

A stylized, hand-drawn illustration of a bridge, likely the Story Bridge in Brisbane, rendered in grey and blue tones. The bridge spans across the top of the page, with a blue swoosh underneath it that flows into the background of the main title text.

Old Stories New Ways

**The Oral History Association of Australia
Proceedings of the 2007 National Oral History Conference**

The Oral History Association of Australia held its biennial national conference in Brisbane, in September 2007 bringing together oral historians from around the country and overseas. The theme of the conference was: Old Stories New Ways.

OHAA The logo for the Oral History Association of Australia (OHAA) features the acronym 'OHAA' in a bold, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized microphone icon, with a black handle and a grey, textured head.

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Disclaimer

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The Oral History Association of Australia held its biennial national conference in Brisbane, in September 2007 bringing together oral historians from around the country and overseas. The theme of the conference was: Old Stories New Ways.

A rich variety of more than 60 papers were accepted. Our Keynote Speaker was Dr Gwenda Davey AM from Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. There was a strong indigenous content, as well as an emphasis on community projects and memory issues. Speakers came from South Africa, New Zealand, Finland, India as well as from around Australia.

OHAA (QLD Inc.) has put together a selection of papers presented at the conference in this publication. Written permission from the authors has also kindly been given to publish the following papers on our web site. Others were published in the Oral History Journals for 2007 and 2008. Journals can be purchased through the OHAA National web site <http://www.ohaa.net.au/publications.php>.

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ORGANISING COMMITTEE

SUE PECHEY PRESIDENT OF THE ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (QLD INC.)



Sue came to oral history in the late 1970s through informal recordings of wartime stories told by her Slovene mother-in-law. Returning to Australia, she reconnected with a former school librarian, Marjorie Roe, who had morphed into the audio-visual librarian at the University of Queensland. She made it easy for Sue to go through an on-the-run apprenticeship which has led to twenty years of interviews, teaching, developing teaching materials, running workshops, putting together workshops and conferences in the pursuit of best practice.

Sue said it was a wonderfully interesting path to have taken, with some tangible rewards but far more intangible ones in the sharing of experience with a huge range of people she would otherwise never have met, let alone glimpsed their private lives.

LESLEY JENKINS IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT OF THE ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (QLD INC.)

Lesley Jenkins is a consultant historian specialising in oral history. She completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in history and radio at the University of Technology in Sydney. She has been working in NSW and Queensland on history, oral history and community publications and projects for 15 years. In 1997 she completed a Graduate Diploma in Arts (Applied History) at the University of Queensland. Lesley has also worked as a journalist, as a correspondent for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and in the museum sector as a curator and consultant oral historian. In 2004 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to further her knowledge of oral history and its applications.



Lesley has published three books, numerous booklets and contributed content to many social history and arts based web sites. She has been actively involved in the Oral History Association of Australia since 1992. She has held the roles of secretary and president of the Queensland branch of the Association.

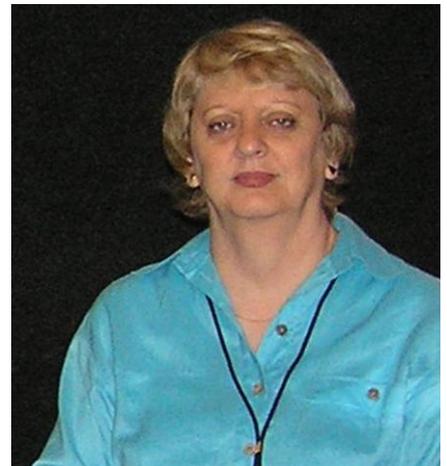
SUZANNE MULLIGAN BA – SECRETARY OF THE ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (QLD INC.)
AND EDITOR OF ON TAPE



Suzanne is an Independent Oral Historian and a member of the OHAA for about 12 years. She completed her BA at University of Queensland in 2001 majoring in Journalism and Political Science. She collects interesting people for her own oral history collection which is now published at <http://mulliganoralhistory.blogspot.com/>

MAXINE KENDALL TREASURER OF THE ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (QLD INC.)

Maxine was our Treasurer since attending our Queensland State Conference in 2002. She has also been involved in other volunteer activities including volunteer guide at Government House, volunteer work at John Oxley Library. She and her husband, Jim, have also worked for many years as volunteers at the Jondaryan Woodshed situated on the Darling Downs.



HELEN KLAEBE CONFERENCE PROGRAMMING CHAIR



Helen Klæbe is a senior research fellow at QUT. Her PhD examined new approaches to participatory public history using multi art form storytelling strategies. She is the author of: *Onward Bound: the first 50 years of Outward Bound Australia* (2005); and *Sharing Stories: a social history of Kelvin Grove* (2006)

ELENA VOLKOVA BA MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY

Elena's first encounter with Oral History occurred when she became a part of the team of the Museum's Sound Archive and met Lev Shilov, the pioneer in Audio Heritage and Oral History in Russia. At the beginning Elena was involved in the process of restoration and subsequent production of the audio disc with the recordings of Leo Tolstoy made in 1908 on a phonograph sent to him by Thomas Edison. Later Shilov encouraged her to start her own projects and she chose to pursue the avenue of oral history and focused on the authors associated with the literature of exile, war and Gulag.



Elena joined the OHAA, QLD Inc. Committee and was happy to both contribute to the national conference and learn more about Oral History and its various applications.

JENNIFER BARRKMAN DIP PSYCH., GRAD DIP LOCAL APPLIED AND FAMILY HISTORY, MAPS.
WORKPLACE TRAINING AND ASSESSOR CERTIV.



Jennifer has worked for over twenty years within the community and government sectors undertaking community development, training, research, story documentation and group facilitation roles. She has published in the Australian Oral History journal, presented at the International Oral History Conference and has been commissioned to undertake oral histories for community agencies in Brisbane. Jen is also a long standing member of Brisbane Playback Theatre Inc. Her web site is at www.barrkman.com

ABSTRACTS

CHASING WHALERS: THE TORY CHANNEL WHALERS PROJECT

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18 ex-whalers from the last whaling station in New Zealand were located and interviewed to capture their memories of a unique period in their lives forty years before. Their feelings when whaling ended and their present attitudes to whaling are also examined. The project will be discussed from the oral historian's viewpoint. [Full Paper.](#)

HEAR! HEAR! FOR ORAL HISTORY!

Bill BUNBURY

Now freelance producer after 38 years working at the ABC in both radio and television and Adjunct Professor, Communications at Murdoch University.

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"Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air!"

(From Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"). All too often a similar analogy could be made for the treatment of Oral History - but in this case '*seen but not heard*'. In this presentation I'd like to draw out and illustrate a rationale for Oral history as a *heard* medium. In practice much emphasis is placed on transcribing spoken words back into written ones and, while that is self-evidently useful, it can dominate the way in which we think of oral history. I suggest that it can fail to point up an important dimension of oral history, not simply its content but the way in which the listener can perceive the content, i.e. the mood or emotion that the spoken word conveys, which adds considerably to our understanding of what we hear. Print alone can never fully convey this aspect. There are ways of creating this dimension but they require a particular approach to the nature of questions we ask and the way in which we interview. In the second part of this presentation I aim to examine ways in which oral historians can interpret what they collect. Sometimes the collection of discrete interviews alone marks a wasted opportunity. As the historian Patrick Farrell suggested: – '*There are shelves and shelves of unheard cassettes*. Subsequent historians might get around to using this raw data but if oral history is to provide a useful arm of history itself it would be valuable to do more in the way of analysing and evaluating what is recorded and presenting it in a finished form, whether written or as an audio piece. This is what orthodox historians do and in this way it has more chance of becoming a valuable historical record. [Full Paper.](#)

FIELD INTERVIEWS IN IRAQ; AN EXAMPLE OF THE USE OF ORAL HISTORY IN CONTEMPORARY SITUATIONS AND CONTEXTS

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In April 2006 the Australian War Memorial commissioned Robert Nugent as Official Cinematographer to Iraq. Nugent interviewed forty servicemen and women on active duty in Iraq. The interviews focused on the personal trails that lead the individual soldiers to be in Iraq. The context of the interview was at an endpoint, in the reality of Iraq itself. A range of servicemen and women were interviewed, from commanding officers and senior NCOs to young Troopers, Gunners and Privates, in groups or alone in their barracks, in tents and in their tank, describing the personal experience of duty, mateship, courage and humour in the face of isolation and uncertainty. Overall the interviews taken in the context of the Australian outposts in Iraq provide an insight into the day in the life of the modern Australian soldier. They are seen and heard balancing professional ambitions; living up to expectations of what it means to be an Australian soldier with reflections on what led them here and their personal motivations. The oral history counterpoints the actuality and immediacy of their world in Iraq. [Note – video of the interviews was shown during the presentation.]
[Full Paper.](#)

REDCLIFFE REMEMBERS

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In 2005 the Redcliffe City Library received a Queensland Stories Grant from the State Library of Queensland for a web site and companion DVD. The web site and DVD were to complement a book produced the year before in 2004, *Redcliffe Remembers: the War Years 1939-1949*. The book had been a collaborative project between the Redcliffe Historical Society and the Redcliffe City Library based on oral histories and we hoped to create a web site that would reflect the stories in the book and in some cases enlarge on the theme. The final result is an innovative web site of which we feel very proud, and a two hour DVD. The paper deals with the following:

The way in which we worked with the community to produce the oral history material:

- How the project evolved
- The people involved
- How we worked as a team to achieve the desired result

The way in which we interpreted the story – a discussion of the evolution of the three separate strands:

- book format,
- DVD format
- web site

Addressing changing technologies:

- Understanding that today's generation want visual presentations and has the expectation that they should be able to find things on the Internet.
- The use of film, photos and recordings to achieve a result using changing technologies.

[Full Paper.](#)

RECORDING AND EDITING AUDIO IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

Suzanne GIBSON

Suzanne is a freelance social history producer whose work includes archival oral history projects and broadcast programs for ABC Radio National and Local Radio. suzanne@sgcommunications.com.au

A practical run through of equipment and concepts involved in recording quality sound, getting it into your computer and editing it. Will work through equipment selection, computer set ups and the principles of editing. There will be plenty of time for questions and answers. [Full Paper.](#)

THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS FOR THE OHAA JOURNAL

Francis GOOD

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An introduction to the rationale behind giving contributors to the OHAA Journal the option of having their offers peer-reviewed, the process to which papers are subjected, and an indication of the kind of criteria reviewers focus on. [Full Paper.](#)

VERNACULAR HISTORY AND RADICAL TASMANIA: STORIES OF RESISTANCE AND DEMOCRATIC TECHNOLOGIES

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Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities. Truth isn't.

Mark Twain, 1897.

Prove it.

Jack Wilson, 1953.

Radical Tasmania is thesis research asking subjects to articulate their stories for a history of the “arts of resistance” in Tasmania. It critiques conventional academic historiography and seeks a popular readership; it also aspires to history as politics. Two themes emerge:

1. Critical history and vernacular history in a symbiotic dialogic for a radical Tasmanian narrative.
2. The relationship of radical Tasmania to the problematic of historical “truth” (science) drawn towards a popular narrative (art).

There is a paradox in the rise of history “by, about and for the losers” amidst the History Wars and the so-called triumph of liberal capitalism after the Cold War. Vernacular history, with its unashamed use of orality, radio, television, videos, DVDs and the internet as well as a broad popular press, autobiography, testimony and so on, is emerging as a key strategy for those who challenge academic history and/or official history. History from below is developing mega phonic narratives which speak louder than before to a popular audience and for democratic ideologies. It directly confronts the archival obsession of traditional historiography and the anti-orality of high profile “white blindfolds” (for example, Keith Windschuttle).

Radical Tasmania is discovering a history of rebellion and resistance against a stultifying culture of repression in the stories from interviews with militant unionists, environmentalists, writers, anti-war activists, feminists, gay rights advocates, socialist agitators and, in very local types, even defenders of “shackocracy” and “trout activists” amongst others.

These are old stories for new ways in democratising not just Tasmania yet potentially also “mainland” Australia and beyond. Through these stories is the historical narrative of a community struggling from the rear of the British Empire to the forefront of the politics of global concern. This paper will detail examples of the oral history of an identity of place which once spurned its past, Tasmania née Van Diemen’s Land, then embraced changing technologies to champion its present in a struggle for a “patriotic” future. [Full Paper.](#)

LEARNING HISTORY FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

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This paper will showcase three ways in which oral histories have been incorporated into recent regional museum exhibitions in the NT, exploring some of the positives and some of the challenges which arise from wanting to use primary source materials in contexts where time/space is at a premium.

1. "A Tennant Childhood 1932-1940: Kevan Weaver Remembers" – is an innovative multimedia presentation in which extracts from an oral history interview, family photographs, moving text and modern day sound effects are combined to tell the story of Australia's last gold rush from a child's point of view.
2. Using 5-10 word oral history quotes like essay footnotes in a social history museum as a way of authenticating an outsider's conclusions about the past to locals with strong, but not necessarily complete memories about daily life in their town, in a context where an authoritative secondary source didn't exist.
3. Using 1-3 minute oral history sound bites to interpret the collection of regional museum with lots of objects, very little storage space, no labels or text boards and no plans to throw anything out or re-vamp displays. [Full Paper.](#)

THE DIGITAL COMMITMENT: THE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO SOLID STATE FIELD - RECORDING EQUIPMENT AT THE STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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State Library of South Australia

Peter Kolomitsev has been a professional Audio Engineer for over 20 years, working as both a live and studio engineer. He currently works in the audio preservation studios at the State Library of South Australia, managing its fleet of oral history recorders and the digitization of the audio collection.

Since the 1970s the mainstay of oral history has been the cassette. Equipment ranged from domestic cassette recorders to professional field-recorders, and the media was cheap and easily available. In the 1980s the State Library of South Australia purchased eight Marantz-CP430 cassette recorders. The kits proved to be extremely popular and half of its annual intake was recorded using this equipment. In the 1990s SLSA purchased two Sony-TCD-10 DAT recorders. Although digital, they were tape-based and very similar to the Marantz-CP430 in operation and management. In recent years tape based recorders have disappeared from manufacturer' product lines and have been replaced with solid-state recorders. Consequently SLSA faced the challenge of committing to a new recorder and in 2005/06 purchased seven solid-state recorders, the Fostex-FR-2, now the main recorder for

our oral history program. This paper discusses the challenge in moving from a well known format to a very new technology, the decision making process, the development of a user guide and training session for users, and the work flows implemented to manage the resulting recordings. It will also look at some newer products on the market and suggest what to look for when purchasing a digital recorder for oral history. [Full Paper.](#)

UTILISING THE PAL TECHNIQUE: THE POWER OF TRADITIONAL STORYTELLING TO ENCOURAGE ORAL HISTORY RESPONSES – A WORKSHOP

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Julie is a Client Services Librarian with the University of Newcastle and became a professional storyteller in 1992, who still does paid storytelling regularly. This workshop will illustrate the PAL technique with examples of stories used in a study of children and examine the evidence obtained in the form of the recorded responses. Participants will be encouraged to share examples of stories from their own histories that come to mind during the telling. [Full Paper.](#)

NEW WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING DP MEMORY

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This paper examines memory and commemoration in relation to the 170,000 Displaced Persons (DPs) – predominantly Central and Eastern Europeans – who arrived in Australia as IRO-sponsored refugees between 1947 and 1953. These DPs were the vanguard of the successful mass European migration programs to Australia, yet the way in which their experiences have been perceived, remembered and commemorated speak largely of dominant national narratives and personal biases. Using an oral history methodology, new ways of teasing out themes of intergenerational and intercultural transmission are needed, with a new focus on integrating themes such as personal trauma and relationships with (in) family, culture and community with the wider themes of national narrative, memory and commemoration. [Full Paper.](#)

YANKS AND KIWIS IN THE PACIFIC WAR

Bruce M. PETTY

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In addition to doing archival research, I have interviewed Americans who spent time in New Zealand, and/or served with New Zealand forces in the Pacific. I have also interviewed New Zealanders, both veterans of the Pacific War and civilians from the home front. Both the archival research and the personal stories in this book will give a multidimensional picture of wartime New Zealand. It will show how New Zealand and the United States came to know each other, not only as nations, but also as individuals. With most of New Zealand's fighting men in places like the Middle East and Singapore—soon to become POWs--the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor brought home to New Zealand a fear of invasion, a fear that was calmed by the sudden infusion of tens of thousands of American Marines and other military personnel. Although many New Zealanders remember this coming of young American fighting men to New Zealand with some nostalgia, it is also the source of unhappy memories for others, which will be discussed in greater detail in the paper. In many of the oral histories the war appears as little more than a backdrop to lives lived during that epic-making drama known as WWII. The stories are about family life, about loss, about newfound friends and relationships, life before, during and after the war, and how Maori and Pakeha viewed themselves relative to each other both then and now. [Full Paper.](#)

SEARCHING FOR ADAM AND EVE: HOW ORAL AND FAMILY HISTORY CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY IDENTITY ACROSS INTERGENERATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES

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'Where do I come from' is a question common to the human experience, for answers we turn to those closest to us, our families. Oral history plays an important role in the preservation and dissemination of personal and family history. The passing on of stories from one generation to another strengthens intergenerational and familial bonds by increasing knowledge and understanding of 'what it was like back then.' Although many different races, nationalities and cultures emerge in family history research, all genealogical research leads to an Adam or Eve, the original man or woman who first arrived in Australia and planted the seed of the family tree. [Full Paper.](#)

YOUR FIRST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Pam WILLIS BURDEN

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For the novice, beginning an oral history project can be a perplexing jumble of choices. How do you choose the participants to suit your theme? How do you work within your community without offending anyone by omitting them? How do you conduct the interview? What sort of equipment do you need? What do you do with the interview once it has been completed?

This paper will face many of these puzzles from a layman's perspective. Research, transcribing, editing and funding will also be examined, providing a guide from the very beginning for individuals and community groups who are keen to start an oral history project but daunted by the prospect. [Full Paper.](#)

RECORDING ORAL HISTORIES IN A PARLIAMENTARY HERITAGE CONTEXT

Barry YORK

Old Parliament House

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The Oral History Program at Old Parliament House (OPH), Canberra, has recorded more than a hundred interviews with a wide range of men and women who worked at the place during the years 1927 to 1988 when it housed the Australian Commonwealth Parliament. Oral history offers OPH the opportunity to create unique primary sources of information and impressions based on highly personalised recollections about the building and its immediate environs, the individuals who worked there, the daily routines of labour and leisure, about past Prime Ministers and parliamentarians, and the political processes that affected the nation. In this paper, Barry York describes the collection and shows how oral history, as part of the OPH and Curtilage Heritage Management Plan 2007-2012, helps document and conserve intangible heritage values while allowing the known heritage values of the place to be enhanced. He also discusses the new direction that has emerged for the Oral History Program as OPH has developed a major national research role with its new Gallery of Australian Democracy and Australian Prime Ministers' Centre. [Full Paper.](#)

BREHAUT, LOREEN: 'CHASING WHALERS: THE TORY CHANNEL WHALERS PROJECT'

This is intended to be a quite informal project report on a series of oral history interviews I recorded with ex-whalers in New Zealand during 2005-6.

The last whaling station operating in New Zealand was situated in Tory Channel, which connects Queen Charlotte Sound with Cook Strait. Shore-based whaling had started there in 1827 and finally ended in 1964 when whale numbers had depleted and economics no longer supported the industry. For many of the men who had spent their winters in an exciting, dangerous, well-paid and macho work environment, the end of whaling was a significant blow. This project aimed at finding and interviewing as many surviving ex-whalers as possible and discussing their memories of those days. In addition, we wanted to find out what they had done in the forty-plus years since, and what their present feelings are towards whales and whaling.

A similar project had been conducted for the Australian National Library in the 1990s by Malcolm Trill in Albany, Western Australia, resulting in 11 interviews about the whaling industry there, but had a somewhat different angle as the whalers did not live on site in such a concentrated community. Also, as the Albany station closed some 14 years later than the New Zealand one, whalers came into contact with protesters both in the media and in person, so their experiences as the industry closed were somewhat different.

The Seahorse Heritage and Educational Trust, based in Picton, obtained a Sesquicentennial Oral History Award for this project, and I was engaged to do the interviews. You may be aware of the Australian Government's gift to New Zealand in 1990 on the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Waitangi, earmarked for oral history. That sum was invested and the interest is shared out in Oral History Awards every year, allowing a great range of different projects to be funded. The object of this project was not so much to collect information about how to catch, kill and process whales and produce the oil (already well documented) as to capture the atmosphere, attitudes and lifestyle of those involved in this bygone industry.

Shore whaling, or bay whaling as it is sometimes called, differed from the ship-based activity of *Moby Dick* fame and the modern huge Japanese vessels, in that each whale, when killed, was towed back to shore and handled there, rather than being butchered and processed on a mother-ship. This type of whaling depended on the catch coming within reach of the base, as a 50-ton whale cannot be towed very far. Although mechanized, the New Zealand whaling industry differed from almost all others internationally in that whales were chased and killed using small fast motorboats, the direct descendants of the rowboats used in former days. The hunt and the kill were thus close, personal events in which man and whale came into intimate contact, more closely resembling the intensity of indigenous whaling than the large, impersonal ships of other whaling nations.

As more than forty years had expired since any of these men had involvement with whaling, naturally the interviewees were men in their later years; the youngest I recorded was sixty. It was a group of men past their physical prime recalling the days of their youth and vigour, so I wasn't surprised to find their memories of whaling tinted with the rosy glow of nostalgia. The days when whalers swaggered down the Picton streets when they came to town and were the heroes of boys and attracters of young women are still well remembered. The overall impression was of hard physical conditions in a male environment, strong camaraderie, the thrill of the hunt and the kill, and the frisson of danger. While some of these elements were reduced for men working in the factory processing dead whale carcasses, the teamwork and good money seem to have left them all with equally positive impressions.

Selection of interviewees was made purely on availability and willingness. There is a local myth that only a handful of whalers survive. If the definition was extended to include everybody who worked at the Whaling Station in any capacity – not just the high-status harpooners and chaser-drivers – the numbers are larger than anyone had realised. I approached all those I was able to contact, and within eighteen months had recorded interviews with eighteen men whose whaling experiences ranged from the top to the lowliest of positions.

At no time did I perceive any embarrassment from the men at having taken part in whaling. While expressing regret that other nations are still killing whales, they felt that when they did it, it was a job, part of a useful industry, and that there was little difference between that and their off-season work in meat works, killing and butchering sheep. Most were bitterly disappointed when whale numbers diminished in the early 1960s and whaling became uneconomic – they had believed, and still do, that the numbers they killed were unlikely to have any long-term effects on whale populations, and they missed the good money and the excitement that whaling brought them. Several of them now refer to themselves as whale conservationists, and they are willing to spend a week or two every winter sitting in a lookout shanty counting migrating whales through binoculars for studies on behalf of our Department of Conservation. However several of them have admitted that if they had the chance (and of course if it was 'acceptable') they'd return to whaling immediately.

The reason I refer to this project as *Chasing Whalers* is because of the difficulty in actually getting these men to sit down and be recorded. Like the whales, they were very slippery – suspicious of my motives, difficult about signing consent forms, particular about access to and use of their interviews. They would make appointments and fail to keep them, and more than one refused to be interviewed at all. I discovered many undercurrents of status issues and personal feuds dating back generations, so in many ways the project was a minefield. It reminded me in some ways of my experiences interviewing Aboriginal people in the Pilbara as a new and naïve oral historian – this work is not as simple as the innocent might think, and we need to be well-trained in understanding potential pitfalls and indeed in understanding our 'client group'.

Although apparently unwilling personally to be captured on tape, once they sat down with me the men were keen to talk about their whaling experiences. Most of them said it was a pity I hadn't done this years ago when their fathers were alive (not much I could do about that!)

and I had to sometimes work hard to keep them telling their own experiences rather than passing down stories of the past. Doing an iconic job which only a few had access to, for only three months of each year, in a remote environment witnessed by few outsiders, men easily grow incidents into myths. Many of these men had heard from their fathers and grandfathers the stories of whaling down the years, and would describe an incident as if they'd been present. I had to be careful to ask, 'was this in your time?' To establish whether I was getting an eye-witness story or what I call a 'campfire tale' – there was little difference in the telling. Their work was dangerous and exciting, and there were accidents and near misses, some fatalities, and these were mostly the basis of such stories, although the jokes, pranks and tomfoolery which they delighted in, also attained mythical status. In the Lookout, which was on a hilltop overlooking Cook Strait, they would sit for hours staring through binoculars waiting to sight passing whales, then rush down the hill, launch the boats and speed out for the hunt. In the long periods of boredom on land, time was spent devising tricks and practical jokes to play on each other or unsuspecting visitors. Such things as exploding toilets and lunchboxes soldered shut were the stuff of legend and much repeated. On my first visit to the modern Lookout in 2005 I had difficulty getting any sense out of them as they were so busy revisiting their youth and telling silly stories.

The strongest message emerging throughout the interviews is the recall of camaraderie and teamwork. In spite of status issues, the atmosphere of masculine physical effort and skill combining to produce a profit remained a strong memory. There was great faith in the expertise of each man to do his job well. One of the whalers expressed it this way:

It was very much a community thing. ... You know, everybody was involved. There was nobody that just sort of took orders; they all did their own thing. They had their own specialties and they helped each other but they needed to work in with other people. It was, you know, probably very much a tribal sort of a thing, I guess. That's the way I see it.

Reinforcement of this 'tribal' atmosphere probably came from the pay arrangements. As in traditional whaling days, workers were paid by a share of the profit: basically so much per whale caught and processed. This made it in everybody's interest to cooperate and keep the industry working at maximum efficiency.

One topic the whalers were keen to discuss was shark hunting. Many seabirds, fish and sharks were attracted to the bay by the large amounts of blood, offal, meat and oil which were freely discarded into the sea, particularly in the early days. Shark hunts were a favourite hobby of men working in the factory, and provided thrills similar to those experienced by the whale chaser crews. The owners eventually banned shark hunts during working hours, mainly due to the bad publicity this activity was attracting in the media.

Although alcohol was not encouraged on site, and sobriety was essential in the dangerous work, when opportunity arose the whaling community, wives included, were not loath to indulge. Liberal amounts of beer and spirits were ordered and brought by chartered launch on occasion, supplied by a willing publican in Picton who ran accounts for the season. I have wondered whether there was any relationship between the binge drinking which was well-known, and the fact that few of the whalers lived into old age.

When whaling ended in New Zealand, it was due to the shortage of whales and impossibility of making a profit. Large ships from other nations were catching huge numbers of whales in

Antarctic waters before they migrated north along the New Zealand coast, and from one season to the next the numbers dropped dramatically. As most of the men at the station were descended from whaling families, they must have been aware of this possibility. After all, their grandfathers had hunted right whales in rowboat days until they were almost extinct. There was some sympathy for the whales' plight in New Zealand and internationally in the early 1960s, but the movement was not strong enough to affect licences or provide local protest action. In Australia, where whaling continued into the 1970s, the industry was attacked in print and in person by conservationists, but by that time the New Zealand industry had closed due to commercial constraints.

The end of whaling was a blow to those for whom it had provided thrills, comradeship and financial reward. Although the work was hard and dangerous, it was for only three months of the year, and was anticipated with pleasure. However, all the workers were used to finding other employment for at least half the year, so the individuals and the local community survived. Some of the men moved into new types of employment, and most said that their whaling years had given them a financial boost. However, quite a few preferred the contract way of working and spent years doing seasonal work and short-term contract jobs, often in the farming or building industries. One or two were laughingly vague about the way they had supported themselves for the past forty years: 'Oh, doing this and that,' – probably part of a thriving local informal economy.

The project has stimulated new interest in the whaling history locally. To some extent the old whalers have been restored to a position of respect and admiration, and the Oral History Award has certainly been a great boon to Picton Museum which has added many more photographs and artefacts to its collection.

BUNBURY, BILL: HEAR! HEAR! FOR ORAL HISTORY!

Now freelance producer after 38 years working at the ABC in both radio and television and Adjunct Professor, Communications at Murdoch University. bunburywj@westnet.com.au

“Full many a flow’r is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air!”

(from Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard”).

All too often a similar analogy could be made for the treatment of Oral History - but in this case **‘seen but not heard’**.

I’m conscious that much of what I will say shortly is standard practice for many oral historians but if I can draw out ways in which we can look at oral history both through example and practice then I hope this excursion will prove helpful.

I am also conscious of that other 18th century character Samuel Johnson who noted that

It is often as helpful to be reminded as it is to observe.

I hope to do both.

In this presentation I’d like to draw out and illustrate a rationale for Oral history as a **heard** medium. In practice much emphasis is placed on transcribing **spoken** words back into **written** ones and, while that is self- evidently useful, it can dominate the way in which we think of oral history. I suggest that it can fail to point up an important dimension of oral history, not simply its content but the way in which the listener can perceive the content, i.e. the **mood** or **emotion** that the spoken word conveys, which adds considerably to our understanding of what we hear.

Take this example:-

TRACK 1 STONYBROKE AND WALKING

Begins What’s the use of talking..

Ends nearly fell asleep on the plate.

DUR 4’17 – Click icon below for sound

Three men interviewed in different places and times but all asked the same pattern of questions. Their narrative is the summary, almost the script of enquiries about:-

Shelter ?

Food?

Attitudes of authorities?

Others?

Their self-perception of themselves at that time?

Print alone can never fully convey this aspect. You hear it in the tones of the voices, bitterness, determination, fierce pride, gratitude etc.

In the second part of this presentation I'd like to talk about ways in which oral historians can interpret what they collect. Sometimes the collection of **discrete** interviews alone marks a wasted opportunity. As the NSW historian Patrick Farrell once observed:-

'There are shelves and shelves of unheard cassettes.'

Subsequent historians might get around to using this raw data but I strongly suggest that if oral history is to provide a useful arm of history itself it would be a good idea to do more in the way of analysing and evaluating what we collect and presenting it in a **finished** form. In this way it has more chance of becoming a valuable record.

I recall hearing a paper some time ago which traced the continued history of numerous accidents in a rural industry. But it was a catalogue of woes rather than an analysis of why they happened and what was done or not done to prevent them.

Did they tail off or continue?

Was there a union stance on this issue ?

Management action/attitude?

Effect on morale/productivity?

One could go on but these are the kind of questions I'd like to probe. The historian, reading or hearing this material later on, perhaps well after the lifetime of the original compiler, may well want these questions answered.

The 17th century poet John Dunne famously observed that **NO MAN IS AN ISLAND** and I am sure that today we'd remind him to include women. But his observation applies strongly to the way we see ourselves or **beyond** ourselves.

I've heard and read some local histories which concentrate only on the area itself, with no connection with the larger world, and yet nurses and soldiers and immigrants in those communities have seen much of the rest of the world and those experiences have enriched and changed those communities.

How did a returning soldier see/ fit into his home town on return from Vietnam?

How did a Displaced Person from Poland see Port Lincoln in SA 1946?

Well we can look at this example?

After World War Two the Eyre Peninsula Railway in South Australia offered for many Displaced Persons -immigrants from war torn Europe, their first job in Australia.

And we'll hear one shortly -**Stan Domagalski** from Poland,

John McGeever was one of the Peninsula railway staff helping to create accommodation for migrants like Stan Domagalski.

TRACK 2 DISPLACED PERSONS

Begins Er, you know I was..

Ends the Germans were running away.

DUR 1'07

Immediately after the war Stan Domagalski was in a DP camp, working as a driver for the UN. He saw pictures of Australia when he delivered films to the camp for would-be emigrants, liked what he saw and applied.

Under the regulations he was to work for two years in a government job- and found himself doing railway work near Port Lincoln.

TRACK 3 SA RAIL LIFE

Begins You live in a camp again..

Ends here till we die !

DUR 1'00

Stan wanted to learn English and helped himself by finding a local pen- friend, the daughter of a local farmer, a girl called **Alice**.

TRACK 4 THE PEN FRIEND

Begins So we corresponded ...

Ends the way the romance began.

DUR. 1'08

Alice not only found a life partner but her partner and his fellow migrants helped to change the Port Lincoln community.

TRACK 5 MIGRANT CONTRIBUTION

Begins They brought in a lot of new ideas..

Ends ... cook prawns and squid.

DUR 00'47

I suggest these perspectives can enrich local histories. We sense a wider world affecting Port Lincoln and the reaction of at least one local. We also sense the optimism and the appreciation of someone escaping from the wrecked sub-continent of Europe in 1945.

And we also hear an amusing but very relevant account of the sectarian divide in post war Australia.

He's Catholic and I'm Methodist

These comments, I suggest, are the real stuff of local history, not when the Town Hall was built or who was the Mayor in 1955. They're good audio documents. It's more important, I suggest, to capture the texture, the flavour of past lives and decades than simply the facts of what happened when and where – that isn't **oral**.

Now, if we have time, a bit about **Design**, if we are to turn our oral histories into accessible and helpful documents.

I guess for me a radio background has always helped. There is nothing like the constraint of time to help you get a message across but there is also the imperative to be interesting and also to shed light on topics/ issues that may be obscure or have not been examined from a particular point of view.

I'm thinking here of a radio series I made some twelve years on from the event itself. In 2001 I researched and produced a two part series called

AN UNHEALED WOUND

It was the story of the Australian civilian pilots' dispute in 1989. In that year, their Union lodged a wage claim for a 29.4% wage rise. This was in the context of the Accord brought in by the Hawke government, limiting wage gains to 6%, (with few exceptions) to cope with inflation and provide more jobs.

The pilots were never going to be an exception. Ansett, under Sir Peter Abeles, seized the chance to write new rules for pilot employment - and to cut a long story short, unless the disputing pilots accepted the new conditions, they were effectively blackballed.

What the travelling public remembers is the inconvenience of aircraft travel, cancellations and delays, foreign pilots flying our planes, being flown in Hercules by the RAAF etc.

As I went through the archives and interviewed pilots and their families, it was clear that there were at least two stories here. The third is the one you've just heard, passenger inconvenience.

Story 1 was an industrial dispute. Incidentally it was not a strike. It was a story of perhaps poor pilot leadership, failure to read the political and economic climate, and a story where the government and the airlines broke the will of the pilots Union.

Story 2 was about the personal consequences for those who took industrial action.

Many pilots never flew again. Those, who from economic necessity went back were 'scabs' in the eyes of those who refused to accept the altered conditions offered by the airlines.

On the other hand there were bankruptcies, suicides and broken marriages. Some pilots had to leave families behind and work for overseas airlines. In many ways they were the fortunate ones.

It wasn't all bad news either. Some flew on international routes, First Officers became Check Captains etc. But the initial effect on nearly all families was a sense of catastrophe, a sudden alteration of what had seemed a secure existence and professional careers for both husbands and wives abruptly ended or altered.

It seemed important for me to interweave these two stories together, to show the effect of a large scale dispute on individuals. When I started I was well aware of Story 1 – the **Industrial** Story- what became equally compelling was the **Personal** story, whose depth I had not fully appreciated until I met the people involved.

This is a recurring situation in any work of this kind.

One of the traps in any compilation is to set out with too fixed a view of what you are trying to do. One of the most important lessons for me in documentary making was to re-think and revise constantly.

An early lesson for me came in 1986 when I made a radio feature called

OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF MIND

Essentially it was the story of a virtual concentration camp in pre- World War Two Western Australia, an enclosure for Aboriginal men, women and children –either surplus to labour requirement, or simply a 'nuisance' in certain country towns – or in the case of children – almost an orphanage for those taken from their parents.

My initial aim was to depict the situation as accurately as I could, which, with interviews with former inmates told its own story. I recall feeling appalled at their treatment.

But as I went on I began to hear other voices and realised I was not listening to victims but rather to survivors and - perhaps more than survivors, men and women who had come through Moore River with dignity and courage.

One phrase buzzed in my head as I came back from talking to playwright Jack Davis, author of "No Sugar" which dealt in part with this story. Jack had been through Moore River himself and in answer to one of my questions about the effect of the experience, he simply said.

It made some of us very weak.

It made some of us very strong.

It was an element I began to include in the program as I built it. I was in fact hearing the beginning of the indigenous struggle against that kind of treatment. People like Ken Colbung and Jack Davis were to lead that only a few years later.

Stories or social issues are often complex and paradoxical and all the more interesting for it. They also help us avoid political correctness and polemics. What I have to say here applies particularly to areas like a record of a dispute or an ongoing social phenomenon.

Again, another indigenous story.

I made a three part series on the long term effects of the Northern Australia Pastoral Workers Award of 1965 when the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission awarded Aboriginal pastoral workers equal wages with white workers.

Good intention- socially just and it had to happen.

But in its application, the effects often fell far short of the desired effect. Whereas hitherto pastoralists had maintained whole communities on stations, largely on a welfare basis, they now argued (*and had done so in the Commission hearings*) that they would have to let people go. In some cases treatment was humane, in others not, but the net effect?

Drift into towns like Katherine and Halls Creek of able bodied former stockmen and families.

Initially poor housing, camping out on the fringes

Unemployment - passing into the next generation

Alcohol Abuse

The list goes on and it still resonates today. The outstation movement of the late 1980s was a direct attempt by indigenous Australians to break out of this cycle - by returning to country.

I called the series – and later the book I wrote on this issue

IT'S NOT THE MONEY IT'S THE LAND

I was hearing the strongest distress from those stockmen and their families and it was about their sense of absence from country.

The loss of station life meant in most cases the loss of contact with land that in a very real sense was and is their mother and gives them their identity and their life meaning; concepts often difficult for Europeans to properly appreciate.

And this came home to me when I asked one particular question. I was sitting with a group of people at Ringers' Soak, some three hours south of Halls Creek, in the Kimberley, land from which they had been roughly evicted in the 1980s.

I'd asked one former stockman how it felt to lose his country at that time. His reply was terse. In the lunch break we took shortly afterwards, the Djaru interpreter, Patsy Mudgabel

took me aside – *I had been recording the interviews in the local language – for ease of expression- and Patsy had been doing spontaneous translation-*

Patsy said

You asked him the wrong question – he never lost the land – it was always inside him –in his being.

That mistake on my part crystallised the whole story and gave the focus to the whole series.

I've found it pays to be a constant learner and mistakes or taking wrong directions are useful experiences. Your interviewees are often your best teachers.

NOTE: To hear the sound bites referred to in this paper click on the following version at <http://www.ohaaqld.org.au/index.php?/bill-bunbury-2007-ohaa-conference-paper.html>

CHALEYER, MADELEINE: FIELD INTERVIEWS IN IRAQ; AN EXAMPLE OF THE USE OF ORAL HISTORY IN CONTEMPORARY SITUATIONS AND CONTEXTS

The Memorial has a long tradition and commitment to recording the history and service of the Australian Defence Force, and its collection already includes the work of First World War cinematographers Hubert Wilkins and Frank Hurley, and Damien Parer's iconic work of the Second World War.

Robert Nugent is the first Official cinematographer ever to be commissioned by the Memorial. Nugent was selected based on his professional achievements and extensive experience in filming observational documentaries in many of the world's remote regions. He brought a unique set of skills to the documenting of the Australian military experience in Iraq, the living conditions, the physical environment, and the personal issues of Australians being away from home.

Travelling under the auspices of the Memorial emphasised the importance of documenting activities for the historical record. To accomplish this Nugent was hosted by the Australian Army History Unit and lived with the troops. A key feature of the commission was to create material specifically for the Memorial to use in Post 45 gallery development and contemporary exhibitions.

The style of the footage is not of the news variety, where quick grabs are taken from the mouths of soldiers and action sequences built up on patrols and then a voice over describes what is happening for the viewer. Rather there is an emphasis on taking the viewer into the domain of the soldiers' world, as they live it, creating a historical record for years to come.

The film consists of a mix of on location interviews and actuality image and sound covering operations, training, living conditions, leisure activities and the environment. Footage was also taken from military aircraft and vehicles and included the use of a remote camera. This was achieved by attaching a video camera to the gun mounts of an Australian Light Armoured Vehicle (ASLAV). Rob said these were the best camera platforms he had ever used due to their amazing stability.

There are over 40 interviews conducted with Australian men and women from the three services as well as civilian embassy staff. The interviews focused on the personal trails that lead the individual soldiers to be in Iraq. The context of the interview was at an endpoint, in the reality of Iraq itself. They were conducted inside the two heavily fortified Australian camps which form the view of Iraq for the Australian digger. The topics ranged from personal motivations for service, memories of where each person was on September 11, 2001 and how they thought this event might affect them at the time, and reflections on their own military service. They described their tasks and their day to day routines.

A range of servicemen and women were interviewed, from commanding officers and senior NCOs to young Troopers, Gunners and Privates, in groups or alone in their barracks, in tents and in their tank, describing what they love about what they do and what they think

about going home, watching a cyclone on the weather map move in on their home town back in Darwin while they sit out in the desert in Iraq and wonder.

There are interviews with soldiers who are on the second tour and those who have left Australia for the first time. Of particular significance are the interviews with Garth Callender, Beau St Leone and Luke Stephens who were involved in a VIBED (vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, pronounced as separate letters) explosion on their first tour in October 2004.

Overall the interviews taken in the context of the Australian outposts in Iraq, provide an insight into the day in the life of the modern Australian soldier. They are seen and heard balancing professional ambitions, living up to expectations of what it means to be an Australian soldier with reflections on what lead them here and their personal motivations. The oral history counterpoints the actuality and immediacy of their world in Iraq.

There is historical value in conducting oral history interviews as well as documenting the immediate context of the interviews. The period the footage was taken was in April 2006, when the Australian Army's operating procedures were fairly well established and the situation in Iraq for the Australians was not changing greatly. The soldiers' posture is one of holding a position and keeping a low profile.

Rob's footage has considerable impact and gives a real sense of the day to day activities and concerns of the Australian soldiers.

GEE, PATRICIA: REDCLIFFE REMEMBERS

Today I'd like to introduce Redcliffe City Council's oral history web site, *Redcliffe Remembers: the War years 1939-1949*. The web site and DVD are the result of a State Library of Queensland *Queensland Stories 2005* grant, the purpose of which was to develop a web site and DVD as companion pieces to the book *Redcliffe Remembers: the War Years*, which was published November 2004. I've put a post card on each chair and the web site address is on the back of this.

This story began in 2002 when the Redcliffe Historical Society approached the Redcliffe library's local history department looking for a suitable project for their members to get their teeth into. At the library we had requests year after year from students for information about Redcliffe during the Second World War and at that time we had very little material. There's plenty of material on the big picture, so to speak, but what the students wanted was information relating specifically to Redcliffe. What were people in Redcliffe doing during the war, how did they live, what was it like to be on rations and so on. So the suggestion was made that we research the war years and look at the whole decade including that period immediately after the war – service men and women returning home and trying to settle into the old life, the people at home adjusting to that as well, rationing of some foods and particularly building products which continued for some time, and so on.

We formed a committee that consisted of members of the Redcliffe Historical Society and staff of the Redcliffe City Library and nearly three years later, we launched the book *'Redcliffe Remembers: the War Years'* in November 2004. This book was the result of oral histories, lots and lots of research and plenty of community involvement. Not long after the book launch the State Library of Queensland announced the *Queensland Stories* grants and we thought that a web site and DVD would be wonderful companions to the book and also that we could reach a much wider audience, and so we applied for and were awarded a grant.

One of the reasons for deciding on a web site and DVD was that we have found that there is a public demand for, firstly, visual material – "*Haven't you got a video?*" – and secondly online access – "*Where's the web site?*" – and we are very conscious of this need.

What we had in mind for the DVD was the Ken Burns effect. Most of you would probably have seen the television series of the American Civil War produced by Ken Burns quite a few years back. That series certainly opened our minds to the possibilities of the use of oral history and archival material in a visual way, and this was to be the basic model for our DVD – lots of images with voice over and possibly appropriate sound effects.

With the web site we looked at the *American Veterans History Project* site, www.loc.gov/vets. This site has changed quite a bit since we first looked at it, but there were several things about it that we liked –

- you can download full transcriptions

- they had a 'theme' section and
- there are head-shot icons for each person.

The themes on this site had titles such as '*Courage, Patriotism, Community*' and '*Sweethearts, Buddies, Family Ties*' which didn't quite suit our needs, but we liked the idea of themes for easy access, especially for school students, so we stored that idea for future use also.

Another site we liked was *Hear Her Voice*, a Victorian Museum site. It's an oral history site; quite simple but very effective and we liked their use of Flash.

[click on www.museum.vic.gov.au/hearhervoice]

So with all these ideas in mind we got down to business. One of the most important things about this project for us was that we had already spent three years researching that decade of Redcliffe's history for the book, so we already had a good working knowledge of our subject and we had a good idea of where we wanted to go.

The video interviews were the next thing on our agenda. We've done quite a few of these over the years so that process wasn't new to us, and in association with Bluegum Media of Lawnton we filmed 14 people who had lived in Redcliffe during the war years. We decided to do half-hour interviews and before we started we sat down and talked about what else we wanted to discover about that decade in Redcliffe to shape our questions. Our focus was on Redcliffe's social history for that period of time. One of the things we felt we wanted to get at was the fact that Redcliffe at that time was essentially a small farming community with an overall population of 5 to 6000 we really wanted to get to the nitty gritty of what life was like for those people in those days. Another thing that came up was small business and the problems with restrictions immediately after the War.

Originally we had planned to do 8 interviews and we had actively sought these people out. 14 was nearly double and was quite a lot more than we had anticipated and really made for a lot more work, but on the other hand we did get excellent and varied material. The reason we finished up with 14 was that different people in our group had different ideas about what they wanted to know about, or include, which is usually the case with group projects, however I do think that if you're open to including as many ideas as possible you can get some surprising results. One chap we included because he expected to be included and we didn't feel we could leave him out, but we got him on a good day and he did a great interview. One interview was especially difficult as the poor man was in the early stages of dementia and repeated himself over and over and over. He badly wanted to tell his story, but the slightest interruption sent him right back to the beginning again so that it was just like replaying a record over and over. We did get just enough to use but it wasn't easy and his interview required judicious editing.

So we did our filming and that all went pretty smoothly and we had each interview transcribed. We had a video copy of each interview run off for each participant. Participants signed Consent forms and they knew exactly what the material was to be used for.

We also contacted an American submariner who had set up an R & R base for American submariners at Redcliffe during the War, and asked him to do a video recording for us. Chuck had a friend film him and then posted us the recordings. They weren't the greatest as far as sound and film went, and actually his interview was pretty terrible, but we did manage to cobble bits together for the project.

We had two letters written by soldiers serving overseas to loved ones at home in Redcliffe during the War and we wanted to include these somehow. Some of you may know of William McInnes the actor, he's a Redcliffe boy, so we approached him and he agreed to record the voice-over for the letters.

The filming extended over four months all up and sometimes we would do two or three filmings on the one day. It was quite intensive, but for me it was easier in the long run. We visited some people in their homes, and others who lived some distance away came in to the library. Two things in our favour for the early stages were that we had the background research already done, and we had previous experience with video orals. Once the filming was finished we needed to work out what we would use and how we would use it.

The idea for the DVD was that we would have themes, and after working through the films, we'd chosen what we liked and we had enough to do a double DVD of 4 hours, and for a while we worked towards that. This meant sitting through hours of film to choose appropriate sections suitable for use. Bluegum edited out the sections we'd chosen and sorted them into the themes. As I mentioned earlier we were going for the '*Ken Burns*' effect and this meant sourcing suitable photos to go with the narrative. The basic ratio for this is one photo for every twenty seconds of sound so that's quite a lot of photos.

We chose the theme titles from the comments people made in their interviews, one theme was titled '*Not Many People had a car*'. Almost everyone said that at some point, and that theme dealt with transport. Another was '*It was a simple life*'. Most of them said that as well, so that theme dealt with lifestyle and farming. With both the DVD and web site the photos chosen aren't necessarily those of the people concerned. The photos are meant to be representative of what the participants are discussing and in some cases we've used a bit of 'poetic licence' so to speak.

We had to have scripts to introduce each theme, and a script to introduce the DVD itself, and we discussed background sounds such as waves washing on the shore and seagulls and so on. Anyway, eventually we decided that one two-hour DVD was all that we could comfortably afford. This meant fairly drastic cutting and we just threw out whole themes, which wasn't easy, but in the end you have to be realistic. Because of time constraints I've opted not to show bits of the DVD and we'll go straight on to the web site. We sell the book and the DVD at the Redcliffe City Library and the book is on sale at the State Library of Queensland shop and the Redcliffe Museum.

[go to web site - <http://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/app/redclifferemembers/default.asp>]

This is the **Home** page for the web site. Toadshow was the firm we worked with for the web site and the amount of money we had to spend really determined what we could put on it. As audio takes up so much space we were limited to two minutes per person so the approach for the web site was quite different from that of the approach to the DVD.

Obviously it was going out on the Internet and people who would have no idea of where or what Redcliffe is might look at it, so our idea was to try to give a flavour – a type of time capsule – of what Redcliffe was like in that decade.

It wasn't easy, I have to tell you, to sort through all that film and find one quote from each person, approximately two minutes long, that said something definitive about Redcliffe – and then those quotes had to be matched up to photos. We did have to change one because the quote I chose originally was just too vague and difficult to match with photos successfully.

The first thing Toadshow did was set up a working site. It wasn't 'live' and you needed a password to access it. That meant that we could check on it at any time and make changes or suggestions as we went along. We sent up a selection of photos for background use. You can see that here on the Home page, the banner at the top of the page which changes as you move from page to page, and the head shots of all the participants arranged alphabetically by surname. The two soldiers are the ones who wrote the letters. Down the left-hand side of the page is the navigation bar.

So then Toadshow started adding our photos for each story. The originals were black and white but Rob from Toadshow had this idea of colourising them, making them look like the old fashioned postcards and that has worked out really well.

If we click on [\[About\]](#) firstly you can see the change in the banner heading. On the navigation bar you can see headings for privacy disclaimers, copyright and so on. We looked at what they had on the *'Hear Her Voice'* site, thought, *'Why re-invent the wheel?'* then contacted the Victorian Museum and asked if they would mind if we just basically copied what they had done. They were quite agreeable to that although we did make a few small changes.

On the main page here you have the introduction to the site. Again, we had to consider the fact that most people would not know where Redcliffe was so the introduction had to cover that, but we didn't want to make it too long because we felt that people just don't want to read miles of text on the Internet. [\[scroll down page\]](#)

The next heading is **Stories** so when you click on that you get a list of the people involved on the navigation bar, and a simple explanation of what the stories are on the main page.

If you click on the person's name on the left-hand side, [\[click\]](#) you get a short biography of that person, a copy of his narrative on the site, and then the full transcription of the interview. The transcriptions took quite a bit of time checking and double checking spelling of names and so on and there's a printable version for downloading.

For the **Flash Movies** page, we have a head shot of each participant and that was taken from the film. We did have discussions right at the beginning about Flash and whether everyone had it and so on, but in the end, we felt we couldn't be restricted by those considerations. There will always be some people with and some people without and in my view you just have to keep moving forward. That was two years ago and now you probably wouldn't even have that discussion.

Now you just click on to any person and then start the film, and we'll start with **Colin Bainbrigge**. **[example]**

Each story is quite different you'll find and we'll now have a look at **Heather Braford**.

[example]

- **Ken Grice**
- **Jess Hutchinson**
- **Marle Juster**

So that's a sample of the stories – we only have time to see half of them today but you can view the rest yourselves – and now I'd like to show you one of the soldier's letters:

- **George Corscadden**

There is also a **Message** area and we've received some very complimentary messages. The *Redcliffe Remembers* web site is attached to our Council site and maintained by council's IT people.

The people involved with this project are very happy with the outcome, and we feel we've managed to successfully combine the oral with the visual in a historical but entertaining manner that should appeal to people of all ages.

<http://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/app/redclifferemembers/default.asp>

GIBSON, SUZANNE:

RECORDING AND EDITING AUDIO IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

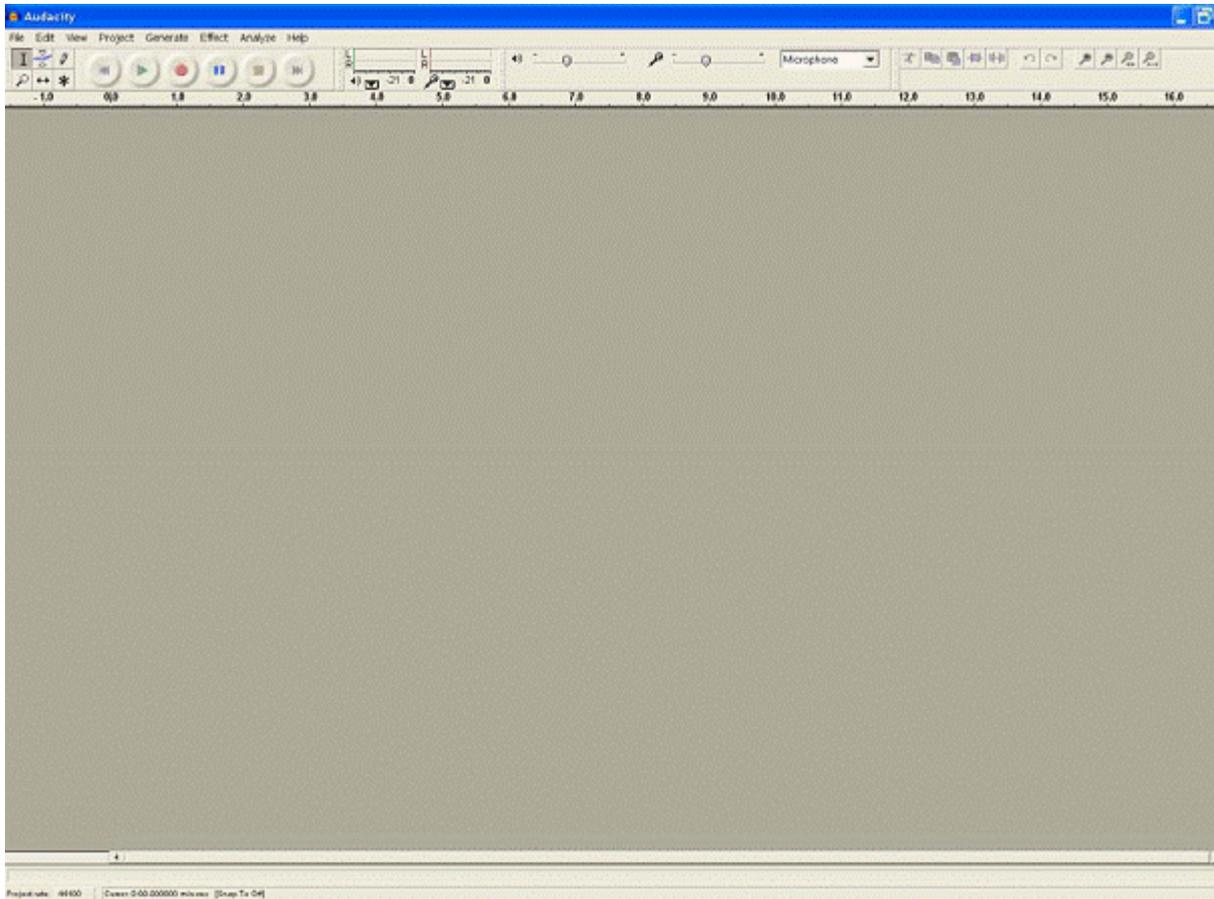
Recording sound. Quality control of audio.

- Remember you can't revive poor quality audio in any computer program, so if you do want to use your oral history interviews in an installation, on a DVD or in a radio program, it all starts with your recording equipment and how you use it in the interview
- Get a decent mic (seek advice from Oral History section of your State Library, or from the National Library. Common broadcast field reporter mics are the Beyer M 58; Shure VP 64 or SM-62).
- Wear headphones so you hear the recording and you can hear if someone goes off mic or the recording stops.
- Choose the least noisy environment. Turn off the fridge, the radio, the A/C, move the dog and ask the neighbour to stop mowing the lawn (nicely). In North Australia, turn off the fans. Explain that it may get a little hot but that it is really important that you get a quality interview that you can use, otherwise, you are simply wasting the time of the interviewee.
- If there is a background noise that you can't get rid of (busy road/bird/unhelpful neighbour re: the lawnmower), then record some background sound of the noise itself, with no talking. This will be a huge help when it comes to editing. If a noise suddenly starts up in the middle of the interview, like a plane roaring overhead, stop the IV but keep the recorder rolling and record the sound, again with no talking. Then pick up the interview after the sound has faded, or after you have recorded at least 1 minute of the sound.
- Don't let the interviewee hold the microphone
- Do keep the mic close to the interviewee's mouth. Don't sit it on the table or on your lap. If you can't hold a mic for a length of time, try a floor stand that keeps the mic close to the mouth of the interviewee, or a lapel mic, but it is important that the recording picks up the questions you ask. You probably won't need them in any production, so they may not need to be as clear/present as the voice of the interviewee ... but they are important for archival purposes. So test out your set up BEFORE you head out into the field.
- Watch the meters while you are recording. If you are on cassette you should be aiming for your recordings level to hover around -3 and flick into the red on any stressed words or laughter. If you are on digital, you should be metering much lower, with the peak at about -6. In digital, you do not ever want to go into the red, as digital sound distorts at 0 and above. The ABC, for instance, meters at -12 for digital ... that is it treats around -12 db on the meters as 0, to avoid distortion. I find this a little low in the field, but definitely don't push your levels to 0, as they will sound horrible.

So you have a recording .. to start editing.

- Firstly, go to this website <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> and click download Audacity 1.2.6 for either Mac or Windows.
- Check the "system requirements" on the download page to make sure your computer can handle the program and that you have enough room on your hard drive to import, edit and save audio files.

- While you are there, take a look through the tutorials, the user guides and the frequently asked questions. It's a very good, user-friendly site, so make the most of it.
- Follow the instructions to download. When the program is properly downloaded, it should open to a page like this:



Don't panic that it doesn't have any tracks on it, as the tracks only appear when you bring audio into it.

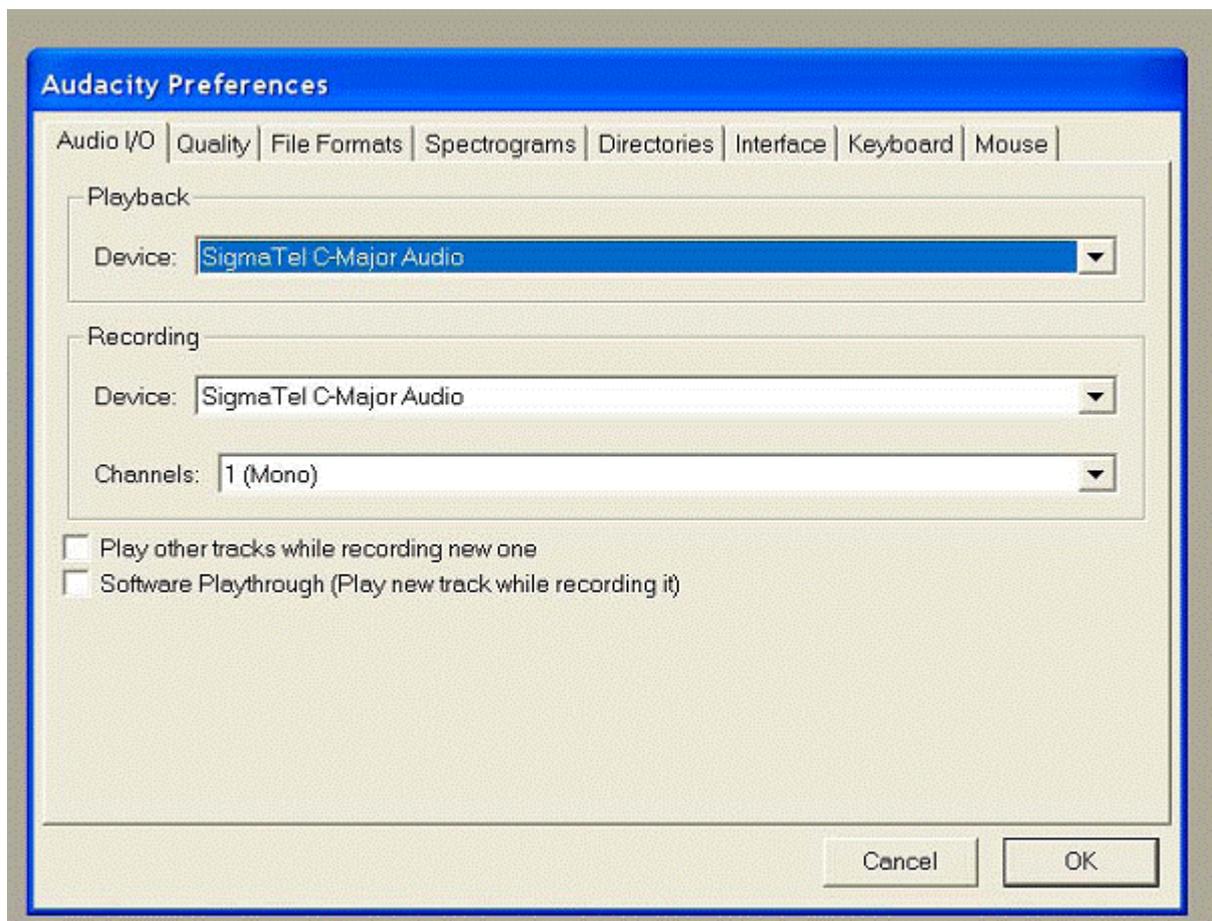
Getting audio into Audacity.

Before you bring any audio into Audacity, you must set up a file name for your editing project and set up the audio quality and format you want Audacity to work in. It can only do what you tell it to do!

So ... first after opening this screen (as above), go to the file menu and hit "save as", and give your project a name. JoeBlowEdit for example. You may want to put the date in the title. Then hit save.

Then you have to tell Audacity the audio quality and format you want to work in.

Go to the Edit menu. Down the bottom you will see "preferences". Click on here and this window will come up.



The tabs we need to know about are **Audio I/O** (In/Out); **Quality** and **File Formats**.

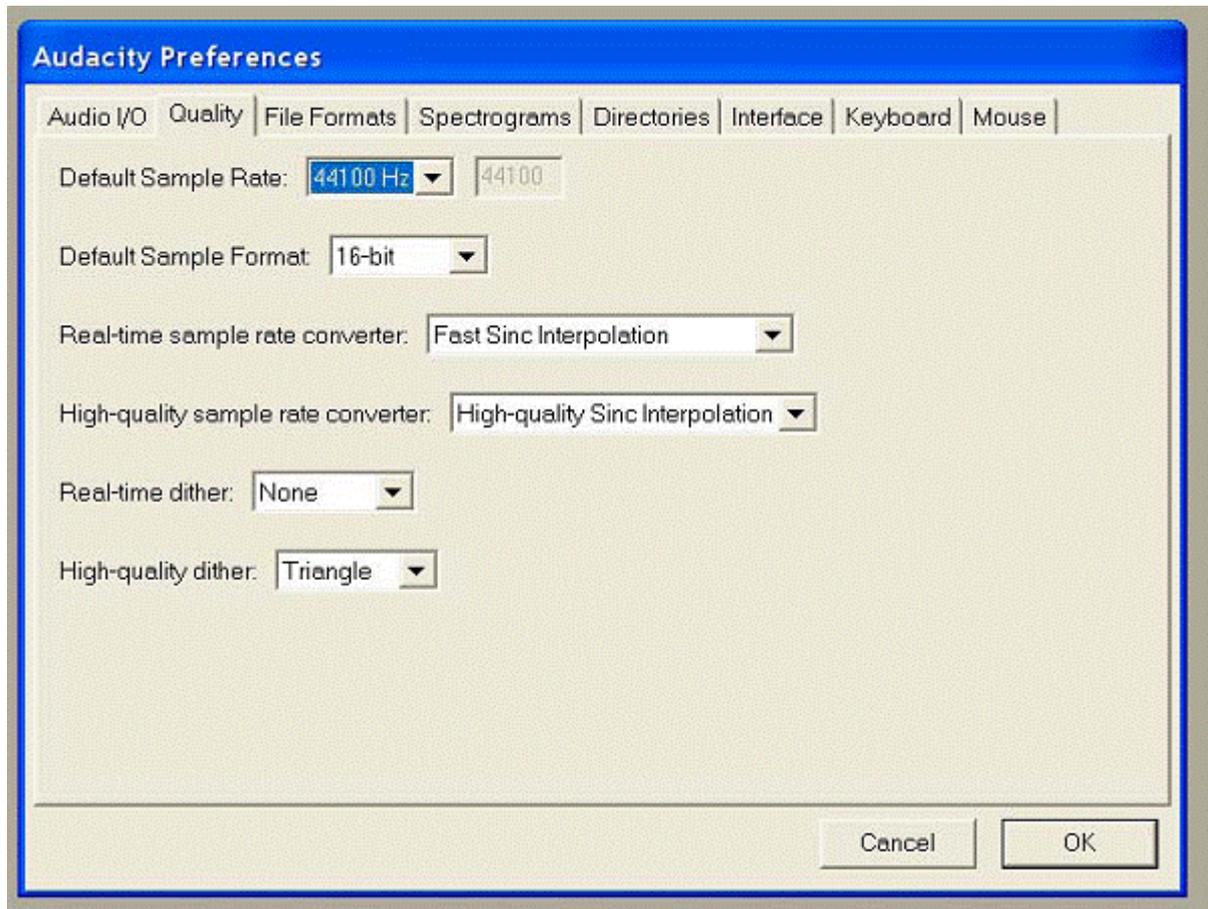
If you don't see these options, check and see if there are little arrows in the top rh corner of this window. Click on these and the menu will scroll across and these options will be revealed.

In **Audio I/O**, (as above), in the Recording and Playback options, Audacity will have already located your computer sound card, as in this example. If you have a .wav recorder attached to your computer, Audacity may have selected it as an audio device. In this case, hit the drop down arrow for record and playback and select your soundcard. If you are not sure of

your soundcard, then look in your control panel (or apple menu) for audio devices and it will be listed there.

If you are editing an interview, it will be a mono recording, which means Audacity will record or import the audio into one track. If you are importing or playing music into Audacity, then select 2 (stereo) in the Channels menu.

Then go to the **Quality** tab and you will get this menu:

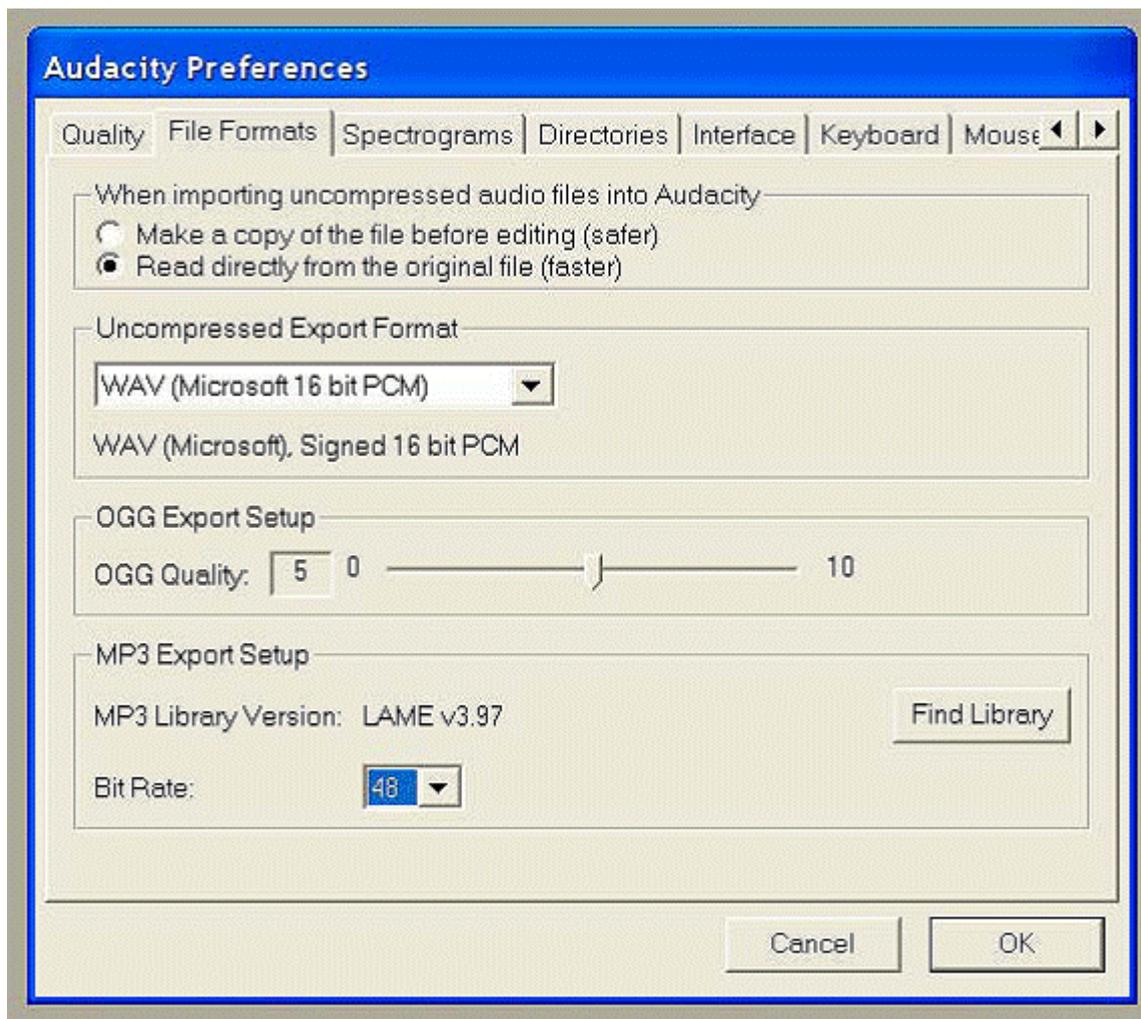


We are interested in the Default Sample Rate and the Default Sample Format.

For archival and broadcast purposes, do not go below 44,100 Hz as a Sample Rate and do not go below 16-bit as a Sample Format. If you have plenty of space on your Hard Drive, you can increase the numbers of both, to a Sample Rate of 48,000Hz and 24-bit. Higher Sample Rates and Formats mean a higher quality recording but a bigger file size, as the improved quality is because the computer is sampling and storing more information in the audio file.

From an archival perspective, they advise to use the highest quality you can... but you have to decide now, as you can't increase the quality further down the track .. ie a 16- bit, 44,100 .wav file will always be that quality, even if you copy it at 24 bit/48,000 as it all relates to the original audio data. This means if you have your .wav recorder set to 16 –bit/44,100Hz, there is no point transferring it as 24-bit/48,000Hz. You have to record the original in this quality then maintain it in the editing process. Don't worry about the other options in this screen, just leave them as the defaults.

The click on **File Formats** and you'll get this window:



In this window, I would click on “Read directly from the original file”. If you are working with a .wav recorder, then you should have a copy of the original file on your hard drive already. If you are playing directly into Audacity, it should be your practise to save the unedited audio file onto the Hard Drive, before you do any editing. We’ll go on to talk about this later.

Select WAV (Microsoft 16 bit PCM) as your export format, as above, or WAV (Microsoft 32 bit Float). This is telling Audacity how you want it to save (export) your edited audio. If you are on an Apple and working in AIFF, there are the same options available. Do not go below 16-Bit as your Export Format. There is some suggestion that some audio programs don’t like the 32-bit float option, so for this reason I use 16-bit, which is CD quality & broadcast standard.

Hit OK. You have now set up Audacity to import (copy/record) and export (save/copy) your audio in the format that you want.

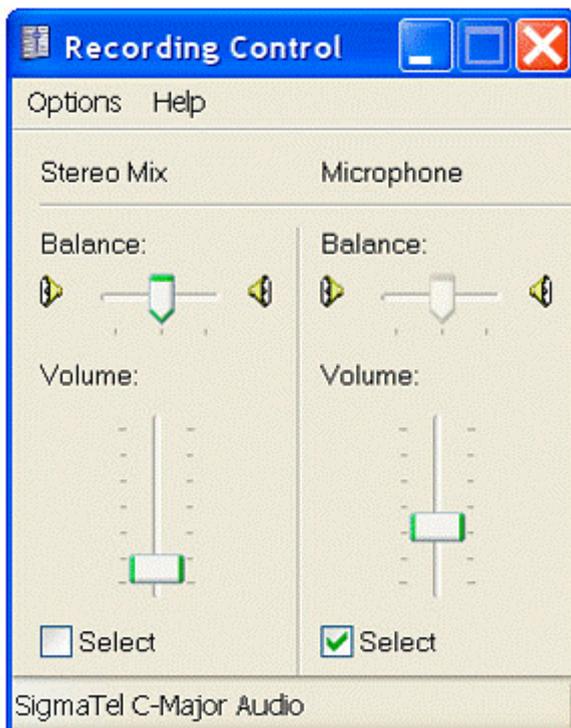
Now you can start bringing your audio into Audacity.

If you have a .wav recorder, then you need to first copy your .wav file to your computer hard drive. Then it is simply a matter of going to the Project menu on the Audacity screen and clicking on “import audio”. Navigate to the .wav file you want to edit and click open. Audacity will automatically place the audio file into a track. If you then want to add another audio file, Audacity will automatically place it into a separate track.

If you are working on cassette, or mini disc, then you will have to do an analogue (real time copy) transfer into Audacity. That is, you will play your IV into Audacity and Audacity will record it as a .wav file.

So you need a lead that will link your recorder into your computer. So the lead will go from the output of your recorder to the soundcard input of your computer. If you are not sure what lead to get, take your recorder to Tandy or Dick Smith and say you need an audio lead to go from it to your computer.

Then you need to tell your computer to accept the incoming audio. On a PC in the start menu, navigate to Control panel - Sounds and Audio devices – Audio – record/playback – Volume. You will get something like this:



You may have more options, like “Line In” or “CD Player”. Basically this is a little mixer that tells the computer which sound source is being used. Select the option that corresponds to your set up. In this case, I am sending audio into the computer via the mic input, so I have selected it. If my audio was on a CD, then I would select the Stereo Mix option.

Don't touch the Balance control, but the Volume slider will control the level of the audio that you are sending into Audacity. So when you have selected the appropriate input, don't close this screen, just minimise it, so it sits at the bottom of your computer screen. That way it will be easy to find when you need to access it during the edit process.

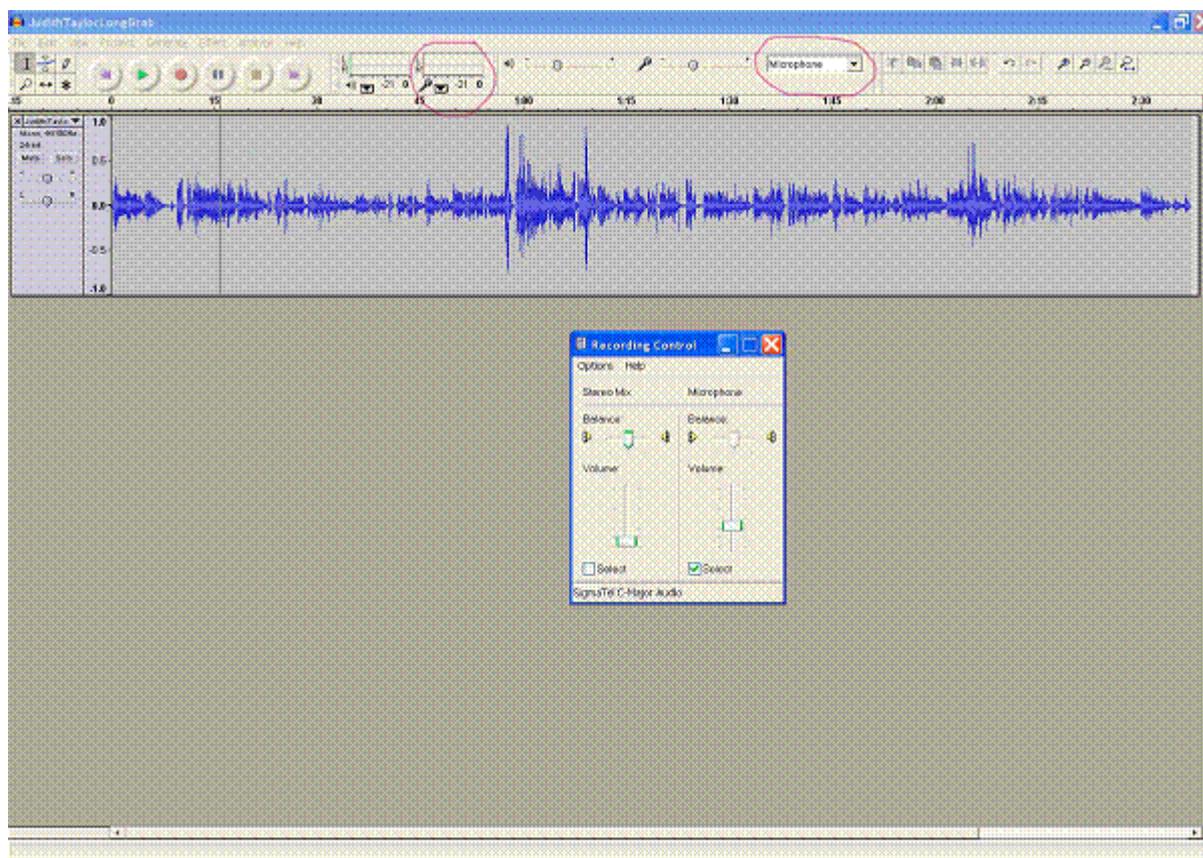
Ok so it is now time to start recording your IV into Audacity.

The first thing is to set the levels, so they don't distort or they don't transfer too low.

The only way to do this is to start recording and then play around until you get a level that you think is pretty good and consistent, then stop the recording and start from the beginning.

So hit play on your recorder to start the transfer. In Audacity, hit the big red button.

Audacity will immediately start a track and a recording. Then hit the Recording Control window that you have minimised, to bring it to the front of the screen...so now you have something that should look like this:



I have circled two important pieces of information that the Audacity screen is showing. The first, with the little mic picture, is showing your input levels. Use the Recording Control slider to get the level you want. NB you don't want it to peak over zero.

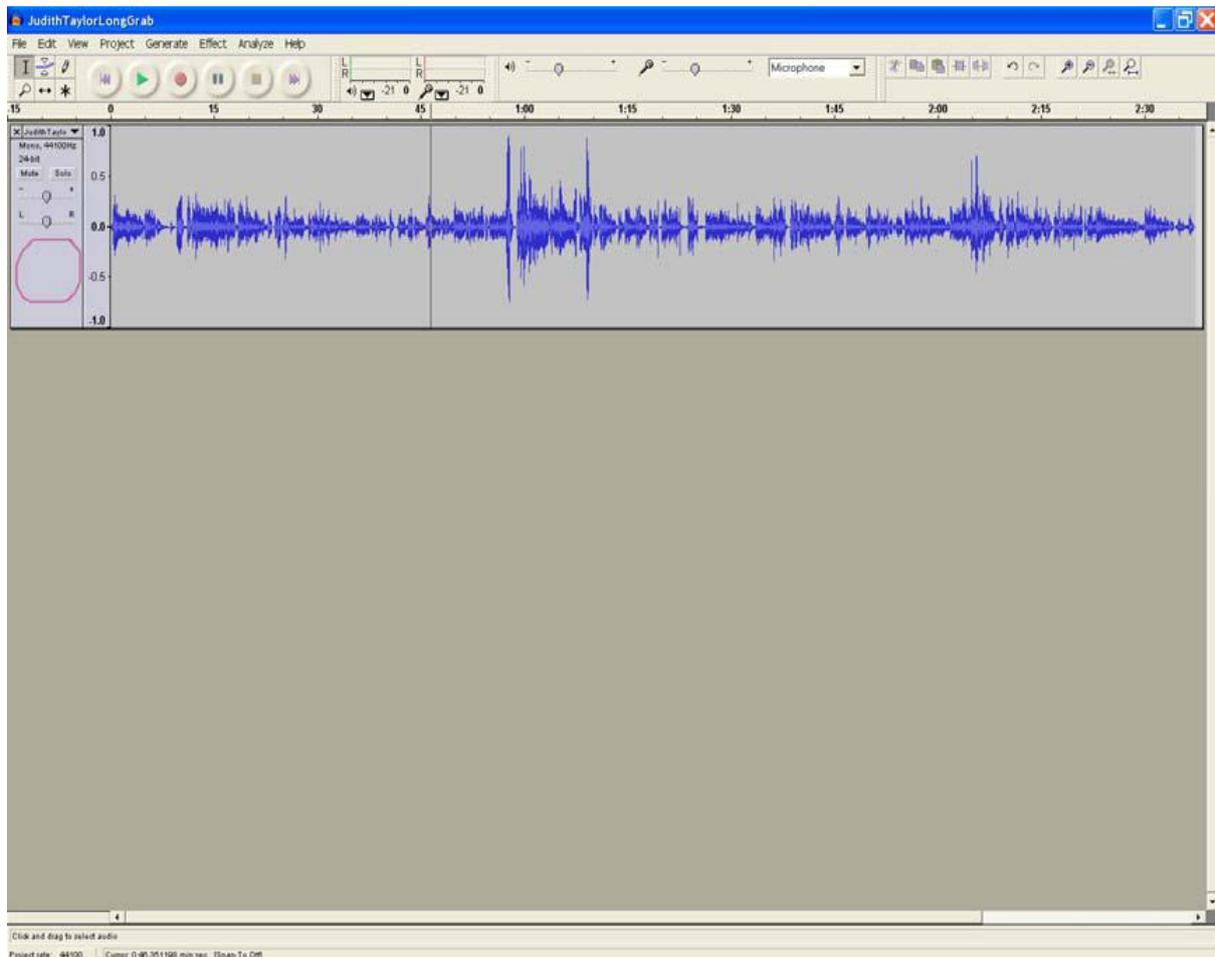
The second piece of information I've circled, which is showing "microphone", is Audacity telling you the sound source it is monitoring. This should correspond to the sound source you have ticked in your soundcard. In this case, I told my sound card that I was sending audio via the mic input, so Audacity is telling me that it is recording from the mic input. If you are playing your interview from your recorder into your computer but there is no audio coming in to Audacity, check here to make sure that Audacity is monitoring the same audio as you have selected on your soundcard (ie you haven't checked mic when you are playing a CD, or vice versa).

When you are happy with your levels, press stop on Audacity – big yellow square button. Remember, this recording is just a dummy to set the right levels. so you now want to get rid of it and start the recording proper.

So .. in Audacity, click in the area on the LHS of the track, under where it says "mute" and "solo". See the area circled below.

If you can't see this area, it just means you have to expand the track – so place your cursor over the bottom edge of the track (the thin black line at the edge of the grey) and your cursor

will turn into an arrow. Left Click and hold down and drag the edge down to make the track wider. Drag up to make smaller.



When you click in this area (LHS under mute & solo commands), Audacity selects the track .. you will notice that the track goes a darker grey. This is a command that you will use a lot in the Audacity program. By doing this you are telling the program that you are working on this track. This is essential when you have more than one track in the window.

In this case, we want to get rid of this track, so we select it and then go to the Project menu and select "Remove Tracks". The recording will disappear from the Audacity window.

So now it's time to start the recording (analogue transfer) properly. So this time start Audacity first. Hit the record button, then hit play on your recorder and then let the IV run it's full length. If you have been careful in recording your interview, and the levels are consistent, then you should be able to let the IV run without too much attention. If you have not been consistent with the recording, then you may need to sit and monitor your transfer, and make adjustments along the way.

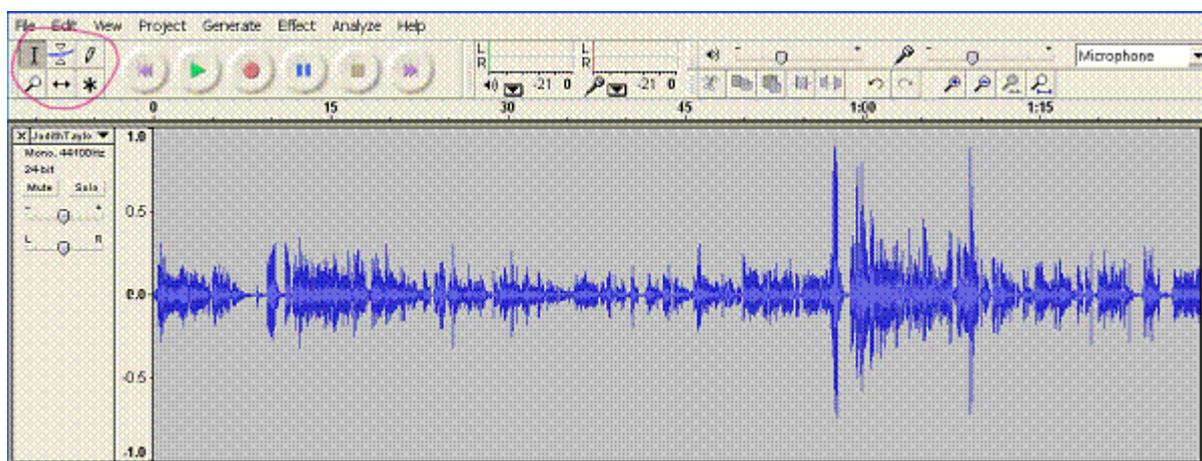
When the IV is finished, stop Audacity and immediately save the recording. As it is, it's just sitting in a temporary folder and could be lost if you close the program, or hit the wrong key, so it is essential to save immediately. Audacity calls this "exporting". Basically you are asking the program to export the audio file from Audacity, as a .wav file, to your Hard Drive.

So select the track, as above, then in the File menu, hit “export as WAV”. Remember we’ve already told Audacity the quality and format we want, so hit export and navigate to the folder you want to store the unedited .wav file in, give your audio file a name (JoeBlowUnedited) and hit save.

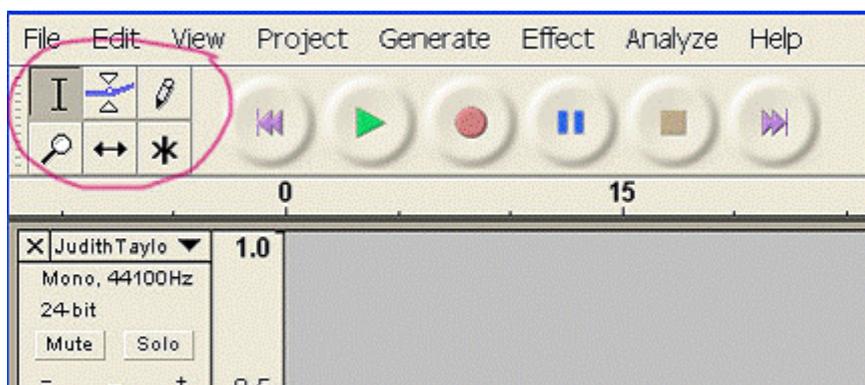
Once you have stored it onto the Hard Drive, then you have a backup should anything go wrong with your Audacity edit. So now bring the file back into Audacity and you can start working. Project – Import Audio – locate the audio file and hit open.

Editing your .wav file.

This is how your screen should look as you get ready to edit. I’ve circled the critical tool box that you will need to use to cut, paste and mix your audio file.



Lets take a closer look.



The tool that is currently selected is the Selection Tool. This is the tool that you use to select the track you want to listen to, and also to mark out the part of the track you want to edit.

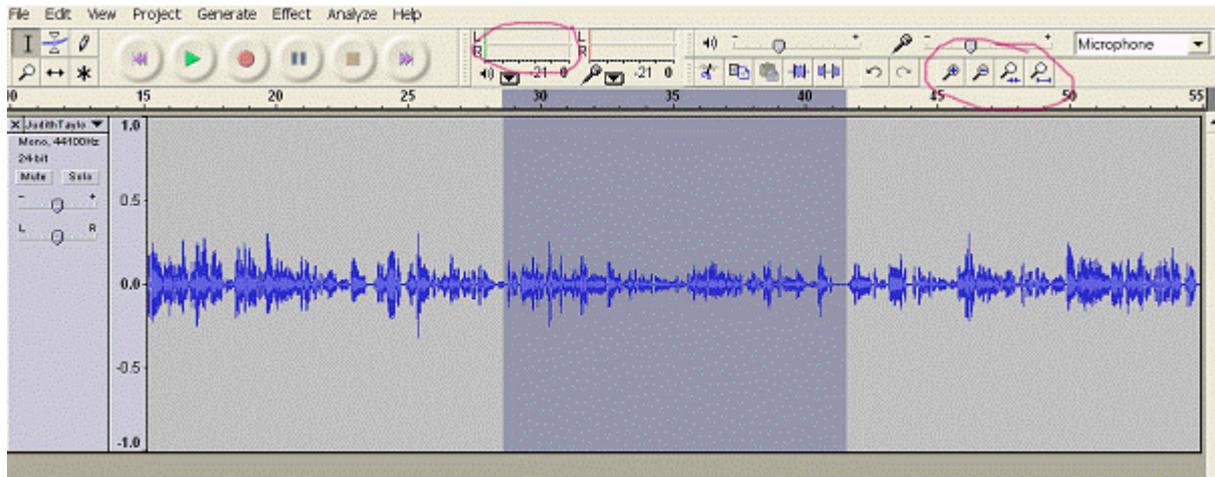
To listen to the track, select this tool (by clicking on it) and then click in the .wav file. You will see that your cursor turns into a little pointing finger and a line appears on your .wav file. Hit the space bar on your keyboard (or alternatively the big green play arrow on the Audacity controls, as above) and the track will start to play from the cursor point.

Hit stop and the cursor will return to the point at which you started. Move your mouse to another point on the track, click and the cursor will move to the new point. Hit play (or the space bar) and the file will start to play from the new point.

Now let's select some audio to cut.

Play the audio track and identify what you want to cut out. Then, select the Selection Tool and place the cursor at the start of the words you want to cut out.

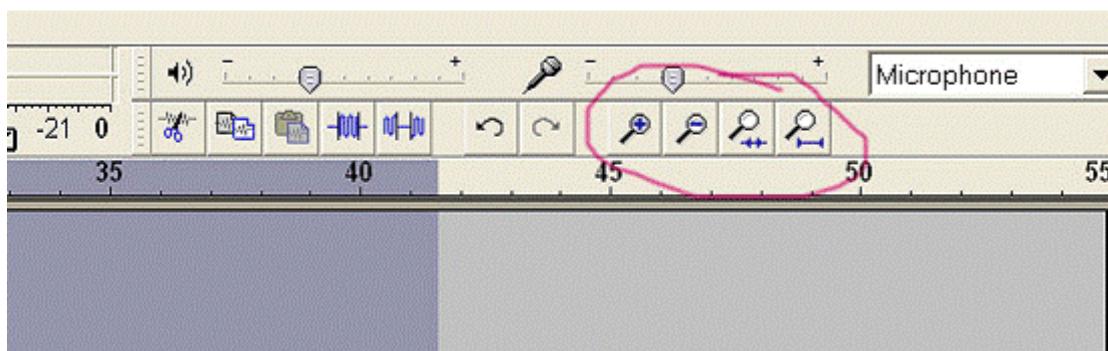
Hold down the left click and drag until you reach the end of the words. The area will now appear a darker grey. (see below). If you hit the space bar now, Audacity will play the audio you have selected.



If you have missed a word, or it cuts in on the middle of a word, holding down the shift key and clicking on the waveform will extend the selection to the cursor.

The two areas of the Audacity Project page that I've circled are useful to know. The first one is the meter that's showing you your levels – they'll appear in green as the file plays. If you see the green bars here but you're not hearing anything, it means you have a problem with your speakers or your soundcard playback device. If the green bars appear here, Audacity is playing the file.

The second circle is the zoom commands. Here's a close up.



Little magnifying glasses. Click on the '+' one and then on the waveform and it will zoom in. Click on the '-' one and then the waveform and Audacity will zoom out. The third tool will fit your selection to the window, while the 4th tool will zoom out to fit the entire wave form in the window.

Play around with them and get the hang, as they are very handy tools. To edit audio, you do need to zoom in and make sure you have the correct edit points, so you will be using your zoom tools all the time.

So when you are happy with the edit points and are ready to work with the audio you have selected, then you have a number of options.

If you want to edit out the selection, then go to the Audacity edit drop down menu and first hit “find zero crossings”, then hit “cut”. Finding the zero crossings will stop any annoying electronic jumps at the edit point.

If you want to save the piece of audio for use later, then go to the file menu and hit “export selection as WAV” ... give it a name and a location and hit save.

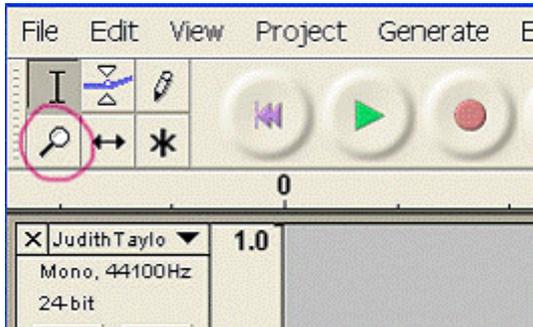
If you want to copy the selection, then go to the edit menu and hit duplicate. Audacity will place an exact copy of the selected area in a new track. This can be very useful when you want to work with a small area of a much longer track. You can duplicate the section you want to work with and do your fine editing on it, rather than navigating the much longer waveform.

Remember when you have finished cutting your piece of audio, you have to save it as a new file. Audacity will not do this automatically. So when you are happy with the audio, export it as a wav file to your hard drive.

You should also save the project on regular basis, much the same as you would a word document. File – save.

Other Tools

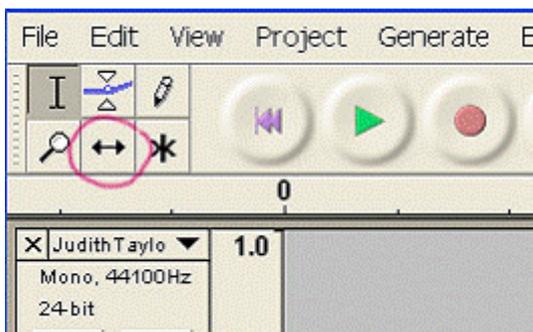
Zoom Tool



This is another Zoom tool. To use it select it by clicking on it, then move to the waveform. Left click will zoom in, right click to zoom out.

Whether you use this tool or the other zoom tool is really a matter of preference.

Move Tool



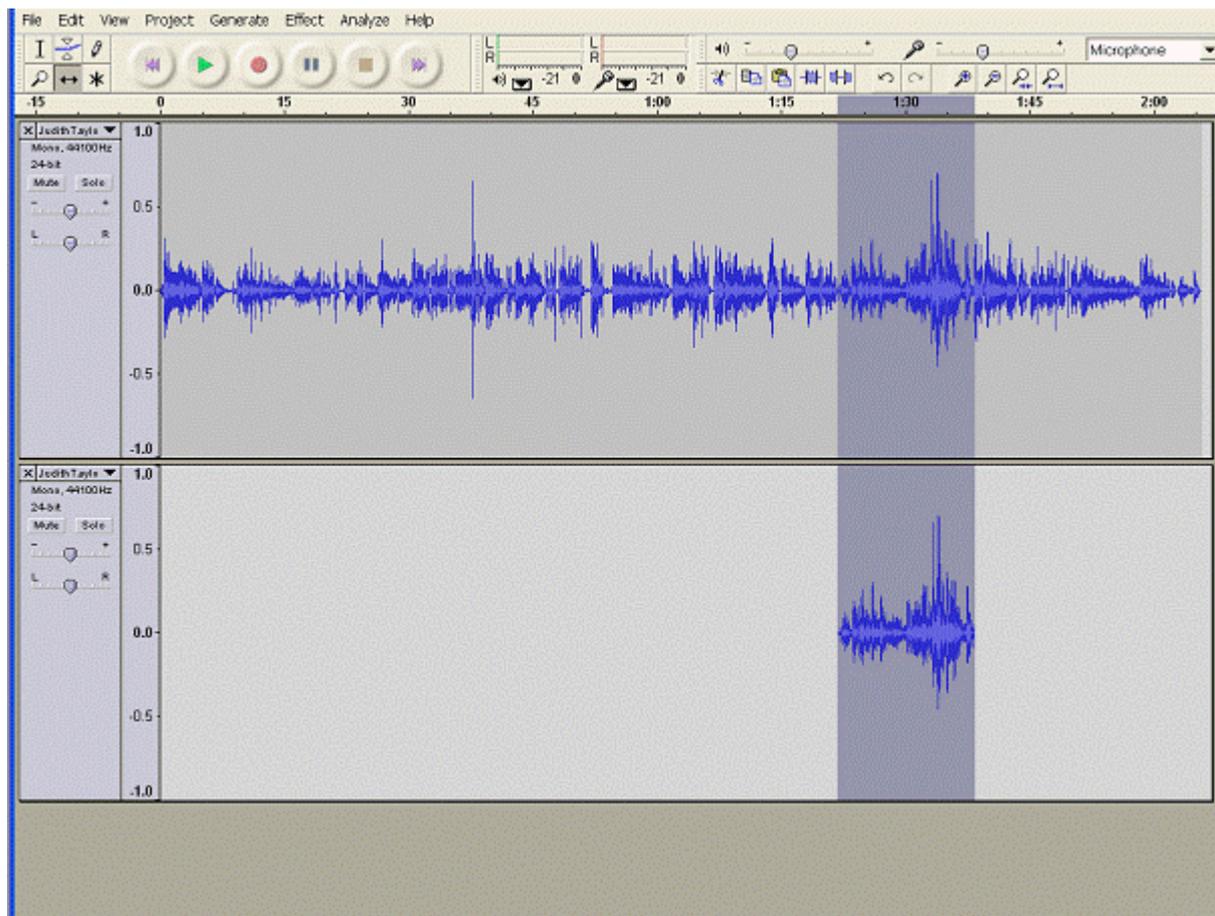
You'll use this tool when you have more than one track of audio.

Let's say that you have one long piece of audio and you only want the beginning and the end of it.

You could just cut out the middle bit, as demonstrated above, but the waveform is so long it is difficult to navigate. So you could cut out the middle bit in chunks or you could split the waveform and work in two tracks.

Let's do the latter.

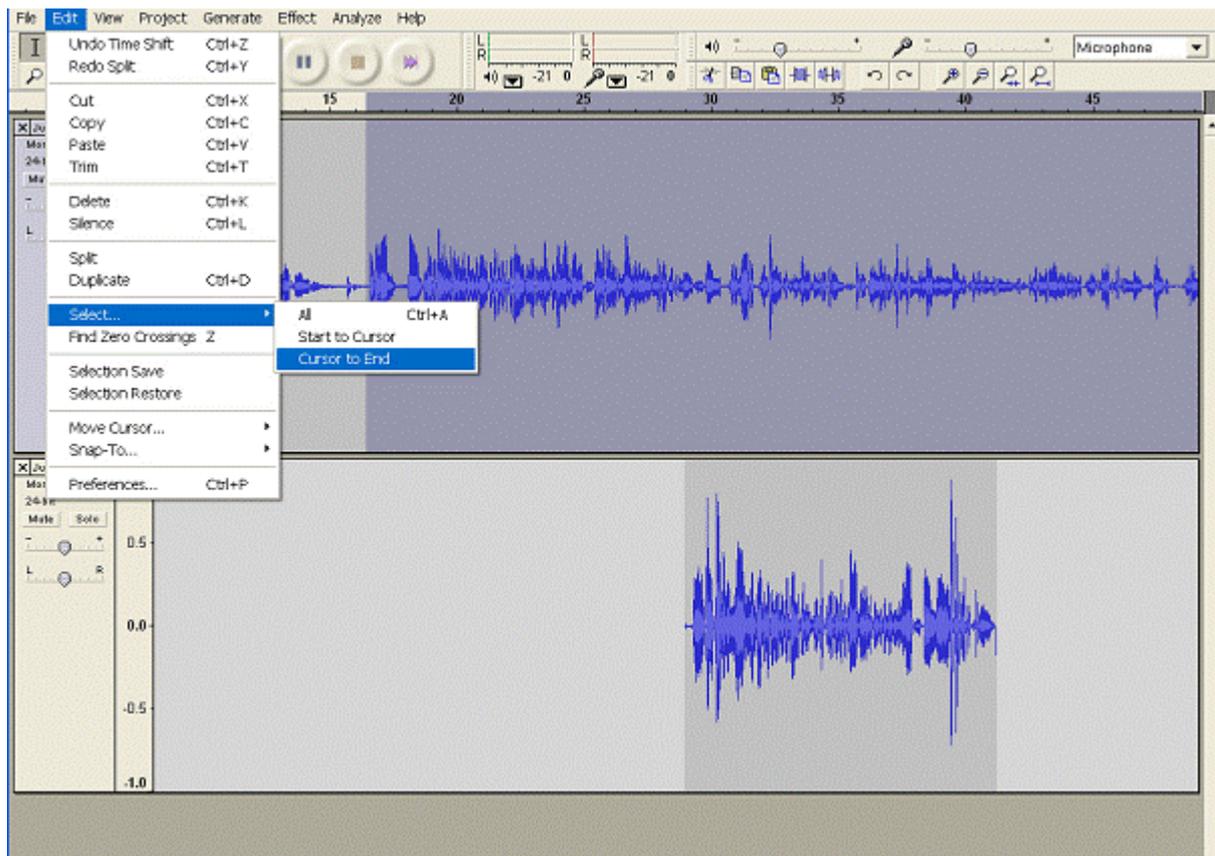
Firstly, identify the piece from the end that you want to use. Use the Selection Tool to locate the first and last words, zoom in to get them right, get your zero crossings then use the "duplicate" command in the edit menu. Audacity will place the selected audio in a new track.



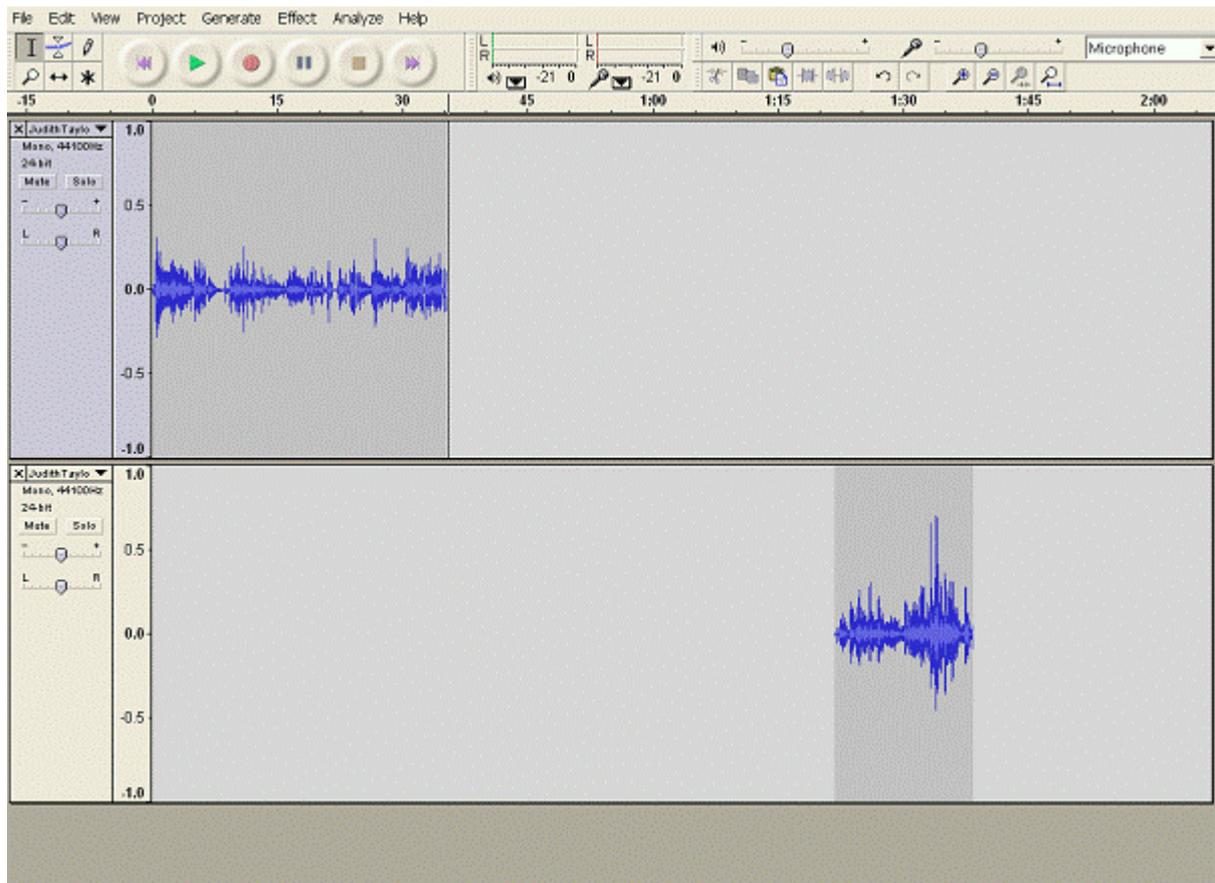
You now have two tracks. Track 2 is your end bit, while Track 1 contains the beginning, as well as all the rest of the audio you don't want.

With the Selection Tool click on Track 1 and find the end words of the audio you want. Again zoom in to get it right then hit "zero crossing" so it's clean.

Then select all the audio you don't want by using the command "select from cursor to end", which is Edit – Select – Cursor to end.

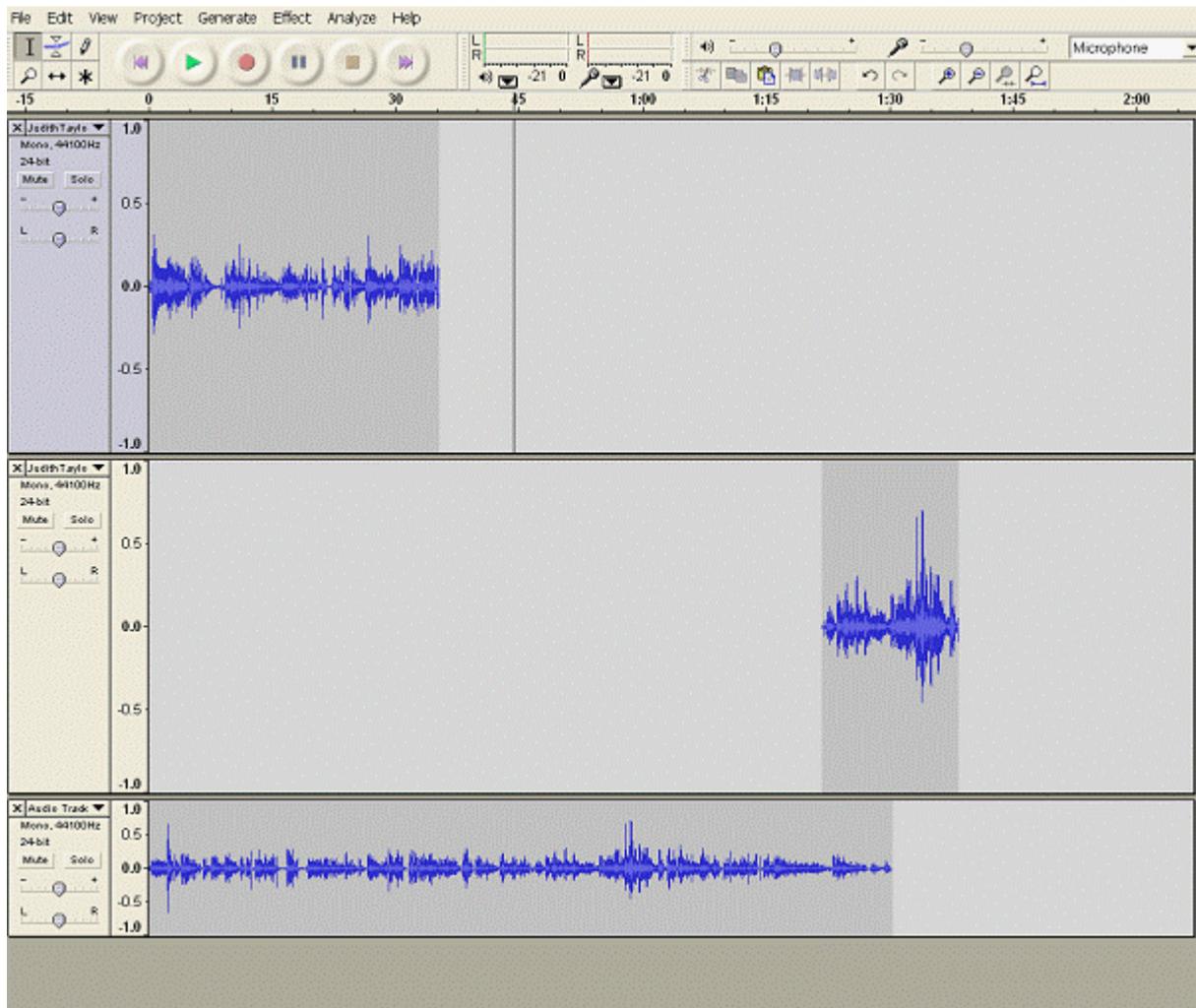


Now you can simply use the “cut” command to get rid of the audio, and your project will now look like this.

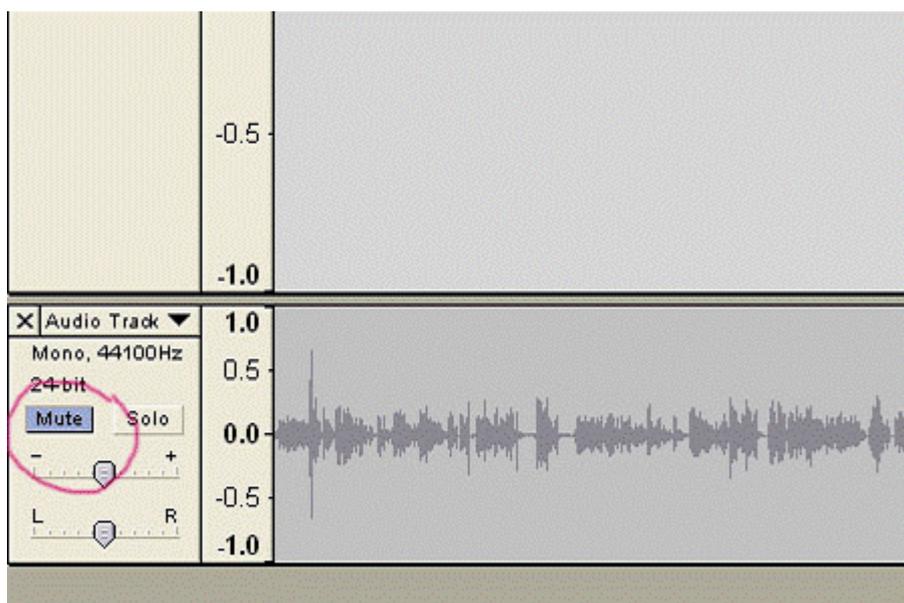


If you think you may want to use some of the material you have just cut, then you can paste it into a third track, which you can come back to later.

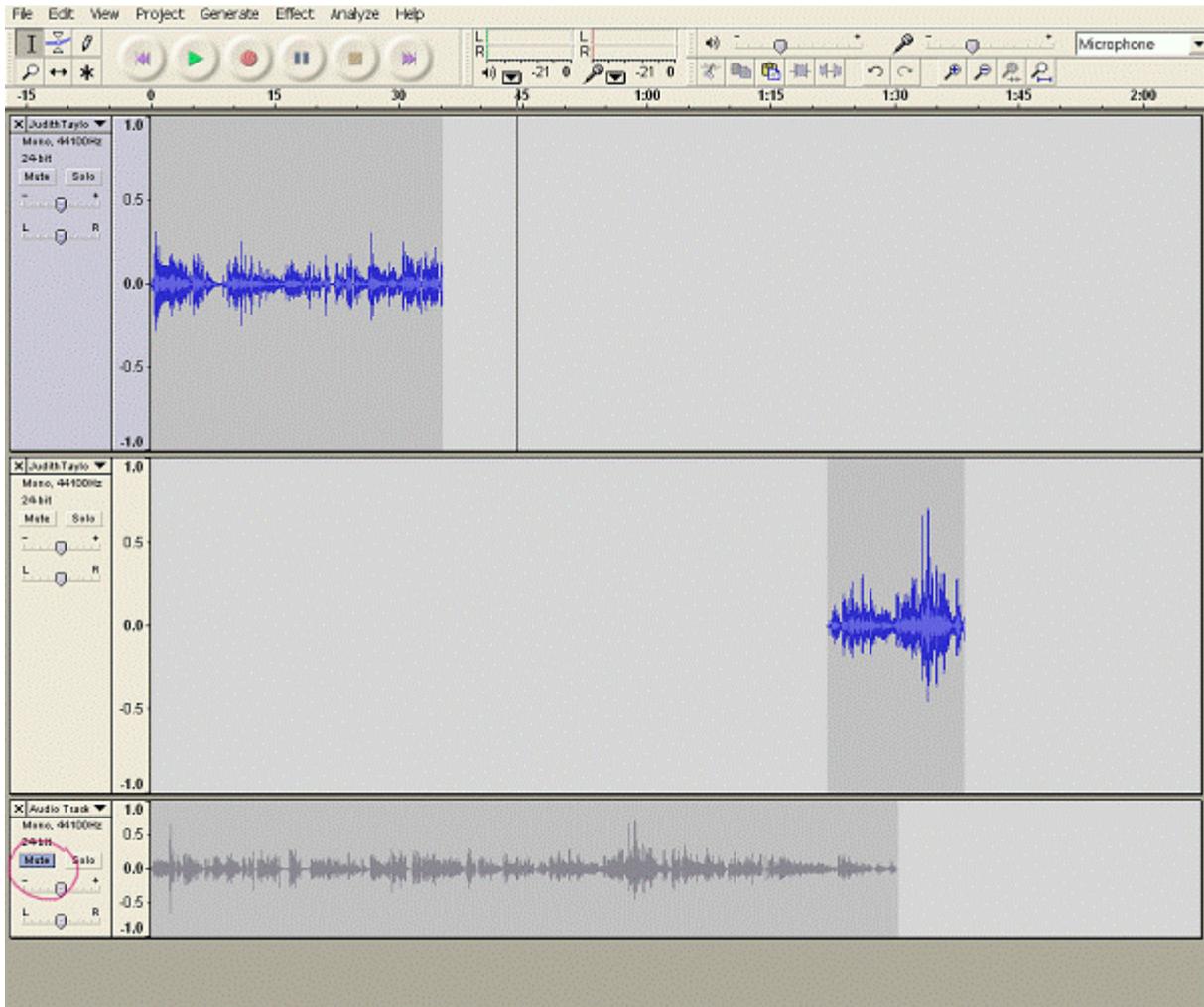
To create a new track, go to Project – New Audio Track, then go to Edit – Paste (Control V) and the audio that you cut from Track 1 will now be pasted into Track 3.



If you hit play now, you will hear both Track 1 & Track 3, which is impossible. You only want to work with Track 1 at the moment, so you need to hit the “mute” button on Track 3.

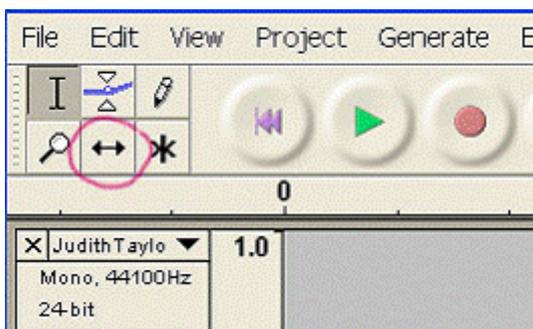


Track 3 is now “greyed out”, showing that it is not active in the mix.

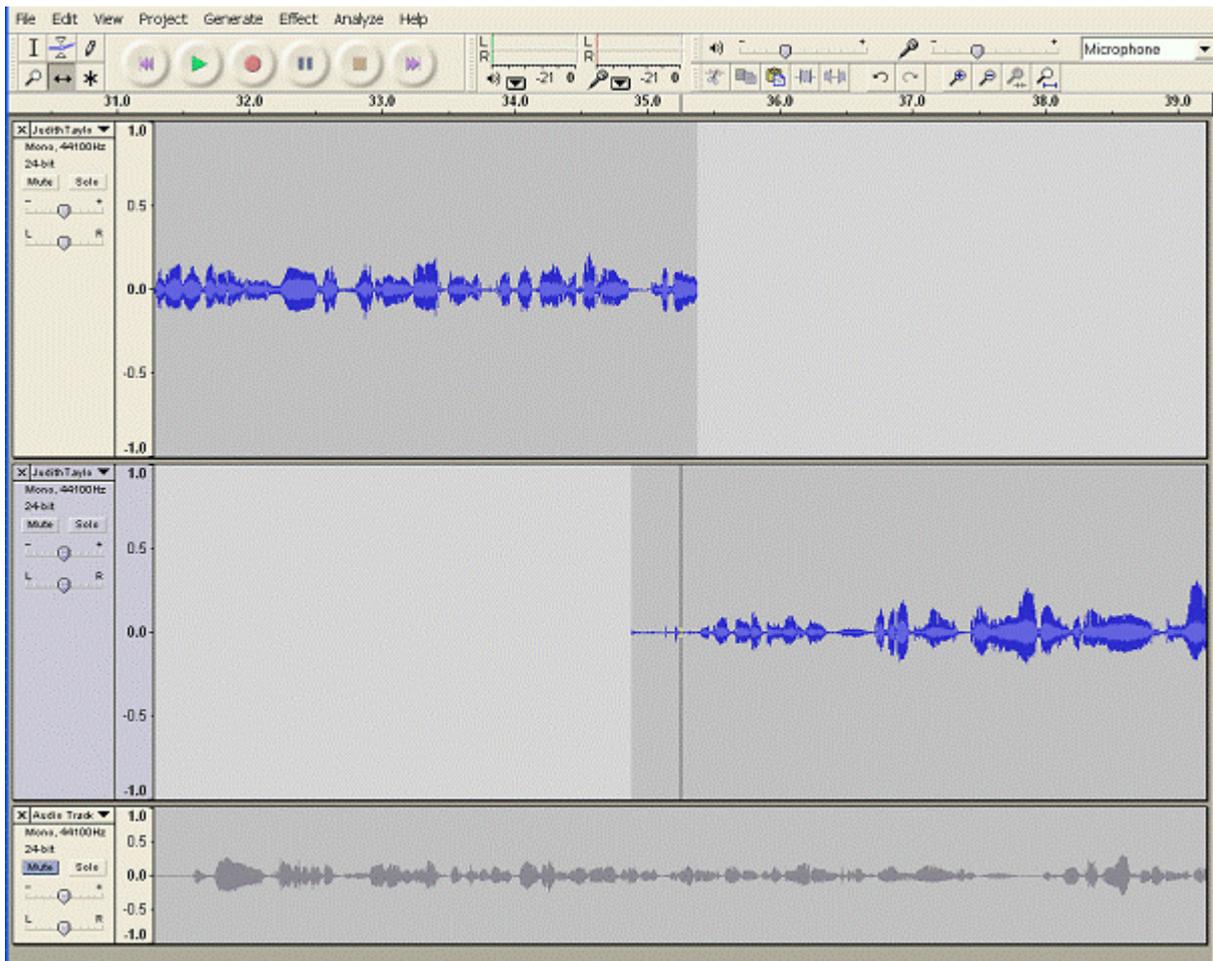


So now you can work with Track 1 & Track 2 without interference from Track 3.

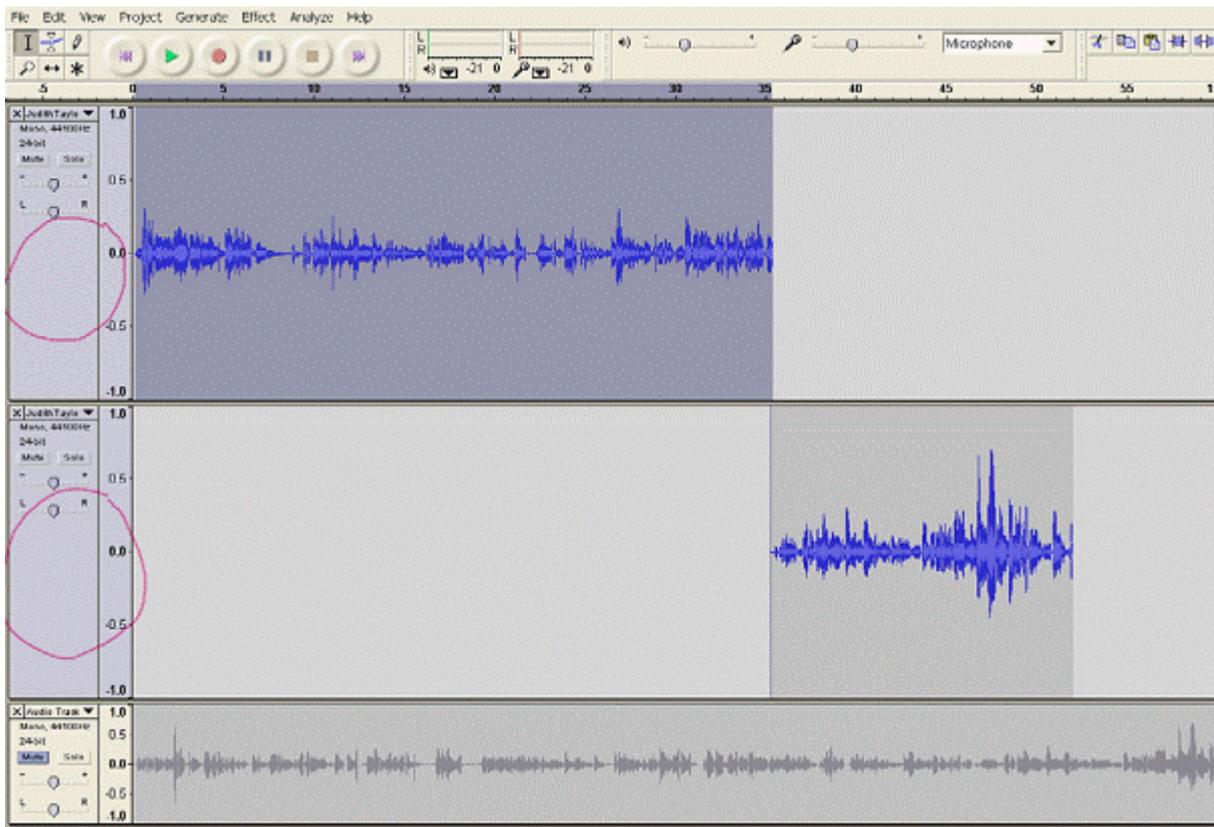
So move Track 2 up to the edit point on Track 1. Select the “Move Tool” from the Tool Box.



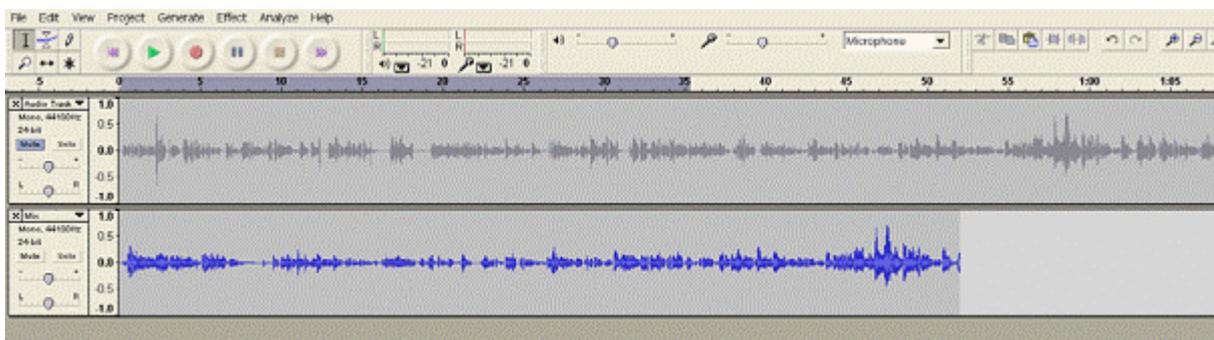
Click on Track 2, hold the left click and drag the audio up until it is in line with the end of Track 1. Zoom in to get it right, play it through a couple of times.



When it sounds right, you can mix Track 1 & 2 into one piece of audio. First you need to select the tracks you want to mix together (mix down). Chose the Selector Tool, then Control Click in the mute/solo panel of Track 1 & Track 2. These will now both change from fawn colour to mauve/blue to indicate that they have been selected.



Then go to Project – Quick Mix and Audacity will mix the two tracks into one new track.



As you can see, Tracks 1 & 2 have been replaced by a new track, while the muted Track 3 remains.

If you hit play, you will hear the mix down. If you don't like it, then use the "undo" function in the "edit" menu and you will get Track 1 & 2 back. Try again.

If you are happy with the mix, you have to save it, as Audacity won't do it automatically. So again, File – Export as WAV – name it and save it in the right folder.

These are just some of the basic commands in Audacity. I haven't gone into fades or the volume envelope tool. What you have above should be enough to get you started.

When you are comfortable with the above commands, then go into the Audacity Tutorial files <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/manual-1.2/tutorials.html> and work your way through them.

This is not a definitive guide and like any program, different people use commands in different ways, so please feel free to experiment.

You may get advice from someone else, so feel free to ignore mine. The most important thing is to try. Remember, if you can use an email program, or a word program, or an Excel spreadsheet, then you can get your head around digital editing. It's just another software program.

Feel free to email me if you get stuck. You'll find contact details on my website: www.sgcommunications.com.au

GOOD, FRANCIS: THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS FOR THE OHAA JOURNAL

The main purpose of this presentation is to explain the reasons why the OHAA has recently begun offering potential contributors of articles for the *OHAA Journal* the option of having their papers subjected to peer review, the mechanisms and processes this involves and how the OHAA manages them. To do this, it's necessary first to look at what the *Journal* should be aiming to achieve – what kind of publication it is, and how the Association views it.

I'll then outline what we believe the review process can achieve, and for whom, looking both at its strengths – and perhaps also some limitations. I'll outline the actual mechanisms and procedures, and their rationale, and along the way, hopefully, try and convey a sense of what authors considering this option need to understand what the OHAA Editorial Board (formerly the Publication Committee)ⁱ and the reviewers look for in papers that are sent for review.

But it's important to flag at the outset that peer-review is an **option** being offered – offers are only put into the review process if authors specifically request it. This is a defining aspect of the publication as it has evolved, underlying the strengths that it has achieved that we want to retain, while adding this additional layer of peer-review.

I edited the *Journal* for the last five issues, and the offer of peer-review was introduced for the last two issues. To begin with, there was a learning curve for all involved, but we now have a formally designed process which has been considered and endorsed by the OHAA's National Committee. We certainly needed to do this, as I asked OHAA last year to find another editor to replace me after this year's issue, and any incoming editor would need to have an agreed set of protocols within which to operate. We are very pleased indeed that Dr Jan Gothard from Murdoch University in WA has now agreed to be the editor of the 2008 issue, and what I'm describing will be the framework within which she will be working.

I've not been aware of any past formal discussion of the role and objectives of the *Journal*, but in formalising this process, the OHAA's National Committee adopted the following as a fair summary of what kind of publication it should be.

The *Journal* should aim to:

- provide a forum and showcase for work and ideas from a broad spectrum of the oral history community, particularly from Australia – so it's not just for OHAA members, but for anyone working in fields that are relevant to the Association's interests
- provide a range of practitioners and scholars, by access to examples of the work and insights of others, with a stronger sense of context for their own work and the opportunity to reflect on how it may be developed or improved – going beyond being a vehicle for oral historians' own work, by giving them a sense of their place in the community of practitioners and how they can further develop their ideas and aspirations
- make a contribution to the leading edge of thought about oral history methodology and its relationship to the world of learning in general – providing a forum for contributors to explore and develop ideas beyond definitional limitations, acknowledging the extraordinary cross-disciplinary nature of contexts in which OHAA members find themselves involved
- offer a valid vehicle for those seeking publication that contributes to their academic career – obviously, not an exclusive or paramount purpose, but as I hope will become clear, essential if we are to continue to attract the broadest range of material

The *OHAA Journal* also has general and informative aspects similar to a magazine or newsletter, and has a role to inform about relevant publications etc. through reviews, and important events through notices. All of the above aims may be satisfied to a degree by material not subjected to peer-review, but the reality is that the last two points in the above list are best served by offering authors peer-review of their material, and further, that articles that have been through this process also make a high-value contribution to the first two aims. On the other hand, it can be argued that a solely academic journal would unacceptably limit the breadth, originality and inclusiveness of material offered for readers, and hence the current approach of including both peer-reviewed and other articles provides a balanced outcome.

Peer review of papers: some basic considerations for OHAA.

As I said earlier, contributors to the *Journal* have been offered the option of having papers subjected to peer-review for the last two issues. We found it necessary to adopt a formal process that allows for:

- anonymity for authors and reviewers
- a collegiate approach to the judgemental aspects, trying to avoid domination by influential individuals within OHAA, and aiming to promote standards and understandings that are generally accepted, rather than being idiosyncratic and biased.

This might seem somewhat utopian, but we think the following is a way to keep faith with these ideals.

In summary, OHAA appoints a General Editor for the overall production of the *Journal*, supported by an Editorial Board which has oversight of the peer-review process, and the work involved in that process is managed by the board's Convenor under the jurisdiction of the General Editor. There is also now a Reviews Editor, who will actively seek review copies of publications, write detailed reviews of some of these and obtain critiques from other appropriate reviewers.

General Editor.

The General Editor has overall responsibility for all final content and its arrangement, and substantive decisions on article inclusions/exclusions, layout, presentation and cover design. Offers of material that do not request peer-review are handled by the General Editor alone, who may or may not seek the assistance of the Editorial Board in determining suitability of the material or need for further work. Typically, this involves detailed attention to around twelve or so papers or articles offered each year (i.e. some 60,000 words plus), as well as OHAA Branch reports, reviews and notices etc. The General Editor also decides which offers can be included from any that become available after publicly-announced deadlines, whether evolving out of the peer-review process or otherwise. However, although taking part in the Editorial Board (below), the General Editor delegates the ongoing process work on offers for peer-review to the Board's Convenor.

Editorial Board and its Convenor.

The Board oversees the ongoing peer-review process. It comprises a Convenor, the General Editor and at least two other members with particular strengths and experience in published academic material. The Convenor services the peer-review process under the jurisdiction of the General Editor, as spelt out below. The Board only advises on material not being peer-reviewed if specifically requested to by the General Editor.

The process begins with a triage of the offers made for publication as peer-reviewed material. It is vital to maintain goodwill of reviewers if we are to rely on their cooperation in a task that requires their voluntary, skilled and time-consuming work, so in order to ensure that material sent for review is suitable and does not waste reviewers' time, each member of the Editorial Board examines all of the offers for peer review (from copies made without attribution to the author). These copies are compiled by the Convenor from original author versions submitted either directly to the Board or through the General Editor. Operating on a consensus approach, the Board determines which papers can be sent for peer-review, and which should not be.

Authors whose papers are not accepted for review can be offered the option of publication without it, if these are seen as worthwhile contributions by other criteria. (General Editor is also able to seek the Board's consensus on inclusion/exclusion of non-peer reviewed material if desired.) This initial level of scrutiny and feedback has been shown to be quite useful and beneficial in itself, and authors have expressed their appreciation for insights gained and assistance given by the Board in strengthening their material.

For papers accepted for review, the Convenor then contacts a range of potential reviewers to seek their cooperation, and sends each paper to two from whom agreement to voluntarily participate has been gained. Only anonymous versions are sent (even though, sometimes, unavoidably, the identity of the author may be deduced by detail in the text).

After referral to reviewers, some follow-up is required by the Convenor – although some reviewers may respond fairly promptly, it could be a month or two before their reports are provided. Invariably, reviewers recommend some revisions – this may mean that some points need elaboration or clarification, that further reading is required or that substantial recasting is recommended.

Following receipt of referee reports, their substance is communicated to authors, and the Convenor then liaises and negotiates with authors for a mutually satisfactory outcome, and is responsible for ensuring that revisions meet the issues raised by referee reports. The option of publishing as a non-reviewed article in the forthcoming issue can be considered; or authors may opt to revise the work for reconsideration. The Convenor keeps the Board informed of progress on a regular basis, seeks their advice if necessary, and clears with the Board any undertakings to authors that papers are sufficiently developed to be passed to the General Editor for inclusion in the next available *Journal*.

This division of labour and responsibility helps to relieve the General Editor of the attention to detail and negotiation that efficient and valid operation of the peer-review process demands, without compromising the General Editor's overall responsibility for compiling and producing the *Journal*, a task which has a high level of other time-critical demands.

One major change to be adopted from now is that, where revisions to peer-reviewed papers are necessary, in the time-frame that has been attempted to date, experience shows that there is often not enough time for an author to complete this work for inclusion in the *Journal* issue for the year it was offered, depending on the amount of extra research and writing that may be involved. Consequently, authors will be invited to offer material for peer-review at any time of the year, with a statement that any material not received by the end of

Decemberⁱⁱ in any year may not be processed in time for publication in the following year. The Editorial Board can stagger the triage selection over two or three stages during the year; referral to and follow-up with reviewers will be an ongoing process not necessarily tied to publication deadlines, although these can be borne in mind as the processing evolves.

Conclusion

We believe that peer review is a process that has a number of benefits. Certainly it is primarily aimed at giving contributors the opportunity to gain academic credit for publishing their work. It is worth mentioning here that, judging from some of the offers that have been made by authors requesting peer-review, there is sometimes a misconception that assessment is mainly about intrinsic worth of ideas or work done, and perhaps a sense of kudos, rather than the opportunity to expose a paper to academic critique. In fact, reviewers generally focus on aspects such as authors' engagement with relevant aspects of current and historical scholarship, and contribution to the discipline by the dialectic of argument and conclusions presented in this context. Recommendations are made on initial drafts which can then facilitate further development of ideas and writing, which could range from some judicious clarifications and adjustments to fundamental recasting.

It could be said that there is a downside to this process, and that perhaps it can inhibit creativity and originality; but we feel that by continuing to offer a forum for material that does not fit the peer-review mould, we are hopefully encouraging contributions that would usually fall between the cracks in a purely academic journal, and will continue to encourage the climate of innovation and insightful crossing of disciplinary borders, to reflect the eclecticism that has characterised our field and offer a broad forum and showcase for oral history projects and activities.

By the nature of the process, peer-review offers readers material that has been well developed in terms of its relationship to relevant previous literature of the discipline and its major themes. However, although the process is of particular benefit for contributors seeking academic credit, it also has the potential to benefit others who are not part of academe, and who may not otherwise have the opportunity for the kind of advice and objective assessment that scholars generally experience. Anyone can benefit from feedback which helps an understanding of the place of authors' material within the broader literature, its relevance to what has been written before, and which can provide sources for further study and indications of how material can be further developed to a higher standard.

All of this is not to imply that contributions which are not subjected to this process cannot also be of high value and interest – on the contrary, material may be worthwhile, creative, refreshing and insightful or make an original contribution without broad, scholarly engagement with relevant historiography to date. However, where peer-reviewed material is included in the *Journal*, contributors and readers can certainly benefit from the broader outcomes of what can be, at times, the daunting process of critique and revision to which authors submit work for peer-review.

However, an important consideration is that for papers to be accepted for academic credit (and this may also have course-funding implications), institutions must be satisfied that work is subjected to the breadth and detail of assessment generally expected within the higher education sector in Australia, so that credit and recognition is based on *their* conception of appropriate standards.ⁱⁱⁱ In other words, it is academe that is setting the agenda, and OHAA is obliged to ensure that the process it follows provides collegiate, objective and anonymous assessment expected by the Australian higher education sector, going beyond the views prevailing within this Association at any given time.

We hope that the process we offer satisfies these considerations, as well as providing benefits for the whole range of OHAA's membership, including scholars and a broader, informed readership in general.

¹ The title Publication Committee was in use at the time this paper was presented in September 2007, but was changed shortly after to Editorial Board. The text of this paper was edited slightly in October 2009 to conform with current usage.

² For 2009, papers should be submitted by December, but this may change.

³ A concrete manifestation of this aspect is that in 2008, the *OHAA Journal* was listed as a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal in tier B by the Australian Research Council in its ranking of all refereed journals of significance to the Australian academy as part of its esteem indicators for the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative

HODDER, ROBERT:

**VERNACULAR HISTORY AND RADICAL TASMANIA: STORIES OF RESISTANCE
AND DEMOCRATIC TECHNOLOGIES**

*Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities.
Truth isn't.*

Mark Twain, 1897.¹

Prove it.

Jack Wilson, 1953.²

My thesis research asks subjects to articulate their stories for a history of the “arts of resistance” in Tasmania. *Radical Tasmania* will critique conventional academic historiography and will seek a popular readership; it will also aspire to history as politics. Oral history is integral to this research. Given the History Wars, such research extends “history from below” and joins with “vernacular history” to use technology as a democratisation of the means of production: the making and telling of history.

Don DeLillo, the fiction author, is credited with writing in his novel about President Kennedy’s assassination, *Libra* (1988), that “Lee Harvey Oswald is told that history ‘is the sum of things

¹ M. Twain, epigraph to Ch XV, “Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar” in *Following the Equator* (n.d.) <http://www.literaturecollection.com/a/twain/following-equator/16/> (14 Nov 2006).

² Art expressing a problem of historical epistemology for a political present:

Jack Wilson: They tell me they call you ‘Stonewall’.

Frank Torrey: Anything wrong with that?

Jack Wilson: It's just funny. I guess they named a lot of that Southern trash after old Stonewall.

Frank Torrey: Who'd they name you after? Or would you know?

Jack Wilson: I'm saying that ‘Stonewall’ Jackson was trash himself. Him and Lee, and all the rest of them Rebs. You, too.

Frank Torrey: You're a low-down, lying Yankee.

Jack Wilson: Prove it.

Torrey reaches for his gun and tries to ‘pull on Wilson’. The hired gunman, Wilson, shoots Torrey dead.

From the movie *Shane*; see G. Stevens (1953).

they aren't telling us'.³ Interestingly for issues of oral history, DeLillo also constructs his Oswald character as dyslexic.⁴

I have not read this particular historical fiction of DeLillo's. What I "know" about *Libra* is only what I have read in two manifestations of the technologies of popular culture: one from that much older and possibly soon-to-be-extinct medium, the daily newspaper (Melbourne's *The Age*), and the other from postmodernism's quintessential medium, that hypertext site, the much resented — dare I mention it to academics? — *Wikipedia*. In fact (to use a deliberately pointed phrase), curiosity also had me looking at *Wikipedia* to see if Oswald's alleged dyslexia is just DeLillo's artistic licence. Apparently, well, according to *Wiki*, "some suggest" Oswald did struggle with text.⁵ Nonetheless, when it comes to that problematic of history and proof, using *Wiki* to research *Wiki* could be like seeing a broken mirror in a maze of mirrors: one "crack" in the evidence might be reflected into thousands of (broken) images; that paradox of the "true copy". Of course, artists like DeLillo always have the hackneyed defence, "It is fiction, you idiot!". We will come back to this problem of popular technology and "reading" history.

No doubt, most of you are aware of that antagonist in the story of Australia's front in the History Wars, Keith Windschuttle. Presumably you are also aware that Windschuttle is an unreconstructed anti-oral historian. Please allow me to refresh your memories with a key detail; which both historians and lawyers (another culture of oral testimony) might refer to as evidence, even proof, of Windschuttle's opinion. He states, "My view is that Aboriginal oral history, when uncorroborated by original documents, is completely unreliable, just like the oral history of white people."⁶ This statement is available in both hard-copy text and hypertext. I do not know if either source is an "original document", to use Windschuttle's vague phrase, but the hypertext version, available at the history warrior's *The Sydney Line*, is, as far as I can "corroborate", *official Windschuttle*. Does this make it reliable? We could put this whole problem through some sort of epistemological test. But I fear we might only endlessly reflect on a broken image in that maze of mirrors. We can leave the philosophical problems with a postmodern Plato: Nothing is as it seems, it seems.

What I am speculating is that the thrust of Windschuttle's rejection of oral history, his ideological imperative, is to counter a trend in the History Wars; to wit, the struggle of history from below. Let us go back to the beginning— of OHAA conferences, I mean, in 1974. Joan Campbell makes the point:

...that the value of oral history is a special one, because by means of recording an interview, the oral historian becomes the creator of new source material — material which would otherwise be lost. Not a great deal is written down. In fact

³ T. Adams (26 May 2007) p24.

⁴ "*Libra*" (2007) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libra_%28novel%29 (27 May 2007).

⁵ Oswald's "letters, diary and other writings have led some to suggest he was dyslexic"; see "Lee Harvey Oswald" (2007) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee_Harvey_Oswald (27 May 2007).

⁶ K. Windschuttle (13-14 Dec 2001); see K. Windschuttle (2005) <http://www.sydneyline.com/National%20Museum%20Frontier%20Conflict.htm> (27 May 2007).

what is [sic.] written down constitutes only a fraction of the historical event or of the historical experience. And so the spoken word, when we get it on tape, does add an extra dimension to our historical knowledge, and it records a segment which would otherwise be unavailable. Certain groups of course, have very little written documentation anyway.⁷

I take it from Windschuttle that he means to exclude those which Campbell nominates as “certain groups”; in other words, oral culture and not just Aboriginal oral culture yet also any culture which does not commit itself to text, to “original documents”. In my research so far of radicals in Tasmania, this would be to omit an extraordinarily rich, complex, informative and even inspiring history; history with meaning; history as story.

For instance, in my as yet unfinished research on the history of industrial disputes in Tasmania’s Fingal Valley, a coal mining district, I have had elder residents tell me that they are the “forgotten valley” of Tasmanian history because they have, so far, been overlooked by academics.⁸ This surprises me because this valley is full of stories about brawls between strike breakers and unionists at local railway stations (a Tasmanian version of America’s 1920 Battle of Matewan, only not as bloody), arson attempts at buildings used for strikebreakers to “meet the boss” and shootings between various factions of the union movement. I have been directed to the official records of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) at its head office in Sydney. (I wonder what Windschuttle would think of a union’s “original documents”.) Of course, I will seek permission from the CFMEU to research their records. But I would be surprised to find such a dramatic history in the official records of the CFMEU. That word “official” is often accented as *omertà*, Italian for a conspiracy of silence. This is frequently for pragmatic reasons and so has no special reference to the CFMEU. What it does indicate is that my research on this topic is mostly dependent on oral history because time allows history to speak, as it were.

From the other side of Tasmania, its west coast mining history, I have been interviewing a mining activist who led a double-pronged campaign against his own union (as well as Trades Hall and the Labor Government) while also trying to entice the Greens to accept mining if the industry could prove itself to be environmentally responsible. History will know him as “Jammo”.⁹ Perhaps it is no surprise that he lost. The 1990s recession put severe downward pressure on working conditions and wages, splitting opinion in the local community, and ensured a direct intervention by the executive of the Tasmanian branch of the Australian Workers Union. Members were advised to both accept lower wages and ban Jammo along with his supporters from the union meetings. (A previous meeting had been organised for when Jammo was away at his brother’s funeral in Launceston, no less!) Meanwhile, the Greens had shied away from negotiations while their own inadequacy to respond to the politics of recession was demobilising their supporter base. I do not know how mere documents could recreate the tremor in Jammo’s voice on tape as he recounts his feelings

⁷ J. Campbell (1 Mar 1974) p5.

⁸ This was an informal remark made to me by Una Camplin after the “Back to Cornwall” festivities to celebrate the district’s mining heritage, Cornwall, Tasmania (5 Feb 2006).

⁹ I. Jamieson, interview, (5 Jul 2006).

of betrayal and then his anger as he tells the story of how a close friend was decapitated in a mine after safety procedures were relaxed.

Then for another angle on the same period of history I have been interviewing Max Bound, once secretary of the Tasmanian branch of the Australian Communist Party. Max describes people like Jammo, who was also a member of the then Socialist Workers Party, as “just another bloody, mad Trot!” Again, it is the sort of telling remark that I would be surprised to see documented, apart perhaps from personal correspondence. It is this colour in history on which oral research can shine.

Before we focus further on Tasmanian radicals along with the topic of technology, we also need to look at a concept which is relevant to history from below, the concept of vernacular history. Again, I did the postmod-thing and went straight to the internet for an easy, labour-saving reference only to come up blank on definitions of vernacular history. But I did find a definition of “vernacular architecture” as “architecture without architects”.¹⁰ I have no idea if this is in any way a definition which would be accepted by experts, such as university qualified architects. But it does raise the question, can we similarly have history without historians? Is history in the making or in the telling? Allow me to tease this out.

So, vernacular history? A “formal definition” for the term would seem to be an oxymoron as its traditional use is mostly about history without so-called professionals, the academics. My old, hard copy dictionary tells me that “vernacular” is from the Latin *verna*, “home-born slave”.¹¹ For that matter, so does the hypertext version, that other *Wiki*, called *Wiktionary*.¹² Vernacular history also tends to a synonym for “local history” or “popular history” and so on. I do not want to get into a word game here, yet I cannot help but notice that there is a close relation between the concepts of oral history and vernacular history, with both terms overlapping in that dreamtime of left historians: history from below.

But it does not stop there. Bring in technology; or as the classical Marxist term has it, the “forces of production”. Bain Attwood, taking his cue from Alan Atkinson, broadens vernacular history to mean:

...histories in which there is 'a mix of writing and speech'. It is vernacular history that increasingly informs public understanding of the past as history increasingly comes to us in the form of radio, television, videos, DVDs, the internet and so on but also autobiography and testimony. It is history with a personal voice. Pity the poor historian who cannot get the hang of doing vernacular history, we might say. We or they are probably condemned to speak to smaller and smaller audiences.¹³

¹⁰ “about: vernacular” (n.d.) <http://vernacular-history.adanoo.com/> (28 May 2007).

¹¹ See “vernacular” in J.B. Sykes (1982) p1193.

¹² See “vernacular” in *Wiktionary* (2007) <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/vernacular> (28 May 2007).

¹³ B. Attwood (5 Sep 2005) <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/public-history-institute/annual-public-lecture/lecture-2005/index.html> (22 Oct 2006).

Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark run a parallel argument that history is not popularly seen “as the preserve of experts” but as an accessible part of the culture of the “commons”.¹⁴ They even cite an American survey on history for which they claim, “Respondents also found grandparents more reliable guides than college professors”.¹⁵

There is yet another approach to history “with a personal voice”. What I have in mind is to borrow from communications theory and Walter Ong’s notion of “secondary orality”, famously elaborated in his *Orality and Literacy* (1982). I do not want to run an over-simplification here and just conflate Ong onto theories of vernacular history. Yet if we take the gist of Ong’s meaning for secondary orality as post-literary and as an electronically mediated culture of spoken language, then we can see that there is an opportunity for a juncture with vernacular history as per Attwood and Atkinson above. This is what we might hear as another voice of history from below and what we might call “history with an accent”. To further mix my communications theory with a philosophy of history, this reconstructs, even partly reverses, the “grapholect” (the conventions of text as a function of cultural imperialism) in academic or Rankean historiography.

You can probably see the direction this thesis is heading: towards a “vulgar history”, history as *demos*, history as a power struggle not just in its making yet also in its telling; history as a democratic challenge to the despotism of document.

This brings me to the nub of my oral history research for *Radical Tasmania* for this conference. Out of the interviews which I have so far been granted, and for which I am requesting, with militant unionists, environmentalists, writers, anti-war activists, feminists, gay rights advocates, socialist agitators, “trout activists” and even defenders of a very Tasmanian vernacular known as “shackocracy”,¹⁶ amongst others, is the emergence of a consistent theme. This is the role of technology, especially electronic technology, in bringing Tasmania out of a cultural and political “backwater” to the forefront of global concern. This is especially the case for its environmentalism.

Environmental activists tell me that the electronic media has been a key to organising support, not just here in Australia yet also from around the planet. It is what the radical geographer, David Harvey, would probably identify as the politicisation of space; more to the point, the politicisation of hyper-space.¹⁷ For us “archivists”, it is also the historicisation of hyper-space. The general narrative is told like this:

Throughout the famous campaign to stop the Gordon-below-Franklin dam in south west Tasmania during the 1980s for example, the environmentalists, firstly intuitively, then very self-consciously, organised their protests to capture the “living room politics” of the omnipresent “middle class”. This meant turning the political debate into an intensely visual

¹⁴ S. Macintyre & A. Clark (2003) p16.

¹⁵ S. Macintyre & A. Clark (2003) p23.

¹⁶ A term used, and probably coined, by Richard Flanagan to describe the Tasmanian preference to holiday in “shacks”, once mostly on Crown Land but now under threat of privatisation. R. Flanagan, interview, (29 Nov 2006).

¹⁷ “Time and space as sources of social power” in D. Harvey (1990) pp226-239.

exercise for television and for graphic representation in magazines and newspapers. (Peter Dombrovskis's famous photograph, "Morning Mist, Rock Island Bend, Franklin River, Southwest Tasmania", published in *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, is an example of the latter.)¹⁸ The strategy was in part developed as a reflex of the very thing the environmentalists wanted to defend, Tasmania's natural beauty. It was also an attempt to raise the issue above the politics of class, to present "wilderness" as a "global issue" which transcends other group identities; except, of course, for the "developmentalists". (This politics-without-class still defines many of the strengths and weaknesses in Tasmanian environmentalism today.)¹⁹

The history of this, and other aspects of society in western Tasmania, is articulated in a fascinating museum known, somewhat disarmingly, as the Strahan Information Centre. This centre uses an adroit mixture of visual displays, recorded interviews and narrative text (the latter mostly written by the historian, fiction author and activist, Richard Flanagan) with contributions from other characters of the local history.²⁰ It is subject to editorial revision and addition as its controlling committee sees fit. I put this up as an example of a symbiosis of the science and art of both vernacular history and oral history; which, with due respect to Mikhail Bakhtin, I have tentatively titled in my project as "dialectics into dialogics".²¹ History aspiring to a democratic dialogue, if you like. For this reason, the Strahan Information Centre can also be categorised as a political museum in the fullest sense.

Yet this example of the history of Tasmanian environmentalism does not stop with the victory over the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme. As environmentalists have continued to wage their struggle, mostly against logging companies today, they have further developed their use of electronic technology to organise their allies and disseminate their politics. Partly for this reason, they embrace the spontaneity of telling their story as directly as they can. Oral history lends itself to them because it has an empathy for the timbre of their vocational passion - their self-described "patriotic" sacrifice for an identity of place²² - which they inflect in their narrative. Of course, oral history almost always has this advantage over text

¹⁸ This can be viewed at "National Library of Australia: Digital Collection Pictures" (n.d.)
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an24365561> (7 Nov 2006).

¹⁹ For example, see Richard Flanagan's criticisms of what he portrays as essentially a bourgeois ideology of the Wilderness Society and, he argues, its belittling of the working class, so isolating itself in the process; refer R. Flanagan, "Conclusion" (1985) pp92-93; and see (now Senator) Bob Brown's rejection of Flanagan's criticisms in the "Foreword" of Flanagan's history (1985) pvi. This factional dispute was again visited by Flanagan in interview in reference to the popular mobilisation around the Blue Tier campaign; refer R. Flanagan, interview, (29 Nov 2006).

²⁰ The machinations of the Tasmanian government to at first stop, and then compromise, the building of the centre is the subject of the interview with Richard Flanagan for *Radical Tasmania*. Flanagan is of the opinion that the centre is under threat because of a continued lack of funding. R. Flanagan, interview, (29 Nov 2006).

²¹ M. Bakhtin (1981).

²² Environmentalists who describe themselves as patriots is a strategy of polispeak that is led in Australia by William Lines; see W. Lines (2006).

documentation and “book history”. The urge to literally tell a story rather than commit to writing is as a function of the Socratic suspicion that text is abstract and alienating. It does not mean that environmentalists, or other Tasmanian radicals for that matter, do not write their history. But that is usually by educated elites within these movements. There is an intuition of many, in a culture of literary domination, that technologies which broadcast oral narrative, especially with the economy of the latest digital technologies, allow both a voice for and literally an image (graphic) of the otherwise undocumented other; that is, undocumented from the point of view of the other. This is history as subject and object.

At the risk of a pun about hyperspace, I will link back to reference sites like *Wikipedia* and ilk. Some of you might be familiar with Roy Rosenzweig’s assessment of *Wikipedia* and other on-line encyclopedias for academic history, invitingly titled, “Can History Be Open Source? *Wikipedia* and the Future of the Past”.²³ He persuasively argues that, on balance, there is a positive role for the “free form” model of such reference sources which invite contributions from a global readership. This is tempered by cautionary notes that *Wikipedia* still has an author bias because it is “more likely to be English-speaking, and [written by] denizens of the Internet”; not forgetting that it also admits to “geek priorities”.²⁴ On the other hand, Rosenzweig claims that reputable surveys show its rate of “serious errors” is equal to *Encyclopedia Britannica* while it has a “slightly larger number...of smaller mistakes”.²⁵ Rosenzweig also details deliberate vandalism of *Wikipedia*, some of which was not corrected for lengthy periods,²⁶ while others, including deliberate attempts by academics trying to defend their traditional status as producers of knowledge (institutionalised discourse), have been corrected within hours.²⁷ This organic quality, proclaims Rosenzweig, is “the great democratic triumph of *Wikipedia*”.²⁸

My link to this discussion of on-line sources is part of what we might call “electronic communications technology historiography” or the secondary orality of “e-historiography”.²⁹

²³ R. Rosenzweig (Jun 2006).

²⁴ R. Rosenzweig (Jun 2006) p127.

²⁵ R. Rosenzweig (Jun 2006) p129.

²⁶ See an account of *Wikipedia*’s attempts to resolve its “Seigenthaler controversy”, R. Rosenzweig (Jun 2006) pp133-136.

²⁷ It is alleged that Alex Halavais, graduate director for the informatics school at the University of Buffalo, inserted thirteen errors in *Wikipedia* and then discovered a complete correction in two and a half hours. See R. Rosenzweig (Jun 2006) p133.

²⁸ R. Rosenzweig (Jun 2006) p137.

²⁹ The Department of History at Ohio State University, USA, produces an electronic journal titled *eHistory* (2007); see <http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/default.cfm?CFID=3936659&CFTOKEN=71762152&jsessionid=4e305e68f85a525b5821TR> (29 May 2007).

Both oral history and vernacular history are a part of this genre by dint of the fact that they use electronic communications technology to record and disseminate their histories, obviously with sound (sometimes transcribed into text) and also with graphics. This is an overlap with the experience of Tasmanian environmentalists and other recent histories from below because it renews that Marxist notion of the forces of production as revolutionary technologies, and which are indeed real forces of history because they democratise historiography as a political praxis. In other words, they challenge control of history by both academics and “public intellectuals” as well as challenging the social values embedded in a technology like book history. Oral history joins vernacular history as a hyper-megaphone speaking for democracy.

In this way then, old stories (and new stories) are told in new ways, even for the benefit of such as Windschuttle. To constrain our research to reading “original documents” (if meant as hard-copy text) is not only a function of cultural chauvinism, it is historically “e-dyslexic”.

KELHAM, MEGG: LEARNING HISTORY FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

This paper looks at three ways oral histories have been incorporated into regional museum exhibitions in central Australia as a means of authenticating new historical research, enhancing object meaning, making emotional connections with the past and encouraging new audiences to visit museums. In the process the paper explores reasons why history is best learnt from the horse's mouth.

Please note that this is the written version of a conference paper which focussed on the actual presentation of the talking books described below. Variations of this paper have been presented at "Museums in a Changing Climate" the Museums Australia National Conference, Canberra May 2007; "Initiatives, Ideas, Interaction, Sharing our Story" the Australian Society of Archivists Annual Conference August 2007, Alice Springs and "Old Stories, New Ways" the Oral History Association of Australia's National Conference in Brisbane, 2007.

For more information about production or distribution of the talking books please contact meggkel@yahoo.com and put talking books in the subject box.

The Project

In 2004 I was asked to curate a social history exhibition for the Battery Hill Mining Centre, a tourist attraction in Tennant Creek, a small town of about 3,000 people located 500 odd kilometres north of Alice Springs, slap bang in the middle of the Northern Territory. While the rest of Australia has in recent years been enjoying the fruits of economic boom, Tennant Creek has been in serious economic decline.

It has not always been this way.

Seventy years ago Tennant's goldfield was declared the greatest in the Commonwealth by an Australian Prime Minister looking for economic hope in the midst of the Great Depression. After the Second World War, the goldfield was home to "Nobles Nob", one of the richest gold mines for its size in the world. In the 1970's copper mines at Warrego and Peko employed a United Nations of post war migrants. The mines built pubs, caravan parks and even child care centres to keep their workers in town. Tennant has been a rich town.

Today's Tennant is not. There are currently no working mines left on Tennant's goldfield and the latest addition to Australia's national infrastructure, the transcontinental rail link between Adelaide and Darwin stops in Tennant in the early hours of the morning, an unkind hour for attracting even the most enthusiastic of train travelling tourists.

Today's Tennant has one of the youngest populations in the country and one of the highest Aboriginal populations to be found outside of remote Indigenous communities. Road travellers passing through on their way to and from the Outback's iconic tourism destinations at Kakadu and Uluru, can be forgiven for thinking that Tennant is one of the ugliest towns in the country as they look at the barred windows of the few remaining businesses struggling to stay open and witness what we in the Territory politely refer to as the "anti-social behaviour" of the town's drunks.

Scratch the surface, however, and you will find one of the friendliest towns in the country, a town, as its tourism slogan proudly proclaims "with a Golden Heart". In the words of one early post-war resident:

I've never had so much real enjoyment in life, so many belly laughs, as I had in Tennant Creek. It didn't matter what you had or what you did, it's ... what you were that mattered. The priest, the bar maid, the sweeper behind the bar, the manager of the Nob, might be all welcome in one group. Peter Braham, Manager Nobles Nob Mine³⁰

It's a sentiment repeated time and time again by those who have actually lived there and by those of us outsiders like me lucky enough to have found our way into the town's underbelly.

I confess that when I began this project, I too thought Tennant an ugly town. Though I live only 500 kilometres away in a place whose early economic expansion owes much to Tennant gold, I had been there only twice. The first time was in 1973 when as a sixteen year city girl on a geography excursion I slept on the raked but not watered red earth "greens" of the town's golf course. It was a memorably bad prickle infested experience. On my second visit, 15 years later, I passed through Tennant as quickly as I could! Like today's tourists, all I could see was Tennant's ugly skin.

I will admit too, that when I started looking at how to refurbish the Battery Hill Mining Centre's social history museum, I found the museum's objects - the creative focal point for all museum work - as depressingly ugly as the town's caged façade. The museum's collection consisted almost entirely of dusty rusted tin. There were rusted tobacco tins and wax match containers, glassless kerosene lamp frames, unidentifiable bits of wood stoves and mountains of lidless food tins. Then there were broken tools – rusted holey gold pans, shovel heads, broken picks, spanners, buckets, wire rope, drill bits and endless acres of engine parts. I couldn't muster up an inch's worth of enthusiasm for anything I saw until I came across the squashed and rusty remains of a child sized wheel barrow, a father's handmade gift, I presumed, to a child requiring to be entertained at work because there was, literally, nothing else to do. I decided to tell, if I could, the story of Australia's last great gold rush through the eyes of its women and kids

Needless to say there were no books on the subject. Indeed, while well researched reports detailing the location and production values of Tennant's mines, the heritage value of its

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NTAS, NTRS 226, TS162

buildings and the impact of European arrival on its indigenous population do exist, an authoritative general history of Tennant Creek has yet to be written. Which leads me to one final confession, I also didn't, at this stage, know anything about Tennant's history at all.

There was, it seemed, only one thing to do. Returning to the roots of my academic training as a social historian I headed to the newly established branch of the Northern Territory Archives Service in Alice Springs. It was here that I found, amongst other things, a series of oral history interviews recorded in the 1980s by Hilda Tuxworth, a long-time Tennant Creek resident, mine wife and nurse, amateur historian and mother of one of the Territory's Chief Ministers (October 1983 to May 1986), Ian Tuxworth who had grown up on Tennant's mines. Hilda was a contributor in the early days of collecting the Territory's now impressive oral history collection begun in 1979. . Though Hilda's weren't the only oral histories I used, they informed a large chunk of my research.

While others may bemoan the quality of Hilda's recordings, the absence of seriously technical questions about the hardware of mining history and the absence of any real attempt to interview Aboriginal people about their experiences, I personally found myself thanking Hilda over and over again for her work. Hilda conscientiously interviewed as many of the town's first European residents as she could, asking questions reflective of her own Tennant experience: questions about food, shopping, clothes washing, toilets, child discipline, sport and recreation, gender relations, mine accidents and coping with the heat. And she conscientiously tried to identify the names, places and people associated with some of the town's most remembered historical events. These have included a couple of very serious shop fires, a few murders, a saveloy party and an old fashioned shot gun-fired running race which determined who got what house block to live on in the town's first land release.

What emerged was the colourful story of a male dominated community established hundreds of kilometres beyond the end of the nation's road and rail systems by people desperate enough to get gold out of iron ore – one of nature's hardest lumps of rock. In the pre-war years they did this by hand. It was a gold rush for desperate times. The acres of broken picks, shovel heads and drill bits in the Battery Hill Mining Centre's museum collection were beginning to acquire some meaning, as were the mountainous piles of rusty food tins.

Whilst gold in Tennant Creek was plentiful, water was in desperately short supply. In the words of one early resident 'We treated water like diamonds, it was so precious'³¹. 'No gardens at Tennant' another woman wrote, 'water at 11 shillings for 50 gallons makes gardening too expensive'. Potatoes, pumpkins and onions might last the long journey from Adelaide and Mt Isa but everything else came in tins, even the butter which generally arrived "in various shades of melted yellow and white".³²

The lack of water affected every aspect of daily life – from incessant plagues of flies quenching their thirst on human sweat, so bad they are named as 'a nuisance' in one man's

³¹ NTAS, NTRS 226, TS 584

³² Kevan Weaver, personal writings.

suicide note³³; to perennial outbreaks of diarrhoea, dysentery, trachoma, bung eye and sandy blight amongst both adults and kids: “Kids’ eyes would swell up and be pussey, because these little flies’d get in. With your first child it just about kills you to see; you think they’d go blind....”³⁴

The history of toiletry in a town where flushing was absolutely unthinkable emerged as a fascinating metaphor for the social hierarchy which existed in the goldfields workaday world, if not in its social one. Town residents had “thunder boxes”, inspected by mining wardens and police in the pre-war years as part of the Government’s public health policy, emptied in the post war period, by Aboriginal employees. In a treeless town on the receiving edge of desert winds, the story of residents caught on the toilet seat as their bottom of the yard toilet house is blown away is not unusual.

Post-war miners used “cesspools”, pans and cans located in the corners of shared rooms and mining tunnels, which someone emptied by hand once a week. Others used flaming furies – 44 gallon drums burnt out with slow to ignite diesel fuel which gave many an unsuspecting smoker a burnt bum in the days before “cleaning in progress” signs were regulated as part of the nation’s occupational health and safety laws. Staff houses, occupied by mine managers, their wives and kids were fitted with dissolventators – an early form of chemical toilet which emptied itself in a tank outside.

Everyone, miners included, washed their clothes by hand. And whilst miners paid for the privilege of living in un-air-conditioned tin huts, staff got their houses rent free. A lack of family accommodation on mines and in town accounted for the disparate gender demographic which dominated the goldfields until the last quarter of the twentieth century. Indeed, the lack of women was so great that it made the national news causing a Melbourne telephonist to offer to visit if the miners paid her airfare. When they did, her story was reported around the world! Unbelievable, but true!

The women who lived in this “man’s town” emerged as the creators of a remarkably bonded community. Kathleen Weaber, whose blind husband was one of the richest miners in the pre-war years, held the goldfield’s first dance on a floor made entirely out of crushed ant hills. A hundred miners danced the night away with 6 women and every kid was given a Christmas present in a tradition which is still maintained in Tennant Creek today. When the war came, the C.W.A. fed thousands of soldiers cups of tea and freshly baked scones cooked on a wood stove despite the heat. “Not a bad effort”, one of them wrote, “for such a tiny hole of a place.”³⁵

In the post war years, European-born women joined the ranks of the goldfield’s small female population, lured, often enough, by husbands who told tall tales of green pastures and houses set in orchards rather than describe the reality of life in tin-huts located in hot, red,

³³ Northern Territory Archives Service F68, S20

³⁴ NTAS, NTRS 226, TS 782

³⁵ Francie Udall, 17/1/1942 MAGNT, Havard Collection

fly-ridden valleys. These European brides may not have made the journey if they'd known what they were really in for!

The oral histories of male and female residents began to reveal a pattern in the women's responses. As Peter Braham put it, those women 'who came up with the ingrained thing that ... the house ... and kids ... must be spotless ... what will the neighbours think couldn't stand it ... they went off'³⁶. The others, the ones who stayed, cried for months on arrival, only to cry even harder when they left. Shared tears were the foundation of intense communal bonds whilst rough living had its rewards. Windows without glass couldn't be washed, concrete floors and "mend and make do" furniture couldn't be polished. For those with the fortitude to withstand the flies, a goldfield's life offered women and children a freedom unknown to most of their lino polishing, gadget dependent, city counterparts. At least, that's what my oral history readings lead me to conclude. Hence, the title of the museum exhibition now on display at Battery Hill, "Freedom, Fortitude and Flies: Daily Life on Tennant's Goldfields".

History as an act of creation

It is, I suppose, the nature of any creative endeavour – and the writing of history from primary as opposed to secondary source materials is, I believe, a creative endeavour – that the creator should be nervous about their creation. This is particularly true in the writing of history because history, unlike art, aims to tell some kind of verifiable truth about the past.

It is a joyous thing when what the historian creates is recognisable to those who have lived it, especially when they are alive to read the tale and approve the historian's creation face to face. This, however, as the nation's current history wars makes obvious, is not always possible. The history of an event is not the same as an individual's memories of it or even of its written and visual remains. And the sum of the individual parts is not the same as the collective whole. Life would be so much simpler if it was.

While some historical tales affirm an individual's beliefs about how their own past actions may have contributed to a positive collective present (like voting "Yes" in the '67 referendum or fighting on the winning side of a justifiable war) other tales judge us retrospectively for contributing to a negative outcome, one which we may not have consciously wanted to contribute to and may even, had we been aware of how our actions engaged with others, have avoided.

Does any white Australian really want to feel in any way responsible for the damage our appearance has created in the lives of Australia's first inhabitants? But just because we don't like what we hear, doesn't mean the story shouldn't be told. This is the challenge of a good historical tale. It can give us a retrospective look at our individual part in the collective scheme of things which in turn may help each of us understand how to make better individual decisions today for a more positive collective tomorrow.

In telling the tale of Tennant's history, through the eyes of its women and children, I was acutely conscious of the silences in the story I was unravelling. Most obviously noticeable

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NTAS, NTRS 226, TS162

was the absence of the voices of the Warumungu who had occupied these lands for thousands of years without ever worrying about the gold its heavy black rocks bore. Commonwealth Law forbade them from entering the goldfield as soon as it was officially proclaimed even though one of them found the first nugget. Not all of them, as my research revealed, obeyed.

I struggled with how to describe those many goldfields residents of mixed European and Arrernte descent, children of an earlier Centralian goldrush. Which of the many nouns used to describe mixed descent peoples did they use about themselves way back then? Were their relationships with the Warumungu different or the same as the Europeans with whom they lived and worked? Were their relationships with each other different from their relations with the Europeans? These questions, never asked in the oral history records, remain, for me, unanswered.

I agonised over changing the word “nigger” to “Aboriginal” in a 1930s postcard which showed enormous sympathy for an Aboriginal attack on a camel train because such “a team would use a lot of water and water is a tremendous problem out West, the Niggers depending on a few waterholes or soaks for their supply.”³⁷ Colleagues insisted the currently offensive word be changed to [Aboriginal] as a mark of respect for Tennant’s contemporary Indigenous population even as I worried about censoring the past. Square brackets mark that a change has been made to anyone who knows how to read them.

And I was frustrated that time prevented me from investigating the role of prostitution in a town with such a huge male population. A pre-war government inventory of the town’s toilets tantalisingly lists one woman’s occupation as “lady of easy virtue”³⁸ whilst another informant mentioned bus loads of Mt Isa girls servicing the miners on-site in the company dominated mines of the post war years. It’s another question never asked, and so not answered, in the oral history record. How could I possibly claim to be telling the history of a goldfield through the eyes of its women if the only women I mentioned were the respectable ones?

An historian’s tale is an act of creation. Every word and content choice carries with it a judgement, biasing the story before it’s even begun and sometimes, in the emotional response engendered in its audience, disrupting the narrative before the end of the story has been reached, before individuals can feel included in the collective whole.

Nervousness about my word and content choices extended to the nature of the conclusions I had drawn as well. And my nerves were, surprisingly, compounded by my “outsider” status. If objectivity is something to be aimed at in museum exhibitions and historical accounts of the past, then my outsider status in relation to Tennant Creek, the fact that I had never lived there and had investigated the past with “clean hands” should have been an advantage. Prior to “publication” however, it felt precisely the opposite.

In the academic world research conclusions can be justified, silences signposted and ethical issues explored without interrupting the central narrative. This is what footnotes are for.

³⁷ Udall, Francie postcard MAGNT, Havard Collection

³⁸ NTAS, NTRS1670, F480

Footnotes are, however, sadly out of fashion in popular historical texts and I'm not sure they have ever been acceptable in the limited textual spaces of museum exhibitions. I did, however, want my audience to know where the conclusions I had reached came from. And I did, if I could, want to signpost somehow the silences.

Quotes, using the edited words from the oral history interviews of the people from whom I had learnt the history of Tennant Creek became my answer, a museum equivalent to an academic footnote. We painted them on the museum's walls, and, though archivists and conservators may cringe at the thought, we painted them on the mounds of rusted tin to which their memories had given meaning. A row of rusted shovel heads, attached without any protective display casing directly to the walls of the museum proclaims "I shudder these days when I see a shovel"³⁹. A couple of broken spanners underneath names the author, notes he was a 1930s ore carter, mentions he was 80 when he made this statement and then gives the formal Northern Territory Archives Service Oral history reference numbers. While I don't expect museum patrons to check the references or even necessarily know what they mean, I think they should be there. It helps, I hope, people to understand how history is made. And I hope, the more they see these strange markings of the historian's trade, the more they will expect to see them in the future and begin to ask all of us in the history making industry – the archivists, curators, conservators, managers, interpreters, oral historians, anthropologists, designers, journalists and hoarders of personal photographs and memories - where our information has come from.



Talking Books

It was with the same desire to ensure that school-aged students also understood where the information behind the text boards and photographic captions in "Freedom, Fortitude and Flies" came from that I decided, when creating the educational resources accompanying the exhibition, to create two talking books using some of the primary source materials on which the exhibition's conclusions are founded. These resources include the edited letters and photographs of one of the first European women to live on the goldfields and the oral history memoirs of a fifty year-old man who lived there as a child.

Talking books, the 21st century equivalent of a 1960s slide show, combine audio, photographic and other images with the printed word to form a multi-media presentation that

³⁹ Kittle, Leonard, NTAS, NTRS 226 Oral History Interview, TS 254

can be viewed on an individual computer using headphones or as a whole group digital projection. In my ten minute productions, the “pages” of each book are somewhere between a half and one minute in length, contain three to ten different images and anywhere from 30 to 75 words of written text. The pages are turned by using the forward keys of the computer, which makes a talking book a little different from video. Pauses are built in to the experience rather than interrupting it.

The audio in the books enables audiences with limited written literacy skills, the result of age and/or the fact that they speak English as a foreign language to access previously inaccessible first-hand accounts of the past. The moving text, a written transcript of the audio which appears at approximately the same time as the spoken word, clarifies any lack of auditory clarity in archival recordings and in the case of Francie Udall’s letters, represents the original written form of the materials. The literacy lesson which comes with hearing and reading text at approximately the same time is an educational bonus as well as a deliberate attempt to encourage the use of local history in lessons across the curriculum.

The busyness of the talking book experience - images fade in and out as words move across the screen and sound effects amplify the meaning of the spoken word – has proven to be an effective tool in engaging the interest of all students, from the brightest to those with behavioural challenges. When the technology broke down in one primary school trial and the text and images stopped moving the class stopped concentrating. The moment movement returned so did the class’s attention.

Though originally created for a media literate youth audience, I have also been showing the books to a large cross section of the adult community. This has included Indigenous language speakers from remote communities who accessed them as an individual headphone experience when they were put on display in the local library; middle aged school principals as part of a professional development session; retirees belonging to the University of the Third Age and a “drop-in” audience of assorted ages and occupations who attended a publicly advertised community heritage event. The positive feedback from this broad audience indicates that the books are being valued as authoritative sources of information about the past because they are eye witness accounts.

While the spoken word in both books is historically authentic the sound effects are designed to evoke rather than re-create the past. While some sounds, like the truck engine which bookmarks the beginning and end of journeys, is a recording of the actual truck which delivered the mail between Alice Springs and Tennant Creek in the 1930s other sounds, like the flies, are obviously modern. They have been included to bring to life oral history themes. If audiences watching the books are irritated by the noise – which they have been – then I claim that as intentional. If you don’t like hearing flies, imagine living with them! Part of the problem with creating an historically authentic sound bed to accompany the talking books is that I’m not sure what the past sounded like and trying to find out proved to be a really big challenge. Sound scapes were not in the archives. It’s another historical silence worth signposting as our own sound environment becomes increasingly dominated by the electronic verbiage of mobile technology. What did the past sound like? It’s a question worth asking ourselves and our kids.

Selecting enough photos to accurately reflect the content of the audio was another challenge to the historical authenticity of the books. Neither of my eye witnesses had taken enough photos to cover all of the content they talked about so I decided to include photos from other people's collections. I would love to be able to say that all of the additional photos were taken at the same time and place and included the people mentioned in the audio, but even this proved impossible. The most obvious inaccuracy I am conscious of is a picture of the dirt road heading into Heavitree Gap, the southern entrance to Alice Springs. The photo which I have used to accompany a letter written in 1938 was taken 12 years earlier before the railway line, a really significant event in the history of Alice, had been built. I included the photo because I couldn't find, or spend any more time trying to find, a contemporaneous picture and the focal point for me was the dirt in the centre of the Gap's familiar outline, rather than the bitumen a Centralian audience has become familiar with. How much the use of additional photos and modern sound effects transforms the talking books from primary source materials to a montage of primary resources or even a secondary source document in its own right is something I'm still pondering.

Whatever the final answer to that particular philosophical dilemma, however, it is clear that the books' first person stance enables the classroom teacher/public presenter to position themselves as a facilitator of information in relation to bad news stories from the past. For a listener hearing about legalised racial segregation in Australia for the very first time, it is much easier to hear a kid's slightly confused account of how the Warumungu were excluded from the goldfields in Kevan Weaber's tale of one Warumungu woman's resistance, than it is to have the teacher explain the existence of a law which clearly disadvantaged the Warumungu during the gold rush., This is particularly important in central Australia where 55% of the student body is Aboriginal and where first contact and pioneer stories are still part of lived experience. Fear of being shot as a messenger of bad news stories about the past may be one reason why local history is a subject often avoided in the Territory.

The Old Timers Traeger Museum Audio tour

The third project in which primary sources materials were used to interpret museum objects, the creation of an audio tour, was informed by a personal consciousness of the limitations of pioneer stories in representing the past and a concern that the telling of these stories might dispossess the centre's first inhabitants for a second time. An added impetus was a sense of appreciation for some really good pioneer tales unearthed in the process of conducting retrospective provenance research at one of Alice's oldest museums, The audio tour was created for the Old Timers Traeger Museum which, perhaps because of its location on site at an old people's home, is the guardian of a very large and eclectic collection of objects, one hundred percent of which are on display.

Rather than adding more labels to the already congested space of the museum's caseless shelves, I decided to create a self guided tour in which the recorded voices of object donors, local historical experts, read archival materials and oral histories are combined to provide visitors with an intimate multi-voiced interpretation of Alice's social history told, for the most part, in the first person voices of locals talking about the memories the museum objects inspire. Each story can be heard as a stand alone three to five minute audio tale or as an hour long museum experience.

Thus, a mechanical fruit juicer reminds one local of the time when Alice Springs was a military town occupied by thousands of soldiers. A silver fob watch tells the story of the Centre's very own communist colony, while an old, battered unplayable violin reveals the reality of the disparate lived experiences of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians and the personal shock the museum's curator felt when he heard about this disparity for the first time. This tale is accompanied by the mournful sound of a modern violin played by an Alice Springs local whose own violin credentials include accompanying Fontaine and Nureyev at Covent Garden, London.

What determines the order in which the information is heard is not the chronological ordering of events in Alice's history, but the order of the objects as they are to be found on the shelves of the museum. And what determined the choice of stories included in the tour and those left out were, amongst other things, the verbal articulate-ness of the interviewee and the ability of the story to engage the curiosity of visitors. Rather than provide tourists with the entire history of Alice Springs from woe to go, it is hoped that visitors will walk out of the museum with more questions than answers, questions which will encourage them to visit other Alice museums or ask questions of the museum volunteers. "When" I hope visitors will think, "was Alice ever a military town?" A visit to the RSL War museum will provide the answer.

Conclusion

History is much more than a simple account in which dates, names, places and events are to be given pride of place over attempts to describe patterns of social, cultural, political and economic interaction. And an historian's conclusions are much more than a simple rendering of facts. They are, instead, evidenced based interpretations informed as much by what is not to be found in the material remains of our past as what is there. All narratives are subjective and the historian's, though it should always aim at some truth, is no different. Audiences, whether they are tourists, students or politicians, should know this. Using referenced primary source materials as the essential elements for learning about the past is one way of enabling audiences to understand that history is made.

The use of primary source materials encourages audiences to respond to the past with their emotions as well as their intellects, to hear about the shameful and unjust a little bit at a time, to ponder the disparate, hear the talkers, notice the silences, create their own questions and find answers to the things that interest them most and in so doing understand how the present came to be or even, heaven forbid, imagine the possibility of an entirely different present from the one we actually have.

Not mind you that I want to advocate either, that one person's story is the same as history or that a third person version of our past shouldn't be told or isn't important. I believe it is. But, because of the biases inherent in any and every third person view of the past, it's not where the telling of the tale should begin, it's where it should end only after a considerable variety of first person stories have been heard. History should be learned from the mouths of multiple horses, indeed as many of the horses as can be legitimately fitted into everybody's very busy lives/curriculum and from as wide a variety of stables/stations/fields/wildernesses

as possible. This is essential if learning about history is to have any hope of clearing a path into a less, not a more conflicted, collective future.

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**KOLOMITSEV, PETER:
THE DIGITAL COMMITMENT: THE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO
SOLID STATE FIELD-RECORDING EQUIPMENT AT THE STATE
LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

Since the 1970s the mainstay of oral history recording has been the standard analogue cassette. Recording equipment ranged from very simple domestic cassette recorders to professional field recorders aimed at the broadcast industry, and the media was cheap and easily available.

In 1987 the State Library of South Australia began to purchase a fleet of Marantz CP430 cassette recorders. These recorders, each packaged with microphones and headphones in a hard case were lent to individuals and community groups in order to collect the stories of South Australians. The kits proved to be extremely popular and about half of the Library's annual intake of recordings was captured using this equipment – over 3000 hours in total.

In the late 1990s the State Library made its first foray into the digital world with the purchase of two Sony TCD-10 DAT (Digital Audio Tape) recorders. Although a digital recorder, they were still tape-based and thus very similar to the Marantz CP430 in operation and management. They were mainly used for commissioned interviews, while the majority of community-based interviews were still recorded on analogue cassette.

The new millennium saw the rapid disappearance of tape-based recorders, both analogue and digital, from manufacturers' product lines. They were replaced with a variety of new technologies such as solid state Compact Flash card recorders, hard drive recorders and systems based on computer lap-tops.

With the Library's fleet of cassette and DAT recorders aging and the media becoming increasingly rare, we were faced with a difficult choice. We could either keep our existing equipment operational or we could replace the entire fleet with the new generation of digital recorders. In early 2005 the decision was made to take a leap into the unknown and make the digital commitment.

This was quite a tough decision because replacing the recorders would mean; re-training our clients who were familiar with the existing equipment; changing management procedures of the recordings; and a total rewrite of our user guides and training sessions. Format longevity was also a concern, with many of the options available using an entirely new paradigm in storage.

However we decided that maintaining an expensive servicing regime and buying large quantities of recording media, in order to keep the obsolete formats running, out weighed the challenges of changing formats. Plus with the improved audio quality we would gain by going digital across our entire fleet, we decided to forge forward.

The first hurdle was finding funds to purchase enough units to maintain the lending program and before we asked for the money we needed to know how much to ask for. In 2005 the average price of one of the new breed of professional recorders was between two and three thousand dollars and well above for some of the higher end models. We would also need to factor in two microphones, a pair of headphones and a protective case for each kit, plus, depending on which unit we chose, enough recording media to service our program. All of these items would increase the final cost of each unit. In order to purchase four kits, enough to start replacing our existing fleet we needed to find at least ten to fifteen thousand dollars to fund the project.

Luckily we did manage to secure the funds so we could begin the research in earnest.

We started by creating a set of criteria for the prospective recorder. Some of the key things being the following;

- The recorder had to record uncompressed PCM audio and at a minimum 16bit 44.1kHz which is known as CD quality but we had a preference for the higher bit depth & sample rates of 24bit 48kHz which has been adopted as the standard for voice recordings by many institutions world wide.
- It needed to have two independent microphone inputs, preferably with professional XLR connectors, and also provide 48v phantom power for powering condenser microphones
- The recording levels should be easily and independently adjustable over both channels
- The level meters should be clear and easy to read and represent each channel individually.
- The unit itself should not be too small and fiddly to operate and access to key features not buried in menus. With this particular point in mind we had a preference toward the larger field recorder style of unit.
- And finally it needed to have a sturdy build that would last several years of heavy use by multiple users.

These requirements immediately ruled out a large range of recorders; most particularly the data reduced formats such as small digital note takers. We also decided that minidisk and CD recorders were at the end of their commercial life and would be a poor choice. We did strongly consider the laptop option, however we ultimately decided that the setup complexities would prove to be quite frightening to many of our users and the IT support would be a burden on our workflows. There was also a concern with the amount of acoustic noise that many laptops generate.

This left us with only a small number of suitable candidates. Some of the higher end models were extremely expensive and were ruled out as they didn't fit our budget, leaving us with two viable choices; the Marantz PMD670 and the Fostex FR-2 (NB: since 2005 there has been a flood of options within this price range)

Both of these units passed most of the criteria and fitted our budget. Nevertheless there was some trepidation as they both recorded to Compact Flash Cards, a relatively new storage

format and particularly unknown as an audio recording medium. We were most concerned with its commercial stability as a format, so we looked at other markets where the cards were being used. Digital cameras had been successfully using compact flash for several years and had gained significant market share as a storage format (particularly in the professional sector). This gave us the confidence that there was enough commercial momentum with the product that should mean ease of availability well into the future.

Happy to proceed, it was time to make the final decision. The two units were quite closely matched in terms of quality and features; however the Fostex had the ability to record 24bit 48 kHz (and up to 192 kHz) whereas Marantz maximum record quality was 16 bit 48 kHz. During our recording, listening and operation tests we felt the Fostex outperformed the Marantz in sound quality and it was also marginally easier to use. This put the Fostex at the top of the pile and we finally chose the Fostex FR-2 s our replacement field recorder.

Compact Flash card capacity was our next big decision. At the time card sizes ranged from 64megabytes up to 4gigabytes and we would be using the 24 bit 48 kHz standard to record. We required the cards to have enough space to record long interviews and with the huge file size generated by digital audio the small cards were obviously no good. In 2005 4 gig cards were extremely expensive and even though the 2 gig cards provided the best value per megabyte, we decided that the most suitable card for our purposes was 1gig. This gave us approximately 1 hour of 24 bit 48 kHz audio, which easily fits, unedited on an audio CD for access copies. (NB: As of 2009 100gig cards are available but are only supported if the device uses FAT32 file system. Also currently 4gig is the maximum length for .wav/BWF files)

With all of the decisions made and the equipment purchased we now had four shiny brand new field recorders packaged into sturdy road cases together with 2 lapel microphones and a pair of headphones.

But before we could begin our lending program we needed to produce a user guide specifically designed for our clients. We wanted to create a step by step guide which started at switching the unit on and then lead the user through set up and recording right up to the pack up procedure. It needed to be clear, concise and include the use of the supplied microphones and headphones as well as any of our specific requirements for the recording, signal levels, I.D.'s and card management. We also didn't want it to be too long or overly complex because many of our users have very little experience with this type of equipment.

The first draft of the manual was supplemented with diagrams scanned from the original owner's manuals. However during the initial testing we discovered the simple images didn't provide much help and proved to be a bit confusing at times. The solution for this was to create our own images. This was done by taking close up photographs of the equipment being set up, so that every step had a clear image of exactly what needed to be done. With the new batch of photographs, some rewrites and added information where necessary, we now had a very user friendly guide ready to go out with every kit.

This is not the only guidance that our clients get. Each new user receives a one on one training session in the use of the equipment. The State Library in conjunction with the Adelaide branch of the OHAA also holds a regular Oral History workshop, where the participants get a hands on practice session with the equipment. This gives us the

opportunity to make sure that the recorders are being used properly and allows us to reinforce some of our requirements, such as how we want the files presented.

The community response to the recorders has been incredibly positive. At first many people show some trepidation about the new technology, however after the training sessions the majority of our clients leave confident in its operation and many people say they find them much easier to use than the old CP430's. Since we began using the FR-2's the overall quality of the recordings has improved immeasurably. This has not just been through the higher recording quality of the equipment but the whole implementation process has improved our user guides and training sessions and thus improved the skills of our clients.

With the new kits out in the field and recordings beginning to flow in, we had to re-evaluate the way that they were managed. Traditionally with both analogue and digital tapes, the master tapes were copied to create a use, donor and interviewee copies. The master tapes were then placed in storage for preservation. With the masters kept permanently, this whole process was often under no real time pressure. In periods where the library's audio preservation department was severely under staffed, low priority recordings could wait several months and not be processed without any real repercussions.

However up until very recently 1 gig compact flash cards have been extremely expensive making it economically impractical to even consider treating them as a permanent master. Unlike magnetic tapes, flash memory is theoretically infinitely reusable without loss of quality. This has made it possible for us to purchase a small amount of cards and reuse them. The process which we now follow is; the recordings are submitted to the library and the files are immediately copied from the cards. CD use copies are then made and the unprocessed original or master file is saved to our Digital Object Storage System (DOSS), a large Raided DATA Server which is archived weekly. Once we are happy that the file safely exists on the DOSS we do the unthinkable in preservation terms, we erase the cards and re-use them.

Aside from the change in priorities with handling the incoming recordings, our computer ingestion procedures have changed. To digitize or transfer tape based formats, the tape has to be played in real time and consequently listened to in full by the audio engineer. However the FR-2 produces a computer file which has the advantage that they can easily and quickly be transferred via USB from the card directly to the computer. This certainly speeds up the whole process significantly however it has meant that the each interview is no longer listened to in its entirety. We still spot check the files for recording quality but this doesn't verify the integrity of the entire file.

Since our initial purchases we have managed to secure funds for three more Fostex FR-2's bringing our total fleet up to 7 complete kits. This has allowed us to remove all of the cassette and DAT recorders from the field. When this additional funding became available we did have the opportunity to look at a different recorder as there has been a flood of new solid state recorders to hit the market all with different price points and feature sets. We decided that standardized, interchangeable kits, out weighed any potential advantage an alternate recorder would provide.

So what is available now? And what are good and bad choices for recording oral histories? Here is a run down of some of the more common recorders available now.

The first group of recorders is the Digital Note-takers. These types of recorders are small hand held devices with a built in microphones and often come bundled with transcription software. They are also relatively cheap. On the surface they appear to be the ideal recorder for oral historians but when you look at the specifications you'll notice that they only record to a data reduce format and some of them only to a proprietary format, locking you into using their recorders and software. Many of the units also have a maximum sampling frequency of around 12 kHz making the highest recordable audio frequency about 6 kHz thus we lose a lot of important audio information. If they do have a microphone input it is only ever a 3.5mm mini-jack connector, thus eliminating most high quality microphones. Finally record levels are either difficult or impossible to set relying on automatic level control. So once you factor in the lower sound quality plus the lack of connectivity and adjustability they become less than ideal recorders. If you are attracted by the bundled software remember that it is generally sold separately and there are other alternative software packages some of which are freeware.

Some examples of note-takers are:

Olympus DS4000,

Phillips Digital Pocket Memo

Sony ICDSX67DR9

The next group of recorders are MP3 players and iPods. Some of these devices have the ability to record as a standard unit and some require a microphone adaptor. Basically everything I've said about the digital note takers applies to iPods and MP3 players, with the general advice being to steer clear of them for oral history recording. (NB; there has been some advances in iPod microphone adaptors since the writing of this paper which do provide 16 bit 44.1 kHz .wav recording that may be worth considering)

From here we move to a batch of recorders I refer to as semi-professional field recorders and are much more suitable for Oral History. These units are generally aimed at musicians and recording music, consequently they are designed to capture high quality audio. Most of them will record both as uncompressed .wav files as well as compressed MP3 files. They are all quite small, light hand held devices which makes them very portable and convenient. However the size does have some drawbacks. For example, when you have microphones, headphones and a power supply plugged in they can become quite awkward and unstable making them difficult to handle. The size also limits the number external buttons and switches with the result being a much more menu drive device. Most of these units are built to a budget with a retail price around \$1000 and under. They are often made entirely of plastic and are a little flimsy, which is something worth considering if you are purchasing equipment to be used by several people and with grant funding that may only come around once every 5 to 10 years. They vary in features and quality of microphone inputs with some only having a single stereo mini jack connection.

Some examples are:

Edirol R-09.

M-Audio MicroTrack 24/96.

Zoom H4

Korg MR-1

The next level up from here is the professional field recorders. These units are aimed at location recording for movies and documentaries, ENG (Electronic News Gathering) and music recording. There are two main layouts available; the smaller hand held style or the larger field recorder shape, designed to be slung over the shoulder with a shoulder strap. The things that are common to most of these recorders is they are of a much sturdier build, they have professional microphone inputs (XLR), independent level control and clear metering and, most importantly, professional recording quality. All of these traits make them an ideal choice as a high quality oral history recorder. They start at around \$1000 and go up to tens of thousands of dollars for the very high end recorders, with the average around 2 to 4 thousand dollars.

Some examples of the larger over the shoulder field recorders are:

Fostex FR-2

Marantz PMD 670 & 671

Tascam HD-P2

Sound Devices 722 & 702

And the smaller hand held style

Sony PCM-D1

Fostex FR-2LE

Marantz PMD 660

Laptops are the next area we'll look at and if you wish to go down this path there are many things to consider. The laptop itself needs to be a modern, reliable and powerful laptop that is quiet when it's operating and have a large internal hard drive. You will also need to buy recording software and a quality audio interface because laptops either don't come with recording inputs and software or, if they do, they are generally very low quality. The most important thing to consider is who will be using the equipment and how confident are they with computers. For some people the laptop is a fantastic system that is totally integrated into their workflow while for others they are unwieldy beasts that never behave themselves.

Some good audio interfaces are:

Apogee Mini-Me

Presonus Firebox

Digi-Design M-Box

M-Audio Fast Track

Software:

Windows only software

Wavelab (Studio or essentials)

Adobe Audition

MacOS only software

Logic Studio

Bias Peak

MacOS & Windows

Protools

Adobe Sound booth

Audacity (this is open source freeware)

These software packages and audio interfaces would also be useful for your file handling if you use one of the solid state recorders.

If you've come here to for me to tell you which recorder to buy, I'm sorry, you're out of luck. As you can see there are lots of options available and everyone and every institution will have different needs and budgets. So how do you make the right choice of digital recorder?

- Firstly you need to know what technical specifications do you need? What recording quality and format will you be using? What features does it need to have?
- What peripherals, such as microphones headphones, protective cases and recording media will need to buy? What type of microphones will you be using? What type of connectors do they use and will they need to be powered by the recorder? Can you re-use any of these items from your existing recorders?
- Who will be using the recorder? Will be it used by young or old people and what sort of experience with recording equipment do they have? How many different people will be using the equipment? How often? How will they be trained in the use of the new equipment?
- Where will it be used? Will it only be used in your home, office or institution or will you be travelling with it? And if you do travel, will it just be to the surrounding suburbs or will it be to country towns, interstate, overseas and even into remote areas.
- Finally do you have a file management system that can safely store your very large audio well into the future or will you need to factor this cost into your project?

If you have answers to these questions, you will be able to create a budget that allows you to purchase everything you require and confidently make the right choice of recorder that suits your needs. If it sounds a bit daunting, take heart there are several resources available to help you with this. One great resource is the *Oral History Handbook* by Beth Robertson which has an extensive technical section and references to several excellent websites.

With a bit of preparation and research you should end up with a recorder that suits you and/or your institution, produces clean and clear interviews that are a pleasure to listen to and most importantly a recorder that will last several years. So get to it and make the digital commitment.

(Please note that the recorders and software listed in this paper were current in 2007 and as with any professional or consumer electronics and software packages, the industry is incredibly dynamic. Model names change, feature sets are updated, and some products are discontinued to be replaced by the latest and greatest. Please use this info as a starting point to your own research.)

MUNDY-TAYLOR, JULIE:

UTILISING THE PAL TECHNIQUE: THE POWER OF TRADITIONAL STORYTELLING TO ENCOURAGE ORAL HISTORY RESPONSES – A WORKSHOP

Humans are strong verbal communicators. We have spent millennia perfecting the art of conversation as a means of understanding each other, and of learning each others' life stories. On the other hand the process of the interview is a relatively new phenomenon, and one which, by its very structure, can hamper the exchange of information. When confronted by an interviewer with a set of typed questions, the usual reaction is to want to answer them as efficiently as possible. The wish is not to "waste the person's time."

Yet people have always exchanged ideas through stories, and as Pastorelli points out, stories "continue to remain a record of our memories and other significant experiences. In short they are often the vessel that brings things to life."⁴⁰ People of all ages, in all walks of life, tell stories everyday. In corporate office blocks around the water cooler, in the playground at recess, in the shelter shed at the local tennis court and in university staff rooms. While life in any community would be impoverished without stories, in our society stories are still often considered to be only something to share with children. By looking seriously at this everyday phenomenon of storytelling, we may agree with highly respected storyteller and educator Harold Rosen when he states:

"We might be disposed to take stories much more seriously if we perceived them first and foremost as a product of the predisposition of the human mind to narratize experience and to transform it into findings which as social beings we may share and compare with those of others."⁴¹

There appears to be quite a complicated procedure to conducting the oral history interview. At a one-day workshop held at the State Library of NSW⁴² in May this year, eight double-sided handouts, each outlining practical guidelines for conducting interviews, were distributed to workshop participants. These handouts included a list of appropriate topics for interview questions, a template of possible questions, a prescriptive list of what people can and can't remember and a one page list of interview skills. American researcher and academic, Elliot Mishler has serious concerns about the interview process that stifles

⁴⁰ John Pastorelli, "Interpretation and Stories," *Historic environment* 18, no. 3 (2005): 9.

⁴¹ Harold Rosen, *Stories and Meanings*, Nate Papers in Education (Sheffield: National Association for the Teaching of English, 1985), 12.

⁴² Rosemary Block, "The Practice and Technique of Oral History," in *Oral history goes digital workshop: a demonstration and exploration - and a practical seminar* (State Library of New South Wales: State Library of NSW; Oral History Association of Australia (NSW), 2007).

meaningful communication between the interviewer and the subject. While talking about the research interview in general, it can be argued that Mishler's concerns also apply here.

"I am suggesting that the varied and complex procedures that constitute the core methodology of interview research are directed primarily to the task of making sense of what respondents say when the everyday sources of mutual understanding have been eliminated by the research situation itself."⁴³

Mishler believes that interviewing should be a form of discourse between two people, that is, meaningful and fluent speech. Interviews that rely on a set of specific questions that must be addressed, can impede this flow of communication if not conducted with sensitivity and in a manner that welcomes recollections from the subject.

Strategies, such as the PAL technique that enhance and promote communication, are surely advantageous to oral historians.

Argument about uniformity of questioning and how sharing a story would skew this

Brenner did a study of how many interviewers actually asked the interview schedule question. In analysing the tape-recorded interviews, "only roughly two-thirds of all questions were asked as required. Thus, in all, it is clear, for this survey, that respondents were frequently not presented with equivalent stimuli."⁴⁴

Similar studies that analyse the adaptation of interview questions have been done by Bradburn and Sudman⁴⁵, Cannell, Lawson and Hausser⁴⁶, and Dijkstra, van der Veen and van der Zouwen.⁴⁷

As long ago as the 1950's the problems inherent in the "normal" interview methods were apparent to researchers such as Benney and Hughes.

"Where languages are too diverse, where common values are too few, where the fear of talking to strangers is too great, there the interview based on the standardized questionnaire

⁴³ Elliot G. Mishler, *Research Interviewing : Context and Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 3.

⁴⁴ Michael Brenner, "Response Effects of 'Role-Restricted' Characteristics of the Interviewer," in *Response Behaviour in the Survey Interview*, ed. W. Dijkstra and J. van der Zouwen (New York: Academic Press, 1982), 150.

⁴⁵ Norman M. Bradburn and Seymour Sudman, *Improving Interview Method and Questionnaire Design* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979).

⁴⁶ Charles F. Cannell, Sally A. Lawson, and Doris L. Hausser, *A Technique for Evaluating Interviewer Performance* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Survey Research Centre of the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1975).

⁴⁷ Wil Dijkstra, Lieneke van der Veen, and J. van der Zouwen, "A Field Experiment on Interviewer-Respondent Interaction," in *The Research Interview: Uses and Approaches*, ed. Michael Brenner, Jennifer Brown, and David Canter (New York: Academic Press, 1985).

calling for a few standardized answers may not be applicable. Those who venture into such situations may have to invent new modes of interviewing.”⁴⁸

Techniques that make the interviewee feel comfortable, and encourage a sense of trust or common experience, can help to overcome these “inherent” problems. By sharing a story from their own experience, the interviewer allows a glimpse of their own life, which often encourages others to share their memories.

Problem of interviewer dominance and respondent acquiescence

It has been noted in numerous research studies⁴⁹ that often the interviewer presents the question, restates the answer (demonstrating active listening,) then may redefine the question in an attempt to elicit more information. The respondent in a “successful” interview will answer in a way that pleases the interviewer, and give them the information they anticipated receiving.

This is not an equal sharing of information, and the interviewer always remains the dominant participant. By sharing a story of their own to illustrate a point, the interviewer displays a willingness to open themselves up, and by doing so, hopefully encourages their respondent to do likewise. Storytelling is a method of building rapport and trust. In her book *The story factor*, Annette Simmons details numerous examples of storytelling being used in business and organisations to engender trust.

Everyone, deep down, wants to be proud of their lives and feel like they are important - this is the vein of power and influence that you can access through storytelling.⁵⁰

Sharing a story of your own, shows the respondent that this is a valid form of memory-making, and gives them permission to relate their own narrative.

Explanation of PAL technique.

By incorporating into the oral history interview a technique that encourages relaxed exchanges and a healthy flow of communication, the interview will produce much richer data for the interviewer to analyse. Craig Abrahamson describes people as “homo narrans”⁵¹, story loving beings. All of us, no matter our age, respond to a well-told story. James Gee expands on this idea when he states:

“One of the primary ways – probably *the* primary way – human beings make sense of their experience is by casting it in a narrative form...This is an ability

⁴⁸ Mark Benney and Everett C. Hughes, "Of Sociology and the Interview," *American journal of sociology* 62 (1956): 191.

⁴⁹ Bradburn and Sudman, *Improving Interview Method and Questionnaire Design*.

⁵⁰ Annette Simmons, *The Story Factor*, Revised ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2006), xix.

⁵¹ Craig Eilert Abrahamson, "Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool in Higher Education," *Education* 118, no. 3 (1998).

that develops early and rapidly in children, without explicit training or instruction."⁵²

When groups of adult friends meet, or extended families gather at a special occasion, it can seem as though people are competing to tell their stories, to describe in narrative form what has happened to them recently, or to mutual acquaintances. People often have vivid memories of these types of occasions, because of a relative who was known for their storytelling ability.

Story is its own reality. It is a configuration in memory that is quite independent of the specific details of any given event. We all recognise "story" and are easily able to distinguish between something told that is "storied" and something that is not."⁵³

This sense of the familiar can be comforting to the reluctant subject. If the purpose of the oral history interview is to illicit sustained storytelling rather than short answers, processes that encourage this are essential.

The **PAL** technique is a method of presenting stories that was developed during the course of a five month project as a storyteller in residence at a public school, which formed part of a postgraduate study. **P** signifies personal contexts or introductions to stories, **A** symbolises a treasured artefact to represent the story and **L** indicates a life lesson shared. While children love stories of all types, when the personal significance of a story for the teller was also shared, their responses were markedly more animated and open. The **PAL** technique requires the interviewer to have selected stories from their own repertoire, and come to the interview prepared to share a memory from their own life. As Oral History interviews are usually well prepared lists of questions or topics, appropriate stories can be considered as preparation takes place. By knowing the focus for the interview, the interviewer is able to preselect the appropriate story that will encourage their respondent to share their own stories.

⁵² James P. Gee, "The Narrativization of Experience in the Oral Style," *Journal of education* 167 (1985): 11.

⁵³ Norma J. Livo and Sandra A. Rietz, *Storytelling : Process and Practice* (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1986), 5.

PERSIAN, JAYNE: NEW WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING DP MEMORY

This paper examines memory and commemoration in relation to the 170,000 'Displaced Persons'⁵⁴ (dps) – predominantly Central and Eastern Europeans – who arrived in Australia as IRO-sponsored refugees between 1947 and 1953. These dps were the vanguard of the successful mass European migration programs to Australia, yet the way in which their experiences have been perceived, remembered and commemorated speak largely of dominant national narratives and personal biases. This paper looks at the current state of DP memory in Australia, and suggests new ways of both interpreting story and understanding DP memory.

The term 'Displaced Persons' was created by the Allies during the Second World War to categorise those refugees who were displaced as a result of the war and who were either 'desirous' but 'unable to return to their home' or who were to be returned to 'enemy or ex-enemy territory'.⁵⁵ There were approximately 12 million Displaced Persons at the end of the war, but by 1947 most of these had been repatriated or absorbed into local communities, leaving one million DPs⁵⁶ who refused to return to homelands now under Communist rule. These DPs were also joined periodically by refugees escaping to the West as the Soviet Union increased its power over Central Europe.

The International Refugee Organisation (IRO) administered the Displaced Persons camps in Germany, Austria and Italy, and funded migration to any country willing to accept the DPs as humanitarian refugees or, in actuality, as pliable mass labour. Initially, Australia agreed to resettle 12,000 DPs per year over three years.⁵⁷ The first shipments were made up exclusively of the so-called 'beautiful Balts' until in July 1948 Calwell announced that Australia would accept up to 200,000 DPs.⁵⁸ Australia gradually included individual national groups: Slovenes, Ukrainians, Yugoslavs, Czechs, single Poles, Hungarians, White Russians, Poles with families, Albanians, Romanians, Bulgarians, and then in May 1949 all IRO-categorised Displaced Persons.⁵⁹ Jews were initially excluded, and it is estimated that

⁵⁴ I will use both capitals and lower case throughout this essay to distinguish between the official designation and the later category of DPs who were no longer technically displaced. The use of the capital initials DP is for simplicity. I acknowledge that referring to this disparate group as 'Displaced Persons' is an offensive categorization to some individuals and groups.

⁵⁵ Proudfoot, Malcolm J, *European Refugees: 1939-52, A Study in Forced Population Movement*, Faber and Faber Ltd, London, 1957, p 115.

⁵⁶ Martin, Harry, *Angels and Arrogant Gods: Migration Officers and Migrants Reminisce 1945-85*, Commonwealth of Australia, 1989, p vii.

⁵⁷ Neumann, Klaus, *Refuge Australia: Australia's Humanitarian Record*, University of New South Wales Press Ltd, Sydney, 2004, p 30.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

only 500 Jews were ultimately included in the IRO Program.⁶⁰ Moreover, while Australia was one of the only countries to reluctantly accept family groups, there were quite stringent health, age and dependant requirements for workers and their families.⁶¹

Approximately 170,000 of these IRO-assisted DPs⁶² (70,678 were women)⁶³ from Central and Eastern Europe, speaking 20 languages,⁶⁴ arrived in Australia between 1947 and 1952. They were brought over in shipping organized by the IRO⁶⁵ and admitted to the country on a Certificate of Exemption (from the standard dictation test), rather than permanent residency, so that they could be deported if found undesirable.⁶⁶ They were then sent to reception camps before being assigned to placements for a compulsory two-year work contract, of which only mothers with young children were exempt.⁶⁷ Upon arrival, the men were categorized as 'labourers' and the women as 'domestics', with little attempt to match up qualifications or prior experience with job vacancies, and no attempt to keep family groups together.⁶⁸ The DPs were sent as unskilled labour to heavy industry, public utilities including projects such as the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Program, agricultural work, and domestic and hospital work, including work at mental hospitals. For their two-year

⁵⁹ Kunz, Egon F, *Displaced Persons: Calwell's New Australians*, Australian National University Press, Sydney, 1988, p 45.

⁶⁰ Rutland, Suzanne D, 'Intermeshing Archival and Oral Sources: Unraveling the Story of Jewish Survivor Immigration to Australia', in A James Hammerton and Eric Richards, *Speaking to Immigrants: Oral Testimony and the History of Australian Migration*, Visible Immigrants: Six, History Program and Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Flinders University Press, Adelaide, 2002, p 141.

⁶¹ Neumann, *op cit*, pp 32-33.

⁶² Approximately 20,000 other DPs arrived in Australia under the auspices of private organizations. Murphy, Brian, *The Other Australia: Experiences of Migration*, Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK, 1993, p 128.

⁶³ Jordens, Ann-Mari, *Alien to Citizen: Settling Migrants in Australia, 1945-75*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards NSW, Published in association with the Australian Archives, 1997, p 61.

⁶⁴ Jupp, James, *Arrivals and Departures*, Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1966, p 173.

⁶⁵ The Australian government paid the IRO £10 for each DP to compensate for the extra distance the ships traveled to Australia. Some DPs erroneously thought that the government had paid the whole cost of shipping, which was to be paid off by the DP in their two-year work contract.

⁶⁶ Jordens, Ann-Mari, 'The Impact of War on Civilians: Australia's Involvement in Refugee Resettlement, 1947-52', *Canberra Historical Journal*, March 2003, p 27.

⁶⁷ These dependents of male workers were kept at holding centers and the worker was responsible for this rent as well as his own hostel rent.

⁶⁸ Maximilian Brändle notes that a husband could be employed as a building worker for the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Program while his wife was sent to work in a hospital in Melbourne. Brändle, Maximilian, *Refugee Destination Queensland*, Multicultural Writers & Arts Friendship Society (Qld), Kangaroo Point Qld, 1999, p 17.

placements, they lived in such varied accommodation as workers' hostels, tents and concrete barracks.⁶⁹ The whole Program was administered by the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES), which was set up precisely for this purpose, and the government also provided a limited number of social workers and translators.

Historiography

In a recent article commenting on the transnational historiography of displaced persons from the Second World War, G Daniel Cohen notes that a 'DP lull' in academic writing between the 1950s and the 1990s was 'only one aspect of the broader disappearance of displaced persons from the scope of public memory'. However, a revival, or resurrection, of 'DP memory' over the past fifteen years has been led by academics interested in migration, labour recruitment and political asylum, and first and second-generation displaced persons,⁷⁰ either as émigré historians or community keepers of memory.⁷¹

In Australia, the most comprehensive history of the Program was written by Egon F Kunz, himself a DP, and published as *Displaced Persons: Calwell's New Australians*. Kunz uses national and international archival documents and statistical sources,⁷² including Jerzy Zubrzycki's 10 per Survey,⁷³ to thoroughly detail aspects of the DPs, particularly their origins, integration and occupational achievements. Kunz describes the different 'vintages' of the various DPs, examining country of origin, political leanings, class, gender, education, occupation, and motivations for leaving their home country in very specific historical contexts. This valuable information uniquely explains the heterogeneity and disparity of experience of this mass group of displaced persons.

Kunz's research regarding the DPs' lives post-settlement is heavily biased towards questions of education and status rather than, say, trauma or cultural transmission. Indeed, Kunz's main focus and criticism of the Program is that the government made no attempt to match the displaced persons' educational qualifications with work placements, and that there were many barriers to prevent former professionals working in their profession in Australia. This criticism, while a valid and important point, is also a personal attack, as Kunz himself

⁶⁹ Wilton, Janis, and Bosworth, Richard, *Old Worlds and New Australia: The Post-War Migrant Experience*, Penguin Books Australia, Ringwood Vic, 1984, p 114.

⁷⁰ Cohen, G Daniel, 'From Omission to Resurrection: Displaced Persons in Collective Memories 1945-2000', in Rainer Ohliger (ed), *Troubled and Contested Memories*, Francia [Forschungen zur westeuropaischen Geschichte], Stuttgart, 2006, pp 3-4.

⁷¹ *ibid*, pp 11-12.

⁷² A variety of published and unpublished statistics were used, including special runs of occupational cross-tabulations of the 1966 Census separating arrival cohorts and educational background provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Kunz, *op cit*, p xx.

⁷³ A 10% Survey of Nominal Rolls of IRO Transports coded and cross-tabulating the characteristics shown against the name of every tenth DP on the shipping lists and flight manifests. Kunz, *op cit*, p xx.

was representative of the highly educated, 'status conscious' Hungarian DPs,⁷⁴ rather than the 70% of the DPs who had minimal education and possessed basic skills.⁷⁵

While Kunz's work is the most comprehensive history of the DP Program available, Kunz neglects to examine and empathise with the wide range of DP experience and confines himself to the fairly narrow themes of 'status', 'occupational achievements' and 'success'. Themes of trauma, family, gender, migration, ethnic identity and cultural transmission are ignored.

The rise in popularity of social and oral histories, particularly within the framework of celebratory multiculturalism with its focus on migration history and ethnicity, provided a forum in which to initiate nationality-specific histories⁷⁶ and community histories. This usually meant government or institution-initiated museums and oral history projects centred around reception centre communities or nationality groups.⁷⁷ In addition, memoirs and semi-autobiographical accounts by displaced persons and their children began to proliferate in the 1990s.⁷⁸ Personal and family insights available from memoirs, fictionalized accounts by DPs⁷⁹ and oral histories are simply not available from any other source, and provide a goldmine of information for historians.

DP Memory

G Daniel Cohen has identified a lack of collective identity and historical agency as the reason why DP memory 'almost entirely disappeared from the radar of public memory'⁸⁰

⁷⁴ *ibid*

⁷⁵ *ibid*, p 168.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Birškys, Betty and Antanas, Putniņš, Aldis L, and Salasoo, Inno, *The Baltic Peoples in Australia: Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians*, Australian Ethnic Heritage Series, Australasian Educa Press, Melbourne, 1986; and Lencznarowicz, Jan, 'Polish Displaced Persons in Australia after World War II – political refugees or economic immigrants? The symbolic construction of the emigrant community's identity' in Olavi Koivunkangas and Charles Westin (eds), *Scandinavian and European Migration to Australia and New Zealand: Proceedings of the conference held in Stockholm, Sweden, and Turku, Finland, June 9-11, 1998*, Migration Studies C 13, CEIFO Publications No 81, Institute of Migration, Turku, Finland, 1999, 215-227.

⁷⁷ For example, The Polish-Australian Oral History Project at the National Library of Australia.

⁷⁸ Vladimir Lezak Borin was the first to write a fictionalized account of his experiences in 1959 entitled *The Uprooted Survive: A Tale of Two Continents*, William Heinemann, London.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Ale Liubinas, *Under Eucalypts: Stories of Migrant Struggles*, Fosbee P/L Australia, Ascot Vale, Vic, 2001; and Diane Armstrong, *The Voyage of Their Life: The Story of the SS Derna and its Passengers*, Harper Collins Publishers, Sydney, 2001.

⁸⁰ Cohen, *op cit*, p 6.

before its recent 'rescue from historical forgetting'.⁸¹ The lack of collective identity, in particular, is still an obstacle to understanding DP memory, as Cohen notes:

The multifaceted reappropriation of the DP past indicates that even in the case of transnational migrants, commemoration rarely transgresses, if at all, the boundaries of national remembrance.⁸²

Another obstacle is the traumatic experiences historians are attempting to recover.⁸³ Peter Novick points out that most of the victims that were liberated from Nazism were not Jews, but political prisoners and slave labourers.⁸⁴ Many of these slave labourers joined the ranks of the Displaced Persons who immigrated to countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia. Although not all DPs suffered trauma of this type, Edward Said has described an 'essential sadness [that] can never be surmounted' inherent in the refugee experience.⁸⁵ Peter I Rose has further explained:

They don't want to be haunted by memories of persecution, wrenching decisions about leaving family, friends, and familiar surroundings, the ordeal of expulsion or escape, the anomic limbo where familiar rules have been torn asunder and normal responses to stress no longer obtain, constant thoughts of those who were and what was left behind, the frustrations of existence in foreign environs, and the uncertainty of future prospects, including fading dreams of going home. But they are. And that is what distinguishes the dispossessed from all other migrants.⁸⁶

While dealing with such problematic memories, Novick notes:

Survivors were constantly told that they should turn their faces forward, not backward; that it was in their interest, insofar as possible, to forget the past and proceed to build new lives.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Cohen, *op cit*, p 11.

⁸² Cohen, *op cit*, p 15.

⁸³ See, for example, Christoph Thonfeld, 'The shaping of memory: individual, group and collective patterns of recollection of slave and forced labour for National Socialist Germany', *Dancing with memory: oral history and its audiences*, Conference proceedings, 14th International Oral History Conference, 2006.

⁸⁴ Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1999, p 65.

⁸⁵ Said in Suvin, Darko, 'Displaced Persons', *New Left Review*, 31, January-Feb 2005, p 116.

⁸⁶ Rose, Peter I, 'Introduction' in Rose, Peter I (ed), *The Dispossessed: An Anatomy of Exile*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst & Boston, 2005, p 4.

⁸⁷ Novick, *op cit*, p 83.

This was also Australia's attitude when accepting the displaced persons. In recent decades, however, government and institution-initiated oral history collections and DP memoir have been invaluable in beginning to construct a picture of DP memory.

Kateryna Olijnyk Longley, herself a child DP from Ukraine, has emphasized the importance an examination of memory in this context can be in her study of her family's oral history. Although stories told by the DPs 'were simply not welcome in Australia',⁸⁸ Longley believes that the telling of these stories is psychologically important and is a significant freedom available to the DPs.⁸⁹ They are 'drawn by the past, however appalling its memories might be, because there at least some semblance of stability can be achieved by packaging the past as a set of rehearsed stories'. This storytelling is a 'way of forcing attention on the bodily experience of suffering, which is obscured by historical narrative's smooth stylizing gestures'.⁹⁰ A 're-narration of the past' assists in rendering it 'bearable, speakable and containable as a basis for building the future'.⁹¹

Longley thus introduces oral history as an important part of any study examining cultural transmission, memory and commemoration. Unfortunately, however, the oral history that exists in Australia has, with few exceptions, been collated rather than analysed. Although an important gathering of primary source material, there is a need for an examination of the oral history collections and DP memoir, as well as the initiation of new oral history studies, with a view to examining the relationships between private, group and national stories in the specific context of DP migration and settlement.

Glenda Sluga has written on memory and commemoration in a history of the largest reception camp. *Bonegilla: A Place of No Hope* relies on both archival information and interviews and engages with the symbol that is 'Bonegilla', both for migrant ex-residents and the broader Australian community. Sluga quotes a poem by Peter Skrzynecki:

Except for what memory recalls
there is nothing to commemorate our arrival –
no plaques, no names carved on trees,
nothing officially recorded
of parents and children that lived beside
the dome-shaped, khaki coloured hills

⁸⁸ Longley, Kateryna Olijnyk, 'Remembering Rublivka: life stories from lost worlds', *Life Writing*, Vol 1, No 1, 2004, p 116.

⁸⁹ *ibid*, p 114.

⁹⁰ *ibid*, p 113.

⁹¹ *ibid*, p 112.

and the red-dust road that ran between Parkes and Sydney.⁹²

Sluga describes this search for order out of chaos as a 'migrant dreaming', or popular history, which is 'created out of and against the existence of an official version in which it is granted no status or social meaning'.⁹³ In this way, commemorative sites become:

An antidote to the restlessness of the exile, driven by the experience to give the migrants back an understanding of their history, of which they had been ignorant carriers and victims, but about which they are now teaching themselves.⁹⁴

Rather than just being *about* and/or *for* migrants, Sluga argues that giving migrants' lives a historical context and space for commemoration works as 'participatory dialogue' to create a 'synthesis of intercultural knowledge'.⁹⁵ Interestingly, there has been no examination of the totality of commemoration in relation to the discrete group of Displaced Persons.

New Ways of Understanding DP Memory

Using an oral history methodology, new ways of teasing out themes of intergenerational and intercultural transmission are needed, with a new focus on the memory and transmission involved in 'individual and family lives'.⁹⁶ This follows Glenda Sluga's notion of a 'migrant dreaming' and Kateryna Longley's emphasis on recovering 'life stories from lost worlds', as well as integrating Janis Wilton and Richard Bosworth's concern with 'the small and beautiful'⁹⁷ – themes such as personal trauma and relationships with(in) family, culture and community – with the wider themes of national narrative, memory and commemoration.

New ways of understanding memory in relation to Displaced Persons should particularly encompass all levels of individual, family,⁹⁸ community and national stories. I hope to

⁹² Sluga, Glenda, *Bonegilla: 'A Place of No Hope'*, University of Melbourne, Parkville Vic, 1988, p 135. 'Migrant Centre Site, Orange Rd Parkes' by Peter Skryznecki.

⁹³ *ibid*, p 133.

⁹⁴ Sluga, 'Bonegilla and Migrant Dreaming', in Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton (eds), *Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994, p 203.

⁹⁵ *ibid*, p 205.

⁹⁶ Richards, Eric, 'Hearing Voices: An Introduction', in A James Hammerton and Eric Richards, *Speaking to Immigrants: Oral Testimony and the History of Australian Migration*. Visible Immigrants: Six, History Program and Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University. Flinders University Press, Adelaide, 2002, p 2.

⁹⁷ Wilton and Bosworth, *op cit*, p 37.

⁹⁸ Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson comment on the 'surprisingly little work by historians on family transmission' in Bertaux, Daniel, and Thompson, Paul, 'Introduction', in Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson (eds), *Between Generations: Family Models, Myths, and Memories*. International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories, Volume II, Oxford University Press, 1993, p 9.

present a specific study of 'the vast structure of recollection'⁹⁹ in an Australian context as called for by historians such as Sara Wills, who has noted a challenge to 'Australian historians to produce histories based as much on the fact of migrancy as the myth of nation', and in doing so, to provide 'scope for the remembrance of loss, disinheritance and the lack of a sense of belonging'.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Proust in Read, Peter, *Returning to Nothing: The Meaning of Lost Places*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p 201.

¹⁰⁰ Wills, Sara, 'Unstitching the Lips of a Migrant Nation', *Australian Historical Studies*, 118, 2002, p 71.

PETTY, BRUCE: YANKS AND KIWIS IN THE PACIFIC WAR

I have written three books on World War II in the Pacific, using both oral history and archival research, and have recently completed a fourth titled, "New Zealand in the Pacific War: Personal Accounts of World War II." In addition to archival research, I have interviewed both Americans who were in New Zealand during the war, and New Zealanders, both veterans of the Pacific War and civilians from the home front; and have included oral histories of New Zealanders who were born to American servicemen.

Both the archival research and the personal stories in this book will give a multidimensional picture of wartime New Zealand, and it will also show how New Zealand and the United States came to know each other, not only as nations, but also as individuals. Although many New Zealanders from that time remember this coming of young American fighting men to New Zealand with some nostalgia, it is also the source of unhappy memories for others, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this paper.

In many of the oral histories, the war appears as little more than a backdrop to lives lived during that epic-making drama known as WWII. The stories are about family life, about loss, about newfound friends and relationships, life before, during and after the war, and how Maori and Pakeha viewed themselves relative to each other both then and now. It is also about New Zealand and American fighting men serving along side each other in the Solomon Islands.

The inspiration for this book came in the early part of 2001, when I interviewed a retired Australian naval officer for my book, "At War in the Pacific." Mac, as he likes to be called--trained to do things the British Navy way--had to learn almost overnight how to do things the U.S. Navy way. It wasn't simply the fact that Mac had to learn to do things a different way--the U.S. Navy way--that inspired me to do this book; it was the realization that most books written about the war in the Pacific, and published in the U.S., give little credit or coverage to contributions made by Allied forces. Certainly Gen. Douglas MacArthur, commander of allied forces in what came to be known as the South-West Pacific Theater, gave Australian forces little credit for what they did while under his command. And as I have discovered from the many books that I have read on the subject of the war in the Pacific--most all of them researched and written by American historians--few give much attention to the contributions made by America's allies. Names of ships and units are sometimes mentioned almost in passing, such as when a Dutch, British, Australian, or New Zealand ship was sunk in battle or hit by a kamikaze.

Other examples can also be given of other Allied countries, such as the Dutch efforts very early in the war, the British Pacific Fleet later in the war--after Germany had surrendered--the Filipinos throughout the war in which they suffered from Japanese occupation and destruction, and the Chinese in keeping millions of Japanese troops tied down on the Asian mainland and out of combat in the Pacific.

As I discovered, most if not all books written about New Zealand in World War II were published in New Zealand. That suggested to me that few people outside of New Zealand bought and read any of these books unless they had some dedicated reason for doing so.

On the contrary, many books researched, written and published in the U.S. and Britain on the subject of World War II can be readily found in New Zealand libraries and bookstores. Put another way, New Zealanders know a lot more about the U.S. role in World War II than Americans know about New Zealand's role.

With the above in mind, and having a publisher in the United States decidedly interested in my project to tell the story of New Zealand's participation in the war in the Pacific, I think for the first time the story of this small nation's contribution and sacrifice will have an audience beyond its borders.

When the United States entered the war following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the war in the Pacific became a U.S. theater of war. All forces in that theater came under U.S. command. The Pacific Theater of Operations was divided between Gen. Douglas MacArthur of the U.S. Army in the South-West Pacific Command, and Adm. Chester Nimitz of the U.S. Navy took charge of the rest of the Pacific area, which included New Zealand.

Both Australia and New Zealand felt especially vulnerable after Japan entered the war because so many of their young fighting men were off helping the British in their struggle against Nazi Germany. The population of New Zealand at this time was only around 1.6 million, and like Australia and the U.S. during the early days of the war, New Zealand forces had little in the way of armaments with which to defend themselves, and most of what they had was in the form of antiquated arms left over from the First World War and before.

New Zealand sent troops to Fiji, Tonga, and other islands that they saw as a buffer to a possible Japanese invasion. The U.S. likewise fearing a Japanese invasion of Fiji, Tonga or Samoa, started sending U.S. forces to these islands, knowing that if they were taken and held by Japan, then the supply route between the U.S. and Australia and New Zealand would be jeopardized.

Similarly, U.S. military personnel were being sent to Australia and New Zealand in an effort to assuage the fears of those two countries of a Japanese invasion, while at the same time making it possible to allow New Zealand and Australian forces to continue fighting alongside the British in the Middle East. Within four months of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, there were well over 100,000 American military personnel serving south of the equator. The U.S. Thirty-seventh Division was sent to Fiji (and later to Auckland), and U.S. Marines were sent to Samoa. In turn, these two nations in the southern hemisphere would serve as supply bases and launching pads for the sea and land counteroffensive that would take place against Imperial Japan in mid 1942.

Following the naval battles in the Coral Sea in May 1942, and Midway shortly thereafter--in June--New Zealand and Australia both had reason to relax as far as fear of any possible Japanese invasion. The First Marine Division, under Maj. Gen. Alexander Vandergrift, was eventually sent to New Zealand to prepare for and combat-load their ships for the first ground counteroffensive of the war in the Pacific by American forces--Guadalcanal. Elements of the Second Marine Division, most of which went directly to the Solomon Islands from California, also joined in the fight that was to last the better part of six months.

By mid-1943, elements of the Third New Zealand Division (3rd NZ Div.), minus one brigade, were serving alongside U.S. Army troops on Guadalcanal, and thousands of RNZAF

personnel were likewise serving with American forces in the same theater, and had been since early in the campaign. Most all of their aircraft were U.S. built, such as Corsair fighters, Venturas, and PBY Catalinas. At the same time, there were thousands of Americans serving in New Zealand. This included two Marine Corps divisions, several U.S. Army divisions, and U.S. Navy and Air Force personnel. However, by October/November 1943, the number of Americans in New Zealand began a rapid decline, as the Second Marine Division—including survivors of Guadalcanal--moved out for the invasion of Tarawa, and the war in general moved north.

In April 1944, Silverstream Hospital in Wellington, built by and for U.S. military personnel, was turned over to New Zealand, and in October of that year the U.S. Naval base in Auckland was closed. That same month, the 3rd NZ Div. was officially disbanded, with some of the men sent to Italy to reinforce the 2nd NZ Division that had been fighting alongside their British counterparts since the early days of the war. The remaining veterans of the 3rd NZ Div. filled gaps in “essential industries,” such as agriculture.

What has been described as “The Friendly Invasion,” of New Zealand by American forces was in fact just that. Very few New Zealanders had ever met an American before they landed suddenly on their doorstep in 1942, and most of the Americans who came here had never even heard of New Zealand. Most New Zealanders I interviewed for this book said that before the marines arrived, about all they knew about the U.S. came from Hollywood—cowboys and gangsters.

Young New Zealand--and not so young New Zealand--girls found new excitement with the arrival of so many young and seemingly exotic Americans on their shores—polite young men with dollars to spend who courted New Zealand girls with flowers, chocolates and now out-of-fashion nylon stockings. Mothers and fathers, who worried about sons they had not seen for so long, took in U.S. Marines, sailors and soldiers, and gave them a home away from home. Most of these young Americans were teenagers. Some had lied about their age in order to get into the fight, and an America desperate for men to fill the ranks in a war of national survival turned a blind eye in too many cases. Some of these American fighting men were as young as thirteen and fourteen, and would die before they were old enough to shave. They were away from home for the first time, many of them; and they were frightened and homesick. Young or not, they found a second home in New Zealand. Families signed up to take in American servicemen for an evening, a weekend, or even several weeks. Those who wanted to work on a farm in the New Zealand outback when they were on leave could do so. In some cases, American servicemen simply latched on to a local family and an unofficial adoption took place, especially if eligible young girls were part of the family make-up. No matter how you look at it, Kiwis and Yanks fell in love with each other. It was a new and exciting adventure for all involved.

However, it was not all sweetness and light. Many New Zealand parents were not happy with the more carefree dalliances going on between American servicemen and New Zealand women. There were unplanned pregnancies and hushed-up abortions. There were children born out of wedlock with promises of marriage that too often never came about, sometimes because the fathers were killed in combat. In other scenarios the fathers simply failed to

return to New Zealand after the war to take responsibility, and instead started second families in the States.

After Guadalcanal had been declared secure, except for mopping up, U.S. Marines of the Second Marine Division arrived in New Zealand to hook up with the rest of the division that had not yet been bloodied. Most of them were sick with malaria and other tropical diseases. Some went to Silverstream Hospital in Wellington, and/or were taken in by families from all parts of New Zealand and nursed back to health. As a result, friendships were made that have lasted to this day, and in some cases involve several generations, as families have stayed in touch and exchanged visits.

By the war's end, over 1,400 New Zealand girls had married American servicemen. Some of these marriages lasted a lifetime, while others ended in divorce. Some New Zealand girls went off to the U.S. to start new lives and never returned. And in other cases, American servicemen elected to stay in New Zealand. And those Americans who did not marry New Zealand girls started coming back to New Zealand in the 1960s for reunions, to reconnect with friends and families they had not seen since the war; and in some cases to look up old girlfriends. War may have been hell, but time spent in New Zealand before and after island battles was heaven.

As pointed out above, although the story of these two nations coming together and discovering each other for the first time might be viewed as a love fest, there were problems. The main problem was women. Most of New Zealand's eligible men had been gone for three years or longer when the first U.S. servicemen arrived on New Zealand shores. The women were doing most of the farm work, as well as taking care of families and working in other industries. There wasn't much excitement for them, certainly little or no romance. When the Americans arrived all of that changed. There were dances, parties, weekend barbecues, sex and even romance. Of course, all of this filtered back to the New Zealand troops serving overseas in the form of letters from friends and family, and even Dear John letters from girlfriends, and in some cases wives.

Some of the longer serving veterans of New Zealand's Second Division started coming home in 1943 on furloughs, and they were not happy to be greeted by walls of sailors, soldiers and green-uniformed U.S. Marines, who apparently had a monopoly on New Zealand girls. A combination of alcohol and jealousy resulted in any number of fights and near riots.

Racism on the part of American forces added to the conflagration. The U.S. military was segregated at this time, and when members of the Maori Battalion came home on leave they were not about to put up with racist remarks from White U.S. Marines and sailors. A potentially explosive situation that could have become even more serious was calmed by the intervention of Maori elders, especially the likes of Princess Te Puea, who helped soften American attitudes by organizing Marae visits, where Americans came to learn and understand Maori culture, and know Maori as individuals.

It didn't take long before Maori girls, like their Pakeha (non-Maori) counterparts, took an interest in all the young American men suddenly made available to them. Like other New Zealanders, men of the Maori Battalion had been overseas for almost three years.

There were other problems besides women and racism, but they were minor in comparison. For example, the dockworkers, known as “Wharfies,” were a powerful unionized group in New Zealand before, during and for some time after WWII. When Maj. Gen. Vandergrift was preparing to land U.S. forces in the Solomon Islands from their jump-off point in New Zealand, the Wharfies refused to combat-load his ships because their union agreement stipulated that they didn’t have to work in the rain. And even after U.S. military officials had come to a wartime agreement with the union regarding some of the finer points of their union contract there were still instances when the Wharfies refused to work in the rain or during holidays. On one occasion in 1943, 180 of them were arrested for refusing to load or unload ships.

Also, throughout the war years, both U.S. military and New Zealand civilian police were kept busy rounding up American deserters, who preferred life in New Zealand to combat in the Pacific. The official count was 190 at one time, and in the process of rounding these men up they were surprised to find an American sailor who had jumped ship in New Zealand twenty years earlier.

Unlike my other books on World War II in the Pacific, this book might best be described as World War II Light. My subjects in this book, but not all of them, deal less with the killing and suffering that mark so heavily a war that took tens of millions of lives. The war in many of these personal narratives is almost a backdrop. For parents in New Zealand, the war was the same as for parents in the United States and other parts of the world. It was a time of anxiety and waiting, hoping sons would survive and come home. For some young men and women, however, it was a time of adventure and romance.

Those who survived, returning home was a time of deafening quiet, to pick up where they had left off, get married, raise families, and make a living. The killing and suffering were behind them, but for many so was the thrill of an adventure few of them would ever have again.

RYAN, PAT:
**SEARCHING FOR ADAM AND EVE: HOW ORAL AND FAMILY
HISTORY CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY
IDENTITY ACROSS INTERGENERATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
BOUNDARIES**

Genealogical research, family history, and the growth of family trees are areas of widespread interest in recent years. A number of factors have contributed to the rise of activity in ancestor research in Australia, particularly the high rate of migration to Australia since European settlement began and the documentation that accompanied those migrations, particularly the passenger lists, land title searches, occupations, and of course the convict lists. However, within individual and families there is also the rich seam of oral history whose nuanced themes, intriguing details and shadowy ancestral presences prompt more detailed investigation.

The need to know can be impelled by many present imperatives such as an unforeseen and otherwise inexplicable family illness, or just purely by the human need to know: where did that colour eye/hair/skin originate? Why do certain names or occupations recur across generations?

For the purposes of this article I will concentrate on a number of family examples to illustrate some of the steps taken along the way to discovering the ancestors. I should also mention in passing that my own background is Irish and the examples used relate to Australia and Ireland – a country where, until the second half of the last century, genealogy solely concerned returning Irish Americans searching for their roots, and of little interest to the locals whose extended families, the living and the dead, were all around the locality.

Gathering Australia

A small item in a country newspaper advertising a family reunion in a country Queensland town sparked my interest. The article described how three brothers arriving from Ireland in the 1880's had started a family tree that had taken firm root across a rural district. The descendants were gathering to commemorate the ancestral journey of migration and their shared ancestral heritage.

The family name interested me for personal reasons and, given my involvement with oral history and community radio, I was intrigued enough to follow up on the contact given in the newspaper. Perhaps one of the organisers would be interested in an interview?

So much in this world hangs on our ability as human being to communicate with each other. How would someone respond, I wondered, to a cold call from a stranger claiming an interest in family surnames and enquiring about their family reunion, particularly in an age when telemarketers call at tea time from distant parts of the world? The response I got was full of warmth, generosity and genuine interest.

At this point in our story it is worth noting the introductory protocols and rituals that led to the first face-to-face contact. There were several steps to the process that involved careful probing and checking of our mutual credentials. The contact named in the newspaper article was the first person to be contacted by telephone. An older lady, she listened thoughtfully to the request for an interview. She seemed pleased but wanted to first check with another family member - the initiator of the family reunion who traced the family tree and shook out the various branches.

Now it should be explained here that in most Irish families (and I imagine in most human families) there is a powerful elder figure, usually though not always - but usually a woman. One word from this person means acceptance or rejection by the rest of the family. Everything hung on this next telephone call. A firm, clear voice speaking in a crisp decisive manner answered the phone. Names of relatives were exchanged; places of origin in Ireland were explored. We managed to establish there was no direct family relationship between us but agreed that somewhere back along the ancestral trail our paths must have crossed, as all Irish surnames derive from a common ancestor, hence the derivative O's and Mac's.

She liked the idea of an interview but would I and my husband come to the reunion first, the family would like to meet us? The planned reunion would involve mass and lunch at the church hall afterwards.

So it was that on a hot spring day that we pulled up outside the Catholic Church, a sandstone building with a soaring spire dating from the 1950's alongside its more humble predecessor of the 1880s that crouched in its shadow. We were a little early so we dropped into the old church which had been converted into a museum. The photographs, newspaper articles, priests' vestments, old pews, banners from St Patrick's Day parades, baptism, First Communion and wedding photographs, all traced the steady rise of an Irish Catholic community which seemed to have reached it's apogée in the 1960's and then stopped in its tracks.

We got talking to the women in charge of the museum and quickly established their family relationship to the two women on the telephone. More pieces of the puzzle clicked into place.

Cultural, religious significance of objects

We joined the trickle of people heading towards the mass and were greeted on the front steps by the women we had spoken to on the telephone – a lively eighty two year old with intelligent, enquiring, light blue eyes -and her sixty year old cousin. We chose a pew at the rear of the church, allowing close family members the seats closest to the front. As the time for the mass drew near the church began to fill up rapidly until, to our surprise, the congregation numbered in the hundreds. Could there really be that many descendants from just three brothers?

The mass book was entitled Mass of Thanksgiving for the family reunion and featured the family crest, a Celtic cross with entwined knot work and tiny garlands of shamrocks, the standard cultural and religious symbolism for Irish gatherings. The significance of the

religious symbolism to this particular gathering deepened as the ceremony progressed. Prayers were offered in thanksgiving for the 'pioneers of the...family' and their example of 'faith and perseverance to carry on the rich traditions that began with them,' and for the 'blessings and good times the...descendants have enjoyed, and for the encouragement and support we have received from each other.' The prayers went on to reach out beyond the immediate group gathered in the church to 'our relatives in Ireland' and to those not able to attend the reunion so that 'they would be embraced by all those present and not feel isolated in their lives.' The two central themes of the reunion were expressed in these prayers: thanksgiving for the good life that flowed from the decision to emigrate from Ireland to Australia, and reaching out to embrace the wider, international branches of the family.

In a nutshell this is the essence of the concept of extended family life, of the traditional clan system of the 'old country,' a system in which strong yet often invisible threads bind together people of common ancestry; of shared cultural, traditional and religious belief, yet sufficiently flexible to admit new members and even the odd strays like myself who stumble into it.

The central point of any Catholic mass is the Liturgy of the Eucharist which is marked by the offering of gifts, quite often carried by children in slow procession from the back of the church, through the central aisle to the awaiting priest at the front of the church. In this case the elder members of the family, including the senior women who organised the event, carried the gifts which comprised a candle, bread, wine, a sprig of shamrock, potatoes, the family book and the family crest.

To understand the symbolic, cultural and religious significance of each of these items it is necessary to understand a little of their historical significance to an Irish family.

Historical significance of objects

The candle has a long association with Christianity as a symbol of the light in the darkness, a metaphor for the concept that inner or spiritual light dispelled the inner darkness associated with a life without spirituality or self insight. This imagery is also central to the mythology surrounding St Patrick, legendary early bishop of Ireland who reputedly converted Ireland to Christianity and challenged the central authority of the Druids by publicly lighting a great fire on a prominent hill on the one evening in the year when the lighting of all fires was banned by the Druids. Candles were also central to the household economy and were used to give light to read and work by until well into the twentieth century. Finally - and importantly to our story - former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, famously placed a lighted candle in the window of the President's official residence in Ireland as a sign to emigrants that they were welcome 'home' to Ireland; a sign itself loaded with traditional Irish religious symbolism kept alive by the custom of placing a decorated, lighted candle in a window of the family home to welcome travellers on Christmas Eve in remembrance of the biblical Joseph and Mary forced to seek shelter in a stable where the Christ-child was born.

Bread and wine are central to Christian theology as are their association with life-giving food - food for the body, food for the soul.

The shamrock is probably the most internationally recognised Irish symbol and is widely used in advertising everything from clothes to pubs. Sprigs of shamrock are worn in Ireland

on the lapel on St Patrick's Day to commemorate St Patrick who reputedly used the three leafed plant to explain the Christian concept of three god-heads in one God - the idea of the trinity - to the pagan Irish.

Of all the symbols on the day possibly the most poignant in Irish experience is the potato – symbol of enslavement, giver of life, dealer of death. The English peer Sir Walter Raleigh introduced the potato to his Irish estates as a cheap crop that grew easily in the wet soil and temperate climate of Ireland. It became the staple food of the dispossessed Irish agricultural labouring class who existed in a marginal hand-to-mouth subsistence economy which failed completely - and some would argue predictably - under the dual pressures of phytophthora infestans, a spoor that blighted the potato plant in mid nineteenth century Ireland, and a foreign and uninformed Government whose political and economic policies favoured the notion that market forces will sort everything out, and they did so with such frightful consequences for the population of Ireland that the haemorrhage of emigration did not cease until the late twentieth century. The population of Ireland halved in a matter of a couple of years in the mid nineteenth century, an experience unique in post Napoleonic Europe. Men and women emigrated in equal proportions, also unique in European history (in most other countries greater numbers of young men than women emigrated). This fact is significant to Australian history and to our story since hundreds of thousands of young Irish men and women came to Australia. It was out of this immediate past history and social experience that our three Adams arrived in Queensland, took up land, married Irish women and raised families. In time, they were joined by other members of their family from Ireland, including some single women who married men of other nationalities, predominantly from northern European countries. They brought new languages, cultures and traditions into the family. The growing diversity in the second and third generations of migrants was reflected in list of names in the final gift, the family book.

Family significance of objects

The family book was the product of many hours of research by the elder women of the family; hours spent in the State Library and Queensland archives trawling through passenger lists, land grants, title deeds and public service professions. The book was also the repository for many hours of conversations between generations of grandmothers and grandchildren, representing many hours spent in each others company checking family relationships and other details, identifying family photographs, naming and dating places, people and events that shaped the family's life in Australia. As each new generation was born another name was added to the book. Indeed, on the day of the reunion there were two new names to be added to the book. The names in the book reflected the national, cultural and linguistic diversity of European settlement in Queensland – names from many European countries but also others indicating origins in parts of Asia and the Pacific interwoven with the primary migration from Ireland.

In his address to the assembled family the priest spoke about their faith, commitment to each other, to their community and to their church. The powerful interweaving of family lore and religious and cultural tradition was not lost on anyone present in the church.

After the mass the family business began in earnest in the church hall. Lunch was spread out here and when everyone was seated the elder women addressed the crowd,

encouraging everyone to inspect the historic items on display – family photos, newspaper articles featuring the family and places associated with it, personal and household items, records kept either by the family or sourced from the public records in Ireland and Australia. Old books, pieces of fading linen, polished silver plate glowing with the patina of age were gently caressed and lovingly passed from one hand to another, deepening the sense of sacredness and remembrance of past generations. Messages of support from distant family members, Clán associations in both Ireland and Australia were relayed to the gathering. There were many children present, their blue eyes, red hair and fair skin seemingly misplaced in the 30 degree heat. Apparently distracted by each other and the games they were playing, they were also immersed in history that was at once intensely personal yet within an international context. As an example of community engagement it could not be faulted by a social scientist.

That strong sense of family, community and belonging is in itself a reasonable explanation of why four hundred people might assemble on any given Sunday to commemorate three Irish men who migrated from Ireland in search of a better life. The family explanation is that if you follow the thread of their name back through the several generations of Australian-born members of the family, including those of different cultural background, you arrive at the same point – the three Adams, the progenitors from Ireland. It is not that the others are any less important, or unworthy of research in themselves (and that will soon be underway), it is that with these three, the Australian trail ends and the Irish trail begins.

Gathering Ireland

At this point in our story we turn to look at Ireland, source of so many emigrants to Australia. What used to be a trickle of Australians returning to Ireland to explore their Irish connections has turned into a river of interest on both sides in recent years. There are a number of reasons for this growing interest. Transportation of the Irish as convicts to Australia began after the 1798 rebellion and continued up until 1868 when the system ended, by which time tens of thousands of Irish saw Australia as home. Waves of Irish famine refugees poured into Australia up to the end of the nineteenth century. Thereafter migration was sporadic and interrupted by two world wars but resumed strongly again in the 1950s and continued until the 1980s. Few migrants from the nineteenth or early twentieth century could afford to return to Ireland but letters and photographs were exchanged regularly enough to keep family connections alive. In some accounts related to me the two world wars provided opportunity for Australian servicemen stationed in Europe to visit Ireland and re-establish contact with their Irish heritage and to trace their Irish relatives. Many of these individuals have been able to exchange visits since retirement.

During Australia's bicentennial year the Irish Government made freely available to the Australian public the records of Irish convicts who were transported to Australia. Events and re-enactments such as the commemoration of the 1804 convict rebellion, known as the Battle of Vinegar Hill in Castle Hill, Sydney which prominently featured Irish convicts, focussed increased interest in Irish heritage. Around the same time the Irish and Australian Governments acknowledged the contribution of Irish women to Australia's heritage with the unveiling of a commemorative sculpture to the Irish Orphan Girls who arrived in Australia following the Great Hunger of 1847 and whose numerous descendants have painstakingly traced their stories. Books, television and radio programs, music, song and dance, oral and

family history, web pages and genealogical software produced in the wake of these commemorations and re-enactments all serve to reinforce the cultural revival. Modern, fast, airline transport facilitates the movement of people between the two countries. Since the advent of the backpacking holiday and working visas, migration from Ireland has dramatically slowed, giving way to tourists and holiday makers, but so far this trend has led to increased exchanges between the two countries. Family and oral history continues to play a vital role in this development and is greatly facilitated by modern technology as evidenced by the following example.

In 2006 the O'Dwyer Clán, an iconic family in Irish history held a Clán Gathering in their ancestral lands in Tipperary. The focus of the Gathering was the Clán Diaspora and the organisers were particularly interested in the Australian connection. There are many people of the name in Australia, more indeed than there are in Ireland. Equally importantly the last inaugurated Clán chieftain, Michael O'Dwyer is buried in Glen Waverly cemetery in Sydney beneath a huge Celtic cross erected to his memory by the Irish in Sydney. O'Dwyer was exiled to Australia following a legendary guerrilla campaign against British rule in Ireland.

During an interview I conducted with several representatives of the O'Dwyer Clán for broadcast on community radio, they discussed their plans to establish the Gathering as a regular bi annual event that would bring together in Tipperary members of the extended Clán from all corners of the world. They planned to publish a collection of the stories of individual members of the Clán from around the world, drawing on the experiences of migration, past and recent to countries such as Canada, the US, Australia, England and other European countries. This book builds on another first published in the 1930s which recounts the Clan genealogy, listing the progenitors all the way back to Adam and Eve. All Irish genealogies claim legendary origins from Adam and Eve. Genealogy was very important in binding ties of obligation and mutual support in the Clán system; clansmen went into battle chanting their genealogies as proof of their identity and territorial claims.

The Gathering in Tipperary provided opportunities to tour historic sites of significance to the Clán, to study its history and to network with local and international members. An interactive website facilitates membership renewal, a chat room and genealogical searches. They had also commenced work on a family DNA database to trace the family name and possibly to find, as one interviewee put it to me 'the holy grail' of the project, the identity of the descendants of the last chieftain of the family. The interview was broadcast on community radio and generated great community interest which translated into a larger Australian presence at the Tipperary Gathering. This in turn led to the establishment of an Australian Clán association with its own organisation related to the Irish Clán Association.

Interviews and research

In an equally fascinating and unrelated interview conducted with an Irish researcher living in Spain and also broadcast on community radio, the fascinating story of Irish migration to the Spanish Court of Phillip II in the sixteenth century unfolded. This research related the fate of dispossessed Irish Clán chieftains petitioning the King of Spain for financial help and assistance on behalf of Clán members who had fled to Spain from Ireland, turning up in such large numbers on the Spanish coastline as to cause unease amongst the local population. The research, soon to be published in a book, explored the difficulties faced by a close knit

and interdependent Irish Clán as they tried to readjust to the more hierarchical Spanish Court.

The contacts established through the Brisbane connection brought together the researcher in Spain and the Clán association in Ireland. And the family just keeps growing. Recently, contact has been established with the Irish in South America who, through family and oral history research are reaching back to the ancestral origins in Ireland and out to their Australian cousins.

Conclusion

In conclusion, records of transportation and migration to Australia are a rich source of information for family history researchers. The catalyst for genealogical research often arises from the oral traditions within families, particularly the older members who retain important fragments of memory about family names and places associated with the family in the country of origin. Modern technology facilitates rapid exchange of information. Increased wealth and the opportunity to travel, particularly among the young and the retired, renew both local and international connections between families. It is this human to human communication that nurtures those connections and keeps them alive across generations and international boundaries. People who have never met each other before are making connections to each other through oral and family history and building a shared identity out of common interests arising from shared heritage.

Notes:

Interviews referred to in the text were collected and broadcast by the author on radio 4EB FM, the ethnic community broadcaster in Brisbane.

WILLIS BURDEN, PAM: YOUR FIRST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Good morning. My name is Pam Willis Burden and I live in Far North Queensland, between Port Douglas and Mossman. 18 months ago I published a book called *Port's People*, based on 28 oral history interviews I conducted with local people in Port Douglas.

I had never interviewed people before, although my background is in film and television. For many years I have been a Script Supervisor on feature films. But even having been surrounded by sound gear on set, I had no idea of the equipment I would need to record oral histories, or how to go about a project.

With the help of the Oral History Association of Queensland and their email network, and the invaluable *Oral History Handbook*, I began. As Secretary of the Douglas Shire Historical Society, I had some credentials to approach interviewees, but basically it was 'learn as you go'.

My paper today is on the subject of how to begin your very first oral history project.

1. Getting the idea

My idea came from two groups of friends who were leaving Port Douglas five years ago, saying that it had become too busy, too commercialised, and wasn't 'like the old days'. They had both been in business there for 20 years. I felt compelled to record their memories somehow, and writing a small piece for the newspaper didn't seem to be enough. So I embarked on my project of recording tales of the growth of Port Douglas – 'from sleepy fishing village to five-star resort'.

Your idea may spring from something you have heard about – like an old hotel being pulled down, which might lead to talking to the previous licensees of all the pubs in your small town.

Or somebody tells you about a lady in an old folks' village who used to sing with Dame Nellie Melba, which will inspire you to speak not only to her, but others in the complex about their memories of the old days.

Or you might just want to talk to your grandpa about his memories of the family.

2. How to choose your interviewees

The two main problems of working in a small community like mine are firstly - the reluctance of some people to be involved, and secondly - the jealousies of those who are not.

Port's People caused controversy when it was published. 'Who chose who was going to be in it?' I was asked belligerently. 'I did.' I admitted. 'Well, why didn't you interview me? I've been here much longer than her.' I didn't like to say that 'her' had many more interesting stories and could tell them in an entertaining way.

Alternatively, some other people were not keen. But once I had signed up one of their friends, or someone who was 'important', they became more confident and agreed. Sometimes you need to work on the 'king-pin' of a group to get others to join in.

I specifically chose people who had told me stories about living in the town ten, or twenty, or thirty years ago, or people that had had a large influence on some part of village life – a developer, a long-serving doctor, a councillor.

I knew all these folk personally, but as I spoke to them, some recommended that also I speak to their friends because 'they know much more about that than me', and 'they've got a great story about this too' and 'you can't do this project without talking to'

Ultimately, some people who should have been included weren't because of the pressure of getting the book published. After four tries, I was given a grant from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund and had to complete everything in six months. That's an extremely tight schedule. So the time came to stop interviewing and start transcribing and editing and collecting photographs.

I still feel that I've missed some people out, but I'll go back and record their stories at another time.

3. Structuring your entire project.

I made a list of questions which would keep the focus on recent history. This kept discussion of the grandson's success at soccer off the tape.

In every case, I sent the questions early to give the interviewee time to reflect on his answers, and I asked if he had any photographs that he'd like to share. On the day of the interview, photos are a great asset, prompting memories and stories that you don't expect.

I asked the same question of many of the interviewees to get a different reaction. 'Have you ever been through a cyclone?' 'Can you describe the main street back then?' - it's important to remember not to ask questions that only need a 'yes' or 'no' answer. 'What did you do for fun?'

After a few interviews, I realised that every story was beginning to revolve around life at the pub. This was probably quite true of a little village where not many people worked and the weather was hot and thirsty. But it wasn't where I wanted the whole story to go.

So I approached an artist and a musician to take part - to change the emphasis. The artist hadn't ever been into a pub and the muso had been into every one of them – but to work, not play.

The project was then more balanced.

Now I've learned that when you make your first list of interviewees, you should choose people from various walks of life, or with differing ideas on the same subject.

4. Researching your interviewee

It's very important to know some of his background before you begin. Discuss with him what he'd like to talk about, and ask his family and friends what his favourite stories are.

I have recently interviewed an old fellow whose grandmother had taken a shot at an intruding Kanaka at the turn of the last century. (A Kanaka being a South Sea Islander imported to work in the sugar cane.) If I hadn't known to ask about that story, I doubt if he would have brought out the gold Albert chain with a bullet dangling from the end, to show me. He said his grandfather had asked the hospital to dig the bullet out of the man, thus proving that his wife had only 'winged' him and was not a murderess. The family kept the bullet. And the fascinating story that came from that was about the lives of Kanakas who were imported to work in the sugar cane.

If your project is centred on an event, say a storm, read all the newspaper reports you can about it first, so you have good background knowledge of the facts before you start asking more personal questions of the survivors.

5. What sort of equipment do you choose?

After having a bad experience with a mini disc recorder, we've gone back to an old fashioned Marantz cassette recorder with huge buttons so it can be operated easily. We have a transcribing machine with a foot pedal and headphones. I'll be referring to tapes but the same applies to CDs or flashcards.

We've found that using lapel microphones is much less scary for the participants than a mike on a table, or on a stand. Once you clip the lapel mike on, the interviewees tend to forget about it. Also in the tropics you have the problem of the noise of the overhead ceiling fan if you're using a mike on the table. Even with the lapel mikes, we have to use little wind socks.

The State Library of Queensland here in Brisbane has a Marantz cassette recorder and mike available to borrow, which is an absolutely wonderful jumping off point. I've learnt at this Conference that they also have digital recorders. You just have to pay for the freight. I was able to borrow it for 3 months, which gave me the confidence to continue to record interviews, and to apply for a grant to buy our own equipment.

Whatever equipment you have, play with it and experiment on friends before you take it to your first interview. Make sure you know how to set the recording volume levels and how far away to place your mikes to get the best possible quality.

Suzanne Gibson's workshop later this morning will give you a much better idea of the latest gear I'm sure. The *Oral History Handbook* also has some valuable advice about what to use. And there is a very helpful fellow at Music Lab here in Brisbane called Warwick.

6. How do you finance your project?

Once you've decided on your equipment and the form your project will take, it's time to look for some funding. Not to pay yourself, but to pay for gear and publishing. If you're working for a university or council, you don't have to worry about this section, but for individuals and historical societies, it's a major problem.

The local council and library were both very helpful in telling me how to apply for grants and which ones were available at the time. Often there's a cultural or community officer at the council and they are sent information on grants from many different agencies.

It's a time-consuming task to fill in the application forms. You have to provide letters of support from prominent people in your community and write a convincing project outline. Then you have to give quotes for everything that you want funded. Don't forget to include extras. For example, will you need travel expenses if you have to go a long way for an interview?

You need to estimate how many tapes you will need. I used four 60-minute cassettes for most interviews – two for the original and two for back-up copies. I didn't want to ruin the originals running back and forth for the transcriptions. Once I'd completed the transcription, I recycled the back-ups for another interview. 60 minute tapes are better than 90s because they don't stretch and cause sound distortions.

At this stage you should have decided on the end use of your project:

If you're publishing a book, then it will cost a lot more than just recording the interviews because of printing expenses.

You could produce a CD of the entire interview, or just excerpts from it. Do you want music or other sound effects in the background? The more elaborate it is, the more you might need a professional sound engineer which will incur a fee.

Or you could make a DVD and include some photos.

Or use parts of the interview as background to a museum exhibit.

Or make a radio program.

Whatever you decide, all these extras need to be costed because you only get one chance at total funding.

Sometimes, private sponsorship is possible if the company or rich individual believes in the project and decides to back it. But you'll still have to provide a breakdown of costs.

7. Getting approval from the interviewee

I take a release form which says the participant agrees to be interviewed, and that if the transcript is printed, he must be shown it before publication.

This worked very well except once. One interviewee insisted on re-writing her interview because she thought she sounded stupid in the transcript. So her entry in the book is very literary, but does not sound like her speaking. And she didn't sound stupid. I contemplated leaving her out altogether, but her story was so good, and no-one else knew all the details, and I left her in.

Another interviewee told a gripping story of cattle rustlers of fifty years ago, and named them. But two weeks after our recording session, he rang to say he was worried about publishing their names because he might be sued by their relatives, and he wanted that whole topic erased from the transcript. I persuaded him that we'd write on his release form that their names were not to be printed until after he had died. Apparently you can't sue a dead man. So we've preserved a great story without the danger of legal action.

I also like to give credit for any photos I use, so in *Port's People* most of the photographs have the owners' names beside them. Even newspaper companies will usually let you use their photos if you give them a credit. And don't forget to credit any funding agencies or private sponsors who have been helpful to your project.

8. Conducting the Interview

One day I forgot to take the blank tapes, so to make sure I'm totally prepared, I make a list of things to remember to take to the interview. Tapes, recorder, extra batteries, microphones, leads, a power board and extension lead, a clipboard with the list of questions, release form, and pen. Make sure you've tested the equipment the night before on your husband or flatmate. Take more tapes than you think you'll need.

I also take a stopwatch, so I know when we're near the end of the tape. That way, with 2 minutes to go, I don't ask a question that I know will have a very long answer. The train of thought is often lost while you're turning over the tape.

It's important to identify each new tape that you record on. Say the tape number and side – 'this is tape one, side A of an interview with John Smith, recorded on – say the date, - at 'their home at 27 Smith Street, Smithton,' for the project '*Port's People*'. The interviewer is – say your name. You can do the first side before you leave home, but it's important to do side B, and tape 2 while you're at the interview. Don't forget to write the details on the label of the tape too.

When you arrive for the interview, head for the dining table or kitchen table. Then you can put your recorder on it, have your clipboard of questions handy and be able to face your interviewee. Ask that any caged birds or barking dogs be put outside. And don't set up next to a chiming clock.

My worst interview was ruined by a ride-on mower that started up next door when we were half way through. You have to decide whether to stop for an hour (and only talk about the weather) or ask the mower man to stop, or abandon your interview and come back another day. Everyone's concentration is ruined when you try to battle a bad exterior noise and the results of the interview won't be good.

Try not to talk about anything to do with the interview while you're setting up your gear. Because when you go to put it on tape, they'll often say 'but I told you all that before'.

I start each interview in the same way. To perform a little sound test and to make sure all the equipment is working and the levels are right, I ask them to tell me their full name, their date of birth and where they were born. The answers are easy, they break the ice, the sound test has been done and then we can get on with the interview.

It is most important to listen to what your interviewee is saying rather than just following your list of questions. Then, you can follow up on a comment or an interesting story that you may not have heard before. Make notes during the answers of anything that you want to follow up on so that you don't interrupt the speaker's flow.

Ask him how you spell names that you're not familiar with. And if he says 'it was about this high', indicating with his hands, you should say '2 metres?' so he can say 'yes, about that'.

It's very important to try not to interrupt, or to say 'Ohh' or 'mm' or 'yes' while he's talking. I find smiling and nodding has the same encouraging effect without overlapping his story.

Don't jump in on his pauses. Sometimes he might just be trying to think of the next thing to say, or to remember something. If you don't fill the pause, often he will and you'll get more of the story than you expected.

If the phone rings, you'll want to turn the recorder off. But remember the last topic so when you start again, you can say 'Bill, you were telling me about painting the pub'.

I like to make a back up copy at the same time, so I take my transcribing machine and use the record mode. The quality isn't as good as the Marantz, but it's fine for transcribing.

When interviewing older people, usually an hour and a half is enough. After that they get tired. You can always go back on another day. Mornings are better, when they're fresher.

When you've finished, don't forget to snap out the tabs on the original cassette so that you don't accidentally record over your precious interview.

I take my digital camera with me, and ask if I can copy the interviewee's photos. It's much safer than taking away the precious originals. Also I usually take a photo of the interviewee in his own environment, which can later be used on the cover of the transcript, or the tape or CD.

9. Do you work as a team, or individually?

The more people in the room during the interview, the more the problems of overlapping occur. People tend to talk over each other during a normal conversation, but during a recording it can become very confusing and make it difficult to hear one voice. Lapel mikes are good for this problem, but if possible, interview people individually.

When interviewing people with limited English, ask your translator to wait until the interviewee has finished speaking. Unfortunately sometimes they get into a conversation with each other in the other language and forget about translating. I had an adult daughter translate for her elderly Italian parents, and at one stage they had a full-on argument about

something. Arms were waved, voices raised, and they yelled over each other. Unfortunately I don't think the translation came out on the side of the parents. If it's really important, it's worth giving the tape to an independent translator.

In our small country area, I sometimes work with another Historical Society member who was born there. She gives confidence to the local interviewees who regard me as a trespassing stranger who's only been there for 13 years.

She usually arranges the time for the interview, we both compile a list of questions and both go to the recording. But only one asks the questions.

10. Transcriptions

At the beginning, I didn't know whether to transcribe the whole interview or just the parts that were relevant to the project. I tried the quick way, but realised that firstly, I might be missing out on something, and secondly, I may never revisit that interview, and should transcribe the whole thing then and there. It's extremely time-consuming but worthwhile. I do an Index as I go, listing the main topics and where they are on the tape and that way, you can search quickly for something. But transcribing a one-hour interview can take you four or five hours, depending on how quickly you can type. I found it essential in preparing the book.

I had arguments with myself about changing the grammar. I didn't want to make people appear foolish when they said 'we was going', but I wanted to retain the flavour of their language. So I compromised and changed some things and not others. Readers comment that 'it sounds just like Alan speaking', which was the ultimate aim.

The other temptation is to write it down as it sounds. An example of this is a place near Port Douglas which is spelt Killaloe, and the newer locals call it 'Killa-low'. But older residents call it Killa-loo because that's the way it's pronounced in Ireland, where the name came from. This time, I transcribed it as it sounded.

You can also employ someone to do the transcribing. But it's rather expensive and they don't make the decisions about grammar and pronunciation and often don't recognise local names. This is also a concern with digital voice-recognition software.

If you're going into print, as I did, editing is also difficult. What to leave out? I condensed one hour of interview into about 1,000 words of text. I had to make sure I kept to the topic, and was also constrained by the number of pages in the book, so I had to be rather ruthless. But it makes for a racy read.

11. Storage

Once you've finished with your interview, it's important to store the tapes in a safe and cool place. In Far North Queensland this means under the stairs in a plastic box with a tight lid.

I offered my collection to the John Oxley Library, Oral History Collections department here in Brisbane, and was lucky enough to have it accepted. Or the local library might equally be

keen to have it. I provided full transcripts of each interview in Word format on CD, so it's easy to search for a name or topic. And gave them the '*Port's People*' book too.

12. In Conclusion

When all the work was done we had a book launch and invited all the participants. I should've taken the recorder to that, because some of them hadn't seen each other for years and had some wonderful stories to swap.

You never seem to have enough time to get all the stories. I've been back to a couple of people and recorded another two hours, and it's still not enough.

But I've found that the more interviews I do, the more confident I've become. So it's true that practice makes perfect.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank the Douglas Shire Council, which will be no more after the March local council amalgamations, but that's another story. They provided me with a RADF – Regional Arts Development Fund – grant to attend this conference.

My email address is secretary@douglas-shire-historical-society.org if you would like any more information.

YORK, BARRY: RECORDING ORAL HISTORIES IN A PARLIAMENTARY HERITAGE CONTEXT

Old Parliament House (OPH) began recording oral history interviews in November 1995. The first interviewee was one of the men who had helped build the place 70 years earlier, in 1926 – a construction worker named Fred Johnson. Mr. Johnson joined the staff of the provisional Parliament House, what we now call Old Parliament House, in 1927 and retired in 1967. There are about 110 oral history interviews in our collection. They are nearly all in the social history category, such as people who attended the opening ceremony of the provisional Parliament House in 1927, construction workers, journalists, stenographers, police, managers, librarians, typists, gardeners, waitresses, drivers, Hansard reporters, caterers, paymasters, hairdressers and descendants of the early clerks and politicians. The most recent interview, recorded a few weeks ago, was with a former parliamentary reporter, who started work in the Hansard section in 1964.

It is entirely appropriate that a parliamentary heritage building should have an oral history program because, after all, the spoken word is what the place was essentially all about. The provisional Parliament House, what we now call Old Parliament House, was home to the Australian parliament for 60 years from 1927 to 1988. Old-timers who remember the early MPs claim that the parliamentary debates were far more eloquent back then, far wittier and more boisterous. Whether this is true or not, the fact is that the very word **parliament** comes from the old French *parlement*, which derives from the French word *parler*, “to speak”. Deriders of the parliament still sometimes refer to it as a ‘talking shop’ and there is a sense in which, despite their usually negative motives, that is accurate. It was a place of debate, argument, and rhetoric. The following claim will surprise you but OPH has one of Australia’s largest collections of transcripts. These are the Hansards, which have captured the debates in the Commonwealth Parliament since 1901.

Until recently, OPH approached the oral history collection in a fairly ad hoc way. Some very good work was none the less done. An example comes to mind of Michael Richards’ interview with Heather Bonner, the wife of Senator Neville Bonner. The interview provides insights into Australia’s first Aboriginal member of the Commonwealth parliament from the deeply personal perspective of his widow. It was recorded in 2001, two years after Senator Bonner’s death.

A couple of years ago, OPH decided to try and place its oral history work on a more systematic footing. A historian with a strong background in the field – yours truly - was contracted to review the program. The review assessed the condition of the program; its procedures, sustainability, content strengths and weaknesses; ways of avoiding duplication with other institutions; and the appropriateness of continuing the program. The review’s recommendations were approved by OPH Governing Council earlier this year and we are now on course to implement the key recommendations. I was appointed as an OPH historian on an on-going basis last August and my primary responsibility is to develop and manage the Oral History Program. I am one of four professional historians at OPH. Three

of us – Michael Richards and Dr. Joy McCann and me - have had extensive oral history experience.

It's an exciting time to be at OPH. The 2006 Federal Budget allocated additional funding to enable OPH to develop a Gallery of Australian Democracy (GAD), incorporating an Australian Prime Ministers' Centre (APMC). As a result, several new staff were taken on and the APMC was opened in April by John Howard. The GAD should be opened in 2009. Through this project, the OPH has been reconceptualised as a significant research institution as well as a heritage and interpretation centre. In this bold new milieu, the review of the Oral History Program made recommendations to expand the program beyond the social history category, with its heritage emphasis on understanding the building, into something that might take account of the bigger political context and processes.

At its May meeting, the OPH Governing Council endorsed the proposed oral history program and priorities for future interviews. Four priorities were identified by the review:

Members and senators who were in Parliament prior to the move to Parliament House in 1988,

Individuals who knew past prime ministers personally and/or professionally,

People who worked at the Provisional Parliament House in the range of trades and professions associated with the place, and

Long-term members of political parties from the 1940s to the 1980s, from the era when parties were highly dependent on dedicated voluntary workers.

Just a bit more detail each of the four.

Priority 1: Former parliamentarians.

There are approximately 170 former MPs and senators who served prior to 1988 and who are still alive. Six former parliamentarians have been approached in the first instance in 2007-08. Given the limits to our oral history resources at OPH, this is an ambitious objective, as we intend to adopt the life story approach, while emphasising political careers.

Priority 2: People who knew the Prime Ministers.

Direct memory of former Prime Ministers probably does not extend further back than Scullin (1929-32). Interviews with people who knew the former Prime Ministers from the perspective of friends and family or associates and colleagues will enhance the Australian Prime Ministers Centre's research capacity by the creation of new primary source material. In seeking out such interviewees, OPH will work in coordination with the National Library and various prime ministerial libraries. It is proposed to undertake three substantial interviews in this category. Names of possible candidates for interview are still being canvassed.

Priority 3: Workers in trades and professions.

The OPH Oral History collection has previously focused on interviews with men and women who worked in the building in various trades and professions prior to 1988. The collection is strong in this social history category. We're hoping to record a further four interviews be

recorded this year, including the completion of an interview with a former librarian. Others are:

a former member of the Hansard reporting staff

a long-serving former attendant with experience in both houses

a former ministerial staffer who later worked for the Transport and Storage Group during the move in 1988.

a building contractor.

Priority 4: Rank and file party activists (pre-1988)

The era in which parties relied upon a large number of dedicated voluntary grass-roots workers is passing with the professionalization of political campaigning. OPH aims to fill a gap in oral history collections in Australia by recording rank-and-file party activists with an affiliation to the major parties that have had a parliamentary presence. The proposed target in 2007-08 is at least four interviews. OPH is also suggesting to other agencies such as the National Library of Australia that complementary interviews in this field might be conducted under their auspices. It is proposed to approach party branches to identify potential interviewees.

The Heritage Management Plan 2007-12

Oral history offers Old Parliament House the opportunity to create unique primary sources of information and impressions based on personal recollections about the building, its immediate environs, the individuals who worked here, the daily routines of labour and leisure, about past prime ministers and other parliamentarians, and the political processes that affected the nation related to OPH. Because oral history is a way of documenting and conserving the intangible heritage values of the place, it is particularly important to the OPH and Curtilage Heritage Management Plan 2007-2012 which, in keeping with the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act, is values driven. At times it will be the only way to do this because oral history recordings create a tangible record of intangible memories, where no record previously existed. These records can serve the entire research and scholarly community whenever the members of that community have an interest in Old Parliament House, past prime ministers and parliamentarians, political processes, and Australia's parliamentary history. Oral history allows the known heritage values of the place to be enhanced and serves to improve the condition of these values.

A new element to the oral history program is the use of digital filming as a supplement to an audio interview. For example, in addition to interviewing a former House of Representatives attendant and former Hansard reporter, I have filmed them moving around the physical spaces that were part of their daily work routines. In this way, we can actually see the spaces whose past uses might otherwise be lost, unless we talk with, and learn from, those who once worked in the building. I use a Sony hand-held digital video camera and, thus far, it has worked very well, and the sound quality is adequate for heritage purposes too.

Consultation has taken place with the National Library of Australia, National Archives of Australia, National Museum of Australia, National Film & Sound Archive and the

Parliamentary Library. Technical support has been offered by the National Library of Australia and National Archives of Australia, and it is hoped that the good relationship with these two bodies will be further consolidated in the near future. The National Library has been a trusted adviser to OPH since 1998 and discussions that are under way at present suggest further collaboration will continue.

In finishing off, I'd like to just draw your attention to two flyers. The first is about the OPH oral history program. Please take one. We would like to develop a register of names and contact details of oral historians who have a proven interest and record in the political history field. Also, another flyer relates to the Australian Prime Ministers' Centre's scholarship and fellowship scheme.

ⁱ The title Publication Committee was in use at the time this paper was presented in September 2007, but was changed shortly after to Editorial Board. The text of this paper was edited slightly in October 2009 to conform with current usage.

ⁱⁱ For 2009, papers should be submitted by December, but this may change.

ⁱⁱⁱ A concrete manifestation of this aspect is that in 2008, the *OHAA Journal* was listed as a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal in tier B by the Australian Research Council in its ranking of all refereed journals of significance to the Australian academy as part of its esteem indicators for the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative.