

Voices from the past: Uncovering local and personal stories

21 July 2017

Session information

How do we reconstruct historical narratives about our communities? How do we tell stories of people long gone and largely absent from historical records? The increasing popularity and accessibility of family history, memoir and historical fiction reveals how storytelling can empower communities, give voice to their diverse histories, and encourage the documentation of local history.

This all-day workshop will feature a range of speakers who will share their ideas and experiences in historical research and the creation and publication of stories. Join us for a lively discussion of historical projects and the transformative role these stories play in our communities.

Speakers: Alison Wishart (Senior Curator, State Library of NSW), Carrolline Rhodes (author), Marian Lorrison (PhD candidate, Macquarie University), Trudi Mayfield (Librarian, Orange City Library), workshop chaired by Nicole Cama (Executive Officer, History Council of NSW).

Come to this workshop if you are...

- An aspiring or established historian, researcher and/or writer;
- Part of an organisation wanting to document local and/or individual histories;
- Just generally passionate about history and storytelling!

Voices from the past will be a fantastic learning opportunity and attendees are invited to bring their questions and share their experiences for feedback and ideas. The History Council of NSW will be producing a resource sheet featuring ideas and notes from this workshop which will be published on our website after the event.

The History Council of NSW, in partnership with Central West Libraries, presents this workshop as part of the Orange Readers and Writers Festival. Supported by Create NSW.

Tickets are \$35: <https://hcnswstorytelling.eventbrite.com.au/>

Session schedule

Time	Description	Notes
9:45-10am	Workshop registrations	
10-10:45am	Alison Wishart, 'Using photographs as historical sources'	See more information below
10:45-11am	Question time	
11-11:20am	Morning tea break	Selection of fruits, scones, orange juice, tea and coffee provided
11:20am-12:05pm	Carrolline Rhodes, 'Illuminating the Past'	See more information below
12:05-12:20pm	Question time	
12:20-1:30pm	Lunch break	
1:30-2pm	Marian Lorrison, 'Marching to her own drum: The adulterous woman in colonial society'	See more information below
2-2:30pm	Trudi Mayfield, 'The Centenary of World War I in Orange project'	See more information below
2:30-2:45pm	Afternoon tea break	Self-serve coffee and tea refreshments provided
2:45-3:30pm	Panel and question and answer time	Audience members are invited to ask questions and/or share their ideas

Alison Wishart, 'Using photographs as historical sources'

Alison's session will provide participants with a framework for interrogating photographs as historical sources. It goes beyond dating a photograph based on the fashions, cars, etc. She will examine the technical aspects of a photograph, its content and context. She will discuss reading 'outside the frame' and the assumptions of viewers and researchers using examples from the collection of the State Library of NSW.

Carrolline Rhodes, 'Illuminating the Past'

During 'Voices from the Past' you will journey through Carrolline Rhodes' seven histories as well as her experiences during several years' employment as a manuscript assessor. During her work as an assessor she mentored best-selling author Deborah O'Brien in the development of her historical novels 'Mr Chen's Emporium' and 'The Jade Widow', as well as two further novels. As she shares what she learned from her professional practice as an assessor, mentor, and

multi-award winning writer you will gain the skills that will take your work from tentative first draft to polished publication.

Marian Lorrison, 'Marching to her own drum: The adulterous woman in colonial society'

Marian's talk describes the experiences of four women whose husbands sued them for divorce in New South Wales during the 1870s. Based on the early divorce files of the Supreme Court's Matrimonial Causes Division, it presents a very different account of colonial womanhood than the one we are most familiar with. Rather than being doormats, burdened by large families and utterly subject to masculine dictates, these were women who flouted social norms and risked losing home and children when they engaged in an extra-marital infidelity. Her work explores the experiences of such women in the court system and looks at how the wider society viewed their transgressions.

Trudi Mayfield, 'The Centenary of World War I in Orange project'

Trudi's current project, The Centenary of World War I in Orange (<http://www.centenaryww1orange.com.au/>), involves identifying the district's servicemen and women and researching their stories. The project has identified 1,882 servicemen and women from the district who served in World War I. Their stories are researched and published on the blog alongside daily updates highlighting local, national and international developments 100 years ago, ranging from local recruitment drives and fundraising initiatives to eyewitness accounts of the battlefield. The blog also includes topical stories about Indigenous servicemen, Australian nurses and the role of animals in the war.

NOTE: The History Council of NSW will be producing a resource sheet featuring ideas and notes from this workshop which will be published on our website after the event.

About our speakers

Alison Wishart

Before coming to the State Library of NSW in 2015, Alison worked as a curator or collections manager with the National Museum of Australia, the Australian War Memorial, the State Library of Queensland, and Museum of Tropical Queensland (Townsville). She has a BA (Hons), University of Queensland and Masters in Cultural Heritage (majoring in Museum Studies), Deakin University. She is passionate about public history and has curated social history exhibitions on a diverse range of topics from football, to long distance love, to the stolen generations.

Carrolline Rhodes

Carrolline is the author of seven commissioned histories, the most recent being 'The Evolution of Community', the centenary history of Nambucca Shire Council and 'Wheels', a history of community transport. She has been a presenter at Byron Bay Writers Festival and the Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival. A multi-award winning writer across a range of genres (including playwriting), she is a passionate and inspiring tutor. She says the aim of her historical publications is to bring times past to life. 'I don't report the past,' she says, 'my histories illuminate it'.

Marian Lorrison

Marian taught for 22 years in NSW schools before family research led her to Australian History. Her recently completed Master of Research explored the experiences of four adulterous women whose husbands sued for divorce in NSW during the 1870s. Her current PhD thesis examines the rise of the New Woman in Australia between 1880 and 1914, and traces the effects of increasing emancipation on twelve ordinary women. Marian's interests lie in histories of sexuality, gender and feminism and writing the stories of ordinary people.

Trudi Mayfield

Trudi has worked at Orange City Library for 11 years. Her current project – The Centenary of World War I in Orange – involves identifying the district's servicemen and women and researching their stories. To date 1,882 servicemen and women have been identified, including Andrew Barton "Banjo" Paterson and NSW's first Victoria Cross recipient, John Patrick Hamilton. Trudi completed a Graduate Diploma in Information Studies (Librarianship) at the University of New South Wales in 1990. She has worked in a wide variety of occupations, from rouseabout to kindergarten teacher, professional knitter, translator and interpreter.

More information

The History Council of NSW aims to ensure that history, in all its diverse forms, is an important part of the cultural life of the people and communities of New South Wales.

We provide services and programs, which aim to build capacity within the history sector and showcase the importance of history. If you'd like to know more about our programs or membership, visit our website: www.historycouncilnsw.org.au or contact us at admin@historycouncilnsw.org.au.

Find out more about Central West Libraries and the Orange Readers and Writers Festival here: www.cwl.nsw.gov.au