



Abstracts

Lesley Alves, professional historian

Using a recently completed municipal history as a case study, I will discuss the use of personal stories and their relationship to place. The stories included some existing personal reminiscences held in local history collections, collected without the urban setting in mind. How do they relate to place? Is the local context implicit? I also invited the community to contribute stories and received an enthusiastic response. I will discuss the way such personal stories brought out the spirit of the times and captured the identity of the particular suburbs.

Meryl Andrews, Monash University

Green bans and elephants: Urban development and the redefinition of welfare in Australia in the 1970s

The Whitlam government came to power in 1972 with an ambitious program for reform that reflected a broad desire for change, a desire summed up by the campaign slogan "It's Time". Amongst a raft of social and political changes there was a challenge to traditional conceptions of social welfare and to the ways in which social welfare services were delivered. A long period of economic stability and growth had led to increased urbanisation in cities and regional centres, and new suburbs spawned new communities with new aspirations. The Australian Assistance Plan (AAP) was a Whitlam government social welfare initiative that tapped into the energy and creativity of these new communities producing different expressions of both community and welfare.

This paper uses the oral testimony of people involved in AAP programs, from resident action groups opposing inner-city development to suburban community arts and education centres, to explore both the ways the changing urban landscape impacted on conceptions of welfare and community and the ways in which those impacts were understood by the people involved, at the time and after a thirty plus year interval.

Matt Bailey, Macquarie University

Embracing private public consumer space: The reception of regional shopping centres in Sydney during the 1960s

Large pre-planned regional shopping centres began appearing in Australia in the late 1950s. They were based on American models and complemented the post war suburbanisation and spread of car ownership that was occurring throughout Australia and other Western countries. They tapped into mainstream society's affluence and were widely embraced by a

public increasingly attuned to consumer goods and in need of a more convenient means by which to acquire them.

Newspaper coverage at the time reported grand centre openings attended by massive enthusiastic crowds. This paper explores the crowd. Based upon detailed qualitative survey feedback from over one hundred Sydney residents, it opens up the mass to provide a personal insight into the early attitudes towards, and experiences of, shopping centres in Sydney. The reception was celebratory – ambivalence came with time, seemingly endless centre expansion, and the homogeneity of chains and franchises – but it was multi-faceted. This paper argues that centres were celebrated in far more diverse ways than the public record conveys, and that the sense of social space that was created within them can be more closely tied to the people who used the centres than the marketers who promoted them.

Jill Barnard, Living Histories

A sustained and constantly strained effort: Josephite Sisters and post-war education in Victoria

Post-war migration to Australia, along with the baby boom, imposed great stresses on both state and non-government schools. The Catholic hierarchy's public response to the influx of many Catholic European-born migrants was to pledge the Church's welcome to them and offer to share the Church's resources. In many areas of Victoria where migrants settled, this translated into bulging classrooms and immense strains on a largely Religious teaching force.

Using material gained from interviews with Victorian Sisters of St Joseph, this paper will examine some of the impacts of the 1950s and 1960s on both individual Sisters and the Province as a whole as they struggled to carry out the Church's commitment to provide a Catholic education for every Catholic child who sought it.

Margo Beasley, City of Sydney

Zoot suits, guns, tobacco and mink: Doing business in Central Sydney

This City of Sydney Council oral history project was conducted initially in 2001 but is now being developed by the City's oral history program into an ongoing concern. The project focused on (predominantly) long standing, mainly retail, businesses in central Sydney in the second half of the twentieth century. These included a furrier, a gunsmith, a tailor, a fish and chip shop, a Chinese restaurant, a tobacconist, a delicatessen, a comic shop, a golf supply shop, an office furniture repairer and a second-hand book and record dealer. The project's initial interest was in the heritage buildings in which many of these businesses resided but its focus broadened to include the social history of the sites. What emerges from these interviews is a picture of the complex and ever-shifting interplay between the individual and larger economic forces that is inherent to urban commerce. Politics, manufacturing capability, regulation, migration, international fashion, public taste, economic expansion and contraction, population trends, urban development and redevelopment, and digital technology all combine with personal attributes such as preference, family and social circumstances, acumen and skill to shape the history of businesses in inner urban Sydney.

Louise Blake, Blake Hyland Group

Seeing Melbourne through the prism of family stories

Every story told has a setting in time and space. The experiences a storyteller has within the setting often transforms it from a simple locality into 'a place', or as others have described, 'a space that means something to someone'. The family stories that resonated with me from

childhood were set in Melbourne. I was born in Canberra, but as I so often preface that statement, my family are from Victoria. From about 1915 through to the mid 1950s several generations of my mother's family lived within a few streets of one another in the inner suburbs of Brunswick and Coburg. From the 1950s the setting of many family stories had shifted to a place called The Patch in the Dandenong Ranges, where some of the family had moved. I'm not sure if I was more captivated by the stories of trains and trams, factories and docks, or the nostalgic view of an extended family living side by side.

Since moving to Melbourne in 2000 — where my 'work with history' has enabled me to hear other stories of Melbourne — I have come to see these settings with my own eyes, though the 'spaces' I see are not always the same 'places' in my family's stories. In this paper I draw upon my collection of recorded stories, photographs, and other memorabilia to explore how some of these urban spaces have become places in my family's stories, and consider the meaning they have for both storyteller and myself, the audience.

Steve Brown, Department of Environment and Climate Change (NSW)

Backyard belonging: Creating attachment to place through archaeology and memory

In August 2007, the authors purchased a property in the suburb of Arncliffe, 13km from Sydney's CBD. We wondered how we might ever feel a sense of belonging to a place that we had previously barely even heard of. We undertook a basic home renovation, so *de rigueur* in Sydney, and then set about turning a grassed expanse into a garden. Both processes revealed a wealth of evidence and artefacts about the history of the place. From the house came the evidence of past colour schemes, past floor coverings, altered fireplaces as well as coins, pins, a betting ticket and prescription medicine bottles. The garden revealed a wealth of artefacts – from a late nineteenth century clay pipe bowl to recent plastic toy soldiers. A small excavation was undertaken in the backyard to try to establish the distribution and time depth on the artefacts and the past activities that they represented. In addition, previous owners and occupants of the property were contacted and interviewed. Our experience of the material traces of history, combined with people's stories, have given us a strong sense of the history of our block in Arncliffe and a sense of belonging to a special suburban place.

June Caunt, University of Western Australia

Urban life in Western Australia as perceived by British migrants in the 1960s

As part of my doctoral research at the University of Western Australia I am comparing and contrasting a contemporary longitudinal study of British migrants with a study I completed in 2007. The 25 files from the early study are transcripts of interviews held with British migrants in 1959 immediately prior to their emigration and follow up interviews conducted in Australia in 1961 and 1966. As part of the requirements for a Masters of Arts from the University of Notre Dame I conducted interviews with British migrants who had arrived in Western Australia in the 1960s

These contemporary and retrospective responses are a window into urban Western Australia in the 1960s. British migrants were surprised by poorly constructed homes, over-crowded schools, and a lack of entertainment venues. Western Australia was not the 'Britain down under' they had expected to find, although one remarked, 'it is a copy of England—but 25 years behind the times'.

Kate Darian Smith, University of Melbourne

Australian children's playlore and oral history

This paper commences with an overview of fieldwork currently underway for the 'Childhood, Tradition and Change' research project, funded by the Australian Research Council in partnership with the National Library of Australia and Museum Victoria. This involves visiting selected primary schools throughout Australia and the collection of aural and visual recordings of children's games and play activities in the school playground, as well as interviews with children and adults about play. These materials will form an oral, visual, material culture and text-based archive that can be examined alongside the findings of similar documentation of play gathered by researchers since the 1950s. The aural recordings will be held by the National Library of Australia's oral history and folklore collection. But what is the relationship between oral history and folklore, and how does Australian children's playlore contribute to our understandings of social and cultural history?

Gwenda Davey, Deakin University

Immigration and children's lore

Perhaps nothing could be more urban than the multi-story blocks of public housing in Flemington, an inner suburb in Melbourne's north-west. Most of the residents are 29 refugees, asylum-seekers or immigrants, and currently most are from diverse parts of Africa, such as Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. There are also residents from East Timor, Vietnam and a few other places.

Almost, though not literally, in the shadow of the high-rise flats, is a primary school whose population reflects this ethnic diversity. The school has 110 pupils, of whom only two are of Anglo origin. The school is of considerable interest to the 'Childhood, Tradition and Change' project, as a substantial research project was carried out there in the mid 1980s by Heather Russell, who published her findings in 1986 as *Play and Friendships in a Multicultural Playground*. Her results will provide an excellent basis for comparison with fieldwork carried out in this school in December 2008.

Both this primary school and another multi-ethnic inner-suburban school in Melbourne, studied in an earlier research project, showed an active children's play culture, although only a little evidence was found of play traditions brought from children's original homelands. It is particularly intriguing to consider the transmission of children's lore in these unusual circumstances. How do Somali, Sudanese, Ethiopian and East Timorese children learn to use the counting-out rhyme 'Mickey Mouse had a house...'?

Kath Ensor, Monash University

Life stories of the not so rich and famous: The public historian's role in researching and recording these stories

'Life isn't a matter of milestones but of moments', (Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy). Similarly, life-stories are not biographies of achievements but rather snapshots of memories. This paper looks at researching and recording life-stories of those whose voices have not previously been heard.

Urban development in the 20th century and changes in the nuclear family have seen many people move away from the security and support of people and places that were familiar to them. How can their past lives and experiences be understood and appreciated by others if they are not recorded?

History writing is no longer restricted to traditional volumes. The ways in which lifestories can be recorded today are numerous. To illustrate this I will draw on examples of work that I have been involved with as a public historian, with aged and disadvantaged groups in the community over the past two years.

The sources for each of these unique life-stories are diverse and combine both oral interviews and other records that have previously been reserved for genealogists researching their own families. Their simple yet potent messages bring a new dimension to history telling.

Richard Evans, Swinburne University

'The Police are rotten corrupt': Social geography, police corruption and the mobilisation of scandal in Sydney in 1936

The Sydney SP bookmaking scandal of 1936 is all but forgotten now, but its historical significance is enormous. It was the first public exposure of systemic police corruption in 20th century Australia.

The scandal began with a routine police raid on a smallgoods shop in Dulwich Hill and a minor charge of illegal betting. It led to a royal commission which exposed widespread police misconduct and extensive corruption, led to the dismissal of 13 police, and shook public confidence in the New South Wales Police Force. The SP scandal presented a valuable opportunity for reform, but this did not occur – a failure which is revealing in itself. This paper looks at the urban and social geography of the illegal betting industry in Sydney in the 1930s and its associated police corruption. It explores how illegal gambling caused different social and geographic worlds to intersect, leading to unlikely alliances which were able to mobilise scandal and force a public inquiry.

June Factor, University of Melbourne

Reflections on more than a century of collecting children's folklore in Australian suburbs

Until the 1950s, the history of collecting the folklore of Australian children – the games, rhymes, riddles, jokes, insults, secret languages, etc – was the work of dedicated individuals, urban and rural, for whom it was a minor but fascinating cultural byway. The arrival of an experienced ethnographer from the US in the mid- 1950s not only greatly enlarged the corpus of collected material, but also shifted playlore into the scholarly realm of historical context, analysis, international comparison and the like. From this time, scholars have played an increasingly important role in the study of Australian children's folklore, and in the advocacy of its significance to the understanding of human development and the growth of cultural forms, as well as its clear-eyed reflection on Australian history. The current national research project, 'Childhood, Tradition and Change', builds on all the earlier work undertaken by individuals inside and outside academia.

This paper will consider the work of a handful of the collectors who found most of their material in city and suburban streets and schoolyards.

Ruth Ford, La Trobe University

'I wasn't going to rove the streets or go down to St Kilda': Class, place and lesbian desires in 1950s urban Australia

In an oral history interview, Pat narrates of her first lesbian affair, conducted in a car in Melbourne's streets in the early 1950s, while engaged. As a daughter of a respectable, well-off family, she chose to marry than 'ruin my life'. She continued to have affairs with women she met through her family and friendship networks in suburbia, rather than participating in a public urban lesbian sub-culture: 'I wasn't exactly going to rove the streets or go down to St Kilda or something'. In contrast, working-class Jan Hillier tells stories of her experiences set within inner-city Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney. Place is central to her accounts of lesbian experiences and visual style, amidst hostility and physical violence on city streets. Revisiting

oral history interviews I did in the early 1990s, this paper examines the ways place and urban settings shaped the stories lesbian women told about their lives in 1950s Melbourne. I argue that class was central to the different urban spaces which lesbian women inhabited and expressed their sexual and gender identities within. I also consider how public bars, cafes, entertainment parks, urban beaches and city streets were sites that enabled the performance and creation of individual and collective lesbian identities.

Anita Frayman, Monash University

Understanding cultural diversity: Life stories of ageing migrants

Contextualising people's experiences in their countries of origin within the relevant historical political, social and economic periods of their birth and within which they experienced important stages of their lives, can help understand the attitudes and expectations that migrants carry with them as they age. Migrants bring their experiences and their memories of their home countries to Australia which are then further affected by the Australian historical context and the urban environment into which they migrate. This process forms part of the cultural diversity of a community.

Life stories, used as a means of understanding the influence of history upon the present, show how cultural diversity within a community impacts upon older people's experience of ageing. Examples drawn from a study of older people in the Melbourne Jewish community show that within the community's collective identity are different cultural sub-groups formed around the various waves of migration to Australia from different countries. The case studies serve to illustrate how members of the cultural sub-groups have built and adapted their social capital to the Melbourne urban environment reflecting the attitudes and expectations that they brought with them from their countries of origin.

Bronwen Gray, Housing New Zealand Corporation

Homelessness: Myths and memories

Every night the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Victoria could fill the Telstra dome. Although invisible to most of us, more often than not, when we think of the homeless, an image instantly comes to mind about what they look like, how they act on the street and possibly even what they smell like.

In a recent survey, more than 76% of those surveyed believed that the homeless are to blame for their current predicament because they are lazy and just don't want to work.

So who are these people? Why are they homeless and just how different are they to you or I?

Equal service: myths and memories, was an oral history project undertaken collaboratively by the Department of Justice, the Homeless Persons Legal Clinic and the Council to Homeless People, that took place in Melbourne during 2007. This DVD contains 8 animated stories from individuals who have been, or are still, homeless. Each story tells of their unique pathway in and out of homelessness and busts many of the myths that society holds about who our homeless population is.

This presentation speaks not only about the stories of homelessness with a political overview of the issues, but will also discuss the ethical considerations of working with such a vulnerable population.

Paula Hamilton, University of Technology Sydney

'The breath of home' Sensory Urbanism - the memory of the city and suburbs through touch, smell, sound and taste

'Coming down the Spit you could smell the seaweed. This was the breath of home.' Dorothy Olsen

We understand cities primarily through the visual, seeing them everyday through our mind's eye, but the city can engage all our senses as an invocation to remembering. How might the history of the city and suburbs be different if we remembered the experience through smell, touch, taste and sound? This paper addresses the limitations and possibilities of oral history by drawing on people's sensual memories of their city and suburbs as places of everyday life and work. It utilises some of the recent research in cultural history to explore a multisensorial landscape of the past.

Jim Hammerton, La Trobe University

'Growing up in "white bread" England in the 60s I might as well have come from Mars': Cosmopolitanism and the city in the lives of British migrants in the late 20th century

A recurring theme in the testimony of British migrants to Australia in the two decades following World War Two, especially those from London and industrial cities, is the disappointment, often scorn, which they expressed for the quality of urban life in their new country. Amenities they had taken for granted, even in war damaged and austerity ravaged cities at home, seemed to be absent or inferior in Australian capital cities (as in the equivalent cities in Canada), and they prompted critical comments on issues ranging from the quality of public transport to restrictive liquor laws. Disappointment with the urban setting was one of the reasons why these migrants opted to settle in middle and outer suburbs. By the 1970s this critique began to give way to a more positive outlook among a younger generation, more intent on a search for 'adventure' and more cosmopolitan in inclination. For many of these migrants Australian cities represented a degree of excitement and challenge they had not known in the 'white bread' towns of their upbringing; by the 1990s the city centre living some of them chose was a celebration of a form of cosmopolitanism they had never experienced in Britain. The paper will draw on two oral history projects on post-war British migration to Australia to illuminate the changing meaning of the city in migrant life histories.

Jo Hook, Monash University

'Let's just open the door and see what happens': the Catholic response to need in St Kilda

On a Saturday afternoon in January 1982, Fr Ernie Smith moved into the presbytery next to the Sacred Heart Church in Grey Street, St Kilda. It was the eve of his 43rd birthday. At two o'clock the next morning, he stood out on the veranda to savour the tastes of his new parish. He watched the traffic and was overcome by the noise. He was saddened by the sight of women working on the streets and somewhat disgusted by the kerb crawlers. He felt at a loss in respect of those affected by drugs and alcohol. With a wry smile, Ernie wished himself a happy birthday. Later that same month, Ernie opened the doors of the presbytery to the people of St Kilda. Thus began the work of Sacred Heart Mission which today employs hundreds of staff and volunteers who, in turn, support thousands of people in need.

Using St Kilda as an example, and utilising oral history interviews with workers and clients of Sacred Heart Mission as source material, this paper examines the practical effect of faith as the motivation for welfare activism. It analyses the response of the Catholic church to need within the broader welfare context as a pathway in the exploration as to how and why faith matters.

Andrew Junor, Sue Hodges Productions

Lockdown: Integrating oral testimony and twentieth century history at the Old Melbourne Gaol

At the request of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), production company SHP has been engaged to develop a set of new interpretive concepts for the Old Melbourne Gaol. The primary emphasis of the gaol's pre-existing interpretation was on the site's history as a functioning prison between 1841 and 1926. The history of the gaol site, however, extended beyond its 1926 closure into the 20th century— most notably when used during the Second World War to incarcerate soldiers who were Absent Without Leave (AWL). This history had been represented in the gaol's interpretation through a number of video interviews undertaken with former soldiers who were temporarily held at the Gaol. This 20th century oral material did not sit easily within the dominant 19th century and penal emphases of the overall site interpretation.

Our paper will explore the two key challenges faced by SHP in developing new interpretive concepts for the Old Melbourne Gaol: how to integrate 20th century oral histories of non-criminal prisoners within a site that has traditionally been framed as a 19th century penal space and how to re-frame the Gaol as an integral part of Melbourne's cultural, economic and political life, rather than as a discrete and aberrant space. The paper will reflect upon the Gaol's historic role within Melbourne's urban fabric and its shift from a site of incarceration to one of heritage; the methodological difficulty of giving voice to former prisoners when little oral source material is available; and the practical challenges of integrating diverse historical experiences within a thematically and physically restrictive heritage site.

Helen Klæbe, Queensland University of Technology

Incorporating community history into urban redevelopment

A community history project must be relevant to each person within it so that they see themselves as part of the socio-cultural fabric of the area and feel a sense of ownership of their environment.

The Mill Albion community history project is a diverse, multi-layered public history/art program that captures the social heritage of The Mill Albion and allows the community to contribute to their ongoing history.

The Albion Flour Mill was built in 1930 at a time when Australia was feeling the effects of its worst economic depression and continued operations for more than 72 years. After ceasing operation in 2005 the site was left to deteriorate. The FKP Property Group purchased the land to undertake a new urban redevelopment project, drawing on the design principles of a traditional 'village', while valuing the importance of remembering the community that once included the Flour Mill.

This paper reflects on the this project and showcases some of the culturally creative ways this community's history was told, using methods such as digital stories, contemporary and historical photography and oral history.

Tanja Luckins, University of Melbourne

A collective conversation: Talking and hearing the cosmopolitan city

Cosmopolitanism is historically and popularly associated with the city, where the citizen of the world typically felt at home. This paper explores the Australian city's cosmopolitan past. Long before the advent of the contemporary café latte lifestyle, people spoke and wrote about the cultural atmosphere of their city in newspapers and popular magazines, associating

particular sounds, smells, and tastes with 'immigrants', particular neighbourhoods and locales, and cafes and restaurants; it was, if you like, a collective conversation about a city and its relationship with the rest of the world. For the historian, it is an opportunity to think about oral and aural sources in a specific way: the words on the newspaper and magazine page were often people's voices and the sounds of sociability and hospitality, helping in turn to define and articulate the cosmopolitan city to a broader audience.

Alexandra MacCallum, The University of Melbourne

Australian children of servicemen from World War Two – An intergenerational study

Australian historians have written about World War Two extensively. Many social, political and economic histories canvassing the years 1939-1945 exist. There is not a great deal written, however, discussing the post-war years. Few texts explore how families coped when they lost cousins, uncles, brothers, husbands and fathers. Nor do they explore how loved ones grappled with the return of soldiers and prisoners of war into their families who were profoundly scarred both physically and psychologically by the horrors of battle and internment. To date, no academic history or personal memoir or autobiography exists examining in detail the impact it had on children when their fathers did or did not return home. To delve into the inner domestic world of the families of returned servicemen, I have conducted interviews with children from these families. In this paper I will focus on the different experiences families had after the Second World War depending on whether they were living in an urban or a rural context. In both the urban and rural context returned servicemen and prisoners of war struggled to settle back into society despite the pressures they themselves, the community and in some cases, the Government put on them to 'get back to normality'.

Nicola McColl & Belinda Ensor, Sue Hodges Productions

Empty vessel: Polly Woodside as a post-war Melbourne heritage site

The sailing ship *Polly Woodside*, an icon on Melbourne's Yarra River since the 1960s, highlights the complex role of meaning-making in 20th century urban heritage. The ship was acquired by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and restored by volunteers from the late 1960s, becoming a heritage site familiar to generations of Melburnians. The *Polly Woodside's* historical significance lies in its being one of the last remaining 19th century sailing ships. However, the ship's connection to Melbourne stems less from its history at sea than from its history of post-war restoration and public visitation. It was by the act of restoring the ship, researching its history, and establishing its place within Melbourne's urban fabric, that the ship came to take on heritage meanings.

Heritage and design firm SHP has been engaged by the National Trust to develop new interpretation for the *Polly Woodside*, which is scheduled to reopen to the public in 2009. In this paper, SHP historians will discuss how they have sought to resolve the difficulties of the ship's connection to Melbourne and how her recent history as a heritage space within Melbourne has influenced their interpretation of the vessel.

Throughout the project SHP historians have also attempted to glean stories of life on-board ship from restricted oral histories collected in the 1970s and 1980s. The paper will also reflect upon the methodological challenges of working with oral source materials which are subject to historiographical trends and a changing heritage industry.

Susan Marsden, professional historian

'Miss Interviewer' speaks about collecting urban oral histories

This talk forms part of a workshop presented with other speakers Rosemary Block and Mark Peel. I draw on more than 30 years experience in collecting oral histories. Many of them discuss urban life in places including Adelaide, Newcastle, Brisbane, Canberra and country towns. I am currently interviewing for national, state and local libraries concurrently. This focus on oral history collection alone – and at different levels in terms of locality – can be more challenging than interviewing as part of a broader history. The differences throw up interesting questions or issues. My first and most pressing question- thrown open for discussion here - is 'what do historians want in such interviews?'

Other issues and insights arise from that oral history experience. I address these in terms of the interview process itself, 'Before', 'During' and 'After', and at the same time show excerpts from interviews and histories that throw light on town life and the complex interactions between Australian people and urban places.

Julia Miller, Macquarie University

Longing for a decent, hot summer: Perceptions of climate change in Sydney in the 20th century

In 1963 Sydneysiders, having suffered three dismal summers in a row and wetter than usual weather during the 1950s, longed for a return to those lazy, hazy days of the summers of a distant past where the sky arched blue over the gleaming golden sand of the quintessential Australian beach. In contrast to contemporary fears on global warming and water shortages in urban areas, city dwellers in the dying months of 1963, worried by persistent rain and cool temperatures, concluded that soggy weather had become the established norm. This paper examines attitudes to climate, how lived experience influences perceptions of what is 'unusual' and draws on the analysis of the underlying inter-decadal climate cycles that contribute to the shaping of the environment in which our lives are lived out. It argues that our perceptions of weather have a far reaching effect on the ways we manage our cities and provide resources for those who live in them. It concludes that problems of water supply, flood mitigation and storm abatement are perennials whose resolution is hampered by opinions on climate that oscillate with its cycles.

Felicity Morel-EdnieBrown, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Western Australia

'From inside my mind': Using oral histories to create authenticity in city interpretation

Community based histories have frequently been the poor cousin of heritage research despite their potential to be a rich source of material for establishing cultural heritage significance. Stories of the past, interwoven with artefacts such as photographs, documents and expressed heritage (stories, dance, tracing of lives) can inform interpretation with a level of authenticity difficult to otherwise replicate.

This paper will explore the richness that has been discovered in central Perth through the oral history sources of the Northbridge History Project – an initiative whose role is to revitalize the city authentically by drawing on its diverse histories.

Containing sites of recognized cultural heritage significance, Northbridge has undergone significant infrastructural and generational change in the last 20 years, bringing with it dislocation of its identity. Fragments of the cultural fabric are being collated into an online electronic archive of primary sources www.northbridgehistory.wa.gov.au which is being used to proactively create understanding of the cultural heritage of the area.

Discovering and making available the histories of this diverse area has created a new sense of identity and community engagement bringing awareness that the life of the city is played out against the backdrop of the built environment but the soul of the city comes from its

context within the cultural fabric. Oral histories form a key ingredient in this change of perception. Snippets of recorded material have been used by historians, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (television and radio) and commercial radio stations. Awareness is increasing that the area's living cultural heritage is valuable and has much to offer the city as it seeks to position itself as Australia's Indian Ocean gateway.

Dan Morrow, University of Melbourne

The rapid genesis and incremental decline of a large rental estate erected by the Housing Commission of Victoria

This paper closely examines the rapid genesis and incremental decline of a large rental estate erected by the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) at Braybrook and Maidstone in Melbourne's western suburbs after 1946. It is a case study which offers an insight into both the trajectory of public housing in post-war Australia and the implications of this arc for the economic well being and civic status of government tenants. In doing so, it reveals the critical contribution of Commonwealth and state housing policy to the emerging cultural mosaic in the western suburbs that this thesis explores. Social rental housing was a vital component of an extraordinary expansion of federal responsibility for citizen welfare which the Australian Labor Party (ALP) government enacted in an attempt to expedite national post-war reconstruction. In the decade following the conclusion of the Pacific theatre in April 1945, housing commissions in all states employed capital dedicated by the Commonwealth to provide affordable rental accommodation for recently-arrived European migrants and Australian working families who found themselves unequipped to compete in an extremely pressurized housing market. A vast majority of the dwellings built and let by the state agencies during this period were fully detached bungalow houses set in hygienic green field surrounds at a distinct remove from the acute congestion then wracking the older territories of inner cities. Whilst these hurriedly constructed post-war outer suburban estates satisfied an urgent social need for accommodation, this paper argues that an original and ongoing absence of planning for community amenities in the government developments significantly inhibited the quality of life for the first and subsequent generations of tenants.

Lisa Murray, City of Sydney Council

R.A.W. materials - Oral history sources for Redfern, Alexandria and Waterloo

The City of Sydney Council has commissioned a social history of Redfern, Alexandria and Waterloo to be published late 2009. This paper reviews four oral history projects relevant to these suburbs that range in scale, focus and subject matter, but all of which are concerned with the urban experience. The paper considers how the urban setting and the context of the interview (date, project agenda) shape the stories told. The merits of the individual projects are examined, especially in view of re-using material for secondary purposes such as a new urban history. Common themes across projects emerge, such as crime, gambling, community, and urban renewal. The veracity of working-class life as depicted in the twentieth-century urban literature of Sydney - novels like Foveaux and Jonah - is tested against these oral histories.

Tim Murray, La Trobe University

Explorations in the archaeology of the modern city: Sydney and Melbourne compared

Contemporary historical archaeology is much concerned with understanding capitalism, colonialism and modernity. Analyses of material culture recovered from archaeological contexts have tended to focus on what material things have to tell us about class, ethnicity and race, gender, and the consequences of colonialism. While there has been a strong tradition of exploring the archaeology of rural settlements, it has long been understood that

the city provides the crucial context for investigating the archaeology of capitalism and modernity. But urban archaeological assemblages (especially those created over the last 250 years) tend to be very large and complex, requiring considerable time and knowledge to allow material culture to be transformed into primary historical and anthropological data, which can then support analysis and interpretation. It is also now more widely understood that approaching the archaeology of the modern world requires a framework of methods and theories that will successfully integrate material evidence drawn from sites around the world, with dense local historical documentation. The sheer amount of evidence is a major challenge to historical archaeologists, but then so is the creation of viable strategies for integrating the various types of evidence we routinely deal with (eg oral history, photographs, written documents, plant and animal remains and material culture).

Research undertaken in Melbourne and Sydney over the last 12 years has begun to articulate the rigorous analysis of urban assemblages and related historical documentation to underpin broader inquiries into the historical archaeology of the modern world. Analysis typically occurs at several levels, ranging from a single sealed deposit to comparisons between contexts at the local, national and global levels. In this paper I will discuss those developments and focus on two broad 'transnational' matters. First, the consumption of consumer goods, and exploring what this can tell us about production, trade, ethnicity, class and gender. Second, the nature of the modern city as a global phenomenon, particularly as an outcome of the global mobility of people, capital and technology during the last 50 years of the nineteenth century.

The core of the research reported here is the analysis of large assemblages of domestic material culture found in archaeological contexts. These analyses are then linked with detailed documentary research into particular places (generally houselots), to provide place-specific histories. When the documentary evidence is available, these histories contain significant information about the occupants (countries of origin, employment, patterns of residence and mobility, and relationships with others) that foster inquiries into matters as diverse as migration, identity and the formation of communities. The analysis of large scale assemblages has also become more consistent and more rigorous. The creation of systems and databases that allow the consistent recording of data has made it possible for data drawn from different places (such as Sydney and Melbourne and latterly London) to be meaningfully compared, as well for the effective integration of historical and archaeological information. Fundamental to this approach is the description and analysis of patterns, be they of the contents of cesspits, or the occupancy of houses. For these patterns to be statistically meaningful, assemblage-based analysis has to be large scale, and is best supported by numerous comparable datasets.

Barbara Nichol, The University of Melbourne

Melbourne's Chinese restaurants and the city at war: New perspectives on the urban landscape 1939-1945

I am researching Melbourne's early Chinese community through the lens of the Chinese restaurant community over the first half of the twentieth century. I am arguing that its long term influence has been marginalised by the extent of post-World War II social and cultural change and economic prosperity. A major component of my research will focus on the various connections between early restaurateur families and the city. This paper will examine the way early cross-cultural relationships were renegotiated as a consequence of the very public event of war. War not only provided a significant economic boost to all restaurants, it also introduced new groups to Chinese food and culture. By synthesising the business and personal stories of Melbourne's Chinese restaurateurs, their families and their customers over the war years, I will offer a new perspective on the city at war.

My paper will also touch on some of the personal challenges I have faced as a European Australian in doing oral history work with members of the marginalised Chinese Australian community over the White Australia decades.

Carla Pascoe, The University of Melbourne

City as space, city as place: Sources and the urban historian

As historians, the sources that we use affect the way we view the city in the past. Documentary sources composed by experts on the city such as urban planners are generally useful ways to understand urban 'space': the city viewed as an abstract physical entity. But we need human stories also to understand urban 'place': the lived experience of a locality. This paper draws upon research into Melbourne's urban environment in the 1950s which compares the ways in which urban planners viewed the city and the ways in which children experienced the city. Urban planners tended to talk about the city in quantifiable terms, mapping school locations, administrative boundaries, traffic routes and recreational spaces. People who were children in the 1950s were more likely to describe their neighbourhoods in social, emotive and phenomenological terms, for these are the types of associations which embed memories. For urban historians, our choice of sources fundamentally shapes the ways in which the historical cityscape can be remembered and recreated.

Stephen Pascoe, The University of Melbourne

The historian and the activists: how to tell the story of SHAC?

Late last year, a group of student activists occupied buildings belonging to the University of Melbourne and demanded the improved provision of student housing. Whilst the members of SHAC (the Student Housing Action Collective) were unsuccessful in their attempt to establish an autonomous student-run co-operative, their campaign drew public attention to the dearth of affordable housing for university students in inner Melbourne.

This paper draws upon interviews with members of SHAC, conducted as part of a larger project of research on the history of student housing policy at the University of Melbourne. The paper critically examines the perspectives of these activists and reflects on the methodological problems in writing histories of urban activism.

It explores the inherent differences in perspective and intent between the historian and the activist and discusses the particular benefits that their collaboration can bring, as well as its limitations. It argues that oral history can offer valuable insights into the experiences of social activists that other forms of historical inquiry do not have access to, as the interview process affords a space for imagining possibilities for social change. The paper contends that recreating this sense of contingency in our understandings of the past is indispensable for histories of social activism.

Lisa Petty, Monash University

Fox trots and air raids: The role of dance within WWII

Extraordinary pressures were borne by the individual and the community in Australia within World War II yet many Australians reflect upon this period positively.

Fox trots and air raids explores the role that social and professional dance played in relation to maintaining psychological health and the social fabric of Australian society within this period.

Drawing from oral histories and archival research, the paper compares the nature and meaning of social dances within urban and country environments and investigates the role dance played as a vehicle for communication, expression and healing throughout the war. The investigation explores and defines the nature of community involvement in creating and attending the dances, how often the dances were held and compares the experience of social and professional dancers.

Finally the paper illuminates why the majority of the population participated in the dances, what dancing meant to members of the community and the role of dance in promoting community cohesion throughout the war-time.

Adrian Regan, Monash University

The Pako Festa and multiculturalism in Geelong

Norma, Tanja, Stace and Stan came to Australia as children and young adults, arriving as Displaced Persons in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 2007 and 2008 they spoke to me about their lives in Geelong and their memories of watching the city change. These two elements, their life stories and their memories of the changing city, were overlaid with their involvement in their respective ethnic communities. The interviews were conducted in association with the Pako Festa, an annual multicultural Festival which began in 1983 and has grown to be one of the largest events in non-metropolitan Victoria.

Through the years, these narrators have seen Geelong through a range of perspectives, as new arrivals, workers, parents and as active members of their ethnic communities. This paper looks at the life stories of these four people to try and draw out some of the meanings that Geelong has had for migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds. It also seeks to use their experience of the Pako Festa to explore the expression of minority ethnic identities in a non-metropolitan Australian city.

Susan Reidy, University of Melbourne

Making sense of suburbia: The adventures of an historical hunter-gatherer

While Australian suburbs have a cultural reputation as alienating and dreary, in reality they contain profound cultural and community connections. The challenge for the urban historian is to recognise these wherever they may lurk. In 1912 a woman moves with her new husband, an artist, into a new house on Melbourne's fringe. She lives there until she dies sixty years later. In 1942, when this suburb is no longer on the city's edge, a young female artist buys an old hotel and converts it into art studios. In the few years she lives there she makes a reputation for herself, and her 'painters' pub'. In interviews in the 1980s she recalls her time there. But did she know the other woman? Traditional research tools, like biographies and interviews may hide or never reveal suburban friendships. But other records can provide clues to the richness and complexity of suburban relationships in twentieth century Australia – a Christmas card written in a shaky hand, a photograph layered with symbolism and found unexpectedly. This paper explores the pleasures and challenges of hunting for these clues, which can reveal so much about the ways in which suburbia has shaped and supported community connections and friendship.

Francesco Ricatti, University of the Sunshine Coast

Italians in Brisbane: Oral (hi)stories of hope

While it is commonly assumed that migrants hope for a better life, the importance of hope in migrants' lives has not been deeply investigated. This paper considers the role that hope has played in the life of postwar Italian migrants who settled in Brisbane. The paper is part of a

oral history project in which migrants' hopes are considered in relation to the different stages and aspects of their lives, including the decision to migrate, the preparation for the trip, the trip, the settlement, the creation and maintenance of transnational ties, work choices and financial planning, family and community life, illnesses, and death. On a more theoretical level, this project aims to investigate hope not only as an object of historical research, but also as an important tool for creating historical narratives at individual, community and academic level.

Peter Robinson, RMIT University

Narratives of HIV/AIDS affected males (and their sense of self)

When asked in the early 2000s to describe the effects HIV-AIDS had on their sense of self, fifty-eight gay, Australian men (aged 59-22) drew on four principal narratives. These were first, feeling frightened, vulnerable or more stigmatized; second, changing their sexual practices; third, feeling lucky not to have contracted the disease; and fourth, how experiencing loss of friends and acquaintances led them to a greater understanding of gay solidarity. In this paper, I would like to consider how all four narratives are connected and tell a larger story about the self in relation to the epidemic. For example, being frightened, vulnerable or more stigmatized, when coupled with the effects of thoughtful public education campaigns, caused some of the interviewees to reassess then modify their sexual practices. This larger story also involves facing several fears. Fears the men spoke of included having to face heteronormative moral judgements and having to shape a new identity in the midst of 'fighting' the disease, and knowing that it was still infecting gay men, and doing all this while trying not to minimize its threat or conflate homosexuality with a diseased self.

Keren Rubinstein, Monash University & La Trobe University

Concrete dreaming

As war once more unfolds on my screen I get another slap to the face: this is Israel in its extreme, one of many faces of the country I departed half a lifetime ago as a reluctant teenager. I have remained Israeli but in Australia my Israeliness is swallowed up by Zionism and Jewishness, which I find harder to locate in my home landscape. In my current doctoral study I am writing my life narrative while examining diasporic Israeliness, migration and collective dreaming. A transnational lives in multiple locations, traversing the new place while mentally tracing urban grids elsewhere. I am returning to the streets of my childhood, reviewing the cinderblock structures, the grey bomb shelters, the first Hebrew mall. At the same time Israel slips through my fingers; my memories melt away and come back, and my displacement from it increases, despite persistent returns. More recently Israel has surrounded itself with a concrete fence; from my picket-fenced neighbourhood in Melbourne I try to find the places where the axes of my life converge. In this paper, Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Melbourne will be woven together in a series of vignettes threaded by cement; my fascination with concrete is, like those plaster casts of owls and princesses I used to make, an attempt to halt a fluid shapelessness.

Tracey Ryan, Redland City Council & Elisabeth Gondwe, North Stradbroke Island Historical Museum

Uses of our collection or: You've collected the interviews: now what?

This paper covers the issues facing repositories (the North Stradbroke Island Museum and the Local History collection, Redland City Council) once they have built up an oral history collection and then want to 'use' it. In the course of building up the North Stradbroke Island Oral History collection, common themes emerged, including the importance of a place

called One Mile. The decision was made to create a project called the One Mile for various reasons, not the least being tenure issues faced by the residents over many years.

The One Mile project involves creating an aural and visual resource for and on behalf of the community. This includes collecting and collating historic and contemporary photographs; creating digital stories using extracts from the oral histories; collecting and providing access to documents relating to the topic; and assisting future indigenous artist intervention to interpret the oral and visual resources.

The project faced ongoing issues with permissions and different cultural perspectives. Anglo Australian cultural constructs of copyright and permissions require considerable formal official paperwork. The indigenous community has expectations of respect of knowledge and intellectual property protocols whilst wary and mistrustful of paperwork. Fear of theft and misappropriation of cultural knowledge is a real concern. Despite this, we have actively and very successfully collected photographs and documents, and produced digital stories from the oral histories. This might seem like a nice little placemaking project but in fact it has huge ramifications. Key are the questions of community identity and the context in which it is created. By definition the One Mile is on the fringes of white society and this project has shown us what that actually means.

Joanne Scott, University of the Sunshine Coast, & Ross Laurie, University of Queensland

When the country comes to town: Encounters at a metropolitan agricultural show

For much of the twentieth century, the Brisbane Exhibition was the most significant annual event in Queensland's capital city. Until the 1980s, show week – a 'week' that could stretch from a few days to a fortnight – was when Brisbane came closest to being a bustling urban centre, 'a miniature London', according to one enthusiast. Ironically, that status was achieved through an influx of rural Queenslanders, rural products and rural values. As the state's preeminent display of pastoral and agricultural industries and the occasion for celebrating the interdependence of rural and urban Queensland, the core values of the Brisbane Exhibition proved remarkably resilient across the twentieth century, despite (or perhaps because of) the profound changes that occurred in Brisbane and beyond.

Drawing on interviews with rural and urban visitors, exhibitors, volunteers, employees and business owners, this paper explores the significance of the Brisbane Exhibition's urban context for individual showgoers and for the show itself. It reflects on the extent to which the show has contributed to definitions of urban life in Brisbane and the extent to which Brisbane's expansion shaped the Exhibition and individuals' understandings of the event's significance.

Zora Simic, University of New South Wales

Remembering Sweethearts: Oz Rock and the western suburbs of Sydney

Sweethearts was an iconic nightclub throughout the 1980s, the decade in which Australian pub rock music ('Oz Rock') enjoyed local and international success. Sweethearts was located in Cabramatta, in southwestern Sydney, and played host to the crème of Oz rock bands, including The Divinyls, Hunters and Collectors and The Radiators. Many residents of the western suburbs of Sydney, previously at a distance from the epicentres of popular culture, gravitated regularly to Sweethearts and other suburban 'beer barns' that championed live music performed by Australian rock bands.

Drawing on oral history research, this paper will investigate the place of Sweethearts in the personal and collective memories of past and present residents of Cabramatta and nearby suburbs. For those who regularly visited Sweethearts, their memories are generally positive.

They are also sometimes expressed to counter stereotypes of the western suburbs as a cultural wasteland and/ or site of after-hours violence and fear. For others, Sweethearts was not a place to experience, but to avoid. The various reasons for this rejection of Sweethearts – on the grounds, for instance, that ‘Oz rock’ augmented ‘Aussie’ racism and sexism – highlight the limits of ‘Oz rock’ as a signifier of ‘westie’ cultural identity, while also drawing attention to the diversity of western suburban social activity.

Sherene Suchy, Duo Plus Change Management

Families and museums: Partnerships for provenance

In 2005, a workshop designed by the author called *History Begins at Home: Family Memory Making* was piloted through two museums in the United States. The workshops were the catalyst for ongoing social action research to complete a book that teaches families about being a memory keeper using oral history techniques. The paper describes the project, museum-of-you, and provenance in heritage management. It includes seven-questions used to teach families about how to assess collecting institutions for emotional value prior to making a donation of life history or heirlooms. A six-step model is also discussed describing the change management transition connecting personal and community histories. This paper draws on the book for families completed in 2008 (publication pending), which describes experience as a coexecutor for a family estate, responsible for tangible (heirlooms) and intangible (stories) heritage.

David Sweet, University of South Australia

Pie floaters, fritz and shoe boxes: The photographic legacy of the Australian baby boomer

We look at images of people and urban landscapes collected by history societies and other official holdings, and with patience, detective work, and checking of records, they can provide a representative history of these people and places. I argue they lack life. Where are the personal stories, the passion, and the human dramas of love, birth, death, happiness, or sorrow?

There is another, often ignored source for these urban lives that is full of rich, thick, and detailed chronicles; the family photo album and the stories they contain. My research is bonding these family photographic collections with the oral stories of the Australian Baby Boomer.

I draw on the French theorist, Roland Barthes, and what he describes in, *Camera Lucida* (2000), as the *studium* and *punctum* of the photograph. While the *studium* is the grey generalness we feel in seeing the presented photograph, it is the *punctum* that gives us understanding, and in part we are bruised by the photograph. Family photography has shaped the memories and fashioned nostalgia for generations, and my interviews give meaning to some of these collections, and show that even the most *studium* life has its moments of *punctum*.

Sue Taffe, Monash University

Shirley Andrews: Mid-century urban activist for indigenous rights

Shirley Andrews was ‘a Melbourne girl’. She was born and grew up in Melbourne. She lived and died here, leaving money in her will specifically for a party after her death where people would sing and dance. Shirley was a political activist who gave her energy and intelligence to campaigns for Aboriginal rights at a time when Indigenous Australians were denied human rights by proscriptive state laws, and when ‘out of sight, out of mind’ was the attitude which typified most white Australians to the position of Aboriginal people in this country.

This paper explores the forces which shaped Andrews' commitment to the cause of Aboriginal rights. It considers her membership of the Communist Party of Australia in the post-war years when this was the only political party which developed policy regarding Indigenous Australians. She became the honorary secretary of the Council for Aboriginal Rights in Melbourne, the first such body to take a national interest in this matter. Over the next 17 years she developed a vast Australia wide network realising the importance of stepping outside her city-centric position to understand the lives of those in rural and very remote locations where access to news, networks, politicians and power structures was almost non-existent.

Alistair Thomson, Monash University

Micro and macro analysis of oral history interviews

I'll outline approaches to micro (narrative) analysis and macro (thematic) interpretation of oral history interviews, workshop some examples from my interviews with postwar immigrants, and open up discussion of approaches and issues in the interpretation of recorded life stories.

Alan Young, Auckland University of Technology

The politics of oral history and visual representation

Oral history is politically charged, with an ability to tell stories of people otherwise excluded from traditional histories. Furthermore, it is well suited to audiovisual media, where sensitive treatments can enrich the experience, presenting a powerful representation to both participants and the wider community. I'll use examples to tease out how notions of power, ownership and truth are implicated in new media forms.