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NOHANZ

The National Oral History Association of New Zealand
Te Kete Kōrero-a-Waha o Te Motu

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NOHANZ • P.O. BOX 3819 • WELLINGTON 6140
www.oralhistory.org.nz

NOHANZ

Newsletter

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AUGUST 2006

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President:

Lesley Hall

Executive Committee:

Emma Dewson
Linda Evans
Susan Fowke
Gillian Headifen
Megan Hutching
Alison Laurie
Taina McGregor
Rachel Morley

Distance members of committee:

Anna Green (Auckland)
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Ruth Greenaway (Christchurch)
Jacqui Foley (Oamaru)
Helen Frizzell (Dunedin)
Anne Thorpe (Otaki)
Rachael Selby (Otaki)

www.oralhistory.org.nz

Newsletter: We seek news and views from around the country about what is happening, courses that are being offered, reports on projects in progress or completed. Email contact is Rachael Selby at:

R.A.Selby@massey.ac.nz

who is looking forward to receiving your contributions.

President's Annual Report 2006

An annual report is a welcome opportunity to reflect back on the past year. At my age however, what is particularly noticeable is how quickly the year rolls round.

People are the most important component of any organization so I would like to begin by first of all thanking the membership as a whole, and secondly thanking the executive members of NOHANZ in particular. Only people who have been committee members, event organizers and editors are fully aware of the enormous amount of commitment and effort that is involved. In the past year, following on from a very successful annual conference in Christchurch NOHANZ has published one journal, three newsletters, launched a book and arranged a very successful series of oral history talks at the National Library in Wellington.

NOHANZ publications

At the last conference it was decided that three newsletters per year would be produced from that date. Editor Rachael Selby has done an excellent job of soliciting articles and producing of this publication, often with the able assistance of Anne Thorpe. Thank you both. NOHANZ is now looking at re-vamping the newsletter; we are also investigating a change to the NOHANZ logo.

The journal, *Oral History in New Zealand*, was published at the beginning of 2006 in its re-vamped form with refereed articles. Thank you to Megan Hutching and Anna Green for their excellent work as joint editors for the journal.

Maori and Oral History: A Collection, edited by Alison Laurie and Rachael

Selby was launched at the National Library, Wellington in August 2005. Many NOHANZ members contributed chapters to this collection. It has been reprinted twice and this is testament to its success. Consequently, other edited collections are being considered.

The website continued to be maintained by Olwyn Crutchley and Megan Hutching. I would like to thank them both for their hard work in continuing to try to add new items of interest every month.

Public Seminars

Asking Questions: talking about oral history

In this series of four talks held in April 2006 at the National Library speakers addressed the difficulty of asking intensely personal or difficult questions in the context of various projects. The talks were well attended and received. Speakers and their topics included Margaret McClure 'When a happy marriage turns to custard': Women's divorce stories from the 1950s and 60s; Taina McGregor Wartime: partings and reunions - Maori perspectives; Helen Frizzell & Judith Fyfe An Arcane Practice Revolutionised: From oak panelling to paisley carpets and beyond. Also the staff at the Oral History Centre gave an interesting presentation on their work.

Equipment

NOHANZ's set of audio recording equipment is still placed with the Auckland Museum which makes it available for hire to those recording oral history in the area.

Consultation with other groups

Committee members have continued exploration of developing ways to have input into the teaching of oral history

in schools and also influencing the way oral history is viewed and treated by human ethics committees in universities. NOHANZ is also exploring the possibility of having information about oral history on the New Zealand History Teachers' Association website.

IOHA Conference 2006, Sydney

NOHANZ donated \$1000A to the conference and a good number of members have indicated they will be attending, many giving papers there. NOHANZ will sponsor one of the themes - the most likely at this stage being Island Stories. We will also be taking some of our publications to Sydney and setting up a stall at the conference to sell our publications and promote NOHANZ.

Unfortunately our attempts to raise funds for Pacific Island oral historians to attend the IOHA conference were unsuccessful, even though early indications were to the contrary. However, many thanks to Anna Green and Megan Hutching for the time they put into this.

Life Membership

Judith Binney was made a life member of NOHANZ though official celebration of this is yet to take place. We also recommended Judith for the Prime Minister's Award for non-fiction.

Membership

Membership of NOHANZ remains stable at around 200. The committee has been in discussion about membership fees recently and, in order to maintain our current activities a small increase is likely in 2007/8.

Executive committee

The committee met every two months and consists of Lesley Hall (President),

Megan Hutching (Secretary), Rachel Baskerville (Treasurer), Emma Dewson, Linda Evans, Gillian Headifen, Alison Laurie, Rachael Selby and Anne Thorpe. I would like to thank them all for their hard work and commitment in the last year.

Distance members of the committee are Marie Burgess (Gisborne), Jacqui Foley (Oamaru), Helen Frizzell (Dunedin), Anna Green (Auckland), Ruth Greenaway (Christchurch), Bruce Ralston (Auckland) and Mary Donald (Auckland). Most of these have been involved in email discussions of issues that have necessitated canvassing more widely than Wellington such as how much to contribute to the IOHA conference. We thank you for your enthusiastic participation.

Megan Hutching has continued to be an effective secretary and Rachel Baskerville has been Treasurer for the past year. Rachel has prepared the financial statement and the books for auditing. Gillian Headifen has also had regular and effective input into the practical work of the committee. A very big thank you to everyone for their diverse contributions.

Lesley Hall, President - NOHANZ



CONFERENCES

IOHA CONFERENCE, SYDNEY 2006

The last conference I went to, earlier this year, left me feeling a bit flat. This one left me feeling elated: with excitement from ideas generated by papers I heard, joy at meeting others from around the world and hearing the many and varied ways in which they are using oral history in their work, pleasure from being around a large and friendly group of oral historians, including a significant group from New

Zealand. All that and more. I am already saving for the trip to Guadalajara in 2008.

I am an independent oral historian. For me the people who used audio or video recordings in their presentations were the most interesting. Although some presenters were hindered by technological problems, having the recorded material is undoubtedly more powerful. Interviews through an interpreter with Afghan Hazaras claiming refugee status in Australia evoked a strong emotional response. A performance in which the actors dramatised a series of oral history interviews done in the Bankstown area south west of Sydney was a creative outcome for a community project. Extracts from interviews conducted by Hazel de Berg, an Australian oral history pioneer, displayed her consummate personal and technical skills. We listened to a recording made on reel to reel in 1957 – the sound quality was exquisite.

I came home with a copy of the Oral History Handbook by Beth Robertson. The 2006 edition now contains advice on digital equipment and a guide to commissioning oral history projects along with revised chapters on the process of doing oral history. It is published by the Oral History of Association of Australia (South Australia branch) – beautifully written and a mine of information. At the conference Beth Robertson was presented with the inaugural Hazel de Berg award for Excellence in Oral History.

Pip Oldham



The following remarks are a very personal reflection from a long-term enthusiast of oral history conferences and the stimulation and confirmation they provide.

The Sydney conference was a considerable investment in time and funds for self-funding oral historians, yet there were a good number of us there from New Zealand. It was good to see that it was a truly International gathering, all continents being represented in both presenters and audience, so many people had travelled immense distances. The international aspect raised language and translation issues which were not always successfully handled: not all participants had fluent English or Spanish, the two official languages. I was strongly aware that those of us with mother-tongue English, in particular, need to take more account of this; there was a lack of appreciation of the need to speak slowly and clearly. Also, presenters occasionally had to read their papers in English translation which they could barely pronounce, so it could be a difficult process for the audience as well.

The venue was excellent: University of Technology, Sydney, is well-placed near many hotels and ethnic restaurants (yum!) and the rooms in use were all near each other and close to the cafeteria. We also enjoyed two luxurious evenings in splendid surroundings at the Mayoral reception in the Town Hall and at the official dinner in the NSW Parliament House. The organizing committee did a great job before and during the conference and everything ran very smoothly, and there was ample time to meet and greet old and new friends and colleagues.

I do have a few quibbles which I hope will not sound petulant. Eight parallel sessions means that at best one can hear only one eighth of the papers. I understand that at previous international conferences there have been even more. It is very difficult with only an abstract or possibly even less, to select the papers of most

interest, and I constantly had the feeling I was in the wrong session. A number of papers were presented very unprofessionally: 'mumbled' reading from a sometimes highly academic script is not engaging, and many papers relied heavily on high-tech wizardry which was sometimes distracting and sometimes didn't work at all. It was a good lesson to those of us who may give presentations in the future: keep it simple, speak slowly, and engage the audience - happily the New Zealand papers which I attended were good examples! I believe that the papers needed to be vetted quite a lot more. I know of at least three that had nothing at all to do with oral history - why were they there?

On a more positive note, we opened with a splendid and inspiring keynote address from Peter Read, entitled 'The truth which will set us all free' which reminded many of us of the reasons we are committed to oral history and its possibilities. The atmosphere was friendly and collegial and several pertinent ideas were expressed, in particular (for me) the deep roots of oral history in equality and justice, the importance of considering the interviewer's role and influence, and issues of interpreting our interviewees' words with sensitivity.

Would I attend the next IOHA conference in Mexico in 2008? Possibly.

Loreen Brehaut

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Nearly 400 people from 31 countries gathered in Sydney from 12 - 16 July for the 2006 International Oral History Association Conference. 20 New Zealanders attended and enjoyed meeting one another and others from around the world. Some of the New Zealanders who attended offered to write a reflective piece about the

conference and these are included here.

Several times during the conference, the gathering was referred to as a 'reunion'. This is because once an IOHA Conference is attended once, the participants make such good contacts and friends that they want to go back again - and indeed they do. I attended the conferences in South Africa (2002) Rome (2004) and now Sydney (2006). So it was like a reunion. But why was it worth attending? The variety of papers was impressive. We focused on the water theme which included environmental issues. There were some impressive papers such as: Javier Arce an ecologist who has worked for some years in the Amazon, examining environmental changes - and including oral histories; Katri Kaunisto from Finland who shared her research about the Finnish Forestry and nature conservation; Heather Goodall from Sydney who presented some of her research about rivers and the people who know the rivers around Sydney. It was exciting to hear the presentations and to discuss the papers further over meals and breaks.

Papers presented by New Zealanders were as good as any at the conference: Taina Tangaere-McGregor's presentation on Sunday morning at 9 a.m. was very well received. She outlined the project involving Māori Battalion survivors and their families. It was great to see this presentation. Nepia Mahuika, also from Ngāti Porou, looked at life stories and presented to a room jam packed with around 50 people keen to hear him.

So what single gems have I taken from the conference? 'If you are not changed by an interview, you have wasted your time' (Portelli). And I was reminded to approach every interview as if it were my first!
Rachael Selby



DISCUSSION POINT

In the last newsletter, members indicated an interest in discussion points:

1) I think Jacqui's idea about a discussion column where we can ask and reply to various queries is a great idea. A local version of the online international one (which is mostly but not totally American).

2) My first query for such a column: Would it be possible for NOHANZ members to have a list of active oral historians in various parts of NZ who would be willing to answer questions from the public in their district? At Picton Museum we often get questions from people who have seen our file of OH abstracts and then later ring up asking how they could go about doing some OH themselves. We can refer them to NOHANZ but sometimes what they need is a local person to either say, 'Yes, we'll do it for you - it will cost this much,' or 'We are holding a course soon, would you like to join it?' Not easy for me to field enquiries from Picton to Raglan, Otorohanga, etc and I'm never sure of the best way to manage this. Don't want to discourage people but don't want to suggest there's nothing much to it.

Cheers, keep up the good work,

Loreen Brehaut



PUBLICATIONS

Māori and Oral History: A collection, Edited by Rachael Selby and Alison Laurie

Last year NOHANZ launched this publication – a collection of 20 papers previously published in NOHANZ journals between 1989 and 2003. The first two printings sold out within weeks of being printed. In May another print run of 150 was ordered. These are now for sale and going well (to date we have sold 65). If you want to recommend that your local library purchase one, please get them to send an order to us at NOHANZ, Box 3819, Wellington 6140. Current price \$25.00.

A REFERENCE FOR YOUR ORAL HISTORY FILE FROM DOROTHY MCMENAMIN

My article, which uses oral history extracts, can be added to the list of recent publications, as invited in the April NOHANZ newsletter.

Dorothy McMenamin 'Anglo-Indian Experiences During Partition and its Impact Upon Their Lives' in *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, June 2006, pp. 69-95.

Enjoy reading the latest newsletter, Dorothy



REPORTS

LYNDHURST CWI: AN ORAL HISTORY OF 70 YEARS

After hearing that the Lyndhurst Country Women's Institute (CWI), Mid Canterbury, were combining their 70th anniversary and closing ceremony in July 2001 the idea of this project began. I applied for funds from the

Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust for Oral History to interview ten former Lyndhurst CWI members.

Over the last century society has changed dramatically and is continuing to change at a rapid pace. Groups like the CWI, renamed Women's Institute (WI) in 2004 to include all women, do not retain the same significance that they once did during the mid twentieth century. Nationally, institute membership reached a peak of 38,000 by 1964, in 1032 institutes. Lyndhurst CWI, with nine members, was one of 572 institutes in New Zealand at the time of its closing in 2001, nationally 12,760 members remained. The aim of this project was to capture the experiences of Lyndhurst women who were involved in their local CWI over its' 70 year history.

The interviews were mainly chronological, starting with the interviewee's life before beginning paid and/or community work or going farming. They then focused more specifically on local CWI membership, meetings, favourite memories, changes over the years, and involvement with either the Mid Canterbury and New Zealand Federations of CWI. Questions about other members were also included, particularly in latter interviews, about those who are no longer alive. I was also interested in how important CWI became in each of the women's lives and how they each interacted with the wider community as institute members.

These interviews provide a rich source of information about rural life in Lyndhurst and wider Mid Canterbury from the 1930s to today. The interviewee's personal reflections show that institute membership was an important part of these women's lives, enabling them to socialise off farm and build long term friendships with other local women.

I thank these Lyndhurst, Methven and Ashburton women for sharing their memories so eloquently. In allowing their interview tapes and abstracts to be archived at the Methven Museum they are providing a complementary resource to *Coal Range and Candlelight* (2001); published by the Methven Women's History Group with over 150 auto/biographies of women of Methven and surrounding districts.

Nicola Robertson
30 June 2006

THE ORAL HISTORIAN AT 100

Having just entered the 100th arranged oral history interview in my log I am prompted to reflect on the evolution of this activity. At the opening of a new neonatal unit in 1990 at the National Women's Hospital in Auckland, there was agreement that a history of the specialty over the past 25 years needed to be recorded by those involved. I had worked in the service over the years 1964-1984. In 1991 I attended the Masterton Summer School run by Judith Fyfe and Hugo Manson and then spent 6 weeks professional development leave from Wairiki Polytechnic on the project, NZ Neonatal Nursing history: National Women's Hospital Auckland 1964-1990. 20 interviews were conducted with 21 individuals (two nurses were interviewed together) for a total of 50 hours during the 6 weeks. The 1.5 kg bound volume of abstracts was then completed and lodged with the tapes in the Oral History Centre at the Alexander Turnbull Library in February 1993.

The Quaker Oral History Project was commenced in 1989 with a training programme run for a small group of Friends with the aim of recording the history of Quakerism in New Zealand through individual Friends recording their lives and activities. In 1997 I was appointed Oral Historian to the New

Zealand Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and found that none of these interviews recorded in the years 1990-1995 were lodged in the Oral History Centre. I arranged typing of abstracts for 12 and these were deposited in 1998.

It seemed important to have a position description and this I prepared for our nominations committee outlining the purpose and the need for training and experience in sound recording, abstracting, archiving and teaching skills.

The selection of subjects for interview was based on my clear intention to portray the structure and functioning life of the Society through interviews with individuals currently or recently in office at local and national level. The other element was to record how the individual came to be a Quaker - that is through birthright or by conviction - and to explore their roles and aspirations within the church. In the ensuing seven years I interviewed a total of 49 individuals and closed off the project at the end of 2004.

Over the years I have also interviewed people whom I met and found to have a story to tell which interested me. A total of 18 of these are lodged in the Oral History Centre. All interviews have been on the basis of a life history with the accent on previously agreed topics. Further training has been done with Judith Fyfe, Hugo Manson, Megan Hutching and Linda Evans. A weekend on video recording made me decide to stick with tape cassettes. The advent of the digital recorder and the anticipated demise of the tape cassette have made me consider laying down this work, which I much enjoy.

A log is used to record each arranged interview. The master tape is dubbed at home on a Sony machine and the

copy tape used for preparing the abstract. Fuji Xerox copy and bind the abstracts. The master and the abstract then go to the Oral History Centre, the copy and abstract to the interviewee and a file copy and abstract is kept. I keep no tapes. Additions to the abstract of a CV, historical information, photographs and maps can give an added dimension.

The recorder is a Sony ECM cassette with lapel microphones. Finance for the Quaker Project was assisted with an annual grant of \$1000 used for travel and accommodation, copying and binding. Travel was by car and by air and involved journeys to Auckland, Thames, Hamilton, Wanganui, Waikanae, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin. Subsequent use of the deposited material has included use of 3 tracks in the Centenary of Midwifery Registration Exhibition at Archives New Zealand and extracts incorporated in a book on mothercraft.

Mishaps ranging from operator errors to the tape-recorder performing as a radio receiver, and so rendering recording impossible, were responded to by abandoning the interview and repeating the attempt. 'What can go wrong' is not the subject of article, but is essential to the Oral History experience.

The community of oral historians nurtures novices in a remarkable manner: from teachers to fellow students to the Oral History Centre and especially NOHANZ. Oral history manifests itself in the ethos of a gist relationship: the interviewee offers their life story and the interviewer their skills to record this. My gratitude to this community from 1991 to today is here recorded, as I sign off at one hundred.

Penelope Dunkley
13 June 2006

**CONFERENCE OF THE BRITISH
ASSOCIATION OF ART
HISTORIANS: ART & ART
HISTORY: CONTENTS.
DISCONTENTS. MALCONTENTS -
LEEDS, APRIL 2006**

I was in England in April visiting family and was fortunate to go up to Leeds for the Artist Interview strand of the Conference of the British Association of Art Historians. Not much information was available beforehand so it was something of a leap of faith. It proved well worth the journey.

There were 27 strands to the conference. The Artist Interview strand sat alongside such intriguing topics as 'Art and Psychoanalysis: Theorising the spaces of practise' and 'Art and Art History after 9/11 and the War on Terror'. The Artist Interview strand was viewed with suspicion by an art history teacher I talked to at morning tea. She could see no useful purpose in talking to an artist. In contrast, Jon Wood from the Henry Moore Institute said in his opening remarks that his interviews with artists had changed his attitude towards the study of art.

These responses neatly summarise two parallel streams in the presentations I heard. All the papers were about interviews with artists. Some were focussed on the work of the artist (the art) and some were more concerned with the life history of the artist (more what an oral historian would be looking for in an interview). Some papers offered useful information about good practise for undertaking interviews and others were interested in evaluating the content of the recorded interview.

It became clear that interviews could be shades of either stream. The interviews recorded for the Artists Lives part of the National Life Story Collection are life history interviews, often of significant length. These are

no doubt similar to Judith Fyfe's interviews with Michael Smither, which she talked about at the City Gallery in Wellington while I was overseas. On the other hand, speakers at the conference gave plenty of instances where the artist is crafting the interview much like a work of art in itself. The artist Et Al is at the opposite extreme, she wishes the work to speak entirely for itself.

I came away from the conference with renewed enthusiasm and conviction for the approach of oral history as a first hand record of the working life of an artist. However, as raw material it is just one resource for the interpretation of the art and the artist's life.

Here is a summary of the perspectives that were presented:

- **Judith Bumpus**, an independent scholar, used the BBC's archives to review its record of broadcasting the voice of artists. She found that for a long time artists were in more demand as commentators on the art of other artists. They were not asked to speak about their own work.
- **Nell McLister** told us about BOMB Magazine in New York. For 25 years it has published transcriptions of interviews done with artists, by artists. The magazine was conceived as a vehicle for the voice of the artist not the critic or art historian.
- **Cathy Courtney** and **Rob Perks** from the National Life Stories Collection held at the British Library talked about their experience of oral history interviews with artists for the Artists Lives Project. This started in 1990 and now extends to art professions, such as curators, dealers and art historians. Typically the interviews are at least 8 hours in length, over several sessions.
- **Noor Nieftagodien** from the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa was to review a project called Artists in Conversation that was commercially funded. He was unable to attend so a colleague of his spoke to the project. The impact of politics on the life stories of the artists was very apparent.
- **Brian Winkenweder** from Linfield College, McMinnville, Oregon, discussed his email correspondence with artist Robert Morris. Performance is integral to Morris' work. Morris exercised complete control over the persona he presented on the record. He agreed to interview by email. Meetings he had with Brian Winkenweder in person during the period of their email "interview" did not form part of the "recorded" interview.
- **Dr Christian Weikop** from the University of Sussex was interested in analysis of recorded interviews. His focus was the art and how to evaluate different sources of information about it, of which artist interviews are just one
- **Robert Proctor** from the Glasgow School of Art was using interviews for research. He had looked at late career interviews with members of a firm of modernist architects for information about their creative intentions during the design stage. Robert Proctor was sceptical about retrospective

analogue tape and digital media. Analog tape recorders are hard to obtain and it was mentioned that some firms have been selling digital recorders which are not best suited to the standard required for oral history. It was suggested that before buying new equipment people contact Bronwyn Officer, Sound Conservator at National Library of New Zealand, Wellington. Email address is Bronwyn.Officer@natlib.govt.nz Mail can be sent to her at National Library of NZ, PO Box 1467, Wellington. Phone 04 474 3041.

Depositing copies of interviews: There was discussion on the long term preservation of interviews and the deposit original copies of interviews in the Alexander Turnbull Library Oral History archive, as they have the expertise, ideal conditions and knowledge of the best techniques for conserving the records.

Training Workshops: There was a need expressed for conducting workshops covering techniques. Arrangements for these workshops to be advised later. Suggested topics: Interviewing, abstracting and digitisation and video recording.

It was agreed to hold another get together in about 6 months. The meeting thanked Robyn Mason, Waitakere Libraries for the venue and refreshments. Thanks also to Elayne and Ian Robertson and Mary Donald for organizing the event. At the close of the meeting a group of ten people went to dinner at the Adriatico in Henderson and chatted on into the evening

Useful contacts:

Linda Evans, Librarian, Oral History Archive, Alexander Turnbull Library, PO Box 12 349 Wellington. Phones 04 474 3162 (direct dial) or 04 474 3000.

Fax 04 474 3063. Email Linda.Evans@natlib.govt.nz

Megan Hutching, History Group, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, PO Box 5364, Wellington. Direct dial phone 04 496 6338. Email megan.hutching@mch.govt.nz

NOHANZ (The National Oral History Association of New Zealand), PO Box 819 Wellington.

Website: www.oralhistory.org.nz



2006 AWARDS IN ORAL HISTORY

Each year Awards in Oral History are granted by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. The funding comes from a gift of \$1 million given by the people of Australia to the people of New Zealand in 1990 to mark the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Beverly Kears \$2000
NZ Association of Psychotherapists
60th celebration project

Kelburn Municipal Croquet Club \$2000
An oral history of Kelburn Municipal Croquet Club

St Andrews on The Terrace convenors \$2500
An oral history of St Andrews on The Terrace Presbyterian Church, Wellington

Auckland War Memorial Museum \$5000
21 Infantry Battalion Association oral history project

Vincent Ward \$5000
The worlds of Puhi Tatu

Loreen Brehaut \$5600
Tory Channel whalers' families and
Whekenui School project

Mary-Lou Harris \$6000
'We will fight them on the beeches' -
an oral history of Native Forest Action

Ruth Low \$6000
Droving in the South Island

Friends of the Police Museum \$6000
Maori Police project

Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Manawa o te
Wheke \$6500
Maori language interviews in the
Anglican archdeaconries of Waiariki
and Waiwhakaari

Nicola Robertson \$7000
NZ Ski Heritage oral history project

Wellington Girls' College Jubilee
committee \$7000
125th Jubilee oral history project

Paul Diamond \$9000
An oral history of Maori who served in
the Vietnam War - a pilot study

GridHeritage \$10,000
An oral history of Maori linemen
working on the national grid, 1945-
2005

***The next newsletter will be
published in November 2006.
Please send items for the
newsletter by 15 October 2006.***