



Oral
HISTORY
in New Zealand

2018

WĀHINE
TAKE
ACTION ♀

TE KETE KŌRERO-A-WAHA O TE MOTU

National Oral History Association of New Zealand

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ORAL HISTORY IN NEW ZEALAND 2018, VOLUME 30

Oral History in New Zealand
is an annual publication of the
National Oral History
Association of New Zealand,
Te Kete Kōrero-a-Waha o Te
Motu (NOHANZ).

NOHANZ also publishes a
newsletter three times a year.
Its editors welcome news,
letters, notes on sources,
articles or reviews relevant to
the principles and practice of
oral history.

Membership is open to
individuals, students,
unwaged and institutions.

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NOHANZ

ISSN 0113-5376

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Editorial

This issue of Oral History in New Zealand has been prepared by Megan Hutching and Pip Oldham. Unlike the NOHANZ newsletter, which is published quarterly and carries more contemporary news and reports, the journal provides an opportunity for oral historians, be they public, freelance, community or academic, to reflect on projects and explore matters of practice, and a place where books, exhibitions and other publications such as podcasts about and using oral history can be noted and reviewed. As oral history becomes more widely taught in universities, the journal provides an increasingly important source of material for use by students of oral history in New Zealand and elsewhere.

In one way or another all the projects featured in this issue reflect a growing demand for a range of outputs from oral history interviewing and underline that the researched archival interview is only one of many products of oral history. The rise of podcasting reflects a contemporary hunger for orality but as Marama Muru-Laming tells us, in her extended interview with Megan Hutching, the transmission of knowledge to and between generations carries complicated personal and community responsibilities, and the choice of who will collect the stories, and how, is equally important. She also talks about the ways in which she is involved in gathering oral history for social science research in a wide range of fields.

The work that Tim Jones did in Bougainville while posted there with VSA stretches well beyond a once only digital imprint of voice on a sound recording stored in an archive. He helped establish an oral history programme that is enabling the voices and diverse languages of the people of Bougainville to be collected and listened to on the island thanks to an innovative collaboration with an Australian programme that uses refurbished laptops to make local wifi hotspots.

The 25 interviews Caren Wilton and Reid

Perkins did for the 50th anniversary of Upper Hutt City have also seen a physical and virtual life beyond the walls of the archive. They discuss the reasons for deciding to put unedited interviews online and the extent of interaction there has been with them, as well as re-use of the interviews in a pop-up museum focussing on Upper Hutt in the 1960's.

Nina Whittaker reviews the Auckland Libraries women's suffrage year exhibition, 'Wāhine Take Action', and brings to light the challenges of communicating the scope and nature of exhibition content in advertising material.

Dr Lynzi Armstrong reviews Caren Wilton's recently published book, *My body, My business: New Zealand sex workers in an era of change*, which tells the story of sex work in New Zealand and presents eleven individual experiences of the work.

And finally, Anna Fomison sheds light on the breadth of her practice as a freelance oral historian and what she calls her financial health after undertaking four very different projects. She includes useful discussion of methodological challenges as well as realistic assessments of the time involved in recording and presenting oral history.

Next year the editors hope to publish a wide selection of content drawing on a variety of oral history work including papers from the 2018 NOHANZ conference hosted by the University of Waikato. We encourage readers to offer contributions for the 2019 issue whether they are project reports, books, exhibitions and podcasts, or longer articles suitable for peer review.

MEGAN HUTCHING
AND PIP OLDHAM



A postcard featuring archival images of the interviewees, produced to publicise the project and the launch



Interviewee Sam Southon (centre), formerly a singer with cabaret band the Hi-Lites, meets up with two of his former bandmates at the pop-up museum, November 2016

Only Connect

Recording community oral history in Upper Hutt

REID PERKINS AND CAREN WILTON

2016 was the 50th anniversary of Upper Hutt being declared a city – a milestone that in 1966 had been enthusiastically celebrated with a week of special events, culminating in a street parade and proclamation ceremony attended by thousands. Upper Hutt City Council was keen to make sure that the 50th anniversary would prove to be another big occasion for celebrating its community and, to facilitate this, they made special funding available to support commemoration projects.

As the custodians of Upper Hutt's main local history archives, the Upper Hutt City Library wanted to play a major role in these activities. To this end we put forward two related proposals – for an oral history project and a pop-up museum – both focusing on the theme of Upper Hutt during the 1960s, which was a particularly interesting period when the town was being transformed from a small rural community into a significant industrial centre and dormitory suburb for Wellington.

The library's archive, overseen by heritage coordinator Reid Perkins, already held a considerable amount of interesting material from the era, and the 50th anniversary offered an invaluable opportunity to publicise this content, as well as add to it by collecting other material such as oral histories. We had a strong awareness that while there were still plenty of people who remembered Upper Hutt in the 1960s, their numbers were diminishing with every passing year. The Council was persuaded by our argument that it was vital to capture this knowledge before it was lost, and agreed to fund an oral historian for 20 hours a week for a year to oversee the project. This

led to the appointment of Caren Wilton, who started work in December 2015.

We planned the initiative as an online digital oral history project, with the interviews made available in full on the internet. The library already had a website for its heritage collections using the Recollect platform. This held nearly 26,000 digitised items and also allowed users to add comments and contributions. It seemed a good place to host an oral history collection because it would allow interviews to be accessed by anyone, anywhere, who wished to listen to them. It would also facilitate connections with other related content in our archives.

While we took into consideration the possible legal or ethical dangers posed by making oral history recordings available on the web, we felt we had to balance the risks of misuse with the risks of no use. As a small, remote archive without a steady stream of visiting researchers or a dedicated reading room set up for listening to oral histories, we knew from experience that our existing collection was seldom, if ever, listened to. We also knew that this was not uncommon. As American historian Michael Frisch notes, 'The nicely catalogued but rarely consulted shelves of audio and video cassettes in even the best media and oral history libraries are closer

Reid Perkins is a historian and archivist and the Heritage and Research Co-ordinator, Upper Hutt City Library - Upper Hutt Council

Caren Wilton is a writer, editor and oral historian, and is the author of *My Body, My Business: New Zealand Sex Workers in an Era of Change*, based on her series of oral history interviews with sex workers. In 2016-17 she coordinated the Upper Hutt in the 1960s Oral History Project at Upper Hutt City Library.



Long-time Māwai Hakona members Hine Poa and Adam and Hakirere Langford sport some of the group's early costumes after being interviewed in March 2016

RECOLLECT UPPER HUTT CITY LIBRARY
HERITAGE COLLECTIONS

Audio

Audrey Harper oral history interview, 9 December 2015 (part 2 of 2)

Audrey Harper-151209-002.mp3



Captions/Tags

- File identification 20 secs
- Coming to NZ, trips overseas 182 secs
- Civic status celebrations, parades 92 secs
- Getting a mortgage 111 secs
- Neighbourhood, grocery shopping, circus 216 secs
- Pubs, six o'clock closing 212 secs
- Socialising, interests 122 secs
- Teaching 236 secs
- Relationships 130 secs
- Driving, transport 51 secs
- Food 126 secs
- Gardening 66 secs
- Weekends 67 secs
- Religion 47 secs
- Craft, sewing 417 secs
- Shops 36 secs
- Technological change 280 secs
- Wahine storm 129 secs
- Arson 132 secs
- Making film at Haretaunga College 127 secs
- Volunteering - library, JP work 216 secs
- Writers' group 413 secs
- Achievements, proud of doing best 102 secs
- Health, length of life 49 secs
- Wanting to visit England 145 secs

than most people realize to that shoebox of unviewed home-video camcorder cassettes in so many families – precious documentation that is inaccessible and generally unlistened to and unwatched.’ It was important to us to help our 1960s oral history project avoid this fate by making it as readily available as possible. We regarded this as a mark of respect to those who would be generously giving up their time to share their memories with us.

We were confident that we could vet the interviews for any problematic or defamatory content, and obtain well-informed permissions from interviewees for online use. The nature of the project meant we were unlikely to be gathering particularly sensitive or personal material. The idea was to interview people about everyday life – houses, gardens, clothes, food, work, education, family life, shopping, entertainment – as well as significant local social and cultural happenings of the time.

We did consider putting up edited extracts alone, pulling out only the most compelling material, but realised that would leave large swathes of potentially valuable content difficult to access. This is why we decided to use complete, unedited interviews – despite the occasional awkwardness of an interviewer tripping over their tongue, a phone ringing or a dog barking. (In practice, there were a couple of interviews that contained a lot of material where the interviewee had gone way off topic, so we edited these to keep the content relevant to the ‘60s. One interviewee also requested that we cut out something she had said. But most of the interviews went up in their entirety.)

We provided time-coded abstracts, removing some identifying details from these to guard against any possibility of identity theft. We also used Recollect’s captioning function to allow users to jump directly to the particular topics of interest they wanted to listen to by clicking on a caption. This greatly enhanced the browsability of our interviews and made it far easier to discover their content. Captioning the audio files was time-consuming, but we considered it vital in terms of presenting these oral histories as accessibly as possible.

To supplement the full interviews Caren

created a series of MP4 films that combined excerpts from interviews discussing the same subject (such as childhood or shopping) alongside related archival images and occasional narration. This served to better display common themes running across several interviews in a succinct and entertaining way. Together with the full interviews, these were all packaged together into a special section of our Recollect website which combined descriptions of the project, biographies of participants and links to related material in a manner we hoped highlighted interconnections and proved easy to navigate.

We have subsequently been flattered to learn that NZ Micrographics, who developed Recollect, now use our project as a showcase for demonstrating to clients how oral history content can be effectively displayed on their platform.

In the course of the project we interviewed 25 people, sourced by consulting various contacts in the Upper Hutt community. We aimed at a balance in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and different life experiences, and to cover a comprehensive range of topics. However, two subject areas did emerge with a momentum that caused us to pay them particular attention.

One was around Māwai Hakona, a local kapa haka group formed in 1962 that went on to achieve significant national and international success. With its beginnings in a time of increased Māori migration to Upper Hutt, Māwai Hakona was not only pan-iwi, but also notably multicultural in composition, with a significant number of Pākehā and Pacific Islanders among its performers.

We interviewed several long-time members who shared their memories of the group and of the subsequent founding of the pan-tribal Ōrongomai marae. Hine Poa remembered Māwai Hakona as providing a family for those who had come from other places (as had most Māori in Upper Hutt at the time): ‘None of us had close brothers and sisters or that living here, or aunties and uncles really close, so we became a backbone for each other.’ ‘You were everybody’s aunty and uncle, everybody was aunty and uncle,’ commented Grace Nicholls.

Another important point of focus – and a rich source of lively stories – was the thriving

youth music scene that existed in the area at this time. A classic example of a 1960s baby-boomer suburb, Upper Hutt incubated a striking number of significant New Zealand bands and musicians, and we documented the memories of several key players in this scene, including Wayne Mason of the Fourmyula, Ray Ahipene-Mercer of the Dedikation and Sam Southon of cabaret band the Hi-Lites.

'There were a lot of kids in Upper Hutt in the '60s,' remembered Wayne Mason. 'There were lots of Bible class dances, school dances in school halls. So almost every week at St John's hall, or Trentham hall, Silverstream hall, Upper Hutt Primary School hall, they had dances. That's what kids used to do.'

'We all thought we were going to be rock stars,' laughed Stefan Brown (who went on to a period of stardom with the hit song 'Big Norm' in 1974). 'Many, many amazing musicians have come out of Upper Hutt, because there wasn't a lot to do in Upper Hutt. So a lot of us decided that we should start bands and get music going, start things happening.'

Others discussed a broad range of topics, including work, family life, housing, Friday-night shopping, socialising – and sewage! (One interviewee had worked on the 'night cart' before the introduction of septic tanks and then sewers.) Several people remembered the number of balls and dances they attended – as well as the acceptability of drink-driving at the time. Those who attended high school in the 1960s recalled the battles over hair length (for boys) and skirt length (for girls), while Ray Ahipene-Mercer also raised the issues of racism and teen pregnancy. Many interviewees remembered swimming in the Hutt River or at Maidstone Pool. Peter Hall commented, 'If you were to say to me, what's my first vivid memory, I would have to say the long hot summers, Onehunga weed on your lawns that were baked black and you couldn't walk on them. The Hutt River was our playground; we had so many beautiful swimming holes to choose from.'

As the person responsible for conducting almost all the interviews, Caren, a relative newcomer to Upper Hutt, was appreciative of the interviewees' generosity, warmth and manaakitanga – as well as the many cups of tea, pieces of cake and guided tours of their gardens. (One interview finished with her

being given a bag of grapefruit and a jar of an interviewee's pickled garlic.) Even now, a year and a half after her year-long contract finished, she still feels a part of the Upper Hutt community.

Once we had put in place the framework for this special section of our website and uploaded most of the interviews, we held a formal launch event. Although – or, rather, because – the deliverable for this project existed in virtual space, we wanted to organise something that grounded it in the physical community from where it had come. We also wanted to create a sense of occasion commensurate with the importance of these oral histories in terms of preserving knowledge about everyday life in our region. To that end we put on an evening at our library, in which invited guests were treated to food and wine, along with speeches, presentations, 1960s home movies and an exhibit of images related to the project. Several VIPs – including the mayor, councillors, and the local member of Parliament – attended, along with most of the interviewees, their families and friends, and a number of Wellington oral historians. The event proved a big popular success and served as a way not only of publicising our oral history project but also of celebrating its participants and recognising the value of their memories as a community resource.

Since being launched, the Upper Hutt in the 1960s oral history project section of our website has received regular use. Unlike oral histories that can only be accessed by visiting a reading room, our interviews could be immediately shared by participants with friends and family living elsewhere in New Zealand or overseas. Anecdotal evidence suggests this type of personally connected audience accounted for much of the early traffic on our site. Particular communities of interest – such as people interested in the history of the local marae or the 1960s music scene – also appear to have contributed to visitor numbers as word about pertinent interviews spread through their networks.

Our project page has been viewed 3,400 times since being launched in July 2016, with the pages for several interviewees reaching 250 to 350 page views (and 724 views in one case), while our themed MP4 films have while

our themed MP4 films have each been viewed 200 to 600 times. While these are somewhat crude statistics and can't be taken to indicate the degree of active, sustained attention to our oral histories, they still point to a much higher level of engagement than a small, remote institution like our own would expect through reading-room access alone.

These oral histories have also lent themselves to various forms of re-use. Over the past year a weekly Hutt Valley access radio programme has been serialising extracts from the interviews to a good response from their audience. Our oral histories also played a crucial role in the library's other major project for the 50th anniversary celebrations of Upper Hutt becoming a city, a pop-up museum focusing on Upper Hutt in the 1960s.

This was a temporary exhibition held in a specially built gallery space within a working second-hand store in the CBD. Interspersed amongst the wide variety of 1960s images and artefacts on display from our archival collections were selected quotes from our interviews, which contextualised the exhibits with personal reminiscences from the time. We also improvised a 'listening post' kiosk using a Raspberry Pi mini-computer, a video screen and specially built display box, which allowed visitors to push a button and watch our short themed MP4 movies. We were delighted that this proved a highly popular feature of the museum, with many visitors watching the entire set of short films and discussing them with one another.

This image of people connecting with



Visitors to the pop-up museum watch an MP4 movie on childhood in 1960s Upper Hutt, featuring audio clips from the oral history recordings

one another and connecting with their community's past via stories of everyday life that have been collected, preserved, and made accessible in digital oral histories, nicely encapsulates the main goals driving our project –to leverage oral history's unique power to not only document individual memories, but also provide a vehicle for constructing the social memory from which resilient communities are formed.

The Upper Hutt in the 1960s oral history project is available at:
<http://uhcl.recollect.co.nz/nodes/view/24810>

- 1 Michael Frisch, quoted in Douglas A. Boyd, "I just want to click on it to listen": Oral history archives, orality and usability', in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds, *The Oral History Reader*. 3rd ed. London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2016, p. 118.



Caren Wilton interviewing Upper Hutt mayor Wayne Guppy, December 2015

Using the Voices

MARAMA MURU-LANNING

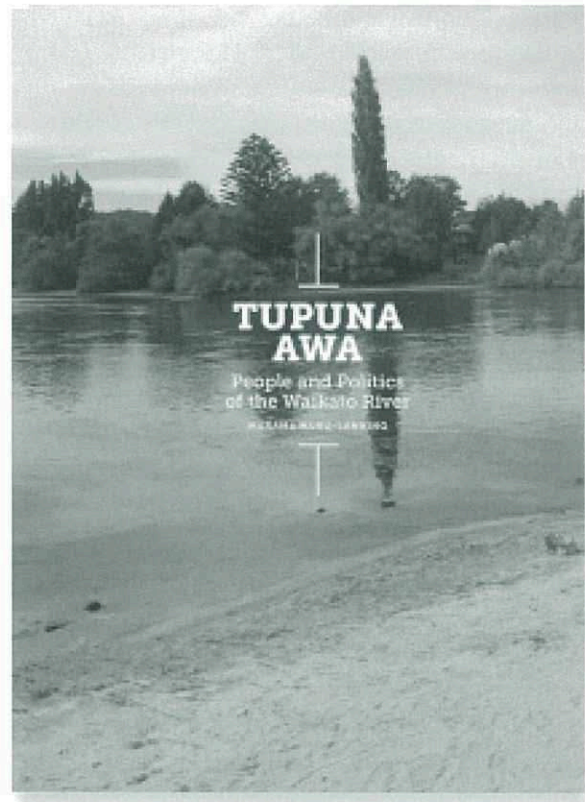
In November this year Megan Hutching caught up with Marama Muru-Lanning, who is the Director of the Sir James Hēnare Research Centre at the University of Auckland, to talk about Marama's work and her thoughts on oral history. The pair first met around 25 years ago when Marama organised and Megan tutored an oral history workshop in Hamilton. This interview has been edited.

Marama Muru-Lanning (MML)

We first met when I was doing a research project with what was called ECNZ back then, the Electricity Corporation of New Zealand. It was my job to go along the Waikato River and interview different kaumātua about their stories and the river. At that time, I had no training at all – I was more or less thrown into a role.

It was all part of ECNZ's resource consent process, and they were trying to create better relationships with Māori along the river in view of the fact that the company was going to be split up into three smaller companies – Mighty River Power, Genesis and Meridian. My role at that time, as a very young Māori woman, was to go and talk with kaumātua about their experiences of the Waikato River in the hope that the company, ECNZ, could form better relationships with iwi.

Some of the iwi authorities at that time, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, not so much Waikato Tainui, were creating Memorandums of Understanding with ECNZ, and so this project that I was on was meant to be a part of that fostering of good relationships. I was completely untrained in how to do interviews. I had no training, but I had worked for the Auckland Museum in the role of education.



ECNZ thought I might be a good person to do this piece of work. They sent me to the different areas with one of their managers to try and get participants to be interviewed. My Dad was a very influential Māori whaikōrero in the Tainui region and Dad often came with me and assisted me because he loved meeting the kaumātua as well. But what was very difficult for my Dad and me, and other kaumātua on the project who were supportive of me, and there were a number of them – Matangi Hepi from Ngati Tuwharetoa

Marama Muru-Lanning is of Waikato and Maniapoto descent. She is a Senior Research Fellow and in 2018 was appointed Director at the James Hēnare Research Centre at the University of Auckland.

and Ngati Raukawa was very supportive of me doing the project – they knew about the politics at play. As a young person I didn't really realise what the stakes were.

There were times in the project collecting kaumātua oral histories of the Waikato River, when I think now about how naïve I was about what I was actually collecting and what was at stake, giving that mātauranga, that knowledge, to the company. I didn't ask a number of questions at that time that I should have asked, although the kaumātua around me were asking those questions.

There were two wonderful kaumātua, one from Maniapoto, and he's passed away, and another from Mōkai Marae. They gently showed me the politics of oral history. Within about a year of the project I realised there was an inequality in the way the project was operating. I had good intuition. ECNZ told me that they would not use the interviews. It was more about relationship building, and the mātauranga, the interviews, would be given back to the kaumātua or the tribe. Now this was problematic because the mātauranga was owned by the kaumātua, not the tribe. My questioning, after working with those kaumātua, was to really question about the right that the iwi had to that knowledge as well.

So all of a sudden, I was thrown into this hornet's nest, with quite a lot of money to do this research. I started naturally and instinctively to feel like a kaitiaki of the knowledge for the kaumātua. There were some very powerful kaumātua that I interviewed, like Sir Robert Mahuta and Hare Puke, and others that were well known politically. I didn't have to worry so much about their knowledge that they were handing over because they knew the stakes, whereas some of the kaumātua that I interviewed, who were less in the political scene, they had really deep stories that they were sharing. The onus was on me to make sure that those stories went to the right places because they were filled with mana. When you share a story, it's about a relationship and to suddenly take these stories and those relationships, and that mana embedded in those stories, and put them into the public arena, that's a problematic thing with regard to transmission of knowledge within Māori society.

Protecting future knowledge lines and

recognising that there are these inter-generational transmissions of knowledge that if captured somewhere else, and put somewhere else, instead of being tapu or sacred knowledge, they become very common and globalised knowledge. I didn't know any of this stuff back then. I was so young and wanted to have a job, but I guess it was that grass roots training and learning about things for myself that has helped me be successful in this space that I'm in now. I get this gut feeling: you're going too far, that's too much, go back, or, we need to delete that part of the interview or not write that part of the interview up. I always want to protect the people that I work with as best I can.

I work a lot with kaumātua now, and one of my recent projects is around kaumātua hauora and well-being. When you work with kaumātua, not only do you have to be very gentle in your approach, but you also have to be very thoughtful and realise that they have whānau who protect them and the whānau want you to treat their kaumātua and their rangātira in a way that's honourable, but also in a way that you are protecting their knowledge lines for the future.

I do a lot of work in southern Chile, as well, so I'm working with indigenous people overseas and I feel that same sense of respect and honour and that manaaki and that awahi. But also, that real sense of: that's enough, stop, that's too much, you're taking away too much of their being, of their essence, of their mauri.

I wrote a book on the Waikato River called *Tūpuna Awa, People and Politics of the Waikato River*, which was something that came out of my PhD, and during the PhD process I interviewed a lot of people. I think the training that I had 25 years ago when I first met you, taught me how to actually do interviews. It taught me how to turn the tape on and how to write up the questions. I also did a Masters in Anthropology which taught me the structure of doing a successful interview but, really, it's the person giving the interview and putting yourself into the interview and making yourself transparent so that people respect you.

You've also got to have a little bit of knowledge of the topic you're asking about. You can't go in there and not know anything

because that's just annoying for people that you're interviewing. They want you to have some sense of context. When I did my interviews with people from the Waikato I was very lucky that, before I did the interview, my Dad and some of his friends took me along the length of the Waikato River. They called it the hīkoi. He introduced me to a number of key people. We also did the spiritual side, the karakia and the whaikōrero to the tupuna and the ancestors and the taniwha in the river, the things that you can't see. That was really important to set my work up within the Māori realm. With oral history for Māori there are other things at play besides just the questionnaire and knowing the person. You actually have to have some sort of... I guess I was very lucky to have those kaumātua, particularly my father, set things up for me.

I came to the James Hēnare Research Centre, and I've been able to take all of those learnings from those different projects starting way back with the Mighty River Power Kaumātua oral histories project to now, where I'm on a lot of national research projects. Quantitative research projects which we are pushing into qualitative research projects. We're getting the interviewing into projects that wouldn't usually have interviews. Usually they would just collect data and the data would be numbers or other people's data, but now there's recognition in a lot of the research funding applications that we actually need to talk to real people. No matter whether it's an MBIE research grant looking at automated orchard technologies, or it could be an infrastructure project looking at what roads we need to service a port, or a septic tank project in the North. Natural scientists recognise that we need to have engagement and the voices of people in the research we're doing it to make it real and to sort out the detail and to add the complexity that is often missing, particularly in physical sciences like engineering – when they build a bridge and they don't ask people where's the best place. So now we're adding the detail and enriching research projects.

My skills that I learnt by learning how to do oral histories, and how to make sure that it is privileged in the research process, are holding me and my colleagues at the James Hēnare Research Centre in good stead. We are being invited onto all sorts of projects that

you would never think qualitative researchers would be invited onto.

MH: One of things that I thought it might be useful to talk about is – when you're approaching an interview project, the difference between being an insider, and being an outsider. I wondered if you had any thoughts on that?

MML: It depends how passionate I am about the project. One project that I may be doing, maybe, maybe I won't, is a Turangawaewae history project. When I was talking about the way I'd like to run it, and it may not happen, we were talking about who would do the interviews. And we picked this team from home, home grown scholars who are the best scholars in New Zealand. They are families that have come from Turangawaewae. We all know one another. But when I was thinking about who would do the interviews, I actually decided against them doing the interviews. I thought that it would be better if we brought in an autonomous, independent, non-Māori interviewer because I think we'll get a different set of responses with the non-Māori interviewer. My iwi, my marae have worked with Michael King in the past, and that was a wonderful piece of work that he did, even though a lot of people criticised it. He really got stuff that a local person or a Māori person would not get.

MH: What sorts of things do you mean? Why do you think Michael King did?

MML: They will be able to ask questions that I might think are not important because I already know the answer. They will probe deeper than I would because I already know stuff and I'm going to forget to ask.

And the other thing is that we may shy of asking certain questions because they are our relations and the questions that we ask might seem a bit naughty, rude...and they would go, well, you know that, why are you asking me that? You already know that.

MH: Well, what are the advantages of having someone like you doing the interviews? For other projects?

MML: I've got this project with robotics where we are going into the Bay of Plenty to work with the labourers of blueberry farms, and

vineyards, and apple and pear orchards. We will be asking them, How do you want these modern technologies to assist you? How can we improve your work so that you can use these technologies and it's going to be helpful for you? I work very closely with robotics, but they don't have any qualitative researchers in the mix. They are trained engineers and they are pretty thoughtful people, but they don't know how to do interviews and they don't want to know. They actually don't really care to go out and do interviews; it's not their thing.

So, sending me into this Bay of Plenty environment with a couple of members from my team, we will enrich their study and we will ask questions about people and society. We are going to an area where there is Māori investment, so we want to make sure that when we create these new technologies that we incorporate tikanga into the new technologies, or a process of engaging with their workers. It's going to be a learning experience for me, too, but it gives us extra money at the James Hēnare Research Centre to bring on two Māori summer interns who will travel with us and who will be responsible for the recorder and transcribing. It's adding capacity to Māori research in the social sciences space or the oral history space. But having the recognition from those physical and natural scientists that they know there are things that they can't do that will enrich their research. Don't you think that's great for New Zealand? Great for us.

MH: Gosh. I bet you never thought when you were doing your Mighty River Power project that you'd end up doing this sort of stuff.

MML: Never!

[After my book was published] I got approached by the Faculty of Medical Health Sciences to be on their project as a leader, and I thought, I don't know anything about health. It doesn't matter, they said, you know about people. So, I worked with Professor Ngaire Kerse on a longitudinal study of aged people. Remember my interest is environment and water and natural resources! And then I won a Marsden, and I got invited on projects with the Faculty of Health Sciences. And then I won a fellowship to Chile and did research with Chilean

scholars around energy generation, and the Mapuche people.

We are now working with multiple iwi across the country in multiple projects. I have my own projects which are more related to the environment. We get to do projects with Ngāti Tūwharetoa, we do projects in the Waikato, we've done some things with Ngāti Hikairo, we have some things happening in the Ngāi Tahu area, but we are still very, very clear that we have a mandate to do research projects in the north.

MH: What sort of things are going on up there that the Centre is responsible for?

MML: One of our main kaupapa in the north is around kaumatua well-being. We've just finished a feasibility study in the Whangarei-Tutukaka area with kaumātua, working and recognising that kaumātua have different aspirations and different expectations and levels of health. Sometimes, when they talk about hauora, they are not even thinking about sickness and illness, or sickness and disease, they're thinking about good relationships with their children and mokopuna, access to their marae, access to the bush so that they can self-heal themselves. In their head, health has a completely different make up to what our Ministry of Health is saying. Part of that project is to try and get some idea back to Wellington about what Māori elders need.

We've got various hauora that we have relationships with, various institutions. It's hard to manage all this stuff but that's our main project for the north at the moment. And we chose a project where we knew we would get support from all people. No one's ever going to say, No, don't do a project on kaumatua, but if we did a project around something economic or Treaty settlements, it would be problematic. A kaumātua project can sit in the James Hēnare Research Centre quite nicely without any antagonism from anybody.

We've never done health before, and I'm not a health researcher. I remember when our board came in and I raised the idea two years ago that I thought we should do kaumātua research. One of them said, But we don't do health, and I said, Oh well, we

do now. It has been successful for us. Even though we haven't really won big money, we've won hearts and support.

MH: I'm just really interested in what you think about the importance of the human aspect when you're doing your research. I mean, some of the things you've been talking about, it is kind of hard to get your head around the fact that you'd be interviewing people for them,

MML: The voices or the narratives, the transcribed [material], it's really quite powerful. For example, when we were writing our recent [grant application] there are times when citing a piece of literature and putting some author's name there isn't enough. It doesn't hit home the point. What we are able to do from the feasibility study is take a sentence that a kaumātua actually said, and put it in the application, and it adds so much more power to the application.

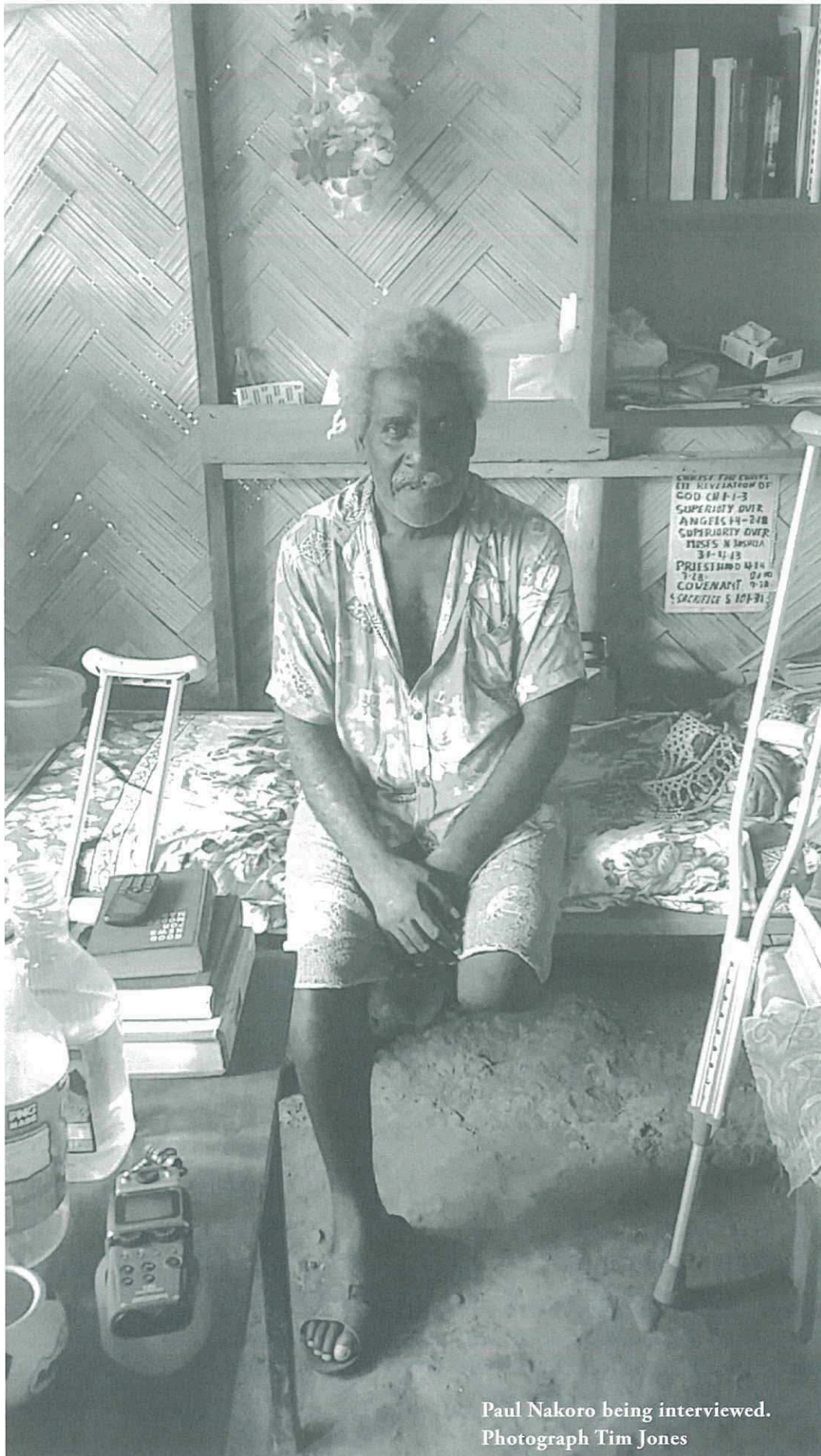
And that's what I find. You have to be selective and don't overdo it but if you can just take a line of what someone is saying and add it to your application, it makes it real and it makes people know that this is a real issue. That there's a certain urgency around it and that this research project is actually connected to real people. And so I do that in my work.

Part of the expectation of being an academic is that you have multiple outputs i.e. publications. I've got my publications but I have always used the voices. I have always used, selectively, sentences from my participants in my research outputs, in my publications whether it be journal articles, chapters, my book. More recently I've started doing work with Newsroom. It's not a blog but it's like an academic medium for latest news stories in academia, so I'm able to get the photos and voices of our participants into the international arena with regard to high level scholarship and high level research.

Sometimes when we do it with older kaumātua, we say, Can we put you on a... and you think they're going to say no but they go, Go sweetheart, yup, all good, lovely. We always ask them. Very rarely do they say no because we've built up that reputation with them beforehand and they are quite proud of the research that they're doing with us.

Most of them don't even have computers to check what they look like, but we are very committed to having ethical relationships and outputs with the people that we work with.

I find the power of those sentences, of the words, and sometimes when they're in Māori, you know that makes them even more powerful. But you have to be really good at crafting that yourself. You have to really know which bit to put in. I remember once reading a book by Paul Diamond, *A Fire in Your Belly: Māori Leaders Speak* based on oral histories, and I thought he captured those people so well. That was really a piece of artistry. It's one of my favourite books. Not all oral histories that I read are interesting but he really captured those leaders well and so I tried to copy what he did with his work.



Paul Nakoro being interviewed.
Photograph Tim Jones

Bougainville Haus Stori and Oral History

TIM JONES

In 2017 Tim Jones spent six months working as a volunteer oral historian in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. Working with the Bougainville Heritage Foundation under the auspices of Volunteer Service Abroad to establish an oral history programme, he describes some of the project's pleasures and challenges. These observations are Tim's alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the Bougainville Heritage Foundation or of Volunteer Service Abroad.

Does the rhythmic lapping of waves on the shore add to the story being told? Or detract from it? Does a supporting chorus of dogs help to paint a picture in sound? Or just confuse it and make the people speaking harder to understand? Do the background sounds of a school tell you more about that school, or are they just annoying?

Setting those down as options suggests that the oral historian has some control over them and can choose to eliminate them simply by changing the time or location of recording. In some circumstances that may indeed be possible, but in Bougainville those sounds are very much the soundtrack of life and to eliminate them would be both impossible – and, I would suggest, undesirable. Dogs, children, the sea, awful Christian rock music – these are the sounds that get right inside your head. And if they encroach on gold-standard audio-recordings then that, it seems to me, is no bad thing.

The Bougainville Heritage Foundation (BHF) was established to preserve and promote Bougainville's cultural heritage: its stories, song, dance, music and plastic arts. It occupies the Haus Stori, the library built with the support of Lloyd Jones, author of the best-selling novel *Mr Pip*, which is set in

Bougainville. The Haus Stori, which is used for all kinds of local cultural and social activities, was very much a New Zealand project: designed, funded, built and stocked largely through the efforts of New Zealanders.

But a traditional library, and the written culture it represents, is not the complete story, since the culture of Bougainville, like that of many places, has an important oral component. While embracing and enjoying the library and its books, the people at the BHF knew that capturing their own stories, which are rarely if ever written down, was a vital next step.

Allan Gioni, the BHF's driving force, worked with New Zealand's Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) to establish a volunteer position to develop an oral history programme. VSA is actively engaged in building local skills in the health, education, agricultural and technical sectors and has supported BHF previously, building and setting up the Haus Stori.

It is a cliché to say that I was fortunate, in 2017, to be offered this six-month volunteer position. But many clichés are, of course, true. Bougainville is a very awkward place to get to independently and there are plenty of challenges in living there, but VSA smoothed the path and provided magnificent moral, and to a lesser degree financial, support. The experience of living in a developing country that is still recovering from the bitterest civil

Tim Jones is the librarian at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū. In this role he has commissioned and manages a collection of audio and video interviews with artists, scholars and curators. In 2017 he spent six months volunteering as an oral history adviser at the Haus Stori in Arawa, Bougainville. This project was a partnership between the Bougainville Heritage Foundation and Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA).

war, working on a worthwhile project with lots of local support, was a privilege indeed.

I lived and worked in the town of Arawa, a mining town built by Australians in the 1970s to service the Panguna copper mine – itself one of the triggers of the war. Much of Arawa is in ruins, but there is a community there which struggles along. Its schools, churches and hospital all face enormous challenges. It is to the community's great credit that, as well as dealing with issues over water, food, jobs and health, there is a hunger to preserve intangible heritage too.

The VSA model is very much to build capacity – along the lines of 'teaching a person to fish' – so my mission, properly set out in a formal document signed by all parties, was to leave Bougainville certain that people there could continue to make, document and present oral histories. I took with me a brand new Zoom recorder, which lent credibility and authority to the project. Even without lapel microphones and studio recording facilities, the difference in sound quality was immediately obvious when compared with some of their earlier attempts using a cellphone. The built-in microphones proved to be extremely tolerant and the machine itself was dead easy to use – and to help other people to use.

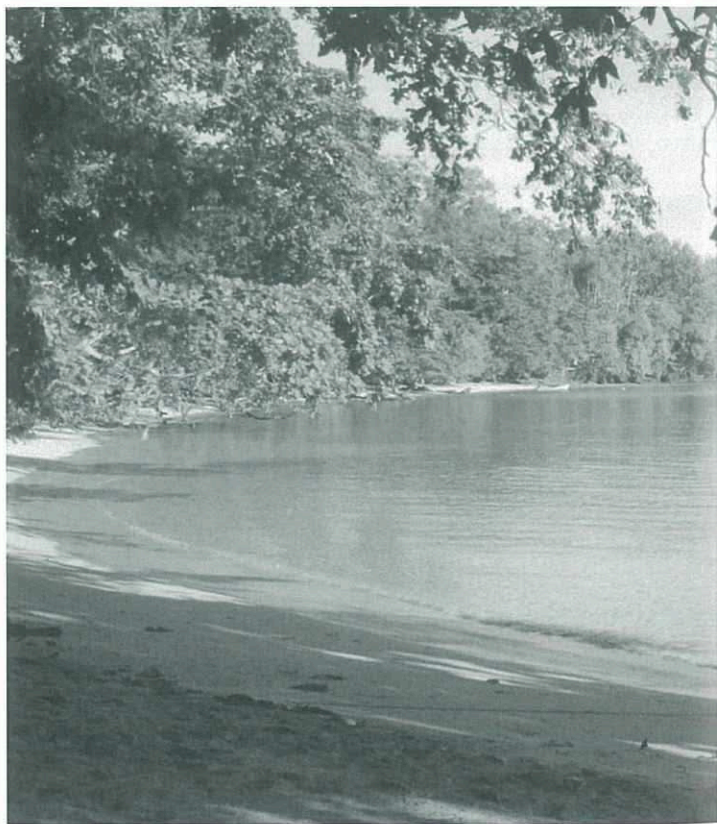
It is absurd to generalise but the Bougainvilleans I met were without exception extremely resourceful. They have had to be when you consider what they have been through. They could fix things and make things out of nothing, and anything technical, even something simple like a sound recorder, was enthusiastically embraced. (I also introduced barcodes and a barcode scanner to the library, which went down a treat!)

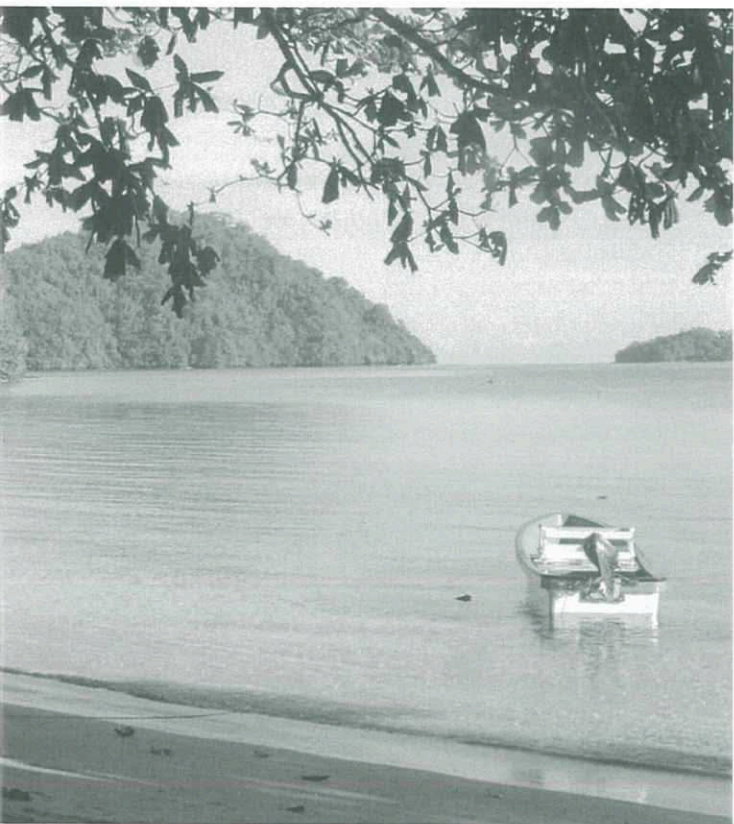
I was quickly confident that the recorder's operation was well understood. A supply of electrical power was the bigger problem: power cuts were frequent and often long, and batteries were expensive and often of low quality. Getting the files out of the recorder and putting them on a laptop, and a system of backups, was all understood. The lack of a network and the very high cost of internet access meant that backing up files to the cloud was never really possible. Internet access was exclusively done through expensive data packages from either of two unreliable phone providers, so sending large audiofiles to, and retrieving them from, the cloud was quite out of the question.

The solution to making the audio created available to users fell into my lap rather fortuitously. Teacher in a Box is an Australian programme which takes old laptops – though that could mean just a couple of years old – strips them of practically



Sing Sing Festival. Photograph Adam Costanza





Bakawari, also known as Pok Pok Island. Photograph Tim Jones

everything and loads onto them a whole range of offline teaching resources: Khan Academy pages, atlases, dictionaries, music and maths teaching programmes, thousands of Wikipedia pages and so forth. The laptop then acts as a local wifi hotspot and anyone with their own laptop – or, more likely, their own cellphone – could connect to it.

Wifi was an entirely new idea. People must have seen it on their phones – and phone ownership was surprisingly high, especially among teenage high school students – without really knowing what it was. Being able to connect to a local network, even if it only gave access to these educational resources rather than the whole internet, was, again, enthusiastically received.

The Teacher in a Box set-up allowed users to write their own local pages in extremely simple HTML – essentially just lists of interviews with a link – but this was almost miraculous in its effect. Anyone visiting the library could now listen to locally recorded audio on their own device, with no checking in or out of equipment, no discs or cards or USB sticks, and all completely free of charge.

As far as gathering the recordings themselves was concerned, I was keen to show that everybody has a story to tell, and I wanted to seed the BHF oral history collection with stories from as wide a range of people as possible. Village elders, invariably male, are very much in charge in Bougainville – and I do not apologise for wanting to ensure that the voices of women and young people were also heard. I have been away now for over a year, but I hope that starting the collection with stories from all parts of society will help ensure this diversity is maintained.

We did of course talk with some elders about their lives, but in doing so I was keen not to dwell on 'The Crisis', as the civil war is usually described. Many people have horror stories to tell of this period but it is well-documented already; other aspects of Bougainville's heritage are far less well-known. Local myths and legends were of paramount importance, and we recorded a fair number of these, usually folk tales with elements of magic and a strong moral message of disobedience punished or pomposity pricked. Many involved harbingers of death.

We also interviewed several students and teachers at the adjacent high school, asking them about their lives in Arawa: how they socialised, what their ambitions were, what they ate and how they amused themselves. In 2019 Bougainville is due to hold a referendum on independence from Papua New Guinea and this, as well as the related issue of

whether the abandoned copper mine should be re-opened, are the two questions that hang over everything and could, whichever way they are decided, change everything. Raising either of these two issues called for maximum discretion and, in fact, was often met with a smile and a 'we will see'. It was always perfectly clear when interviewees did not want to have these or any other topics of conversation pursued – and as a guest in their country, and an oral historian rather than a journalist, it seemed right to change the subject.

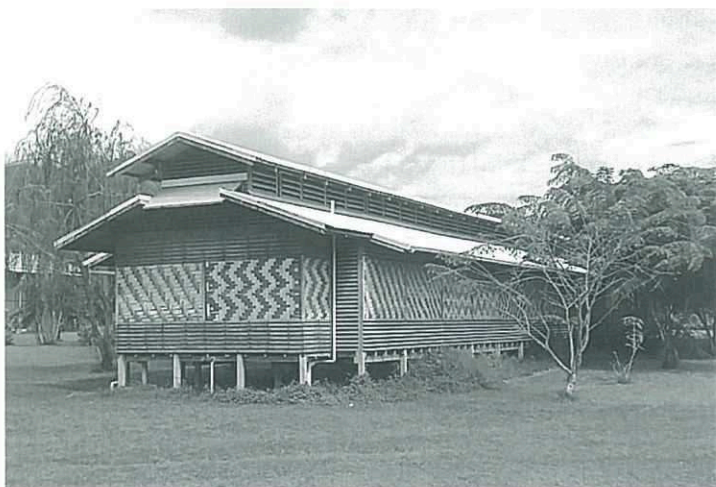
Bougainville is about the same size as Northland but has 28 mutually incomprehensible languages. Many of these have been little researched and little more than the Gospels or a catechism has been printed in many. The use of language – and where have we heard this before? – is intensely political and intimately bound up with the deployment of power. The local language in Arawa is Naasioi, and although my oral history project was not specifically a language investigation or preservation project, it seemed appropriate to make recordings in Naasioi – especially recordings of local myths and legends where the locality and the language are so tightly interwoven.

The demonstration interviews I did myself were obviously in English, which is widely understood and slightly less widely spoken. Some were done in tok pisin, the lingua franca which enables the speakers of those 28 languages to communicate with each other. There is then a hierarchy of languages which the local high school perfectly exemplified. The local tok ples, or village language, was Naasioi

and this is what people spoke at home or in their village – assuming it was the mother tongue of everyone there. Tok Pisin was the language that enabled anyone to communicate with anyone else – though scarcely to unify them! – while English was the language of business, education and government.

Arawa High School's language was English, and anyone caught speaking anything else was punished. Addressing a teacher directly in any language other than English was unthinkable. And of course the reason for prohibiting local languages was surely that the teachers might well not understand it and so would feel powerless. The official line was that English was the language of the future, the language of opportunity, but it seemed to me the teachers who caught students speaking Naasioi were simply annoyed, or alarmed, at not knowing what their students might be plotting against them!

I am pleased to record that the Bougainville Heritage Foundation now has a system for recording oral histories – in fact for recording anything they like – and for presenting it, in a public library to anyone within wifi distance. Bougainville's social, political and economic challenges are many: they stand on the brink of independence but are subject to global pressures that are quite beyond their control. If the tiny thing I did can add one ounce of self-awareness and self-respect to their view of their own place in the world, then I would be delighted. And the sound of the waves and the dogs and the children? Play on!



The Haus Stori library. Photograph Tim Jones



A girl reading at the Haus Stori. Photograph Tim Jones

Doing a Deal With the Past

Taking up the Recording Kit

ANNA FOMISON

The beginning

In 2010, I took up the recording kit by chance and entered the realm of the Oral Historian. Over the past eight years, I have worked on a diverse variety of projects in two main subject areas: the environment and the arts. In this article I share with you four of my recent and current projects, and give special attention to the following three questions that have emerged as significant. I hope this discussion may be of interest or value to you.

1. What has an impact on or influences my interviews or projects?
Has the client had an impact on my projects or on the interviews themselves? Or am I, as interviewer, impacting on the nature of the recordings?
2. Who is listening?
Am I connecting to an audience?
Archiving my interviews is the focus of my projects but how accessible are these archives and are people accessing them? How difficult is it to create a narrative analysis from interview extracts, and what is lost and what is gained when the spoken word is turned into another form? And how successful is the video format as a tool to connect an audience to an oral history archive?
3. What is the financial health of my oral history projects?
As fulfilling as oral history practice is, in some of my projects I have noticed that the financial return seems comparatively low. Is this inadequate quoting or are there hidden costs involved?

Project One

Voices from the Stream: the story of 'Project Twin Streams'

Topic area: Environmental
Number of interviewees: 26
Client: Auckland Council
Duration: 3 years
Financial health: Low
Outcome: audio and accompanying video footage of 26 interviews, plus documentation and a 60-minute DVD, 'Voices from the Stream, the story of Project Twin Streams' all archived with West Auckland Research Centre
Ngā Pātaka Kōrero o Tāmaki Makaurau - Auckland Libraries

In August this year, in the beautiful legacy Waitakere City Council chambers, Auckland Council launched a 60-minute documentary 'Voices from the Stream, the story of Project Twin Streams'. This documentary tells the story of a remarkable project told solely through the eyes and voices of those who have been involved in the project.

Project Twin Streams (PTS) was an extremely successful local environmental project based in Waitakere, West Auckland. It has achieved national recognition as the largest stream restoration project to date, and, as well, it was one of the first environmental partnership projects between a local government body and the community.

The documentary tells the story of the project. With a budget of over \$38 million rolled out over 15 years, PTS effectively managed to restore 56 kilometres of riparian

Anna Fomison has lived in West Auckland since 1980. She currently freelances as an event/marketing manager, writer, editor and oral historian. She has an MA (Hons) in English from the University of Canterbury and is interested in the role of public advocacy.

margins of streams in Waitakere in an attempt to mitigate the impact of erosion, flooding, sediment and toxin accumulation flowing into the Waitemata Harbour.

In 2015, I was commissioned to undertake an oral history project to record the stories of those who had been involved in PTS. This project was initiated by Environmental Services, Auckland Council to ensure that the valuable knowledge that had been gained in the ten years of PTS was not lost in translation during the transition to supercity. Twenty-six people were interviewed and over 16 hours of recorded interviews have been archived at West Auckland Research Centre, Ngā Pātaka Kōrero o Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland Libraries. The documentary 'Voices from the Streams' was created from the interview audio and footage and is available for viewing on the PTS website <http://projecttwinstreams.com/the-story-of-project-twin-streams>.

Impact and influences

My assessment is that the client, Auckland Council, had a considerable impact on the project but that impact was mainly on the length of time it took for the project to be completed. The range of interview questions was broad, and as such opened the door to discussion by the interviewees of Council management of the project and also of the supercity. The project was then deemed by Auckland Council to have a risk factor and consequently at more than one crucial stage it had to be 'signed off' by Council staff. Although the Council was broad-minded and suggested only a few changes, the approval process took a long time and created significant delays. However, there were other factors in the mix that also added lengthy delays.

These included the fact that Auckland Council sign off was required on both the creation of topic questions and the list of interviewees. Additionally, interviewee sign off



was required for the time-coded abstracts, recording agreements and biography documentation. Drafting the script for the documentary was a very lengthy process as it required analysis of 16 hours of interviews. Auckland Council also required sign off on the script, but in the end made no changes. Interviewee sign off and permission was also necessary. They, too, made no changes. Making the 60-minute video and getting Council sign off for that also took time.

Output

The documentary was added on to the project in the hope that it would make the story of PTS more easily accessible and act as an entry point to the oral history archives. I was responsible for curating the interviews, and stitching together the narrative from the audio of the interviews. I was assisted by videographer, Davian Lorson, who filmed the interviews and, as video editor, put the

soundtrack together along with the video footage and stills.

The decision to create a video narrative entirely from extracts from the 26 interviews with no narrator overlay, made it imperative to select the right audio clips for the script. It meant that every part of the story of the project had to be taken from one or more of the interviews. I transcribed occasional phrases in the abstracts to make it easier to select segments for the video. The time-codes became a crucial identifying factor. Initially I tried several different methods of data extraction contending with the fact, as every oral history practitioner knows, that often people do not actually answer the question asked! So instead of having answers to all the questions I had asked, I actually had another list of topics entirely.

It was back to the drawing board. I went through all the answers again and identified the topics that people had actually talked



Group shot, Celebration Project Twin Streams Documentary - Voices from the Stream

about. There were about 40. I re-sorted these topics, gathering together the time-coded clips from each interview that referred to the same topic. Accompanied by the relentless tick-tocking of time passing, at this point I realised I had organised the data but I was not much closer to reducing the 16 hours of audio to a concise logical 60-minute narrative. Eventually, I discarded thirteen and a half hours reducing the script to two and a half hours and then, after more footage hit the cutting room floor, I finally reduced it to one hour. Transforming 16 hours of audio to one hour is a long process and there were many decisions along the way, both ethical and technical. To extract valuable information was a massive learning curve.

Financial health

It was very fulfilling project but very unhealthy financially. In a nutshell, too many interviews, too few dollars, too complicated for the budget, and it took too long. My initial quote was hopelessly inadequate. It was an example of the principle that you don't know what you don't know. It involved significant delays not only due to the sign off process with Auckland Council but also because of my novice status in creating a narrative from interview excerpts.

Outcome

The project has now been archived with Auckland Libraries for anyone wishing to do a similar project in the future, to use the knowledge of this one to refine their own process.

What was learned?

I learnt that commitment to the integrity of a project can come at a cost. If I had limited the interviews to ten, as initially planned, the project would more likely have fallen within the budget, but the result would have been less representative and honest.

I also learnt that there are significant opportunities and challenges presented by creating a video from interview extracts. My conclusion is that transforming interview excerpts into another format is a long and arduous process and each step along the way involves difficult decisions. But, putting that aside and the fact that this project took much

longer and cost more than expected, this project still had a very successful outcome. Many people have viewed the video and so more people are aware of the archive than would have been before. However, I cannot state with any certainty that more people have or will access the archives.

PROJECT TWO

Tony Fomison Oral History Project

Topic area: Arts

Number of interviewees: 15 to date

Dates: 2015 ongoing

Client: Myself

Funding: Creative NZ (initial seed funding) (2015), Ministry for Culture and Heritage (2018)

Financial health: moderate

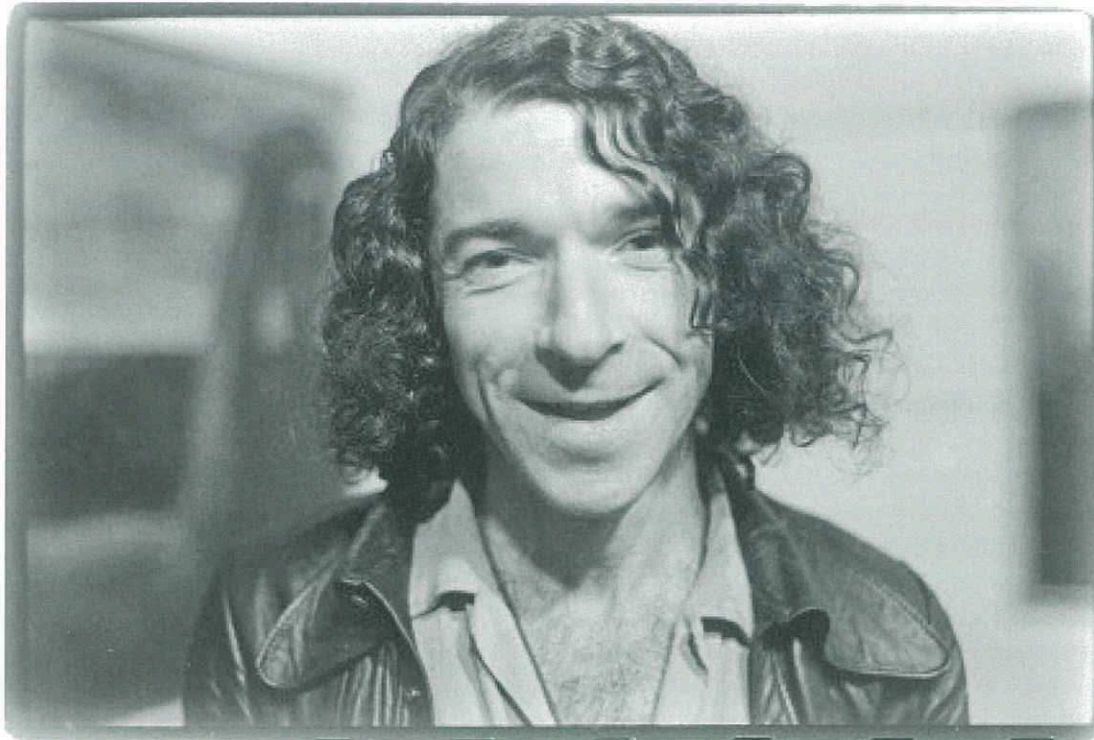
Outcome: All interviews to be lodged with Alexander Turnbull Library and the Auckland Art Gallery, Eric McCormick Library

This is my personal project. The focus of the interviews is Tony Fomison, my brother, 14 years older than me, a very talented artist, renowned for his art, his commitment to New Zealand culture and history, and his bohemian lifestyle.

After my brother's death in 1990, I was often approached by people intent on telling me a story about Tony – tales they wanted or needed to share. After many years of this, and in the light of my developing oral history practice, I began to consider recording an oral history project. It took me a long time to make the decision to embark on this project because I was concerned that I was too close to the subject matter. This delayed me talking to some of Tony's friends and peers who have now died, their stories lost forever. It was the loss of several of these people that finally motivated me.

Impact and influences

I acknowledge that as I am both Tony's younger sister and interviewer, I could be affecting the interviews in some way. Is there any censoring of the information that is being discussed? The stories I have



Tony Fomison. Photograph courtesy of Sally Griffin

recorded about Tony are sometimes funny, sometimes sad, sometimes disturbing, confronting, entertaining, informative and always interesting. Having the recording kit between me and the interviewee gives me a structure to process information and indicates that I am committed to the process of objectively gathering the stories. If any story continues to disturb me or haunt me after the interview, it is easy to let it go when I put it in the context of the entire project.

It seems that the questions play a crucial part in opening the door to frankness and seem to allow scope for a broad range of discussion. Each interview follows the same sequence of questions, starting with the interviewee talking about themselves, how they knew my brother and the type of relationship they had with him. From there, the interview proceeds to cover the art scene in New Zealand during the '50s to the '90s, in Christchurch and in Auckland. Topics discussed range from the quest for identity in a post-colonial New Zealand, Tony's art, to his lifestyle and stories about Tony.

Most of the people who I have interviewed about Tony, I have known for some years or have been acquainted with before interviewing them. There is a feeling of trust and familiarity, almost like we are family. I

feel both these things are advantageous to conducting an open and honest interview.

I have also found that, on occasion, my familial relationship with Tony has been an advantage as some people have made the decision to be interviewed only because of that relationship.

Financial Health

I have been fortunate to secure seed funding from Creative New Zealand that supported the start of the project, then in 2018, I secured some additional funding from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage via a New Zealand Oral History Award. Both grants have allowed me to dedicate some significant time to the project.

Output

The interviews will be deposited with both the Alexander Turnbull Library and the Auckland Art Gallery, Eric McCormick Library. At this stage, I have no further plans for the project other than to secure as many interviews as possible, and to find a way to prioritise the project more in my life.

What has been learnt to date

At times, this project has taken a back seat in my life and so has proceeded slowly. Due to

my familiarity with many of the interviewees, I tend to socialise and spend more time with them than in other projects so the interview process can take longer. I acknowledge that my initial fears and hesitations, to a large extent, have been unfounded.

PROJECT THREE

Northcote Winter Stories

Topic area: Environment/Arts

Number of interviewees: 10

Dates: August 2018

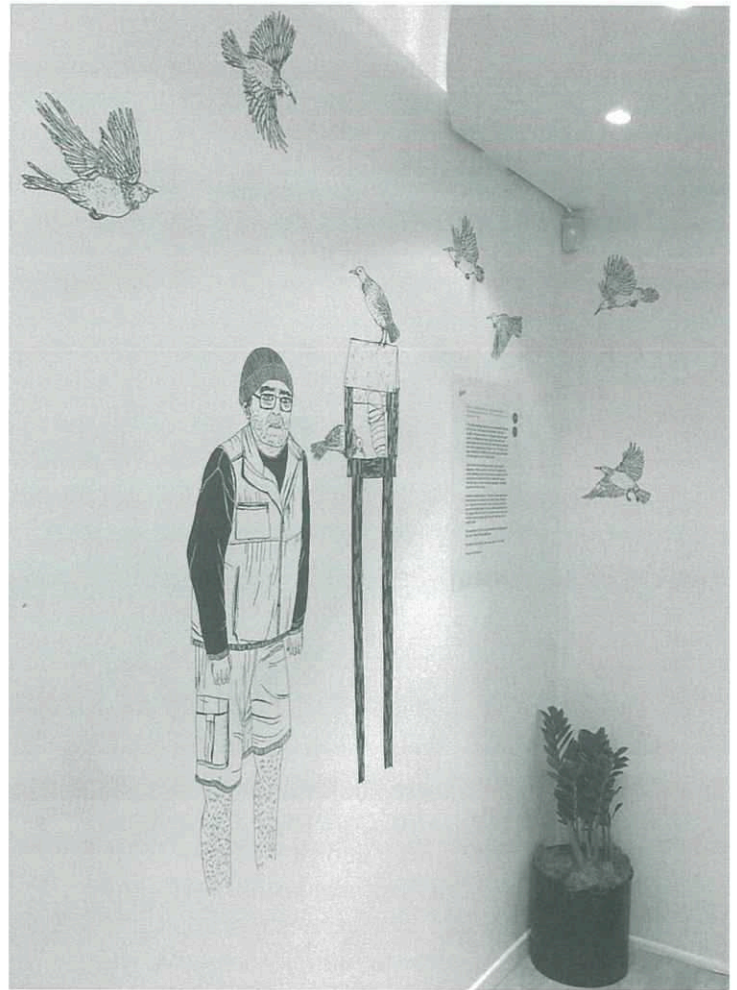
Client: Panuku Developments,
Auckland Council, First Concept

Outcome: Local pop-up exhibition with audio clips selected from interviews, full interviews archived with Research North, Takapuna Library.

This was a project with very tight deadline and was completed in just three weeks. Fresh Concept were the contractors for this project funded by Panuku Developments, Auckland Council. The brief was to set up in Northcote shopping centre and interview randomly chosen locals about their experience of, and their opinions about, winter in Northcote. The brief was for very short interviews designed for use in a proposed Pop Up exhibition that was going to be held in an unused shop in the Northcote shopping centre, with listening posts featuring audio clips from the interviews.

Impact and influences

I thought Fresh Concept's plan for the project was interesting but relatively limited, but they were receptive to adding value to the project, and decided to conduct more in-depth interviews, agreeing to include questioning the interviewees about themselves. Nevertheless, the interviews could still be seen as a wasted opportunity. Despite this, this was a successful project. Fresh Concept were professional in their approach and I really enjoyed being involved. The full interviews, which are still quite short but longer than the initial brief, have been abstracted and archived at Research North, Takapuna Library.



Northcote Winter Stories Project exhibition space. Photographs Anna Fomison

Financial Health

Due to the speed in which they needed the interviews completed, this project had the highest hourly rate and was probably my most financially rewarding project in the last 12 months.

Output

The pop-up exhibition, held in a freshly painted empty shop, displayed photos of the interviewees on the walls. Audio clips of the interviews were made available at listening posts.

What was learnt

Although this project had obvious limitations, it was also a great example of using extracts from interviews and getting them out in the public. It was also good to know the original recordings have been archived at Research North, Takapuna Library. Once again, people have been in contact with the interview extracts and with the information that the archive is available at Research North, Takapuna Library, but it is still uncertain if this will lead to more accessing of the archives.

PROJECT FOUR

Gil Hanly

Topic area: Arts

Number of interviewees: One

Dates: 2017-2018

Client: Auckland War Memorial Museum

Tāmaki Paenga Hira

Funding: Auckland War Memorial Museum

Tāmaki Paenga Hira

Financial health: moderate

Outcome: 15 interviews to be lodged with Auckland War Memorial Museum

Tāmaki Paenga Hira

In 2017, the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira commissioned me to interview Gil Hanly, one of New Zealand's most well-known photographers, about her life and work. For more than five decades she has documented New Zealand in times of great social change through the country's art and peace movements, at festivals and

in gardens. Gil has recorded thousands of images for posterity. This series of life history interviews is to be archived at the Auckland War Memorial Museum to accompany the large photo library that Gil has recently generously donated to the Museum.

This has been a 12-month project that has ebbed and flowed around Gil and her comings and goings. It seems that this could be the first time that Gil has discussed her life in any detail and sometimes it appears that she is remembering and relaying events to someone else for the first time. To assist in the process, I researched her life, deducting the chronology of her life from the story of her husband, Pat, reading both Russell Haley's *Hanly: A New Zealand Artist* and Greg O'Brien's *Pat Hanly*. This has been an important part of the process.

At times during the interviews, we have referred to Gil's photos. Often the image is sufficient in itself in telling its story and there can be little to add except names or places. However, what makes it more interesting is to record what was happening for Gil at the time the photo was taken.

Impact and influences

As a client, Auckland Museum has been very supportive and has stayed very much in the background. As interviewer, I have been more present than usual in the interviews and sometimes the interviews have taken a more conversational tone, usually due to discussion about dates, names or places. The recording environment has also had an impact. We have recorded in Gil's studio which is out the back of her house in Auckland's Mount Eden and over the past year has been subject to a variety of weather events, two tropical summer storms, wind, rain, tui and cicadas singing, agitated hens, a bird that flew into the door and knocked itself out, planes, helicopters, car alarms, weed eaters, lawn mowers, sirens, occasional interruptions from the boarder and unexpected visitors.

Financial Health

Moderate. There are many precious, unaccounted-for hours spent with Gil, talking, walking around her beautiful garden,



Photographer Gil Hanly in her garden. Photograph Anna Fomison

having coffee and eating various items of my baking before we record the interview and weave our way through her life.

What has been learnt

I have learnt that, no matter how much you control the recording environment, the external world can still have a considerable impact and there is not much you can do about that. And that although it is important to allow the interviewee to lead the type of interaction that they require from you, it is an art to try to ensure the interviewer is not too present in the interview.

On another entirely personal note, every interview occasion with Gil presented me with a new baking opportunity. I have enjoyed improving my baking skills!

In conclusion

When I record an interview, I often feel that I am holding open the gate of a portal that is allowing the past to enter the present, to be used, once archived, in the future. However, what is it that I am recording? The usual questions remain – the subjectivity of memory, the reliability of memory and the things that can affect or influence interviews. If the portal has limited topic areas, is it missing recording valuable information?

Memory is inherently subjective. In Tony's project, for example, I have noticed that the same event can be told in radically different ways, but that each version it is true for each individual.

In terms of output, turning audio extracts from interviews into a more accessible form or a different format begs the question of what is lost or gained through this process. This was particularly evident in creating the sound bites in the Northcote Winter Pop Up exhibition and in creating the video 'Voices from the Stream'. Communicating information about the availability of an archive may not lead to an increase in numbers of people accessing it.

My experience is that the time spent in socialising or talking with the interviewee contributes to a sense of trust and security for them, and can lead to a deeper interview. This seems to me to be a naturally embedded aspect of the interview process, and adds immeasurable value. Even though in

some projects, all the hours worked were not reimbursed adequately, they became invaluable learning opportunities.

Each project I have worked on or continue to work on in my role as an oral historian is a privilege and an honour. I have really enjoying talking with every one of my interviewees and have huge respect for each of them. I hope the discussion of my experience and projects has been useful in some way to you.

Reviews

Caren Wilton

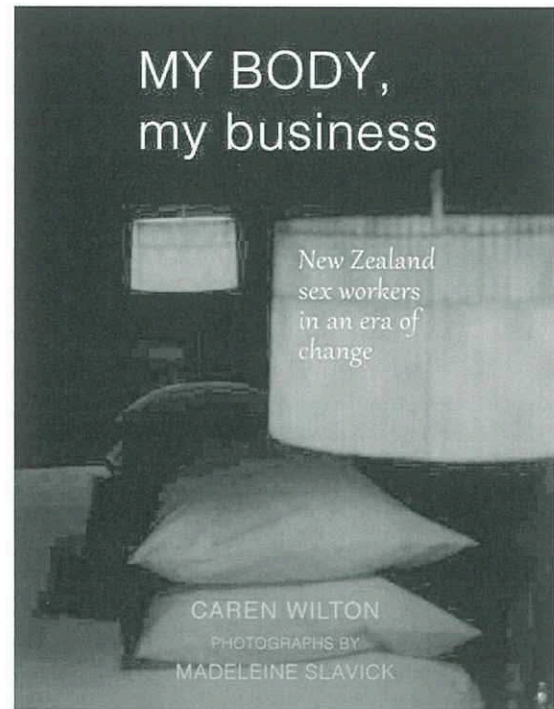
My Body, my business: New Zealand sex workers in an era of change (2018)

Reviewed by Lynzi Armstrong

My body, my business: New Zealand sex workers in an era of change offers a timely and poignant insight into the lives of sex workers both prior to and after the law change which decriminalised sex work in 2003. The preface provides a useful introduction to overarching debates surrounding sex work, the unique New Zealand context, and outlines the approach to gathering the stories which underpin the book. Wilton describes these eleven stories as “both extraordinary and ordinary” (p.10), which is undoubtedly accurate and aptly describes the people who shared them, with their diverse experiences, identities and worldviews.

This book does not only tell the stories of eleven current or former sex workers, collected through oral history interviews, it also tells a broader story about sex work in New Zealand in the context of its colonial history. Furthermore, it documents how sex workers, dissatisfied with their treatment under law, collectively organised and made history themselves through the decriminalisation of sex work.

While a plethora of books have been published on sex work, seldomly do they capture the nuances of positive, banal and negative experiences, nor do they provide an authentic account of sex workers as people. This book achieves this in telling the stories of the lives of eleven people prior to, during, and after their time as sex workers. The book serves as a very useful follow on to Jan



Jordan's *Working Girls*, published in 1991, which Wilton notes greatly influenced her approach to this text. Oral history interviews remain a relatively underutilised method in sex work research and this book showcases the enormous value of this approach to powerfully challenge misconceptions about sex workers.

The stories all have something unique and important to contribute, and capture the diverse meanings and impacts of sex work in people's lives. Several of these stories illustrate experiences of transgender people navigating a society that was hostile towards them, and how sex work not only provided a means of economic survival but also provided camaraderie and support, enabling insurmountably strong friendships to develop.

The use of oral history interviews enables insights into sex worker's everyday lives, which powerfully challenges stigmatic assumptions. For example, it is often

presumed that sex workers do not make good parents and that their children will be damaged by their caregiver's participation in sex work. On the contrary, Kelly recalled her son being the first person she contacted on the night of the vote for law reform and described how proud he was of her, while Anna told of her children growing into adults who had immense respect for what their mother had achieved. These are important stories in a global context in which representations of sex workers are often grossly inaccurate.

The book is beautifully written and the rich and complex stories that form its basis are complemented by photography provided by Madeleine Slavick. Sex work, as Wilton notes in her introduction, is often thought of as a secret world that is so profoundly different, though in reality is 'just ordinary yet not' (p.8). This book offers readers a window into that world through these stories. It will be of interest to a diverse range of readers and provides an invaluable contribution to published work on the experiences of sex workers in New Zealand.

References

Jan Jordan, (1991). *Working girls – women in the New Zealand sex industry talk to Jan Jordan*. Auckland: Penguin.

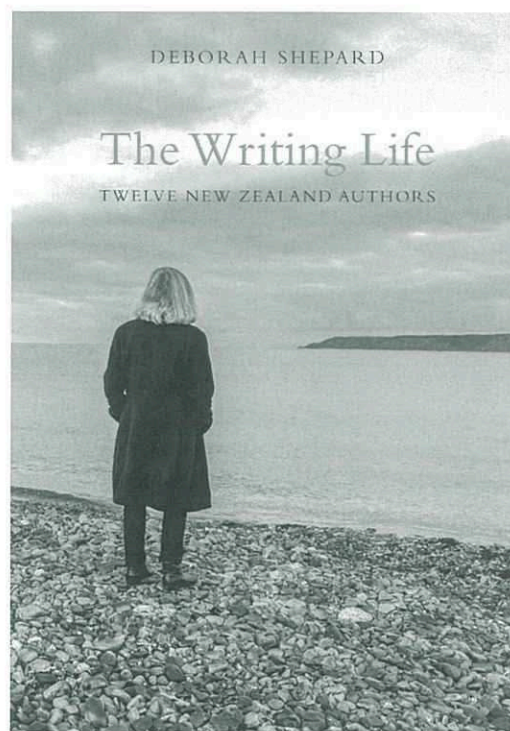
Dr Lynzi Armstrong, Lecturer in Criminology, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington

Books Noted

Deborah Shepard

The Writing Life, Twelve New Zealand Authors

Massey University Press, 2018



Deborah Shepard's new book, *The Writing Life, Twelve New Zealand Authors*, is the result of her involvement in the long running New Zealand Society of Authors oral history project. It contains her full life history interviews with twelve authors presented in question and answer form and as such provides an invaluable opportunity for oral historians to see lines of questioning and the responses they elicit in action, as well as to read in depth about the life experiences of the participants.

At the same time the NZSA has taken the opportunity to present extracts from its oral history project, some recorded by Deborah Shepard and some by Alison Gray and Michael King, in podcast form. The series can be listened to on the NZSA website <https://authors.org.nz/podcasts/> or on various podcasting platforms. Deborah Shepard has given interviews and public talks about the book.

Adrienne Jansen and carina gallegos

All of Us – poems on the themes of migrant and refugee experience

Landing Press, 2018. www.landingpress.wordpress.com

Adrienne Jansen, who is a writer, teacher, editor and oral historian, has written several books based on oral history. Her latest publication, with carina gallegos, is *All of Us*, which uses what the authors describe as 'poem-stories' to explore ways to write about migrant experience from the perspective of 'there' and 'here'. This format appealed to Adrienne Jansen because she didn't want to take on the voice of the migrant or refugee rather to explore what someone from Syria, for example, might experience when they go to a railway station, compared to what she herself might experience.

carina gallegos has a background in journalism and development studies and moved to New Zealand thirteen years ago. She has worked with refugee-background communities since 2011. Coming from a migrant background she found it easy to relate to the stories she heard, and she saw the poem-stories as a way to share the experiences that people have shared with her. The two authors collaborated to tell stories they think it is important to pass on. The collaborative nature of the project extended to the publication which involved students of the Whitireia New Zealand publishing programme taking the book from manuscript to bookshelf with editing, production, design, publicity and marketing.

Mary

You smacked her for talking
in her own language.
You made her language a sin.

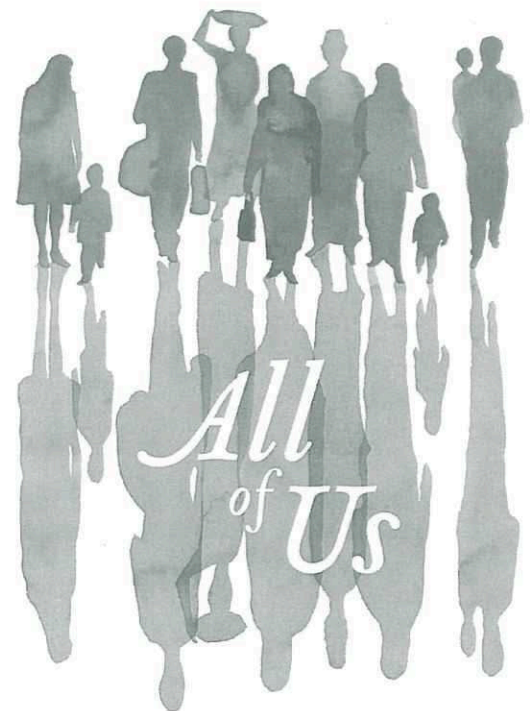
You stole her words, changed
them
and made them your own.
But they're not.

Now they are no one's
They are skin with no bones,
leaves with no branch.

Listen, all of you, to her name.
It is strange and beautiful.
It means golden fruit.

'No' you say,
'I will not call her by that name.
I will call her Mary.'

Adrienne Jansen



ADRIENNE JANSEN

CARINA GALLEGOS

underwater

i'm sixteen.
'head west'
father said
and forbade me to look back
over my shoulder.

i think of sodom and lot,
of his wife
and their fate.
the sun blasts
on to my neck.
i walk,
i do not stop.

ten thousand steps
and i arrive
at the camp,
blistered bones,
a numb soul.
there is no rest
in the July heat
of east sudan,
for in hell
not even the devil sleeps

no running water.
the stench
is oppressive.
i'm underwater
and i learn
to hold
my breath.

ten thousand miles
and i arrive
at the end of the world.
it is july
and all is cold.
the wind howls
its welcome
in a language
i do not know.

i have a roof,
food,
running water.
i have everything
i need
except that they forget
the blankets
for the bed.
its steel frame
touches my skin,
freezes my feet -
i'm too long
too brown,
i do not fit.

carina gallegos

'Wāhine Take Action'

Tāmaki Pātaka Kōrero Exhibition,
Central City Library, Auckland
20 August - 11 November 2018

Reviewed by Nina Whittaker

To begin a review with a confession, this article was submitted late. From my initial visit to 'Wāhine Take Action' in mid-September, I had been struggling to identify the 'heart' of the exhibition, and to put it into words. I knew that I wanted to express how different the exhibit was to its red graffiti-sprayed advertising, but as the weeks passed I remained unable to grasp exactly what it missed about the exhibit. Four days after the review was due, I went to a screening of the exhibition's feature film *Women on the Move*. As director Lisa Prager thanked Auckland Libraries for giving the film its first recognition in 25 years, I realised exactly what I wanted to say. I went home and wrote this article.

'Wāhine Take Action' was produced by Tāmaki Pātaka Kōrero Central City Library as the commemorative exhibition for Suffrage 125. Curated by a range of passionate librarians and including oral histories selected by Sue Berman, this exhibit showcased the variety of different actions that wāhine have taken to further society in Aotearoa New Zealand. With each action set up in a different cabinet, the exhibition covered everything from 'Write a Book' to 'Run for Office', 'Play and Grow', and 'Make Art'. The exhibition also featured a wall of 'Mana Wāhine', looking at the three elements of mana tangata, mana reo, and mana whenua from pūrākau through to contemporary history. This included a beautiful kahu (cloak) from the 1975 Land March, presented to Auckland Libraries by Whina Cooper and Eddie Kawiti.

The oral histories featured at the listening station were also carefully chosen to talk to the actions showcased in each cabinet. Visitors were invited to take a seat, grab a pair of headphones, and be inspired by short 5-minute selections from oral histories with the likes of Baljit Kaur Dheil, founder of a support group for Punjabi women, and Tūpou

Manapori, the first person of Pacific decent to be elected to Council. It was wonderful to be able to sit and listen to the wāhine's stories, as these drew the exhibition out in well-selected short clips. The transcripts clearly available alongside the recording were really helpful in reading along, particularly in a space with so much going on.

At an evening curator's talk, I was lucky enough to hear curators Sue Berman, Zoë Colling, and Renée Orr discuss the details that went into the creation of the exhibition. The magazines from the Broadsheet Archives used in the "Start a Feminist Press" cabinet were carefully selected to represent New Zealand's wāhine artists. The Auckland Kindergarten Association archives, displayed in the "Play & Grow" cabinet, had a diary opened to a careful lesson plan on blacksmithing. These layered expressions of small, everyday actions were hidden treasures, which I felt were almost drowned out by the red-graffiti advertising that shouted, KEEP YOUR LAWS OFF MY BODY and I'M ADDICTED TO HEROINES (both taken from badges in the cabinet 'Be Visible').

What brought the whole exhibition together for me, however, was the screening of the 1983 documentary *Women on the Move*. I was greeted upon arrival by a beaming Jane Wild, who offered me asparagus wraps before we were led into the viewing space. Here, Sue introduced filmmakers Lisa Prager and Anne Speir, alongside peace activists Louise Brandt and Valerie Morse. After viewing the footage of the 1983 anti-nuclear women's march on Queen Street, members of the audience came forward with their stories of the event, from hosting meetings in their living-rooms to posting calls for women in the classified section of newspapers. As we ended with a waiata from the march (keep those toys, away from our boys...), the exhibition came to life in our voices, and I finally realised the 'heart' of the exhibition- it was the people.

From the letters and voices in the exhibition itself, to hosted events with those who created and curated the content, Wāhine Take Action brought together a collection and its people. What frustrated me about the exhibition advertising was that the impersonal anonymity of the red spray paint ignored the

beautifully personal, person-focused exhibit and events. Given the chance, I would have replaced it all with the glow of the faces of the curators, photographers, and film directors involved in the exhibition wāhine taking action to share our precious history.

*He aha te mea nui o te ao?
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.*

Nina Whittaker is an assistant librarian at Walsh Memorial Library, MOTAT, Auckland

WĀHINE
TAKE
ACTION ♀

NOHANZ Conference Report 2018

University of Waikato, 27–29 November 2018

PIP OLDHAM



Group visit to Ōrākau Battlesite, NOHANZ Conference 2018. Photograph Sue Gee

The programme for the biennial NOHANZ conference, held on the attractive campus of the University of Waikato, was demanding. Two days of back to back papers were preceded by a valuable workshop taught by Professor Alistair Thomson, also a keynote speaker, and an escorted outing to Ōrākau, the site of a key battle in the colonial wars in the Waikato. There we were addressed by Dr Robert Joseph, whose tūpuna fought at the battle, and Dale-Maree Morgan, an artist who draws on stories of colonisation in her work. Their account of the lead up to the battle and subsequent events reflected a prevailing theme of the conference: the contemporary personal, cultural and social significance of past events, often but not always traumatic, told and reflected in oral history. The presentation by members of the project team for the Pākaitore oral history project, exploring the history of the 1995 occupation

of Moutoa Gardens through interviews with 40 participants from all aspects of the occupation, and ‘treasured pūrākau (stories) of the past that resonate with the present to drive the future’, a project initiated by Māori mental health nurses, provided particularly vivid examples. There were many others amongst the presentations. Members of Ngāti Tipā talked with warmth, mutual affection and respect about their Marsden funded project ‘by whānau, for whānau’ to build a resource about whenua and whakapapa.

Professor Alistair Thomson’s keynote described and illustrated the book he wrote with Anisa Puri, *Australian Lives: An Intimate History*, based on interviews for the Australian Generations oral history project, 300 interviews with Australians born between 1920 and 1989. He showed us how the 50 interviews featured in the

book can be accessed via text and listening to the recorded words online, and how the indexing system, which includes keywords for emotions, allows for fine grained research across themes and place/time. We had workshopped listening for meaning and there was plenty of opportunity for this during the conference with extended audio extracts a feature of many presentations.

In his keynote NOHANZ President, Dr Nēpia Mahuika, standing in for Dr Tom Roa who was attending a tangihanga, built on previously published writing* that uses Māori culture and practice to argue against drawing firm distinctions between 'oral history' and 'oral tradition' arguing instead for a reconsideration of the form, politics, practice and methodology of oral history to recognise indigenous understandings of orality. Dr Michael Dudding, who researches in the field of architectural history, conceptualised some of the issues for us beautifully by representing memory visually using geometric webs to explain the complex interaction of past and present sited in space and time.

Continuing Nēpia Mahuika's thread, not all presentations were based on the recorded voice. Dr Maria Haenga-Collins and Dr Keri Mills moved many listeners with they called 'poetic transcriptions' of material derived from oral history and oral tradition. These strong personal responses were a potent reminder that emotion is the human thread that runs through all our work.

The conference ran beautifully despite the crowded programme and changes necessitated by unforeseen events. Te Reo Māori was used extensively, many speakers recited their pepeha, some presentations were acknowledged with waiaita and karakia were said. One regret was that there was not more time between sessions to make connections and explore ideas with people who came from a wide variety of different places and perspectives and often dipped in for a short time not the whole conference. For those of us who stayed in the university halls there was enjoyable and valuable conversation and connection in the corridors and over breakfast.

The 2018 conference papers underlined the complexity of recording and working with memory and the need to be constantly aware of the bigger contemporary and historical picture and the individual nature of lived experience. The increasing use of the spoken word in present day society, the ease of recording and distributing audio material, and the range of oral history practitioners across different parts of society, underline that the capacity to record and tell stories is an instrument of power. Who tells the story and how the account is contextualised matter. So it is timely to revisit what we mean by 'oral history' and the ethical parameters oral historians need to observe. It would be helpful for NOHANZ to lead these important conversations. Updating the Code of Ethical and Technical Practice, which has been talked about by many, could be a useful end result so that we have a living document that reflects contemporary oral history practice and conditions.

All told a memorable three days for which a big thank you to the conference team who will no doubt have put in many hours of painstaking time making sure things ran to plan.

*Nēpia Mahuika, 'An Outsider's Guide to Public Oral History in New Zealand', *NZ Journal of History*, vol. 5, n1, 2017, pp3 - 18



Professor Alistair Thomson – Interpreting Memories workshop. Photograph Lynette Chum

Code of ethical and technical practice

National Oral History Association
of New Zealand
Te Kete Kōrero-a-Waha o Te Motu
PO Box 3819
WELLINGTON

WWW.ORALHISTORY.ORG.NZ

NOHANZ

This Code exists to promote ethical, professional and technical standards in the collection, preservation and use of sound and video oral history material.

Archives, sponsors and organisers of oral history projects have the following responsibilities:

- » To inform interviewers and people interviewed of the importance of this code for the successful creation and use of oral history material;
- » To select interviewers on the basis of professional competence and interviewing skill, endeavouring to assign appropriate interviewers to people interviewed;
- » To see that records of the creation and processing of each interview are kept;
- » To ensure that each interview is properly indexed and catalogued;
- » To ensure that preservation conditions for recordings and accompanying material are of the highest possible standard;
- » To ensure that placement of and access to recordings and accompanying material comply with a signed or recorded agreement with the person interviewed;
- » To ensure that people interviewed are informed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the interview and accompanying material may be used;
- » To make the existence of available interviews known through public information channels;
- » To guard against possible social injury to, or exploitation of people interviewed.

INTERVIEWERS HAVE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSIBILITIES:

- » to inform the person interviewed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the particular project in which they are involved;
- » to inform the person interviewed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the material and accompanying material may be used;
- » to develop sufficient skills and knowledge in interviewing and equipment operation, e.g. through reading and training, to ensure a result of the highest possible standard;
- » to use equipment that will produce recordings of the highest possible standard;
- » to encourage informative dialogue based on thorough research;
- » to conduct interviews with integrity;
- » to conduct interviews with an awareness of cultural or individual sensibilities;
- » to treat every interview as a confidential conversation, the contents of which are available only as determined by written or recorded agreement with the person interviewed;
- » to place each recording and all accompanying material in an archive to be available for research, subject to any conditions placed on it by the person interviewed;
- » to inform the person interviewed of where the material will be held;
- » to respect all agreements made with the person interviewed.

NOHANZ Origins

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

was established as result of the first national oral history seminar organised in April 1986 by the Centre for Continuing Education of the Victoria University of Wellington and the New Zealand Oral History Archive, a professional organisation then based in the National Library that worked on major oral history projects.

Objectives

- » To promote the practice and methods of oral history.
- » To promote standards in oral history interviewing techniques, and in recording and preservation methods.
- » To act as a resource of information and to advise on practical and technical problems involved in making oral history recordings.
- » To act as a coordinator of oral history activities throughout New Zealand.
- » To produce an annual oral history journal and regular newsletters.
- » To promote regular oral history meetings, talks, seminars, workshops and demonstrations.
- » To encourage the establishment of NOHANZ branches throughout New Zealand.
- » To compile a directory of oral history holdings to improve access to collections held in libraries archives and museums.

NOHANZ

ISSN 0113-5376

