‘She said: He said’
conference reviews

A Charles Sturt story

Traditional Craft Skills Project

‘Not for Ourselves Alone’
The objectives of Oral History Australia Inc.: To promote the practice and methods of oral history; to educate in the use of oral history methods; to encourage discussion on all aspects of oral history; and to foster the preservation of oral history records in Australia.

Committee: June Edwards (President), Catherine Manning (Secretary/Membership Secretary), Sally Stephenson (Treasurer), Alison McDougall (WOM Editor), Catherine Murphy (Handbook Distribution), Madeleine Regan, Karen George, Tonia Eldridge (State Library of South Australia), John Mannion, Peter Hackworth

Membership: 1 June 2013 to 31 May 2014.
Individual $40; Institution $65; Household $55; Student/Unemployed/Pensioner $30

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Oral History Australia Inc (SA/NT Association)
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Contributions to *Word of Mouth* should reach the Branch by **31 March 2014**
Please send contributions (if possible) by email via www.ohaa-sa.com.au or on disc to The Editor, *Word of Mouth*, at the above address.

The views expressed in *Word of Mouth* are not necessarily those of Oral History Australia (SA/NT Association) Inc.


A Glimpse of the Conference
Photograph courtesy: Jenny Scott
The SA/NT Branch AGM was held on 12 August 2013

The OHAA (SA/NT Branch) committee for 2013/2014:
June Edwards – President
Catherine Manning – Secretary and membership
Sally Stephenson – Treasurer
Alison McDougall – newsletter editor
Karen George (Oral History workshops)
Catherine Murphy (handbooks)
Madeleine Regan
John Mannion
Peter Hackworth
Tonia Eldridge, State Library’s oral history program organiser

We are pleased that John Mannion and Peter Hackworth joined the committee as they will provide different perspectives on what the branch can offer members, especially for country members.

After the elections Linda Lacey gave a brief overview of her work as Cultural Heritage Project Officer at the City of Charles Sturt and talked about her involvement in oral history projects. (see Linda’s article on p.18)

Branch Activities

• How to do oral history workshop May 2013.
  The May workshop was part of the History Month program and there were 30 registrations so this highlights one of the benefits of participating in the event. Karen George and Peter Kolomitsev ran the session.

  A country workshop was run in Roxby Downs by John Mannion in April 2013. He had a busy time running three sessions for local people interested in the history of the area and two sessions with school students. The committee truly appreciates John’s willingness to run the country workshops when they are held in his vicinity.

  Many thanks to Karen, Peter, and John for running these workshops which help people understand what is required to achieve a well recorded interview. Also thanks must go to Richard Moriarty (acting Oral History Officer) and Tonia Eldridge for their support and to the State Library for its in-kind support in providing the venue.

• In June 2013 a new member, Liz Burge, organised a ‘Wednesday at 1pm’ event for the Friends of the State Library: Speaking our lives: selected audio jewels from the J.D. Somerville Oral History Collection of the State Library. Richard Moriarty, Tonia Eldridge, Allison Murchie and I talked about the Library’s collection, the value of oral history and what makes a good interviewer. Tonia and Allison put together some terrific examples from various recordings in the collection which made the session entertaining. Richard combined his studies in community history at the University of New England with his oral history experience to talk about theory and practice in an insightful way.

• In July I gave a talk to the writers’ group in the South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society. The Family History Writers are a Special Interest Group of the Society who meet monthly with the aim to encourage and support aspiring family historians to produce a readable and entertaining record of their family’s history. A dozen people came along and were interested in how they could use oral history in their family history and fiction writing.

• Liz Burge, Tonia Eldridge and I prepared a questionnaire for public libraries asking if the libraries had an oral history collection and the breadth and age of the recordings. The survey will help the State Library map current holdings of oral history resources and find ways to further develop quality collections for both academic research and local community interest. It was a good opportunity to learn about ideas for future oral history projects and any past oral history activity in the Library system. Geoff Strempel, the A/Associate Director, Library Services at State Library of South Australia gave support to the development of the questionnaire and Tonia will collate the results.

• The Organisation of Hellene and Hellene-Cypriot Women of Australia (OEEGA) oral history project. Catherine Manning and I were pleased to meet Helen Haltis from OEEGA to talk about the OEEGA Oral History project. The group has interviewed twenty Greek migrants who came to Australia between the 1930s to 1950s. Ten of the interviews are recorded in Greek and ten are recorded in English. OEEGA received a grant
from the Commonwealth Government which included money for uploading the recordings onto the internet. Dave Smids from Wildfire Design is working to put the twenty interviews up onto the OHAA SA/NT website as an addition to the 175th SA anniversary project interviews. It will be a discreet group with recordings, transcripts, translations and photographs. This will provide another set of interviews on our website which will give viewers a broader understanding of what can be achieved when oral history is employed to record unique experiences. Working with a community group such as OEEGA is a positive development and hopefully other groups will be encouraged to apply for funding to upload their recordings.

Lizzie Russell Oral History Grant
There were no submissions for the grant this year so the committee decided to put the money towards supporting three registrations for the September conference.

Hazel de Berg Award
The Branch committee nominated Francis Good for the Hazel de Berg award and it turned out he was also nominated by the Tasmanian Branch so he was an extra worthy nominee. Francis won the award so a huge congratulations to Francis who has always been a hardworking member of the Association (see the latest Journal for his citation).

Financial matters
On Sally Stephenson’s recommendation the Branch has invested $10,000 in an interest bearing account. (see pp.5-6 for the full financial report and balance sheet)

Membership
Memberships have remained steady between 50–60 when the life members are included and several people have been inspired to join since the Biennial conference.

National matters
The OHAA National Committee prepared a new constitution which was passed at the AGM. The national organisation is now known as Oral History Australia Inc. To this end, governance and legal compliance will be streamlined, with a committee made up of a nominee from each member association rather than being made up of the office bearers from the state branch that ran the biennial conference. The national committee elects its own office bearers and the term of office will be one year with a maximum term of six years. Each member association will appoint an alternate delegate to ensure maximum involvement and continuity of in the work of the committee. Rather than being independently incorporated, state oral history associations will become members of a national incorporated association, and provision will be made for Territory associations, not currently in existence, to be admitted.

Sue Anderson is the South Australian delegate and June Edwards the alternate delegate. Sue was also elected President of Oral History Australia Inc so congratulations to Sue! It is wonderful having a South Australian as the national president.

The branch is now the SA/NT Association of Oral History Australia Inc. Our constitution will need to be amended to incorporate the changes and Northern Territory members are happy to include NT in the new Association’s title.

Handbooks
Catherine Murphy has been busy sending out the Oral History Handbooks and the last print run is almost sold out. The committee organised another print run of the handbook with Beth Robertson which has been completed.
2013 OHAA conference 21-24 September

The main achievement of the Committee has been the success of the conference:
The Oral History Association of Australia, History SA and the University of South Australia jointly hosted this conference which brought together professional, academic, community and oral historians and historians.

My sincere thanks go to the Oral History conference committee members Sue Anderson, Alison McDougall, Tonia Eldridge, Karen George, Peter Hackworth, Megg Kelham, Catherine Manning, Catherine Murphy, Annmarie Reid, Madeleine Regan, and Sally Stephenson and to History SA staff Mandy Paul, Margaret Anderson, Suzanne Redman, and Karen Blackwood for their efforts. Also thanks go to the national committee of the OHAA for their support and guidance leading up to the conference and for the promotion of the event which led to the attendance of many interstate speakers and delegates.

I also want to thank the speakers, chairs, and delegates at the conference who made it such a friendly and successful event. People came from all around Australia, New Zealand, the USA and China. Bao Guimin found the conference on the internet and decided to give a paper on Mongolian women! To quote Jill Adams, past OHAA President: ‘The papers were all excellent and the chairing was brilliant.’ The participation and positive support made the event all very worthwhile.

The University of South Australia kindly sponsored the venue, technological support and satchels. The venue with the outdoor eating space encouraged a convivial atmosphere and delegates seemed to respond well to the university. The National Library of Australia provided wonderful support for our keynote speaker Rina Benmayor. Local company, DiskEdits, also provided useful sponsorship.

The most impressive thing about the conference from my parochial point of view was the professional, reflective and intelligent contribution made by SA/NT Branch members to the conference visits, sessions and workshops. Everyone should be very proud of the event and of the historians who work in this state and the Northern Territory. The conference has had a very positive response from delegates with the most common reaction being ‘inspirational’ and ‘affirmative’.

Equally impressive was Rina Benmayor’s plenary session where she talked about her project to ‘re-imagine Salinas’ Chinatown’ by creating an on-site and web-based walking tour.

The tour is part of a larger effort to renew and revitalise the only extant Chinatown between San Francisco and Los Angeles. Oral history has constructed a memory that transforms the physical space. Several people who I talked to reflected on how Rina’s ideas could be applied to their current and future projects. The talk highlighted how an imaginative oral history project can refashion a community space. History based projects can be transformative. Rina was ‘inspirational’.

Another event which tied in with the conference was the History Council’s annual lecture. Alistair Thomson reported on the Australian Generations: an Oral History of Everyday Life, a national oral history project in collaboration with the National Library of Australia, ABC Radio National, the Oral History Association of Australia and La Trobe University. The interviews will provide a fascinating
insight into Australian society from the perspective of historical change in Australia throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries, and will be used by the research team for written histories and in a series of ABC Radio National history programs. It was a very enjoyable introduction to the conference.

As I was fairly busy with the day to day administration I only managed to attend a few sessions. All that I heard revealed the breadth and thoughtfulness of historical research and the sometimes surprising roads down which oral history can take you. Particularly memorable were Stephanie Boyle from the Australian War Memorial who gave an insightful presentation about her work in Afghanistan recording Defence personnel on the front line; Annmarie Reid’s quite lyrical presentation on her research on sensory rich memories of migrants who came to Australia from England’s north east; Karen George and Kevin Bradley who bantered very successfully to highlight the issues around the value of transcripts; and Jill Adams who revisited the housewife of the 1950s in a very entertaining way.

The Branch also gave out three grants to cover conference registrations for an OHAA SA/NT Branch member and two students. Allison Murchie was the Branch winner and Daniella Pilla, a PhD student at the University of Adelaide, and Karen Austin, a PhD student at Flinders University, won the student places (see their reports starting on p.8. There was quite a bit of interest from students so they have been added to the Word of Mouth electronic copy mailing list for this year as a thankyou for submitting an application. All three recipients seemed to be having an enjoyable time and finding the conference beneficial so grants will be something to consider for future conferences.

Well done to everyone involved in the
Treasurer’s Report
2012-2013 (presented August 2013)

The SA/NT Branch of the Oral History Association of Australia has enjoyed another very positive year financially.

Healthy sales of the Oral History Handbook and excellent attendance at workshops combined with a lack of major expenses ensured that we made a profit for the year of $8 445.27, of which $4 000 is sponsorship towards the forthcoming national conference (see below). At the end of the year, our cashbook balance was $15 710.03, the highest for some years. It is pleasing to be in such a strong position financially, given the potential for major costs next financial year associated with the national conference and the possible re-printing of the Handbook.

Membership
This year saw an 8% increase in membership income to $2 602.55, due in part to a pleasing number of workshop participants deciding to join the Association.

Oral History Handbook sales
We increased the cost of handbooks this year for the first time in more than five years. The number of Handbooks sold decreased slightly, but the net proceeds from sales this year was similar to last year at $4 469.34.

Workshops
Income from workshops this year was even more impressive than last year’s. Two introductory workshops were held this financial year as well as an advanced workshop, and a successful series of workshops for the Roxby Downs community. These were all well attended, resulting in a net income of $1 890.09, a 63% increase from the previous year. Clearly there is a great demand for introductory and advanced workshops.

Conference/Events
In 2013-2014, the SA Branch will host the Oral History Association of Australia Biennial National Conference. This will be a joint conference with History SA and UniSA. Such an arrangement minimises the financial risk to the branch, and shares the organisational workload more broadly. We are grateful to the support from our colleagues at History SA and UniSA. Our branch agreed to find sponsorship for the keynote speaker, Professor Rina Benmayor. June Edwards was successful in her application to the National Library for sponsorship of $4 000. We have already received the sponsorship money. Since we do not incur any expenses for Rina’s trip until next financial year, it is prudent to consider this year’s profit $4 000 less than reported, i.e. $4 445.25.

Bank accounts
This is the first complete financial year since we changed bank accounts to a fee-free account. We therefore incurred no bank charges this year, a saving of $115 from last year and of $170 on the previous year.

With the Branch’s healthy bank balance, the committee decided to open a second account, but one that is interest-bearing. This account also has no fees, and has the flexibility of enabling transfers at any time to our working account – a useful feature in the lead-up to the conference.

Other
Items included in the other category are the cost of auditing the accounts, the Lizzie Russell Grant grant money and reimbursing Sue Anderson 50% of the cost of attending the executive meeting of the National Committee in Melbourne on our behalf (the National Association paid the remaining 50%).

Audit
The financial statements have been audited by Frances Magill Financial Strategists and deemed to present a true and fair view of the revenue collected and expenses paid of the Oral History Association of Australia (South Australian Branch).

Sally Stephenson
Treasurer
5 July 2013
## GENERAL ACCOUNT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bank Balance as at 31 May 2012</th>
<th>7,867.06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>plus cash at hand as at 31 May 2012</td>
<td>620.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less unpresented cheques as at 31 May 2012</td>
<td>1,222.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashbook balance as at 31 May 2012</td>
<td>7,264.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RECEIPTS

| Membership | 2,602.55 |
| Handbooks | 5,303.00 |
| Newsletters | 0.00 |
| Workshops | 3,290.00 |
| Events | 4,000.0 |
| Bank Interest | 0.0 |
| Other | 245.45 |
| Hire Equipment | 20.00 |

### PAYMENTS

| Secretarial | 153.00 |
| Word of Mouth | 2,603.26 |
| Bank Charges | 0.00 |
| Events | 0.00 |
| Workshops | 1,399.91 |
| Capitation (National) | 885.00 |
| Handbooks (Royalties, Printing, Loans) | 0.00 |
| Handbooks Postage | 833.66 |
| Other | 1,140.90 |

### Opening Balance

| 7,264.76 |

### Cash Book Balance

| 15,710.03 |

### Bank Balance

| 16,130.03 |

### Profit (loss)

| 8,445.27 |

## ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (SA BRANCH) INC

### Income and Expenses for past four financial years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012-2013</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening cashbook balance</td>
<td>7,264.76</td>
<td>4,413.42</td>
<td>11,572.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RECEIPTS

| Membership | 2,602.55 | 2,404.50 | 2,495.00 | 1,935.00 |
| Handbooks | 5,303.00 | 7,060.00 | 6,722.00 | 4,276.00 |
| Newsletters | 0.00 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| Workshops | 3,290.00 | 2,470.00 | 1,450.00 | 1,770.00 |
| Events | 4,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Bank Interest | 0.00 | 2.67 | 3.94 | 20.07 |
| Other | 245.45 | 7,387.06 | 1,409.83 | 6.00 |
| Hire Equipment | 20.00 | 75.00 | 0.00 | 40.00 |

### Total Receipts

| 15,461.00 | 19,399.23 | 12,090.77 | 8,056.07 |

### PAYMENTS

| Secretarial | 153.00 | 266.05 | 170.95 | 289.78 |
| Word of Mouth | 2,603.26 | 2,773.78 | 2,179.60 | 2,456.10 |
| Bank Charges | 0.00 | 114.95 | 171.40 | 135.95 |
| Events | 0.00 | 680.15 | 55.00 | 0.00 |
| Workshops | 1,399.91 | 1,311.76 | 632.26 | 586.00 |
| Capitation (National) | 885.00 | 780.00 | 780.00 | 750.00 |
| Handbooks (Royalties, Printing, Loans) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 623.70 | 200.00 |
| Handbooks Postage | 833.66 | 2,496.74 | 624.11 | 550.00 |
| Other | 1,140.90 | 8,124.46 | 8,333.25 | 1,685.00 |

### Total Payments

| 7,015.73 | 16,547.89 | 19,183.57 | 8,452.83 |

### Cash Book Balance

| 15,710.03 | 7,264.76 | 4,413.42 | 11,252.77 |

### Profit (loss) for the year

| $8,445.27 | $2,851.34 | -$7,092.80 | -$396.76 |
Profile
Sue Anderson

At the Biennial Conference held in Adelaide in September, I was pleased to have been elected national President of the newly-named Oral History Australia. This represents a new era for our organisations, both national and State, under the new constitution and I look forward to engaging in this role.

By way of background, I was born and grew up in outer suburban Sydney in the 1950s and 60s. When I completed high school I spent a year at the Metropolitan Business College. In those days work for women was largely restricted to nursing, teaching or secretarial jobs and I had no penchant for the former two fields. I was successful as a secretary and at age twenty won the position of Assistant Private Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition, travelling between Melbourne and Canberra at the exciting time of the Whitlam Government. After the double dissolution I took a year’s leave to travel through Europe on a working holiday before returning to Sydney where I met my husband to be. We have one son and we moved to Adelaide following a tragic accident to be with my husband’s son by a previous marriage living here who sustained a spinal injury while playing rugby and became a severely limited quadriplegic. We loved Adelaide, decided to stay and have lived here ever since. These days I am a doting grandma to Chloe, five, and Elliot, three months.

When my marriage broke down I decided to broaden my horizons, undertook the Flinders University Foundation course for a year before enrolling in a Bachelor of Arts degree. I found this so rewarding I have continued on this path, finally achieving a PhD in 2009.

My oral history journey began twenty years ago when I was completing a Master of Letters in archaeology from the University of New England. I was working on an excavation at the site of the former Swan Reach Aboriginal mission on the River Murray, when I decided to conduct some oral histories with former residents of the mission in order to write a creative piece for my thesis about a day in the life of a woman on the mission. I put this together using the artefacts that had been recovered from the excavation combined with the information I gathered from residents about life on the mission. I found the experience of hearing people’s stories so much richer than the dry artefacts that I became hooked on oral history, which became my new direction.

Since that time I have worked as a consultant researching and writing history and engaging with oral history in all my projects, largely with Aboriginal individuals and communities. In 2011 I was employed by the University of South Australia to write four new courses for a history major that was being introduced in 2012. These were in Australian colonial history, Australia in the twentieth century, a material culture course and an oral history course. This is the first time oral history has been taught in a South Australian university, so that was a very pleasing outcome for me.

While I have been Editor of the Oral History Journal for the last three years and I will continue to do so, I have not been involved with the South Australian committee since I was President of the State Association from 2002 to 2006 and I commend June Edwards for her marvellous effort in this role since then.
The Biennial National OHAA Conference & the 21st State History Conference
“She said, he said” – reading, writing and recording history

This conference, attended by 241 delegates for varying lengths of time (126 of whom were South Australians), provided a fine range of work done by people passionate about history. What follows is a taste of the feast based on contributor’s interests, but it’s not the whole feast. We are intending to bring more of the papers to you via our National Oral History Australia website in due course.

The first three reports are from the recipients of the OHAA SA/NT conference grants: Allison Murchie, a longstanding member and prolific producer of oral histories, and a valuable volunteer in the oral history program at the State Library of South Australia; Karen Austin, PhD candidate from Flinders University, and Daniella Pilla, PhD candidate from Adelaide University.

From Allison Murchie
I was very fortunate in being able to attend the recent Biennial OHAA/State History conference in Adelaide. We got off to a great start with the History Council’s annual lecture on the Friday night, with Professor Alistair Thomson of Monash University talking about ‘Australian Generations, An Oral History of our Living Memory’. The project has recorded 300 life stories over the decades from the 1920s to 1980s. He played excerpts from several of the interviews, whetting our appetites to go to the website and listen to other interesting stories [http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/australian-generations/].

When he said, ‘There is no template for life’, it struck a chord with me, as my current oral history project of life histories of Adelaide zoo keepers is showing how true that is and what interesting stories we are privileged to hear as oral historians.

The following morning we were again introduced to another exciting project by the keynote address of Rina Benmayor, ‘Re-imagining Salinas Chinatown, an Oral History Walking tour’. Rina is Professor of Oral History, Literature and Latina/o Studies at the California State University. Salinas was part of the gold rush of the 1880s and later became an agricultural centre farmed by the Chinese up to the 1970s. Chinatown no longer exists but an oral history project that began in 2008 created 125 hours of video oral history interviews with 80 people and the project started to take shape.

After the Chinese, Salinas was populated by people from Japan, the Philippines, Africa and Mexico – now the homeless live there. The ‘re-imagining’ has become a walking tour that is on-site as well as web-based; the oral histories have created a transformation of the community. Several different stories are told about the one location so that everyone’s story is told and the town has been brought back to life. The memories were visual, emotional and experiential and this led to an understanding of shared history.

One of my biggest challenges was to decide which sessions to attend as there were so many interesting papers being presented. Here are a few of the sessions that were on offer so you can see what a diverse program was on offer: History of Place, Queer Voices Diverse Histories, Hostel Stories, History of the Stage and People Shaping Place.
Dr Tim Sherratt, the Manager of Trove was not only informative but most entertaining and dazzled us with some statistics. Did you know that there are 100,000 registered users and that over 100 million lines have been corrected? It has 110 million news articles and the site gets more hits than the National Library. Why is the date 16th February 1942 so significant? On that day the front page of the Advertiser changed from being advertisements to telling news stories. There are 27,911 lists on Trove with 444,819 items. The two most commonly searched lists are Family and World War Two.

Being a home based conference there was a strong presence of Adelaide speakers and they certainly did us proud.

I have been to many, many conferences over the years and am usually quite exhausted at the end of it, but in this case I was totally energised and even more enthusiastic to continue with my interviews. This is due not only to the excellent variety of speakers but to the superb organisation of the History SA/OHAA SA/NT committee to organise such a smooth running conference, well spaced talks and presentations, always interesting and entertaining. And what about the great catering? Well done June Edwards and your outstanding committee.

My Reflections on the conference
My name is Karen Austin and I am a PhD candidate within the Humanities Department of Flinders University, South Australia. It was my great fortune to be awarded a student scholarship to attend ‘She Said, He Said’ – Reading, writing and recording history the recent combined Oral History Association and South Australian State History conference. My attendance at the conference provided me with insight into the research of many diverse ‘history keepers’ working on their projects both here in Australia, and overseas in the United States of America and New Zealand.

My own research is an investigation into the ways that Australia’s Indigenous people use humour, via the arts, as a tool of intervention into mainstream discourse. Whilst the conference provided me with some interesting and specific Indigenous Australian information, it was primarily this ‘broad taste’ of other research projects and methodologies that was the most rewarding aspect of the conference for me. Following are a few of my thoughts on some of the papers that I particularly enjoyed.

Keynote speaker, Professor Rena Benmayor, spoke of how oral history can open our minds to the possibility of a ‘third space’ – a space beyond the limits of traditional history, where we gain richer knowledge about locations that are imbued with past memories and life. People’s recollections have the ability to make places ‘come alive’ in our imaginations as we glimpse into the memories and lives of those who have, or who continue to inhabit, that space. Whilst memories are coloured with individual experience and bias, they are just as ‘real’ and valid as other forms of historical record. Professor Benmayor’s augmented reality history tours of Salinas’ Chinatown, California, showed me how oral history can takes us beyond the limits of facts alone. Such innovation can launch us into possibilities and experiences of real people, adding greater complexity and dimension to our historical knowledge.

The City of Tea Tree Gully Library’s Historical Officer David Brook gave an engaging appraisal of both the successes and problems experienced in researching and ‘filling the gaps’ of the long neglected histories of Australia’s Indigenous people of that area. In an open and honest manner David discussed the problems of giving voice to marginalised, minority people whose history and lives have been significantly neglected by mainstream to date. He suggested that this task is difficult, yet not impossible. Oral history recording becomes a way that colonial Australia might right some old wrongs and legitimise the history of people whom it has not taken the time to listen to properly in the past.

Indeed, giving voices to other minorities such as gay people who have also experienced ‘different’ and difficult lives was a strong theme of the conference. I enjoyed the papers of Clare Parker and Barbara Karpinski – two speakers who have engaged with those whose lives do not match mainstream morality. What came across to me most poignantly was the fact that there are many people who have interesting and divergent stories to tell. Moreover, in telling their stories they can empower both themselves and us. In researching peoples’ stories we can learn from the successes and failures of the past as we attempt to negate the rocky road of social justice.
My favourite papers were those concerned with images – photographs and visual art. Lynette Shum’s Chinatown photographic history from Wellington, New Zealand; Megg Kelham’s Indigenous prisoner photographs, and Jesse Adams Steins photographs from the NSW Government Printing Office, were fascinating. These speakers challenged me with the fact that whilst a picture is said to be worth a thousand words, photographs can be ‘deceiving’. We really need to investigate the historical and social context, as well as the complexities of personal narratives, behind images in order to truly comprehend them. Likewise, the fascinating work of Melbourne’s Dax Centre, spoken of by Penelope Lee, gave insight into the world of pain, disassociation and the stigma of mental and physical illness. Particularly, the life of artist and cancer sufferer, Rosa Niran, as expressed through her emotive artwork, touched me and reminded me that the arts can be a genuinely cathartic tool for self-expression and creativity.

Issues of social justice and the role played by non-Government bodies, such as the Church, were discussed by both Drs Kristy Kokegei and Janis Wilton in their papers on the life experiences and narratives of migrant Australians. Oral records were again revealed as significant tools to assist in recording the complexities of Australia’s multicultural history. The papers of Drs Sara Donaghey, Margaret Leask and Renee Bester discussed the pitfalls, innovative and sensitive ways that interviews can be undertaken in order to get the best out of the experience of recording oral histories. To balance the benefits of oral recording, the lively discussions of Kevin Bradley and Tonia Eldridge and Drs Sally Stephenson and Karen George gave a timely reminder that although audio provides greater depth to historical records, transcripts remain a valid tool of record too. It is ideally the combination of both oral and text recording that can provide a richer source of information than just one of these methods alone.

In conclusion, I believe that the closing talk given by Professor Benmayor succinctly summed up the overriding benefit of the conference. The intergenerational nature of attendees coupled with the intimacy of the diverse range of people who shared their projects was incredibly inspiring. The ‘reading, writing and recording’ of history in this country is alive and well and vested safely in the hands of some very dedicated and innovative historians.

From Daniella Pilla
This year I was fortunate enough to receive a grant to attend the ‘She said, He said’: Reading, writing and recording history conference. This was to be the first conference I had ever attended and understandably I was abuzz with excitement. What thrilled me the most was the prospect of being part of a community discussing issues relating to a topic very close to my heart- oral histories. What I present here therefore are my impressions of the conference and a few of the key ideas I was able to take away from it. I will begin by introducing my area of research and then take you through, what were for me, some of the conference’s highlights.

I am a PhD student from the University of Adelaide and I am working on the ARC funded Hostel Stories project which aims to document the lived experiences of migrants in South Australian migrant hostels. My particular interest is the experiences of migrants and refugees who resided at the Pennington Migrant Centre during the 1970s, 80s and early 90s. The many people who resided at Pennington during this period make up an under researched area of South Australia’s immigration history. For example, we know little about the initial settlement experiences of South Australia’s Persian Baha’i, Latin American, East Timorese and South East Asian communities. These groups are important members of our community yet as a researcher there are scant resources available for me to
document their initial experiences and impressions as new arrivals in South Australia. Conducting oral histories as part of the Hostel Stories project has been one of the project’s major aims. We have been busy developing an extensive file of interviews which will be available for future researchers at the State Library of South Australia. Understandably then, attending the ‘She Said/He Said: Reading, writing and recording history’ conference allowed me to listen, learn and critically assess the ways in which I conduct and apply oral histories. Through the conversations I had and conference papers I listened to, my understanding of what makes a great oral history was greatly enhanced.

I found it difficult deciding which sessions to attend. So many of them sounded exceptionally interesting! The Queer Voices, Diverse Histories was an excellent session, particularly the two papers covering the oral history projects currently underway within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities. Of interest for me was the discussion as to how researchers can go about preserving the memories of a community that is often excluded from national narratives. Similar to the minority migrant and refugee communities that I am studying, oral histories are used to understand and document the experiences of marginalised communities. One suggestion was trying to engage young members of the community who are interested in collecting their own histories. I am currently thinking about implementing this into my own research.

Finally I want to thank the OHAA SA/NT Branch for the grant I received and the opportunities it presented. Attending this year’s She said, He said: Reading, writing and recording history conference was truly a valuable and memorable experience. What follows now are reviews from some of our South Australian members. There will be more in the Autumn 2014 edition of Word of Mouth.

Picturing the Past: Photography

• With both eyes: Representations of Wellington’s historic Chinatown by Lynette Shum (Oral History Adviser at the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand)

• Seeking the prisoners’ perspectives: what are those snaps saying? by Megg Kelham (PhD candidate at the University of Western Sydney, member of the Professional Historians Association of the Northern Territory and OHAA SA/NT)

• Picturing the Guv: reflections on the process of combining oral histories with institutional photographs in a history of the NSW Government Printing Office by Jesse Adams Stein (PhD candidate at the University of Technology Sydney, School of Design)

Following on from Rina Benmayor’s plenary about Chinatown in Salinas, USA, it was interesting to hear Lynett Shum’s fascinating account of another Chinatown – this one being in Wellington, New Zealand. Lynett explained how she had attempted to use photo elicitation with her research participants to facilitate the sharing of stories about life in the area around Haining Street. Lurid newspaper headlines about opium dens, vice and gambling...
along with photographs of run-down derelict looking buildings were contrasted with the reality of the lives lived there as described by the inhabitants of Chinatown who remembered a place of acceptance, community spirit, friendship and great food! As Lynette stated, it is important to ask through whose eyes we are seeing things when we look at photos taken by those who live outside a community. An important question which led us to pause for thought when confronted by the provocative set of photos with which Megg Kelham began her presentation. Megg’s work focused on the representation of Indigenous people in photographs which were taken in central Australia prior to the 1930s. The black and white photos showed confronting images of Indigenous youths and adult men who were held in neck chains by their captors. Megg reminded us that just as we interrogate written evidence, so too should we regard photographic evidence with a critical eye, asking who took the photo, for what purpose and where it was going to be published. These questions led us perfectly in to Jesse Adam Stein’s presentation about the photographic collection of the New South Wales Government Printing Office. Jesse has discovered that many of the photographs in the collection, which appear to show employees of ‘The Guv’ hard at work, were in fact staged photographs, taken by the official state photographers who had turned their photo lenses inwards and photographed their workmates and work places. Using a number of the photographs as prompts in oral history interviews with former employees of the Printing Office allowed Jesse to reveal a number of amusing stories about what actually went on behind the scenes. The fascinating work described by all three speakers highlighted how important it is that we take the warning issued by Lynette: ‘We say, “a picture speaks a thousand words” but we have to ask whose language they are speaking.’

Annmarie Reid

International Perspectives – transformations in India and Mongolia revealed.

- Transformative Transnationalism: narratives of change across borders by Dr Peter Gale (Associate Professor in Australian Studies at DUCIER, UniSA)
- The life change of Mongolian women in the past century using oral history by Guimin Bao (Master in Philosophy, Vice Editor at Ethnic Publishing House, China and author of Eji River – An Oral History of 17 Mongolian Women)

A small and enthusiastic audience gathered to listen to Dr Peter Gale explore the transformational narratives of Australian volunteers working at Mithra, a non-government organisation established by Sister Mary Theodore, an Australian nun widely regarded as the Mother Theresa of the south who has devoted a lifetime to working with the poorest of India’s poor, in this case children with severe physical and intellectual disabilities. Peter’s narratives and the pictures of beaming children which accompanied them spoke of both personal and political transformations. In particular I remember the story of a young girl who everyone assumed could not learn because of her physical disabilities but who, as a result of living at Mithra, now has a university degree. Then there was the story of the middle aged Australian doctor who visited Mithra as a student. He attributes his understanding of the importance of familial love to the love he discovered amongst Mithra’s children and staff. In the background was the transformation of India itself, from a newly independent nation when the project began to a modern economic powerhouse. Peter’s own involvement with the project added further depth to the story as he revealed how his father, himself and his children have all spent time helping out. Peter’s narratives are a mix of oral history interviews and small sketches written by volunteers. Peter is compiling a book which will be published next year.

Peter’s presentation was followed by a close-up look at some of the transformational changes affecting the lives of seventeen Mongolian women. Guimin Bao, a Mongolian woman currently living in Beijing, discovered the OHAA conference on the internet. Having rehearsed it over some time before taking the long trip to the Conference, she did a sterling job reading her paper in English, revelling in her topic as she explained changes in attitudes to marriage, language and ethnic identity. Amongst the women Bao had interviewed, older ones had been pushed into marriage by parents; younger women had been able to marry for love. Some of the women who had grown up in rural areas leading a nomadic life style were now living in Beijing. Where once
parents had taught girls how to make buttons for the traditional Mongolian cloak, their children were now going to schools and those traditional arts were being forgotten. This had not, however, changed their sense of pride in their Mongolian identity. While June Edwards and Sue Anderson had been working for over 24 hours trying to locate a Mandarin speaker within the University to translate questions for this paper, in one of those deliciously unexpected serendipitous moments a member of the audience who had come to the session revealed that she spoke Mandarin. The translating skills of Katie Maher, a Research Assistant at DUCIER, who has spent over twenty years living in China and who speaks Mandarin at home enabled us to ask Bao questions about Mongolian life after the talk was over. From these questions we learnt that parts of Bao’s book describing religion have been censored by the Chinese government. We also learnt that in the old days Mongolians had buried their dead by putting bodies out on the steppes to be trampled on by horses. Now they are cremated and/or buried in tombs. Transformational change indeed. Katie’s translating assistance drew a string of fascinating questions and answers that really rewarded both audience and presenter, leading to warm hugs and group photos at the end of the talk.

Unfortunately for us, the speaker from the United Arab Emirates, Associate Professor Hamad Mohammed Bin Seray, did not make the session, a great disappointment for those of us wanting to acquire a more intimate understanding of Dubai.

Megg Kelham

Queer Voices, Diverse Histories
• Finding the truth in John Lee’s oral histories by Dr Dino Hodge (Historian and writer)
• 100 Voices: developing a community archive of LGBTI oral histories by Dr Scott McKinnon (Oral History Project Coordinator, Pride History Group, and Research Assistant, Macquarie University)
• Australian Lesbian and Gay Life Stories: Towards a National Oral History Project by Dr Shirleene Robinson (Vice Chancellor’s Innovation Fellow in the Discipline of Modern History at Macquarie University) and Robert Reynolds (Oral Historian and Associate Professor in Modern History, Macquarie University)

Chair of this session, Ian Purcell AM, is an Adelaide gay community activist and writer with an interest in local history and community theatre. He is also late historian John Lee’s literary executor and custodian of his important collection of interviews with gay community members.

Finding the truth in John Lee’s oral histories
Dino Hodge is the author of Did you meet any Malagas?, on Darwin’s gay community, and The Fall Upward about spirituality in the lives of lesbian women and gay men. Dino’s presentation was prompted by a paper, delivered at the 2011 State History Conference, examining the sources and extent of police persecution of South Australia’s homosexual community. Much of the initial research referenced the interviews conducted by John Lee, while this second paper responded to a question from a conference attendee about the validity of those oral histories.

Lee employed oral history methodology because, in his words: Diaries and letters ... are unfortunately not a ready source, because secrecy, until quite recently, has been all important in the homosexual world. Risk of discovery and exposure through a written record, even after one’s death, was a pervasive fear.

Mindful of this perspective, Dino spoke of the process of identifying alternative primary material through State Records, the State Library and other sources to confirm the veracity of the John Lee interviews. He referred to the satisfaction of experiences, formerly only recorded in oral testimony, being substantiated in these written records. A notable example offered was the after-hours soirees conducted by a long-term Government House employee, spoken of by many, and confirmed in a State records document labelled ‘Parties given by Peter Rollo at Government House’! The additional research readily found that police documentation, official and personal records (such as memoirs and other interviews) consistently supported and corroborated the experiences of the original Lee interviewees.

100 Voices: developing a community archive of LGBTI oral histories
Moving from the unofficially sanctioned persecution of South Australia’s homosexual community by the State, to a project rooted in Sydney’s gay activist movement, Dr Scott McKinnon spoke about the Pride History Group’s (PHG) 100 Voices. Reflecting John Lee’s observation about the paucity of written primary material in the homosexual community, the decision was made to employ oral history methodology to document the experiences of a cross-section of community members. When the 100th voice was recorded in early 2013, the oral history archive was made publicly accessible, and a website showcasing the material with 139 audio excerpts, developed.
Scott reflected on project challenges, some of which derived from being a community history group. Largely resourced by volunteers, there were the usual frustrations around participants finding the time for consistent involvement, along with concerns over lack of expertise. 100 Voices had contributors with strong interviewing and web publishing experience, but organisers were mindful of how difficult it would otherwise have been to meet the expectation of engagement with the online world. A more significant, unresolved, issue for Scott was the overrepresentation of gay men (to the exclusion of L, B, T and I’s) in the interviews, and the bias, unwitting or otherwise, reflected in the selection of excerpts for the ‘sound bites’.

The project has not been without its frustrations, with representatives from specific cohorts more elusive than others. Robert Reynolds may, in fact, have echoed Scott McKinnon’s musings when he suggested that the youngest group of gay men were not interested in being interviewed because they were ‘too busy with dance parties’. He also made a special request that, if audience members knew any ‘quite mature’ lesbians from Western Australia, he’d be very eager to speak to them – even more so if the potential interviewee were Aboriginal! That said, it is anticipated that approximately 300 hours of recording will have been gathered by the project’s end.

Tonia Eldridge

Indigenous Voices
- Centering Aboriginal voices in Mazin Grace: the politics of language and survival in ‘post’-colonial South Australia by Dr Dylan Coleman (Adelaide University, with engagement with Aboriginal communities and social justice)
- New histories of attachment: Indigenous Caring for Country Programs by Associate Professor Daryle Rigney (Dean Indigenous Strategy and Engagement at Flinders University) and Associate Professor Steve Hemming (Australian Studies, Flinders University)

This session was a joy for me to chair as I have long associations with the presenters of both papers. I was truly delighted to introduce Dylan Coleman, a Kokatha-Greek woman from the West Coast of South Australia. Nearly 20 years ago I was engaged by the National Estate to conduct a history project at Koonibba Aboriginal mission just out of Ceduna. I recorded oral history interviews with Dylan’s Nanna Pearl, Dylan’s mother Mercy Glastonbury (nee Coleman) and Mercy’s five sisters and two brothers. During the course of this work Dylan approached me to say she wanted to record her father’s life story and asked me how she should go about it. When I returned to Adelaide I sent her a copy of Beth’s Oral History Handbook and thought nothing more about it. Last year I heard Dylan speak at the Adelaide Spirit Festival at Tandanya and learned that she had not only completed her father’s story, but also her mother’s and that she had just been conferred her PhD at Adelaide University.
She told me that if I had not sent her the *Handbook*, she may not have gone on to undertake any of this work. Clearly she was being kind, but it nevertheless filled me with great satisfaction to think she had come so far and that I had some small part in the beginnings of that. I was also able to direct her to her family’s oral history collection in the State Library, particularly the interviews with her wonderful Nanna, who is now deceased. Isn’t oral history great? Dylan talked openly and bravely about the journey of writing her mother’s story growing up on Koonibba Lutheran mission in the 1940s and 50s, an award-winning novel called *Mazin' Grace*, which brought many painful emotions to the surface that affected her mother to the point of attempted suicide. She discussed how they both came through this difficult process and how the telling of her story brought Mercy to a place of conciliation with her fraught past. It was a moving account and I can highly recommend the book. If you would like to purchase a copy, please get in touch with Dylan at Dylan.Coleman@adelaide.edu.au

The second presentation was by Daryle Rigney and Steve Hemming. While I have read much of Daryle’s scholarly works, I have known Steve for many years, having had the fun of working with him excavating the former Swan Reach mission on the River Murray in 1993 and 1994.

Daryle and Steve talked about the important Ngarrindjeri nations’ Murray Futures projects that engage with natural resource management, land use and Indigenous histories of attachment. This work extends that of some of the extraordinary Ngarrindjeri leaders such as brothers Tom and George Trevorrow and Matt Rigney, who have now all passed away, but whose legacy will remain strong in the Coorong and Lakes region. The projects represent proactive reconciliation, driven by Ngarrindjeri people through their traditional concepts of sharing and caring. The projects have resulted in alliances on traditional Indigenous paradigms, but contemporary ones as well. They are also now being recognised as a model by other Indigenous communities.

**History on the Stage**

- *Invisible Lives* by Ian Purcell (Adelaide gay community activist and writer) *Note: the reviewer was unable to be present for this paper*
- *Telling Tales* by Dr Vivienne Nicholson (Historian) and Evelyn Krape (actor, founding member of The Pram Factory, Melbourne)
- *Cutaway – a story* by Lara Torr (Program Coordinator, Vitalstatistix, Port Adelaide)

**Telling Tales**

This presentation described a pilot project to create theatre from oral history with a twist; the interviewees were to be the performers. Seven people, all over 50, from the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria were interviewed by Dr Nicholson. She provided the participants with a list of biographical questions and also time to gather personal photographs and artefacts to include in the resulting performances. Evelyn sat in on all the interviews to aid her in developing the performance.

There were some consistent themes in the interviews, including family, migration, racism and volunteering. After the interviews were completed Evelyn created the performance piece. Prior to the performance there were two rehearsals. Each participant was given a script at the first rehearsal, but rather than have the performers read from their scripts Evelyn used a PowerPoint presentation as a prop to assist them. The performers were able to include photographs and music and had licence to vary their stories on the day. Evelyn served as narrator to help the link to stories. Seventy people were in the audience at the performance.
The participants were debriefed three weeks later and they were all very positive about their experience, describing it as transformative. A video was made of the performance and this helped to reinforce the sense of achievement of the participants. The resulting camaraderie between the participants has encouraged them to re-present the performance at Seniors Week. The authors found this method an effective way of preserving stories and contributing to the mental health of participants at the same time. They gave the example of one interviewee who asked for the recording to stop to tell a painful, personal story that she didn’t want recorded. But when it came to the performance she had the confidence to retell it.

**Cutaway**

Vitalstatistix or ‘Vitals’ as it is more commonly known is in its 30th year. It started as a national women’s theatre group and is still driven by feminist principles. Its home is the Waterside Workers Federation Hall, built by the Working Men’s Association in 1926. The renovation of the building inspired the performance piece, ‘Cutaway’ which tells the history of the hall, its people and the Port Adelaide community.

Community members interviewed Port Adelaide people with a connection to the hall. They interviewed all ages including some sixteen year olds. Many of the stories were well-known but they wanted to ensure that other stories were also heard.

What made the project unique was the performers wore headphones through which they were hearing for the first time the voices of the interviewees. The performers (all professional actors) repeated what they were hearing verbatim, including the ums, ahs and pauses and created an impromptu performance. All but one of the interviewees attended the performance, which they found very positive and affirming.

**Comment**

Both presentations demonstrate that recording can be ‘value-added’ through public performance and that this has multiple benefits: a wider audience, public affirmation of the interviewees, a new awareness of the lives of the interviewees and in some cases the chance to share stories that might otherwise remain hidden.

**Peter Hackworth**

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**NEWS FROM THE J.D. SOMERVILLE ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**NEW INTERVIEWS/PROJECTS**

**OH 1024 – History of Crafers Primary School oral history project** – Karen George

Year 6 students at Crafers Primary are conducting a major project to discover the history of their school. Part of this involves the Year 6 students conducting oral history interviews with past students of Crafers Primary School. Karen George has trained the students in the use of the recording equipment and given guidance and advice on designing questions for the interviewees. Students work in pairs, as interviewer and sound technician, having rehearsed the interview together before recording the subject. To date, thirteen interviews of past and present Hills residents have been recorded and received by the State Library, including that of Beatrice May Laffey, aged 94, and one Crafers Primary graduate who went on to bigger things (but came home), Alexander Downer.

**OH 1014 – The Greek migration experience: oral histories of Greek migrants in South Australia during the 20th century.**

The Organisation of Hellene and Hellene Cypriot Women of Australia (SA) Incorporated (OEEGA) set out twelve months ago to document the experiences of Greek migrants who arrived in South Australia in the 20th century. Aiming to explore the reasons for migrating and the experiences of the migrants on arrival in South Australia, Helen Haltis and Joanna Tsalikis have taken 24 interviews to date. Some of the interviews are in Greek, all are being transcribed, and include songs and stories from the Eastern Mediterranean as well as accounts of new life in SA. A common theme in many interviews is the very extensive journeying undertaken by Greeks and Greek Cypriots. Their experiences of Mediterranean North Africa and the Middle East have been part of the contribution these migrants have brought to South Australia. In an initiative by the SA branch of Oral History Australia, selected interviews will be incorporated into the SA/NT OHA website.
**OH 1019** – Aboriginal Task Force oral history project – Sue Anderson
Comprises twelve interviews to date, conducted by Dr Sue Anderson, with people involved in the Aboriginal Task Force Education unit of the former South Australian Institute of Technology (SAIT). Sue plans a great many more in capturing the oral record of this group who played an important part in South Australian society. The once off special program was implemented by the SAIT in 1973 in response to demand from the Adelaide Aboriginal community who wanted their own people to work as case managers with Aboriginal clients. Thanks to careful advising, the academic program incorporated indigenous knowledge systems, a learning environment that fostered cultural safety, teachers selected for experience and cultural sensitivity and students selected for community commitment and likely success. The course was a two year uncredited certificate which candidates studied alongside the SAIT’s Associate Diploma in Social Work. In evaluation, the Task Force training scheme was judged a success based on student comments alone, though its impact was far greater, and the processes and methods developed by the Task Force became a model for Indigenous higher education across Australia.

**OH 1022** – Macclesfield Butter and Cheese Factory Oral History Project – Lesley Schack
The Davis family expanded their butter and cheese factory into a new building in Macclesfield in 1937. It was subsequently sold to Jacobs Dairy Produce Company (of Mount Barker) in 1944, who operated it until it was bought by Southern Farmers Limited in 1975. The oral history project covers this period, 1937-1975, and is intending to interview ten people employed by the factory, or factory-related family members. This period was one of enormous change in dairying with new production methods and demands resulting in a processing jump from 4,000 to 14,000 gallons per day during the period of Jacobs’ ownership. A table in Jim Faull’s *Macclesfield: Reflections Along the Angas* (p.126) shows that while processing increased markedly, the number of dairies supplying the Macclesfield factory went from 236 down to 102 during this period of change to bulk handling and increased licensing. Cheese made at the plant had a strong reputation overseas, particularly in Japan. The interviewers advertised locally, held a project meeting and afternoon tea and have already deposited five recordings with milk carters, office workers and factory hands.

**OH 172/35** – Peter Hetzel – Joan Durdin
Joan interviewed Peter as part of the Royal Adelaide Hospital oral history programme in 2006, but it is a new accession for the collection. Peter Stuart Hetzel graduated in Medicine from the University of Adelaide in 1948. After working as a Resident Medical Officer at the Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH) and the Adelaide Children’s Hospital, he was appointed in 1950 Surgical Research Officer at the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science. Peter was awarded his MD in 1952 based on his work in electrolyte disorders at the Institute. From 1952-56 Peter worked at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, training in general medicine and cardiology, where he was a member of the team pioneering open-heart surgery. During this time he married Margaret Mackie in London, and together they had four daughters. With his cardiology background Peter led the development of open-heart surgery at the RAH where he was Foundation Director of the Cardiovascular Investigation Unit from 1960-1965. The unit’s research contributed to the international recognition of the RAH Cardio-Thoracic Surgical Unit. Peter led the unit for 25 years, finishing as Emeritus Specialist of RAH. During his career, he was concerned with salary equity of visiting medical staff, and joined the Salaried Medical Officers Association, becoming President in 1980. In a long interview, Peter describes his time lecturing in Rabaul, long term friends, efforts at furthering his career, developing spaces and services for heart care and development of specific heart procedures.
Northern Territory Archives Service report

by Matthew Stephen

The Northern Territory Archives Service and the National Archives of Australia (Darwin) celebrated their successful co-location with an opening of the Northern Territory Archives Centre on the 11 November. David Fricker, Director-General, National Archives of Australia and the Honourable Matt Conlan MLA, Minister for Arts and Museums, attended to represent the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Government respectively. The current Northern Territory Administrator, Her Honour Sally Thomas and former Northern Territory Administrators Tom Pauling AO QC and Ted Egan AO read excerpts from the archival records to showcase the collections.

The Northern Territory Archives Centre is a ‘one stop shop’ for researchers. Collections of the National Archives of Australia and the Northern Territory Archives Service brings together the archival records spanning 170 years of the Territory’s history, from the Commonwealth Government, the Northern Territory Government, Community archives and the Northern Territory Oral History collection. The Northern Territory Archives Centre will have four collections from two Archives in one location, operating with a shared reference and reading room service.

The Northern Territory Archives Centre is situated at Kelsey Crescent, Millner, Darwin. The search room is open 9.00am to 4.30pm Tuesday to Friday. Appointments are recommended. The Northern Territory History Grants have again been available in 2013 [applications closed 22 November]. The aim of the grants program is to encourage and support original research about Northern Territory history. Northern Territory residents and societies and community organisations based in the Northern Territory are eligible to apply. Non Northern Territory residents, State, Local and Federal government agencies are not eligible to apply. Many successful past applications have been oral history projects and it is hoped that this will again be the case this year.

Oral history - bringing council and the community together

A Charles Sturt story.

by Linda Lacey

The City of Charles Sturt is located in Adelaide’s western suburbs and stretches from the City to the coast along the River Torrens, taking in the Hindmarsh, Woodville, West Lakes, Findon, Grange and Henley Beach areas. Our population of around 105,000 is diverse both culturally and socio-economically.

My role as Cultural Heritage Project Officer is to ensure that Charles Sturt’s history and heritage and the stories that we tell about the past are relevant and interesting to as many people in our community as possible. As I sit within a community development team, a community development approach informs much of my work.

At the City of Charles Sturt, we aim to use history and heritage as a tool to connect with our community, and to contribute to sense of place.
and identity. Through developing partnerships with local groups and organisations, including historical societies, we also aim to build community capacity. As a result, my work is extremely varied and involves working across the organisation on a variety of projects including built heritage, major developments and urban renewal, reserve and street upgrades, heritage displays, as well as more general local history activities such as presentations, tours and managing a local history collection.

While oral history does not form a major part of my role, it is a critical element in the work that we do in gathering and preserving community history and heritage. Recently, the City of Charles Sturt has been lucky to support and partner in two oral history based projects that have strong relevancy to our local community. These two projects are capturing previously undocumented histories that are enabling us to understand our city and community better.

These two projects are:
• Hostel Stories being undertaken by the University of Adelaide and the Migration Museum.
• Madeleine Regan’s *From the Veneto to Frogmore and Findon Roads: stories of Italian market gardeners 1920s – 1970s*.

The *Veneto to Frogmore and Findon Roads* project has been so successful and popular with local residents that in 2012 we developed a side project and engaged a University of Adelaide student to research the history of the Bulgarian community (who were also market gardeners). Under Madeleine’s wonderful guidance and mentoring, this student started to build her own skills in the oral history field, and delivered to us a great overview on the history of our lesser-known Bulgarian community and captured the stories of two key community figures.

We are also ‘dabbling’ in oral history in other ways. This year we’ve funded a project by a local surf club to train young club members to undertake oral histories of older members as a way of documenting club history. Oral history is also used as a key research tool in the West Lakes history project currently being undertaken by Dr Susan Marsden, and from this we’ve now got interviews of two of the major players in the development.

Charles Sturt greatly values the partnerships that we’ve been able form by supporting the *Hostel Stories* and the *Veneto to Frogmore and Findon Roads* projects. Without partnerships such as these, I don’t think that as a local government organisation we would be participating in oral history at all, primarily because we don’t have the skills or the resources to do it ourselves.

When it comes to local history, oral history is one of the main research techniques that people have heard about, yet I think that it is one of the most misunderstood techniques. Oral history is really hard and many people don’t realise this. I’ve lost count of the number of times that someone has contacted me to tell me about so-and-so, such as their aunt or the old bloke down the road, who is 100 and has a really great memory and that someone should ask them about their life – in fact I should go and interview them! I’ve done this once, with disastrous results. I won’t go into detail but unsurprisingly the result was a really bad oral history interview that had no purpose and as a result has no real value to us as an organisation.

However, I learnt a valuable lesson – proper and good oral history is hard to come by. Due to the diverse nature of my role I don’t have the capacity or resources to build my own skills in this area therefore I need to seize opportunities to partner in and support oral history projects that are relevant to our community. Being able to support oral history projects has in many ways been one of the most rewarding local history undertakings we have done. More than just the information being collected, they have resulted in the creation of some very strong relationships with our residents and community. This is due to the following:

- Supporting specific oral history projects has enabled Council to branch out into non-traditional areas of local history, and by its very nature, more contemporary areas of local history which have greater relevance to the community. This relevancy translates into greater interest and participation in local and community history.

- This increased community engagement in local history by the community as both participants in and audiences of these projects is a key benefit for us. Generally, the oral history projects we have supported have generated more interest in local history than other local history projects or activities combined. The *Veneto to Frogmore and Findon Roads* project easily achieves 100 plus people at an event, and the *Hostel Stories* project is also proving to be as equally popular (we’ve directly reached at least couple of hundred people through activities associated with this project).

- Oral history projects have brought, and continue to bring, new and more diverse voices to local history. They challenge the notion of who local history belongs to, and what the authoritative voice
in local history is. They are based on community involvement rather than exclusion in deciding what stories are important and should be documented and preserved.

- Oral history is accessible. While I think oral history is more challenging than people realise I also think that people or groups looking to do history projects find more confidence in using oral history as a research tool over others. We all have an ability to communicate with other people, ask questions and take an interest in the sharing of a story, whereas navigating and researching archives, for example, can be rather daunting if you are not skilled in that area. The surf lifesaving club project we are supporting is an example of this.

- Oral history project outcomes also contribute to making history more accessible. Hearing the emotion in someone’s voice as they recount a past event immediately captures people’s imaginations, just as the technical detail of a particular work technique explained with a simply spoken quote can create greater understanding. I find that people enjoy oral history projects because they hear local stories being told in local voices – they can understand, relate and identify. Both the Hostel Stories and Veneto to Frogmore and Findon Roads projects are great examples because they are capturing migrant or cultural groups that we may not reach in more traditional history projects.

- The projects we support are capturing significant but missing histories of our city and are doing it in a way that involves rather than excludes the community. The success and strength of the projects, particularly Veneto to Frogmore and Findon Roads, is in part due to them involving and enabling the community to tell their stories in their own voices.

- By participating in strongly defined and professionally conducted oral history projects that take individual stories and robustly compares them with other stories and sources of information, we are recognising and validating what are often personal and private memories and experiences. We are placing an importance on these individual stories and linking them to broader historical narratives, and participants and their families have expressed deep gratitude for this.

We are gaining a better understanding of our city and community. These projects build our knowledge and resources about local events, groups and places. They help us understand the experiences of our community in becoming who it is today. They can also reveal unexpected information. For example, the Veneto to Frogmore and Findon Roads project is providing valuable knowledge about land use and about market gardening practices that could potentially impact local residents today (eg past chemical use). Through the Hostel Stories project we hope to gain knowledge that will assist us meeting the settlement needs of current newly arrived communities in Charles Sturt.

A couple of months ago I met with representatives from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and the Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission (and SBS board) who were on a national road tour to investigate settlement strategies for new arrivals, and how we connect with our diverse community and reflect their stories in our work. I used both oral history projects as examples of how we do this in Charles Sturt, and the representatives were very impressed and interested to know more. They liked that we were investing resources in gathering the histories of specific migrant communities, and that rather than viewing settlement issues of past migrant communities in a time capsule we see the information as being relevant to assisting and meeting the very different needs of contemporary migrant communities.

The projects are reconnecting communities and people to places. With both projects communities who were dispersed in the transition to more permanent accommodation or by urban development are reconnecting through the sharing of memory, and by physically coming back together as part of other project outcomes. The stories that we can share as a result of the projects also establish connections between past and current residents and local places.

Ultimately, the oral history projects we are supporting help us as a council get closer to our community. For the community, oral history tends to feel like ‘real history’ – they understand it, it means something to them, and it encourages them to become more involved. As the oral history field expands and makes increasing use of other media such as video and digital storytelling, I think that benefits for those of us participating in oral history projects will only increase. While our ability to plan and drive oral history projects of our own may be limited, our ability to partner in and support oral history projects is much greater. We relish the benefits that these types of projects present for us and our community.
Guildhouse's Traditional Craft Skills Project began in 2009 as a way of assisting artists and craftspeople from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds to continue practising after moving to Australia. The project involved traditional craftspeople teaching their skills to the general public and members of their own communities in over 30 workshops, including Nigerian indigo dyeing, Bangladeshi quilt embroidery (Kantha), Iranian wood inlay and Afghan embroidery. Many of the people who attended these workshops were already proficient crafts people who were interested in furthering their knowledge of other cultures. Throughout the workshops the CALD crafts people shared their personal stories with community members and vice versa; craft making, it seems, provides a space where people can connect across cultures and generations, through the common language of making. The project highlighted the intertwining of personal stories and craft making, which inspired the oral history component of the project.

Alongside the workshops, in 2012 we facilitated creative partnerships between five of the culturally and linguistically diverse craftspeople who had taught workshops and five South Australia artists. Commencing in May 2012, these partnerships offered participants the opportunity to engage in a mutually beneficial process of creative development, exchange and collaboration. The partnerships were: Oluwole Oginni (Nigerian indigo dyeing) and Simone Tippett (printmaking); Masuma Akther (Bangladeshi quilt embroidery) and Kay Lawrence (textiles); Lady Narvaez Penaloza (Colombian string bags and Molas) and Jelina Haines (textiles/fibre); Shima Gholami (Iranian wood inlay) and Adrian Potter (wood working); and Milete-Tsega Ogbalidet (Eritrean basketry) and Lisa Furno (jewellery).

The creative partners worked together over a period of ten months, sharing techniques and stories while creating new work. As part of this process a series of oral history interviews were conducted. These interviews focused on the maker’s history with their chosen craft and, for the CALD practitioners, their experiences of migration and settlement in Adelaide. The artists were also asked to discuss the process of exchange they undertook as part of the project and how this created personal and cultural connections. A primary focus of the interviews was talking through the processes of making crafts.

The creative partnerships culminated in The Third Space: intercultural crafting, an exhibition showcasing new work resulting from the creative partnerships. The exhibition was launched at Prospect Gallery in April 2013 and then toured to Art Images Gallery and Murray Bridge Regional Gallery. Extracts of the oral history interviews accompanied the exhibition on iPods and are also available to listen to on the Guildhouse website. The original recordings have been entered into the JD Somerville oral history collection in the State Library of South Australia.

Guildhouse would like to thank the South Australian branch of the Oral History Association of Australia for its support of the Traditional Craft Skills Project. We would also like to acknowledge the support received from the Government of South Australia through Arts SA, the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments, Multicultural SA, the Textiles Studio of the School of Art, Architecture and Design at the University of South Australia, History SA, the City of Charles Sturt and Next Byte Glenunga. The response to the project from the media, arts industry and broader community was extremely positive and we are proud to have assisted craft practitioners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and promoted traditional craft skills to both the local and wider South Australia community while raising awareness of the significant role that craft plays in all working practices.

For further information about the Traditional Craft Skills Project and The Third Space exhibition, including links to the oral histories go to: http://guildhouse.org.au/projects/the-third-space-intercultural-crafting/

Guildhouse August 2013
Masuma Akther and Kay Lawrence
Courtesy Pauline Cockrill, History SA

Artwork photographs courtesy Grant Hancock

Milete-Tega Ogbalidet and Lisa Furno
Lamp #1, 2013
palm leaves, cotton, beads, copper shim, jump rings and aluminium
180mm h x 360mm diam

Lady Narvaez Peñaloza and Jelina Haines
Wildlife Hand Felted Mola, 2013
Australian fine merino wool, black button and cotton thread
1960mm h x 670mm w

Milete-Tega Ogbalidet and Lisa Furno
Lamp #2, 2013
bamboo, galvanized iron, enamel and cotton
290mm h x 280mm diam
Lady Narvaez Peñaloza and Jelina Haines
1 River – 2 Cultures Tapestry, 2013
mixed media
690mm h x 1300mm w

Top row left to right
Masuma Akther, Chittagong (Shapla / Waterlily), 2012,
230mm h x 270mm w
Kay Lawrence, Uraidla oval (autumn), 2012,
390mm h x 440mm w
Kay Lawrence, Uraidla oval (sign), 2013, 260mm h x 340mm w

Bottom row left to right
Kay Lawrence, Uraidla oval (magpies),
2013, 460mm h x 460mm w
Masuma Akther, Chittagong (Gram Bangla / Village of
Bangladesh), 2012, 370mm h x 610mm w

Oluwole Oginni and Simone Tippett
Adire (Indigo Songs), 2013
batik, tie-dye, natural and synthetic indigo, hand
stitching
2100mm h x 2100mm w

Oluwole Oginni and Simone Tippett
Ripple (Indigo Songs), 2012
relief woodcuts printed on Fabriano
Rosapina paper
900mm h x 2140mm w

Shima Gholami and Adrian Potter
SUN, 2013
rock maple, walnut, fret-work,
carving and inlay
980mm h x 1100mm w x 75mm d
The South Australian Home Builders Club Incorporated (SAHBC) operated between 1945 and 1965. A relatively unknown South Australian organisation, its members built about 400 houses in metropolitan Adelaide, thus making an important contribution to the state’s post World War Two housing shortage. Organised as a cooperative and run on collaborative lines, the SAHBC offered a unique means of obtaining a house in the face of postwar building restrictions and constraints. Club members were not skilled in design and building but learnt on the job and taught each other.

Edna and Val Love and Jim Phillips became lifelong friends through their involvement in the SAHBC. Over the years the trio lost touch with other Club members but in the late 1990s they endeavoured to renew contact with former colleagues. In October 1999 Edna penned a letter which reached historians Donald Langmead and Christine Garnaut in the Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture and Design at the University of South Australia (UniSA). Edna’s letter was the genesis of the South Australian Home Builders’ Club project.

A team of staff from several disciplines in the Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences at UniSA worked on the project in collaboration with five members of the Oral History Association of Australia (SA Branch), the Oral History unit at the State Library of South Australia and a representative selection of former Club members and their spouses. OHAA members, Sue Anderson, Karen George, Alison McDougall, Mandy Paul and Lizzie Russell produced fifteen oral history interviews which are available in the J.D. Somerville Collection of the State Library of South Australia.

In 2005-06 two of the UniSA research team, Christine Garnaut and Julie Collins, made a successful application to the South Australian History Fund to undertake further research on the project. The resulting monograph, Not for Ourselves Alone: The South Australian Home Builders’ Club, 1945-1965, introduces the Club and its aspirations, operations and achievements through the voices of former members and their spouses. Derived largely from archival material and oral histories, it reveals not only Club members’ resourcefulness but also their remarkable contributions to the achievement of home ownership in post-war South Australia. It builds a picture of post war Adelaide and the community collaboration that delivered homes to hundreds of young families. The SAHBC project began because Edna and Val Love and Jim Phillips wanted to find their friends and to collectively and publicly tell the story of their Club and its achievements. This monograph makes their wish a reality and was launched at the recent Biennial National OHAA Conference & 21st State History Conference by Emeritus Professor Alison McKinnon.

Oral History Australia Inc
South Australian/Northern Territory Association

Oral History Australia Inc is a non-profit body whose members practice and promote oral history. The aims of the Oral History Australia [OHA] are:

- to promote the practice and methods of oral history
- to educate in the use of oral history methods
- to encourage discussions on all aspects of oral history
- to foster the preservation of oral history records

The South Australian Association of OHA came to life just seven months after the national body was founded in Perth in July 1978.

Services provided by the volunteer committee of Oral History Australia to members of the SA/NT Association include:

- *Word of Mouth* Branch newsletter which is published twice a year and includes articles about work being done in South Australia
- Annual Journal of Oral History Australia which contains papers given at the biennial conference or other papers considered of particular topical interest
- Hire of Fostex digital recording equipment at a membership discount
- Various publications including the Oral History Handbook by Beth Robertson which have a membership discount
- Biennial conference of OHA which has a membership discount
- Regular oral history training workshops. These full day workshops introduce participants to the practice and methods of oral history and provide equipment training on the Fostex digital recorders
- Advanced oral history workshops covering a range of issues including ethics, memory and technological advances in the use of oral histories
- Access to the annual OHA SA/NT Association grant scheme of $500 to help foster small oral history initiatives in South Australia and a free workshop
- Access to the branch website: www.ohaa-sa.com.au
- Participation in events which often coincide with the AGM and Christmas eg tours of the Migration Museum and the State Library of South Australia focusing on the audio visual aspects of these organisations; a New Year get together over afternoon tea; talk by Peter Kolomitsev at the State Library on digital technology and equipment; seminars during the Family History Fair and History Week; and exhibitions during History Week