Enquiries should be addressed to chatts123@optusnet.com.au.

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 recordings accessible – indexing, transcribing and logging

When: Saturday 22 April 2006
10.00 am – 4.00 pm

Where: Kelvin Grove Urban Village Information Centre, 72 Victoria Park Road,
Kelvin Grove (near the corner of Musk Ave, opposite QUT)

Cost: \$60.00 (members) \$70.00 (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 or phone Suzanne Mulligan on 3376 1865.

- If you have a working tape recorder please bring it along.
- Morning and afternoon tea provided. Please bring your own lunch.

SECURING FUNDING WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Maxine Kendall

Writing Grant Applications; Developing Partnerships; Sourcing Funding
November 24th and 25th 2005

Presented by Brisbane's Living Heritage Network and Museum and Gallery Services Queensland

As Treasurer of OHAA (Qld Inc.), I was asked by the committee to attend the above workshop. The cost was \$50.00, which was paid by the Association. It was a two-day affair and I was lucky to be able to rearrange the days I work so that I could attend.

There were 10 sessions in total:

1. Chris Stannard - Funding bodies, Designing a project and Writing a grant application
2. Arts Queensland – Maren Gotzmann - Project Grants Program
3. National Library of Australia – Material only - Community Heritage Grants
4. Brisbane City Council – Sheryl Anderson - Community Grants
5. Gambling Community Benefit Fund – Ann Baillie and Kerri Laidlaw - Funding Application Package
6. Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund – Ann Baillie and Kerry Laidlaw - Funding Guidelines
7. Michelle Smith – Redcliffe Museum - Richard Baberowski – Caboolture Shire Council Building relationships with Local Governments
8. Dr Linda Griffith – Linda Griffith Consultancy - Fundraising and Philanthropic Funding
9. Debra Beattie – Museum and Gallery Services - Budget Tips
10. Australian Business Arts Foundation and corporate partnerships – Danica Bennett from Australian Business Arts

All of the sessions were helpful in giving me ideas on not only the application but also the implementation, of grant applications. However because the Oral History Association of Australia Qld Division has the word "Association" in its name, we do not qualify as an applicant for most of the funding organizations.

The attendance at the Workshop was very varied from Friends of Newstead House to the Blackall Wool Scour and all places in between. If you ever want to do the workshop visit the M&GSQ calendar at <http://www.magsq.com.au> for information about training and professional development opportunities.

We were given a scenario and were able to do a mock application. We were given tips on how to word applications to make the most of any details. There was also a budgeting exercise, from that session the main thing to come out was to ensure that your Income and Expenses actually balance. We were also shown the use of 'in kind volunteer staff contributions' and how they are handled in the Income and Expenditure and Budget of the grant application.

With all of the presentations the most important advice given was: -

RING THE ORGANISATION THAT YOU ARE APPLYING TO FOR FUNDING FOR HELP IN COMPILING THE APPLICATION.

They all said that they are only too happy to help anyone with the interpretation of questions. They can't write your application for you, but they will help as much as possible to explain what information is required to answer the questions, so maximizing your funding application's ability to succeed.

INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL STORYTELLING CONFERENCE Helen Klaebe

Digital Storytelling (DST) is a phenomena growing in popularity and which is of interest to most oral historians. Our own President, Lesley Jenkins, attended a workshop, while on her Churchill Fellowship, at the Berkley Storytelling Centre. Helen Klaebe, an OHAA Qld member, waited till the Centre's founder, Jo Lambert, came here to Australia.

In February, I attended the second International Digital Storytelling Conference, held at Federation Square, Melbourne, which was hosted by the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI). The term 'digital storytelling' was coined at the US Berkley Storytelling Centre, run by Jo Lambert and is what he describes as, a variety of new media production practices, where the attention is focussed on "the personal voice and facilitative teaching methods." The product produced as a digital story is generally a scripted first person narrative, about some aspect of ones life, accompanied by images and sometimes music.

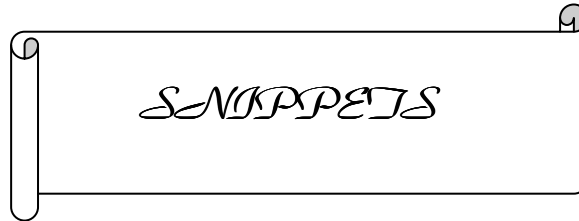
In the UK, Daniel Meadows is Director of the BBC Capturing Wales project- one of the largest DST undertakings in the world. He also attended the Jo Lambert workshop in the early years. Daniel Meadows calls a digital story, "a short, personal, multi media tales, told from the heart. Made on the kitchen table they have an aesthetic all of their own, which I think of as *scrapbook television*."

This may have been the case when Lambert and Meadows began, but if the conference was anything to go by, the interest in this humble media has grown and there was nothing amateurish about the production of the stories we were treated to. The last 11 years have seen these experts hone their skills and spread the word globally through their workshops. The Australian Centre of the Moving Image (ACMI) have based their workshops on the Lambert model and are now flat out keeping up with the demand to run workshops for facilitators and community groups a like.

The sessions were split into different themes, like, those who use digital storytelling as a social advocacy tool, those interested in the technology/production and those interested in the distribution networks open to such media use. The calibre of speakers was fantastic and so interesting to get a mix from overseas and around Australia, especially those from rural or indigenous communities.

The use of digital stories for historical narrative about place is still relatively new, but gaining popularity and interest. In fact, the upcoming International Oral History Association Conference in Sydney, 2006 titled *Dancing with Memory*, will feature some sessions focussing on the role of new media with oral history. I have used DST in the Kelvin Grove Urban Village *Sharing Stories* history project and will be giving a paper at the conference about my findings to date.

I'm sure there will be some lively debate between the purist oral historian and others about whether DST and oral history sit well together, or not, and it will be an interesting debate of which I am looking forward to.



There has been a lot of debate on the Oral History List about editing transcripts recently. Here is one of the contributions:

You may want to check out "Transcription Techniques for the Spoken Word" by Willow Roberts Powers. 128pp Published by AltaMira Press just recently.

<http://www.altamirapress.com/Catalog/SingleBook.shtml?command=Search&db=^DB/CATALOG.db&eqSKUdata=0759108439>

We use descriptive language if we are instructed to transcribe "verbatim" as follows:

Q: So, Mary, can you tell me what it feels like to be a complete drooling idiot?

A: <gurgling sounds> W-W-well, I have to tell you it feels <burp> pretty good <hiccup, laughter> gee, I'm funny.

Without the "verbatim" instruction we clean up the text like this:

A: Well, I have to tell you, it feels pretty good. <laughter> Gee, I'm funny.

The word "laughter" is only included in the second case because there is a contextual reference. Otherwise it would likely be eliminated. In the end it's a judgment call based upon conversations with our clients and an assessment of their needs/intended purpose of the transcript. Some of our transcription clients need every sound (as in qualitative research studies or legal) and others only want the "gist" of what was said (as in focus groups and some oral histories).

The TAPE TRANSCRIPTION CENTER handles this sort of thing on a case-by-case basis. Please feel free to contact us if you need more information.

Ryan Robbins
Media Specialist
617-423-2151
The TAPE TRANSCRIPTION CENTER
129 Tremont Street
Boston, MA 02108

Here are a couple of web sites that have been mentioned in the editing discussion that may interest you:

Transcribing, Editing and Processing Oral Histories – Minnesota Historical Society Oral History Office: <http://www.oham.org/how/transcribe.html>

Oral History Workshop on the Web – Transcribing Style Guide from Baylor University Institute for Oral History: http://www3.baylor.edu/Oral_History/Styleguide.htm

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A couple of talks at the Queensland Museum may interest members. One is by member, Joanne Scott, on 2 August 2006 – ‘Charms, splendours and wonders, the history of the Brisbane Exhibition’. The other is by Brian Crozier on 7 June on “History, Memory and the Past in the novels of Penelope Lively”. You may find out about these talks and more at:

www.qmuseum.qld.gov.au/calendar/2006/connections/index.asp

Editor’s note: If you hear of any talks, conferences etc. that would interest our members, please let me know.

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Member, Colleen Hattersley, whose story appears on page 5 has a very keen interest in collecting indigenous oral histories. She has given me this web site to share with members, remarking that it “is the kind of thing I’d like to see happening in Australia”.

Omushkigo Oral History Project – devoted to the transcription, digitization, and preservation on CD-ROMs of a large portion of Louis Bird’s extensive collection of audiotapes documenting Swampy Cree legends and oral history: <http://www.ourvoices.ca/>

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Oral History on India's Independence Movement

Millions of Indians participated in the struggle for independence from the British Empire who witnessed and were part of the large nonviolent movement, led by Mahatma Gandhi.

For the first time a concentrated effort is made to video-record reminiscences of nonviolent fighters for India's freedom. Systematically, GandhiServe Foundation, in cooperation with its sister organization, GandhiServe India Trust, Mumbai/India, identifies these veterans and talks to them about various aspects of the struggle, which was the first large campaign in history based on truth and nonviolence.

The results of this project are partly presented here and are made available fully to associates and supporters of the project.

http://www.gandhiserve.org/activities/research/oral_history.html

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Another interesting discussion that has been on the Oral History List recently concerns the issue of preserving oral history on CDs. There has been much debate about the longevity of CDs and DVDs. There seems no definitive answer. Here are some of the contributions with accompanying web sites for you to check out yourself and make up your own mind:

Would you by chance be ready to read French publications, the French Department of Culture recently published a complete handbook on CD choice, preservation, periodical checking, etc. It is online at (two chapters, 'recommendations' and 'memento'):

<http://www.archivesdefrance.culture.gouv.fr/fr/circAD/DITN.2005.004.recommandations.pdf>

and

<http://www.archivesdefrance.culture.gouv.fr/fr/circAD/DITN.2005.004.memento.pdf>

Gold CD are highly recommended, as well as using a CD analyser to check the collection at fixed intervals of time, avoiding tags and writing on CDs, etc.

Marie Noelle Polino AHICF - Association pour l'histoire des chemins de fer en France / French Railway Historical Society - 9, rue du Château-Landon, - ahicf@club-internet.fr - www.trains-fr.org/ahicf

Note: - there are no English translations of the above sites available. Although it is not 100% perfect, you can use Babelfish to translate foreign language docs into English. See <http://babelfish.altavista.com/> or www.babelfish.org.

See the following article by Joe Iraci (Senior Conservation Scientist at the Canadian Conservation Institute):

"The Relative Stabilities of Optical Disc Formats" has been published in Restaurator Vol. 26, No. 2 (2005). This paper summarizes research that compared the stabilities of a variety of optical disc formats such as audio CDs, CD-Rs, CD-RWs, DVDs, DVD-Rs, and DVD-RWs.

The upshot of this study is that CD-R discs made with phthalocyanine dye are less likely to fail as a result of chemical deterioration than other discs - including commercially-manufactured CDs. More stable yet are CD-Rs made with phthalocyanine dye and a gold reflective layer, as gold is chemically inert.

For information on recommended storage conditions for compact discs and other media, see the Image Permanence Institute's "IPI Media Storage Quick Reference" at: http://www.climatenotebook.org/MSQR/MSQR_home.html

Rick Taylor, Austin, Texas

For an English language discussion about CD longevity see:

Fred R. Byers. (2003). Care and Handling of CDs and DVDs: A Guide for Librarians and Archivists. Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR).

Full text is available at: <http://www.clir.org/pubs/abstract/pub121abst.html>

Richard Urban, Graduate Research Assistant ECHODep/NDIIPP Graduate School of Library and Information Science University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign - <http://ndiipp.uiuc.edu> rjurban@uiuc.edu

For the best reference on this topic see International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, Guidelines on the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects: <http://www.iasa-web.org/tc04/index.htm>

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