



REWIND

AUGUST 2016

Symposium review

One of Oral History Victoria's premier events, the Symposium – Culture, Community and Oral History : Stories of Diversity, Conflict and Resilience, was held recently and considered a great success by all who attended.

OHV President, Al Thomson, provided this overview of the 2016 Symposium:

I love so many things about oral history.

I love the fact that people from so many different contexts and backgrounds do it - community historians, workers in museums and cultural organisations, professional and freelance historians, advocacy workers and care workers, students of many different kinds, and even the occasional academic like me - and that although we do oral history in different ways and for different reasons, we're all animated by an enthusiasm for recording and working with people's life stories.

I love the fact that oral history can make a difference. That 'small stories' can change how we understand the world, past and present; that telling your own story can be affirming and empowering; that hearing stories like one's own - or not like one's own - can be transformative.

I love the fact that the world of oral history seems to be populated by so many fine, fun, generous people, which may be because good oral historians are good at listening, and are interested in other people and their stories and interests (a Mexican friend once told me that she thinks it may also be because the vast majority of oral historians are women!).

I love the fact that oral historians are good collaborators. By definition we cannot work alone, and we often collaborate not just with people and their stories, but also with a range of institutions and voluntary organisations.

All of these qualities and passions were on show, in abundance, at this year's OHV symposium about Culture, Community and Oral History: Stories of Diversity, Conflict and Resilience', at MUSEO Italiano in Carlton (many thanks to the museum!!).

In the opening sessions on Immigration and Australian Communities, Moya McFadzean from Museum Victoria talked us through the approaches and issues involved in making museum exhibitions about migration, culture and diversity – in a wonderful keynote opening to the day. Melissa Afentoulis explored the values and challenges of a community oral history project with Greek migrants from Lemnos, which is also the basis of her PhD; and weaver, artist and community activist Anneli Rickards explained her life's work of recording and documenting Finnish migrants to Australia.

The second session focused on Organisations and Oral History. Gretel Evans (with Jodie Boyd) spoke on behalf of several colleagues about their Young Christian Workers' oral history project and what they learnt about power of an activist faith, with colleagues and interviewees joining in an illuminating discussion. Marie Nunan introduced her oral history project with people who have worked and volunteered with Barwon Health, and highlighted both the value of the project and the ways in which some stories are difficult, if not impossible, for people to share.

The final panel session was about “telling Community History through the Individual”. Melissa Walsh explained how the Big Issue Classroom enables people who have been homeless to narrate their life stories to groups of mostly school students, and how this social enterprise benefits the ‘guest speakers’ (who get paid) and informs young audiences about homelessness. Big Issue Classroom guest speaker Julian Ogle talked frankly and thoughtfully about his own experience of developing and performing his story. Narrative researcher and graduate student Elena Balcaiti used her narrative work about passionate sports fans, and her work with her ‘contributor’ Lee, to introduce issues about the ‘magical’ work of co-creating personal narratives and using them to make sense of bigger issues. The panel - and the symposium participants – then enjoyed a vigorous discussion of several issues from the session that also connected to earlier presentations: What are the challenges in eliciting and recording people’s life stories? What are the challenges in presenting and interpreting people’s life stories? How is life experience articulated through personal narrative, and how might that story-telling impact upon the narrator? What is the value of these types of oral history work?

I came away inspired by the diversity and value of oral history practice, and by the activist engagement and generosity of spirit of oral historians – in all our varieties.

Oral History Victoria Innovation Awards 2016

Oral historians based in Victoria are encouraged to apply for one of two annual awards judged by Oral History Victoria (OHV)

Oral History Victoria Community Innovation Award:

is open to all community-based oral history practitioners, including freelance workers and professional historians, and members of voluntary organisations and public institutions (excluding educational institutions).

Oral History Victoria Education Innovation Award:

is open to students and staff working in an educational institution.



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To be eligible projects must have been active (in creation and / or production) in 2015 and / or 2016. Applicants must be based in Victoria, though the project may involve oral history work interstate or overseas. Applicants need not be members of OHV, though they will be added to the OHV mail list and encouraged to join. Members of the OHV committee may not apply.

Each award winner will receive a prize of \$250, and all shortlisted projects will be posted on the OHV website. The judging panel may award joint prizes and/or Commendations for Excellence to outstanding runners-up. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to make a short presentation about their project at the OHV annual general meeting on Thursday 27 October.

Application Process:

Applicants must email an application as a Word document or pdf attachment, to each of the three judges listed below. Your application must include:

1. Applicant/s name (individual/s and organisational affiliation, if applicable)
2. Award you are applying for (Community or Education):
3. Project name
4. Applicant/s contact address, phone number, email and (where available) web address.
5. In no more than 500 words, a description of the project and explanation of why it is deserving of an award for innovation in the creation, interpretation and / or presentation of oral history.
6. A list of all outputs produced by the project, including web addresses where appropriate.
7. If a significant project output is a book, journal article, essay or some other format that can be provided to the judges, then one copy should be sent to each of the three judges at the following addresses:

Alistair Thomson (Chair of judging panel): email alistair.thomson@monash.edu;
postal address: History Program, Monash University, Clayton 3800.



Susan Faine: email susan@susanfaine.com.au; address: OHV c/-Royal Historical Society of Victoria, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne, 3000.

Linda Patrick: email linda@farmingminds.com.au; postal address: PO Box 34, Shoreham, 3916.

Closing date for applications: 1 September 2016

Details of the 2015 award winners available at:
<http://www.oralhistoryvictoria.org.au/ohv-awards/>

Sad news

As OHV members have already been notified, former Deakin University historian and Oral History Victoria member Michele Langfield died recently after a spell of ill-health. Among many achievements, Michele played a significant role in recording video testimonies of Holocaust survivors at Melbourne's Holocaust Centre. She published important work based on these interviews, including the article 'Capturing the Intangible: Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Held in the Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre, Melbourne', published in the *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* (28, 2006, 7-13), and the very fine book *Testifying to the Holocaust* (with Pam Maclean and Dvir Abramovich), published by the Australian Association of Jewish studies in 2008. A memorial service was held for Michele on 26 July at Montsalvat in Eltham.

OHV Inaugural Group Exhibition – Call for submissions

Oral History Victoria is excited to announce that it is planning its first group exhibition in partnership with The Good Room Social History, Documenting & Sound Gallery in Brunswick East. This will be a 4-week exhibition in from 23 November until 21 December 2016.

This is a fantastic opportunity to promote the work of Oral History Victoria and to showcase the work of its members.

What's involved?



This is an open entry exhibition. An invitation is extended to all Oral History Victoria members to submit your showcase piece.

Simply download and print the Group Exhibition submission form, fill it out and send it to:

OHV, c/o Katrina Lolicato

6 Lockwood Road

Belgrave Heights VIC 3160

or you can email it to: thefoundlingarchive@gmail.com

The submission form can be found on the OHV website:

<http://www.oralhistoryvictoria.org.au/event/inaugural-group-exhibitions-members-showcase/>

This is an opportunity to:

- Honour someone you have researched
- Promote your business/organisation
- Expand your networks
- Get to know other practitioners and be inspired
- Share your work with family and friends
- Try something new
- Reach a different audience

Some ideas.....

1. Submit your favourite interview (audio/visual or just audio is fine).
2. Submit your publication – your cookbook, memoir, local history
3. Submit a podcast or radio documentary



4. Submit your short film.

Submissions Due: 15 August 2016

Workshop reminders

Invitations to the next two OHV workshops for 2016 were sent to members in recent weeks. The invitation for the second **Introductory Workshop** this year was sent on July 15. It is scheduled for:

Saturday 27 August from 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Join Sarah Rood, professional historian from *Way Back When Consulting Historians*, for this introduction to oral history practice, focusing on research, ethics, equipment, interviewing techniques and transcribing.

Suitable for students, volunteers, or anyone with an interest in recording oral histories, you will gain valuable insights into the work of doing oral history. Learn how to prepare questions; about the forms, the ethics and permissions involved; and the top tips to a good interview.

Sarah uses real examples to illustrate some of the pitfalls and some of the gems from actual interviews. You will have the opportunity to practise writing questions, as well as to conduct a short interview.

Please bring your recording device with you.

Morning and afternoon tea are provided but you will need to either bring or purchase your own lunch.

Registration – Members \$60, Non-members \$100, Student / Concession members \$30, Student / Concession non-members \$60



The invitation for the **Advanced Workshop: Interpreting Memories** was sent to members on 21 July. It is scheduled for:

Saturday 3 September from 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

How do we make sense of the memories that we record as oral historians? How do we begin to transform stories into histories? In this workshop with Monash University History Professor Alistair Thomson we'll consider a range of ways of approaching the interpretation of memories.

We'll note the changing ways that researchers have used memory as a historical source. We'll consider the factors that shape memory stories. We'll try out narrative analysis with interview extracts (from AI's interviews with migrants and war veterans) using the rich clues of sound, gesture, word and narrative form. We'll think about how we might work with a set of interviews to find historical patterns and illuminate historical themes.

You'll finish up brimming with ideas and enthusiasm for working with your own interviews (or other people's interviews), armed with lists of further reading if you wish to deepen your understanding.

Registration – Members \$50, Non-members \$90, Student / Concession members \$25, Student / Concession non-members \$55

Read more here: <http://www.oralhistoryvictoria.org.au/event/ohv-advanced-workshop-interpreting-memories/>

Oral History Victoria Committee nominations reminder

As indicated in the letter from the OHV President emailed to members in May and reprinted in the June edition of REWIND, several members of the existing OHV Committee will be stepping down at the end of their current term of office in October. Any OHV members interested in joining the committee are warmly encouraged to contact the President (email: Alistair.thomson@monash.edu or

phone: 0452 221 589) ahead of the next AGM. While some expressions of interest have now been received in this regard, the request for new nominations remains open. In seeking new nominations, Al's email noted that the committee workload is shared so that it is not onerous, and that it's a fun group to work with and from which to learn more about oral history.

2016 Annual Australasian Sound Recordings Association (ASRA) Conference

This year's ASRA Conference will be held at the National Film and Sound Archive, McCoy Circuit, Acton in Canberra from Wednesday 31 August to Friday 2 September.

The conference theme this year is '**Getting It Done - Crunch Time for Audio Archives**' which explores the projects and programs being developed and undertaken by audio archivists in response to the urgent imperative to preserve and digitise collections in a climate of restricted resources and limited time frames. The program will include papers by experts and practitioners with experience from across the audiovisual collections sector, including researchers, archivists, preservation specialists, collectors, oral historians, academics, broadcast professionals and creative practitioners.

The conference will explore sub-themes including:

- Doing it right - planning and management of projects
- Doing the business - business models to support large scale digitisation projects
- That's why we do it - maximising the public benefits of digitisation projects
- Do it yourself - home-grown solutions for archiving problems
- Making do - compromise and improvisation as a strategy to maximise results
- Do it now - looking at the consequences of delay
- Just do it - overcoming obstacles and challenges
- This is what we do - reports on projects from members and institutions

To register online or for more information, visit the ASRA website:

http://www.asra.asn.au/events/conference_2016.htm